

Chapter 14.214

MIDTOWN DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

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Article I. Administration

14.214.100 Purpose and intent.

The purpose and intent of the Midtown District development regulations is to:

- A. Implement the goals and policies of the Snohomish Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Enhance Midtown's visual and pedestrian-oriented character.
- C. Promote a diverse mix of retail, housing, office, and civic land uses and a genuine sense of place in Midtown.
- D. Encourage development that is pedestrian-oriented and human-scale in an aesthetically attractive, energy efficient, easily accessible, and economically healthy environment.
- E. Include diverse retail and service uses, higher density residential housing, a network of pedestrian-oriented streets, and a high degree of connectivity for all modes of travel. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.120 Applicability.

- A. All of the provisions of this chapter shall govern all new development and redevelopment within the Midtown District. Redevelopment is determined to have occurred if more than ten (10) percent floor area is added or if any existing structures are demolished and replaced wholly or partially.
- B. At all times, all exterior alterations and modifications have to meet the building design standards.

- C. All new exterior construction, additions, alterations, or modifications, that require a site development plan pursuant to Chapter [14.65](#) SMC, have to meet relevant standards applicable to the new construction.
- D. Where provisions of this chapter conflict with provisions in any other section of this code, this chapter prevails unless otherwise noted. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.130 Administration.

Most sections within this chapter include the following elements:

- A. Purpose statements, which are overarching objectives.
- B. Guidelines use words such as “should” or “is/are recommended” or “encouraged,” signifying voluntary measures.
- C. Standards use words such as “shall” and “is/are required,” signifying required actions.
 - 1. Some standards are easily quantifiable, while others provide a level of discretion to the applicant in how they are complied with. In the latter case, the applicant shall demonstrate to the Director, in writing, how the choices made for the development meet the purpose of the standard.
 - 2. In some instances, deviations may be allowed from specific standards in this chapter to allow alternative designs, provided the Director determines the resulting design and overall development meets the purpose of the standards and other applicable criteria. See SMC [14.214.140](#) for related procedures associated with deviations from standards. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.140 Deviation from code requirements and determination of equivalence.

- A. Deviations from the requirements of this chapter may be approved after a determination of equivalence is made by the Planning Director according to the criteria in this section. The variance process, as provided by Chapter [14.70](#) SMC, is not required for deviations but is available to all applicants if they prefer to use that process.
- B. A permit applicant may propose deviations from the strict provisions of this chapter and request in writing that the Planning Director determine that the proposed deviations are equal in kind, extent, purpose, and impact as would compliance with the development regulations being deviated from. The Director’s decision in approving or denying a requested determination of equivalence shall be made in writing as a type 2 permit with findings of fact and conclusions and may include conditions of approval.

- C. Deviations shall not be requested or approved from allowed uses, maximum building heights, and minimum setbacks. Flexibility in administration of building heights and setbacks shall require a variance pursuant to Chapter [14.70](#) SMC.
- D. Deviations from numerical standards shall be no more than a ten (10) percent departure from the standard. Requests in excess of ten (10) percent shall require a variance pursuant to Chapter [14.70](#) SMC.
- E. The Director's decision to approve a requested determination of equivalence shall be appealable to the Hearing Examiner as provided by Chapters [14.20](#) and [14.90](#) SMC.
- F. The Director's decision to deny a requested determination of equivalence shall not be subject to appeal. Upon the denial of a requested determination of equivalence, the applicant may submit an application for a variance to the subject development regulation as provided by Chapter [14.70](#) SMC.
- G. The Director may only approve a requested determination of equivalence when all of the following criteria are satisfied:
1. The request constitutes an equivalent and alternative method of achieving the purpose and intent of the subject development regulation.
 2. The extent to which the proposed land development implements the purpose and intent of this chapter is not compromised or diminished.
 3. The deviation does not create additional adverse environmental or land use impacts.
 4. The deviation is the minimum necessary to achieve the requested relief.
 5. The cumulative effect of multiple deviations for a single structure or project does not compromise or diminish the purpose and intent of this chapter.
- H. In approving a requested determination of equivalence, the Director may impose conditions of approval as necessary to ensure that the decisional criteria above are satisfied. The decision to impose conditions shall be appealable to the Hearing Examiner as provided by Chapters [14.20](#) and [14.90](#) SMC. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

Article II. Required and Prohibited Uses

14.214.200 Purpose.

The purpose of this article is to:

- A. Implement the comprehensive plan goals and policies for the Midtown District.
- B. Ensure the Midtown District develops as a vibrant commercial and mixed-use area.

- C. Promote development and redevelopment in the Midtown District by limiting restrictions on allowed uses.
- D. Allow development and redevelopment in response to local market conditions.
- E. Support expansion of existing uses in Midtown District that are not prohibited. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.210 Uses.

- A. See Chapter [14.207](#) SMC, Land Use Tables, for permitted uses in the Midtown District.
- B. Buildings with frontage on Avenue D shall meet or exceed minimum requirements to provide space designed for commercial uses on the street level at the front of the building as specified in SMC [14.214.505](#).
- C. Outdoor storage shall be prohibited as a primary or an accessory use.
- D. Uses are specifically prohibited pursuant to SMC [14.207.065](#).
- E. Nonconforming uses shall be subject to the provisions of SMC [14.80.020](#). (Ord. 2425, 2022)

Article III. Block Frontage Standards

14.214.300 Purpose.

- A. To design sites and orient buildings with an emphasis on creating visual interest and a comfortable walking environment.
- B. To provide for a system of pedestrian-oriented building frontages.
- C. To recognize that buildings fronting on Bonneville Avenue will have different uses and needs than buildings elsewhere in the district, and should be regulated differently than buildings fronting on other streets in Midtown. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.310 Block Frontage Types.

All new street-fronting development in Midtown is subject to the block frontage regulations of this article. The block frontage type shall be selected by the applicant with the exception of the Bonneville Avenue type which can only be used on blocks fronting Bonneville Avenue.

- A. The proposed development shall meet all regulations of the selected block frontage type.

B. The storefront block frontage type shall not be used for buildings with ground-floor residential uses facing the street.

C. The Bonneville block frontage type shall not be used for buildings with ground-floor residential uses facing Bonneville Avenue.

D. Additional treatment shall be required for high visibility intersections, pursuant to SMC [14.214.370](#). High visibility intersections are:

1. Avenue D and 14th Street.
2. Avenue D and 13th Street.
3. Avenue D and Tenth Street.

Table 1. Summary of block frontage standards

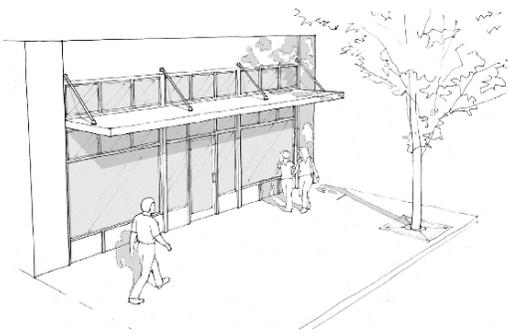
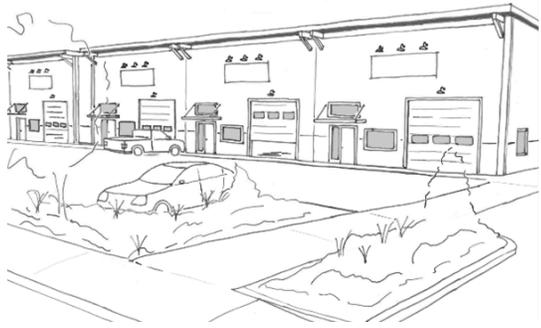
Block Frontage Type	Details
<p>Storefront</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special transparency, weather protection, and entry requirements. • Minimum commercial space height and depth. • No ground floor residential uses except for live/work units where the storefront space meets height and depth standards. • No new ground-level parking adjacent to the street.
<p>Landscaped</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping to soften façades and buffer parking areas. • Minimum façade transparency requirements supportive of the use and setback. • New ground-level parking placed to the side or rear of buildings.

Table 1. Summary of block frontage standards

Block Frontage Type	Details
<p>Bonneville</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions on parking lot location (except for landscaping requirements to buffer parking areas). • Façade transparency requirements based on use. • At least one (1) primary entry facing the sidewalk with weather protection required.

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.320 Façade Transparency.

A. *Purpose.* The purpose of façade transparency standards is to facilitate a viable and attractive business environment, to create streets/sidewalks that are welcoming and visually interesting to pedestrians, and to help maintain visibility for public safety.

B. *Measurement.* Table 2 includes details in how they are measured.

Table 2. Transparency standards

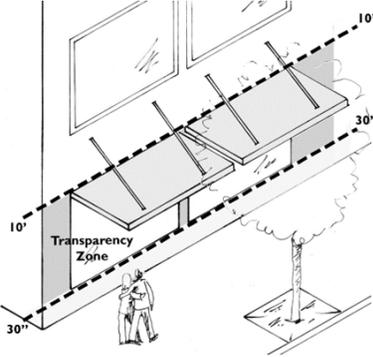
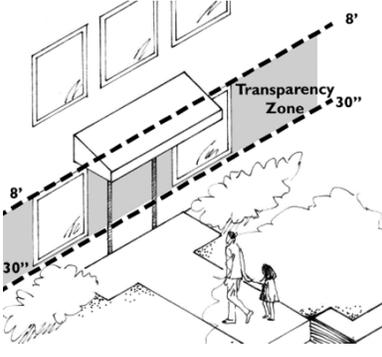
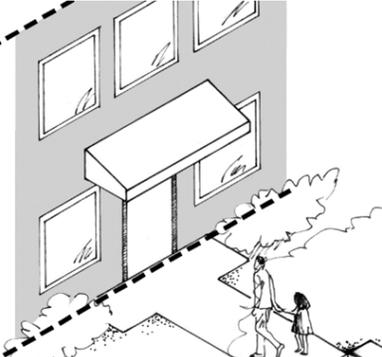
Transparency Zones by Frontage Type		
<p>Storefront/Bonneville: Nonresidential</p> 	<p>Landscaped: Ground floor nonresidential</p> 	<p>Landscaped/Bonneville: Residential & Mixed-Use</p> 

Table 2. Transparency standards

Transparency Zones by Frontage Type		
The transparency zone is on the ground floor between 30 inches and 10 feet above sidewalk grade.	The transparency zone is between 30 inches and 8 feet above grade.	All vertical surfaces of the façade are used in the calculations.

Other Transparency Provisions

- Windows shall be transparent.
- Ground level window area for storefronts and other nonresidential uses that is mirrored, reflective, or tinted in any manner that obscures visibility into the building shall not count as transparent window area.
Exception: Windows containing window signs may be counted as transparent window area provided the window around the sign is transparent.

Display windows

If display windows are used they must be at least 30 inches deep in order to meet transparency requirements.



Integrated display windows

Structured parking facilities

Where structured parking facilities occupy a portion of the façade, any openings simulating windows may be used to help comply with transparency requirements.



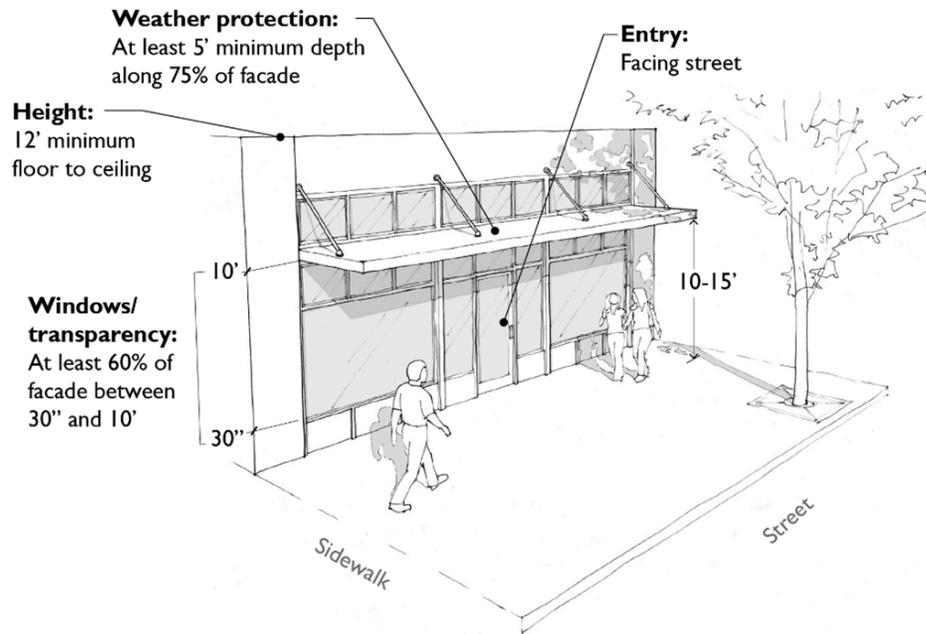
Parking garage with windows

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.330 Storefront Block Frontage Standards.

A. *Purpose.* Storefront block frontages are intended to create vibrant and active shopping and dining areas within Midtown that create visual interest for pedestrian traffic. Storefront block frontages include storefronts placed along the sidewalk edge with shops and business entries.

Figure 1. Storefront block frontage key standards



B. *Standards.* All development using the storefront block frontage type shall comply with the standards in Table 3.

Table 3. Storefront block frontage standards

Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
Ground Level		
Floor to ceiling height	12' minimum	
Commercial space depth	20' minimum	Applies to the entire width of the commercial space

Table 3. Storefront block frontage standards

Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
Building placement	<p>Buildings shall be placed at the edge of the adjacent sidewalk, or at the front property line if the sidewalk does not abut the property. Additional setbacks may be allowed for a wider sidewalk or where a public space (meeting requirements of SMC 14.214.420) is provided between the sidewalk and the building.</p>	
Building entrances	<p>Primary building entrances shall face the street. For corner buildings, primary entrances for ground-level building corner uses may face either street or the street corner.</p>	
Façade transparency	<p>At least 60% of the transparency area.</p>	<p>See SMC 14.214.320 for additional clarification on transparency standards.</p>
Weather protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather protection over the sidewalk is required along at least 75% of the building’s façade, and it shall be a minimum of 5' deep (drip lines shall be at least that far from the face of the building). • Additional standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather protection shall not be placed higher than the top of the ground floor. • Weather protection shall not interfere with existing street trees, utility poles, street signs, or extend beyond the edge of the sidewalk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canopies and awnings meeting this standard shall be a permanent architectural element. • The building’s architectural details shall not be concealed by awnings or canopies. • Awning shapes should relate to the shape of the façade’s architectural elements. • Transparent canopies are allowed. • Under-canopy signs and lighting are encouraged.

Table 3. Storefront block frontage standards

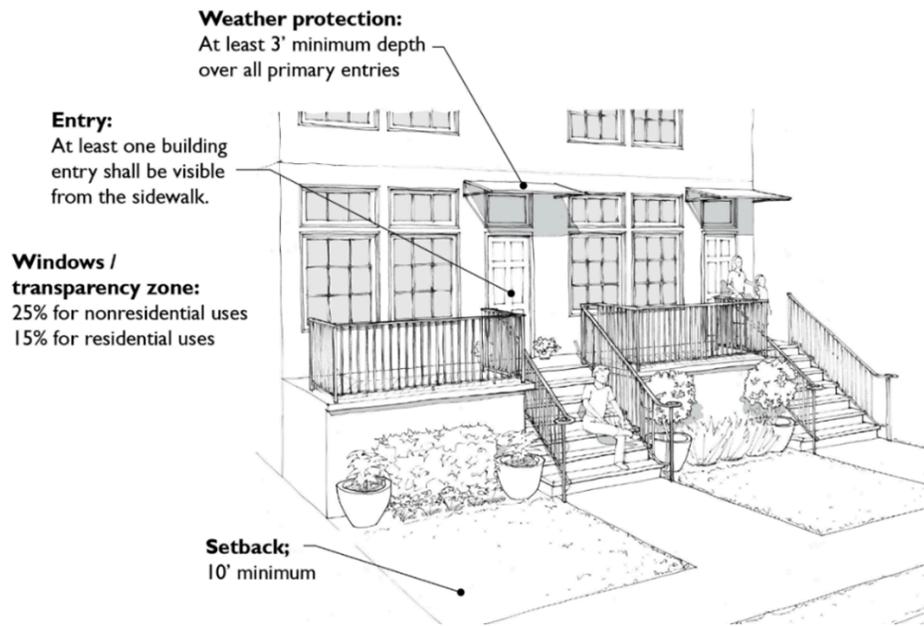
Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
		
<p>Parking location</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New ground-level (surface or structured) parking between the building and the street is prohibited, including parking lot entries and driveways. • Parking may be placed below, to the side, and/or behind buildings. • Vehicular access shall comply with the provisions of the latest version of the City of Snohomish Design and Construction Standards adopted by City Council resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily only applicable to Avenue D.

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.340 Landscaped Block Frontage Standards.

A. *Purpose.* Landscaped block frontages are intended to emphasize landscaped buffers from the street that soften the look of the hardscape, create clear pedestrian connections between the building and the sidewalk, provide privacy for ground-level residential units, and to minimize surface parking lots along the frontages.

Figure 2. Landscaped block frontages vision and key standards



B. *Standards.* Landscaped block frontages shall comply with the standards in Table 4.

Table 4. Landscaped block frontage standards

Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
Building placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10' minimum front setback. • 20' maximum front setback. • Covered entries and porches are allowed to project up to 6' into the front setback. • See SMC 14.214.410 for other setback requirements. 	
Building entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one public or shared building entry shall be visible from the sidewalk and feature direct access from the sidewalk. 	
Façade transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For buildings with ground-level, nonresidential uses, at least 20% of the transparency zone. 	See SMC 14.214.320 for additional clarification on transparency standards.

Table 4. Landscaped block frontage standards

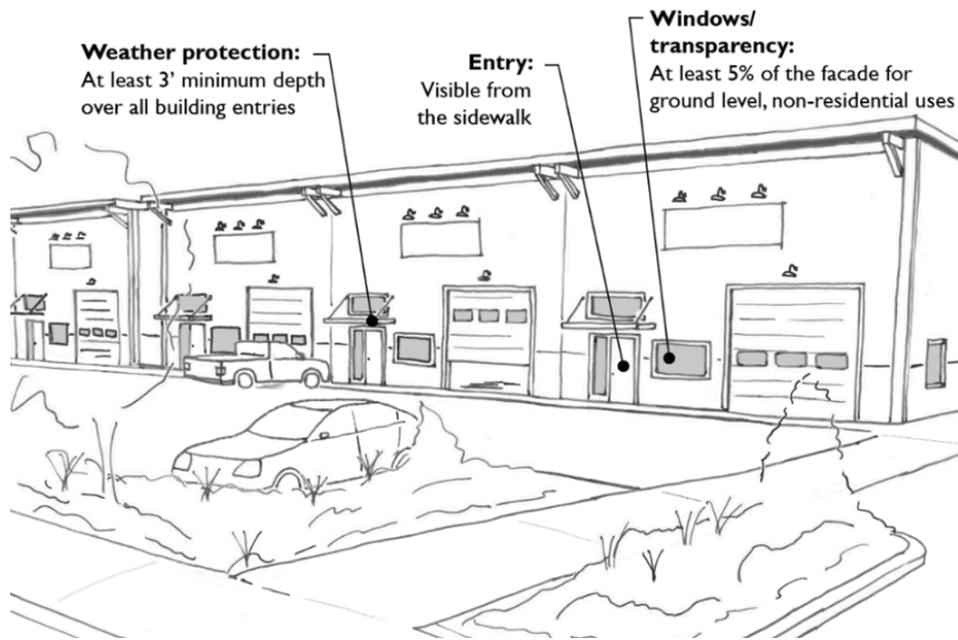
Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For buildings with ground-level residential uses, at least 15% of the facade. 	
Weather protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather protection at least 3' deep shall be provided over individual business and residential entries. Weather protection for shared entrances shall be at least 5' deep. 	
Parking location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking shall be located to the side, below, or behind buildings. • Vehicular access shall comply with the provisions of the latest version of the City of Snohomish Design and Construction Standards adopted by City Council resolution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily only applicable to Avenue D.
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setback areas shall be landscaped with type II landscaping as provided for in Chapter 14.240 SMC and shall otherwise be consistent with the requirements of that chapter. 	

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.350 Bonneville Block Frontage Standards.

- A. *Purpose.* Bonneville block frontages are intended to facilitate light manufacturing and flex tech commercial land uses along Bonneville Avenue, with increased allowances for vehicles and reduced pedestrian-scale elements while still being supportive of the overall purpose of creating a visually interesting and pedestrian-friendly Midtown District reflective of the Snohomish character.
- B. Bonneville block frontage type standards shall only be used on blocks fronting Bonneville Avenue.

Figure 3. Bonneville block frontages vision and key standards



- C. *Standards.* Bonneville block frontages shall comply with the standards in Table 5.

Table 5. Bonneville block frontage standards

Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
Building placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings may be placed up to the sidewalk edge, provided they meet the storefront block frontage standards of SMC 14.214.330. Otherwise, 10' minimum front setbacks are required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Covered entries are allowed to project up to 5' into an exterior setback. 	

Table 5. Bonneville block frontage standards

Element	Standards	Additional Provisions and Examples
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See SMC 14.214.410 for other setback requirements. 	
Building entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one building entry shall be visible from the sidewalk. • Where buildings are set back from the street, pedestrian connections from the sidewalk are required. 	
Façade transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For buildings with ground-level, nonresidential uses, at least 5% of the transparency zone. • For buildings with ground-level residential uses, at least 15% of the facade. 	See SMC 14.214.320 for additional clarification on transparency standards.
Weather protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather protection at least 3' deep shall be provided over the primary building entry. • Weather protection shall not be placed higher than the top of the ground floor. 	
Parking location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking lots shall be located consistent with the landscape buffer requirements of SMC 14.214.470. • Vehicular access shall comply with the provisions of the latest version of the City of Snohomish Design and Construction Standards adopted by City Council resolution. 	
Landscaping	Parking lots developed adjacent to the street shall comply with landscaping provisions of SMC 14.214.470 .	

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.360 Ground Floor Residential Frontage Standards.

A. *Purpose.* The purpose of these standards is to:

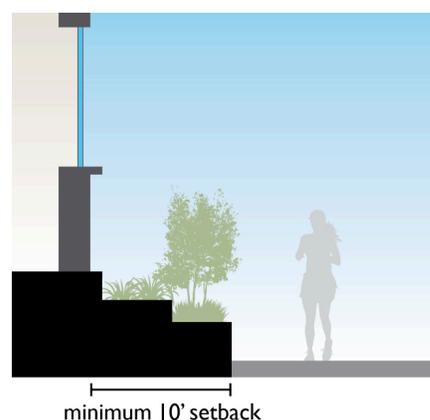
1. Enhance the privacy and security of residents living on the ground floor.
2. Provide an effective visual and physical transition between the public realm and the private realm.
3. Enhance the relationship between the building and the street through high-quality landscape and architectural design.

B. *Applicability.* All developments with ground-floor residential uses adjacent to public streets and through-block connections shall comply with the frontage standards herein.

C. *Standards.* Design treatments shall be coordinated to enhance the character of the public and semi-public realm while respecting the privacy of adjacent residential units. Design criteria:

1. *Direct Access.* All abutting units with exterior entrances should have individual ground-related entries directly accessible to applicable streets and through-block connections.
2. *Unit Setback and Elevation.* Provide privacy for people living in the adjacent dwelling units and ensure the applicable streets or through-block connection environment is comfortable through all of the following measures:
 - a. Provide a ten (10) foot minimum setback from streets and through-block connections. For through-block connections, the setback shall be measured from the edge of the pathway.

Figure 4. Minimum setback between a ground floor residence and street or through-block connection

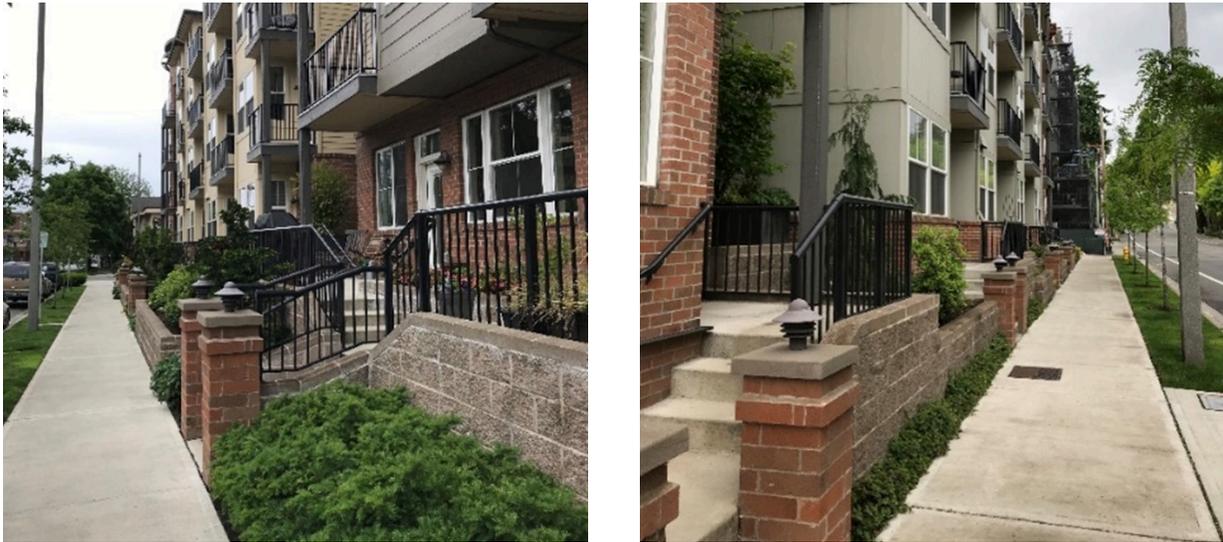


- b. Where the façade is within ten (10) feet of a street or through-block connection, the ground level of dwelling units must be raised from at least three (3) feet above the level of the corresponding sidewalk or through-block connection.

- i. On sloped sites, the minimum and maximum heights shall be calculated using the average elevation of the slope adjacent to the façade.
 - ii. Elevated ground-floor units are encouraged to have secondary access from a wheelchair accessible route within the building that meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The route should be clearly signed and marked.
 - iii. Up to twenty-five (25) percent of units may be exempted from the elevation standards herein, provided the exempt units are designated for occupancy only by seniors or people with disabilities for the life of the building and other design treatments are integrated to meet the purpose of the standards.
3. Enhance the privacy of residents and provide an effective transition between the public and private realm by integrating all of the following measures:
 - a. Provide a physical “threshold” feature such as a hedge, retaining wall, rockery, stair, gate, railing, or a combination of such elements on private property that defines and bridges the boundary between the public right-of-way and the private entry, porch, yard, or patio. Thresholds may screen but not completely block views to and from the public and semi-public realm areas.
 - b. Provide an outdoor space at least four (4) feet deep and six (6) feet wide (twenty-four (24) square feet minimum area) in the front setback such as a porch, patio, deck, or stoop. Where feasible, this space shall be at the same level as the interior of the unit.

Overhead building projections may cantilever over the outdoor space by up to fifty (50) percent of the minimum ground level setback.
 - c. Provide a covered area, porch or protected entry space, or other architectural weather protection at least three (3) feet deep that provides cover for a person entering the unit and a transitional space between outside and inside the dwelling.
 - d. Landscaping planters (in-ground or constructed and raised) shall be integrated into transitional areas between the dwelling unit and the adjacent public and semi-public realm areas (see the figures below for examples).
4. See SMC [14.214.530\(E\)](#) for window design standards for ground floor residential units.

Figure 5. Examples of ground-level residential frontages



The above images show ground-level residential frontages with setbacks of approximately ten (10) feet (left image) and five (5) feet (right image) along different street frontages for the same corner apartment building. These ground level units all have their own private unit access from the sidewalk and are elevated above the sidewalk to enhance the privacy to the units. The landscaping elements, brick posts, split-faced concrete block stoop walls, and black metal railings help to provide an attractive and effective transition between the public and private realms.

Figure 6. Additional examples of ground-level residential frontages



Consistent: Image A includes a stoop design with brick terraced planters and low wrought iron fences. Images B and C include stoop designs with sidewalk level planters and concrete terrace planters.

Figure 6. Additional examples of ground-level residential frontages



Inconsistent: Despite the raised ground level, the shallow setback design in image D is insufficient to meet the intent of the standards. In image E, the upper level building cantilever doesn't meet the standards and creates a cold "cave stoop" like form. The large areas of unscreened concrete walls in both examples are undesirable.

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.370 High Visibility Corner Standards.

- A. *Purpose.* The high visibility corner requirements are intended to accentuate street corners with high visibility to the public to create visual interest and a sense of identity.
- B. *Standards.* Sites located on high visibility corners shall meet the following requirements:
1. Buildings shall be located within twenty (20) feet of the street corner.
 2. At least one (1) of the following special features shall be included (Figure 7 illustrates acceptable examples):
 - a. Corner plaza.
 - b. Cropped building corner with a special entry feature.
 - c. Decorative use of building materials at the corner.
 - d. Distinctive façade articulation.
 - e. Sculptural architectural element.
 - f. Other decorative elements that meet the purpose of the standards.

Figure 7. High visibility corner examples



Building A includes a corner tower and change in materials. Building B features cropped building corners with a change in materials and decorative elements. Building C uses a decorative canopy. Building D uses a change in material color and façade articulation at the corner. Building E incorporates a plaza at the corner. Image F shows a decorative landscaped area with a trellis and neighborhood gateway sign.

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

Article IV. Site Planning Standards

14.214.400 Purpose.

- A. To promote thoughtful layout of buildings, parking areas, and circulation, service, landscaping, and on-site amenity elements that result in pedestrian-oriented developments that allow for adequate circulation of vehicles.
- B. To create functional areas that provide opportunities for residents and the public to actively or passively relax and enjoy themselves.
- C. To enhance the circulation, access, and service areas of developments.
- D. To ensure the design and use of adjacent developments do not negatively impact each other. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.405 Front Yard Setbacks.

Front yard setbacks vary depending on the block frontage type selected for the development. Storefront block frontages require a zero (0) foot setback, with buildings placed at the edge of the adjacent sidewalk/front property line although this could be modified to accommodate a public pedestrian-oriented space or other unique circumstance. Landscaped block frontages require a minimum ten (10) foot, maximum twenty (20) foot setback. Bonneville block frontages require a minimum ten (10) foot setback. See SMC [14.214.330](#), [14.214.340](#), and [14.214.350](#). (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.410 Side and Rear Yard Setbacks.

- A. *Purpose.*
 - 1. To promote the functional and visual compatibility between developments.
 - 2. To protect the privacy of residents on adjacent properties.
- B. *Side and Rear Setback Standards.* The minimum side and rear setback in Midtown shall be five (5) feet, except as provided in Table 1. The provisions below clarify specific setback requirements:

Table 1. Minimum side and rear yard setbacks

Block Frontage Type	Min. Setback	Applicability/Standards
Storefront	0 feet	Windowless firewalls are allowed on side property lines only.

Table 1. Minimum side and rear yard setbacks

Block Frontage Type	Min. Setback	Applicability/Standards
Landscaped	5 feet	For mixed-use and commercial buildings.
	Side: 5 feet Rear: 15 feet	For buildings that are exclusively residential.
Bonneville	0 feet	Windowless firewalls are allowed on side property lines only.
	Street side: 10 feet	

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.420 Public Pedestrian-Oriented Space.

Public pedestrian-oriented space refers to publicly accessible, pedestrian-oriented spaces that are integrated into nonresidential or mixed-use developments.

A. *Purpose.*

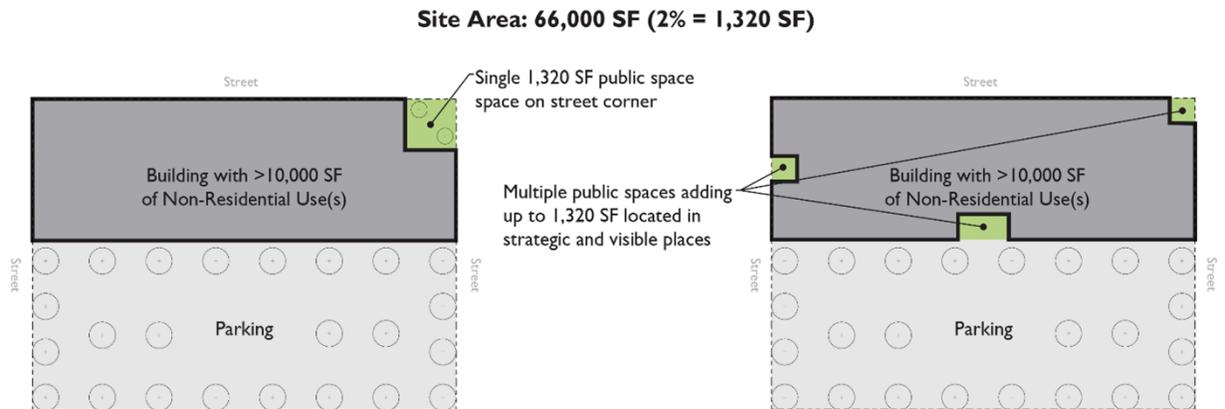
1. To provide spaces that attract shoppers to commercial areas.
2. To provide plazas and other pedestrian-oriented spaces in commercial areas that enhance the employees’ and public’s opportunity for active and passive activities, such as dining, resting, gathering, and recreational activities.
3. To enhance the pedestrian character and appeal of commercial development.

B. *Applicability.*

1. In the Midtown North overlay, public pedestrian-oriented space shall be required for new nonresidential and mixed-use development.
2. In the Midtown South overlay, public pedestrian-oriented space shall be required for all new nonresidential development and mixed-use development with more than ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor area.

C. *Required Size of Space.* On-site public pedestrian-oriented space meeting the design requirements of subsection [D](#) of this section shall be provided. The required area may be consolidated into a single space or multiple spaces.

Figure 1. Required size of public space



D. Public Pedestrian-Oriented Space Design Standards.

1. Required Size.

- a. To ensure the spaces are functional, the minimum size of any single public pedestrian-oriented space shall be two hundred (200) square feet with no dimension less than fifteen (15) feet, except portions of sidewalk areas widened beyond minimum standards may qualify as publicly accessible outdoor space without meeting these minimum requirements, provided storefronts abut the sidewalk.
- b. The total area of the required public pedestrian-oriented space shall be at least two (2) percent of the site area of the structure in which it is located or adjacent to.

2. Required Features.

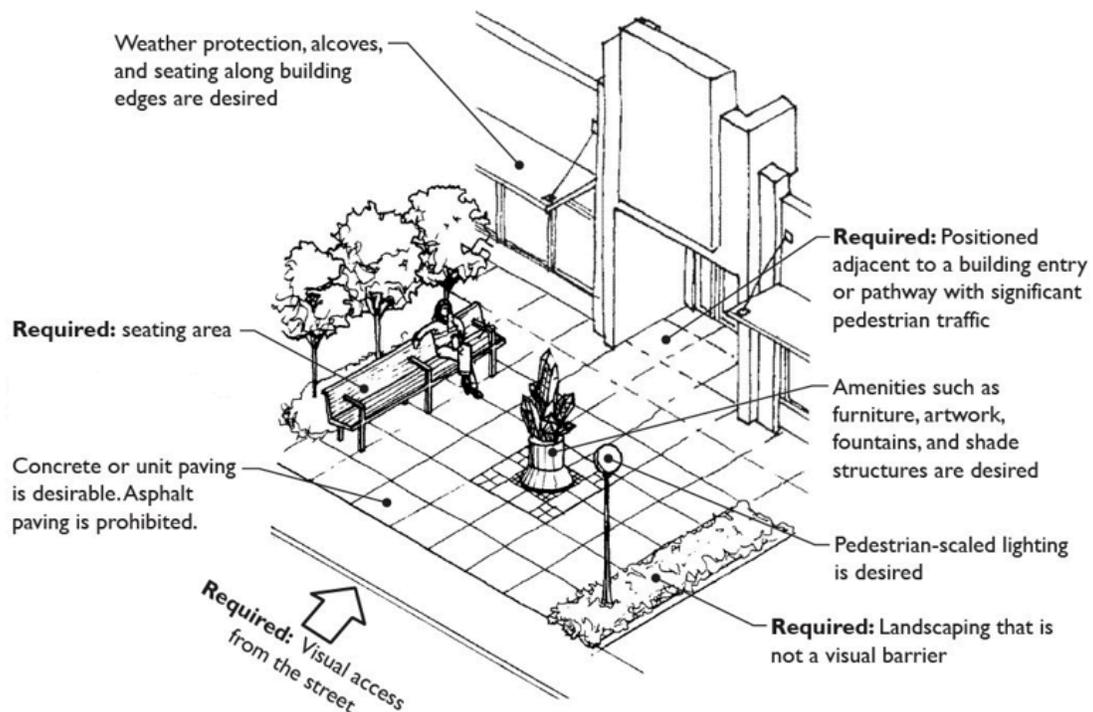
- a. The space or spaces shall abut a public sidewalk or other major internal pedestrian route and shall be designed to function as a focal point and gathering spot.
- b. The space(s) shall be ADA-compliant and generally level with the adjacent sidewalk or internal pedestrian route. Steps, ramps and grade changes may be acceptable, provided the outdoor space is designed to be visually and physically accessible from the adjacent sidewalk or internal pedestrian route and the space meets all other standards herein.
- c. The space shall be publicly accessible from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.
- d. The space shall be directly accessible by at least one (1) building via an entry door.
- e. Paved walking surfaces of either concrete or unit pavers are required. Form-in-place pervious concrete paving is allowed. Gravel surface areas may be allowed for seating areas.
- f. Pedestrian amenities shall be integrated into the space. Such amenities can include site furniture, artwork, drinking fountains, shade structures, kiosks, or other similar features that complement the space and encourage use of the space by a variety of users.
- g. Lighting shall be integrated into the design of the space for safety and security, activities or events, and to create a distinct and inviting atmosphere.

- h. Permanent, built-in seating elements are required for public spaces through benches, ledges, or similar elements.
- i. Landscaping components that add visual interest and do not act as a visual barrier are required. This could include trees, planting beds, raised planters, and/or potted plants, or both.

3. *Prohibited Features.*

- a. Large expanses of uninterrupted paving or paving without pattern.
- b. Service and utility areas or venting of mechanical systems.
- c. Long, narrow space with limited access.
- d. Vehicular access lanes.
- e. Asphalt paving.
- f. Chain-link fences.
- g. Outdoor storage.

Figure 2. Public space examples



(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.430 Residential Amenity Space.

Residential amenity area refers to spaces that are integrated into residential developments or the residential portion of mixed-use developments for use by the residents in the development.

A. *Purpose.*

1. To create usable amenity space that is suitable for leisure or recreational activities for residents.
2. To create amenity space that contributes to the residential setting and the quality of life enjoyed by the residents.

B. *Applicability.* Residential amenity space meeting the standards of this section shall be required for all new:

1. Multifamily development.
2. Mixed-use development containing residential units.
3. Senior housing and other age-restricted facilities.

C. *Amount Required.* Applicable developments shall be required to provide residential amenity space equal to a minimum of one hundred (100) square feet per dwelling unit.

D. *Amenity Space Types.* Table 2 lists the types of residential amenity spaces that may be used to meet the requirements in subsection [B](#) of this section.

Table 2.

Residential amenity space type	Percentage of required amenity space	Cross-reference to applicable design standards
Common outdoor recreation areas	Up to 100%	SMC 14.214.430(E)(1)
Shared roof decks	Up to 50%	SMC 14.214.430(E)(2)
Private ground level open space (applicable only to adjacent dwelling units)	Up to 100%	SMC 14.214.430(E)(3)
Private balconies (applicable only to adjacent dwelling units)	Up to 25%	SMC 14.214.430(E)(4)
Shared indoor recreational areas	Up to 50%	SMC 14.214.430(E)(5)
Children's play areas	Up to 50% Required for developments with greater than 75 units;	SMC 14.214.430(E)(6)

Table 2.

Residential amenity space type	Percentage of required amenity space	Cross-reference to applicable design standards
	except for senior and age-restricted housing developments	

E. *Residential Amenity Space Design Standards.* Alternative amenity space plans may be considered for the standards below pursuant to the deviation process in SMC [14.214.140](#), provided they meet the purpose of the standards and fill a recreational need for the residents of the development. The use and design of the space shall be integrated with the surrounding site and building features in a manner that is complementary to the development and any adjacent streetscape.

1. *Common Outdoor Recreation Areas.* These can include landscaped courtyards, decks, entrance plazas, gardens with pathways, children’s play areas, swimming pools, and water features, provided they are accessible to all residents of the development.

Design criteria include the following:

- a. Common outdoor recreation areas shall be a minimum of five hundred (500) square feet. The space shall feature dimensions necessary to provide functional leisure or recreational activity (unless otherwise noted herein).
- b. Vehicular circulation areas, stairways, and service areas shall not count as common outdoor recreation areas.
- c. Areas shall be accessible to all residents of the development, and shall be located in areas that are visible from within the development.
- d. Areas shall feature paths or walkable lawns, landscaping, seating, lighting, play structures, sports courts, or other pedestrian amenities to make the area more functional and enjoyable for a range of users.
- e. Areas shall be separated from ground-level windows, streets, vehicular circulation areas, service areas, and parking lots with landscaping, fencing, and/or other acceptable treatments that enhance safety and privacy for both the recreation areas and dwelling units.

Figure 3. Common outdoor recreation area examples

Image A includes a combination of open lawn area for informal recreation plus pathways and decorative landscape areas to enhance the setting for residents. Image B is a courtyard that includes pathways, seating areas, landscaped beds, and semi-private spaces for adjacent ground level units. Image C includes a covered gathering space with outdoor grills adjacent to a landscaped commons with a central pathway. Image D includes a common green area and separate, fenced off-leash dog area.

2. *Shared Roof Decks.* These are flat portions of a roof that are used as a walkway or gathering area for residents of the building.

Design criteria include all of the following:

- a. Shared roof decks shall be available to all residents.
- b. The space shall feature hard surfacing and shall provide amenities that encourage use, such as seating, outdoor grills, and weather protection elements.

- c. The space shall integrate landscaping elements that enhance the character of the space and encourage its use. Such landscaping may be in pots or planting beds.
- d. The space shall incorporate safety features such as enclosures, railings, and appropriate lighting levels.

3. *Private Ground-Level Open Space.* This type of private open space shall be adjacent and directly accessible to the subject unit, and shall be usable space. Examples include yards, stoops, and porches.

Design criteria include all of the following:

- a. Such open spaces shall be enclosed by a fence and/or hedge at least thirty (30) inches in height, but no taller than forty-eight (48) inches when adjacent to a street, common outdoor recreation area, or public space. Taller privacy screens may be provided between units.
- b. Private porches that face a street or a publicly accessible common area qualify as amenity space provided they are at least fifty (50) square feet in area, with no dimension less than six (6) feet.
- c. Ground-level, private open space shall be measured for each unit individually, and areas in excess of the minimum requirements shall not be shared with other units in the development (per SMC [14.214.430\(C\)](#)).

4. *Private Balconies.* These are adjacent and directly accessible only to the subject unit and which provide all of the following:

- a. Private balconies in mixed-use or multifamily developments should be at least partially recessed into the building façade to provide protection from the weather.
- b. Balconies shall be integrated into the building design.
- c. Balconies shall be at least thirty-six (36) square feet in area with no dimension less than six (6) feet to qualify as amenity space.
- d. Individual balconies shall be measured for each unit individually, and areas in excess of the minimum requirements shall not be shared with other units in the development (per SMC [14.214.430\(C\)](#)).

5. *Shared Indoor Recreation Areas.* Examples include multi-purpose entertainment space, fitness center, movie theatre, kitchen, library, workshop, conference room, or similar amenities that promote shared use and a sense of community. All of the following design features shall be provided/met:

- a. Common indoor recreation areas shall be a minimum of two hundred fifty (250) square feet in area.
- b. The space shall be accessible to all residents of the development.
- c. The space shall be located in a visible area, such as near an entrance, lobby, elevator bank, or high traffic corridors.

- d. The space shall be designed specifically to serve interior recreational functions and not merely be leftover unrentable space used to meet the open space requirement. Such space shall include amenities and design elements that will encourage use by residents.

Figure 4. Shared indoor recreation area examples



6. *Children's Play Areas.* These include playgrounds, tot lots, and play fields which meet all of the following design criteria:
 - a. Children's play areas shall be a minimum of four hundred (400) square feet.
 - b. Safety measures necessary to protect children from vehicular traffic shall be included, such as low fencing or landscaping to provide a physical barrier around the perimeter of the play area.
 - c. Shade and rest areas for supervision shall be provided through the use of landscaping, architectural elements, temporary structures, permanent benches, or other means.
 - d. Play areas shall be designed for a variety of ages, activities, and motor skills.
 - e. Play areas shall be located in areas that are highly visible to residents. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.440 Internal Pedestrian Access and Design.

A. Purpose.

1. To improve the pedestrian and bicycling environment in Midtown by making it easier, safer, and more comfortable to walk or ride among residences, businesses, the public sidewalk, transit stops, through parking lots, to adjacent properties, and other connections throughout the city.
2. To enhance access to on- and off-site open space areas and pedestrian/bicycle paths.

B. *Access to Sidewalk.* All buildings shall feature pedestrian connections to a sidewalk per applicable block frontage standards in Article [III](#) of this chapter. See subsection [D](#) of this section for walkway design standards.

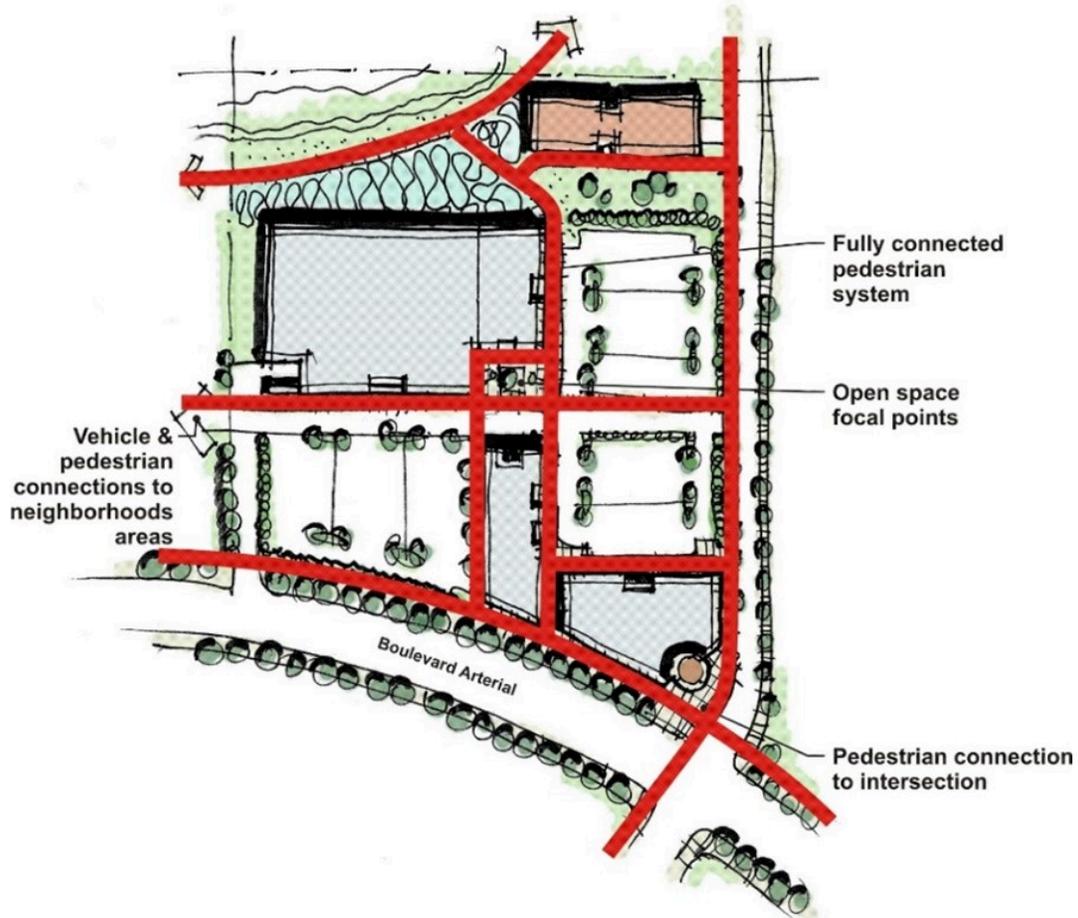
Figure 5. Examples of direct pedestrian access to buildings from the street



C. *Internal Circulation.*

1. Sites with multiple buildings shall provide internal circulation for pedestrians and bicycles. Pedestrian paths connecting businesses and residential entries on the same development site shall be provided. Routes that minimize walking distances shall be utilized to the fullest extent practical.

Figure 6. Internal and external pedestrian connections

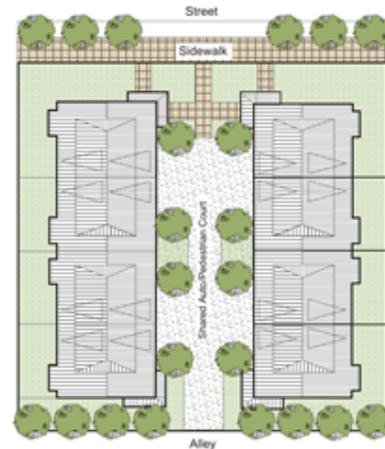


2. Sites containing residential units shall provide pedestrian access between all ground-floor entries and a public street or to a clearly marked pathway or open space that has direct access to a public street. Residential developments shall provide a pedestrian circulation network that connects all private dwelling unit main entrances on the site to the community/public areas on the site, such as:

- a. Parking areas.
- b. Recreational areas.
- c. Common outdoor areas.
- d. Any pedestrian amenities.

For townhouses or other residential units fronting the street, the sidewalk may be used to meet this standard.

Figure 7. Direct pathways between the street and dwelling units



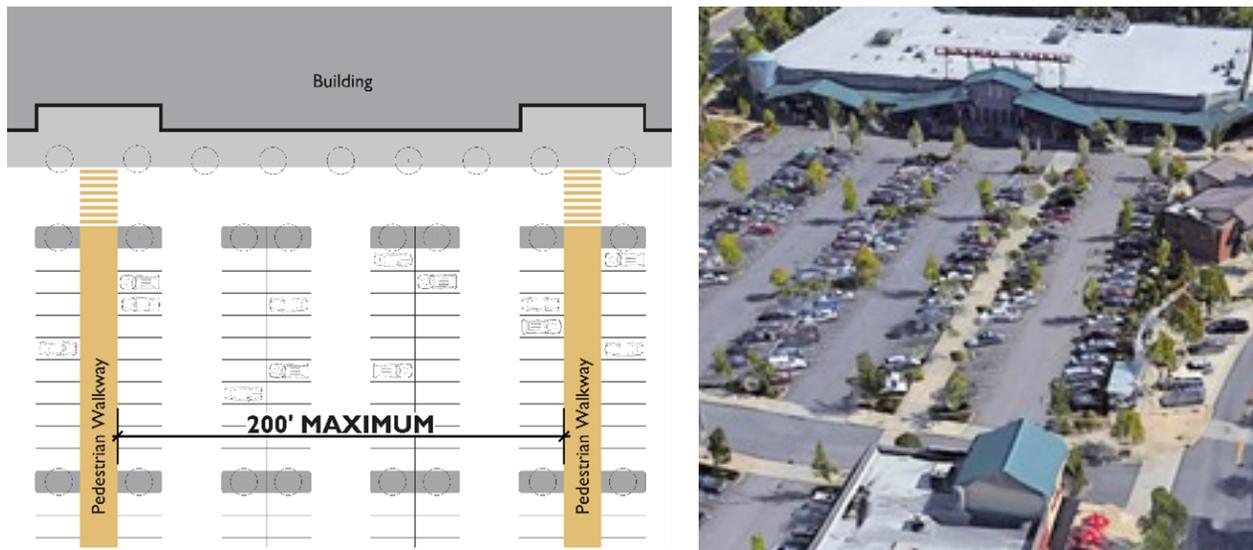
The entries of the example on the left connect directly to a public sidewalk while the entries in the right example connect to a common path that extends to the sidewalk.

Figure 8. Examples of pedestrian connection through a residential development



3. Crosswalks are required when a pathway crosses an on-site paved area that is accessible to vehicles. Crosswalks shall contain contrasting surface material and/or patterns.

4. Pedestrian walkways through parking lots are required for parking areas with fifty (50) or more parking spaces. Such walkways shall be specially marked or paved. At least one (1) pathway shall be provided for every four (4) rows of parking, at a maximum spacing of two hundred (200) feet. The pathways shall provide a safe connection to the building entrance and meet the pathway design standards in subsection [D](#) of this section, Walkway Design. See examples below.

Figure 9. Parking lot pedestrian walkway standards and examples

Note the location of the parking lot walkway in the upper right example (connecting shops in one (1) building to the main entry of a grocery store).

D. Walkway Design.

1. All internal pedestrian walkways shall have a minimum five (5) foot wide, unobstructed walking surface, except where wider walkways are prescribed in this article or where the applicable uses and context dictate wider walkways.
2. Where a pedestrian walkway is adjacent to perpendicular or angled parking, wheel stops are required to prevent encroachment of parked vehicles over the walkway. An extra two (2) feet of walkway width may be provided in lieu of wheel stops. See SMC [14.214.480\(D\)](#) for other situations in which wheel stops or curbing may be required.
3. Walkways one hundred (100) feet or more in length that are provided between a parking lot and a multi-tenant commercial or mixed-use building shall include an eight (8) foot wide sidewalk with:
 - a. Trees placed at an average of fifty (50) feet on-center and placed in grates or in planting strips as set forth in subsection [\(D\)\(3\)\(b\)](#) of this section.
 - b. Planting strips may be used between any vehicle access lane or parking area and the walkway, provided it contains trees per subsection [\(D\)\(3\)\(a\)](#) of this section and the combined walkway and planting strip is at least twelve (12) feet wide.

Figure 10. Example of a pedestrian sidewalk between parking lot and storefront



(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.450 Vehicular Circulation and Parking.

A. Purpose.

1. To create a safe, convenient, and efficient network for vehicle circulation and parking.
2. To enhance the visual character of interior access roads.
3. To minimize conflicts between vehicle and pedestrian circulation and activity.

B. Driveways. Driveways shall meet the standards of the Snohomish Engineering Design and Construction Standards adopted by City Council resolution.

C. Drive-Throughs. Where allowed, drive-through facilities shall meet the standards of SMC [14.235.160](#) and the Snohomish Engineering Design and Construction Standards adopted by City Council resolution, in addition to the following:

1. For the purpose of complying with the block frontage standards in Article [III](#) of this chapter, Block Frontage Standards, drive-through lanes are considered a parking area.
2. Drive-through lanes, including waiting and holding lanes, shall be buffered from the street and internal walkways by at least one (1) of the following:

- a. A planting strip at least five (5) feet wide with continuous plantings of evergreen shrubs and/or trees that will, at maturity, provide a continuous evergreen screen at least four (4) feet tall.
 - b. A wall at least three (3) feet high constructed of brick, stone, or siding materials that matches the principal walls of the building to which the drive-through lane provides service.
 - c. An alternative screening scheme may be approved, provided it reduces the negative visual impacts of views from sidewalks, pathways, and adjacent residential uses and adds visual interest.
3. Drive-through lanes shall not restrict pedestrian access between a public sidewalk and on-site buildings. Required pedestrian pathways shall not be located within required vehicle queueing space.
 4. Drive-through speakers shall be volume-controlled and screened so as not to be audible from adjacent properties.

E. *Inter-Site Connectivity.* Vehicle access connections are required between nonresidential properties, except where the Director determines it is infeasible or undesirable (e.g., where it is determined that such a vehicle connection would negatively impact safe pedestrian movement). Vehicle access may be in the form of a dedicated or private alley, connected or shared parking lots, shared drive aisles, or similar features. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.460 Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment.

A. *Purpose.*

1. To minimize adverse view, odor, fume, and noise impacts of mechanical equipment, utility cabinets, and other service areas at ground level and on roofs.
2. To provide adequate, durable, well-maintained, and accessible service and equipment areas.
3. To protect residential uses and adjacent properties from negative impacts due to location and utilization of service areas.

B. *Location of Ground-Related Service Areas and Mechanical Equipment.* Building service areas and mechanical equipment include loading docks, trash collection and compactors, dumpster areas, storage tanks, electrical panels, HVAC equipment, wireless communication facilities and other utility equipment. Wherever possible, these elements should be contained within the building envelope or on roofs and screened so they are not visible to the public.

If any service areas and utility mechanical are outside the building envelope at ground level, the following location standards apply:

1. Service areas shall be located for convenient service access and shall be screened from public rights-of-way, parking areas, pedestrian areas, and adjacent properties with the structural and landscape screening measures provided in subsection [C](#) of this section.

2. Service areas for multiple users or tenants shall be co-located or consolidated to the extent practical.
 3. Service areas shall be sited for alley access if available. Service elements accessible from an alley are exempt from the screening requirements of this section.
 4. All service areas, including trash collection areas, shall include roofs or overhead weather protection and shall meet applicable stormwater standards, as determined by the City Engineer.
 5. Exterior loading areas for commercial uses shall not be located within twenty (20) feet of a single-family zoned property, unless there is no viable alternative. Loading areas allowed within twenty (20) feet of a single-family zone must be separated by a masonry wall at least eight (8) feet in height. Noise studies may be required by the Planning Director as part of the permitting review process.
 6. Service areas used by residents shall be located to avoid entrapment areas and other conditions where personal security is a concern. Pedestrian-scaled lighting or other measures may be required by the Planning Director to enhance security.
 7. Noise-producing mechanical equipment such as fans, heat pumps, etc., shall be located or shielded to minimize sounds and reduce impacts to adjacent dwelling units.
 8. Dumpster storage areas shall be provided for all nonresidential developments and mixed-use or residential developments containing at least ten (10) residential units. Dumpster storage areas shall be located on the site they serve, and shall not be located in the public right-of-way.
- C. Where ground level service areas are necessary, they shall be screened with the following provisions:
1. Structural enclosures shall be constructed of masonry, heavy-gauge metal, heavy timber, or other decay-resistant material that is consistent with the architecture of the main building. Alternative materials other than those used for the main building are permitted if the finishes are similar in color and texture or if the proposed enclosure materials are more durable than those for the main structure. The walls shall be sufficient to provide full screening from the adjacent street, pedestrian areas or uses, but shall be no greater than seven (7) feet tall. The enclosure may use overlapping walls as a screening method. See Figure 11.
 2. Gates shall be made of heavy-gauge, site-obscuring material. Chain link or chain link with slats shall not be permitted for enclosures or gates.
 3. Where the interior of a service enclosure is visible from surrounding streets, pathways, or residential units, an opaque or semi-opaque horizontal cover or screen shall be used to mitigate views. The horizontal screen/cover should be integrated into the enclosure design.
 4. Garbage collection points shall be located and configured so that the enclosure gate swing does not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic, and does not require that a hauling truck project into any public right-of-way. Screening elements shall allow for efficient service delivery and removal operations.
 5. The ground surface of the service area shall be paved.

6. Landscaping shall be provided at the sides and rear of service enclosures if they are visible from the street, parking lots, and pathways to soften views and add visual interest.

Figure 11. Acceptable trash screening enclosures



All examples use durable enclosures with trees and shrubs to soften views of the enclosures from the side. Images C and D use a trellis and weather protection structure on top – a desirable feature particularly where the top of the enclosures are visible from surrounding buildings, streets, and pathways (due to topography or building heights).

D. *Utility Meters, Electrical Conduit, and Other Service Utility Apparatus.* These elements shall be located and/or designed to minimize their visibility to the public. If such elements are mounted in a location visible from the street, pedestrian pathway, common outdoor recreation area, or shared auto courtyards, they shall be screened with vegetation and/or integrated into the building's architecture.

Figure 12. Utility meter location and screening – acceptable and unacceptable examples



Images A and C are tucked away in a less visible location and/or screened by vegetation. Images B and D are poorly executed and would not be permitted in such visible locations. Such meters shall be coordinated and integrated with the architecture of the building.

E. *Roof-mounted Mechanical Equipment.* All rooftop mechanical equipment, including air conditioners, heaters, vents, wireless telecommunication facilities and similar equipment, shall be fully screened from public view at the street level. Screening shall be located so as not to interfere with operation of the equipment.

Exception: Roof-mounted wind turbines, solar energy and photovoltaic systems, and rainwater reuse systems do not require screening.

F. All rooftop screening devices shall be integrated into the architectural design of the building through such elements as parapet walls, false roofs, roof wells, clerestories, or equipment rooms. Screening walls or unit-mounted screening is allowed. Louvered designs are acceptable if consistent with building design style.

G. The screening method shall be constructed of materials requiring minimal maintenance and shall be at least as high as the equipment being screened. Wood and perforated metal are not permitted materials for screens or enclosures.

H. Noise-producing mechanical equipment such as fans, heat pumps, etc., shall be located and/or shielded to minimize sounds and reduce impacts to adjacent properties.

Figure 13. Examples of roof-mounted mechanical equipment screening

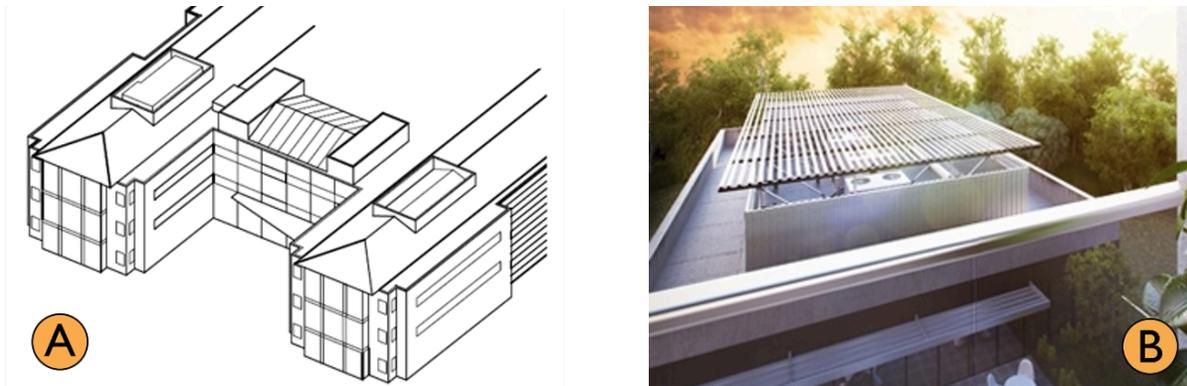


Illustration A shows how rooftop mechanical equipment can be located and screened effectively. Image B shows effective location and screening, including side walls and a trellis to screen views from taller surrounding buildings.

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.470 Landscaping Standards.

A. *Applicability.* The provisions herein supplement the landscaping standards in Chapter [14.240 SMC](#). Where there is a conflict, the standards of this section apply.

B. *Purpose.*

1. To enhance the character and livability of the Midtown District.
2. To soften the appearance of larger building façades.
3. To screen the view of parking areas.
4. To reduce erosion and stormwater runoff.
5. To improve air quality.

C. *Landscaped Area Calculations.*

1. A minimum of fifteen (15) percent of the development portion of the site shall be landscaped. The development portion shall not include areas of the site that remain undisturbed during construction or are within a NGPA.
2. Landscaping can be achieved through ground-level planting areas, terraced or raised planting surfaces, green roofs, green walls/trellises, and arbors.
 - a. Ground-level planting areas that support large trees may be counted at twice their actual size in calculating required landscaped area.
 - i. The planting area must be designed to support at least one (1) tree that will grow to thirty (30) feet in height at maturity, including the projected dripline.
 - ii. The planting area requires deeper soil depths to support the tree(s).
 - iii. The tree(s) must be installed by the developer and maintained pursuant to the provisions of SMC [14.240.050](#).
 - b. Green roofs shall be calculated at fifty (50) percent the required area of a typical planting area.
 - c. Green walls, trellises, and/or arbors shall be calculated at seventy-five (75) percent of the required area of a typical planting area. Planter areas shall feature minimum soil depth necessary to maintain healthy vine growing conditions.

**Figure 14. Landscaped area examples
Planting beds**



Figure 14. Landscaped area examples
Planting beds



Green roofs



Green walls



D. *Landscape Planting Standards.*

1. Plant materials for required landscape surfaces shall meet the minimum size at time of planting of SMC [14.240.040](#). Native plant materials and drought-tolerant species are encouraged.
2. *Trees and Groundcover.*
 - a. Significant trees should be preserved to the extent feasible. See SMC [14.240.030](#).
 - b. Trees planted within five (5) feet of public curbs, paved areas, or sidewalks shall be installed with root barriers and grates to prevent physical damage to sidewalks, curbs, gutters, pavement and other public or private improvements.
 - c. Groundcover shall be planted to have one hundred (100) percent groundcover in two (2) years.
3. Applications for new development in Midtown shall include relevant provisions for soil quality, depth, and volume in construction details, including:
 - a. In planting beds: place three (3) inches of compost and till to a depth of eight (8) inches.
 - b. In turf areas: place one and three-quarters (1.75) inches of compost and till in to an eight (8) inch depth.
 - c. Scarify (loosen) subsoil four (4) inches below an amended layer to produce a twelve (12) inch depth of uncompacted soil.
 - d. After planting: apply two (2) to four (4) inches of arborist wood chip mulch to planting beds. Coarse bark mulch may be used but has fewer benefits to plants and soil.

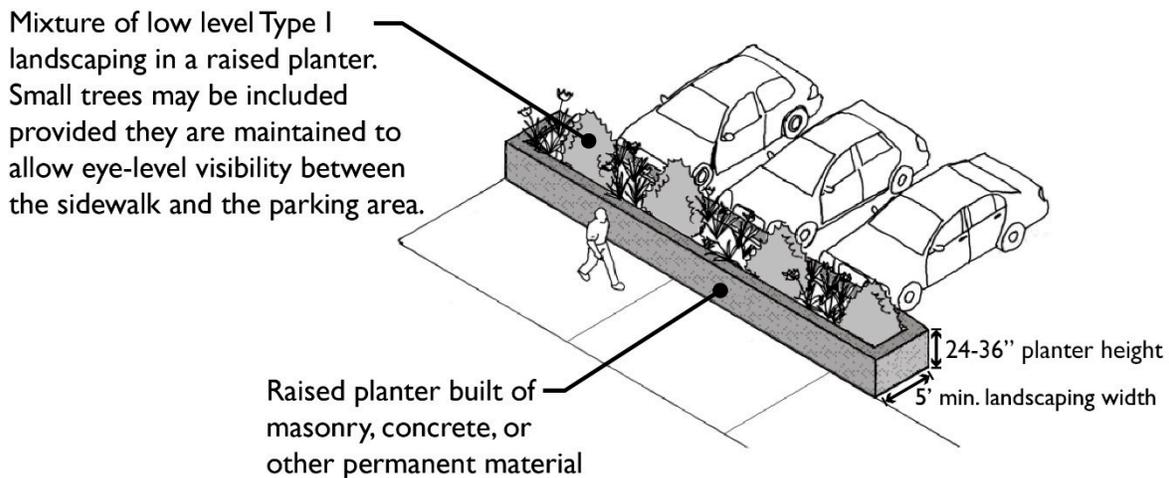
4. All landscaped areas containing nonnative plants shall be provided with an approved automatic irrigation system.

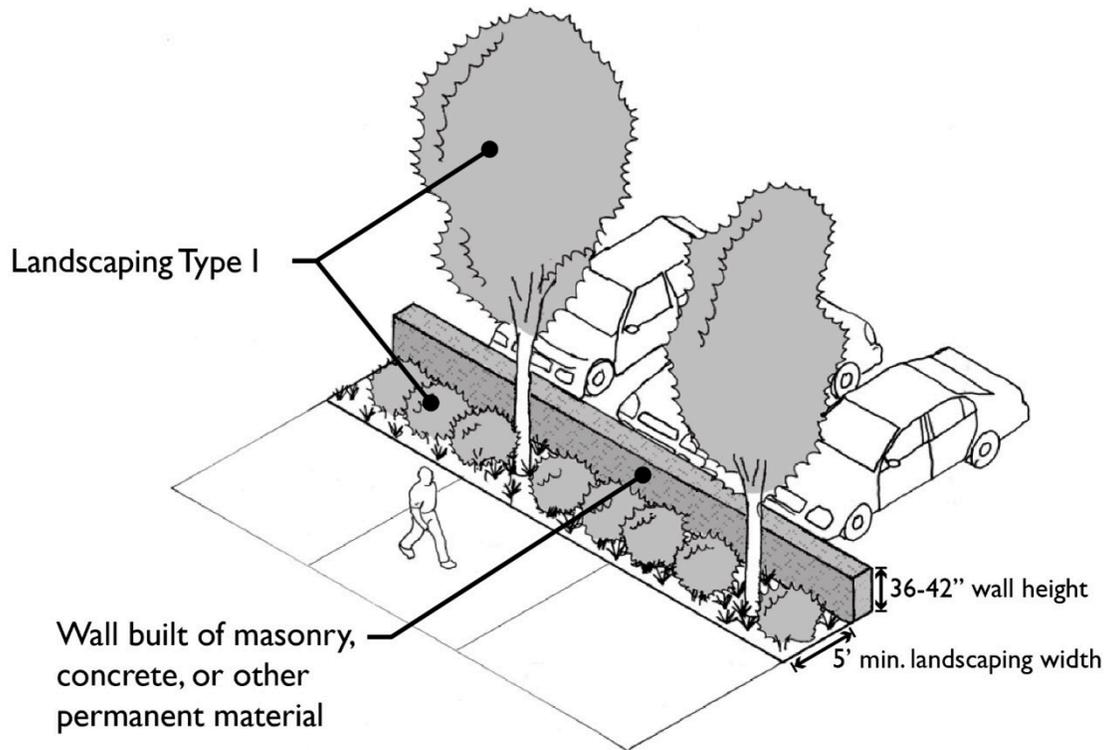
5. All landscaping shall be maintained in good condition. Maintenance shall include regular watering, mowing, pruning, clearance of debris and weeds, removal and replacement of dead plants and the repair and replacement of irrigation systems.

E. *Parking Lot Screening.* Parking lots shall be screened from streets through one (1) of the following methods:

1. At least five (5) feet of type II landscaping per SMC [14.240.040\(F\)\(2\)](#).
2. Raised concrete or masonry planters between twenty-four (24) and thirty-six (36) inches tall and planted with at least five (5) feet of type I landscaping per SMC [14.240.040\(F\)\(1\)](#).
3. A minimum five (5) foot wide planting bed planted with type I landscaping per SMC [14.240.040\(F\)\(1\)](#) in front of a low masonry or concrete wall (thirty-six (36) to forty-two (42) inches tall).

Figure 15. Examples of parking lot landscaping buffers





F. *Interior Parking Lot Landscaping.* Parking lots shall contain internal planting areas consisting of trees and groundcover species. The number of trees shall depend on the location of the parking lot in relation to the building and public right-of-way:

Location of parking lot	Number of trees per parking stall
Between building and street	One per five (1:5)
Beside building, partially abutting street	One per six (1:6)
Behind building, minimally visible from street	One per seven (1:7)

(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.480 Parking.

The standards herein supplement the provisions of Chapter [14.235 SMC](#). Where there is a conflict, the provisions of this section apply.

A. *Spaces Required.* Off-street parking for Midtown shall be provided at the rates provided in Chapter [14.235 SMC](#), except for the modifications in Table 3.

Table 3. Midtown parking requirements

Land Use	Parking Requirement
Dwelling Units	
Townhouses ¹	2 spaces per dwelling unit
3+ bedroom dwelling units ²	1.75 spaces per dwelling unit
2-bedroom dwelling units ²	1.5 spaces per dwelling unit
1-bedroom dwelling units ²	1.0 spaces per dwelling unit
Studio units ²	1.0 spaces per dwelling unit
Senior housing	1.0 spaces per dwelling unit
Personal Services	As listed in SMC 14.235.180
Business Services & General Commercial	1 space per 300 sf gfa

1 Tandem parking is allowed for townhouse development in Midtown.

2 For units that are not townhouse developments.

B. *Location of Parking Spaces.* Parking facilities for residential uses shall be located on the same lot with the building they serve or on a lot within three hundred (300) feet from the nearest boundary that has the same ownership of the lot on which such structure is located or for which an easement or other legal mechanism provides permanent parking rights.

C. *Ground Floor Uses.* In any building, one thousand five hundred (1,500) square feet or thirty (30) percent, whichever is less, of ground-floor retail, office, and service uses adjacent to and accessed directly from a public street shall be exempt from off-street parking calculations.

D. *Parking Space Design.* Wheel stops or curbing are required where necessary to prevent a parked vehicle from encroaching onto/over adjacent property, a pedestrian walkway or circulation area, a right-of-way, or a landscaped area. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.490 Site Lighting.

All lighting shall be consistent with all lighting requirements in the General Design Standards adopted by City Council resolution. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

Article V. Building Design Standards

14.214.500 Purpose.

- A. To promote buildings with an architectural character that reflects the historical context of Snohomish with human-scaled design details, durability, high-quality materials, and sustainable design measures.
- B. To emphasize that high-quality design is critical to the Midtown District's high-visibility sites and corridors.
- C. To avoid generic, corporate architectural design that is inconsistent with the character and identity of Snohomish.
- D. To provide alternate development standards for developments fronting on Bonneville Avenue with less restrictive requirements related to building and site design but still complementary with the rest of the Midtown standards. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.505 Required Commercial Space.

Buildings with frontage on Avenue D shall be required to include space designed for commercial uses on the street level at the front of the building as follows:

- A. If the street frontage on Avenue D of a development site is less than two hundred (200) lineal feet, then twenty-five (25) percent of the façade width of buildings fronting on Avenue D shall be designed for commercial uses.
- B. If the street frontage on Avenue D of a development site is greater than two hundred (200) lineal feet, then fifty (50) percent of the façade width of buildings fronting on Avenue D shall be designed for commercial uses.
- C. Commercial spaces used to meet the requirements of this section shall:
 - 1. Be at least twenty (20) feet deep; and
 - 2. Average at least forty (40) feet in depth.
- D. Proposals by applicants to require space designed for commercial uses at the street level of buildings with frontage on streets other than Avenue D may be approved by the Planning Director if it is determined the intent of the purpose as stated in SMC [14.214.200\(B\)](#) is met. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.510 Corporate Architecture Prohibited.

Corporate architecture, defined as building features and/or design that reinforce a corporate identity, is prohibited in Midtown. Signs and features that can easily be removed are exempt from this prohibition. Examples of corporate architecture include features such as distinctive roofline designs, window patterns, cladding materials, and other architectural elements that serve as signs to reflect and reinforce a corporate identity or product marketed. Such architecture is difficult to adapt to other uses. As tenants change in these types of buildings, these corporate identity features can negatively impact the character of the area and identity of new tenants. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.520 Building Massing and Articulation.

A. Purpose.

1. To employ architectural elements such as windows, balconies, entries, and similar features that create a complementary pattern or rhythm, dividing large buildings into smaller, identifiable pieces making them more relatable to the human scale.
2. To integrate substantial articulated/modulated features on large buildings to break up the massing and add visual interest.

B. Building Articulation – Nonresidential.

1. Nonresidential buildings and nonresidential portions of mixed-use buildings shall include articulation features to create a human-scaled pattern.
2. Primary building façades and other elevations that face parks or are adjacent to lower intensity zones shall incorporate at least three (3) articulation features listed in subsection [\(B\)\(3\)](#) of this section at intervals no greater than:
 - a. Thirty (30) feet; or
 - b. If facing Bonnevill Avenue then the interval shall be no greater than sixty (60) feet.
 - c. The articulation interval length may be adjusted based on the interior configuration of the proposed building. Floor plans shall be submitted to justify wider articulation intervals.
3. Nonresidential building elevations shall incorporate at least three (3) of the following articulation features:
 - a. Window patterns and/or entries.
 - b. Weather protection features.
 - c. Vertical piers/columns.

- d. Distinctive roof forms per subsection [E](#) of this section.
 - e. Change in building material or siding style.
 - f. Towers.
 - g. Other design techniques that effectively reinforce a pattern of small storefronts compatible with the building's surrounding context. Such techniques shall consider the type and width of the proposed articulation treatment, the block frontage type, and the size and width of the building.
4. In addition to the above articulation features, the following features may also be used to meet articulation requirements for nonresidential, nonstorefront building elevations only:
- a. Vertical elements such as a trellis with plants, green wall, or artwork.
 - b. Building modulation of at least twelve (12) inches, if tied to a change in roofline per subsection [E](#) of this section.
 - c. Other design techniques that effectively break up the massing of structures and add visual interest. Such techniques shall consider the type and width of the proposed articulation treatment, the block frontage type, and the size and width of the building.

Figure 1. Nonresidential articulation



The above image uses window patterns, weather protection elements, building modulation, and roofline modulation to articulate the primary building façade.

C. *Building Articulation – Residential.*

1. Residential buildings and residential portions of mixed-use buildings shall include articulation features at intervals of no greater than thirty (30) feet to break up the massing of the building and add visual interest and compatibility to the surrounding context. The articulation interval length may be adjusted based on the interior configuration of the proposed building. Floor plans shall be submitted to justify wider articulation intervals.
2. Primary building façades and other elevations that face parks, contain primary building entrances, or face lower intensity zones shall incorporate at least three (3) articulation features, as listed in subsection [\(C\)\(4\)](#) of this section, at each unit interval.
3. All other building elevations except firewalls shall incorporate at least two (2) articulation features, as listed in subsection [\(C\)\(4\)](#) of this section, at intervals no greater than thirty (30) feet, or at the interval determined pursuant to subsection [\(C\)\(1\)](#) of this section.
4. Articulation features:
 - a. Window patterns and/or entries.
 - b. Distinctive roof forms per subsection [E](#) of this section.
 - c. Change in building material or siding style.
 - d. Building modulation such as recesses and offsets of the building plane of at least twelve (12) inches if tied to a change in roofline modulation per subsection [E](#) of this section.
 - e. Balconies, if they are recessed or projected from the façade by at least eighteen (18) inches. Juliet balconies or other balconies that appear to be tacked on to the façade will not qualify for this option.
 - f. Vertical elements such as a trellis with plants, green wall, or art element.
 - g. Other design techniques that effectively break up the massing at no more than the maximum articulation intervals.

Table 2. Residential articulation

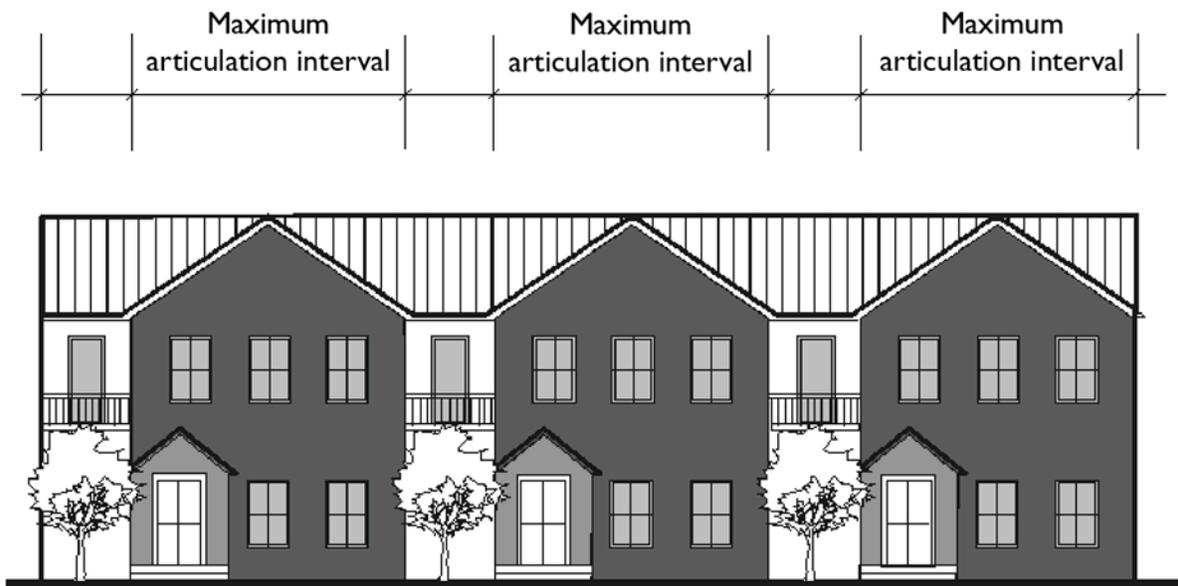


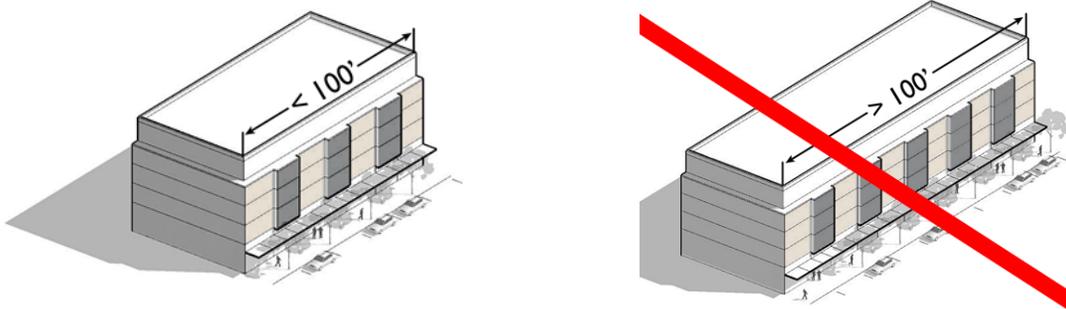
Image A uses a combination of building modulation, window patterns, material changes, and roofline modulation. Image B is unacceptable.

D. *Maximum Façade Width.* All primary building façades and other building elevations facing parks, containing primary building entrances, or are adjacent to lower intensity zones wider than one hundred (100) feet, or wider than one hundred forty (140) feet if facing Bonneville Avenue, shall include at least one (1) of the following features to break up the massing of the building and add visual interest:

1. Modulation of vertical elements of the building plane, such as recesses and offsets, at least four (4) feet deep and fifteen (15) feet wide.

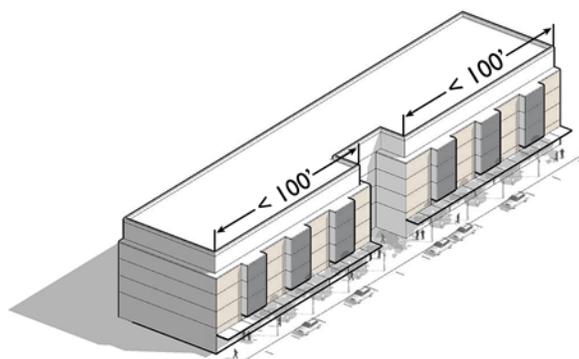
2. Modulation of horizontal elements that extend through all floors above the first floor facing the street, unless the upper floors are stepped back more than ten (10) feet from the façade. Such modulation shall:
 - a. Utilize a change in building materials that effectively contrasts with the rest of the façade.
 - b. Be stepped forward or backward from the rest of the façade by an average of six (6) inches.
 - c. Provide roofline modulation per subsection [E](#) of this section.
3. Contrasting building wall articulation that employs the following elements to give the impression of two (2) distinct buildings.
 - a. Different building materials and/or configuration of building materials.
 - b. Contrasting window design (sizes and/or configurations).

Figure 3. Maximum façade width



Acceptable: Building façade less than one hundred (100) feet wide.

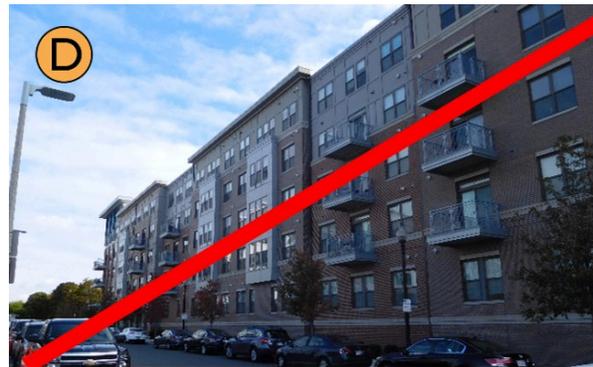
Unacceptable: Building façade greater than one hundred (100) feet wide without modulation.



Acceptable: Building incorporating a recess along the façade per subsection [\(D\)\(1\)](#) of this section, to effectively break the building up into smaller components.

Figure 4. Façade width examples

Image A: The central portion of the building employs substantial modulation (from adjacent building elevation segments), a mix of façade materials, distinctive rooflines and window fenestration techniques to effectively break up the building massing. Image B: The building employs distinct façades to lend the appearance that it is several different buildings.



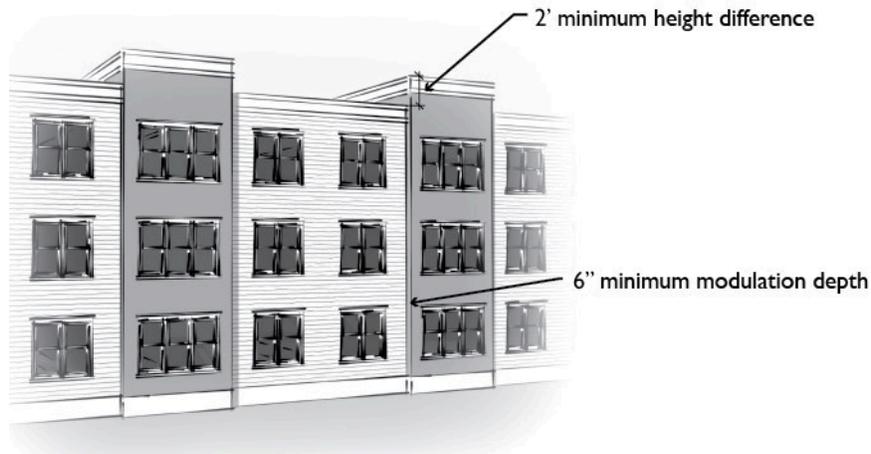
Images C and D: The buildings feature a combination of modest modulation, roofline modulation, and window fenestration techniques, but lack the techniques to visually break up the expansive and repetitious façade lengths.

E. *Roofline Modulation.* In order to qualify as a façade articulation pursuant to subsections [B](#), [C](#) and [D](#) of this section, rooflines shall employ one (1) or more of the following:

1. Flat roofs or façades with a horizontal eave, fascia, or parapet that are modulated at varied heights with a difference of at least two (2) feet, when combined with building modulation techniques described in subsection [D](#) of this section. Otherwise, the minimum dimension of roofline modulation shall be four (4) feet.

2. A pitched or gabled roofline segment of at least twenty (20) feet in width, meeting the minimum pitch of subsection [F](#) of this section and featuring modulated roofline components at the intervals described in subsections [B](#) and [C](#) of this section.
3. A combination of the above.

Table 5. Roofline modulation examples



Roofline modulation qualifies as an articulation feature when combined with building modulation techniques.



Image A: pitched roof example. Image B: flat roof example.

F. Roofline Pitch.

1. Buildings four (4) stories or shorter may have a flat or a pitched roof. If a pitched roof, the minimum slope shall be at least four to twelve (4:12) and shall feature modulated roofline components at the interval required by subsections [B](#) and [C](#) of this section.

2. Flat roofs are required for any new building five (5) stories and taller. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.530 Building Details.

A. *Purpose.* This section contains standards that affect the human experience of architecture at the ground level and the quality of windows. The purpose of this section is:

1. To encourage the incorporation of design details and small-scale elements into building façades that are attractive at a pedestrian scale.
2. To integrate window design that adds depth, richness, and visual interest to the façade.
3. To create clear and welcoming building entries.

B. *Architectural Details – Nonresidential and Mixed-Use Buildings.* The ground floor of all commercial and mixed-use buildings not fronting on Bonneville Avenue shall be enhanced with appropriate details. This standard applies to primary building façades, façades containing primary building entrances, and façades facing parks.

All new buildings and additions shall employ at least one (1) detail element from each of the three (3) categories below for the street-facing façade articulation interval per SMC [14.214.520\(B\)](#).

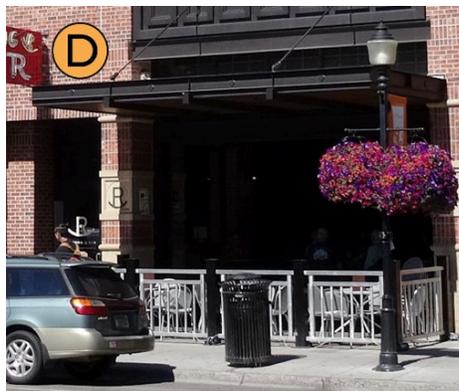
1. *Window and/or Entry Treatments.* At least one (1) of the following shall be employed for each articulation interval:
 - a. Display windows divided into a grid of multiple panes.
 - b. Transom windows.
 - c. Roll-up windows/doors.
 - d. Other distinctive window treatment that meets the purpose of the standards.
 - e. Recessed entry.
 - f. Decorative door.
 - g. Other decorative or specially designed entry treatment that meets the purpose of the standards.

Figure 6. Window and entry treatments

A: operable storefront window. B: transom windows. C: operable window with decorative details. D: decorative window shades. E: decorative door. F: multiple-paned display windows and recessed entry.

2. *Building Element/Façade Detail.* At least one (1) of the following shall be employed for each articulation interval:

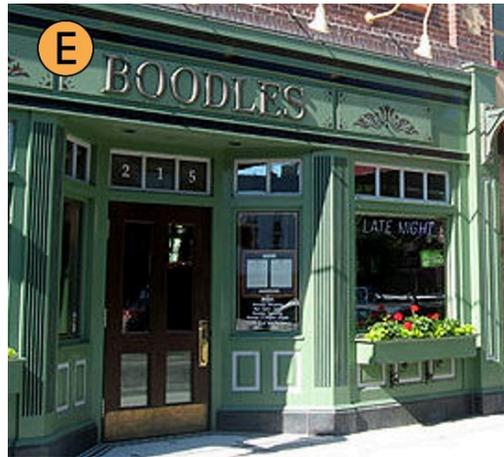
- a. Weather protection element such as a steel canopy, cloth awning, or retractable awning.
- b. Decorative building-mounted light fixtures.
- c. Bay windows, balconies, trellises, towers, and similar projecting elements.
- d. Decorative, custom hanging sign(s) (only available for alterations to existing buildings).
- e. Other details or elements that meet the purpose of these standards.

Figure 7. Building elements and façade details

A: retractable awning. B: balcony. C: building-mounted light fixtures. D: projecting canopy. E: tower feature.

3. *Decorative Surface Materials.* At least one (1) of the following shall be employed for each articulation interval:

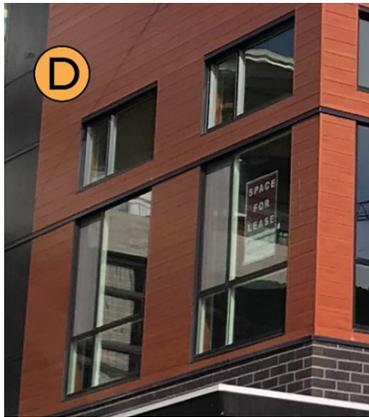
- a. Decorative building materials/use of building materials, such as decorative use of brick, tile, or stonework.
- b. Artwork on building, such as a mural, medallions, or bas-relief sculpture.
- c. Decorative kick plate, bulkhead, pilaster, plinth, base panel, frieze, or other similar feature.
- d. Handcrafted material, such as wrought iron or carved wood.
- e. Other details that meet the purpose of the standards.

Figure 8. Decorative surface materials

A: decorative brick/design. B: tile-work and column pattern. C: decorative medallion. D: decorative mosaic tile work. E: tiled/paneled bulkhead. F: decorative materials and design.

E. *Window Design Standards.* All windows (except storefront display windows) shall employ designs that add depth and richness to the façade. At least one (1) of the following features shall be included to meet this requirement:

1. Recess windows at least one (1) inch from the façade.
2. Minimum three (3) inch wide window trim around windows.
3. Minimum five (5) inch wide wide window headers and/or projecting sills.
4. Contrasting muntins and mullions.
5. Other window design treatments that add depth, richness, and visual interest to the primary façade.

Figure 9. Window design

A: recessed window. B/C: three (3) inch window trim. Images D/E: contrasting frames and mullions. F: treatment does not effectively add a sense of depth and richness to the façade.

F. *Cornice/Roofline Design for Flat Roofs.* Buildings employing a flat roof shall employ a distinctive roofline that effectively provides an identifiable “top” to the building, including one (1) of the following:

1. A traditional, projecting cornice line. Cornice lines shall depend on the materials and design of the base and middle elements to reinforce the base/middle/top configuration.
2. A contemporary interpretation of a traditional cornice line. Such rooflines shall be proportional to the size and scale of the building.
3. Rooftop solar units are permitted, provided the placement and design of units visible from the surrounding streetscape are carefully integrated into the overall design concept of the building.

Figure 10. Flat roof design



G. *Articulated Building Entries.* The primary building entrance for all buildings shall be designed as a clearly defined and identifiable architectural feature of the building. Such entrances shall be easily distinguishable from regular storefront entrances on the building. Such entries shall be scaled proportional to the building.

Figure 11. Building entry examples



(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.540 Building Materials.

A. *Purpose.*

1. Encourage development that reflects the Snohomish character and is complementary to existing development in historic areas.
2. To encourage the use of durable, high quality, urban building materials that minimize maintenance costs and provide visual interest from all observable vantage points.
3. To promote the use of a distinctive mix of materials that helps to articulate façades and lends a sense of depth and richness to the buildings.
4. To place the highest priority on the first floor in the quality and detailing of materials at the pedestrian scale.
5. To emphasize the importance of the ground floor in the quality and detailing of materials at the pedestrian scale.

B. *Quality Building Materials.*

1. Applicants shall use high quality, durable materials, particularly on the ground floor and for commercial and mixed-use buildings where the primary façade is sited close to sidewalks.
2. Wood, stone, and brick are highly encouraged on all new building façades in order to reflect the Snohomish character, as seen in images A through D in Figure 12. Other materials are allowed, but must be integrated with a mixture of highly encouraged materials in a manner that emphasizes a diversity of materials, textures, colors, and articulation techniques, as seen in image E in Figure 12.
3. Prohibited exterior building materials:
 - a. Fiberglass.
 - b. Vinyl and plastic siding.
 - c. Plywood.
 - d. T-111 siding.
4. The use of sustainably harvested, salvaged, recycled or reused products is encouraged wherever possible.
5. The first two (2) feet of the ground-floor building wall on nonresidential or mixed-use buildings shall have a bulkhead. The bulkhead shall be constructed of stone, brick or tile masonry, architectural concrete, or similar durable material if a decorative element is incorporated.
6. *Limited Use Materials.*
 - a. Concrete block/concrete masonry unit (CMU) is limited to twenty (20) percent of the overall façade surface area.

- b. Metal siding is limited to forty (40) percent of the overall façade surface area and shall be finished in a matte, nonreflective surface.
- c. Exterior insulation and finish system (EIFS) is limited to twenty (20) percent of the overall façade surface area and shall feature a smooth or sand finish. EIFS shall be sheltered from the weather within a recessed wall area or by a projecting element such as a roof overhang.
- d. Cement fiber is limited to forty (40) percent of the overall façade surface area for nonresidential and mixed-use buildings and seventy (70) percent of the overall façade surface area for residential buildings.

Figure 12. Building materials that reinforce and enhance the character of Snohomish



Figure 12. Building materials that reinforce and enhance the character of Snohomish



(Ord. 2425, 2022)

14.214.550 Blank Walls.

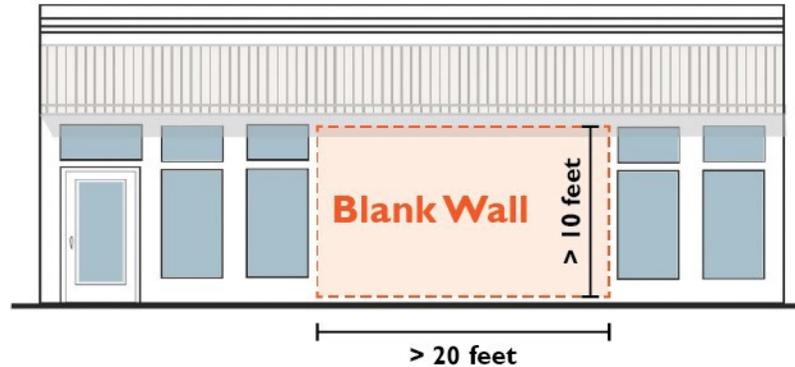
A. *Purpose.*

1. To create visual interest and a pedestrian-friendly environment by avoiding/minimizing untreated blank walls.
2. To retain and enhance the character of Midtown's streetscapes.

B. *Blank Wall Definition.* A wall is considered a blank wall if it:

1. Is over ten (10) feet in height;
2. Has a horizontal length greater than twenty (20) feet; and
3. Does not include a transparent window or door.

Figure 13. Blank wall definition



C. *Blank Wall Treatment Options.* Untreated, blank walls that are visible from a street, public space, residential amenity space, or pedestrian walkway are prohibited. Allowed methods to treat walls so they will not be considered to be blank walls include the following:

1. Display windows at least sixteen (16) inches in depth to allow for changeable displays. Tack-on display cases do not qualify as a blank wall treatment.
2. Landscape planting bed at least five (5) feet wide or a raised planter bed at least two (2) feet high and three (3) feet wide in front of the wall with planting materials that are sufficient to obscure or screen the wall's surface.
3. A vertical trellis or "green wall" in front of the wall with climbing vines or plant materials. The method shall be sufficient to obscure or screen the wall surface. This option requires an irrigation and maintenance plan sufficient to maintain healthy plants for the life of the building.
4. A noncommercial mural or other permanent art feature such as metalwork or mosaics.
5. Building detailing that adds visual interest at a pedestrian scale such as belt courses, bulkheads, decorative tile work, accent lighting, or a similar element that meets the intent of the standard. Such detailing shall use a variety of surfaces.

D. Buildings fronting on Bonneville Avenue are not required to comply with the blank wall treatment standards of this section. (Ord. 2425, 2022)

The Snohomish Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 2465, passed March 7, 2023.

Disclaimer: The city clerk's office has the official version of the Snohomish Municipal Code. Users should contact the city clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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