



# Downtown Livability

**Date:** April 9, 2014  
**To:** Downtown Livability Advisory Committee  
**From:** Emil King AICP (425-452-7223, [eaking@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:eaking@bellevuewa.gov))  
Patti Wilma (425-452-4114, [pwilma@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:pwilma@bellevuewa.gov))  
*Project Managers for Downtown Livability Initiative  
Department of Planning & Community Development*  
**Subject:** April 16, 2014 Advisory Committee Meeting

Enclosed you will find the agenda packet for your Downtown Livability Advisory Committee meeting next Wednesday, April 16, 2014. This packet includes:

- Meeting agenda
- Draft minutes from the March 19, 2014 Committee meeting
- Amenities Incentive System: Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives
- Design Guidelines: Preliminary Evaluation of Strategy

The April meeting will continue the discussion of proposed strategies and alternatives with a focus on the Amenity Incentive System and Design Guidelines. The goal of this meeting is to reach consensus on the proposed approaches that will ultimately be part of the Committee's recommendations to Council.

The tentative schedule for the remaining topics is:

May meeting: Height and Form (incl. DT-OLB), Downtown Parking

June meeting: Incentive System Details/Calibration, Finalize Recommendations & Wrap-Up

Packet materials will be posted on the City's project web site <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm> and we will be sending an email to the interested parties list that this information is available. Paper copies of the packet will be mailed to committee members on Thursday, April 10th. Please email Michelle Luce at [mlyce@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:mlyce@bellevuewa.gov) if you prefer to pick up your copy at Bellevue City Hall's Service First desk. And please let us know if you have any questions about the agenda or attachments. We look forward to seeing you next week.



# Downtown Livability

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

6:30-9:30 p.m. • Room 1E-108

Bellevue City Hall • 450 110th Ave NE

## AGENDA

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- 6:30 p.m.            1.    **Call to Order, Approval of Agenda, Approval of March 19 Meeting Minutes (see Attachment 1)**  
*Co-Chairs Simas and Laing*
2.    **Public Comment**  
*Limit to 3 minutes per person*
- 6:45 p.m.            3.    **Review of Amenity Incentive System based on direction from January 15 Alternatives Workshop (see Attachment 2)**  
*Staff to seek Committee direction on packages of amenities that would move forward for detailed economic analysis.*
- 7:45 p.m.            **BREAK**
- 8:00 p.m.            4.    **Review of Downtown Design Guidelines strategies based on direction from January 15 Alternatives Workshop (see Attachment 3)**  
*Staff to seek Committee direction on recommended approaches to updating the Downtown Design Guidelines, including format, content, and procedures.*
- 9:15 p.m.            5.    **Public Comment**  
*Limit to 3 minutes per person*
- 9:30 p.m.            6.    **Adjourn**

Next Meeting: May 21, 2014 – 6:30 p.m.

Project web site located at: [www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm](http://www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-livability.htm). For additional information, please contact the Downtown Livability project managers: Emil King (425-452-7223, [eaking@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:eaking@bellevuewa.gov)) or Patti Wilma (425-452-4114, [pwilma@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:pwilma@bellevuewa.gov)). Meeting room is wheelchair accessible. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation available upon request. Please call at least 48 hours in advance. Assistance for the hearing impaired: dial 711 (TR).

CITY OF BELLEVUE  
DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY  
CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

March 19, 2014  
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall  
Room 1E-113

MEMBERS PRESENT: Aaron Laing, Ernie Simas, co-chairs; Patrick Bannon, Hal Ferris, Gary Guenther, Trudi Jackson, Loretta Lopez, Lee Maxwell, Erin Powell, Jan Stout

MEMBERS ABSENT: Michael Chaplin, Mark D'Amato, Brad Helland, Ming Zhang

OTHERS PRESENT: Dan Stroh, Emil King, Patti Wilma, Department of Planning & Community Development

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA, APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Co-chair Simas.

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Co-chair Laing. The motion was seconded by Ms. Jackson and it carried unanimously.

With regard to the minutes, Mr. Bannon called attention to the sixth paragraph on page 5 and noted that "Milwaukie" should be spelled "Milwaukee."

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Mr. Bannon. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stout and it carried unanimously.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Christina Wish, 37 103rd Avenue NE, spoke representing the Old Bellevue Merchants Association parking committee. She said there is not a lot of parking in Old Bellevue and the lack of it is hurting business. There are a lot of development projects under way adding construction vehicles to the mix and impacting the area even more. Many people do not even know about Old Bellevue and having signage in several places might help. Adding temporary parking specifically for Old Bellevue until a more long-term solution can be developed would help. A valet parking system could be set up, but no one knows just where the cars would be parked. Even having bike rentals might help.

Co-chair Simas stated that the Transportation Commission will be receiving a presentation on bike rentals in July.

Mr. Mason Cave, 688 110th Avenue NE, spoke representing IntraVest Development, which is currently evaluating the financial feasibility of a project in the Wilburton area. As part of the process, pedestrian connectivity and access to light rail have been evaluated. One of the concepts that has been evaluated is a bridge over I-405. He shared with the Committee some drawings of a conceptual design for a lid over the freeway connecting City Hall to the Wilburton area and developed as a park. The main pedestrian entrance and exit would be from the reflection pond area of the City Hall campus, and people riding light rail would take stairs or use the escalator to get to the park. There is the potential for some parking and civic amenity space next to City Hall. The zoning changes in Downtown and Wilburton that would be needed would come with the ability to pay for certain amenity space and the I-405 bridge.

Co-chair Laing said he and Mr. Ferris met with Mr. Cave on March 18 and were given a presentation of the concept. He said the concept certainly relates to the idea of an amenity system.

Ms. Stout pointed out that accessibility to such a facility would need to accommodate those in wheelchairs as well.

Mr. Ferris stated that bridges can make for a memorable skyline. He shared with the Committee photos from the Urban Land Institute magazine showing memorable bridges.

Mr. Brian Brand with Baylis Architects, 10801 Main Street, called attention to the Pedestrian Corridor on NE 6th Street. He reminded the Committee that the guidelines for the corridor were adopted by the City in 1981. In 2000 a consultant was hired to illustrate and to do some planning work on the corridor; the final product from that effort resulted in the creation of the three districts along the corridor: Street as Plaza, Garden Hillclimb, and Transit Central. He noted from the packet materials that the Committee would be discussing a fourth district focused on the light rail station. Even though more than 30 years have passed, much of the Pedestrian Corridor remains uncompleted, and what has been completed does not really promote pedestrian activity. Weather protection is lacking; retail along the corridor is lacking; and opportunities for people on bicycles is lacking. The guidelines call for a coordinated effort to manage the whole area with events planning, maintenance of landscaping, signage, and other elements and it is disappointing that the vision has not been realized. A highly pedestrian-oriented corridor is a major and key element for many successful cities, and in nearly every case a public/private partnership was created to bring about creation of the corridor, all with a focus on creating more development. The Committee was encouraged to recommend to the City Council the creation of a public/private partnership with a financing option to move ahead. The 2000 version of the guidelines include having (vendor) kiosks on the Honeywell (north) side of the transit center, but that has not been done. Many cities use kiosks and something like that could be done very inexpensively.

Mr. Ferris asked if the kiosks would be informational or actually feature a vendor. Mr. Brand said he was talking about a kiosk at which a vendor would actually be selling something.

Co-chair Laing asked if the Bellevue Downtown Association would want to take on such a project. Mr. Brand said the issue could be presented to the board of directors. Certainly several members of the organization are interested in the idea.

Co-chair Laing asked if the Pedestrian Corridor has not been fully developed simply because the ideas that have been fleshed out have been forgotten, or because there is something missing in the document. Mr. Brand said both are true. The 2000 document is far more detailed than the 1981 document. Some of the sketches drawn for the 2000 document actually look like what has been developed in fits and starts. Compass Plaza was constructed but it has never really been enlivened other than in the summer when the Bellevue Downtown Association sponsors the “Live At Lunch” concert series. The Hillclimb area has no retail at all and essentially there is no reason for pedestrians to visit that segment unless they are simply walking from Bellevue Square to the Transit Center. The lack of weather protection is a negative factor, and at the Bellevue Square end of the corridor pretty much the only activity is access to garages.

Co-chair Laing asked if the problem is that the planning documents are not prescriptive enough. Mr. Brand said the real problem lies in the fact that development of the corridor requires action on the part of adjacent properties. The development currently planned for the other side of the Hillclimb segment represents a huge opportunity. No one knows when or if the site adjacent to Paccar will develop. The City should figure out a way to approach all of the remaining landowners with a consolidated plan for getting the corridor funded and implemented. In cities where there are successful pedestrian corridors, there is a managing organization that takes care of planning; the 16th Street Mall in Denver is a case in point.

Mr. David Schooler, 600 106th Avenue NE, commented that 30 years ago there was not much there, and currently what’s there is not good enough. Retail is needed, but retail takes bodies. The bodies are coming with the increased number of Downtown residential units and with continued office development; the number of people on Downtown sidewalks has increased dramatically in the last 30 years. There are food trucks operating in the Downtown, and the farmers market came online in 2013 and will be bigger in 2014, but unless there is a gigantic public investment the Pedestrian Corridor will not fully develop anytime soon and patience will be required.

### 3. RECAP OF STAFF UPDATE TO BELLEVUE CITY COUNCIL ON DOWNTOWN LIVABILITY INITIATIVE

Strategic Planning Manager Emil King said the update provided to the City Council on March 3 regarding the Downtown Livability Initiative involved no action on the part of the Council. The update focused on the direction given by the Committee to staff at the alternatives workshop. He directed the attention of the Committee members to the memo included in the packet, and said the video of the meeting could be viewed on the City’s website.

Co-chair Simas said the time had come to turn all of the words used over the past several months into actions. He said the modules to be presented to the Committee were in rough form but polished enough to serve as a final product. Each of the upcoming meetings will be focused on reaching conclusions and making final recommendations on the various modules, all with an eye on the last meeting of the Committee being in June.

Mr. Ferris highlighted the need for the packet materials sent out ahead of each meeting should be very clear about what decisions the Committee will be asked to make.

Mr. Bannon said as new material has been produced he had been challenged in clearly distinguishing the new and different information and weighing the relative changes. In some instances the changes have been minor restatements of existing plans or guidelines. He suggested that as the Pedestrian Corridor and public open space modules are presented there should be a clear indication of what has changed.

Ms. Stout suggested the City needs to address the issue of helicopters given the tragic event that occurred in Seattle on March 18. Safety issues facing the Downtown need to be addressed along with design issues. Co-chair Simas said he would confer with staff on that issue.

#### 4. REVIEW OF MAJOR PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR INITIAL EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES - BASED ON DIRECTION FROM JANUARY 15 ALTERNATIVES WORKSHOP

Mr. King briefly outlined the Committee's previous direction on code-related Pedestrian Corridor strategies to analyze, including extending the Pedestrian Corridor to the east; methods to require weather protection; methods to better activate the Pedestrian Corridor; opportunities to add landscaping and green elements; and integration of bicycles and other wheeled users. He noted the Committee had also highlighted several non-code measures, including public investment in key sections; wayfinding, overall weather protection, lighting, upgraded pedestrian crosswalks and other features to make the Pedestrian Corridor more inviting; partnership between the City, Pedestrian Corridor property owners and others to support a rich array of events and activities; exploring creative funding to help design and implement a City-sponsored grand design for the Pedestrian Corridor; and exploring changing the name or re-branding the Pedestrian Corridor. He stated that the non-code measures can be forwarded by the Committee to the Council as part of the final recommendation but they do not warrant the same level of analysis as the code measures at this time.

Ms. Maxwell agreed with the comments made by Mr. Schooler relative to the need for a management system. She suggested that many of the strategies from the January 15 workshop could be addressed by having management and funding. She proposed adding management and funding to the list of strategies.

Mr. Guenther said he walks the corridor quite often and would elevate the notion of widening the bottleneck near 108th Avenue NE. The section is so narrow that on rainy days two persons with umbrellas cannot pass each other.

Ms. Maxwell said she would like to see the portion of NE 6th Street that is open to vehicles changed over to allow pedestrians only.

From a process perspective, Co-chair Laing suggested the Committee should decide whether or not the five non-code strategies should be forwarded to the Council as part of the final recommendation before addressing the code-related strategies.

Ms. Stout said she found none of the bulleted items to be objectionable. Each is complementary to the work the Committee has been doing.

Co-chair Simas agreed. He noted that during the Transportation Commission's discussion of the Pedestrian Corridor, the roadblock encountered most often is the fact that the City has no hammer to do anything with and until there is redevelopment nothing can be done. With the way things stand, it will take the property owners getting together or the City making the Pedestrian Corridor a priority and choosing to put public money into it. He said the recommendation of the Committee should be for the Council to start a dialog with the landowners and developers with a goal of seeing the Pedestrian Corridor developed over a set period of time.

Ms. Powell said the five bulleted items should be part of the Committee's final recommendations. She said the issue, as always, is money to pay for the implementation. Agreeing that the strategies are the right ones is one thing, but the Committee should talk about how to accomplish the funding piece for both the Pedestrian Corridor and open space. The question is whether or not only the local property owners should pay or if all the citizens of Bellevue should have a hand in improving the Downtown, which is the economic engine for the whole City.

Co-chair Laing said it appeared to him the Committee was in agreement with the bulleted points. He suggested, however, that inherent in establishing a timeframe is the need to have some accountability. One of the things that ties into the Pedestrian Corridor, especially if it is extended, is the light rail project and the Downtown station. If a timeframe is set, it should coincide with the opening of the light rail station.

Mr. Bannon noted that extending the Pedestrian Corridor to incorporate the light rail station is one of the strategies from the January 15 workshop and an important point. He said the easy step is in deciding the Pedestrian Corridor should be completed, the harder step involves defining who should do and pay for what. He said the dialogue should occur, but the Committee does not need to address it now.

Mr. King said the proposed approach for the strategy of extending the Pedestrian Corridor to the east is to add a fourth segment to the corridor named Civic Center District. In this segment, the Pedestrian Corridor would take two paths. First, the segment

would extend along NE 6th Street from 110th Avenue NE where the entrance to the future light rail station will be to 112th Avenue NE. NE 6th Street and the sidewalks fronting that roadway would be part of the Pedestrian Corridor, so in that vein the area fronting the Braven and Meydenbauer Center on the north side of the street along with the area fronting the City Hall and Metro sites would be considered part of the Pedestrian Corridor. The second path of the Pedestrian Corridor would route along roughly a NE 5th alignment through the City Hall plaza, through the Metro site, and on to 112th Avenue NE and a potential connection across to Wilburton.

Ms. Jackson suggested extending the Pedestrian Corridor to the east depends greatly on having a bridge for pedestrians to use to cross the freeway. Mr. King said the concept of a 14-foot wide pedestrian/bicycle facility connecting from the south side of NE 6th Street from Downtown to Wilburton has seen some design work already. A facility of that sort would be far less complex and expensive than doing an open space lid over the freeway. Ms. Jackson suggested that if the facility is only a vision for some future time, the City should not spend much time, effort and money extending the Pedestrian Corridor as far east as 112th Avenue NE.

Planning Director Dan Stroh said it is feasible to assume that such a facility will be constructed in the next 20 to 30 years. The notion of constructing an open space lid over I-405 is quite an exciting vision and is certainly something that would be a signature piece. It would take creative funding efforts to get there given the cost, but it would certainly help to revitalize the Wilburton district and would provide a link from that area to Downtown, the Pedestrian Corridor, Downtown Park and ultimately to Meydenbauer Bay. The potential is tremendous. While not a pipe dream, the vision certainly is audacious.

Co-chair Simas said the Transportation Commission has considered several options for pedestrian/bicycle crossings of I-405. Even if the grand vision does not come about, it would make sense to extend the Pedestrian Corridor to 112th Avenue NE.

Co-chair Laing pointed out that almost all of the properties abutting both sides of NE 6th Street in the proposed Civic Center District segment are in public ownership, and at least one side is set to undergo some major redevelopment. Extending the Pedestrian Corridor eastward makes a lot of sense if for no other reason than it will create a walking corridor through the heart of Downtown connecting the eastern edge to the western edge.

Mr. Ferris asked if the Pedestrian Corridor should in fact be extended beyond 112th Avenue NE all the way to either the frontage road or the freeway itself ahead of any redevelopment of the area. If the Pedestrian Corridor had been extended prior to the development of the Bravern, there likely would be a very different frontage in place in that section.

Mr. Bannon said extending the corridor all the way to the freeway seems okay at first blush but asked if that would imply some sort of an easement. Mr. Ferris said much would depend on how the pedestrian bridge will connect. If it were elevated all the way

to 112th Avenue NE, it would not be necessary to extend the corridor all the way to the edge of the freeway. If the vision really is to go across I-405 someday, it will be necessary to make sure the Pedestrian Corridor will continue at some point to where the connection will be made. From a planning perspective, what is needed is language that calls out a district designation.

Co-chair Simas said unless the connection across I-405 is made a City goal, it would never be achieved. He said the recommendation of the Committee should be to extend the Pedestrian Corridor to the east. Mr. Ferris agreed and suggested the language of the first strategy should be to extend the Pedestrian Corridor to the east side of I-405, leaving the particulars to be decided at a future time. There was general consensus in favor of taking that approach.

With regard to the strategy related to methods to require weather protection along the corridor, Mr. King said the proposed approach involves having a framework in which developers can pick from a list of ways to provide weather protection, including building front protection, self-supporting protection, and methods proposed by developers. There may be opportunities for larger structures in certain areas to cover significant portions of the corridor. He also suggested the idea that weather protection at street intersections has been noted by the public and the Committee.

Mr. Bannon asked how 75 percent of building frontage was chosen as the minimum for self-supporting weather protection as noted in the second bullet on page 8 of the memo. Mr. King said the research done by the staff and consultant team arrived at that percentage. Their thinking was that it would be unreasonable to require 100 percent. Community Development Manager Patti Wilma said the code currently has a ratio of height to horizontal projection that roughly translates to weather protection being 12 feet off the ground. The language regarding the width of weather protection gives a range that can accommodate individual building design and signage location.

Mr. Ferris asked if the reference to accommodating two small groups passing is specific enough. Mr. King said that generally translates into between 10 and 12 feet. He noted that the memo is general in nature and does not include every detail at this point. He allowed that if so directed, future packets could include all of the details.

Ms. Stout cautioned against getting too specific. She said what is needed are general guidelines that will not tie the hands of future developers or project reviewers. Co-chair Laing concurred.

With regard to the third bullet item, methods to better activate the corridor, including identification of existing code barriers inhibiting activation, Mr. King said the issue was closely tied to the Land Use Code audit. He allowed that some portions of the Pedestrian Corridor are developed in an attractive way while other areas range between being pleasant and unattractive based on the audit. The idea is to build upon the current development and activities along the corridor to have a more interesting travel sequence. He said the proposal is to have a major point of interest at least every 60 to 90 feet along

the corridor, such as large landscape features, areas designated for programmed events, gateway structures and artwork, changes in building façades, changes in the width of the corridor, building entries, views, intersections with a through-block connection, or other similar changes in the visual qualities of the sequential experience. Minor points of interest should happen more frequently on the order of every 12 to 18 feet and could include items such as permanent artwork, wayfinding kiosks, areas for temporary uses such as flower stands and newsstands, special walkway treatments, benches, picnic tables, and outdoor eating areas, and special architectural elements. Mr. King noted that the specific items were meant to be examples and that flexibility would be used during implementation.

Co-chair Laing said as envisioned the code language would specifically call for a major point of interest every 60 to 90 feet and a minor point of interest every 12 to 18 feet. He asked if there is anything in the code currently that either requires points of interest or prohibits them in any way. Mr. King said nothing was found in the code that would necessarily prohibit them, but at the same time there is no language specific to a travel sequence.

Mr. Ferris agreed with the comments made by Mr. Schooler that what is needed to activate the corridor is people and a sense of place. The Pedestrian Corridor runs east and west like a pedestrian arterial and people need to have a reason to walk the north and south connections from their homes and offices in the Downtown to get to it. Consideration will need to be given to making sure the north and south connections are pedestrian-friendly to encourage walking to the Pedestrian Corridor. Street crossings need to be easy and inviting. The predominant use along the corridor is office and thus even the places that are inviting are not heavily used. If there were restaurants at key street corners, there would be far more people using the Pedestrian Corridor. That combined with the coming increase in Downtown residents is what ultimately will activate the corridor. The points of interest highlighted in the memo are primarily passive, but active uses are also needed.

Ms. Maxwell agreed with the need for active uses. It would be good to have permanent architectural displays of Bellevue's heritage, interesting artistic installations, periscopes and telescopes, and book exchange kiosks. Wayfinding could be incorporated into the corridor that would not necessarily be part of a kiosk.

Co-chair Simas stressed the importance of keeping the options open to things that are of interest without being too specific.

Co-chair Laing suggested that because everything is connected it will be important for the Planning Commission to be thinking about uses when considering amenities.

Ms. Wilma clarified that the uses along the Pedestrian Corridor are by code required to be 100 percent retail on the ground floor, which means shops and restaurants. She said the intention was not to back away from this. She agreed that while some of the uses along the corridor now are not open outside of regular business hours and on weekends, the

critical element is the number of people. Businesses certainly will respond once a critical mass is reached, but the City cannot require certain open hours.

With regard to opportunities to add landscaping and green elements, Mr. King said the proposed approach is to include a landscape concept in the update of the design guidelines. The concept would include some general objectives and principles for the corridor as a whole and for each block addressed separately. More work would need to be done to flesh out the details, including how to further the City's environmental sustainability objectives.

Co-chair Laing said the thing that could become the unifying theme for the corridor is continuity of landscape design. Ms. Jackson concurred. Mr. King agreed the language could be reworked to stress corridor continuity while also addressing opportunities unique to each segment.

Ms. Maxwell stressed the need to view the Pedestrian Corridor as a park. In that respect the landscaping should make the corridor look and feel like a park.

Mr. King said the last topic is the integration of bicycles and other wheeled users on the corridor. Regarding ADA considerations, it will be necessary to have future portions add to the overall accessibility through increased seating and resting areas, enhanced wayfinding, and meeting the barrier free standards in place at time of development. There currently is an ADA route that runs the full length of the corridor; however, one must know where it is and must be okay with being out in the elements for a large portion of the corridor. ADA and barrier free standards evolve over time, including appropriate slope, the frequency of rest areas, and the room needed to navigate a walker or a wheelchair. All new development will need to conform to the current standards.

Ms. Stout called out the need to be clear about meeting current ADA standards in talking about integrating bicycles and wheeled users. Otherwise the focus will appear to be on bicycles primarily.

With regard to accommodating bicycles, Mr. King said the proposed approach is to allow for safe, low-speed bicycle accommodation without interfering with pedestrian movement, safety or comfort. The current guidelines only talk about putting bicycle racks where the north-south streets intersect the corridor. The City's existing pedestrian/bicycle plan calls for an off-street path from Bellevue Way to 112th Avenue NE. More recently, the Transportation Commission was clear in drafting the Downtown Transportation Plan about the need for the Downtown Livability Committee to look at the need to better accommodate bicycles. The recommended approach is that bicycles in the Bellevue Way to 106th Avenue NE segment should use the low-speed, low-volume portion of NE 6th Street that ultimately will be two lanes. For the segment from 106th Avenue NE to 108th Avenue NE the recommendation is to explore a low-speed route towards the middle of the corridor, though in order to safely navigate the grade there should be some separation between the bicycles and the pedestrians. For the segment between 108th Avenue NE and 110th Avenue NE the recommendation is to have bicycles use the sidewalk to the north

of the transit center adjacent to the rider services building; if and when the property to the north redevelops it might be possible to enhance the treatment. Finally, for the segment between 110th Avenue NE and 112th Avenue NE there is an opportunity to use the wide sidewalk on the south side of NE 6th Street that is being planned as part of the transit station.

It was also mentioned that having bicycles in the 106th Avenue NE and 108th Avenue NE segment does not fit the vision of having retail and restaurant uses facing each other that are easily accessible to pedestrians. The primary focus of that segment should be on pedestrians.

Mr. Ferris said Bellevue is more set up to accommodate a bike sharing program than Seattle given that Bellevue has fewer big hills. As the Downtown area continues to develop with residential and as light rail comes through, people will be more willing to be part of an organization that allows for the use of bicycles in and around the Downtown. Figuring out a way to accommodate bicycles will be very important going forward. He agreed that mixing bicycles and pedestrians will be difficult in some areas, but careful thought needs to be given to how to welcome bicycles to the Downtown.

Mr. Bannon said he can envision shared use facilities, but only if bicycles are kept to very low speeds. He said he did not know what mechanisms will need to be contemplated to assure safety in the Pedestrian Corridor. It would be shortsighted to simply disallow shared use facilities.

Ms. Powell pointed out that Bellevue has no laws prohibiting the use of bicycles on sidewalks. They are allowed to legally operate both on sidewalks and in the roadways. There is, of course, the debate about whether or not bicycles should be separate from or blend in with automobiles.

Ms. Lopez asked if the Pedestrian Corridor is considered to be a sidewalk. Mr. King said bicycles are currently allowed to use it. The recommendation, however, is to maintain pedestrian priority throughout the corridor, and to avoid locating a bicycle route where the likelihood exists of having major pedestrian traffic.

Co-chair Simas said the question is not whether or not bicycles should or should not be allowed, the question is how to create an environment that bicycles, pedestrians and people with special needs can all use. The issue may be difficult but it is not insurmountable. The Pedestrian Corridor is a major east-west connection for a variety of users.

Ms. Jackson agreed and pointed out that bicyclists do not want to just ride around the Downtown, they want to go to destinations within the Downtown. It makes sense to have a route through the middle of the Downtown connecting to Wilburton.

Co-chair Laing commented that the issue is one of implementation. The corridor is not finished and as it currently exists it is not a good idea to have bicycle traffic zipping back

and forth through it. However, as new projects go forward there will be opportunities to address the various segments and the variety of issues.

There was general agreement with the proposed approaches for the Pedestrian Corridor as presented by staff.

**\*\*BREAK\*\***

## 5. REVIEW OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INITIAL EVALUATION OF STRATEGIES

Ms. Wilma said the three strategies evaluated were: 1) Open Space Expression – identifying and incentivizing different open space expressions for each neighborhood to help address each neighborhood’s needs and enhance their character; 2) I-405 Open Space/Connection – exploring the potential for significant open space/park investment with a lid over I-405 from Downtown to Wilburton along roughly a NE 5th alignment; and 3) Through-Block Connections – strengthening the requirements and guidelines for integrating mid-block connections through the superblocks. She noted that two other pieces will be addressed in another capacity: 1) Updating the design guidelines for through-block connections and publicly accessible open spaces, including provisions for solar access, seating, design principles relating to safety, and active edges along the perimeter of open spaces; and 2) Exploring methods to help fund Downtown open space acquisition and improvement.

With regard to the first strategy, Ms. Wilma outlined a proposed approach under which the various elements, such as neighborhood parks, large plazas and community gardens, would be prioritized by neighborhood.

Mr. Ferris said he liked the idea but asked if the Parks Department or the Parks & Community Services Board has reviewed the approach or the desired new open spaces by district chart that was included in the packet. Ms. Wilma said the chart was drawn up by staff based on where the open space plan in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan identifies priorities.

Ms. Powell noted that a process is in place through which Ashwood Park will be revisited and redesigned. She asked if the old master plan for that park facility was taken into consideration in producing the chart. Ms. Wilma said it was not.

Ms. Lopez asked if the Ashwood column on the chart refers to the park itself or the district. Ms. Wilma said the column headings all refer to districts.

Co-chair Laing asked if the proposal speaks to the Meydenbauer Bay Park master plan and the possibility of establishing a fee in-lieu for funding that project. Ms. Wilma said that issue could be addressed as part of the amenity incentive system. Ms. Wilma continued that the Lake-to-Lake Trail will pass through Old Bellevue and that is why the

chart shows a need for a major bicycle facility in that district. The trail will pass through a number of different districts, each of which will have to respond differently.

Co-chair Laing suggested the recommendation that goes forward from the Committee should alert the Planning Commission to the fact that some of the use/function/feature elements may already be in the amenity system. With regard to the internal corridors/alleys with addresses, he voiced concern over the fact that there does not seem to be any meaningful design standards for them. There needs to be a vision of what they should look like.

Mr. Bannon said in order to achieve some of the items on the list there is going to need to be an incentive offered to the developers.

Ms. Jackson suggested that the first strategy is not going to be realized without stepping outside the Land Use Code and making some tactical decisions. The critical importance of open space needs to be made very clear to the Planning Commission and to the City Council. Co-chair Laing agreed and said all the planning in the world means nothing absent having money behind it. The need for a major public investment cannot be overlooked.

Mr. Ferris referred to the City Center North district and the open space shown as appropriate for the plaza around the future Tateuchi Center. He pointed out that location relative to the sun has a huge influence on whether or not green spaces are successful, thus areas on the north side of buildings in the shade are not always inviting. Additionally, the north side of NE 10th Street would not be a good location given how busy the street is and how difficult it would be for pedestrians to reach it. He suggested any open space in the district should be placed between NE 8th Street and NE 10th Street on either side of 106th Avenue NE.

Ms. Stout asked if the vision for the Northwest Village district is for high-density development with apartments above retail uses? Ms. Wilma said the district is envisioned as primarily a residential district with ground floor retail. The district has had the least amount of redevelopment to date so a variety of open spaces are still needed.

Attention was drawn next to the strategy of exploring the potential for a significant open space spanning I-405 and connecting the Downtown and Wilburton. Ms. Wilma shared with the Committee members graphics showing similar approaches used in cities around the nation. She noted that such a lid would present a significant placemaking opportunity in the middle of the City.

Co-chair Laing asked what Sound Transit has had to say about the idea and the possibility of tying it into the light rail project. Mr. Stroh said he was not aware of any discussions with Sound Transit about the idea of putting a lid over the freeway. The need to work through the Memorandum of Understanding and address the issues around other projects that will need to be synced with Sound Transit will be a big focus of the next City Capital Investment Plan (CIP). The lid would represent a huge add to the list. Co-

chair Laing said he is very excited about the idea. He said he would like to see a dedicated pedestrian/bicycle pathway with landscaping created as Sound Transit put back all the sidewalks between I-90 and Redmond it will be tearing out as part of the light rail project. Such a project would connect every single light rail station in Bellevue, would be at an easy grade, and could ultimately connect the I-90 trail to the Burke Gillman trail. Everybody agrees it would be a good idea, but the notion has not even been raised with Sound Transit. To avoid doing so, will be to miss a golden opportunity. It will be far easier to include a lid over the freeway as part of the light rail project than it would be to come in years later and add it. Mr. Stroh said the thinking to date has been that a pedestrian bridge or open space lid would be projects separate from the light rail project, but he agreed to consider making it all one project and provide a report at a future Committee meeting.

Mr. Bannon said for some time the focus has been on providing better access to and from the light rail stations as they get constructed. He said he liked the idea of thinking somewhat broader about what the Downtown station area is. It is very feasible to think the area could extend a half mile across the freeway.

Ms. Wilma said the strategy regarding through-block connections includes a change in nomenclature from mid-block connections in order to differentiate them from the crosswalks that occur at the mid-block point. The strategy proposes a deliberate network of through-block connections across Downtown. The Downtown Transportation Plan update established priorities for through-block crossings. The guidelines need to be strengthened to identify minimum dimensions, lighting expectations, and other elements. All proposed locations are conceptual only and will need to align with future development patterns. The edges can be activated with retail or residential, and attention should be paid to making sure there is good solar access. Particular attention should be paid to connecting the open spaces within the superblocks.

Mr. Ferris noted that some of the existing through-block connections are so narrow and poorly signed they do not feel open to the public. The design guidelines should be written to call out the need to make the connections open and inviting and appear to be public spaces. Where residential uses are involved, the design of the connections should accommodate privacy. They should also be multifunctional, serving pedestrians at certain times of the day and maybe restaurant patrons in the evening hours.

Ms. Wilma said more details will be fleshed out in the discussion on the design guidelines.

Ms. Maxwell said the new City Hall plaza will be a good place to have a welcoming statement of heritage.

Mr. Ferris commented that the programmed CIP covers a seven-year period but is underfunded. The notion that new amenities will come about as a result of leveraging development capacity can only really be expected to bring about so many amenities. The Committee has no voice in what the property taxes should be or what bonds should be

issued to pay for projects, so the Committee needs to be realistic in making a recommendation to the Council that incentives and development lifts will not yield everything the City wants. The City will need to investigate other funding sources to realize the vision.

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Paul Braulier, 11021 NE 14th Street, spoke representing the Northtowne Community Club. He pointed out that while NE 12th Street is the northernmost boundary of the Downtown, McCormick Park lies just across the street and serves as the transition between the Downtown and the Northtowne community. The Committee was encouraged to think of the park as one of the Downtown's open spaces. A lot of people use the park to gain some exercise and the park could benefit from having a few more amenities. There's a bike path coming across the freeway on NE 12th Street, but that facility dies at the intersection with 112th Avenue NE. A property that should have been acquired some time ago should be purchased to allow for an opening up of the corner and promoting the use of McCormick Park by bicycles. The little garden could also be increased in size, and a sign giving the name of the community could be installed back a little way from the corner. There is also a pinch point at 106th Avenue NE; the sidewalk there is barely wide enough for one person. The acquisition of a property there is needed to open up the pinch point and permit a full multiuse path. He said the Northtowne Community Club has been closely following the work of the Committee and is appreciative of the work that has been done.

## 7. ADJOURN

Co-chair Simas adjourned the meeting at 9:23 p.m.



## Downtown Livability

# AMENITY INCENTIVE SYSTEM

## Preliminary Evaluation

04-16-2014

### Evaluation in this packet

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#### #1 Develop a shorter, more focused amenity list

- #1a Select packages of highest priority amenities from January 15, 2014 list to move forward for economic analysis
- #1b Identify which current amenities should be shifted to development requirements, with base height and density adjusted accordingly

### Evaluation to occur in conjunction with height & urban form analysis (April-June 2014)

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- Adjust base heights and densities based on amenities shifted from current list to development standards
- Prioritize and value new amenities list with consideration of potential height & density increases, cost to produce amenities, bonus received, and district needs
- Establish mechanism for fee-in-lieu payments

# Amenity Incentive System – January 15 Workshop

## Summary of Discussion Leading into Workshop

- Amenity list should focus on the factors that would ultimately make Downtown more livable; should be tangible and give back to the community.
- Strong interest in how the incentive system and design guidelines can be used to help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity (i.e. a district-by-district approach).
- Desire the ability to potentially modify some of the existing amenity definitions and more clearly direct where they happen within Downtown.
- All amenities on the existing list of 23 should be studied during the analysis phase, along with new ideas.
- Certain elements could potentially shift to be requirements (such as weather protection) rather than be a bonused amenity.
- The structure of the bonus rates should clearly reflect the most-desired amenities.
- A “superbonus” might apply to extraordinary or iconic design features; special design review would be needed.
- The incentive system should be efficient, predictable, not overly complex, and encourage creative design.
- Incentive system should be economically viable; should act as a real incentive and not deter development. Changes to the current incentive system may necessitate an increase in base density/height.
- The system should be updated more frequently and have the ability to address Downtown needs as they change; there may be creative, new concepts that arise which make sense to bonus in some way.
- Fee-in-lieu collection through an amenity system should relate to the area where the project occurs.

## Advisory Committee Direction on Alternatives to Analyze (Jan. 15)

**Shorter, More Focused Amenity List** – Adjust amenity list to include only a handful of highest priority items (examples: pedestrian-oriented frontage, open space to be expressed differently in each neighborhood, affordable housing).

### **Common Elements to Analyze:**

- Identify which current amenities, such as weather protection, may be shifted to be a development requirement; and adjust base height and density accordingly.
- Recalibrate FAR values to reflect updated economics and public priorities:
  - Develop cost estimates for potential amenities.
  - At a future step, prioritize/value amenities with consideration of cost to produce, bonus received, and district needs.
  - Convert to FAR earned per unit of amenity.
- Provide mechanism for fee-in-lieu payments.
- Specify that the Code provisions relating to the amenity system will be updated on a set interval (may be similar in the future to other sections of the Downtown Land Use Code that need routine updating).

## Evaluation Criteria (presented to CAC on Feb. 19)

- Added “lift” to incentive system through additional height (and FAR)
- Development economics – economic calibration to ensure amenity system is real incentive
- Public benefit yielded by amenity system
- Ability to prioritize and achieve amenities most important to livability
- Elements that should be required outright versus incentivized
- Complexity and usability of the system

REPRINT FROM EARLIER MATERIALS

# List of Potential Amenities Identified by Committee – January 15 Workshop

## Public Gathering Space/Placemaking

Major Pedestrian Corridor	Existing List
Pedestrian Oriented Frontage	Existing List
Signature Streets	New Idea
Third Places, gathering places	New Idea
Farmers Market Space	New Idea

## Parks/Green/Open Space

Outdoor Plaza	Existing List
Landscape Feature	Existing List
Landscape Area	Existing List
Donation of Park Property	Existing List
Residential Entry Courtyard	Existing List
Active Recreation Area	Existing List
Enclosed Plaza	Existing List
Upper Level Plaza	New Idea
Green Space/Open Space	New Idea
Pocket Parks & Urban Courtyards	New Idea
Green Streets Concepts	New Idea
Landmark Tree Preservation	New Idea
Significant Tree Planting	New Idea
Activated Rooftops	New Idea

## Connectivity

Connectivity through Plazas and Blocks; Connections to Neighborhoods	New Idea
Midblock Crossings	New Idea
Pedestrian Bridges	New Idea

## Weather Protection

Marquee	Existing List
Awning	Existing List
Arcade	Existing List
Freestanding Canopies at Corners	New Idea

## Parking

Underground Parking	Existing List
Above Grade Parking	Existing List
Above Grade Parking in Residential Bldg.	Existing List
Electric Car Charging	New Idea
Bike Parking and Other Facilities	New Idea

## Housing

Residential Uses	Existing List
Affordable Housing	New Idea

## Neighborhood-Serving Uses

Public Meeting Rooms	Existing List
Child Care Services	Existing List
Retail Food	Existing List
Space for Non-profit Social Services	Existing List
Partnership for Downtown School	New Idea

## Arts and Culture

Performing Arts Space	Existing List
Sculpture	Existing List
Water Feature	Existing List
Art Space	New Idea
Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources	New Idea

## Design

Iconic Features (i.e. rooftop, tower, etc.)	New Idea
Increased Setbacks for Light/Air	New Idea
Small Lot Interesting Architecture	New Idea
Sustainable Features/Practices	New Idea

# #1 Amenity Incentive System: Develop a Shorter, More Focused List of Highest Priority Amenities

## Overview

The amenity incentive system is a key tool for achieving the Downtown vision. As currently structured, it allows developers to earn “bonus” height and density (in the form of FAR) in return for providing public amenities. The original system was conceived in 1981 when the area was up-zoned and a new land use code for Downtown Bellevue was adopted. Since that time, only minor changes to the incentive system have occurred.

In Spring 2013, as part of the Downtown Livability Initiative, Council directed the Advisory Committee to assess the incentive system to see if any updates were needed to meet evolving market conditions and integrate newer thinking about desired Downtown amenities.

At their January 15, 2014 Alternatives Workshop the Downtown Livability Advisory Committee provided direction to staff to develop a short, more focused amenity list of the highest priority items. This evaluation provides recommended approaches for defining amenity packages and for shifting elements to be development requirements. Economic analysis would occur between the April and June to assist the committee in selecting a final recommended package and for the calibration and prioritization of the individual amenities.

## #1a Select packages of highest priority amenities from January 15, 2014 list to move forward for economic analysis

Based on the Committee discussion to date, there have been a few overarching themes regarding amenities:

- **Focus on amenities most important to achieving livability and desired future for Downtown.**
- **Consider what needs to be incentivized vs. what market will do without incentives.**
- **Provide flexibility to encourage creative design.**
- **Amenities should help reinforce Downtown neighborhood identity.**
- **Modified incentive system must be feasible and act as a real incentive.**

**Proposed Approach:**

With committee concurrence, move the following four “packages” of amenities forward for further analysis (#1 through #4 below). The packages build upon the major categories of Pedestrian Corridor & Pedestrian-Oriented Frontage, Public Open Space, Affordable/Workforce Housing, Major Sustainability Features, and Arts & Culture. The structure would be similar to the current system with developers selecting from “basic amenities” (proposed to include pedestrian-oriented frontage, outdoor plazas, landscape features, sculpture, art, water features, sustainability features), and selecting from “bonus amenities” listed below to reach their desired bonus level. (Note: The basic amenities count towards the ultimate bonus earned by the project.)

All four packages would be examined through detailed economic analysis with the final Committee recommendation on a selected package to occur in June. The economic analysis will help prioritize and value the selected amenities with consideration of potential height & density increases, cost to produce amenities, bonus received, district needs, and fee-in-lieu provisions.

	Amenity Packages			
<b>BONUS AMENITIES</b> Developer selects from the following:	#1	#2	#3	#4
<b><u>Major Pedestrian Corridor &amp; Pedestrian-Oriented Frontage</u></b> Consistent with updated design guidelines.	❖	❖	❖	❖
<b><u>Public Open Space</u></b> Outdoor plaza, landscape feature, mini park, alleys with addresses, pea patch, outdoor pet area, active recreation area, farmers market space, improvements to city parks or city-identified projects such as I-405 lid (per March meeting, these are tailored to needs identified for each Downtown neighborhood).	❖	❖	❖	❖
<b><u>Affordable Housing/Workforce Housing</u></b> Affordable at up to 80% median income level for rental and up to 100% median income level for ownership.		❖	❖	❖
<b><u>Major Sustainability Features</u></b> e.g. Living Building Challenge, or other programs or features beyond current market.			❖	❖
<b><u>Arts &amp; Culture</u></b> Major performing arts space, sculpture, art, water features, historic preservation and cultural resources (façade treatment, special design features, etc.)				❖

## ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Any changes to the amenity incentive system need to carefully consider how this may affect development economics, ensuring a good balance of public benefit and economic return that maintains a healthy economic climate. The economic analysis will include:

- Identification of the lift to the amenity system provided by any height and/or density increases as directed by the Committee at their May meeting.
- Evaluation if there is sufficient market demand in the near- and long-term to develop properties at various height and density levels. The anticipated demand in excess of the base zoning will help inform the revisions to the incentive valuation.
- Analysis of how the base densities should be modified to take into account added development requirements or other changes to the current incentive system.
- Pro-forma analysis of development scenarios (office, residential, mixed-use) to determine project feasibility and ability to contribute to the incentive system.
- Recommended incentive pricing and calibration based on the most desired amenities, cost to produce, and value derived from height and density increases.
- Identification of fee-in-lie provisions

### #1b Identify which current amenities should be shifted to be development requirements, with base height and density adjusted accordingly

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The Committee provided previous direction to staff to identify currently bonused amenities that could shift to be development requirements. The idea was that there may be important features that have not been provided in a comprehensive manner through the amenity system as it currently stands.

The amenity that came up most often during the focus groups and Committee discussions was weather protection. Staff concurs, and recommends that weather protection should be provided in appropriate locations per the updated design guidelines, and not rely on the incentive system.

#### **Proposed Approach:**

**Shift “weather protection” from the Amenity Incentive System to be a development requirement, implemented in appropriate locations through the updated design guidelines.**

**It is also important to note that a few longstanding amenities are not included in the packages presented in the previous section. These amenities include Underground Parking and Above-Grade Structured Parking and the bonus for Residential Uses. The rationale is that they were once important features to bonus, but are now common elements that do not need a bonus to occur. An adjustment to base density will occur to reflect these shifts.**

## Application of evaluation criteria: Shorter, More Focused Amenity List

❖ Added “lift” to incentive system through additional height (and FAR)	There is a relationship between the amenity system and any potential height and density changes that the committee will be discussing at their May meeting. Once the committee provides direction, these potential new height and density maximums will be reflected in the economic analysis to determine the amount of added “lift” and how it should be reflected in the amenity system.
❖ Development economics – economic calibration to ensure amenity system is real incentive	The economic analysis will seek to ensure a good balance of public benefit from the amenities and economic return to the developer that maintains a healthy economic climate. The calibration of the precise bonus rates will need to provide enough additional height and density to clearly justify the investment in the amenities.
❖ Public benefit yielded by amenity system	The four packages presented in this memo seek to focus on the amenities that might contribute the most to achieving livability and the desired future for Downtown. Downtown is only about 50 percent built out at this point. Elements such as the vibrancy of the pedestrian realm, district-specific open spaces, workforce housing, sustainability, and arts & culture have been discussed by the committee and stakeholders as being important as Downtown continues to develop.
❖ Ability to prioritize and achieve amenities most important to livability	As is true in the current system, the structure of having a set of “basic amenities” as a subset of the “bonus amenities” will help ensure a base set of amenities are included. The committee’s desire to have a shorter, more focused list and the recalibration that will occur during the economic analysis will help reinforce the amenities most important to livability.
❖ Elements that should be required outright versus incentivized	This memo identifies weather protection as a current amenity that should be shifted to a development requirement. There are also a few long-standing amenities (parking and residential uses) that are not in the proposed amenity packages. Analysis of how the base densities should be adjusted will be done for all these items.
❖ Complexity and usability of the system	The proposed packages build upon the major categories of Pedestrian Corridor & Pedestrian-Oriented Frontage, Public Open Space, Affordable/Workforce Housing, Major Sustainability Features, and Arts & Culture. They become progressively more lengthy as additional categories are added on, but all reflect a more focused list than currently exists. The structure of the “basic amenities” and “bonus amenities” is proposed to carry forward.



## Downtown Livability

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Preliminary Evaluation

04-16-2014

### Evaluation in this packet

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- Design Guidelines: Format
- Design Guideline: Content
  - Building Frontages/Sidewalk Relationships
  - Pedestrian Circulation/Through-block Connections
  - Building Materials
  - Façade Treatment
  - Rooftop Design
  - Public Views
  - Reinforcing Neighborhood Character
  - Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods
  - Other Issues
- Design Guideline: Procedures

# Design Guidelines – January 15 Workshop

## Summary of Discussion Leading into Workshop

- Design Guidelines should be used to help reinforce neighborhood character and identity within Downtown. Each of the districts in the Downtown has a different personality and serves a different purpose. Going forward it will be important to preserve the differences among the districts.
- Refinement and calibration of the Amenity Incentive System should be used to help reinforce neighborhood identity and character.
- Old Bellevue is a good example of where design guidelines and specific standards have helped reinforce a unique character. There are areas that do not as yet have strong identifiable characters and some guideline modifications would be appropriate.
- Some newer buildings have interesting rooftop designs, but there is still room for improvement relating to incorporation of gathering spaces, green elements and screening of mechanical equipment.
- The pedestrian environment and street right-of-way should incorporate ideas from the Great Streets document, Downtown Design Charrette, and recommendations from the Transportation Commission. Important elements include where to focus retail activity, open space and green elements, connectivity through superblocks, weather protection, and accommodations for mobility impaired users.
- Explore potential process modifications that allow developers some flexibility through design departures to encourage creativity and unique architecture. Might include more public meetings where input from the public can be considered.

## Advisory Committee Direction on Alternatives to Analyze (Jan. 15)

### Revise Street Classifications in Building/Sidewalk Design Relationship Guidelines to create stronger

#### focus for most concentrated pedestrian activity –

Reinforce highest pedestrian and retail activity along Pedestrian Corridor, Main Street in Old Bellevue, Bellevue Way and other north-south streets in the Core. Implement the Great Streets document, Downtown Design Charrette, and recommendations from the Transportation Commission for the Transportation Plan Update.

### Update Design Guidelines – Review and update design guidelines with emphasis on the following:

- Increased focus on the public realm and pedestrian experience.
- Establish neighborhood-specific design guidelines to reinforce character and identity.
- Emphasize the importance of site design and dynamic urban architecture.
- Adding intent statements, clear minimum standards, and design options.
- Use of photos, sketches, and other graphic means to communicate guidelines.
- Encourage creativity and eclecticism.
- Develop guidelines and criteria that can be applied to potential design departures.
- Specify that the design guidelines will be assessed and refined on a set interval.

## Evaluation Criteria (presented to CAC on Feb. 19)

- Extent to which updated design guidelines succeed in:
  - Increasing focus on the public realm and pedestrian experience
  - Reinforcing neighborhood character and identity
  - Emphasizing site design and dynamic urban architecture
  - Encouraging creativity
  - Incorporating newer ideas (e.g. Great Streets, design charrette)
  - Allowing flexibility (e.g. design departures based on established criteria)
  - Being user friendly, visual and clear

# Design Guidelines Strategy

## Overview

The purpose of design guidelines is to influence development to create a functional and aesthetically pleasing environment. Design guidelines contain some numerical standards, as well as design direction that allows for a level of flexibility and discretion in meeting desired outcomes.

Existing design guidelines for Downtown Bellevue cover much of what is needed to produce quality outcomes, but they could be more clear and concise. In addition, they leave a number of gaps and shortfalls that need to be filled in, per the Land Use Code Audit, public outreach, and the Advisory Committee's work to date. This results in the following objectives for the update of design guidelines:

- Increasing focus on the public realm and pedestrian experience
- Reinforcing neighborhood character and identity
- Emphasizing site design and dynamic urban architecture
- Encouraging creativity
- Incorporating newer ideas (e.g. Great Streets, design charrette, environmental sustainability, family friendly design)
- Allowing flexibility (e.g. design departures based on established criteria)
- Being user friendly, visual and clear

Toward these objectives, the proposed approach to updated design guidelines is presented in three parts:

- ❖ Part A, **Format**—covers the approach to making the guidelines more clear, concise and user-friendly
- ❖ Part B, **Content**—covers the substance of what the guidelines address, with new and updated information as needed
- ❖ Part C, **Procedures**—covers the process for administering the guidelines, including new allowance for design departures and additional flexibility as appropriate.

## Design Guidelines Strategy, Part A: Format

Under current code, design guidelines are applied through the Land Use Administrative Design Review Process. All new development and major remodels are subject to the guidelines. Design Guidelines are found in seven different code sections:

- Downtown-wide Design Criteria
- Building/Sidewalk Relationship Guidelines
- Perimeter Design Districts
- Old Bellevue District
- Downtown Core
- Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space
- Civic Center District

Based on where an individual development is located, multiple set of guidelines apply. For example development in the Core would be regulated by 1) Core Design District, 2) Pedestrian Corridor and Major Public Open Space Guidelines, and 3) Building/Sidewalk Relationship Guidelines.

**Problem Statement:** Current design guidelines need to be updated, in format as well as content. Some existing design guidelines are lacking in clarity. Multiple sections of design guidelines can apply to a single development, in some cases creating repetition and/or confusion. Overall, they are not user-friendly and would benefit by being more illustrative and clear.

**Proposed Approach to Format:** Consolidate and reformat the Downtown design guidelines for improved clarity and readability around the following major elements:

- **Intent:** An initial concise statement of the objective of the guideline
- **Guideline:** Explanatory text describing the details of the guideline
- **Examples of recommended treatment:** Textual and graphic examples of recommended development consistent with the intent of the guideline
- **Examples of not recommended treatment:** Textual and graphic examples of development that does not meet the intent of the guideline.

Visual examples will be included as models for design and review purposes and not intended to be specific examples to be replicated.

## Design Guidelines Strategy, Part B: Content

This section covers the substance of what the updated guidelines will address. New and updated information is presented under the following headings, which parallel those used in the Design Guidelines section of the Land Use Code Audit:

- Building Frontages/Sidewalk Relationships
- Pedestrian Circulation/Through-block Connections
- Building and Public Realm Materials
- Façade Treatment
- Rooftop Design
- Public Views
- Reinforcing Neighborhood Character
- Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods

For each topic, the report below presents a problem/opportunity statement, depicting what issues or gaps need to be addressed. The problem statement has been informed by the Audit, along with public outreach to date and earlier Advisory Committee discussion. This is followed by the proposed approach, i.e. what staff is proposing to amend or add.

### Building Frontages/Sidewalk Relationships

The 1981 Building/Sidewalk Relationship Design Guidelines have been one of the most important tools in defining the character of Downtown and its individual neighborhoods. Key components of the document are the map of six right-of-way designations and the design guidelines for each of those six right-of-way designations. While close to 50% of Downtown's block frontages have been implemented consistent with the Design Guidelines, the character, conditions, and design objectives for Downtown have evolved considerably in the 30+ years since they were established. The Design Guidelines section of the Land Use Code Audit highlights implementation to date, what's working well, and where there is room for improvement.

**Problem Statement:** In some cases, narrow sidewalks along key streets, discontinuous weather protection, blank walls and lack of detailing detract from the overall pedestrian experience. Ground level details, materials, scale, and uses that enhance the pedestrian experience can better be used to promote neighborhood character.

Further, Downtown Bellevue needs a stronger sense of where highest levels of pedestrian activation are encouraged. Also needed are additional options for pedestrian-friendly treatments where pedestrian activation is not as intense.

**Proposed Approach:** Amend building/sidewalk right-of-way designations to better depict where the highest levels of

pedestrian activity are to be concentrated—along Main Street in Old Bellevue, the Bellevue Way shopping-theme street, and the Pedestrian Corridor. Clarify expectations about frontage treatments on other street types, providing added flexibility where appropriate. Continue to ensure that all building frontages are pedestrian-friendly.

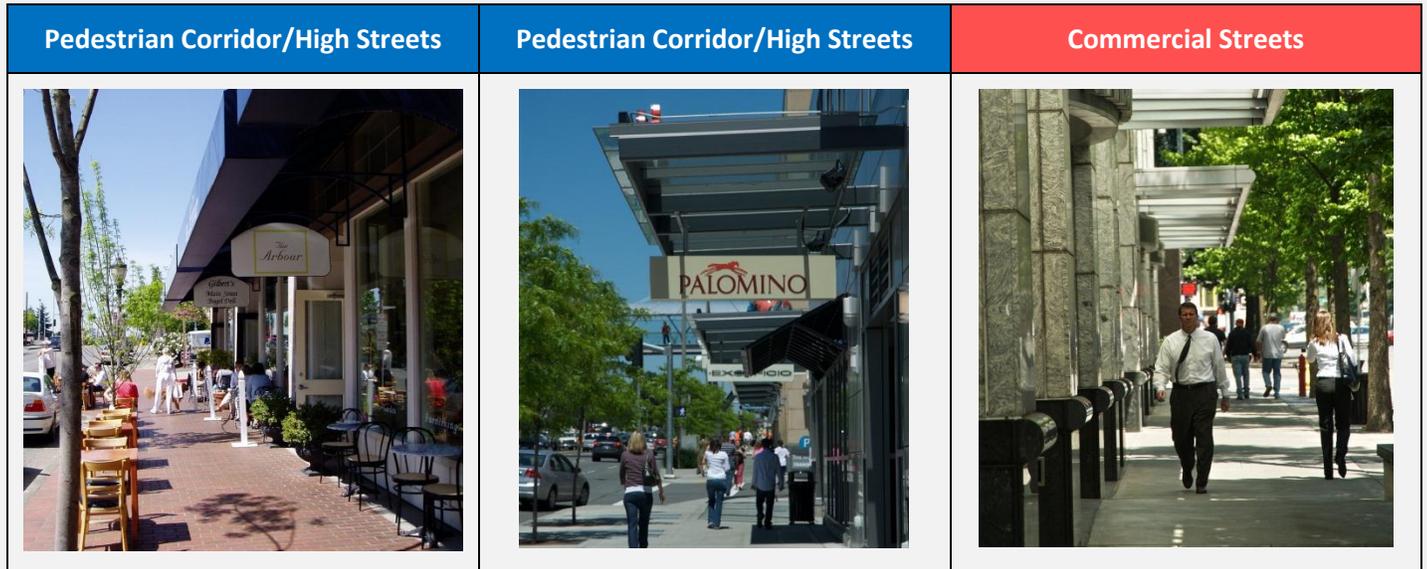
The maps and charts below identify key changes between the existing Building/Sidewalk Relationship Design Guidelines and the proposed approach. A summary of key changes in the proposed approach follows.

Right-of-Way Designation	Ground Floor Frontage	Visual & physical access	Weather protection <sup>3</sup>	Entry or other major points of interest <sup>4</sup>	Sidewalk Standards	Vehicular Access
<b>Pedestrian Corridor/ High Streets</b> Most intensely pedestrian activated streets	100% PAF <sup>1</sup> ; 13-15' gmd fir ceiling ht.	75% min.	75% min.	Every 60' max.	Undeveloped parcels implement recommendations from the Downtown Transportation Plan Update for sidewalk widths.  Curbside planting w/street trees on all streets without on-street parking.	None, except where no other option available
<b>Commercial Streets</b> Streets in the core with a balance of retail and other uses	50% PAF <sup>1</sup> min; 50% service <sup>2</sup> max; 13-15' gmd fir ceiling ht	75% min.	75% min.	Every 75' max.		Yes with limitations
<b>Mixed Streets</b> Streets outside the core that accommodate a variety of uses	Developer choice – mix of PAF <sup>1</sup> , service <sup>2</sup> , office, residential, and green walls;	75% min.	75% min.	Every 90' max.		Yes with limitations
<b>Neighborhood Streets</b> Streets outside the core with a residential and neighborhood services focus	13-15' gmd fir ceiling ht	50% min.	50% min.	Every 90' max.		Yes with limitations
<b>Perimeter Streets</b> Streets with a neighborhood focus, scale, and transition to adjacent single family neighborhoods. Includes a 20 ft landscape buffer between sidewalk and building	Developer choice – mix of PAF <sup>1</sup> , service <sup>2</sup> , office, residential, and green walls; 13-15' gmd fir ceiling ht  Parking permitted with special conditions	50% min.	50% min.			Yes with limitations. Primary access off streets not facing residential neighborhoods

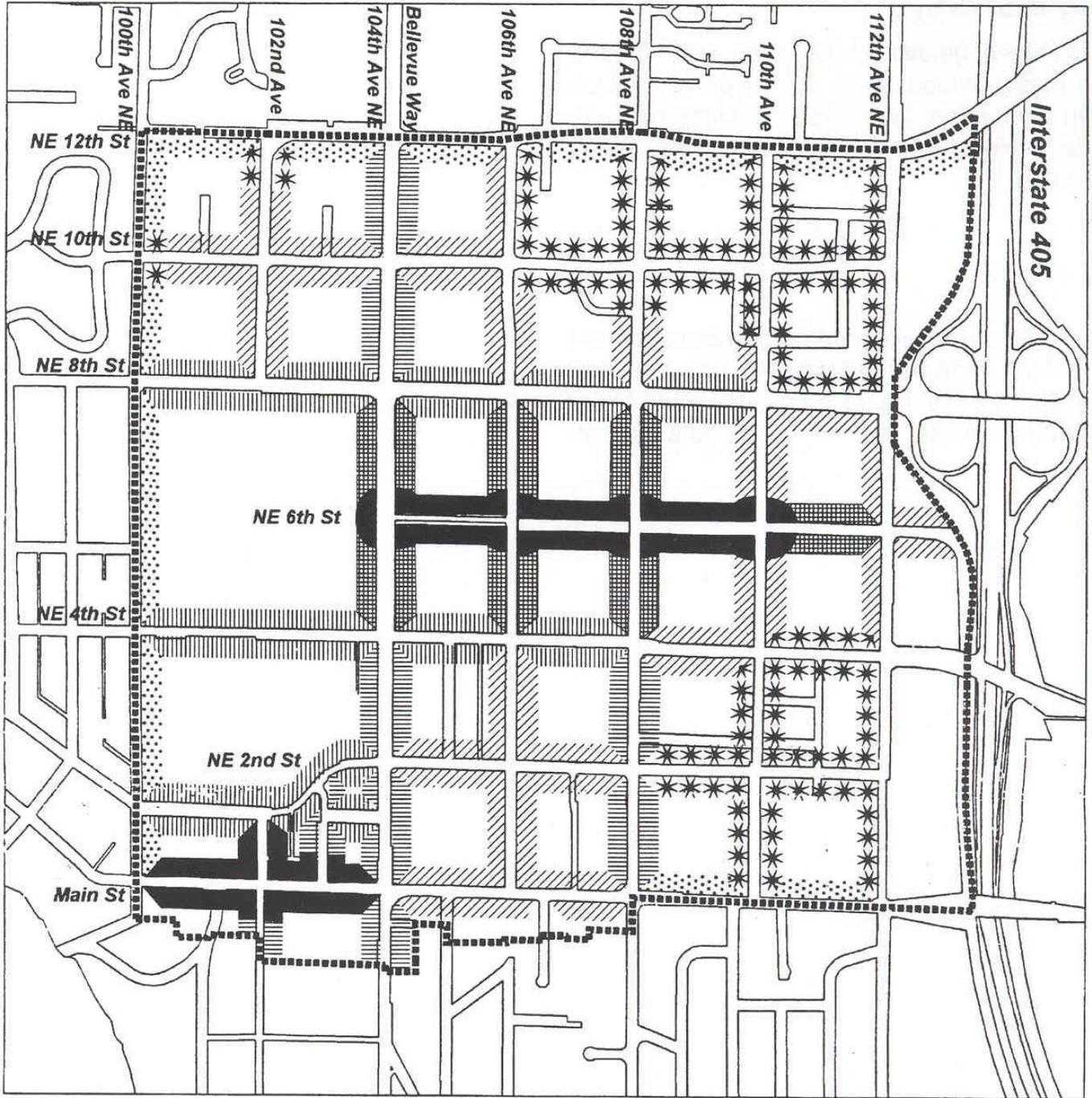
Footnotes:

1. Pedestrian-Activate Frontage (PAF): Retail and personal services that generate pedestrian activity including retail stores, groceries, drug stores, shoe repair, cleaning, floral, barber, and beauty shops, art galleries, travel agencies, restaurants, and theaters.
2. Service: A range of personal and professional service uses including, finance, insurance, real estate, and business services. Designs for these uses are intended to be pedestrian-attracting in nature.
3. Weather protection required at all entries - included in required minimum. Portions of projects with townhouses or live/work units may require reduced weather protection.
4. Major Points of Interest: An element such as a large landscape feature, event space, art, water feature, open space, and through-block connection.

Prototypical examples of each of the proposed right-of-way designations:

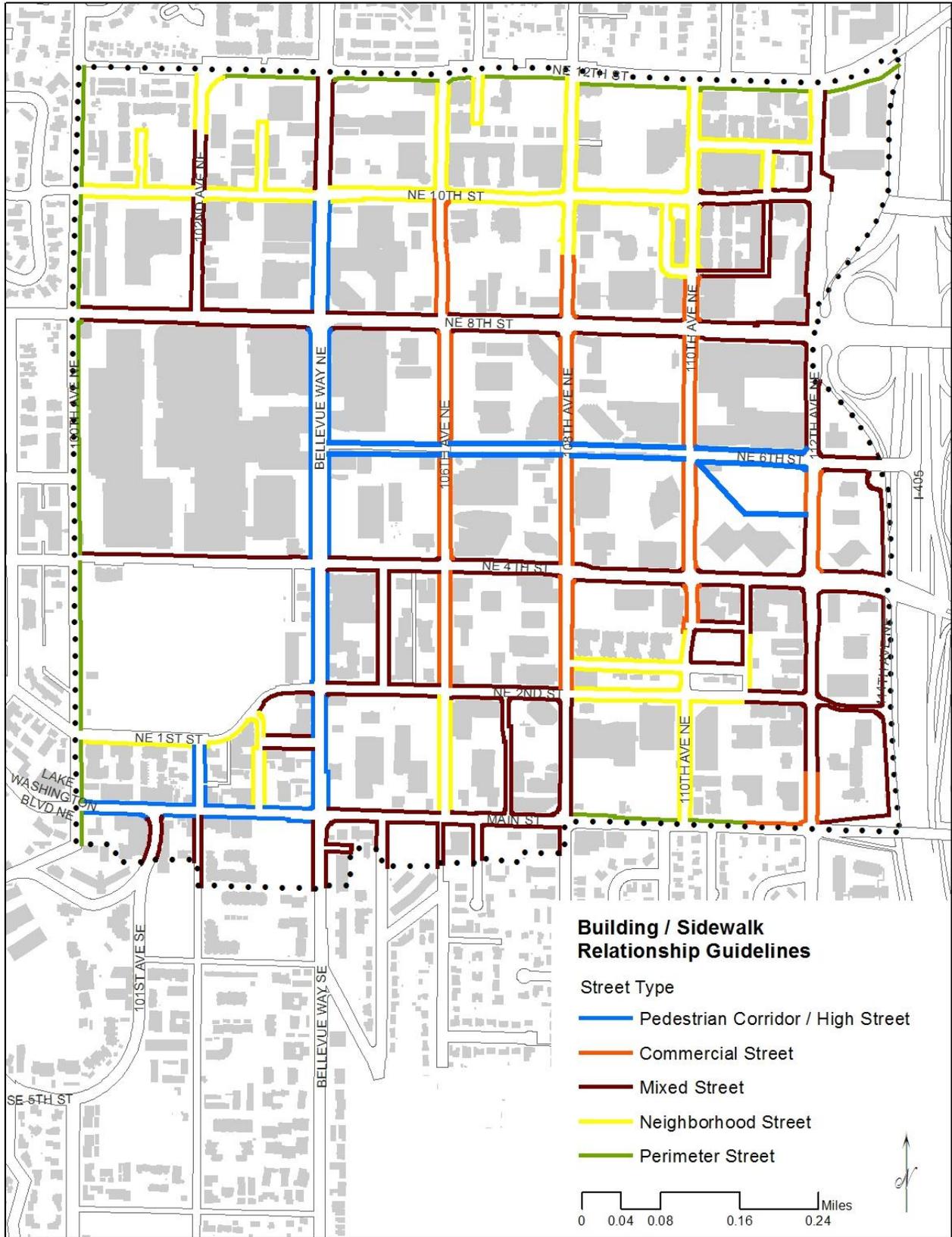


**Current Right-of-Way Designations: Building/Sidewalk Relationships Design Guidelines**



	A
	B
	C
	D
	D/R
	E

## Proposed Right-of-Way Designations: Building/Sidewalk Relationships



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## Pedestrian Circulation/Through-block Connections

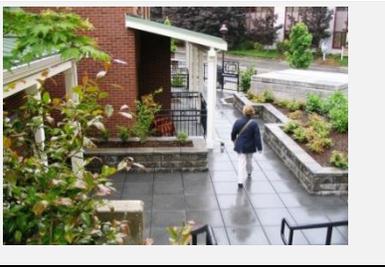
**Problem Statement:** Through block connections (previously called mid-block connections) are critical to providing pedestrian connectivity, reinforcing the character and identity of individual districts, and Downtown as a whole, and enhancing the setting for surrounding development.

Through-block connections are present in many superblocks but in many cases lack important pedestrian qualities such as visibility, pedestrian interest, and integration with services/utilities and larger patterns of movement. Improvements are needed to ensure that through-block connections are barrier free, at optimal locations, connect to the larger pedestrian system and offer a safe and inviting pedestrian experience.

**Proposed Approach:** (a) Add a map to the Guidelines that identifies existing through-block connections and desired locations for new ones. The locations for new connections will be conceptual in nature – allowing the flexibility for development to make adjustments based on proposed uses and unique site conditions. Existing guidelines require that through-block connections form logical routes from origins and destinations. The proposed concept emphasizes that such connections are well-integrated with the proposed and surrounding development, and that they are safe and pedestrian-friendly.



(b) Create options for design of through-block connections (developer’s choice). To help ensure that these connections are integrated with the development, applicants would choose among four types of frontages (combinations are acceptable). The guidelines will include provisions for through-block connection location (not type) based on conceptual Downtown-wide master plan (above), ADA accessibility, common wayfinding installed at the intersection with a public sidewalk, documentation of CPTED principles, recommended dimensions (see above).

Frontage	Description	Examples
<p>A. Retail Connection (12 ft. clear minimum – consistent with existing guidelines)</p>	<p>Retail storefronts with generous window transparency, pedestrian entries, weather protection, and outdoor seating/dining areas.</p>	
<p>B. Residential Activation (6 ft. clear minimum)</p>	<p>Stoops or similar residential frontages with private individual entries, private individual patio frontages, lobbies/ common residential entries or other common facilities with generous transparency/activation elements.</p>	
<p>C. Passive/Walk-through (6 ft. clear minimum)</p>	<p>Passive corridors that connect uses and open spaces and featuring landscaping, lighting, human scaled details, and other pedestrian amenities.</p>	
<p>D. Vehicular plus Pedestrian Access (6 ft. clear pedestrian access vehicular access TBD)</p>	<p>Connections could take the form of a low traffic route where autos and pedestrians share space) or separated access. Lighting, landscaping, and or other design element separates autos from pedestrians to create a safe and attractive pedestrian route. Frontages along the sides may be landscaped or building walls with transparency and human scaled details that add visual interest.</p>	
<p>E. Through-building connection (project specific)</p>	<p>Some building types lend themselves to through-block connections open to the public during business hours. Hotels, shopping, office buildings, and community uses may provide a safe and weather protected route through a block or large scale development.</p>	

## Building Materials

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**Problem Statement:** As noted in the Audit, some existing buildings have used façade materials that may not convey a sense of quality, durability, and permanence; or may be challenging to install correctly. Specifically, the Audit calls out questions about the use of EIFS (exterior insulation and finishing systems), a lightweight synthetic “stucco”-like cladding, as well as use of concrete blocks and metal paneling as primary façade materials.

In addition, there is an opportunity to use materials to help express each neighborhood’s context and character. Building elements, finish materials, sidewalk treatment, and lighting may all contribute to the expression of neighborhood character.

**Proposed Approach:** The proposed approach will emphasize the use of high quality materials that enhance the street environment while maintaining compatibility with adjacent buildings. Recommended materials and finishes will convey a sense of depth, quality and durability, and not artificial, thin “stage sets” applied only to the building’s surface. Rather than prohibit certain materials that have been problematic, the approach will include special conditions on their use to ensure they convey a sense of quality.

In addition, the revised guidelines should include a menu of recommended materials and scale, to convey district character. Refer to “Reinforcing Neighborhood Character” for profiles. These recommendations would be used to describe the desired character and quality of materials and not predetermine options. Architectural diversity, rich layering of design elements, and fine grain character are encouraged.

## Façade Treatment

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**Problem Statement:** As outlined in the Code Audit, some recently constructed building facades are lacking in human-scaled details that can add character to the building and the streetscape. In addition, the current code includes limited guidance regarding articulation of facades to mitigate impacts of large buildings. While many recent developments have successfully executed facades to add character and visual interest, a number would have benefitted from additional guidance.

**Proposed Approach:** Provide additional direction on building massing and articulation. Guidelines will emphasize that buildings have a distinct top, middle and bottom. For buildings with wider facades (>120-140’), require more substantial articulation to reduce perceived scale and add visual interest. At the street level, continue to place strong emphasis on ground-level differentiation and the use of building articulation, windows, materials, textures, colors and unique site characteristics that create a quality and inviting public realm, and a human scale.

## Rooftop Design

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**Problem Statement:** Many of the rooftops, and associated tops of buildings) in Downtown Bellevue are of a basic utilitarian design. As Downtown becomes more vertical, more emphasis may be placed on:

- Creating interesting design elements that contribute to Downtown's skyline.
- Designing rooftops that are attractive when seen from other nearby taller buildings, including views from upper levels looking down onto rooftops.
- Providing design features and special definition that gracefully screen rooftop mechanical equipment.
- Integrating sustainable design features such as green roofs or solar panels.
- Incorporating useable space on rooftops.

**Proposed Approach:** Strengthen the current guidelines relating to rooftop design, including providing elements that contribute to a more memorable skyline, good and bad examples of rooftop mechanical equipment screening, and suggested treatments for large flat areas. Utilize appropriate incentives:

- Building off the existing 15'/15% allowance, allow departure for increased building height if the additional height is needed to accommodate architecturally integrated mechanical equipment and/or interesting roof forms.
- As an incentive to encourage use of rooftops for recreational open space for building occupants, allow rooftops or enclosed top stories (penthouses) to be used as non-leasable common areas without counting against FAR calculations. Also promote green roofs and rooftop solar panels.

## Public Views

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**Problem Statement:** Existing design guidelines address view preservation; however they are lacking in clarity. More guidance and specificity on view protection from public spaces is needed, including distant views for drivers and pedestrians.

**Proposed Approach:** Emphasis will continue to be placed on views from public spaces, such as the Downtown Park, Pedestrian Corridor, and major rights of way. Important views will be identified, described, and, where possible, mapped. Design guidelines will be developed to preserve those views to the extent feasible.

## Reinforcing Neighborhood Character

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**Problem Statement:** As Downtown Bellevue has grown, it has been evolving into a mix of neighborhoods, a very positive development. There is an opportunity through the design review process to further reinforce the sense of unique, memorable and distinctive Downtown neighborhoods, adding to Downtown’s character and sense of place.

**Proposed Approach:** The seven major Downtown neighborhoods are generally described below (reprinted from the Advisory Committee’s March 19, 2014 packet). The updated design guidelines will emphasize opportunities to reinforce the character and distinctiveness of these neighborhoods. This theme will be “woven” into each of the major design guidelines topics. This will build off the related open space and building frontage elements discussed earlier in this document.

### **Northwest Village**

Northwest Village is developing an “alleys with addresses” character by focusing activity on internal streets and through-block connections. District land uses are primarily residential with substantial neighborhood support services (e.g., grocery). This calls for local-serving, family and children-oriented, open spaces with active play areas. Interconnected, meandering walkways and alleys, faced with restaurants, shops, services, and residential entries, will provide a safe, lively, and connected network of linear open spaces. A neighborhood park near the NE 10th Street and 102nd Ave NE intersection and connected to the pedestrian network will provide a central place for active play and social gathering.

### **City Center North**

The entertainment theme street’s (106th Ave NE) northern terminus is in City Center North near the planned Tateuchi Performing Arts Center. A plaza near 106th Ave NE and NE 10th Street will complement the performing arts center and entertainment focus. The plaza could provide space for outdoor performances and joint functions with the performing arts center, as well as a social gathering place ringed with active uses during non-event times. In addition, this district features a number of high-rise housing complexes, so reinforcing the district as a high-quality urban place to live is important. Residential amenities, such as pocket parks and sports courts, throughout the district would strengthen that character.

### **Ashwood**

Ashwood Park and the Library Plaza already serve Ashwood and create a strong civic core. While Ashwood Park provides an essential recreational asset, facilities such as a children’s play area, outdoor pet area, community garden, and others as identified by the local neighborhood are needed. Some of these may be added at Ashwood Park; others will occur at scattered locations in the vicinity.

### **Eastside Center**

The 6th Street Pedestrian Corridor connects the transit center and the major civic center and convention center hub to Bellevue Square through a mostly office and commercial area. This corridor, Compass Plaza, and the other accompanying open spaces are key defining elements for the entire Downtown. As the Downtown Core, Pedestrian Corridor, and connections to it evolve, more outdoor activities and programmed events should be integrated to encourage use through-out the day and year-round. Additionally, space for active uses, such as children’s play areas, sports courts, and small plazas with active edges, should be added as opportunities arise on the Corridor and on connections to it. Unifying elements on the Corridor may include timeless and kinetic art, green infrastructure, and bicycle amenities.

### **Old Bellevue**

Old Bellevue's character is largely defined by the grand Downtown Park, commercial activity enlivening Main Street, proximity to Meydenbauer Bay, and the planned Lake-to-Lake Trail on Main Street. Priorities include heightening the presence of the Downtown Park from Bellevue Way and improving connections between Downtown Park, Main Street, and Meydenbauer Bay, and the Lake-to-Lake Trail. These connections should offer landscaping and streetscape amenities that support safe, lively, and comfortable routes. Also, the improvement of NE 1st Place as a lively multi-use urban space is a unique opportunity. To support the Lake-to-Lake Trail concept and reinforce Main Street as an attractive stopping point for cyclists, special bicycle facilities, and a safe biking environment should also be a priority.

### **City Center South**

City Center South is emerging as a mixed-use neighborhood but lacks open space and a unifying feature. The planned Lake-to-Lake Trail will be an especially important bike and walking route between 108th Ave NE and Meydenbauer Bay and provides the opportunity to generate a green and water-oriented theme particularly for Main Street. The functional green infrastructure would emphasize the movement and treatment of water while buffering, educating, and entertaining pedestrians and cyclists. Therefore, great streetscapes with green infrastructure are a high priority for Main Street, and this theme could be carried throughout the district. Because substantial large parcel redevelopment is likely, there will also be the opportunity to create a variety of open spaces along the through-block pedestrian connections.

### **East Main**

The East Main district has plans for a linear neighborhood park at 110th Ave NE and NE 2nd Place, a light rail station just south of Main Street, and a linear park along Main Street between 112th and 110th Aves NE that lids the light rail tunnel portal. Considering the fairly dramatic topography, terracing could become an identifying feature of open spaces in this area. As a neighborhood with strong residential and office components, multi-use public areas that serve different types of users throughout the day are especially important. In addition, recreational uses, especially those that can make use of the topography, are important for enhancing neighborhood qualities. Because substantial large parcel redevelopment is likely, there will also be the opportunity to create a variety of open spaces along the through-block pedestrian connections.

## Transition to Adjacent Neighborhoods

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**Problem Statement:** With increasing Downtown services and amenities, there are opportunities to increase pedestrian connectivity and permeability between Downtown and its neighbors. This may also help address edge areas that have been largely bypassed by investment and improvement in recent decades. In addition, the area along I-405, at the eastern edge of Downtown, requires new thinking about its appropriate edge condition.

### **Proposed Approach:**

- In the Building Bulk and Height module, to be discussed in a separate meeting, changes to Perimeter Area and DT-OLB bulk and height dimensional standards will be examined. If these are modified, design guidelines may be refined to ensure that building facades and landscaping elements continue to present an appropriate “face” to adjoining neighborhoods. Tower spacing and preservation of views from public spaces will also be addressed.
- Design guidelines will promote the presence of through-block pedestrian connections and neighborhood-tailored open spaces that create improved permeability for adjoining neighborhoods.
- In the DT-OLB District between 112th Ave NE and I-405, streetscape guidelines will apply for the first time; in the past this area has not been subject to streetscape (Building/Sidewalk) Design Guidelines.

## Other Issues

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**Problem Statement:** As noted in the Land Use Code Audit and public outreach to date, the update also needs to address identified gaps and shortfalls in the existing Design Guidelines. These are in addition to the topics above, and reflect changes in Downtown and community expectations that have evolved over the years, including:

- Additional emphasis on walkability, including universal design (designing spaces so they can be used by the full range of people -- recognizing that there is a wide spectrum of human abilities)
- More emphasis on environmental sustainability and “greening” the Downtown
- Physical design to promote safety and crime prevention
- Addressing elements needed in a maturing Downtown environment, e.g. odors, service access and solid waste/recycling facilities

**Proposed Approach:** Guidance to address these identified gaps/shortfalls will be woven into the updated Design Guidelines, to ensure they address the evolving nature of Downtown and changing expectations for quality urban environments.

## Design Guidelines Strategy, Part C: Procedures

Prior Advisory Committee discussion has explored whether the design review process should allow additional opportunities for departing from prescriptive standards, as well as the best way to administer a review process that would allow this additional flexibility. Design guidelines and other Code provisions already provide for some departures from prescriptive standards. It may be appropriate to allow additional departures where the result will be to promote innovative and creative approaches that better meet the intent of the Code.

In many communities, the design review process and any departures are overseen by a board or committee of specialized citizen volunteers, to provide members of the public a role in ensuring that the public interest is being met. In Bellevue the review process has been administered by professional staff rather than a citizen board. The goal has been to maintain predictability and consistency, with professional accountability for results and timelines.

**Proposed Approach: Maintain the current administrative design review process and allow greater flexibility for departures.**

**Administration and Review Process:** With the goal of fast and predictable application of Design Guidelines Standards and Guidelines will continue to be through the Administrative Design Review Process; a process managed by the Land Use staff of Development Services and incorporating expertise from all departments in the city.

**Departure Criteria:** To further encourage exceptional design additional flexibility is proposed. Guidelines for which a departure is available are noted in the section above. Proposed decision criteria:

- The departure would result in a development that better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines and statements of intent.
- A public benefit is derived from the departure.

**Examples of Departure Opportunities:**

- Entry and points of interest spacing
- Percent weather protection and windows and entries
- Design criteria for features in the amenity incentive system
- Ground floor frontage
- Landscaping
- Sidewalk widths

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## Application of evaluation criteria: Design Guidelines

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### Extent to which updated design guidelines succeed in:

- ❖ **Increasing focus on the public realm and pedestrian experience**

Proposed Guidelines for Building Frontage/Sidewalk advance the focus on pedestrians and the public realm, by better depicting where the highest levels of pedestrian activity are to be concentrated, and clarifying elements of pedestrian-friendly design. Added direction for through-block connections will enhance pedestrian connectivity and quality of the pedestrian experience, by clarifying the general location, types and functions of connections through superblocks. Also see related work on public open space from the March 2014 Advisory Committee meeting.
  - ❖ **Reinforcing neighborhood character and identity**

Under the Proposal, elements of neighborhood character and identity will be woven into each of the major Design Guidelines topics, building off of related open space elements that are tailored to individual neighborhoods.
  - ❖ **Emphasizing site design and dynamic urban architecture**

While this write-up focuses on individual elements identified in the Code Audit and other prior work, final Design Guidelines will need to promote integrated site design. Among other factors are consideration of open space and through-block connections, reinforcing of neighborhood character and context, and transition to adjoining neighborhoods.

Dynamic urban architecture will be advanced by several of the elements in this Proposal: additional guidance for façade treatments, emphasizing that towers have a distinct top, middle and bottom; promotion of memorable rooftop forms; and emphasis on use of building materials that convey a sense of quality, durability and permanence.
  - ❖ **Encouraging creativity**

The Proposal encourages creativity and flexibility in a number of ways. 1) While some Guidelines include numerical standards, the proposed format is typically a statement of intent, leaving much discretion and choice in how to achieve the intent; 2) The Building Frontage/Sidewalk Guidelines provide a menu of options for most street types; 3) In several cases of problematic materials or situations, the proposal is to place special conditions rather than prohibit the particular material; 4) The proposal includes expanded opportunities for design departures, again encouraging creative approaches rather than a “one size fits all.”
  - ❖ **Incorporating newer ideas (e.g. Great Streets, design charrette)**

Newer ideas are incorporated into the Proposal. The revised Building Frontage/Sidewalk Guidelines incorporate ideas from Great Streets. Other emerging design issues are called out under the “Other Issues” section of the write-up; these will be more fully addressed in the complete set of Design Guidelines. Also note incorporation of newer ideas in a number of the other major topical areas for the Downtown Livability Initiative.
  - ❖ **Allowing flexibility (e.g. design departures based on established criteria)**

Also see above. The Proposal is to continue implementing existing exceptions from some standards and to provide further flexibility through a design departure process.
  - ❖ **Being user friendly, visual and clear**

The Proposal Part C focuses on reformatting the Guidelines. Existing Guidelines will be consolidated and made more clear and user-friendly. The new format will be state-of-the-art, with numerous illustrations to augment the text.
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