

Tacoma Downtown Streetscape Study and Design Concepts

April 2003

Prepared for: City of Tacoma



Prepared by:



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Tacoma Downtown Streetscape Study and Design Concepts

ERRATA

1. The title of this document is "Tacoma Downtown Streetscape Study and Design Concepts." The self-reference of "the plan" throughout this document should be regarded as "this streetscape study" or "the study."
2. The general area of the "Union Depot" and "UWT" encompasses a historic district and a special review conservation district, and should be recognized and referred to as such throughout the document, such as seen on pages 4, 5, 34 and 35.
3. All "Cobra" lighting recommendations should be changed to "Round Box", as found on pages 23, 30, 31, 32, 37, 38, 39, 40 and 41. The "Round Box" type of streetlights can be seen in the area of Market and St. Helens between S. 7th and S. 9th streets.
4. On page 9 ("Street Trees"), the 2nd paragraph concerning vaulted sidewalks and planter boxes should be changed to read as follows:

Some downtown streets are "vaulted," with an air space below them. Where trees are called for on vaulted sidewalks, the study recommends extending the curbs at intersections to form curb bulbs and provide planting space. Also, the Tacoma Municipal Code 13.06A.070 requires that "where existing areaways or vaults prevent [tree] planting, trees shall be planted in planters equipped with irrigation" and that "all trees shall have a minimum caliper of 2 1/2" at the time of planting." In these cases, simple precast planters are recommended, such as the one shown.



5. On page 10 ("Lighting"), the "30-foot pole" that is referenced in the last sentence should be changed to "30- to 40-foot pole."
6. On page 10 ("Lighting"), the following two statements should be added:
 - Add – The "funnel" lights are expensive and are not recommended to be expanded beyond where they currently exist.
 - Add – Where historic streetlights are missing, replacement with in-kind is required.
7. On page 14 ("Signage & Signature Features"), the following sentence relative to "galvanized steel straps" (which are not in use) should be deleted:
 - Delete – The galvanized steel straps that are commonly used as an expedient tend to deteriorate and loosen over time.
8. On page 17 ("Multimodal Transportation"), the following three sentences that are not consistent with the current City practices should be deleted:
 - Delete – Post-top signals should be considered, provided that MUTCD standards are met.
 - Delete – Signals and signs hung from span wires should be avoided.
 - Delete – The City should not use galvanized "packing straps" to attach signs and brackets to poles in favor of tapped mounting holes, more substantial brackets, or special mountings provided by pole manufacturers.
9. On page 24 ("Tacoma Ave."), the recommended street configuration should be modified as "Two lanes with parallel parking on each side, or one lane on each side with a median."

10. On page 29 (“Broadway”), “street” in the 2nd bullet point should be changed to “streetscape.” The bullet point will now read as follows:

“Extend streetscape design northward on Broadway and St. Helens to S. 7th Street to connect this important link.”

11. On page 40 (“St. Helens & Baker St.”), the design recommendations for lights should be modified to read as follows:

“Historic light if possible; ‘Round Box’ light and pedestrian lights if desired by property owners; consider extending the lighting standard of the Stadium Business District to 6th Avenue.”

12. On page 43 (“Triangles with Buildings and Open Space”), the design recommendation for trees for “Triangles with Buildings” should be modified to read as follows:

“Should not obscure the building or be planted too close to the building.”

13. On page 49 (“Implementation”), the following paragraph should be added to the section of “Coordination Activities and Partnerships”:

“Internally, the Economic Development and the Public Works departments should maintain and strengthen the coordination of grant applications and design of streetscape improvement projects identified in the *Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Program*, in order to ensure that the implementation of such projects are consistent with the intent of *Destination Downtown*, this study, and other pertinent plans and programs.”

14. Street name corrections:

- “S. 6th St.” should be corrected as “6th Ave.” on pages 20, 21, 23, 24, 25 and 40.
- “Broadway Ave.” should be corrected as “Broadway Plaza” on pages 27, 28, 29 and 43.
- “Market Ave.” should be corrected as “Market St.” on pages 34, 38 and 43.



Preface: The Vision

The recommendations in the *Tacoma Downtown Streetscape Study and Design Concepts* (“streetscape study”), when implemented, work in concert with each other and other civic efforts to achieve the City’s redevelopment and improvement goals for the downtown area.

The City has embarked upon a number of strategies aimed at revitalizing the greater downtown area. Two planning efforts form the foundation of this work, *Destination Downtown* and the *Tacoma Dome Area Plan*. This streetscape study builds upon these planning documents and provides specific guidance to improve the character and environment of greater downtown streets. The two plans call for building a vibrant, vital center of commerce, education, government, housing and entertainment. New development will reinforce the pedestrian activity at street level. The intent of these plans is to transform the downtown area into a walkable center that is safe, convenient, lively and attractive. The streetscape study proposes improvements to help achieve these objectives. Not only will the improvements make the walking environment more comfortable but also an enhanced streetscape will be more attractive to the motorist. The use of similar elements such as lighting, trees, landscaping and street furniture will unify the area.

The streetscape study envisions improvements at major entranceways into the downtown. No matter how one approached the downtown whether from the interstate, light rail or from nearby neighborhoods, gateways would define the entrances and set downtown apart. The gateway improvements could range from landscaping, welcoming signs, sculptures and banners.

The streetscape study recommends the entire downtown area be unified through streetscape elements to help tie together the diverse districts such as the Old City Hall Historic District, the UWT/Union Depot Historic District, the Museum District and the Tacoma Dome area. Walking corridors between these districts would be linked by attractive streetscape elements yet each district would maintain their unique

character and influence. For example, the use of historic street lights would set apart the historic districts while the Dome area would continue to distinguish itself with “fun and funky” individualistic signs, artwork and plantings. The recently installed palm tree artwork has set the course for this area.

The streetscape study proposes streetscape treatment options for all streets depending on the function of the street, adjacent developments and expected level of pedestrian use. Certain streets are recommended for enhanced treatment. Pacific Avenue is one of the West Coast’s great streets. To enhance its preeminence as Tacoma’s main street, the streetscape study recommends filling the gaps and completing the streetscape improvements along this street. The study recommends maintaining its historic streetlights and unifying the street with distinctive trees located on extended sidewalks at every intersection. Attractive crosswalks, trees and artwork will beckon walkers along its entire length.

The study takes the recommendations from *Destination Downtown* and suggests three treatments along Tacoma Avenue responding to the anticipated redevelopment along this corridor. This street is generally now devoid of any pedestrian amenities. As envisioned, the street would include street trees, pedestrian lighting, extended sidewalks and crosswalks and perhaps a median at certain locations. Yakima Avenue, another corridor which traverses the length of downtown, will turn into a dramatic “linear arboretum” with tree plantings and signature light poles, according to the recommendations in the study. This treatment will provide a link to historic Wright Park to the north and its magnificent collection of trees from around the world.

Accomplishing these recommendations will not happen overnight. Funding will limit implementation and it is anticipated that many of the improvements will happen incrementally as public and private development projects occur.



CHAPTER 1: Background Introduction

Background

The Downtown Tacoma Streetscape Plan is an implementation element of Tacoma's downtown plan, *Destination Downtown*, and is one of the key tools to shape downtown Tacoma into a regional destination.

Strategically conceived streetscape improvements are a proven method of stimulating economic activity and private investment in a downtown. They also create vitality, pedestrian activity, and "sense of place." Streets are shared by different users, such as cars, trucks, buses, light rail trains, pedestrians, and bicycles. To function effectively, street space needs to be carefully allocated to accommodate these competing modes and users. Also, coordination among the key parties of currently planned projects is critical to the creation of a holistic downtown, and a strong commitment to downtown public-oriented improvements must be maintained to attract private development in the years to come.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop a streetscape plan for downtown Tacoma to enhance the safety, comfort, wayfinding, and visual experience of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Specifically, the plan:

- Recognizes the unique character of downtown Tacoma, finds the commonality among diverse areas, and reinforces it through historic and contemporary streetscape treatments.
- Provides the visually appealing connectivity that ties diverse districts together, and creates a sense of place.
- Develops a more systematic approach to streetscape design, making it easier for the City to maintain high-quality streets.
- Recommends improvements that will enhance pedestrian activity and support development and economic growth.
- Provides guidance for the design and development of streetscape elements.

Study Area

The plan covers the area called the Greater Downtown Tacoma, bounded by Thea Foss Waterway to the east, Yakima Avenue to the west, Division Avenue to the north, and I-5 to the south, and includes the Tacoma Dome Area as appropriate.

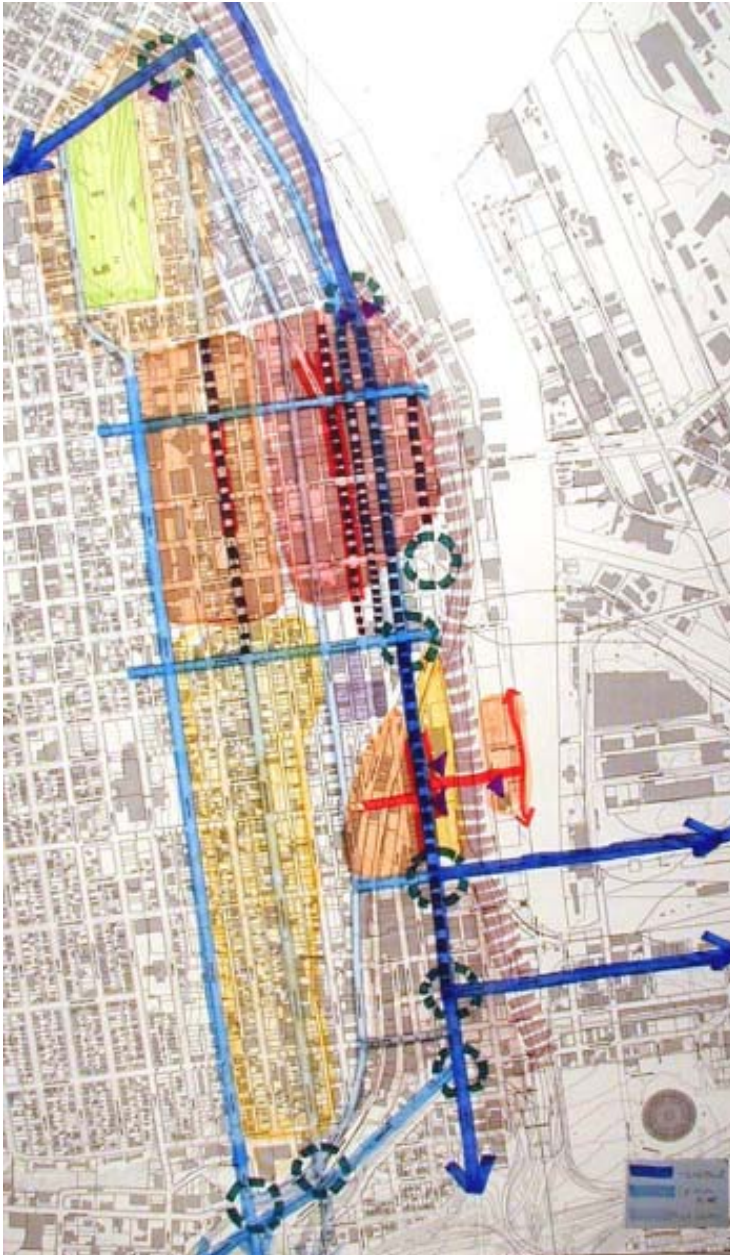
Destination Downtown Goals and Policies This Plan Implements

Overall Goals:

6. Downtown Tacoma will have many forms of publicly accessible open space, such as parks, plazas, waterfront esplanades, tree-lined streets and community gardens.
7. Downtown Tacoma will build upon its rich collection of handsome, historic buildings to create an environment of distinctive character and quality.
8. Downtown will be a regional destination for artistic, cultural and visitor attractions.

General Policies:

2. Downtown districts shall be connected to each other and to surrounding neighborhoods by landscaped streets, linked open spaces, pedestrian and bicycle routes, and transit.
5. New development shall reinforce pedestrian activity at the street level, present an attractive and varied profile on the skyline, and provide opportunities for artistic expressions all contributing to the unique character of downtown Tacoma.
6. Ongoing programs and funding priorities should ensure that downtown streets and sidewalks are clean, safe, well lighted and attractive.
7. Public transportation shall not only provide a needed service for commuters, residents, shoppers and visitors, but should contribute to the quality of the streetscape.
9. Parking facilities should be designed to contribute to an attractive appearance of the streetscape and to provide customers with convenient access to the building.



Since a primary objective of this plan is to support the City's redevelopment goals and *Destination Downtown* directives, the first step in the work process was to document and analyze existing conditions and City policy. The map on this page summarizes the downtown's major land use and circulation structure. For the circulation network, the darker blue indicates heavier traffic. The network pattern begins to suggest which streets are the most visible for motorists and transit riders. The black dashed lines indicate designated pedestrian streets with special design standards in *Destination Downtown* and the Tacoma Dome Area Plan. They, along with the sidewalk noted in red, suggest where the most important pedestrian areas are. The blue dashed circles denote potential gateway locations, and the various pastel patches indicate areas with relatively consistent land use and design character. As the analysis suggests, there are gaps between these districts that must be bridged if the downtown is to be perceived as a whole and function as a unit.



Background Analysis: Streetscape Quality

Before developing a streetscape plan, it is important to identify those streets that already have a strong design identity and high levels of activity. The map on this page indicates levels of streetscape quality based on subjective criteria. Although it is not a scientific analysis, it does suggest that certain downtown areas already have relatively attractive street settings. However, wide sections of the downtown have relatively low-quality streetscapes that could benefit greatly from enhancement. Besides being useful in setting priorities for improvements, such an analysis is informative because an attractive streetscape setting has been shown to be a substantial incentive for private business and building development.



An excellent quality streetscape, indicated with red color on the map.



A poor quality streetscape, indicated with light yellow color on the map.



CHAPTER 2: General Principles

Design Concept



This plan's design concept translates the project objectives into a comprehensive strategy which is the basis for the individual street design recommendations. The fundamental objectives driving this effort are:

■ Induce Development and Redevelopment

Destination Downtown, the City's downtown land use development code, calls for a vibrant commercial core surrounded by livable neighborhoods and a mix of institutional, public, and commercial uses around the Union Depot/UWT/Convention Center area. The plan seeks to enhance the downtown's development setting and indicate to developers what to expect for a given site.

■ Promote Safe Multi-Modal Circulation

Downtown streets must provide for pedestrian, bicycle, bus, rail transit, auto, and commercial truck circulation. Pedestrian safety and comfort are especially important. Transit mobility is also critical, and auto movement and parking must be considered.

■ Reinforce Downtown's Identity

Downtown Tacoma has several unique urban design assets, including identifiable districts, a redeveloping waterfront, a new UWT campus, museums, the Convention Center, and other attractions. This plan focuses on creating a varied mix of corridors, gateways, and activity nodes to enhance and link these assets and reinforce the downtown's overall identity.

The plan's concept addressed the above objectives by establishing a hierarchical classification of streets, gateways, and activity nodes based on the uses, local conditions, and type of development envisioned. Recommendations for individual street designs respond to this classification and the following concept elements:

1. Create the missing links that tie diverse districts together.

Tacoma's downtown is emerging as a multidimensional assemblage of different districts, each with its own special activities and character. Public and private efforts, including the new LINK light rail line, the UWT campus, museums, Convention Center, waterfront redevelopment, and redevelopment in historic districts, has heightened the downtown's vitality and diversity. However, there are gaps between these special areas that must be connected to achieve a unified downtown. The proposed streetscape design plan recommends high visibility improvements for key "signature" and "connecting" streets. Along critical east-west links, including S. 7th, 9th, 11th, 15th, and 21st Streets, opportunities for view enhancements and activity nodes are identified.



General Principles Design Concept

2. Create a safe, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

Pedestrian activity is crucial to any downtown. This plan focuses on providing different pedestrian amenities for different streets, depending on the pedestrian activity and neighboring land uses. For example, in the commercial core and on pedestrian-oriented streets designated in *Destination Downtown*, where there is a lot of pedestrian activity, amenities and safety features are recommended, including curb bulbs, pedestrian lights, special paving, landscaping, banners, and street furniture. In the residential areas, varied street trees and planting strips are emphasized for a more traditional residential character.

3. Reinforce the cohesion and identity of special areas.

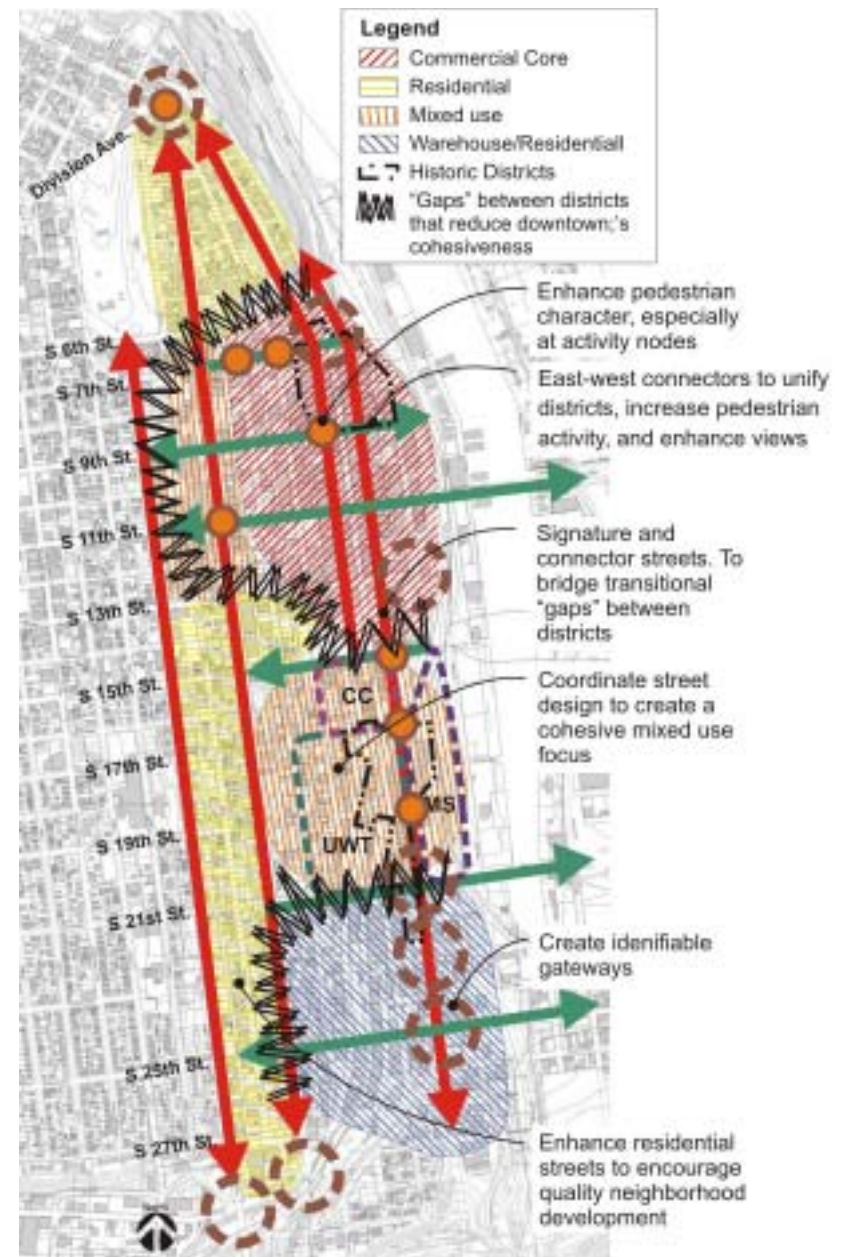
The plan includes recommendations to coordinate various development efforts for greater effectiveness. For example, the area encompassing the Convention Center, UWT, museums, and the Union Depot/Warehouse Historic Special Review District is rapidly becoming one of the downtown's most active and diverse nodes. In addition to providing links to the rest of downtown, this plan recommends continued efforts to ensure that the various streetscapes in this area help to unify and increase the compatibility between the various elements. Likewise, street design recommendations for residential areas and historic districts are intended to strengthen their cohesiveness.

4. Increase the identity of highly visible streets and gateways.

The plan identifies "signature streets" that should be enhanced with high-profile streetscape features. Prominent gateways at vehicular entry points are also identified as having high priority opportunities for artwork or signage features.

5. Establish an efficient, cost-effective street elements system.

The plan recommends an approach to selecting and locating street elements, including pedestrian lighting, curb bulbs, banners, special paving, street furniture, artwork, signage, and landscaping. By selecting elements that are most appropriate for local conditions, locating such elements where they are most effective, and reducing the number of different styles and types of street elements, the City can reduce maintenance costs and increase design quality.



General Principles Streetscape Elements



Street elements include lighting, furniture, paving, signage, signature features, artwork, street trees, and landscaping. The Downtown Tacoma Streetscape Plan recommends that street elements be used to perform a variety of functions, including:

- Provide for the safety and comfort of pedestrians, motorists, and other persons using the street.
- Accentuate or call attention to a particular location or district.
- Visually unify or organize a streetscape or district.
- Add an amenity or attraction.
- Enhance a street or district's identity.

The use of various street elements depends on the street conditions. For example, street furniture is recommended in the areas with high pedestrian volume or where pedestrian traffic is to be encouraged, and large artwork pieces are obviously more effective in highly visible locations. The streetscape element recommendations for the individual streets are presented in the third chapter, "Individual Street Recommendations," and are based on a strategic approach to street element selection. This section describes the strategy or rationale behind the individual street recommendations.

In *Destination Downtown*, historic district streetscapes, including banners and signage, are subject to review by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (Sections 13.07.020 and 13.07.080 of the Tacoma Municipal Code). Guidelines for streetscape improvements are included in the proposed (as of January 2003) *Downtown Tacoma Historic Districts Design Guidelines*. Those working on streetscape improvement proposals should contact the City of Tacoma Historic Preservation Officer within the City's Economic Development Department about historic district design review procedures.



General Principles **Artwork**

Tacoma already has a distinguished tradition of public art, ranging from the monumental Chihuly Bridge of Glass to the masks on Broadway. While this plan does not make any specific recommendations for artwork, some priority locations are identified as “gateways,” “triangles,” and “activity nodes.” Artwork is usually installed at a single location. For this streetscape plan, it might be useful to consider an art installation that consists of several pieces or a linear element that extends down a street corridor.



Chihuly Bridge of Glass.



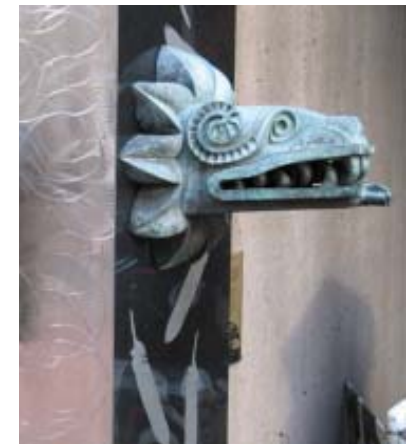
Chihuly Bridge of Glass.



Art emblems.

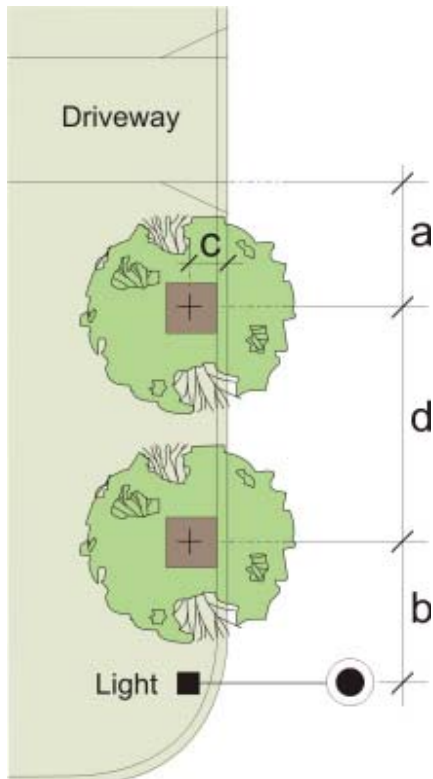


Broadway artwork.



Broadway masks.

General Principles Street Trees



Typical spacing dimensions:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| a. Feet to driveway | 5' minimum |
| b. Tree to street light | 10' minimum |
| c. Setback from curb to trunk | 3' minimum |
| d. Average tree-to-tree spacing: | |
| Large trees | 30' average |
| Medium trees | 25' average |
| Small trees | 15' minimum |

Tree Species Selection

Effective street tree selection depends on a number of factors, including horticultural conditions, available space (and the presence of overhead wires), nursery stock availability, and desired characteristics: size, shape, quality of shade, hardiness, growth rate, and foliage and blossom characteristics. Street tree selection, especially large plantings of uniform trees, should be carefully considered after a thorough study of local conditions and project objectives. The selection should be made during the street design process, since the type of tree(s) selected can have a great impact on overall street design.

In this plan, the exact tree species are not specified for a number of streets. For example, the plan recommends that one or more distinctive tree types be selected to unify the Tacoma Avenue corridor, but the exact specie(s) is not specified. This allows the designers and public participants of that project to consider a variety of options during the design process. In other cases, the logical street tree choice is more apparent. For instance, infill plantings of sweet gums are recommended for Market Street to complement and extend those already planted. Since this plan was done without the benefit of a horticultural or subsurface examination, suggested species should be reviewed by a landscape architect or horticultural specialist prior to installation. In most cases, the most important characteristics of future street trees are listed.

In some cases it would be useful for the street tree specie for a given street to be designated so that when a property owner is required to install trees as part of a development, the type would already be known. However, if the street design includes a uniform tree planting, it might be preferable to plant all the trees at one time. In that case, the City should consider mechanisms to allow a developer to contribute to the future plantings in lieu of planting immediately.

Street Tree Management Program

This plan strongly recommends that the City establish a "city arborist" or "urban forestry" program to oversee tree selection, installation, irrigation standards, and management. Such a program would greatly improve tree health and longevity and reduce maintenance and construction costs due to unsafe, inappropriate, or unhealthy trees. It would also be useful for the City to establish a list of acceptable street trees for different conditions, such as planting environment or presence of overhead wires, and a policy on pruning and maintenance. Besides adhering to the recommendations in this plan, the street program should be aimed at ensuring human safety, enhancing the overall health of the "urban forest," reducing maintenance costs where feasible, and enhancing the comfort of pedestrians and the aesthetic qualities of the downtown.



General Principles Street Trees

Adjacent Paving, Grates and Landscaping

Street trees need adequate air and moisture to their roots in order to thrive. Some horticulturists recommend at least 64 square feet of open earth (with or without a grate) or porous pavement, such as unit pavers or other treatment that allows air and water to penetrate the earth. The grass or landscaped planting strips recommended for some streets, such as the residential streets, along Yakima Avenue, and on portions of Tacoma Avenue, provide favorable planting conditions. However, in more intense urban environments, the need for pedestrian walking area does not allow for large open planting areas. In such cases, it is recommended that the tree be grated and at least 32 square feet of unit pavers be installed adjacent to the tree pit. In areas where the City determines there is not heavy pedestrian traffic, hardy low shrubs or ground cover may be substituted for tree grates. Low shrubs are recommended in portions of curb bulbs not directly in the walking path. (Please see the recommended curb bulb design for Pacific Avenue in Chapter 3.)

Some downtown streets are “vaulted,” with an air space below them. Where trees are called for on vaulted sidewalks, the plan recommends extending the curbs at intersections to form curb bulbs and provide planting space. Planter boxes for trees are not recommended unless direct irrigation and adequate soil space can be provided as prescribed by an arborist.

Decorative street tree grates, such as those used on the LINK corridor, may be employed in specific street improvement projects. However, special castings can be expensive compared to their visual impact. A standard, easily replaced grate with knock-out rings to allow the trunk to grow, such as the one illustrated at right, is recommended. As an alternative, if the City wants to add an individual touch, a “City of Tacoma” tree grate in 3’x3’ and 4’x4’ sizes could be designed and cast locally.

Other landscaping is encouraged where there are adequate resources or commitment to maintain it. Broadway provides an excellent example of the benefits of an integrated landscaping street design scheme. Hanging baskets are also encouraged when part of a professionally installed and maintained program.



Tree with grate in intense urban environment.



Planting strip with tree.

General Principles Lighting



Street lighting, especially pedestrian street lighting, can be an effective means to increase security, encourage pedestrian activity, and add a distinctive character to a street or district. Special light fixtures also represent a substantial initial expense and ongoing maintenance and operational costs. For this reason, it is recommended that special street lights be located only in areas where they most effectively enhance safety, visual character, and/or pedestrian ambience. For example, special lighting is recommended on Pacific Avenue and Tacoma Avenue to unify those “signature” streetscapes, in historic districts to reinforce the areas’ historic character, and on key east-west streets to enhance pedestrian movement on important corridors.

This plan also recommends that the number of fixture types be limited in order to reduce the number of parts the City must supply and maintain. The City should retain the special fixtures that have proven efficient and that have been installed as part of a unified program. The historic lights on Pacific Avenue, the “funnel” lights used on Broadway and Commerce, the historic lights used on Opera Alley, and the historic residential lights (with concrete poles) fall into this category and are illustrated below.

Where special pedestrian lights are not recommended, the City’s standard high-efficiency cut-off lights, typically on a 30-foot pole, should be provided.



Pacific Avenue



Funnel



Historic District



Historic Residential
(where existing)

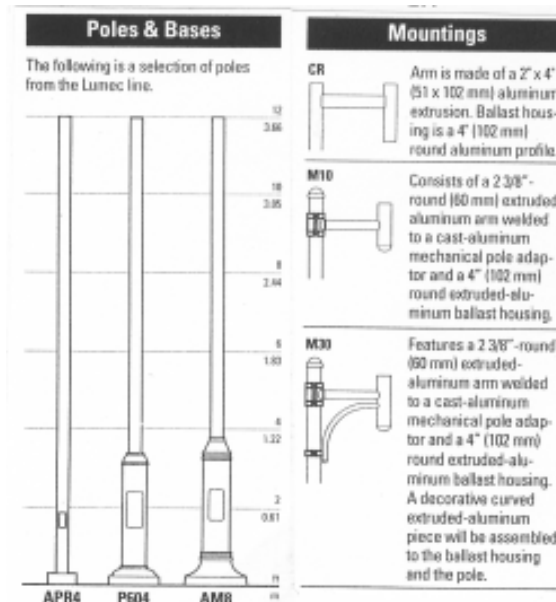
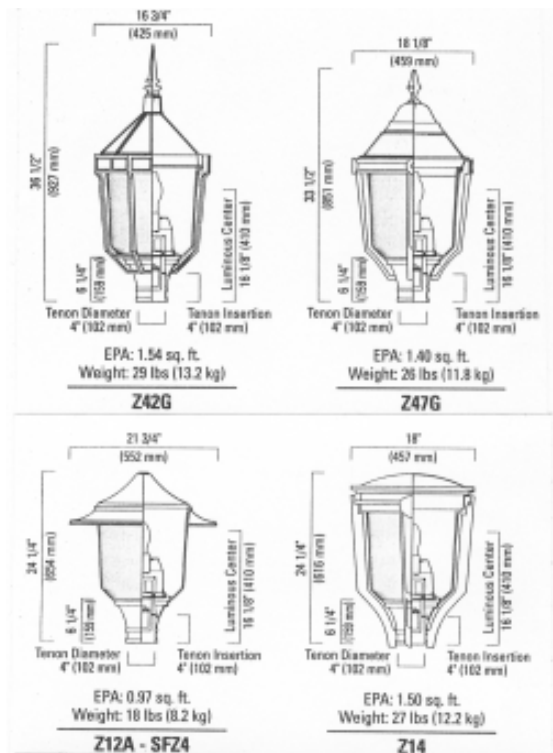
Four recommended light types.



General Principles Lighting

In addition, the City should select one efficient, readily available pedestrian light system with a standard luminaire and wiring component that also features several different pole and housing options. The City can then provide a variety of different light types, all with the same lamp and internal components. The fact that the replaceable parts will be all the same will greatly simplify replacement and repair. Care should be taken in the selection of the manufacturer to guarantee a stable price and availability over time. City Light, which serves the City of Seattle and some neighboring communities, has taken this approach and offers four different pole and housing styles, ranging from historic to contemporary.

In all cases, light pole colors and attachments—such as banners or emblems—offer an opportunity for additional enhancement of a signature streetscape design. Historic lights should retain their original finish and color. (See the “Signage and Signature Features” section below.)



Some manufacturers such as ZED/Lumec offer a variety of light, pole, and mounting options that all employ the same high efficiency luminaire. By limiting the number of street light types using the same luminaire lamp and wiring, the City can allow a variety of options and still keep maintenance costs low.

General Principles

Street Furniture



Newspaper Boxes (Racks)

Large numbers of newspaper boxes on downtown streets can impede pedestrians and visually clutter the streetscape. This is especially true if the boxes are haphazardly located and in poor repair, as is too often the case in many American cities. In response, communities have explored a variety of ways to alleviate this problem. Newspaper racks that enclose a number of boxes and screen the backs of boxes from view can reduce the problem, but they are expensive to install and manage and do not prevent a “rogue” newspaper distributor from placing racks elsewhere. Often the most unsightly boxes are not the mainstream newspapers but the free advertising publications. Ordinances to regulate newspaper boxes often run up against at least perceived First Amendment rights and strong opposition from newspaper vendors.

In many cases, the most successful solution is to work cooperatively with the major news carriers in a program to place all (or nearly all) publications into standardized, multiple-box cabinets that are maintained by the major newspapers. The Seattle Times, for example, has worked with the City of Seattle in the downtown and with some neighborhood business districts to organize and manage newspaper vending programs in lieu of a specific ordinance. The Times provides space for publications in multiple-box units and maintains the units. For example, the Times representative has been working with the Citizens Committee overseeing the current University Way improvements in Seattle. When the bulk of the street construction is completed, the representative and the Committee will locate multiple-box units sufficient to accommodate applicable publications.

Street furniture generally consists of features such as benches and seating, bicycle racks, waste receptacles, newspaper racks, public drinking fountains, kiosks, public telephones, and other amenities. In this plan, street furniture is recommended in locations where pedestrian activity is encouraged, although property owners, institutions, or other interest groups may install appropriate furniture to serve a specific use or need. The design of street furniture elements can vary widely, from ornate historic styles to utilitarian, contemporary or other styles. As in the case of street lighting, distinctively styled or colored furniture can reinforce the design identity of a particular street or district. For example, the benches, lights, and low fences along Broadway give that street a distinct identity. On the other hand, in some cases street furniture with different styles can add interest and reinforce the design character of a particular building. The recommendations in the next chapter, “Individual Street Recommendations,” identify where street furniture is recommended as a high priority and whether or not a distinctive style should be used.

Most of the existing furniture installed during the last decade is appropriate. However, the old concrete planters, tubs, and benches should be removed and replaced with more appropriate fixtures.

The City should identify a preferred set of standard street furniture designs that can be used as a “default” design when no distinctive style is desired. This set of designs should be readily available from different manufacturers and be functional and durable. This way, the number of items that the City will need to replace or repair over time will be reduced. Then, when a waste receptacle or bicycle rack is needed, it will be easy to select an appropriate model.

In historic districts, the *Downtown Tacoma Historic District Design Guidelines* apply. Guideline K-3 states:

Street furniture that adds interest and comfort to the pedestrian experience is encouraged. Permanent street furniture should feature a design character compatible with the district’s architecture and period of significance. Contemporary and utilitarian styled elements such as bicycle racks may be appropriate provided they are simple and not designed to attract undue attention.

The “default” designs on the following page are acceptable in historic districts.



General Principles Street Furniture

The illustrated street furniture fixtures are suggested as standards for downtown Tacoma. Other fixtures may be recommended to special areas or as part of a special street improvement. Unless there is a reason to the contrary, however, providing a set of similar fixtures throughout the downtown will help unify the street environment and reduce the number of furniture elements City crews will have to repair and replace.

The suggested fixtures are fabricated by a number of manufacturers, have proven their durability and compliment both historic and contemporary architectural settings. The bicycle rack accommodates two bicycles and is generally favored over the multiple bicycle rails because its smaller size fits within the limited sidewalk area.

In all cases, steel surfaces should be galvanized and then powder coated (or alternate durable coating such as “DuraCoat”.)



Recommended bicycle rack.



Recommended bench style.



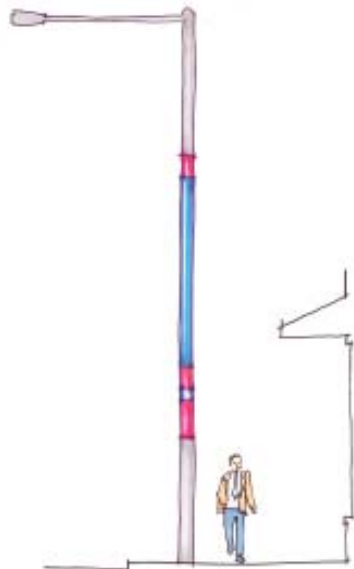
Recommended trash receptacle.

Note: The “default” color of all painted furniture is black. Other colors may be used if part of a larger streetscape improvement.

General Principles Signage & Signature Features



Example of a banner.



Example of a vandal-resistant painted pole.

This section covers a broad spectrum of elements ranging from gateway and directional signs to banners, decorative markers, signature color schemes, and pedestrian-oriented wayfinding systems.

Gateway signs that greet a person entering the downtown can take a variety of forms, from symbolic artwork to the traditional “Welcome” signs. Because the design of such signs is highly individual, depending on the location and purpose of the sign and the people working on its design, this plan only identifies locations where such signs would be most appropriate and does not make specific recommendations for the sign or signage system itself. It is recommended that the City consider establishing a comprehensive system of gateway elements or signs that could be implemented over time. A standardized directional sign might also be a means of subtly unifying the downtown’s identity.

As has been demonstrated in downtown Tacoma, banners are a useful and attractive means of adding visual interest and unifying a streetscape or district. Banners are recommended as an option, particularly on the signature streets and high pedestrian activity areas. More permanent emblems or sculpture mounted on light poles, such as the sheet metal sculptures around Broadway and 9th Street, are especially attractive and durable. One key to an effective banner program is a substantial mounting system that maintains its alignment in the wind and weather. The galvanized steel straps that are commonly used as an expedient tend to deteriorate and loosen over time. The City should establish standards for banners and brackets to facilitate directions to organizations wishing to install them.

In historic districts, the *Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines* apply. Guideline J-12 states:

Banners that are part of an institutional (e.g., University of Washington), cooperative, or public effort may be allowed on light poles. Such banners are considered to be temporary if they are replaced at least every two years. The support brackets for the banners must be constructed to not damage the light poles. “Strap-on” banner brackets and other temporary attachments are not acceptable.

Painting light poles and street furniture with a distinctive signature color is an effective way to enhance a street’s identity. Painting poles, especially if new poles are to be installed, is recommended wherever a distinctive identity is desired. Another option to painting the whole pole is to paint a portion of the pole, perhaps from about 8 to 16 feet above grade. This puts the splash of color in the most visible—but vandal-resistant—part of the pole. For a more decorative look, sheet metal “arm bands” can be applied with a variety of designs or color combinations. Historic lights, however, should retain original finish and color.



General Principles Signage & Signature Features

The City, along with other partners, is currently installing pedestrian wayfinding signs that help guide visitors to downtown attractions. The current wayfinding sign model works well for pedestrians but includes too many messages for motorists, who need to make quick decisions in traffic. Therefore, signs directed toward motorists should contain no more than three destinations.

Attractions to be identified include the Municipal Building, Theater District, museums (perhaps individual museums), UWT, the Convention Center, Foss Waterway access, Tacoma Dome Area, the Library, and the Downtown Core. (See also the Activity Nodes map on page 45 for wayfinding signs.) Recommended locations for pedestrian signs include:

- All LINK stations, including the Tacoma Dome station.
- Key bus transfer points.
- The museum corridor/Union Station vicinity.
- UWT entries on Pacific Avenue and, if pedestrian volumes warrant, Market Street.
- Convention Center entries at Broadway/S. 15th Street and Pacific/S. 19th Street.
- Tacoma Avenue and S. 11th Street.
- Near S. 7th Street and St. Helens Avenue.
- Broadway and S. 11th Street.

Locations for motorist-oriented signs include:

- “A” Street at S. 13th Street (to direct motorists straight ahead to get to the core).
- “A” Street at S. 9th Street (to direct motorists left to get to the core).
- Pacific Avenue and S. 15th Street (for motorists emerging from the ramp).
- Pacific Avenue and S. 26th Street (directing motorists to the Dome).
- Pacific Avenue and S. 25th Street (to the core, museums, etc., and the Dome).
- Tacoma Avenue and S. 21st Street (to UWT and the bridge).
- Tacoma Avenue and Division Street (to the core, museums, etc.).

Some locations may indicate just one destination. In these cases, it may be useful to have a sign design of the same color, material, and type face that can be mounted on a pole to reduce costs and allow easier placement. The sign mounting should feature a pipe frame mount so that it is in the same design family as the ground-mounted signs.



Example of wayfinding signage used downtown.



Example of possible “arm bands.”

General Principles

Multimodal Transportation



While the primary focus of this plan is on streetscape qualities, it is understood that the recommendations are intended to support the safe, efficient, multi-modal transportation mandated in *Destination Downtown*. While only a few of the individual street design recommendations presented here substantially change current street travel lane configurations, applicable transportation plans and appropriate staff should be consulted prior to implementing improvements in order to avoid conflicts. Also, the following general principles should apply unless the City determines otherwise because of local conditions.

■ **Facilitate transit mobility.**

Street improvements should generally not impede bus movement. The curb radii at intersections with bus routes should be dimensioned to allow necessary bus turning movements. Street trees should not be located where they would conflict with riders entering or exiting busses. When street improvements are being implemented, special attention should be given to making waiting areas safe and comfortable. Street designers should consult with Pierce Transit to ensure that proposed improvements support transit objectives.

■ **Facilitate bicycle movement.**

During the design of specific street improvements, designers should consult with applicable bicycle plans to identify opportunities to improve bicycle access, safety, and parking.

■ **Explore various lane channelization options.**

While this plan generally adheres to existing travel lane configurations, nothing in the recommendations is meant to discourage consideration of a different lane configuration for a specific street, provided such a configuration supports this plan's objectives. For example, experience in some cities has shown that replacing a four-lane configuration (two travel lanes in each direction) with two through lanes and a center turn lane is very beneficial on inner city arterials with lots of turning movements and short blocks. The three-lane configuration then allows space for a planted median, bicycle lanes, or widened sidewalks. Some downtown Tacoma streets seem to be much wider than is necessary for current lane configurations. Revising the lane channelization in these cases may allow a variety of streetscaping or multimodal circulation options.

■ **Optimize on-street parking.**

On-street parking is a valuable resource for local businesses, and it actually enhances pedestrian safety by providing a barrier between the sidewalk and traffic. During the design of specific streets, the striping of parking spaces, loading zones, and other curb-side areas should be considered to maximize efficiency.



General Principles Multimodal Transportation

■ Review engineering systems during design.

Of course, the location and status of engineering systems, such as utilities, vaults and storm water drainage structures, should be investigated before installation of any improvements that could affect them. Beyond this check, it is always important to determine if engineering systems will need to be replaced in the foreseeable future. It may be that big savings can be achieved by bundling improvements into a coordinated package. The undergrounding (or rerouting to a back alley) of overhead wires should also be considered.

■ Use appropriate traffic signal systems, street signs, and hardware.

The size, type, and location of traffic signals, poles, mast arms, and signal controllers can significantly affect streetscape quality, as well as human safety. Generally speaking, the size of signal hardware, including poles, mast arms and back plates, should be minimized to avoid a suburban arterial or highway character. Post-top signals should be considered, provided that MUTCD standards are met. Signals and signs hung from span wires should be avoided. The location of signal controllers should be carefully considered to minimize impacts to pedestrian movement and visibility.

The quality of street hardware, such as the mounting of street signs, brackets, and pole bases, has a big and underappreciated impact. The City should not use galvanized “packing straps” to attach signs and brackets to poles in favor of tapped mounting holes, more substantial brackets, or special mountings provided by pole manufacturers. Special brackets for street signs might be considered as a way of increasing design continuity.

■ Consider traffic-calming measures.

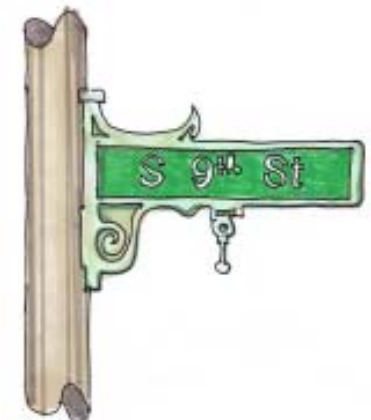
Traffic calming measures, such as intersection traffic circles, chicanes, or raised crosswalks, may be appropriate in low-volume residential streets to prevent excessive through traffic, discourage trucks, or establish a more residential character.

■ Continue interdepartmental and interagency coordination.

As noted above, street design intersects with numerous comprehensive and technical design efforts. Coordination with departments, agencies, transit providers, and interest groups is important. The Mobility Task Force should be consulted where appropriate.



Post-top or side-mounted signals are more urban in character than large mast arms.



Example of a special bracket to complement Pacific Avenue street lights. Compare with banner attachments shown in the “Lighting” section photo.

General Principles Special Paving



Brick paving is used as an accent on many downtown sidewalks and is appropriate where special paving is indicated.



Sometimes small but unique pavement artwork piece can be as effective as extensive pavement patterns.



Curb bulbs are recommended in several high-pedestrian areas.

Because replacing sidewalks can be quite expensive, this plan generally recommends special sidewalk paving only where heavy pedestrian activity is envisioned or where the sidewalk is to be replaced for another reason. Often the decision to replace sidewalks is tied to a particular opportunity, such as the construction of the Sound Transit Light Rail Line. Another opportunity may occur in the UWT campus/Convention Center/museum district.

Because they cover a much smaller area, special crosswalk pavements are generally less expensive than full sidewalk replacement. They also have the advantage of calling motorists' attention to areas where there is high pedestrian traffic. Priority locations for special crosswalk pavements are indicated on the plan, usually at key pedestrian intersections.

Sidewalk extensions (curb bulbs) are recommended for a number of streets. Sidewalk extensions can be a particularly effective way to improve streetscape quality by reducing pedestrian crossing distance and providing more space for lights, trees, street furniture, and landscaping at highly visible locations. They also screen (and protect) cars parked at the curb side. Low (2-foot to 3-foot high) landscaping, such as the planters on Broadway, in particular enhances the design value of sidewalk extensions. Distinctive street trees planted in curb bulbs can unify a street corridor because the trees are in highly visible locations and can be seen in a regular pattern as the eye looks down the street. For example, on Pacific Avenue, sidewalk extensions with signature lights and trees would help to visually unify this long, prominent corridor. Bulbs are also recommended for key east-west connectors, such as 7th and 9th Streets, because they will aid pedestrian movement and because many of these sidewalks have underground vaults, so that street trees would otherwise not be possible.

Bulbs are particularly effective on streets with angled parking, such as portions of Tacoma Avenue. However, where there is angled parking, elements in the bulb should be located to make sure that the driver backing out of the stall has a clear view of oncoming traffic.

In historic districts, paving should be concrete with a traditional broom finish or blended to match existing historic sidewalks in surrounding areas. Existing granite curbs should be maintained or reconstructed where feasible. Decorative artwork in the pavement is acceptable if approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, especially where there is a documented historic precedent for a similar feature or to coordinate with areawide street improvements.

Unless otherwise specified, standard concrete with a light broom finish and 2'x2' scoring is recommended. Stamped pattern concrete is most appropriate in medians and crosswalks where unit paving is problematic. Glass blocks are appropriate in vaulted sidewalks.



CHAPTER 3: Individual Street Recommendations

Street Classification

As noted in the “Design Concept” section of Chapter 2, this plan classifies Tacoma’s downtown streets into five categories for streetscape treatment:

1. **Signature Streets** – Streets with high visibility, thoroughfare function, and importance to the downtown identity. The design for these streets generally calls for identity-building and unifying street elements. Signature streets may include important pedestrian areas.
2. **Core Commercial Streets** – Streets in or near the downtown core, generally with high pedestrian activity. Recommendations for these streets generally encourage higher intensity development and pedestrian amenities.
3. **Connector Streets** – Streets that traverse different districts or the edge of districts. These streets often feature unique conditions or opportunities and are important for bridging “gaps” in the downtown.
4. **Residential Streets** – Streets with predominantly residential uses and zoned primarily for residential development. Low-key streetscapes with planting strips and landscaping that responds to individual properties is generally recommended. However, a few key streets in residential areas, including St. Helens Avenue and Stadium Way, merit special design treatment.
5. **Warehouse Streets** – Streets with industrial or heavy commercial activities and industrial/residential zoning. Recommendations for these streets respond to the need for truck access and low visibility. Some areas within the district may have a higher level of streetscape to respond to redevelopment and pedestrian activity.

This section presents recommendations for individual streets according to their classification. In addition, the plan identifies prominent gateways, activity nodes, and important triangles resulting from diagonal road alignments. Streets in the Tacoma Dome Area are covered separately after these elements because there is a separate subarea plan for that district, and several street improvements are under way.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Pacific Ave. (between S. 6th and S. 30th Streets)



Existing context:

- Mix of uses and architecture styles.
- Unique character of historic lights.
- Main north-south connector.
- Entry to downtown from south.
- Missing link between the Core Commercial District and the area around the Convention Center and Museum District.
- Two lanes each way with a mix of parallel and angle parking.



Pacific Ave. looking north from S. 9th St.



Pacific Ave. looking north from S. 11th St.



Pacific Ave. looking south from S. 13th St.



Pacific Ave. looking south from S. 17th St.



Pacific Ave. looking north from S. 26th St.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Pacific Ave.

(between S. 6th and S. 30th Streets)



LINK Light rail along Pacific Ave.

Objectives/Concept (in general):

- Create a signature street acting as a gateway and a connector with downtown.
- Visually unify the whole corridor with historic lights and curb bulbs with signature trees and crosswalks to create the continuous rhythm.
- Develop a distinctive design character at curb bulbs.
- Reinforce the character of historic districts.

Objectives/Concept (Convention Center, UWT, museum area):

- Plan this area as a unified focus that ties to the rest of downtown.
- Coordinate street environments for greater use compatibility and district cohesiveness.
- Reinforce the character of historic districts.

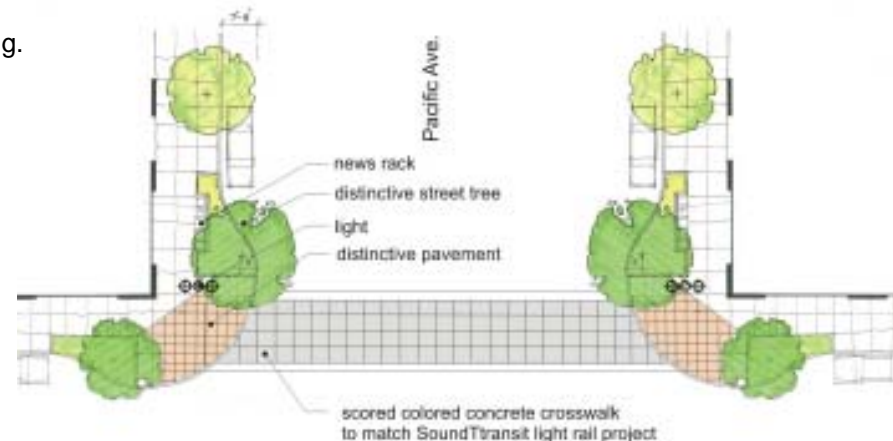


Twin lamp historic light commonly used along Pacific Ave.

Design Recommendations:

Pacific Avenue has a strong statement to be a signature street with unique building styles in different scales and large trees. This plan recommends maintaining historic street lights and introducing curb bulbs with uniform trees to enhance the visual continuity throughout the corridor.

Street Configuration:	Two lanes each way with parallel/angle parking.
Lights:	Twin-lamp historic pedestrian light.
Trees:	Uniform trees, if possible; distinctive trees at curb bulbs such as Tulip Tree, <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> , or Green Beech, <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> .
Furniture:	Distinctive elements at curb bulbs.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+bulbs+trees.
Paving:	Distinctive bulb and crosswalk pavements.
Coordination:	Designers from UWT, Convention Center, and museums need to coordinate to assure a comprehensive approach for streetscape in the district, especially along the edges of districts and projects.



Recommended curb bulbs with distinctive trees, paving and crosswalk patterns.

Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Tacoma Ave.



Pedestrian Area (between 9th and 15th Streets)



Tacoma has a unique character considered as one of the signature streets. This plan focuses on unifying the street with uniform street trees and signature elements throughout the corridor. However, the street is divided into three sections based on street configuration, land uses, and pedestrian activity, so three treatments, unified through plantings, lighting, and signature treatment, are proposed.

Existing Context:

- Commercial/mixed-use with high pedestrian activities.
- High potential of new infill developments.
- One lane with angled parking on each side.

Objectives/Concept:

- In this section, create a pedestrian-friendly area consistent with the overall Tacoma Avenue design character.
- Create a signature street.
- Unify the street with signature tree species.



Pedestrian area on Tacoma Ave. looking north from S. 11th St.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane each way with varied parking as appropriate.
Lights:	Box and pedestrian light with perhaps colored poles and/or banners.
Trees:	Uniform plantings. Distinctive species, such as Red Horsechestnut, <i>Aesculus x carnea 'Brriottii'</i> .
Furniture:	Special elements such as benches and waste receptacles.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Standard sidewalk (concrete with a light broom finish and 2'x2' scoring pattern) with trees and landscaping at curb bulbs.
Paving:	Special paving may be effective on bulbs and crosswalks; special sidewalk paving may be possible if existing is removed.



Section shows recommended streetscape design and character in pedestrian area.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets Boulevard (between S. 6th & 9th and S. 15th & 21st St.) Tacoma Ave.

Existing Context:



Existing context of Tacoma Ave. south of S. 15th St. recommended for Boulevard with median.

- Residential/neighborhood mixed use.
- High potential for new infill developments.
- Few curb cuts.
- Two lanes each way+turning lane with parallel parking.

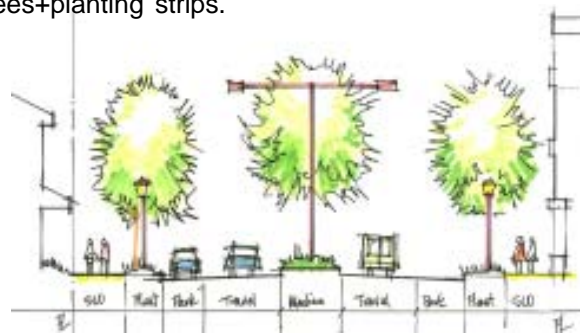
Objectives/Concept:

- Create an attractive and pleasant street; signature street.
- Provide safety and comfort for pedestrians with:
 - Median to give pedestrians a crossing refuge.
 - Planting strips to separate pedestrians from cars.
- Unify the street with uniform trees, lights, and signature color.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane with median and parallel parking on each side (pending for lane deduction analysis).
Lights:	Cobra at median and pedestrian light with color and signature elements at sidewalk.
Trees:	Uniform. Note: In median maybe plant a different species.
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees+planting strips.
Paving:	Standard.

Section shows recommended boulevard concept with median and other streetscape features.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Tacoma Ave.



Planting Strip (north of S. 6th St. and south of S. 21st St.)



Existing Context:

- Mix of residential uses.
- High potential for new infill developments.
- Many curb cuts (driveways).
- Two lanes with parallel and angled parking on each side.

Objectives/Concept:

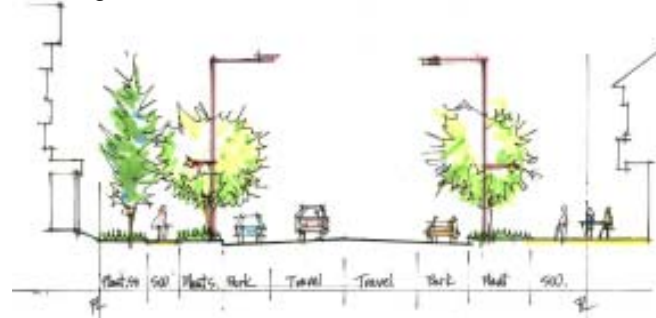
- Create a signature street.
- In this section, emphasize pedestrian safety and residential qualities, with wider planting strips and trees as a buffer between street and pedestrians and residential uses, and with pedestrian lights.
- Unify the length of Tacoma Avenue with uniform trees, lights, signature color, and homes/decorative elements.



Residential area on Tacoma Ave. north of S. 6th St.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	Two lanes with parallel parking on each side.
Lights:	Tacoma standard arterial (box) and pedestrian lights with color and signature elements.
Trees:	Uniform (same types for the whole corridor). A double row/staggered spacing of trees maybe possible because of wide planting strips.
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees+wide planting strips.
Paving:	Standard.



Section shows recommended streetscape character with wider planting strips, trees, and pedestrian light.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Yakima Ave.

(between S. 6th & 29th St.)

Existing Context:



Yakima Ave. with variety of large street trees.

- Attractive mix of uses.
- Variety of large trees with wide planting strips.
- Low pedestrian activities.
- Two lanes with parallel parking.
- High potential for new development.

Objectives/Concept:

- Allow street character to mirror use.
- Create an “urban arboretum” quality.
- Encourage a variety of large trees on existing wide planting strips along the corridor.



Yakima Ave. looking north from S. 11th St.



Existing wide planting strips allow large trees to grow.

Design Recommendations:

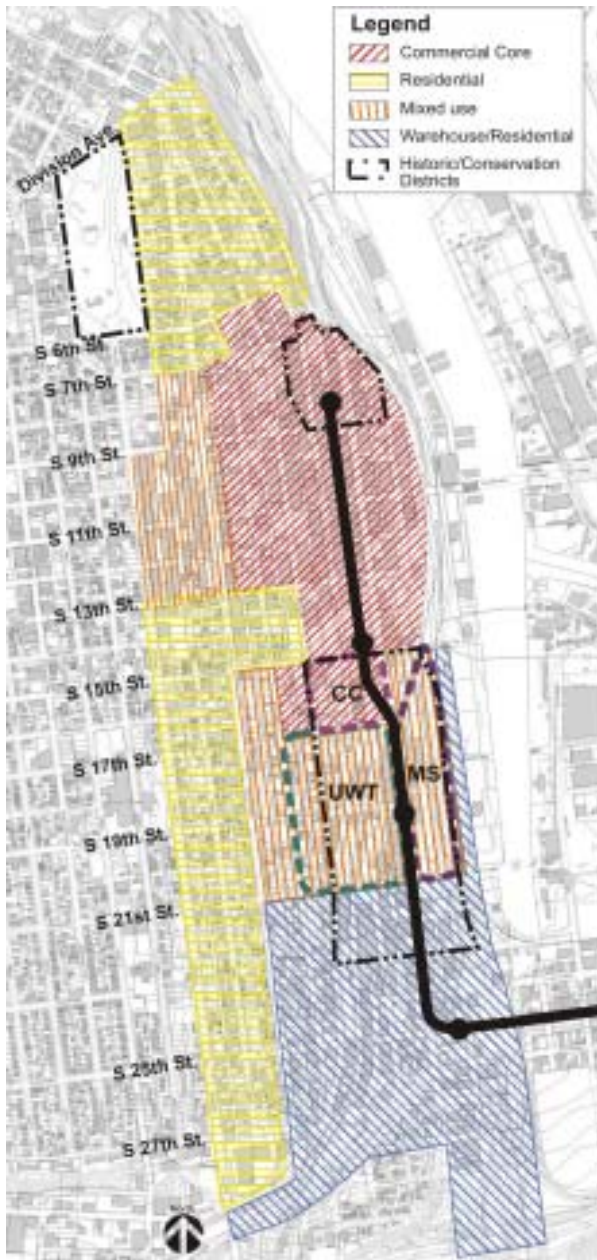
Yakima Avenue is one of the main north-south streets in downtown, connecting diverse districts together. Continuing planting large mixed tree types helps unify the street character while mirroring uses. While Yakima Avenue is a downtown edge and a signature street in terms of visibility, the recommendations are to build on existing character without a uniform treatment or change in character.

Street Configuration:	Two lanes with parallel parking.
Lights:	Standard arterial; paint poles with signature color or install banners or “armbands.” Retain and infill in-kind historic lights in Wright Park Historic area.
Trees:	Distinctive variety of large trees.
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+planting strips.



Individual Street Recommendations: Signature Streets

Sound Transit's LINK Light Rail Corridor



Existing Context:

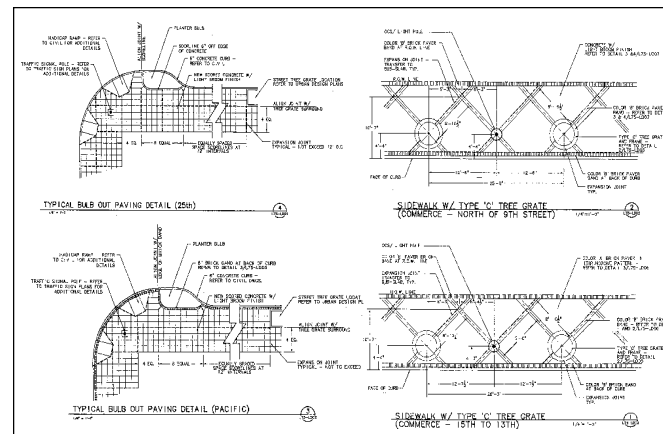
- Pacific Avenue is a signature street.
- Main public transportation mode.
- Five different stations along the corridor, with different characters and signature elements.
- Mix of street tree types.
- Commerce Avenue being substantially improved with extensive streetscape elements.

Objectives/Concept:

- Maintain street character defined by Sound Transit.
- Maintain historic light on Pacific Avenue.
- Tie into the Tacoma Dome Area streetscape.

Design Recommendations:

Follow the Sound Transit design. If the Commerce Street streetscape is improved beyond the LINK project limits, continue the LINK signature design elements.



Four different paving patterns used in four different districts along the LINK light rail line.



LINK light rail station in Dome District.



LINK light rail station in front of Union Station on Pacific Ave.



Paving used for Pierce Transit and LINK light rail project extending to side streets.

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Individual Street Recommendations: Core Commercial Streets

S. 7th St.

(between Tacoma & Broadway Ave.)

Existing Context:



S. 7th St. looking east from St. Helens St.

- Transition between residential and downtown Core Commercial.
- Potentially high pedestrian activity.
- Limited potential for redevelopment.
- One lane each way with parallel/angled parking.

Objectives/Concept:

- Make transition between commercial and residential character.
- Visually unify street with uniform, signature trees.
- Enhance pedestrian features at key intersections, including curb bulbs.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane each way with varied parking.
Lights:	Historic pedestrian light.
Trees:	Uniform, compact signature trees; coordinate with triangles. A distinctive, relatively columnar tree such as a Bowhall Red Maple, <i>Acer rubrum</i> "Bowhall," is suggested
Furniture:	Special elements at key intersections.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk and curb bulbs on S. 7th St.; remove planting strips.
Paving:	Special at key intersections.



S. 7th St. looking west from Broadway Ave.



S. 7th St. looking east to Spanish Steps.



Individual Street Recommendations: Core Commercial Streets

Broadway



Existing (between 9th and 15th Streets)



Existing Context:

- Mix of uses (hotel, commercial, office, residential).
- Unique Theater District character with funnel light.
- Unique streetscape character on Broadway between S. 9th and 15th St.
- Mix of tree types, with planting beds and rails.
- High pedestrian activity.
- Ample street furniture and art.
- Brick pavement accents.
- One lane each way with parallel and angled parking.
- Primary pedestrian street in *Destination Downtown*.



Broadway Ave. looking north from S. 11th St.



Broadway Ave. looking north from S. 11th St.



Contemporary pedestrian light used on Broadway Ave.



Existing streetscape elements on Broadway Ave.



Individual Street Recommendations: Core Commercial Streets

Proposed **Broadway**



Existing pedestrian amenities on Broadway Ave.

Objectives/Concept:

- Maintain existing character.
- Extend street design northward on Broadway and St. Helens to S. 7th Street to connect this important link.
- Remove existing planters between S. 7th and 9th Streets. If replaced, use designs compatible with the historic district character.
- Enhance the historic district character.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane each way with varied parking.
Lights:	Existing contemporary funnel light and historic pedestrian light in the Historic District.
Trees:	Mix of street tree types. (Retain healthy trees.)
Furniture:	Use existing on Broadway streetscape palette; replace old planters.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees+planting strips.



Portion of St. Helens looking south where Broadway character is recommended to extend.



Broadway Ave. looking north from S. 9th St.



Individual Street Recommendations: Core Commercial Streets

S. 9th & 11th St. (East of Yakima Ave.)



Existing Context:

- Key pedestrian cross streets, with vaulted sidewalks.
- High pedestrian activity.
- Good views to the east.
- Two lanes each way with parallel parking both sides.

Objectives/Concept:

- Visually unify the street with pedestrian lights and landscaping at curb bulbs.
- Enhance views.
- Create a prominent pedestrian corridor.



S. 9th St. with vaulted sidewalks.



S. 11th St. looking west from "A" St.



S. 11th St. looking east with view from Fawcett Ave.

Design Recommendations:

With vaulted sidewalk limiting trees to be planted, the recommendation emphasizes curb bulbs with columnar trees to help enhance the pedestrian atmosphere while maintaining the view corridor.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Street Configuration: | One lane each way with parallel parking on both sides. |
| Lights: | Cobra and pedestrian light. |
| Trees: | Columnar trees such as Columnar Norway Maple (<i>Acer platanoides</i> "Columnare") at curb bulbs with landscaping. |
| Furniture: | Kiosks and waste receptacles at curb bulbs. High priority for pedestrian directional signs. |
| Sidewalk Configuration: | Sidewalk with curb bulbs complement the paving and design character of adjacent north-south streets. |



Individual Street Recommendations: Core Commercial Streets "A" St.

(between S. 9th & 15th St.)

Existing Context:



"A" St. looking south from S. 11th St.

- Important vehicular entry to downtown, with varied lane and parking configurations.
- Variety of uses and streetscape features.
- Primary pedestrian street in *Destination Downtown*.

Objectives:

- Provide attractive entries into downtown.
- Unify the street with distinctive street trees.
- Encourage curb bulbs where possible.



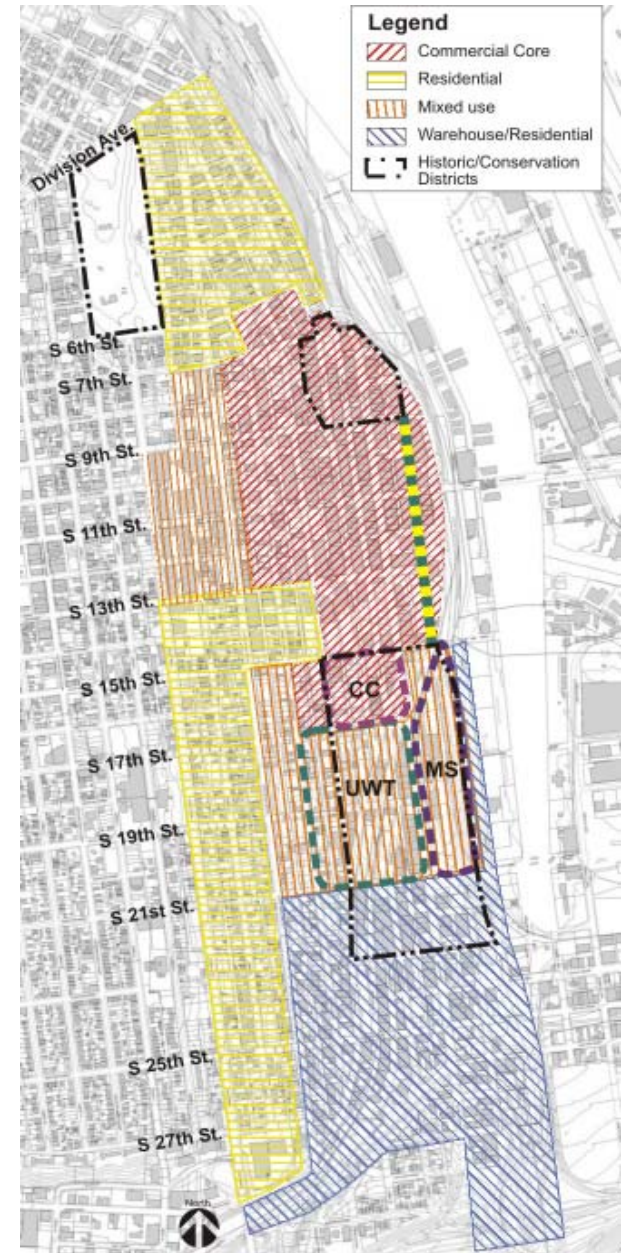
"A" St. looking north from S. 11th St.



"A" St. and S. 13th St.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	Varies.
Lights:	Cobra.
Trees:	Uniform, distinctive.
Furniture:	Relate to adjacent development or park.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Varies; sidewalk with curb bulbs on blocks with varied parking.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

S. 13th St.

(East of Yakima Ave.)



Existing Context:

- Heavy street traffic.
- One to two lanes each way with parallel parking.

Objectives/Concept:

- Soften heavy traffic with trees.
- Enhance visual experience with trees.



S. 13th St. looking east from Broadway Ave.



Existing gateway element at "A" St. intersection.



S. 13th St. looking west from Pacific Ave.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One to two lanes with parallel parking.
Lights:	Cobra.
Trees:	Uniform; columnar such as Pyramidal European Hornbeam, <i>Carpinus betulus "Fastigiata"</i> .
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk with trees.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

S. 15th St.

(East of Yakima Ave.)

Existing Context:



S. 15th St. looking west from Pacific Ave.

- Heavy street traffic.
- Main east-west access to the Convention Center.
- Good views.
- Two lanes each way with parallel parking.

Objectives/Concept:

- Maintain view corridor.
- Extend the Convention Center character to Tacoma Avenue.
- Soften heavy traffic.

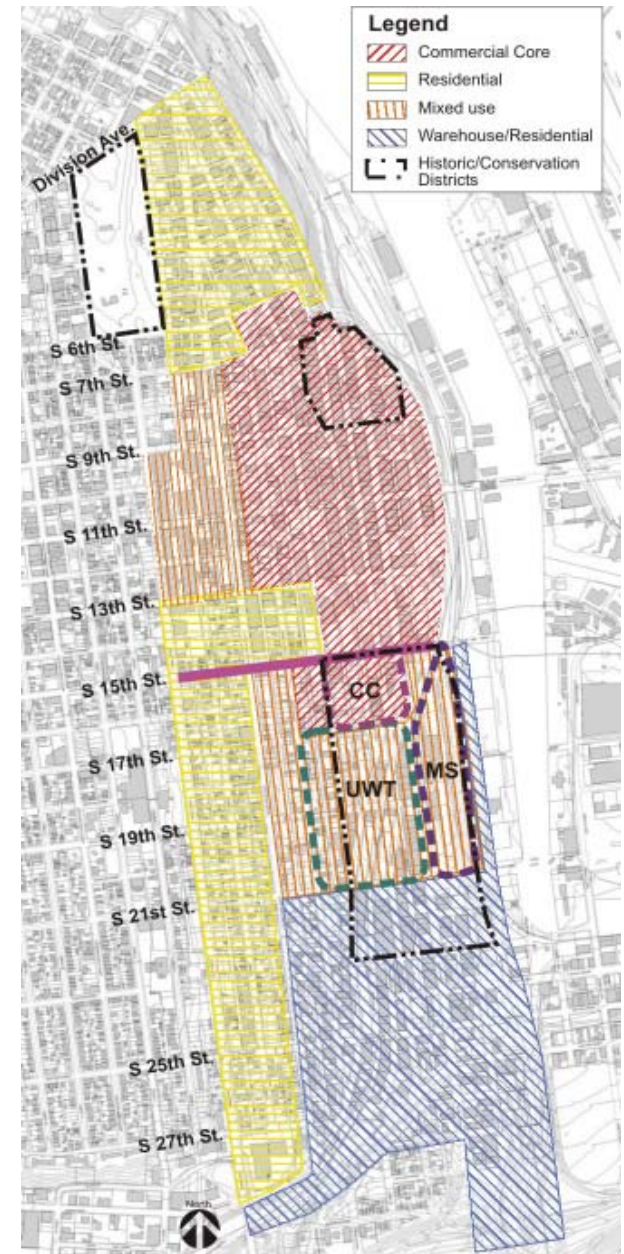
Note: The streetscape design for the Convention Center is currently being developed. Since the basic recommendation is to extend the center's character, specific recommendations cannot be made at this time.



Convention Center site looking west from Pacific Ave.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	Two lanes with parallel parking.
Lights:	Coordinate with the Convention Center project.
Trees:	Uniform; columnar (coordinate with the Convention Center).
Furniture:	Minimal, except pedestrian directional signs for visitors.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk with trees (see the Convention Center design).



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

Institutional/Cultural District



This area is where Convention Center, UWT campus, and museums are clustered together, creating a unique institutional and cultural district that enhances downtown's identity. This area is being developed for the past years and will continue to be developed in the future.

Existing Context:

- Unique institutional/cultural district.
- Several projects are under construction, including the Convention Center, Tacoma Museum of Art, UWT's buildings, and LINK light rail line on Pacific Avenue.
- Coordination is needed among adjacent projects.

Objectives/Concept:

- Designers from the Convention Center, UWT campus, museums, and LINK light rail need to work together on a comprehensive approach for streetscape in the district.
- Continuity of character is appropriate in unifying the street.
- Reinforce the historic district character.



S. 17th St. looking west, UWT campus is on the left, and Convention Center on the right.



Institutional/Cultural district looking south from Pacific Ave.

Design Recommendations:

The City should continue to coordinate with all designers from these projects to assure a comprehensive approach for the district's streetscape--a cohesive character that enhances the district's identity. The focused areas in particular are S. 17th Street between Fawcett and Pacific Avenue, where all three projects meet; Fawcett Avenue between S. 17th and 21st Streets; Pacific Avenue, where the LINK light rail is to be located; and Market Avenue between S. 15th and 21st Street, from the Convention Center through the UWT campus. Consult with the Landmarks Preservation Commission early in the process.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

S. 21st St.

(East of Market St.)

Existing Context:



S. 21st St. looking east to the bridge.

- West vehicle access to downtown and UWT campus.
- Good views.
- Low pedestrian activity.
- Varied lane configurations.

Objectives/Concept:

- Enhance views.
- Coordinate with UWT campus to create a unified connector street and provide a southern edge for the campus.

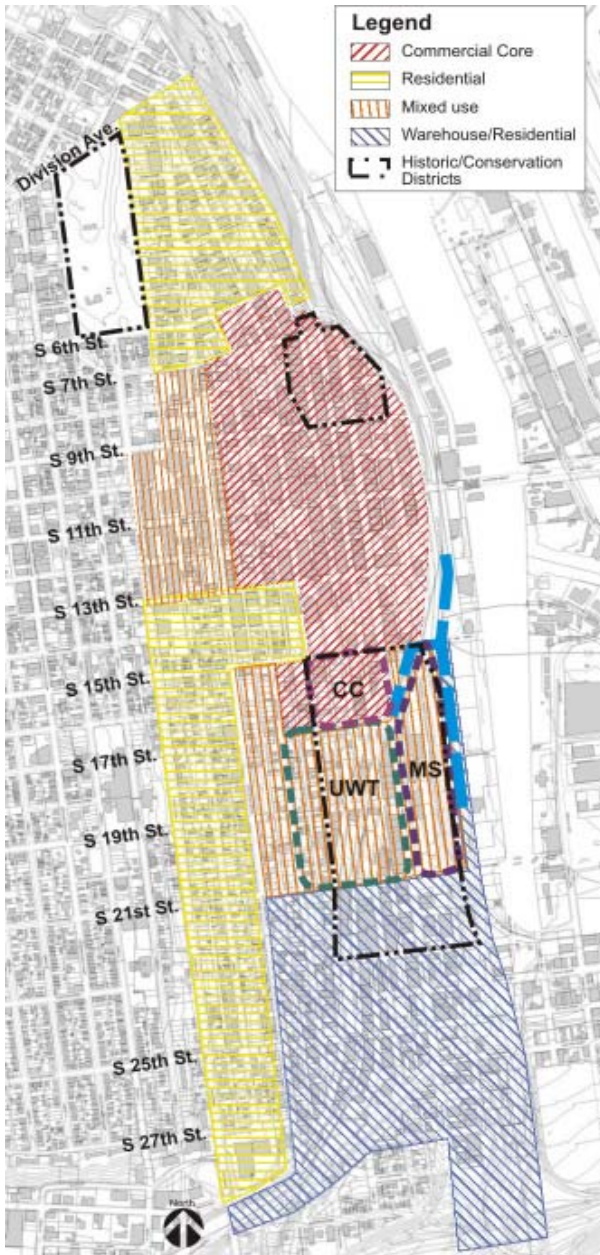
Design Recommendations:

S. 21st Street is defined as a connector street that borders the UWT campus, Museum District, and Warehouse District. It has a potential for a gateway to downtown and a strong perimeter with southern entry for the UWT campus.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

Foss Waterway/Hood St.



Existing Context:

- Potential main connection to the Thea Foss Waterway.
- Varies in street configuration.
- Traverses under freeway.

Objectives/Concept:

- Coordinate with the Museum of Art.
- Continue the Foss Waterway character on Dock St. and the Foss Waterway promenade to create a visual connection to the waterfront.
- Encourage curb bulbs where possible to enhance pedestrian access to the waterfront.



Hood St. looking northeast from Pacific Ave. and S. 17th St.

Design Recommendations:

The recommendation emphasizes the linkage to connect the Museum District to the waterway, both visually and physically. Street improvements on Dock St. are appropriate.



Streetscape elements used on the Foss Waterway's promenade.



Streetscape improvement on Dock St. in front of Museum of Glass.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

Fawcett Ave.

(Between S. 7th & 13th St.)

Existing Context:



Fawcett Ave. looking north from S. 9th St.

- Mix of uses.
- Mix of trees in different scales.
- Planting strips with some street trees.
- One lane with parallel parking.

Objectives/Concept:

- Unify the street with a distinctive tree palette, but allow some variation.



Fawcett Ave. looking north between S. 11th and 13th St.



Pedestrian pathway on Fawcett Ave. between S. 9th and 11th St.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane with parallel parking.
Lights:	Cobra.
Trees:	Uniform where possible.
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees+planting strips.



Individual Street Recommendations: Connector Streets

Market St.

(Between S. 7th & 15th St.)



Existing Context:

- Service and connector street in downtown.
- Opportunity to link UWT campus to downtown.
- No strong building character along the street.
- Uniform Sweet Gum trees in some parts.
- One lane with parallel parking.

Objectives/Concept:

- Coordinate with the UWT campus to link the UWT campus to downtown.
- Extend Sweet Gum trees to unify the street.



Market Ave. looking north from S. 13th St.



Market Ave. looking south from S. 15th St.



Market Ave. looking south from S. 9th St.

Design Recommendations:

Market Avenue is a service street to several parking garages and lots for the downtown area and a potential link to UWT. This plan focuses on unifying this street with Sweet Gum trees, which have been used in some parts of the street. Other treatments are minimal.

Street Configuration:	One lane each way with parallel parking.
Lights:	Cobra .
Trees:	Sweet Gum (<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>).
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees.



Individual Street Recommendations: Residential Streets

Typical Residential Streets

Existing Context:



Typical residential street character.

- Quiet residential street.
- Mix of tree types in various scales with planting strips.
- Potential for new developments.
- Low pedestrian activity.
- One lane with parallel parking on each side.

Objectives/Concept:

- Encourage diversity of individual landscaping to express their identities.
- Maintain planting strips with trees to buffer residential uses from the street.
- Maintain historic residential lights where appropriate.

Design Recommendations:

Typical residential streets are recommended as quiet streets full with variety of trees in different color, scale, and shape that help soften the traffic and give the street the residential feeling. They are streets where residents express their identities and have a sense of pride and belonging. The plan encourages residents to have the freedom to plant individual trees and flowers to compliment their homes.

Street Configuration:	One lane with parallel parking on each side.
Lights:	Cobra and historic pedestrian lights where appropriate.
Trees:	Mix of tree types.
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk+trees+planting strips.
Paving:	Standard concrete.

Existing historic residential lights commonly used in the residential area south of S. 15th St.



Individual Street Recommendations: Residential Streets: Signature St. Helens & Baker St. (between Division and S. 7th St.)



Existing Context:

- Residential use.
- A key redevelopment site and use; transition area on Baker Avenue.
- One lane with parallel and angled parking on St. Helens and one lane with angled parking on Baker Avenue.

Objectives/Concept:

- Create unified signature identity in residential area.
- Provide a pedestrian-friendly walking route into downtown.
- Make the transition between residential area and the commercial core.
- Enhance redevelopment desirability.



St. Helens St. looking north from S. 7th St.



Baker Ave. looking southwest from St. Helens St.



St. Helens St. looking north from S. 6th St.

Design Recommendations:

- Street Configuration: One lane each way with parallel and angled parking on St. Helens St.; one lane each way with angled parking on Baker St.
- Lights: Historic light if possible; cobra light and pedestrian lights if desired by property owners.
- Trees: Uniform trees. Either infill existing trees or plant distinctive species, such as Jacquemontii Birch (*Betula jacquemontii*). An opportunity to include trees such as incense Cedar.
- Furniture: Furniture at key points on S. 7th St.
- Sidewalk Configuration: Sidewalk+trees+planting strips where pedestrian activity is less (north of S. 6th St.). Bulbs should be considered.
- Paving: Special paving may be appropriate at bulbs. Special crosswalks are recommended at S. 6th and 7th St. See also recommendations for Triangles and Activity Nodes.



Individual Street Recommendations: Residential Streets: Signature Stadium Way

Existing Context:



Stadium Way looking south from S. 4th St.

- Residential use on one side.
- Arterial street.
- One lane each way with parallel and angled parking.
- Important views to the east.

Objectives/Concept:

- Maintain views for residential use.
- Soften vehicular traffic with small uniform trees, perhaps flowering, on both sides.
- Potential gateway at S. 7th St. See recommendation on Gateways.



Stadium Way looking south from Division.



Potential gateway location on Stadium Way.



Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One lane each way with parallel parking.
Lights:	Cobra.
Trees:	Small, uniform, perhaps flowering tree, such as flowering cherry (<i>Prunus Snowgoose</i>) or flowering plum (<i>Prunus "Franktrees"</i>).
Furniture:	Minimal.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk with planting strips.

Individual Street Recommendations: Warehouse Streets

Warehouse/Residential Streets



Existing Context:

- Industrial uses.
- Historic industrial character.
- One to two lanes each way with angle or parallel parking.
- Minimal pedestrian improvements.
- Heavy truck traffic and access.
- Long-term potential for mixed-use residential development in warehouse setting.

Objectives/Concept:

- Maintain eclectic historic industrial character.
- Maintain commercial vehicle mobility and access.
- Provide pedestrian access (sidewalks) when properties redevelop.
- In future redevelopment planning for this area, consider more extensive streetscape improvements where pedestrian activity is heaviest. Jefferson Avenue may be a good candidate, as it connects directly to UWT.



Jefferson St. between S. 21st and 23rd St. looking north.



Existing minimal streetscape elements in Warehouse District.

Design Recommendations:

Street Configuration:	One to two lanes with varied parking, as appropriate for existing businesses.
Lights:	Standard "box."
Trees:	Trees and other landscaping are encouraged where the owner wants. Potted or hanging plants may be appropriate.
Furniture:	At the owner's discretion.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Request that all redevelopment include a sidewalk at least 8 feet wide with 2'x2' scoring. Existing sidewalks in good repair may meet this requirement. Provide alternate pedestrian pathways where industrial truck bays or other obstructions preclude a standard sidewalk.



Individual Street Recommendations: Special Focal Features Triangles with Buildings and Open Space

Triangles with Buildings



Special treatment at a triangle on Broadway Ave. and S. 9th St.

Objectives/Concept:

- Enhance unique triangles (formed by skew street rule section) where possible with special building features, such as an entry, marquee, and tower, at the corner.
- Enhance the building facade with trees and minimal street furniture.

Design Recommendations:

Trees:	Should not obscure the building.
Street Elements:	Special elements, lighting, and other elements are recommended to enhance building character.

Triangles with Open Space

Objectives:

- Enhance a unique triangle where possible with a plaza or other pedestrian-oriented open space at corner with landscaping, artwork, and/or furniture.
- Enhance the space with extending curb bulbs to create a special focal point.

Design Recommendations:

Lights:	Special lighting is encouraged.
Trees:	Variety of landscaping; consider a distinctive "landmark" tree, such as Southern Beech (<i>Nothofagus antarctica</i>).
Furniture:	In coordination with private open space.
Sidewalk Configuration:	Sidewalk with curb bulbs in coordination with plaza pavement.
Pavement	Special pavement and special crosswalks are recommended to complement open space.



Individual Street Recommendations: Special Focal Features

Gateways



Gateways are highly visible entry points into downtown that could be enhanced to provide visitors with a strong sense of arrival. Generally gateways are oriented toward vehicular traffic, although pedestrian qualities are also important.

Objectives/Concept:

- Enhance gateways with signage, landscaping, artwork, and/or other features.
- Consider coordinating gateway treatments to reinforce the downtown's identity, create the city's identity.
- Enhance the wayfinding for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
- Good way to unify downtown street character.



Existing gateway at S. 13th St. and "A" St.

Recommendations:

- Initiate a public gateway improvement program.
- Create a unified directional signage program for motorists.
- Explore opportunities for graphic art projects.



Stadium Way and S. 7th St., a location for gateway improvement with vertical feature.



Individual Street Recommendations: Special Focal Features

Activity Nodes



Existing activity node on Broadway and S. 9th St.

Activity nodes are those focal points with high levels of pedestrian activity and visibility and are generally high priority locations for street elements that add to the pedestrian experience.

Objectives/Concept:

- Support or promote pedestrian activity at key focal points.
- Give this area high priority for pedestrian features, artwork, special lighting, and directional signage.
- Reinforce the identity of the surrounding district.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented development.

Note: Identified nodes on 7th Street assume adjacent redevelopment.

Recommendations:

- Lights: Install pedestrian lights to match those of adjacent streets or the surrounding district.
- Trees: Locate trees to support pedestrian activity (e.g., provide shade or spatial enclosure where necessary).



Recommended location for an activity node on Pacific Ave. and S. 19th St.

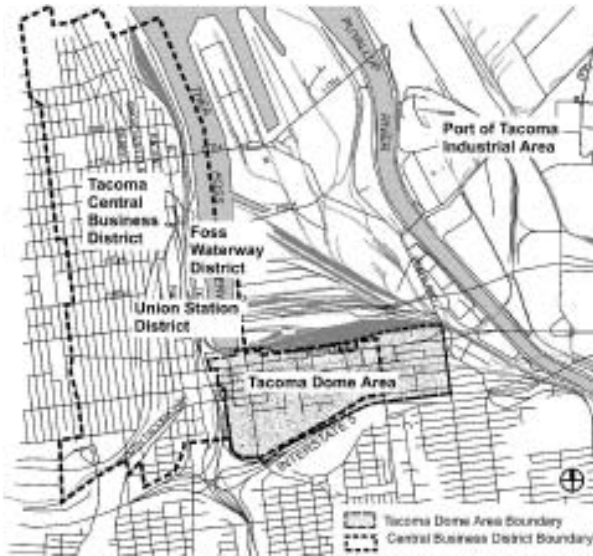


Recommended location for activity nodes on Pacific Ave. and S. 17th St.



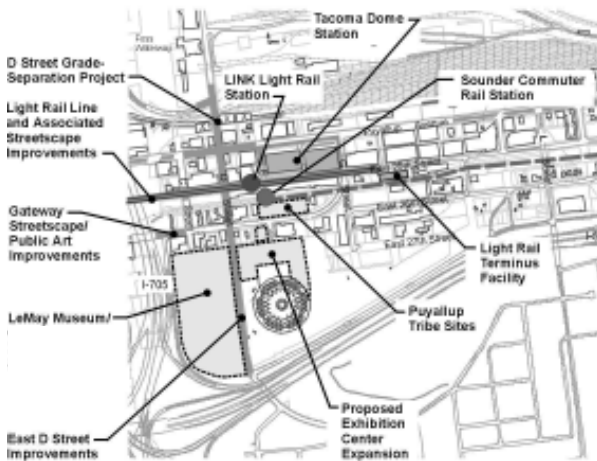
Individual Street Recommendations: Tacoma Dome Area

Tacoma Dome Area



Existing Context and Current Planning:

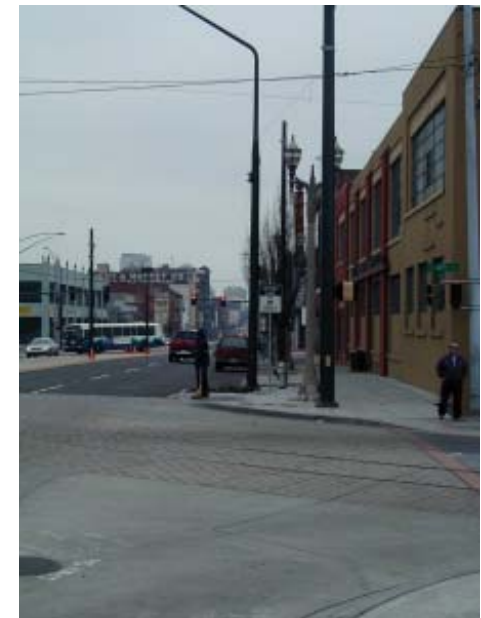
The Tacoma Dome Area is an integral part of downtown, but it is covered in this document separately because the City adopted a subarea plan for the district in 2001 and is currently undertaking an extensive series of street improvements identified in the plan graphic below. Some of the street projects, including the E. 25th Street LINK light rail corridor (with streetscape improvements), the E. 26th Street gateway palm trees artwork, and the street improvements associated with the Tacoma Dome Transit Station, have recently been completed or are nearing completion. This section references the recommendations of that plan, indicates where the two plans intersect, and provides some additional guidance regarding coordination between Tacoma Dome Area redevelopment planning and downtown streetscape improvement efforts.



Current and proposed street improvements.



E. 25th Street looking east.



Intersection of Pacific Avenue and E. 25th Street.

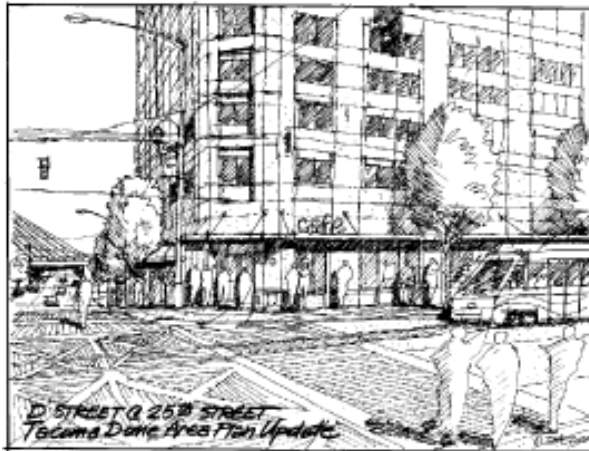


Individual Street Recommendations: Tacoma Dome Area

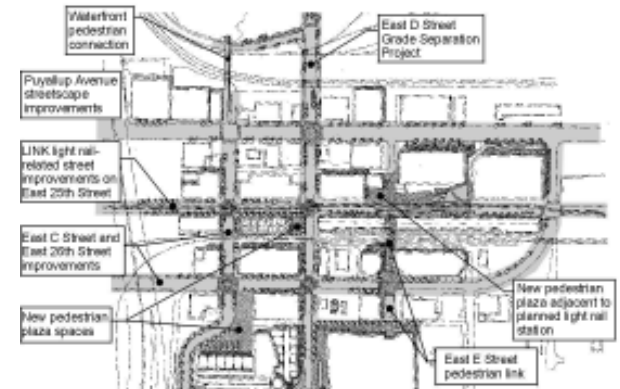
Tacoma Dome Area

Objectives/Concept:

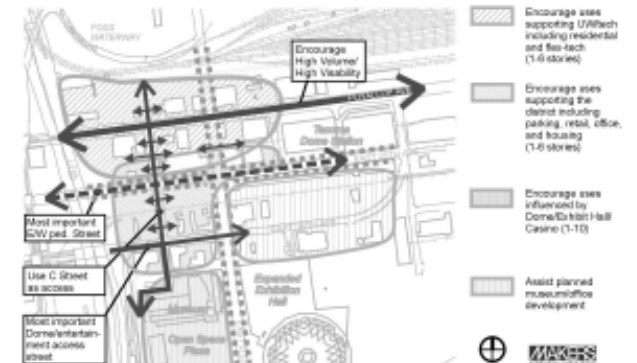
- Support Dome Area redevelopment efforts.
- Support circulation and parking improvements in the Tacoma Dome Area Plan.
- Build on existing and proposed improvements, such as those in E. 25th Street and proposed for E. “D” Street.
- Better link the Dome Area with the rest of downtown, primarily by emphasizing the gateway at Pacific/E. 25th and by improving east/west streets between E. “D” Street and Pacific Avenue.



Sketch of proposed E. “D” Street improvements, looking north.



Streetscape recommendations from the Tacoma Dome Area Plan.



Circulation concept from the Tacoma Dome Area Plan.

Design Recommendations:

- Implement streetscape and circulation recommendations in the Tacoma Dome Area Plan. Please see graphic on this page.
- Complete proposed street improvements, especially the E. “D” Street grade separation and streetscape improvements extending south to the Dome entry and Puyallup Avenue from E. “D” Street to Pacific Avenue.
- Explore gateway opportunities at E. 25th Street and Pacific Avenue. Since public right-of-way is limited, an overhead sign or vertically oriented artwork piece might be most effective.

CHAPTER 4 Implementation



Recommended Streetscape Character Downtown Tacoma Streets Results

Legends	Streets	Concept/Rationale	Reaction				Priority 5 = High 1 = Low
			Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	
	Yakima Ave.	Attractive mix of uses and character without strong signature statement. Allow street character to mirror uses.	1	6	4	1	2.3
	Residential-Low traffic ("G", Fawcett, parts of S. 16th, 17th, 18th, 21st, 25th, & 27th St.)	Quiet residential street. Encourage diversity of individual landscapings to express their identities.	2	7	3		1.8
	Residential-High traffic	Residential street, but with continuous trees to buffer properties and unify identity.	1	4	6		2.6
	Tacoma Ave.	Strong unifying signature statement (lights and tree types) but three different lane configurations, depending on use.	2	7	1	1	4
	-Ped Area (between 7th & 15th St.)	Commercial/ mixed use with high pedestrian activity. Angle parking with bulbs.	2	8	1	1	4.5
	-Boulevard (few curb cuts)	Residential/ mixed use-median.	6	7		1	4.1
	-Planting Strip (many curb cuts)	Wider planting strips, with trees.	4	8		1	4
	Industrial Area	Maintain eclectic historic industrial character.	2	3	4	4	3
	Sound Transit	Character defined by Sound Transit.	2	1	3	1	3.8
	A. Dome District		1	1	3	1	3.8
	B. Mixed Use District		1	1	3	1	3.6
	C. Commerce Core		1	1	3	1	4
	D. Theater District		1	1	3	1	4
	Pacific Ave. (general)	Emphasize continuity with lights, trees, and curb bulb character.	5	7	2	1	4.9
	Pacific Ave. (convention center/UW/museum area)	Plan this area as a unified focus, coordinating major institutions. Use historic lights.	6	6	2	1	4.9
	UW	Follow campus Master Plan.	5	3	2		3.6
	Foss Waterway/Hood Street	Continue Foss Waterway character.	5	6	2		3.4
	Broadway Ave.	Maintain existing character. Extend northward on Broadway & St Helene to 7th.	8	5	1		3.9
	Market Ave. (not at UW or Convention Center)	Utility and service street, use street trees to unify.		3	5	1	3.4
	Convention Center perimeter	Center to stand out with distinctive character. Extend character to both sides of Market north of Center.	3	3	2	1	3.5
	St. Helens Ave.	Create signature identity in residential area.	7	5	1		4.2
	Baker Ave.	A key redevelopment/transition area. Create distinctive character w/uniform street trees and bulbs @ intersections	4	2	2		3
	Stadium Way	Arterial street. Views are important	2	8	3	1	3
	S. 2nd-6th St., 6th, 7th, 8th St. west of Tacoma	Quiet residential streets.	1	4	6		2.2
	S. 7th St. east of Tacoma	Transition between residential and com. Redevelopment likely. Strong signature statement with pedestrian features at key intersections	3	6	4		2.6
	S. 9th, 11th St.	Key ped cross streets with vaulted sidewalks. Unify and enhance with pedestrian lights and landscaped curb bulbs	5	7	3		3.8
	S. 13th St.	Solten heavy traffic street with trees. Maintain view corridor. Gateway treatment @ "A" St.	4	5	4	1	3.3
	S. 15th St.	Heavy traffic street. Connect conv. center character to Tacoma Ave	4	5	3		3.9
	Fawcett Ave., 12th St	Mix of uses S of 7th St. Unify with a distinctive street tree palette but allow some variation. Low traffic road. N of 7th.	2	5	4		2.3
	S. 21st St. east of Market	Signature treatment, coordinate with UW campus perimeter	3	4	6		2.8
	"A" Street	Important vehicular entry into downtown with varied parking and streetscape features. Unify with uniform street trees	3	6	2		3.8
	Cross streets east of Pacific	Narrow, potentially dark streets. Small, lightly leaved street trees can unify.	2	5	3	1	2.7
SPECIAL FOCAL FEATURES							
	Triangles with buildings at corners	Encourage special building feature such as an entry, marquee, tower, etc at the corner	6	1	1		4.6
	Triangles with open space at corners	Encourage plaza or other pedestrian oriented open space at corner and coordinate with street improvements. (e.g. special plaza paving could be extended to curb line	8		1		4.4
	Gateways	Key vehicular entry points. Good locations for signage, landscaping and other features	5	2		1	4.1
	Activity Nodes	Key pedestrian nodes. High priority for pedestrian features, artwork, special lighting and directional signage.	5	1	1		4.2

* indicates already designed

** indicates to be designed as part of other project
*** as part of Nonmotorized Transportation Plan, 1996

Streetscape improvements can be implemented in at least three ways. First, where there is sufficient impetus and available funding, the City can initiate a full scale street improvement. Such projects generally extend for several blocks and include the upgrading of street pavements, drainage and utility systems. Although costs can vary greatly depending on the extent of utility improvements, they generally run in the millions of dollars for a 3 to 10 block project. Such projects have substantial advantages, in that the street lane channelization can be modified, utility systems can be upgraded to the point where ongoing maintenance is reduced, a unified design scheme can be effectively established and the final price will be significantly lower than if the improvements were accomplished piecemeal.

A second implementation method involves coordination and expansion of proposed engineering or development projects. For example, if the City or utility district is laying new underground lines, the extra cost of replacing sidewalk with special pavement or installing conduit and wiring for pedestrian street lights becomes much more affordable. Such opportunities also arise for large public and private redevelopment projects such as UWT, the Convention Center and Sound Transit.

A third implementation method involves small-scale incremental improvements accomplished as part of adjacent development or an ongoing program. Elements such as residential traffic circles, extended curbs, infill tree planting, and special crosswalks can be accomplished this way when funds for large projects are limited.

The implementation recommendations assume that all three of these methods should be pursued. Since the funding and timing of the various implementation methods differ, the recommended priorities are divided into the three methods. The priorities presented below are based upon preferences indicated at a public open house and on staff analysis of the relative benefits of the specific projects relative to *Destination Downtown* goals. The chart at the left summarizes the responses of participants at an Open House on December 2, 2002. A high number in the priority column indicates a high average priority indicated by respondents.

There are several approaches or mechanisms that can be used to support implementation. Acknowledgment in the Comprehensive Plan, funding of design studies, policies calling for street improvements to be made when pavements are demolished, partnerships with private and public entities, line items in capital improvement plans, and aggressive grant applications are but a few. The City should take the next step and develop a comprehensive improvement strategy that combines such mechanisms.



Implementation

Comprehensive Streetscape Reconstruction Projects

The highest priority streets recommended for comprehensive streetscape improvements include Pacific Avenue and Tacoma Avenue. Both streets are highly visible, accommodate high volumes of pedestrian activity and will hopefully see substantial redevelopment. Slightly behind those projects, but still worthy of strong consideration are the extension of the “Broadway Character” street improvements to the north on Broadway and St. Helens, the signature residential improvements on St. Helens north of S. 7th Street, and the construction of sidewalk bulbs with lights and columnar trees on S. 9th and S. 11th Streets.

Coordination Activities and Partnerships

These recommendations include coordinating large redevelopment projects and expanding or “piggy-backing” streetscape improvements on engineering or redevelopment projects. The most immediate and important of these is the recommendation to coordinate streetscape improvements among designers of the Convention Center, UWT campus museum and hotel, and the museums. The objective of this effort will be to make sure that the streetscapes support the identity and function of the individual institutions but also help to mesh the larger district into a functional and identifiable whole. The improvement of several streets bordering on or leading to the institutions, such as S. 15th and 17th Streets and Market Street, should also be considered at this time. Other coordination efforts include the completion of the Sound Transit Link lines, connections to the Foss and Tacoma Dome area and redevelopment in historic districts and the S. 7th Street/Baker Street/St. Helens Street vicinity.

The City should also pursue partnerships with organizations such as the Downtown BIA and the Downtown Partnership for combined funding and redevelopment. The BIA banner program and the pedestrian wayfinding signs are examples of potential partnership projects.

Incremental Implementation Programs

Open House participants gave high priority to all of the special focal feature categories including the triangles, gateways and activity nodes. It may be useful for the City to set up a special fund or program, perhaps with the opportunity for donor contributions, to implement such features on an incremental basis.

The Yakima Avenue “linear arboretum” streetscape concept is one of the few signature street designs that lends itself to an incremental implementation. Infill tree and landscape plantings can be added to the already fine collection of street trees and a signature color or banner treatment added without the expense of a full street “makeover”.

Other streets recommended for priority incremental improvements include S. “A” Street curb bulbs, small street trees on Stadium Way, and sweet gum trees on Market Street.



Implementation



Near-Term Action Recommendations

The previous two pages outline a generalized implementation strategy of both short- and long-term actions based on the type of approach. Below are listed possible short-term actions for the City to consider. They are not listed in any priority.

- **Coordinate the streetscape and public open space designs of the museums, Convention Center, and UWT.**

As noted earlier, this area has the opportunity to be one of the city's richest and most attractive activity centers. But, there should be some design coordination to ensure that the individual projects fit together as a whole. The City is undertaking this action in the spring of 2003.

- **Design and construct comprehensive street improvements on Pacific Avenue.**

As noted earlier, Pacific Avenue is one of the region's signature streets, and workshop participants placed a high priority on improvements to it. Several private developments, as well as the UWT, the museums, and Convention Center, are in planning or under construction. This plan recommends a comprehensive program to construct curb extensions with trees to provide continuity even though the street character varies greatly up and down the corridor. This basic concept should be refined and implemented to "leverage" the new attractions and link them to the core. Property owners should be involved in the process so that private improvements can be effectively coordinated.

- **Initiate an arborist program to select, plant, and manage downtown street trees.**

Workshop participants stressed the desirability of appropriate, healthy, street trees in the downtown environment. This plan suggests some species for specific streets but notes that the selections should be reviewed by a qualified arborist or landscape architect, taking into account site-specific horticultural conditions. An effective street tree program involves tree management as well as planting, and an arborist (or on-call consultant) versed in urban forest management would be an important and ultimately cost-effective resource for the City. Setting budgets and management procedures for tree plantings and maintenance would realize large benefits for tree health and downtown appearance.

- **Refine policies and practices for smaller streetscape elements such as banners and brackets, furniture, container plantings, and signage.**

Workshop participants noted that a lot of improvement could be made through greater attention to "small things." The City has already initiated efforts addressing banners, wayfinding, and furniture. However, some issues have arisen that merit focused attention, such as: more attractive and durable brackets for banners, a standardized set of pedestrian street light options, more wayfinding signs, and removal or better management of above-grade planters.



Implementation

- **Prepare a comprehensive funding and development strategy for streetscape improvements and management.**

A detailed study of funding opportunities, programmatic costs, and coordination with other public works activities is outside the scope of this plan. A little additional effort could identify outside funding sources (e.g., Urban Forestry and TEA-21 grants, etc.), itemize costs (and cost savings), and prepare a budget and capital improvement program proposal.

- **Begin to think about improvements to Tacoma Avenue.**

Tacoma Avenue is identified as a key signature street connecting important parts of western downtown. Comprehensive improvements to this street will be relatively costly but could reap large benefits in supporting redevelopment. Beginning the planning of a long-term effort may be in order.

- **Initiate a “Downtown Spaces” design effort.**

This plan identifies several triangles, activity nodes and gateways that merit design enhancement. A design program, perhaps conducted primarily by volunteer designers, artists, and interested citizens with City review, to develop proposals for those spaces might be a very positive and enjoyable effort. The ideas would likely generate public interest and, hopefully, outside funding for some of the most popular proposals. The workshops for this plan were well attended by a number of local designers and planners, indicating a high level of interest in streetscape design. A City-sponsored design effort, perhaps initiated with a series of design workshops or “charrettes,” would give local artists, designers, and those interested in upgrading downtown an opportunity for creative and productive exchange.

- **Continue to work with development project proponents.**

A primary objective of this plan is to provide direction for the street improvement the City requires as part of a development project. While some of the recommendations for specific street tree types are tentative and the standard pedestrian lights should be reviewed by Public Works, coordinating private improvements to the street will hopefully be simpler and more effective.

- **Establish banner design guidelines.**

This should be a joint effort between the City and the Local Development Council, which will manage the banner program. Banner design must be as approved by the Tacoma Arts Commission, and the bracket design must be as approved by the Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission.

