



# TACOMA WATERFRONT

## Design Guidelines





<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Thea Foss Waterway	2
Schuster Parkway	3
Schuster Parkway Transition	4
Ruston Way Shoreline	5
Point Ruston/Slag Peninsula Shoreline	6
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>USE OF THE PLAN</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPLICABILITY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>HOW TO USE THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>1. PUBLIC REALM</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Waterfront Walkway	14
1.2 Wooded Trails	15
1.3 Trailheads	16
1.4 Community Gathering Places	17
1.5 Public Access Corridors	19
1.6 Streetscapes	20
1.7 View Areas/Viewpoints	23
1.8 Public Access in Industrial Areas	25
1.9 Trail Safety and Security	27

<b>2. BUILDING SITES</b>	<b>29</b>
2.1 General Considerations	29
2.2 View Considerations	30
2.3 Shading Considerations	30
2.4 Site Layout	31
2.5 Pedestrian Orientation	32
2.6 Transition Areas	34
<b>3. SITE DETAILS</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1 Green Shorelines	38
3.2 Shoreline Edge Treatments That Provide Closeness to the Water	41
3.3 Wildlife Habitat	41
3.4 Low Impact Development	44
3.5 Landscape Plantings	45
3.6 Art	46
3.7 Children’s Play Areas	47
3.8 Site Furnishings	48
Benches	48
Lighting	49
Bollards	50
Drinking Fountains	51
Picnic Tables	51
Bike Racks	51
Waste Receptacles	51

3.9 Surfacing Materials	52
3.10 Fences/Screens	53
3.11 Marina Gates	54
3.12 Guardrails	54
3.13 Signs	55
Logos	55
Building Signs	55
Directional	56
Educational/Interpretive	56
3.14 Parking and Staging Areas	57



*Tacoma Dome to Defiance Shoreline*

# INTRODUCTION

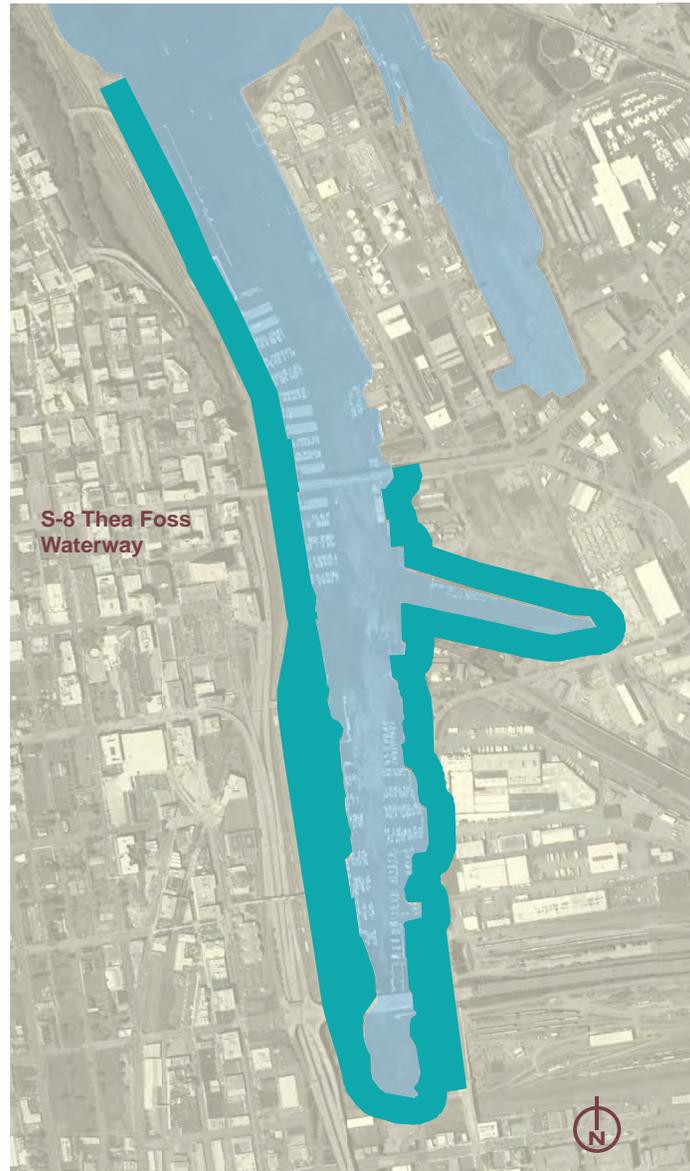
Communities throughout the nation develop and implement design guidelines to promote the historic, scenic, architectural, and/or cultural values of a particular area. Design guidelines are broad statements that indicate how development in an area should take place. Design guidelines are intentionally broad: they are meant to allow considerable creative latitude when designing projects. While not mandatory, the guidelines in this document should be followed by project developers and designers to the greatest extent practicable. The focus is on the design of public spaces and the public realm and to implement the over arching goals and objectives of the Shoreline Master Program. In addition, the guidelines are intended to mediate the interaction between public and private spaces, by looking at the relationship/interaction between the building site and the public realm.

## VISION

### General

The City of Tacoma has prepared these Waterfront Design Guidelines to illustrate how new development and redevelopment of the Dome to Defiance Waterfront can preserve and improve environmental quality; facilitate public access; create walkable, people-oriented public and private spaces; maintain an attractive, maritime aesthetic; and promote the overall quality of life for both residents and visitors. Implementation of these design guidelines will promote the use of identifiable, unifying design elements that will allow the Dome to Defiance Waterfront to be viewed as a whole, rather than a series of disconnected spaces.

Public access and recreation is not limited to the Dome to Defiance Waterfront – The City’s Public Access Alternatives Plan outlines a comprehensive network of public access trails and recreational facilities. These Guidelines will ensure that new public access facilities are being designed to consider site context, public safety, a variety of user groups, and appropriate public amenities. Ultimately, strong design standards will build a common identity for public access sites throughout the City’s waterfront, while providing opportunities for creative site specific design innovations that will allow for a sense of serendipity as visitors explore Tacoma’s rich waterfront environment.



## Thea Foss Waterway

The Thea Foss Waterway represents a unique opportunity for the City of Tacoma to create an attractive focal place for the enjoyment of the inland waters of Puget Sound within an urban context. The Waterway visually and physically connects surrounding districts. The Waterway's historic past and working waterfront, combined with new cultural, recreational, residential, office and retail uses, will create a lively, urban environment. A linear waterfront park will link together a variety of attractive, ground level public activities and uses accessible to all of Tacoma's citizens and to the region. Environmental cleanup and protection measures are being integrated into redevelopment, creating a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment. The rich industrial past of Tacoma's waterway pervades the atmosphere of the waterfront. This history should be highlighted in infrastructure and development alternatives. These include designs that integrate working waterfront and maritime themes.



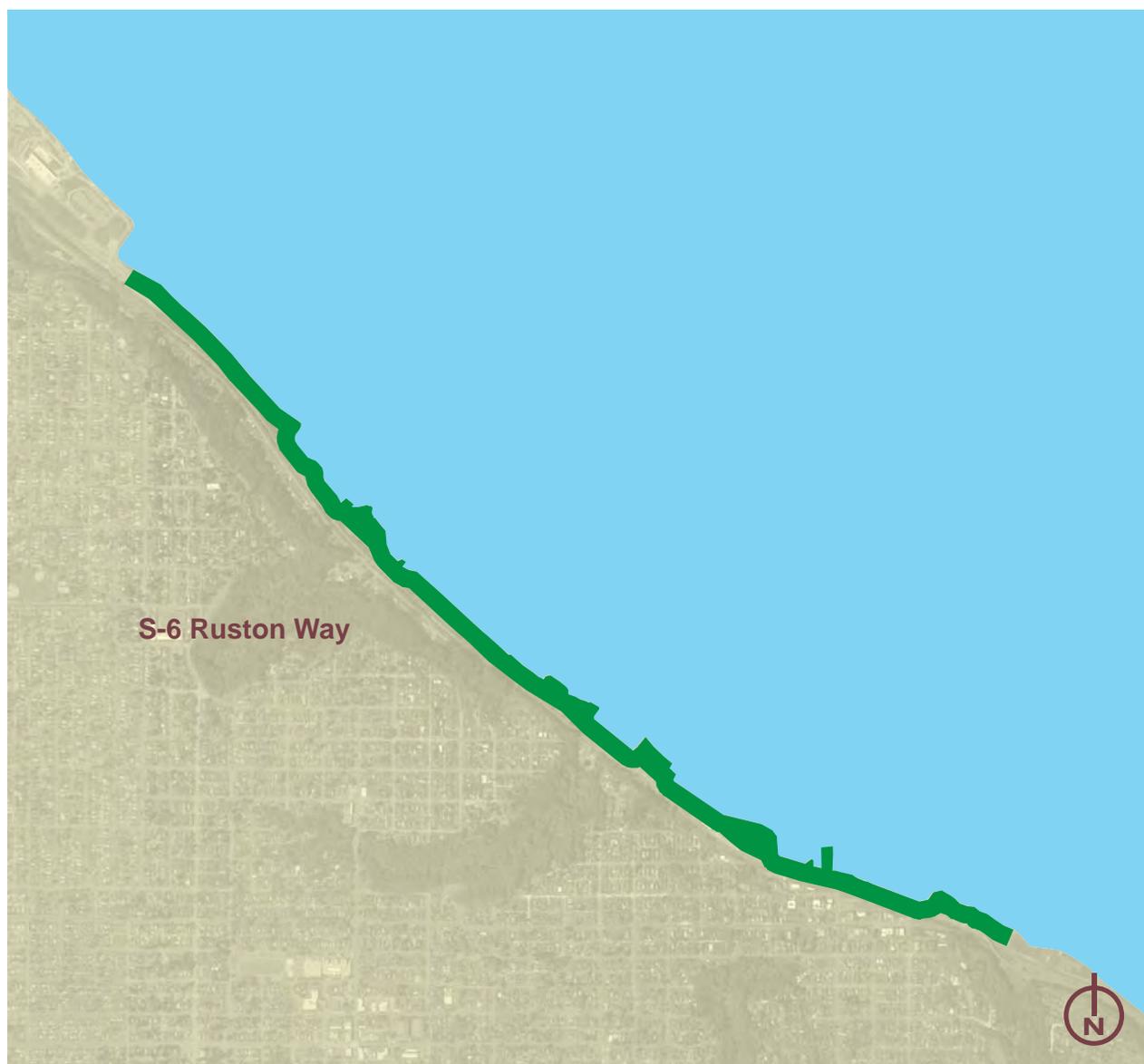
## Schuster Parkway

Schuster Parkway has an active industrial area with an existing grain terminal fronting on deep water, with railroad, road and sidewalk. The district is bounded by dense residential neighborhoods, business districts and historic schools. The design vision for the S-7 Schuster Parkway Shoreline District is to establish a multi-use trail that connects the Ruston Way shoreline and the Thea Foss Waterway; enhance visual and physical access from adjacent hillside neighborhoods to the shoreline; accommodate multiple modes of transportation including bicycle and pedestrian options; incorporate stormwater and hillside seeps as a design feature; and include design treatments that promote public safety and legible public spaces.



### Schuster Parkway Transition

The Schuster Parkway Transition Zone (S-6/7) is a newly created zone that takes into account historical uses and provides a buffer between S-6 Ruston Way and S-7 Shuster Parkway zones. The vision for the Transition Zone is to establish a multi-use trail that connects the Ruston Way shoreline and the Thea Foss Waterway; enhance visual and physical access from adjacent hillside neighborhoods to the shoreline; accommodate multiple modes of transportation including bicycle and pedestrian options; incorporate stormwater as a design feature; and include design treatments that promote public safety and legible public spaces. The design of public access facilities should give special consideration to the connectivity and quality of life of the historic neighborhoods, parks, and schools that are in close proximity to the water.



## Ruston Way Shoreline

The Ruston Way shoreline is comprised of a mix of public and privately owned land, is close to existing dense residential neighborhoods and business districts, and is served by the local street network. The area is characterized by distinct physical features including gulches, steep slopes, intertidal beaches, and a salt water bay. Slopes rise steeply from sea level, offering spectacular views of the water and mountains. Residential neighborhoods are found at the base and on top of the steep slopes. The shoreline area is developed with a mixture of public and private uses including restaurants, offices, public facilities, and public recreation areas.

The vision for Ruston Way is to develop an active and attractive urban waterfront of mixed public and private development that meets community recreation needs and emphasizes the shoreline for public use. It is intended that the Ruston Way shoreline be developed as a unified waterfront that utilizes consistent landscaping, signs, materials, and design details to provide visual continuity and a sense of place.



### **Point Ruston/Slag Peninsula Shoreline**

The vision for Point Ruston/Slag Peninsula is the development of a mixture of residential, and commercial uses with an open space system that builds on the rich heritage of Ruston. This new neighborhood will be a regional destination. A robust open space system with parks, plazas, tree-lined streets, view corridors, and a waterfront promenade will offer recreation opportunities and reconnect the public with the Point Ruston shoreline.

# OBJECTIVES

## **OBJECTIVE #1: Make public access USABLE**

Shoreline access areas are most enjoyed when they are designed and built to encourage diverse, water-related activities along the shoreline. The varied conditions of the Tacoma waterfront and each site's historical, cultural and natural attributes provide opportunities for creating projects with a “sense of place” and a unique identity. View opportunities, shoreline configuration and access points are factors that determine a site's inherent public access opportunities.

Public access improvements should be designed for a wide range of users. While some shoreline areas are best suited for quiet and contemplative public spaces, others lend themselves to be used for large public gatherings, such as festivals, outdoor markets or exhibits. In remote natural locations, simple trail systems may be all that is needed. Public access should be designed to respect all visitors' experiences of Puget Sound and the Tacoma Waterfront. Highly active uses should always be balanced with opportunities for passive activities, such as strolling, viewing and relaxing.

## **OBJECTIVE #2: Enhance VISUAL ACCESS to Commencement Bay, Tacoma Narrows and the shorelands**

The shoreline and waters of Commencement Bay and Tacoma Narrows are a scenic resource that contributes to the enjoyment of daily life in the Tacoma and the region. As a special kind of ‘blue’ open space, Puget Sound acts as a unifying element of the entire region. The wide surface of Commencement Bay and the distant views it affords offer relief from the crowded, often chaotic, urban scene and help to create a sense of well-being. Probably the most widely enjoyed “use” of the Sound is simply viewing it from the shoreline, from the water or from a distant viewpoint. For this reason alone, the Sound is a major visitor attraction for the tourist industry and a Bay view can add substantially to the value of a home, office or commercial use.

**OBJECTIVE #3: Maintain and enhance the VISUAL QUALITY of the water, shoreline, and adjacent developments**

The visual quality of any shoreline development proposal should relate directly to a set of site-specific factors. Incorporating design principles such as human scale, architectural diversity and varied building massing can lead to well-designed waterfront buildings and shoreline access areas. The design character of public access areas should relate to the scale and intensity of the proposed development. For example, projects in high-intensity areas may include a complex and varied shoreline and dynamic water experiences. Conversely, in a natural setting or park setting, the serene visual quality of the Sound can be preserved and maintained by focusing on the site's natural characteristics. Other factors can also contribute to the visual quality of the shoreline and adjacent developments. For example, landscaping with native and drought tolerant plants can provide texture and interest to the waterfront. Existing degraded shoreline edges and substandard shoreline erosion protection can be improved as part of new shoreline developments. Unsightly debris that mars the appearance of the shoreline such as plastic bottles, old tires and other refuse should be removed. Over time, the elimination of inappropriate uses and poor quality shoreline conditions and the implementation of well-designed developments will enhance the visual quality of Commencement Bay and the Tacoma Narrows.

**OBJECTIVE #4: Provide CONTINUITY along the shoreline while also enhancing the UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE of distinct sub-districts and shoreline areas**

Access areas are utilized most if they provide direct connections to public rights-of-way such as streets and sidewalks, are served by public transit and are connected to adjacent public access or recreation areas. To create a comprehensive system of waterfront access, safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to the shoreline should be planned in collaboration with local governments. In addition, a variety and diversity of design features can create interest and 'serendipitous' moments. Public access design features should strike a balance between the unifying design elements that create a common identity for the Tacoma Waterfront, while also using the inherent character and attributes of shoreline sites and context of specific shoreline areas to promote a unique sense of place for subareas within the access system.

**OBJECTIVE #5: Take advantage of the PUGET SOUND SETTING**

Development along the shores of Commencement Bay and Tacoma Narrows should take maximum advantage of the attractive setting that the water provides. Over time, it is expected that more projects will take full advantage of the scenic water setting.

**OBJECTIVE #6: Ensure that public access is COMPATIBLE WITH WILDLIFE through siting, design, and management strategies**

In many locations around Commencement Bay and Tacoma Narrows, the shoreline edge is a vital zone for wildlife. Access to some wildlife areas allow visitors to discover, experience and appreciate the shoreline's natural resources and can foster public support for resource protection. However, in some cases, public access may have adverse effects on wildlife (including flushing, increased stress, interrupted foraging or nest abandonment), and may result in adverse long-term population and species effects. The type and severity of effects, if any, on wildlife depend on many factors, including site planning, the type and number of species present and the intensity and nature of the human activity.

**OBJECTIVE #7: Enroll PARTNERS in the planning and implementation of these guidelines.**

The success of the waterfront access system and of these design guidelines is contingent on developing successful partnerships with other public entities and private parties in the ongoing planning, funding, and maintenance of these facilities. Metro Parks Tacoma, the Foss Waterway Development Authority, and the Port of Tacoma are all significant property owners and managers within the City of Tacoma waterfront. As specific public access projects are identified, ensure close coordination between these entities from site planning through to design, permitting, and construction.

# USE OF THE PLAN

The Tacoma Waterfront Public Access Design Guidelines have been developed for use by:

- **Development Teams** – Developers, land planners, landscape architects, engineers, architects and other members of project teams. Development teams should be aware that, while this document covers issues dealt with in other City of Tacoma regulatory documents, this document is a supplement to—and not a replacement of—those other documents. Therefore, project developers and designers are responsible for complying with all other applicable regulatory documents, such as the Tacoma Municipal Code.
- **The Public**
- **Public Agencies** – City, county, special district, regional and state agencies involved in resource protection, land use planning, transportation and recreation.
- **FWDA Design Committee** – Foss Waterway Development Authority projects in the S-8 Thea Foss Waterway Shoreline District will use these guidelines when submitting a shoreline permit as part of the Foss Waterfront Development Authority (FWDA) design review process. Private or non-FWDA projects in the S-8 Thea Foss Waterway are encouraged to utilize the FWDA Design Committee for project review but are not required.
- **City of Tacoma Planning and Development Services and Public Works** – City staff will use these guidelines as a reference when evaluating shoreline permits for new projects within the applicable shoreline areas defined below and/or where public access is being provided in accordance with TSMP 6.5 and the Public Access Alternatives Plan. In addition, City staff will utilize these guidelines when expending public funds for the acquisition, development, or improvement of public access projects that are within shoreline jurisdiction or identified in the Public Access Alternatives Plan.

# APPLICABILITY

The design guidelines are organized around three primary elements: Public Realm, Site Details, and Building Sites. These guide-lines apply in distinct ways.

1. Design guidelines associated with the Public Realm and Site Details apply to new public access facilities when required by the Shoreline Master Program and Tacoma Municipal Code 13.10, and for projects identified and implemented under the Public Access Alternatives Plan. In some cases, public access projects may be implemented that are outside the jurisdiction of the Shoreline Master Program, but which further the connectivity of the access system or enhance public views of the water. Where identified in the PAAL, these projects will be subject to design review.
2. The design guidelines associated with Building Sites shall only apply to that area defined as the “Dome to Defiance” Waterfront, from Point Defiance in the north, to the 4th Street Ramp off Schuster Parkway, and continuing onto the east and west sides of the Thea Foss Waterway in the south. The Building Site Element establishes design guidelines to mediate the interaction and relationship between public and private development sites and the integrated public access facilities.

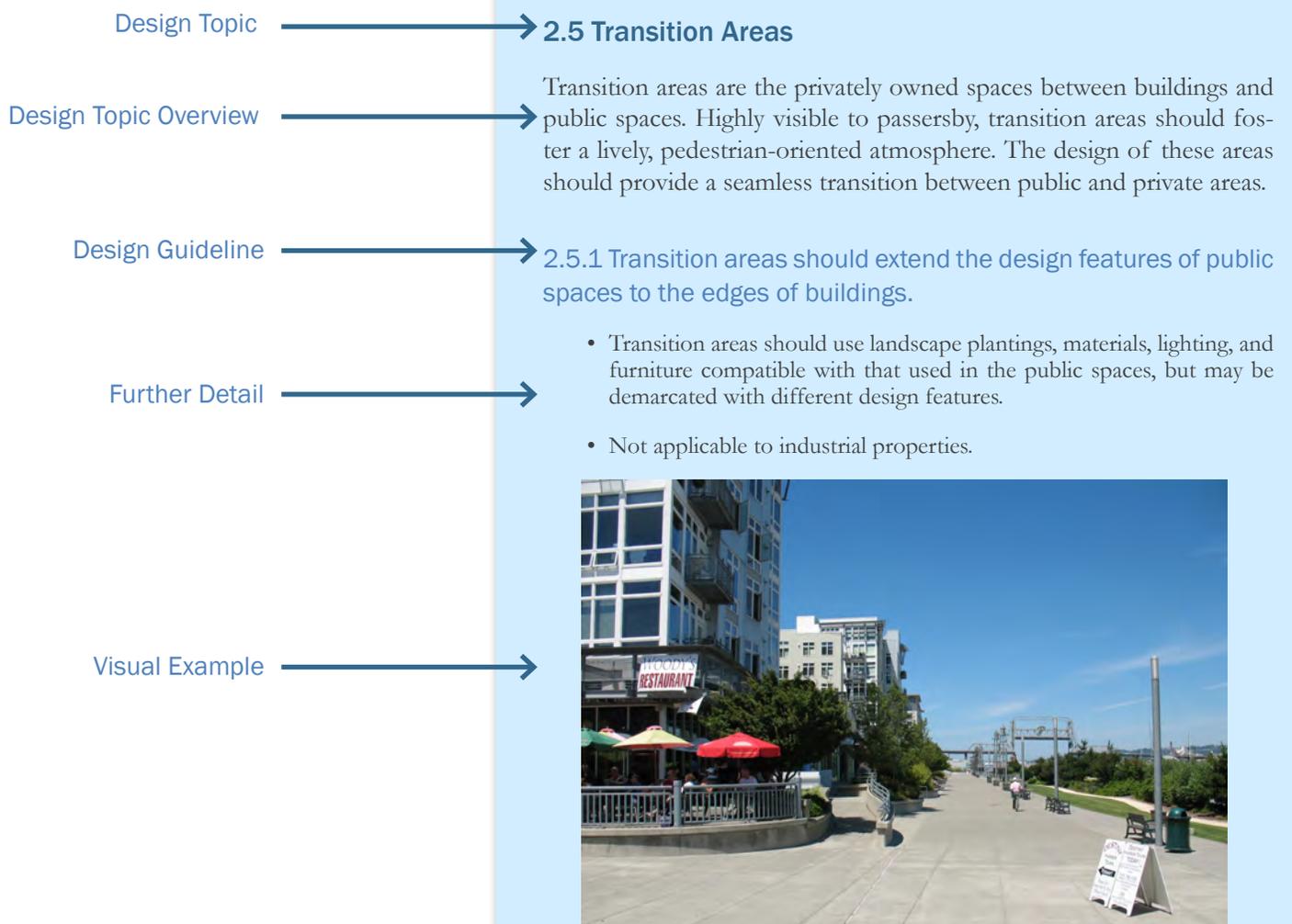
For the purposes of these guidelines, the Dome to Defiance subject area is divided into five distinct subareas:

- o Thea Foss Waterway (which is split into West Foss and East Foss): Comprised of the S-8 Shoreline District
- o Schuster Parkway shoreline: Comprised of the S-7 Shoreline District
- o Schuster Parkway transition: Comprised of the S-6/7 Shoreline District
- o Ruston Way shoreline: Comprised of the S-6 Shoreline District
- o Point Ruston/Slag Peninsula shoreline: Comprised of the S-15 Shoreline District
- o Point Defiance: Comprised of the S-5 Shoreline District

# HOW TO USE THESE DESIGN GUIDELINES

## FORMAT

The design guidelines address three primary elements: Public Realm, Building Sites, and Site Details. Within each element, specific guidelines are presented in a consistent fashion, according to the model described below.





# 1. PUBLIC REALM

The public realm along the Tacoma Waterfront serves numerous purposes. Besides providing public shoreline access and circulation, public spaces are needed for recreation, contemplation, and inspiration—not to mention a nice spot for lunch!

Spaces within the public realm should have some design features in common to provide identity and continuity. Continuity may also be expressed through the regular placement of site details. The Public Realm guidelines apply city-wide.

The Walkway should be an inviting, lively, and safe public space that is enjoyable all year, in all kinds of weather.



*The Walkway should accommodate a variety of users including walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and roller bladers.*



*While it is preferred to have similar site details along the entire Waterfront Walkway, these details may be adapted adjacent to specific development like this portion of the path through the Chinese Reconciliation Park.*

## 1.1 Waterfront Walkway

The term “Waterfront Walkway” refers to the walkway that is envisioned to encircle the Tacoma Waterfront from the East Foss to Point Ruston in the north. The primary intent of the Waterfront Walkway is to provide public shoreline access, with opportunities for active and passive public recreation. The Waterfront Walkway may sometimes be referred to as a “promenade” or “esplanade” in some specific shoreline areas.

The design of the Walkway should create a linear shoreline park that unifies the Tacoma Waterfront shoreline, joins larger public spaces, and relates to the designs and activities of upland and in-water facilities. The Walkway should be an inviting, lively, and safe public space that is enjoyable all year in all kinds of weather.

On the west side of the Thea Foss Waterway, the Walkway will primarily consist of an esplanade that runs immediately adjacent to the shoreline. Elsewhere, it is expected that the Walkway may not always be immediately adjacent to the shoreline due to site constraints. Indeed, the Walkway may at times need to head away from the shoreline and run adjacent to an inland street.

**1.1.1 The Waterfront Walkway should be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and designed to safely accommodate a variety of users, including walkers, joggers, bicyclists, and roller bladers.**

- Where space constraints only allow for suboptimal walkway width, the primary walkway can be designated for foot traffic and remain ADA compliant, while bicyclists and other wheeled users are diverted to a secondary route (such as a route along an adjacent street).

**1.1.2 To bring continuity to the Walkway and ensure that it is easy to follow, similar site details can be provided such as the consistent use of active-use surfacing specified in Section 3.8, Surfacing Materials.**

- Site details may be adapted adjacent to a specific development where it can be demonstrated that they continue the design theme of the development and are compatible with the site details provided along the Walkway on the other sides of the development site.

**1.1.3 The design of the Waterfront Walkway should be flexible to allow the division of space for different types of paths, and for different users.**

1.1.4 The location of the Waterfront Walkway should be flexible to allow location next to the water, where possible, or bypassing existing uses, where necessary.

1.1.5 Provide seating of various types along the waterfront.

## 1.2 Wooded Trails

In addition to the Waterfront Walkway, a system of wooded pedestrian and bicycle trails exists and will be further expanded in the Schuster Parkway and Ruston Way areas. Informal paths and trails in the gulches and along slopes in these areas permit pedestrian access to the waterfront from nearby residential neighborhoods. Part of the City's designated bike path system runs along a portion of the waterward side of Ruston Way, from Alder Street to Marshall Street.

Improved pedestrian facilities in the adjacent slope and gulch areas will provide a greater opportunity for a more intimate contact with the shoreline environment for more people. A linking of the various areas of the shoreline by a system of paths will create a more continuous environment for pedestrians.

The following guidelines promote the development of an organized trail system on the slopes and in gulches, while ensuring that the trails are developed in a manner that preserves the natural wooded setting of the hillsides as much as possible.

1.2.1 Natural trails should consist of pervious surfaces such as packed cinder fine crushed gravel, wood fiber, or hogged fuel.

1.2.2 Carefully design and locate trails to preserve the natural wooded setting, maintain soil stability, minimize erosion, and avoid adverse effects on wildlife.

- Use design elements such as varying trail widths, paving materials, and site amenities to encourage or discourage specific types of activities.
- Use durable materials to reduce erosion impacts on adjacent habitats and to keep users from creating informal access routes.
- Provide spur trails to reduce informal access into and through more sensitive areas.
- Locate night lighting away from sensitive habitat areas.
- Use physical design features to buffer wildlife from human use.
- Manage the type of public use to reduce adverse effects.



*This wooded trail in Point Defiance Park consists of pervious surface of packed cinder fine crushed gravel.*



*Wooded trails should be carefully designed to maintain the natural wooded setting while maintaining soil stability, minimizing erosion, and avoiding adverse effects on wildlife.*



Raised boardwalks, such as this one at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, can provide public access, while preserving sensitive natural areas. Source: wingand-song.wordpress.com.

1.2.3 Bridges and raised boardwalks over waterways and tributaries can help maintain water flow for creeks, seeps, and wetlands.

1.2.4 Wooded paths and trails often are located within close proximity to single family residential neighborhoods. Trail location and design should be sensitive to the privacy concerns of area residents and incorporate CPTED principles where appropriate.

1.2.4 To address safety concerns, multiple points of access can be provided with improved trailheads incorporating signage and lighting.

1.2.7 Provide shelters and seating along the nature trails for user comfort and convenience.

1.2.8 Design and locate informational and directional signs for the trail areas that are compatible with the waterfront.

1.2.9 Consider safety needs when designing and locating bicycle and pedestrian paths.

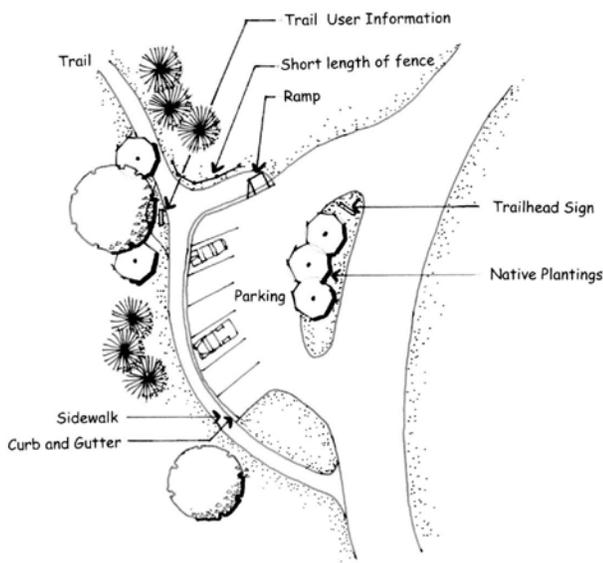
1.2.10 Separate pedestrian paths from bikeway routes wherever possible and feasible to ensure the greatest amount of safety for both.

1.2.11 Where separate paths are not possible, combined bicycle/pedestrian paths should be of sufficient width to allow safe passage of both pedestrians and cyclists.

1.2.12 Landscape the bicycle/pedestrian path to define the path's edge.

## 1.3 Trailheads

Good access to a path system is a key element for its success. Trailheads (formalized parking areas) serve the local and regional population arriving to the path system by car, transit, bicycle or other modes. Trailheads provide essential access to the shared-use path system and include amenities like parking for vehicles and bicycles, restrooms (at major trailheads), and posted maps. A central information installation also helps users find their way and acknowledge the rules of the path. They are also useful for interpretive education about plant and animal life, ecosystems and local history. See the City of Tacoma Pedestrian and Bicycle Design Guidelines for additional information.



Example of trailhead site design.

**1.3.1** Trailheads should be improved and include parking to avoid conflicts with surrounding land uses.

**1.3.2** Trailheads should include common design elements and amenities to improve their appearance and function.

Include common elements:

- Interpretive display
- Sign bollard with identification/distance sign
- Trash receptacle

Optional common elements:

- Picnic table – single post, wooden top
- Bench



*Community gathering places should offer a range of activities, from active uses such as sports facilities or performance spaces to passive places for seating or views.*

## 1.4 Community Gathering Places

Community gathering places are areas along the Waterfront Walkway intended for public assembly. Community gathering places should be flexible spaces that can be used either casually or for formal public events. Gathering places should be a range of sizes and provide a variety of user experiences, from communal spaces for larger group activities (such as plazas, open-air amphitheaters, or concert stages) to amenities that allow for smaller groups and individuals (such as picnic tables, children’s play areas, waterfront viewpoints, and a variety of seating).

Gathering spaces should also encourage a broad range of activities such as volleyball courts, bocce courts, game tables, play areas, and contemplative viewpoints at intervals along the waterfront. These spaces should be designed so that they are suitable for a range of these diverse types of activities.



*Community gathering places can focus activity and define key nodes along the waterfront. They should be located at frequent intervals.*

**1.4.1** The preferred location for community gathering places is in areas where public access, view corridors, and major streets intersect the Waterfront Walkway and pier heads.

- These locations provide increased depth and width, receive ample natural light, are highly visible, and offer views of the Thea Foss Waterway, Downtown Tacoma, Mount Rainier, or Commencement Bay.
- Public gathering spaces can help define locations where an activity focus is desired.
- Linkages to surrounding open spaces and buildings can be created through passages, bridges, steps/ramps, paving patterns, and planting.



*Shelters should maximize the public’s use of the waterfront in all seasons.*



*Gathering places should offer views of Commencement Bay, Mount Rainier, downtown Tacoma, or the Thea Foss Waterway.*

1.4.2 To facilitate public access, community gathering places should be located at frequent intervals along the waterfront.

1.4.3 Community gathering places can be made easily identifiable through the use of significant visual structures (such as art, fountains, or viewing towers) or trees.

- The construction of significant visual structures is encouraged, particularly in primary public access/view corridors where such structures would not obstruct public access and might be visible from Downtown Tacoma or surrounding neighborhoods.
- Trees can help to spatially define a community gathering place, buffer a community gathering space from adjacent uses, and provide shade for users.

1.4.4 The design of community gathering places should allow for unobstructed circulation along the Waterfront Walkway.

1.4.5 Shelters can be considered a design element for community gathering places to maximize the public's use of the Waterfront Walkway throughout all seasons.

- Shelters should be strategically located and respond to sun, wind, and rain.
- Shelters can be provided through built structures or through the planting of trees to provide a canopy or wind break.



*An example of an identifiable gathering place along the Thea Foss Waterway located to improve access and views between upland and the waterfront.*

## 1.5 Public Access Corridors

On the west side of the Thea Foss Waterway, 14 public access/view corridors run between Dock Street and the inner harbor line. These corridors provide visual and physical access to and from the Foss, as well as additional natural light to its west side. While public access/view corridors may, in limited circumstances, be the only feasible option for other functions (such as providing access to temporary marina loading and unloading areas), such functions should be accommodated in other locations when practical.

Along the Ruston Way shoreline, continuous uninterrupted panoramic views should be maintained to the extent possible as new development occurs. Existing views of the shoreline should be emphasized and integrated into proposed developments. In addition, viewpoints along the waterfront and at selected locations in sloped areas can create opportunities for scenic views.

Six public access/view corridors are designated along Point Ruston. While the location of these corridors may shift along the shoreline, they should maintain the established dimensions to ensure adequate corridors to the water. Weather protection features, public areas, and areas for public access are allowed in the corridors.

**1.5.1** The entire width of public access corridors should be improved with appropriate site details and amenities, such as landscape plantings.

**1.5.2** Public access corridors should provide internally consistent site details that complement those of adjacent public spaces in materials, colors, and design.

**1.5.3** Where feasible, the in-water portion of a public access/view corridor should be improved with public facilities including piers, viewing platforms, and other such structures.

**1.5.4** Outlooks at the end of a public access/view corridor should feature a walkway light, at least one bench or picnic table, a waste receptacle, a bike rack, and the design standard railing (if necessary).

**1.5.5** Outlooks should be situated as close as possible to the shoreline ordinary high water mark to maximize views of the waterway.



*A public access corridor along the Thea Foss Waterway offers site details consistent with those of the adjacent public walkway.*



*Public access corridors should be improved with public facilities, such as this seating, and offer outlooks that maximize views of the waterway.*

Streets are one of the major tools through which the City can implement its design vision for the Tacoma Waterfront.



*Space permitting, the Walkway should include design amenities such as waste receptacles, bike racks, benches, lighting, and landscape.*

## 1.6 Streetscapes

Streetscapes along the Tacoma Waterfront should do more than just transport vehicles. Typically, streets occupy approximately 25 to 35 percent of any dense urban environment. Being publicly owned, streets are one of the major areas that a city has to implement the design vision for a given area. As the Tacoma Waterfront is intended to be inviting to the public and open to pedestrian and bicycle use (as well as other forms of non-motorized transportation), the streets along the waterfront are intended to be a place for people. Of course, this needs to be balanced with a street's vehicular function, but it is important that the street be seen as a space intended for moving people, in all forms of transportation, be it people in cars, people on foot, people on bicycles, people in trucks, or people on skateboards. Street design should accommodate all forms of moving people and produce what have come to be called "complete streets."

More specifically, it is desirable that streetscapes along the waterfront be improved with a sidewalk that adjoins properties. In some cases, the sidewalk will serve as the Waterfront Walkway, where the Walkway cannot be accommodated on private property due to constraints such as hazardous material use or high security needs. Standards for the sidewalk in this case will need to be adjusted to accommodate the City of Tacoma street standards, give continuity to the Walkway design, and provide safety and clarity for the public user. Design guidelines and amenities, as outlined in this document, should be incorporated wherever possible. Additionally, the Downtown Element of the City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for developing complete streets. Streetscape projects along the Tacoma Waterfront should follow this guidance.

Streetscapes also provide the opportunity for scenic views along the Waterfront. Ruston Way, Schuster Parkway, and East D Street offer exceptional vistas for not only pedestrians and bicyclists but also daily commuters and weekend sightseers. It is desirable to have shoreline drives with low speeds and attractive landscaping that affords scenic viewing. These shoreline drives place continued focus on the water as an attraction and emphasize the uniqueness of the Foss Waterway, juxtaposed with the Downtown skyline.

### 1.6.1 Where necessary, the street should be reconfigured to allow for a continuous Waterfront Walkway.

- Coordinate this with the appropriate City of Tacoma departments and public and private landowners.

1.6.2 Where the Waterfront Walkway runs adjacent to the street, the Walkway should feature landscape plantings at its edge to buffer Walkway users from vehicle traffic.

- In areas without enough room for landscape plantings, railings or bollards should be used for buffering.

1.6.3 Where the public sidewalk is identified as the Waterfront Walkway, where appropriate and where space permits, design amenities such as waste receptacles, bike racks, and walkway lights should be located on or adjacent to the public sidewalk.

1.6.4 Where there is no practical alternative to having the Waterfront Walkway cross a street or driveway, the path should be clearly marked to ensure continuity of the Walkway and to notify vehicles of pedestrian and bicycle crossing.

- Treatments such as different paving surfaces, textured paving, lighted crosswalks, or painted surfaces can be used alone or in combination to alert users and vehicles of the Walkway's presence. The trail may also be raised to increase visibility.
- The number of crossings should be minimized.

1.6.5 Public parking should be reconfigured, where possible, to allow the Walkway to locate on the shoreline side, except where the parking is intended for a vehicle viewing area.

1.6.6 Provide for safe, well-lit bicycle and pedestrian traffic in both directions.

1.6.7 Bicycle and pedestrian bridges over waterways and tributaries can be used to close gaps in the Waterfront Walkway.

- Design bicycle and pedestrian bridges to be compatible with surrounding land uses, habitats, and adjacent developments.
- The appropriate width of a bicycle and pedestrian bridge will depend, in part, on the level of use that is likely to occur at the site. However, multi-use bridges are usually at least 10 feet wide.

1.6.8 Where possible, streetscape projects should be consistent with the transportation element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines within the Mobility Master Plan (MoMaP) and connect pedestrian and bicycle circulation routes with other like routes to create a continuous multi-modal trail network.



*Where there's not enough room for a landscape buffer, bollards or a railing can be used as found here along Schuster Parkway to ensure pedestrian safety.*



*Where the Walkway crosses streets or driveways, it should be clearly marked. The crossing above could be better marked with a different paving or painted surface. It is elevated, which alerts drivers they are crossing the path.*



*Bicycle and pedestrian bridges not only improve connections along the waterfront but also function as iconic design features.*



*Motorists enjoy waterfront views along scenic shoreline drives. It is important to keep this in mind when designing improvements, re-aligning, or widening streets.*

1.6.9 Streetscape projects should be consistent with the Mixed-Use Centers Complete Street Guidelines, provided in the Downtown Element of the City of Tacoma Comprehensive Plan.

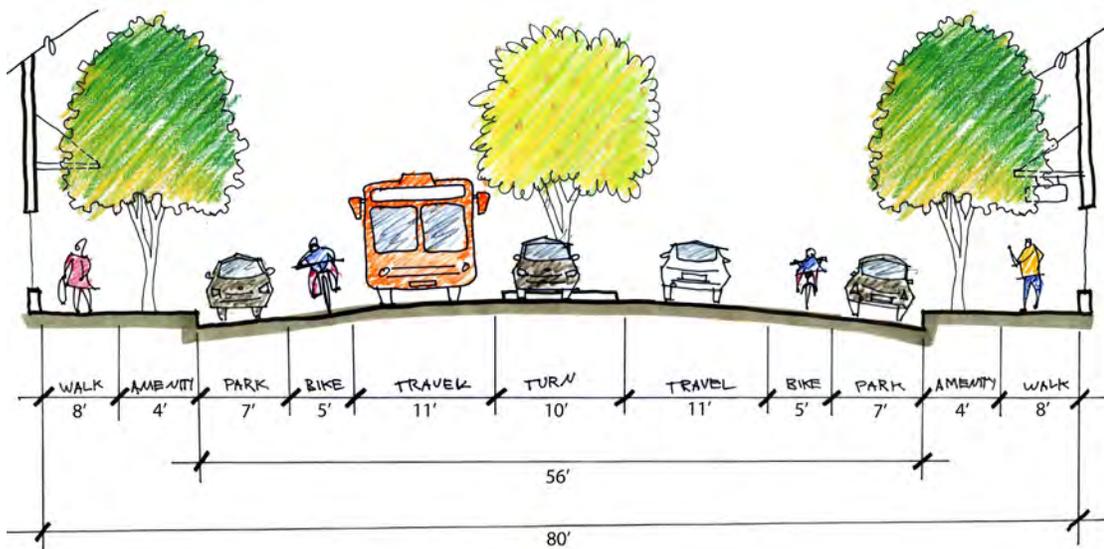
1.6.10 When designing improvements, realigning, or widening streets, consider the scenic shoreline drives and try to preserve motorists' views of the water.

- Use landscaping to balance pedestrian and vehicular views.

1.6.11 Public access at shoreline street ends should be designed to balance public access with private land uses.

- Where safety and/or liability concerns exist, visual access can be provided as an alternative.
- A clear delineation should be made between public and private land, and all public access should be provided on public land.
- Access may include non-motorized boating docks or floats, viewing platforms, seating, and other forms of uses that are not a nuisance to adjacent private uses.
- Public access can be formal (such as paved walkways, identification signs, and interpretive panels) or informal (such as a small footpath to the water or bench by the water).

1.6.12 Emphasize the use of Ruston Way as a low speed, scenic urban parkway that provides access to shoreline properties, accommodates through traffic, and offers viewing opportunities for the motoring public.



*Example of a "complete street" from the Tacoma Complete Streets Manual*

## 1.7 View Areas/Viewpoints

Tacoma's relationship to the water is an important part of its distinct character and history. Significant views include those to Puget Sound, Mount Rainier, and back toward Downtown Tacoma and along the waterfront. These natural panoramas and views of the urban skyline enhance the aesthetic quality of the Waterfront Walkway and provide a connection to the water. Views of industrial areas allow users to see and understand Tacoma's working waterfront.

Vantage points should be incorporated throughout the length of the Waterfront Walkway to support and enhance the public realm. Viewpoints should be understood as extensions of the Walkway but should not impede movement along the Walkway. These viewpoints often benefit from the incorporation of short-duration stop facilities that facilitate stopping, gathering, and viewing activities. These types of facilities could include seating, interpretive kiosks or educational signage, integrated water features, public art, and water access. These facilities also provide an opportunity to adaptively reuse building materials and elements from existing structures to reflect the historic and maritime character of the waterfront.



*Vegetation at this viewpoint balances providing views with creating habitat along the shoreline.*



*A meandering trail along the Wapato Lake shoreline provides an example of how to alternate areas of vegetated shoreline with public access and view areas.*



*This viewpoint along Ruston Way functions as an extension of the Waterfront Walkway without conflicting with movement along the trail. It is defined as a separate space through stairs, changes in landscaping, and public art.*



*Viewpoints should incorporate site amenities like seating and shade and be oriented to major view corridors.*



*Use art, landscaping, and amenities to incorporate viewpoints along the walkway. Source: rustonhome.blogspot.com*

**1.7.1 Incorporate viewpoints and view areas along the Waterfront Walkway.**

- Integrate public access with viewpoints/view areas.
- Define viewpoints that are understood as extensions of the Waterfront Walkway without conflicting with the trail's movement functions. Viewpoints can be clearly defined as spaces separate from the Walkway through the use of different materials, public art, stairs or other changes in elevation, and landscaping.
- Incorporate short-duration stop facilities such as moveable seats, space for vending carts, and/or access to the water.
- Viewpoints and view areas can be elevated above the walkway to enhance views. This can be paired with the incorporation of a flexible open space that can accommodate small events or gatherings.

**1.7.2 Orient views with any key view corridors and/or major streets and street ends.**

**1.7.3 Emphasize panoramic waterfront views from the roadway, slopes, and shoreline areas.**

**1.7.4 Consider the residents' view from the upper neighborhoods when designing and locating new developments along the shoreline or the hillside.**

**1.7.5 Balance viewpoints and view areas with shoreline vegetation and native plantings.**

- Provision of views needs to be balanced with the need for habitat and erosion prevention when considering removing existing vegetation.
- To preserve more vegetation, view areas or viewpoints can be small.

**1.7.6 Outlooks should be situated to provide public views of significant Port and industrial operations. Recognize the aesthetic and educational value of port/industrial operations.**

**1.7.7 Consider the view of the motorist when designing improvements, realignment or widening of the Ruston Way roadway in order to provide the passerby with views of the water.**

**1.7.8 Provide small bayside parking areas or pull-offs for limited in-car viewing, where compatible with existing roads and adjacent uses.**

## 1.8 Public Access in Industrial Areas

While fulfilling the mandate of expanding public access and improving habitat, Tacoma must also remain sensitive to the need of supporting the economic development of industrial uses. The Port and other maritime and industrial uses are valuable assets.

In some instances, these dual goals may seemingly be in conflict. Providing public access may pose some hazard to public users given the industrial nature of uses. Likewise, public access may interfere with private operations, increase liability for owners, and pose issues of security. This is not to say that public access cannot be provided in industrial areas but that it must be carefully designed to address competing needs.

Physical public access can be provided in a way that is inviting and safe for the public while remaining compatible with industrial activities. The design of access should address concerns regarding liability, interference with industrial activities, and security of facilities.

**1.8.1 Security can be accomplished without negatively affecting the aesthetics of public access through careful, subtle, and sensitive design; the use of clever separation; and avoidance of obvious or harsh features such as chain-link fencing, guard houses, or razor wire. The best security will be imperceptible to users or the general public unless trespassed.**

**1.8.2 Public access to industrial areas can be limited through the use of fences, grade changes, or retaining walls.**

- Transitional security strips may be used on the landside to separate the public Waterfront Walkway from private industrial spaces. This strip should be in harmony with the Walkway and not interrupt continuity.
- Fences and walls can be landscaped to reduce their visual impact on the Walkway and provide minimal visual obstructions.

**1.8.3 The safe observation of industrial and maritime facilities and visiting vessels in operation can be provided for reasonable casual visitation when facilities are not being used for active loading/off-loading functions through overlooks, belvederes, decks, or piers. This will allow views of the working waterfront.**

**1.8.4 Convenient and attractive alternative routes through or around the maritime facilities should be provided for**



*Views should be provided of significant Port and industrial operations.*



*While these fences distinguish public and private areas of use, the chainlink fence and barbed wire detract from the appearance of this public access. Fences can be landscaped to reduce their visual impact.*



*Public access is successfully provided at this site adjacent to industrial uses through the use of attractive fencing separating users and a viewpoint that offers visual access without interfering with industrial operations. The low key design of the space reflects the site's industrial character.*

the general public and passersby when security and safety dictate that certain areas be cordoned off from the public. Where reasonable, the facility should accommodate safe pier-side pedestrian access and recreational fishing opportunities.

**1.8.5 Public access can be designed so as not to interfere with existing industrial activities.**

- Separate incompatible uses on site. Visitor vehicle circulation and parking should be separated from industrial traffic so as not to negatively affect work activity.
- Visitor attractions can be concentrated in one part of the site.
- Clear signage/wayfinding and strong attractions will direct visitors and keep them out of private areas.
- Reinforce signage with design cues such as paving, crosswalks, lighting, and site amenities to distinguish areas of public access from private uses.
- Provide elements that benefit workers and existing uses such as better circulation and parking, convenient commercial services, improved lighting, and new site amenities.

**1.8.6 Opportunities exist for the design of architectural and site elements that reflect and reinforce the site’s industrial character. Low-key design can preserve the working waterfront character.**

**1.8.7 Provide public access across boat yards and launch ramps in locations where safety precautions can be implemented.**



*This park in Oakland, CA provides opportunities for visitors to safely view the Port without interfering with operations or posing a security risk.*



*Public access is provided here with landscaping buffering industrial uses from the public and new site amenities such as a boat dock that workers can benefit from.*

## 1.9 Trail Safety and Security

Various design and programmatic measures can be taken to address safety issues on a shared-use path. For additional tips and strategies consult the City of Tacoma Mobility Master Plan Pedestrian and Bicycle Design Guidelines and CPTED (Community Policing Through Environmental Design) strategies.

### 1.9.1 Protect privacy of adjacent property owners

- Encourage the use of neighborhood friendly fencing and also planting of landscape buffers.
- Clearly mark path access points.
- Post path rules that encourage respect for private property.
- Strategically-place lighting, utilizing light shields to minimize unwanted light in adjacent homes.

### 1.9.2 Reduce crime through environmental design

- Place lights strategically and as necessary.
- Place benches and other amenities at locations with good visual surveillance and high activity.
- Create a “Path Watch Program” involving local residents.
- Select benches, bollards, signage and other site amenities that are durable, low maintenance and vandal resistant.
- Manage vegetation to allow visual surveillance of the path from adjacent properties and from roadway/path intersections.

### 1.9.3 Prevent unwanted vehicle access on the path

- Utilize landscaping to define the corridor edge and path, including earth berms or boulders.
- Use bollards at intersections.
- Pass a motorized vehicle prohibited ordinance and sign the path.
- Lay the shared-use path out with curves that allow bike/ped passage, but are uncomfortably tight for automobile passage.

### 1.9.4 Reduce litter and dumping

- Post rules encouraging pack-it-out practices.
- Place garbage receptacles at trailheads.



*Surveillance from nearby buildings and pedestrianscale lighting can increase shared-use path safety*



## 2. BUILDING SITES

When being redeveloped, building sites, whether publicly or privately owned, should be developed in such a way as to take into consideration the special nature of the Tacoma Waterfront. Design teams for sites on the waterfront must recognize that a successful building will not only account for patterns of development on the actual site but will also successfully implement and contribute to the larger goals of the Tacoma Waterfront as a whole. It is desirable that the sites surrounding the Tacoma Waterfront acknowledge the larger patterns of development in the area, public access goals (as exemplified by the Waterfront Walkway), and view considerations (such as the public access/view corridors). Public spaces should be prioritized to minimize shadow impacts, and building massing and form should strengthen the existing public rights of way, including streetscapes and the Walkway. The building site guidelines focus primarily on the impact of building sites on public access rather than the style or materials of buildings.

The following guidelines primarily apply to the redevelopment of new mixed-used, residential, and commercial buildings along the “Dome to Defiance” portion of the waterfront. These types of land uses offer more opportunities for public access and therefore should be designed to improve public access. Industrial uses can still provide some limited public access, but given the character of this land use, many of the following guidelines may not apply.

### 2.1 General Considerations

**2.1.1** New development of individual sites should enhance the shoreline’s positive and distinct features, unify shoreline areas visually, and give definition to subareas.

**2.1.2** Development should improve the appearance of the shoreline for those who live and work there, making it a more attractive and interesting place to visit.

**2.1.3** New development should be oriented to the water and relate to public access along the Waterfront Walkway.



*The newly developed Chinese Reconciliation Park along the Waterfront Walkway enhances the larger shoreline while also defining a unique sub-area.*



*A cafe on the ground floor of Thea’s Landing is oriented to views of the water and relates to public access along the Waterfront Walkway.*



*A building along Thea Foss is oriented to the water, providing views for residents and relates to public access, providing easy access to the Walkway.*



*Balconies along the Thea Foss shoreline take advantage of views out to the water and toward Mount Rainier. A rooftop space increases residents visual access to these same amenities.*



*New development should avoid shading the Waterfront Walkway, like this existing building does, through careful site design and building design.*

## 2.2 View Considerations

The topography and structures in and around the Tacoma Waterfront provide numerous view opportunities, particularly of Mount Rainier, the Cascades, the Olympics, the Thea Foss Waterway, waterfront activities, Commencement Bay, Union Station and the Washington State Historical Museum, the Port of Tacoma industrial area, and Downtown Tacoma. While City regulations are in place to mitigate view impacts, the guidelines below are intended to maximize views to and from the Tacoma Waterfront.

2.2.1 Design and locate new shoreline uses to take full advantage of the waterfront views and location using design elements such as building orientation, windows, decks, and rooftop spaces.

2.2.2 Incorporate design elements such as transparency and preservation of view corridors to minimize view impacts on surrounding areas.

2.2.3 Building designs should explore creative ways of incorporating public access, such as through roof access points.

2.2.4 Views should be balanced with vegetation.

## 2.3 Shading Considerations

The intent of these guidelines is to minimize the shading of public spaces to ensure that the Waterfront Walkway remains a well-used public resource. The shading of public spaces is of particular concern on the west side of the Tacoma Waterfront because its location, topography, and north-south orientation result in early afternoon shadow conditions nearly year-round.

2.3.1 Buildings should minimize the shading of public spaces as much as practical.

- Techniques to minimize shading include the manipulation of building orientation, location, and shape.

2.3.2 In public spaces subject to early shading, sufficient artificial lighting should be provided.

- See the Lighting section of Chapter 3, Site Details.

## 2.4 Site Layout

Buildings should be thoughtfully positioned, programmed, and detailed to maximize the impact of the Tacoma Waterfront public experience. Considerations include: strengthening the profile of streetscapes by locating the building closer to the street, especially on streets parallel to the Tacoma Waterfront; providing more open space on the water side of a building; locating uses with the most public access on the streetscape or Waterfront Walkway sides of a building; and accentuating the pedestrian-friendly nature of a building at ground-level sides facing the streetscape and the Walkway.

**2.4.1** To give the appearance of building façades being a similar distance from the streets, awnings, landscape plantings, entrance markers, modulation, and other design elements are encouraged.

**2.4.2** Location of activities within a building should consider surrounding uses and activities both inside and outside the building. Potential conflicts arising from light, glare, noise, odors, or hours of operation can be avoided by separating uses and activities (vertically and/or horizontally), or by providing physical screening between uses and activities.

- Physical screening can be accomplished through landscape plantings, building construction, or other techniques.

**2.4.3** The preferred location for open space is the waterward side of a building site.

**2.4.4** Combine vehicular access points to minimize the interruption of pedestrian traffic and adverse visual impacts.

**2.4.5** No parts of buildings should protrude into public spaces; however, weather protection features benefiting the public, art visible from public spaces, or building areas provided primarily for public access may be located in or over these areas.

Buildings should be sited to maximize the impact of the public experience along the Waterfront Walkway.



*This building along Thea Foss provides stairs that offer public access through the site, connecting pedestrians on the upland side to the waterfront. They also provide opportunities for views given their orientation to the water and Mount Rainier and slight elevation gain.*

Buildings and building sites should be designed to create a comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment.



*The large facade of Thea's Landing is broken up through the use of vertical modulation and changes in color and materials that create an interesting pedestrian environment.*



*The Albers Mill Lofts adaptively re-uses an historic building along the waterfront and reflects the area's industrial character through the use of materials, including steel and large timbers.*

## 2.5 Pedestrian Orientation

Buildings along the Tacoma Waterfront are intended to feature design individuality, not to portray a strong unifying theme. Design continuity should primarily be established by the cohesive linear design of the Waterfront Walkway and streetscapes.

At the same time, the shoreline has a rich maritime heritage. The design and remodeling of structures should reflect the northwest marine character. To be compatible, design elements from public spaces, existing structures, and surrounding districts should be incorporated into all new developments. It is not intended that portions of existing buildings be replicated; instead, the creative, subtle integration of these elements is the objective. Additionally, the exterior appearance of buildings and building sites should incorporate treatments that make for a comfortable and interesting pedestrian environment.

The pedestrian orientation guidelines apply to the “Dome to Defiance” portion of the waterfront and do not apply to industrial uses.

2.5.1 Strong individual design is encouraged along the Tacoma Waterfront, especially design that creatively reflects the northwest marine character of the area, befitting the Waterfront Walkway's value as a public resource. These characteristics can include integration or reference to proportions, materials, forms, textures, or colors from existing buildings. Continuity between buildings is encouraged, especially through logical transitions in building bulk, shape, and height, or by significant physical separation.

2.5.2 Buildings should be constructed of high quality, long lasting materials, particularly concrete, masonry, metal, or wood wherever possible, to preserve resources and reflect the long-term community values embedded in the Tacoma Waterfront. Wherever possible, the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the use of historic building materials as part or whole of new building or development projects is encouraged.

2.5.3 When several buildings are proposed for a single development, the buildings should demonstrate internal compatibility while maintaining strong individual design. While buildings are not required to look identical, they should provide continuity of design through the use of such elements as building bulk, shape, and height.

- Common design themes should be demonstrated in materials, roof pitches, colors, building separation, and orientation of buildings.

2.5.4 Buildings should be oriented to existing public spaces such as plazas or courtyards. New buildings should be clustered so as to define active public spaces that relate to the Waterfront Walkway (see guidelines in Section 2.5, Transition Areas).

2.5.5 Whenever possible, buildings along the Waterfront Walkway should be oriented to the Walkway and create an inviting and interesting pedestrian environment; locate active uses such as retail, public activities, and employee gathering along the Walkway.

- Visible industrial uses and processes can highlight Tacoma's working waterfront character.
- Windows and displays can provide visual interest and a connection between the Walkway and activities within buildings, particularly on the ground-level.
- Street furniture for ground floor retail and stoops and ground floor balconies for residential uses allow for opportunities for pedestrian social interactions.

2.5.6 The human-scale design of ground-level exteriors of buildings at a pedestrian level is encouraged to improve the quality of public access, encourage pedestrian activity, and provide visual interest/engagement.

- These details could include regularly spaced windows that establish a pattern or tall ceilings and display windows on the ground floor.
- Features that define the ground floor include trim, awnings or canopies, arbors or trellises, or overhangs.
- Façades can be articulated through the use of recessed entrances,



*The Albers Mill Lofts building is oriented to the Walkway and helps define the public gathering space adjacent to the Glass Museum with large ground floor windows and a semi-private open space facing the plaza.*



*A human-scaled ground level along Thea Foss has design details including large display windows, transom windows, recessed entries, awnings, and lighting.*



*This transition area at Thea's Landing extends some of the design features and materials of the Walkway but demarcates a transition with stairs to delineate private from public space.*



*These two examples of transition areas demonstrate how to design for social interaction. Fences, changes in elevation, and landscaping separate private from public use while still allowing people to interact.*

columns, scoring, change in materials, transom windows, roll up doors, arcades, decorative kickplates or belt courses, and/or signage.

2.5.7 Modulation (horizontal and vertical) and architectural features are encouraged to create interest and avoid long, flat façades along the Waterfront Walkway so that the space continues to feel safe and interesting to users. Generally, blank walls longer than 20 feet should be avoided.

- The use of blank walls should be minimized by the incorporation of architectural features of interest and utility, such as windows, building entries, and weather protection.
- Long walls that do not require windows or entries should be articulated in a way so as to break up long, monotonous planes. Building articulation can include changes in the roof line, building materials, facade setbacks, or fenestration pattern. Blank wall treatments include planter boxes, trellises, artwork, awnings, bay windows, and columns.

## 2.6 Transition Areas

Transition areas are semi-private zones where privately owned buildings abut public spaces. These spaces provide physical and visual separation between public and private spaces. The separation indicating the transition between public and private users can be made with seating areas, landscaping, artwork, or walkways. Transition areas should clearly delineate public and private spaces to provide greater legibility and help the public navigate what areas are appropriate for them to use. Their design, however, should provide a continuity of site details and provide a seamless transition from public to private areas. Highly visible to passersby, transition areas should foster a lively, pedestrian-oriented atmosphere.

2.6.1 Transition areas can be used to extend the design features of public spaces to the edges of buildings.

- Transition areas can use landscape plantings, surfacing materials, lighting, and other site details that are compatible with those used in adjacent public spaces to provide a continuity of site details but may demarcate the transition area with different design features to discern public from private space.
- Not applicable to industrial properties.

2.6.2 Transition areas are encouraged to be enhanced with artwork, fountains, landscape plantings, plazas (for public or private use), or other features promoting public enjoyment (active or visual).

2.6.3 Transition areas can be designed to allow for social interaction.

- Transition areas are the preferred location for activities such as outdoor dining or outdoor display.
- Fences, walls, and gateways in transition areas should be designed so that they visually separate but do not hide semi-private spaces.
- Low or stepped down planting areas and terraces or bioswales can be used to visually separate private and public development.



## 3. SITE DETAILS

Site details bring continuity and identity to the Tacoma Waterfront. The following guidelines are designed to ensure that the public realm and development sites remain functional for a range of users. Site details should have a clear function and exhibit a simple utilitarian design. Site details are encouraged to reflect the maritime character of the waterfront. Historic site details may be appropriate when related to historic structures. Exceptional care should be taken in the design, construction, and installation of all site details.

Softer shoreline edges provide additional access while conserving habitat and natural features and functions.



*This soft shoreline along Ruston Way increases public access while also maintaining shore stability through the use of a naturally sloped backshore and anchored logs that stop erosion and allow sediment to travel along the coast naturally.*



*Microhabitat is created in Puget Sound with habitat panels and troughs attached to the sea wall to provide rough textured surfaces for organisms to attach to despite the hard shoreline.*

### 3.1 Green Shorelines

Beyond the important economic and social benefits provided by shorelines, they are essential ecological resources. Shorelines include habitats for diverse species of plants and animals, foraging and spawning habitats for marine species, and breeding and feeding areas for birds. The vast majority of the Puget Sound has hard or immobilized edges. Bulkheads and other seawall armoring have been used to make shorelines static, but this treatment actually destabilizes the shore processes and functions and is generally harmful to marine ecosystems. It also disrupts the sediment supply, impacting the nature and composition of nearby shorelines, and changes wave energy, increasing wake and washing away fine materials needed for habitat. To ensure that the region's coastal resources are sustained, the integrity of shoreline ecosystems should be protected.

As population in the region continues and pressure to redevelop and modify waterfront property grows, impacts on the shoreline will increase. Additionally, current models of climate change suggest that sea levels will increase along with more severe episodic storm events. Instead of continuing to fortify the shorelines, design should seek softer, more natural edges that take into account impacts on coastal processes, adjacent properties, and nearshore habitat. Buildings, roads, and other development can be moved from bluffs or beaches to allow for natural shorelines. Large wood or gravel berms can provide protection from waves, while vegetation and improved drainage can stabilize slopes. This softer edge will have the added benefit of providing additional access to the water's edge, offering places to set in a kayak, go for a swim or wade and build sand castles, and create a softer, natural aesthetic.

#### 3.1.1 Replace existing bulkheads or design new shorelines with green shorelines that substantially improve habitat, maintain shore stability, and improve water access.

- Set back development including buildings, roads, and other development to reduce the need for shore protection and decrease the negative impacts from storm surges, flooding, and other episodic events.
- Natural riparian vegetation plantings offer a dual function as landscape design features and shore protection.
- Where erosion is a concern, consider using naturally sloped backshore, berms, or anchored logs to provide shore protection to allow sediment transport along the coast. Offset erosion with periodic beach nourishment, adding gravel roughly every 5 to 10 years.

3.1.2 Mowed turf areas should not be extended to the top of shore embankments.

3.1.3 Where possible, critical and/or sensitive habitat and natural features and functions of the shore zone should be conserved and rehabilitated.

- Avoid filling in intertidal and subtidal areas that offer critical habitat. Instead, use these habitat features as part of the landscape design and shore protection.

3.1.4 Native plants can be used to provide shade for juvenile fish, facilitate the food web by providing homes to insects that fish and birds can eat, provide refuge for animals, and help filter run-off. Non-native plants can be used where they are advantageous, or when native species cannot be found.

3.1.5 Where hard shorelines are used, they can be designed to provide habitat and mitigate wake energy through the use of porous, sloped, gentle, or terraced embankments or through a combination of horizontal and vertical surfaces.

- Create microhabitat to encourage the formation of a crust of filter-feeding marine organisms that function as a living water filtration system through the incorporation of cavities or crevices that retain water during low tide; the use of rough textured and porous surfaces such as mussel, oyster, and clam shells that facilitate the attachment of organisms; and/or integrated ecosystem-enhancing treatments such as oyster baskets.



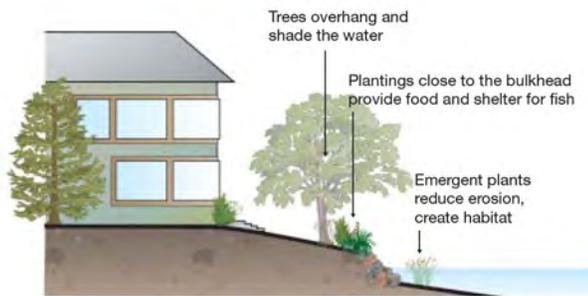
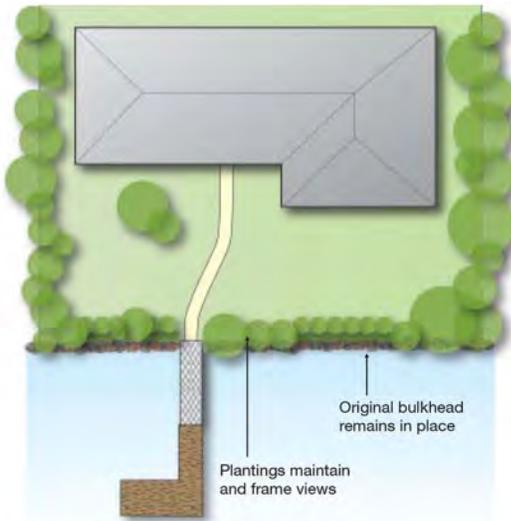
*Extending mowed turf to the edge of a shore embankment should be avoided. Use native vegetation along the shoreline instead.*



*The use of native vegetation and natural shoreline features should be used to provide a buffer between the water and the waterfront walkway.*

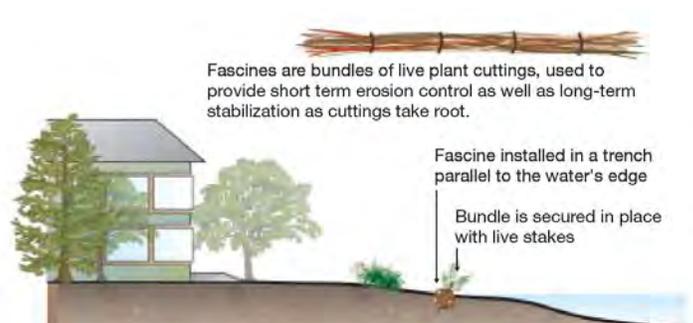


*Instead of filling in an intertidal area, the Chinese Reconciliation Park conserves this natural feature and uses it as a centerpiece of the design.*



Riparian vegetation can be used to improve fish habitat in areas structural shoreline stabilization currently exists.

Source: Green Shorelines. City of Seattle. 2009.



Examples of "soft" shoreline stabilization techniques.

Source: Green Shorelines. City of Seattle. 2009.



*Tidal stairs allow this family to get close to the water along Ruston Way.*



*A soft shoreline along Ruston Way allows visitors to walk along the beach. Riprap can incorporate seating elements.*



*A low-profile float along the Tacoma waterfront allows a kayaker to launch.*

## 3.2 Shoreline Edge Treatments that Provide Closeness to the Water

Shoreline treatments that provide closeness to the water are desired. While trails, waterfront promenades, and viewpoints facilitate access, shoreline edge treatments that allow the public to experience and appreciate the water offer more meaningful access. Access to the water can allow people to touch the water in various ways. Beaches offer the chance to dip your toes in the water or take a swim. Boat docks, floats, and launches let kayaks or canoes to set in. Tidal stairs or ramps allow people to discover the riparian ecosystem. Many of these treatments, such as a boat float or beach, do not require a large investment and can facilitate access at a marginal cost. The design of these waterfront elements should reflect guideline 3.1, Green Shorelines.

### 3.2.1 Provide diverse public experiences that allow visitors to touch the water first and foremost.

- Tidal stairs provide an easy way to get close to the water while also reducing wake energy. Given potential algae growth causing slippery conditions, tidal stairs should be proposed lower than where algae normally occurs. Likewise, grooved, pitted, and or roughened surfaces and handrails can be used to reduce the risk of slipping.
- Tidal ramps provide means for access to the water, allowing people to put in hand-powered boats or fish.
- Riprap can incorporate seating elements that provides closeness to the water.
- Beaches and coves provide simple, convenient access to people and human-powered watercraft.
- Low-profile floats, docks, and launches provide a safe point for launching and landing for human-powered watercraft.
- Piers provide closeness to the water and facilitate fishing and the discovery of nearshore ecosystems.

## 3.3 Wildlife Habitat

While improving public access along the Tacoma shoreline is a primary objective of these guidelines, often access can have negative impacts on wildlife habitat. These impacts may include flushing, increased stress, interrupted foraging, and/or nest abandonment.

Over the long term, these effects may adversely affect the wildlife population. The shoreline edge is a rich and often critical habitat zone for wildlife. Therefore, providing new means and points of access should be balanced with the goal of providing high-quality habitat.

In areas determined to be key habitat, access should be designed sensitively. Careful design can accomplish both objectives. For example, observation decks, boardwalks, and viewing platforms can provide public access with minimal negative impact on habitat. This type of public access will have the added benefit of allowing visitors to explore and appreciate Tacoma's natural resources and foster public support for their protection. It should be noted that areas of critical habitat may provide visual access rather than physical access, or in-lieu access may be explored.

### 3.3.1 Wherever possible, retain existing marsh and tidal flats and restore or enhance wildlife habitat.

### 3.3.2 Plan public access in a way that balances the needs of wildlife and people, reducing or preventing adverse human and wildlife interactions while still providing public access to the shoreline where possible.

- Employ appropriate siting, design, and management strategies such as buffers or use restrictions.
- Use design elements such as varying trail widths, paving materials, and site amenities to encourage or discourage specific types of human activities.
- Provide spur trails to reduce informal access into and through more sensitive areas.
- Use durable materials to reduce erosion impacts on adjacent habitats and to keep users from creating alternate access routes.
- Periodic closures can be implemented to avoid effects on wildlife during sensitive periods such as breeding seasons.

### 3.3.3 Physical design features such as bridges and boardwalks that confine public use and provide predictability for wildlife can buffer wildlife from human use while still providing physical and visual access.

- Viewing platforms and fencing can allow some visual access while preventing physical access to both people and pets.



*Bridges and boardwalks can confine public use to certain areas and provide predictability for wildlife.*



*This bird blind provides a viewing platform that offers the public visual access while minimizing the impact on animals.*

## Washington Native Plants for Saltwater Habitats

Latin Name	Common Name	Height	Type
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	4 inches - 3 feet	Deciduous
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Serviceberry, Saskatoon	Up to 15 feet	Deciduous
<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	Red Columbine	Up to 3 feet	Deciduous
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Kinnikinnick, Bearberry	Up to 8 inches	Evergreen
<i>Armeria maritima</i>	Sea-Thrift	Up to 18 inches	Deciduous
<i>Aster subspicatus</i>	Douglas Aster	Up to 32 inches	Deciduous
<i>Carex obnupta</i>	Slough Sedge	1 - 5 feet	Deciduous
<i>Castilleja miniata</i>	Red Paintbrush	8 - 32 inches	Deciduous
<i>Cerastium arvense</i>	Field Chickweed		Deciduous
<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>	Black Hawthorn		Deciduous
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted Hairgrass	Up to 4 feet	Deciduous
<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>	Creeping Spikerush	Up to 3 feet	Deciduous
<i>Eriophorum chamissonis</i>	Chamisso's Cotton-grass	8 - 28 inches	Deciduous
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red Fescue	Up to 4 feet	Evergreen
<i>Fragaria chiloensis</i>	Coastal Strawberry	Up to 10 inches	Deciduous
<i>Galium trifidum</i>	Small Bedstraw	Up to 28 inches	Evergreen
<i>Gaultheria shallon</i>	Salal	3 - 7 feet	Evergreen
<i>Grindelia integrifolia</i>	Entire-leaved Gumweed	Up to 32 inches	Deciduous
<i>Hordeum brachyantherum</i>	Meadow Barley	Up to 3 feet	Deciduous
<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	Large-leaved Lupine	3 - 6 feet	Deciduous
<i>Malus fusca</i>	Pacific Crabapple	16.5 - 40 feet	Deciduous
<i>Myrica gale</i>	Sweet Gale		Deciduous
<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	Sitka Spruce	Up to 200 feet	Evergreen
<i>Pinus contorta</i>	Shore Pine	Up to 100 feet	Evergreen
<i>Potentilla anserina ssp. Pacifica</i>	Silverweed	Up to 16 inches	Deciduous
<i>Potentilla gracilis</i>	Graceful Cinquefoil	Up to 32 inches	Deciduous
<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	Thimbleberry	Up to 10 feet	Deciduous
<i>Scirpus maritimus</i>	Seacoast Bulrush		Deciduous
<i>Sisyrinchium californicum</i>	Golden-eyed Grass		Deciduous
<i>Solidago canadensis</i>	Canada Goldenrod	Up to 5 feet	Deciduous

### 3.4 Low Impact Development

Low impact development (LID) is an approach to stormwater management that emphasizes the conservation and use of existing natural site features integrated with distributed, small-scale stormwater control features to more closely mimic natural hydrologic conditions (Puget Sound Action Team, 2005. Low Impact Development Technical Guidance Manual for Puget Sound). The use of LID techniques is highly encouraged along the Tacoma Waterfront, where feasible. Due to environmental constraints from industrial uses, however, LID will not be practicable for various sites along the shoreline. Please consult with the City of Tacoma Environmental Services Department before embarking on a LID project.

**3.4.1** Reduce the amount of impervious surfaces by minimizing the building footprint, planning and grading the site to maintain natural drainage patterns and encourage the sheet flow of stormwater runoff over permeable areas, and using impervious surfaces such as permeable pavers or pervious concrete.

**3.4.2** Whenever possible, preserve existing and provide new vegetated areas.

**3.4.3** Direct stormwater runoff from impervious areas into vegetated or pervious areas on the site rather than into the City stormwater system.

- Soils used in stormwater control features should be appropriate for their intended function such as runoff infiltration, flow control, or water quality treatment.

**3.4.4** Small-scale stormwater control features that use natural systems, processes, and materials are preferred.

- Such features include, but are not limited to: dry wells, filter strips, swales, infiltration trenches, permeable pavements, soil amendments, tree-box filters, vegetated buffers, and green roofs.

**3.4.5** Green (vegetated) roofs and green walls are highly encouraged along the Tacoma Waterfront.



*A stormwater control feature along Ruston Way that directs stormwater runoff from impervious areas and incorporates native plants and artwork.*



*Permeable pavement allows stormwater runoff to percolate back to the aquifer.*



*This green roof in Portland, OR is an attractive LID installment that incorporates educational signage.*

## 3.5 Landscape Plantings

Landscape plantings are highly desirable along the Waterfront Walkway, roadways, and surface parking. Landscape plantings, besides just pleasing the senses, can perform many other functions. They can buffer pedestrians from passing vehicles, offer shade, provide wildlife habitat, and filter stormwater, to name but a few.

3.5.1 Native, drought-tolerant plantings are preferred (see list of native plants in Section 3.1, Green Shorelines).

3.5.2 Retaining existing trees in healthy condition and of appropriate species is encouraged.

3.5.3 Select plant varieties that require little maintenance for public improvements.

3.5.4 Landscape planting areas adjacent to the curb can buffer pedestrians from passing vehicles with street trees, low-growing landscape plantings, and groundcover.

3.5.5 Buffer parking areas from adjacent properties, the roadway, and the bicycle/pedestrian path with landscaped separators, where possible.

3.5.6 Encourage the use of plant materials within parking areas, provided views are not blocked.

3.5.7 Landscape plantings can be balanced with views by contemplating planting trees that, when mature, will not have canopies that significantly block pedestrian sight lines.

- Avoid planting trees that would require periodic topping to maintain views.

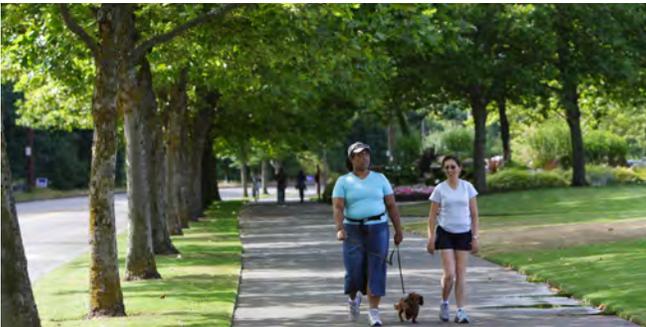
3.5.8 Use landscaping to enhance views and vistas and to screen undesirable features.

3.5.9 Trees are highly encouraged where appropriate.

- Trees should not block lighting fixtures.
- Evergreen trees provide enhanced year-round wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and protection from inclement weather.
- Deciduous trees provide fall color and allow for increased light penetration in winter.



*Drought-tolerant plants are used along with art that reflects the waterfront's maritime character along Thea Foss.*



*Landscape plantings and street trees buffer pedestrians along Ruston Way and offer an attractive public amenity. The canopies of these street trees do not obstruct views to the water.*

### 3.5.10 Tree roots should be protected where they may be subject to damage.

- Tree wells should be flush with the paving and a minimum of 4 feet by 4 feet to allow adequate soil area for root growth.
- Structural soil should be installed under paving to allow tree roots to grow out of the tree well under the adjacent walkway without causing the pavement to heave or buckle.
- While not preferred, tree grates can be utilized for decorative purposes.

### 3.5.11 Coordinate public and private landscaping improvements to create a unified visual character and appearance.

### 3.5.12 Strongly encourage landscaping the Ruston Way roadway, where appropriate, to create a parkway imagery.

## 3.6 Art

The Tacoma Waterfront vision embraces public art projects, particularly at public access/view corridors, community gathering places, outlooks, and along the Waterfront Walkway. As many of the nation's most successful public art programs have demonstrated over the past decades, public spaces that bring people together are greatly enhanced by the introduction of art.

The Tacoma Waterfront Design Guidelines seek to integrate art that is clearly discernible as art, yet may also have a variety of other qualities, which may include:

- FUNCTION, such as shelter, safety, or lighting.
- PLAY, such as playground equipment, skateboard areas, bicycle racks, and objects for pets or children to interact with.
- EDUCATIONAL, engaging the history of the Tacoma Waterfront, its environmental state (both past and present), or the evolving functions of the shoreline.
- ENVIRONMENTAL, engaging sustainable materials/systems, such as bioswales, permeable paving, cisterns, solar, or wind.
- SENSORY/ACTIVE, engaging all or as many of the senses as possible of those interacting with the artwork.



*A tree along the Thea Foss is planted in a tree well flush with the pavement that allows for adequate root growth and additional landscape planting.*

Art greatly enhances public spaces and brings people together.



*Public art at the Chinese Reconciliation Park is incorporated with a gathering space along the Walkway and reflects the history of Tacoma's waterfront.*



*This art display along the Thea Foss functions as an activity generator and is located in a highly visible portion of the Walkway that receives heavy users.*



*Art can be incorporated into public spaces through the use of surface materials and color. Source: rustonhome.blogspot.com.*



*This boat-shaped playground provides opportunities for children to play, while celebrating the area's maritime heritage. Source: rustonhome.blogspot.com.*

An important value for the Tacoma Waterfront is to strive to incorporate deeper levels of meaning into the art pieces that may or may not be discernible upon first glance. Of particular importance is to engage deeper levels of meaning in the waterfront area, including:

- HISTORY, especially maritime history.
- TRANSPORTATION, multi-modal and evolving.
- KINETICISM, especially regarding the rich marine movements of both natural and human systems.
- EXCHANGE and TRADE, as an international port.
- ENVIRONMENT, especially the rich and varied marine life present in the Foss and Commencement Bay.

3.6.1 The use of public art is highly encouraged, particularly at public access/view corridors, community gathering places, outlooks, and along the Waterfront Walkway.

3.6.2 Art, particularly when interactive or kinetic, should be sited at a location appropriate for its function and expected active and visual use.

## 3.7 Children's Play Areas

Gathering areas can include a variety of play areas that may reflect the location through themes, such as maritime or working waterfront. Specific use areas require specific materials to comply with applicable codes and standards.

3.7.1 Children's play areas and playgrounds should include elements to stimulate interactions, creativity, and imagination, such as play structures and materials that foster social play.

3.7.2 Play areas can be designed so that they are universally accessible for children with physical disabilities.

3.7.3 Tot lots can be provided for toddlers (ages 1–3) that offer age-appropriate play areas with different types of play components, allowing parents or guardians to interact or assist. These tot lots should be separated from other children’s play areas to prevent incidental accidents while still within sight distance so parents or guardians can oversee different age children simultaneously.

3.7.4 Preferred locations for play areas are as part of larger community gathering areas.

3.7.5 Play areas should be designed with consideration for a variety of children’s abilities and skills.



*Gathering places should include play areas that reflect the maritime character of the Tacoma waterfront.*

## 3.8 Site Furnishings

According to the Tacoma Municipal Code, all public access sites city wide shall provide site furnishings appropriate for the intended use of the access site, the estimated demand, site context, and hours of use. The following specific site furniture models are preferred for the Dome to Defiance shoreline. A palette of preferred site furnishings is presented below. Used together, these elements will define a unique and discernible identity for the Waterfront Walkway. However, alternative models can be used if they are of equivalent or better quality, design, or function. Alternative site furnishings can be used to create unique subdistricts within the larger Tacoma Waterfront.

Site furnishings define a unique and discernible identity for the Waterfront Walkway.

### Benches

3.8.1 Benches should be considered for public access/view corridors, community gathering places, parks, and at various locations along the Waterfront Walkway.

- At certain locations, benches are required. Please see the Tacoma Municipal Code.

3.8.2 One of the two design standard benches specified below should be used.

- The preferred reversible-back bench is FairWeather model TF-3.
- The preferred bench backless bench is FairWeather model TF-1.3.
- For both benches, arms should be forest green and galvanized. All other metal surfaces should be galvanized steel. Wood slats should be sustainably harvested ipe or cumaru, or other sustainably harvested wood.
- East Foss benches should be 4 feet in length.



*Bench:  
FairWeather Model TF-3, reversible-back bench*



*Waterfront Walkway Lighting:  
Se'lux MRTC - 17 - GV*



*Waterfront Pedestrian Street Lighting:  
Se'lux MRTC - 19 - GV*



*Special location lighting along Thea Foss that reflects the Walkway's maritime character*



## Lighting

In times of limited visibility, artificial lighting has a tremendous influence on visual character and human activity. The lighting guidelines are intended to:

- Provide safe, well-lit pedestrian surfaces 24 hours a day.
- Reduce light pollution.
- Reinforce the marine industrial history and character of the waterfront.
- Address night lighting.

3.8.3 Coordinate public and private lighting standards to achieve a unified effect.

3.8.4 Areas specified below should provide the corresponding minimum average light level.

- Waterfront Walkway: 1 foot candle.
- Commercial areas: 1 foot candle.
- High-volume pedestrian areas (such as bus stops): 2 foot candles.
- Parking areas, entries: 2 foot candles.
- Parking areas, internal: 0.5 foot candles.

3.8.5 Encourage the use of energy-saving lighting methods.

3.8.6 Light levels, direction, and shielding can be used to avoid impacts on the shoreline environment and to reduce impacts on residential units.

3.8.7 The lighting fixture specified below should be used along the Waterfront Walkway, along public access/view corridors, and at outlooks.

- Se'lux MRTC-17-GV.
- In portions of the Walkway designated as esplanade, lights should be located on the waterward side of the esplanade at a maximum spacing of 60 feet on center.
- Walkway lights are not required at public access/view corridors or other public spaces where special location lighting may be provided.

3.8.8 Special location lighting can be used to identify prominent features, gathering spaces, or intersections.

3.8.9 Parking areas and pedestrian walkways should be illuminated to ensure user safety.

3.8.10 The following pedestrian streetlight guidelines should be used.

- Se'lux MRTC-19-GV
- Pedestrian streetlights should be located on the waterward side of the street at a maximum spacing of 80 feet on center.

3.8.11 Vehicular street lighting should be consistent per City standards.

3.8.12 In parking areas, lighting should be provided by non-glare, full cutoff, controlled-source fixtures per City standards.

3.8.13 Where lighting is appropriate along wooded trails, low-wattage or special area lighting should be used to reduce impacts on wildlife.

- Use lighted bollards or low-mounted fixtures for path lighting, as appropriate to minimize glare or unwanted shadows resulting from conflicts with vegetation.
- The following average light level should be used for wooded trails: 0.5 foot candles.

## Bollards

Use bollards where they would facilitate the safe and efficient movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

3.8.14 The bollard shown should be used for typical applications.

- A 36-inch-tall, 8-inch-diameter, steel-pipe bollard with a conical steel top. All painted forest green (Pantone #5605C).
- Removable bollards are encouraged where appropriate.

3.8.15 For East Foss public access/view corridors or for special applications, the lighted bollard shown should be used.

- Louis Poulsen DOCK-B, natural aluminum.



*Lighted Bollard: can be used for special districts  
Louis Poulsen Dock - B, natural aluminum bollard..*



*Standard Bollard: used for typical applications  
36" tall, 8" diameter steel-pipe bollard with conical steel  
top painted forest green (Pantone 5605C)*



### Drinking Fountains

3.8.16 Public drinking fountains are encouraged to be adjacent to or integrated with buildings.

3.8.17 Where applicable, the drinking fountain shown should be used.

- Haws 3500D, evergreen.

### Picnic Tables

3.8.18 Where applicable, the picnic table shown should be used.

- FairWeather model F-4

*Drinking Fountain:  
Haws 3500D, evergreen*



*Picnic Table:  
Fairweather Model F - 4*

### Bike Racks

3.8.19 The bike rack shown should be used.

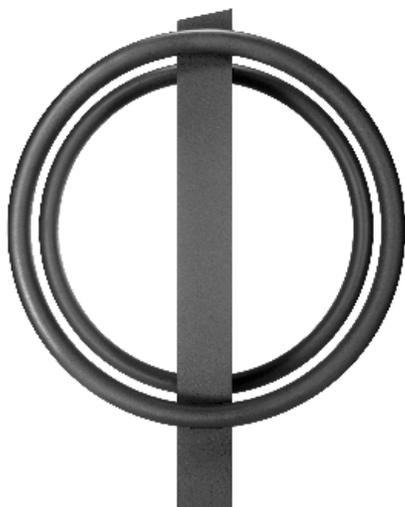
- Hess Tendo, galvanized steel.

### Waste Receptacles

3.8.20 The design standard recycling container should be used.

3.8.21 The waste receptacle shown should be used in most cases.

- TimberForm Profile Series model 2894-P, with evergreen powder coat.



*Bike Rack:  
Hess Tendo, galvanized steel*



*Waste Receptacle: used in most cases  
Timberform Profile Series, Model 2894 - P with evergreen  
powder coat*



*Alternative Waste Receptacle used at the Chinese  
Reclamation Park.*

### 3.9 Surfacing Materials

Surfacing materials provide both continuity and variety for the Tacoma Waterfront. In general, surfacing should feature a higher design and construction quality than more typical projects. Special surfacing materials, such as cobblestones, decomposed granite, or pervious materials, are encouraged, with consideration for color and low impact development techniques (please see the Low Impact Development section of this chapter).

3.9.1 Active-use areas, such as the Waterfront Walkway and sidewalks, should typically use the surfacing specified below.

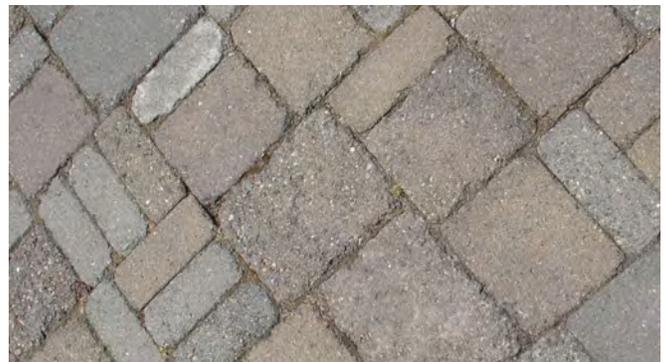
- Cast-in-place concrete with broom finish, hard-screed joints in a 4-foot by 4-foot grid pattern.

3.9.2 For boardwalks, the surfacing materials specified below are preferred.

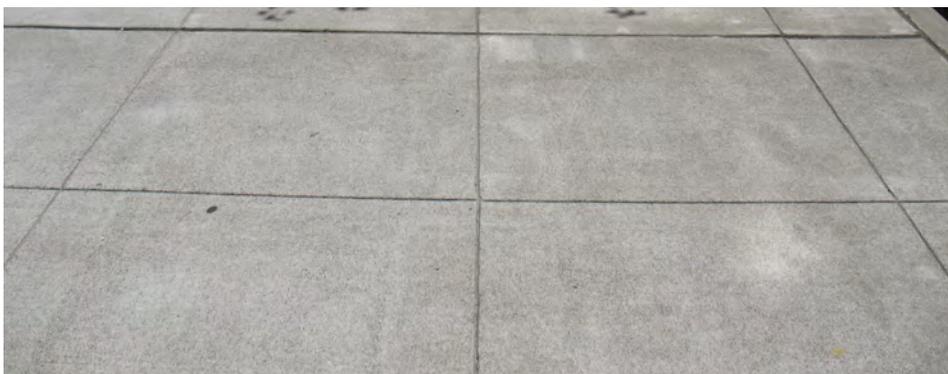
- Six-inch-wide planks made of ipe or cumaru or other sustainably harvested wood.

3.9.3 Special surfacing materials, such as granite, cobblestones, and gravel may be used where the materials are appropriate for the intended use.

- Special surfacing materials are especially appropriate at crosswalks where the Waterfront Walkway must cross a street or driveway, and to distinguish the Walkway from adjacent private spaces.



*Special surfacing materials above are used to distinguish portions of the Walkway. The materials are appropriate for the intended use of the spaces.*



*This cast-in-place concrete with a broom finish in a four-by-four foot grid along the Walkway is the standard surfacing material for active-use areas.*

### 3.10 Fences/Screens

3.10.1 It is preferred that permanent fences erected to separate public from private areas are made of concrete, brick, metal, or other approved materials (not chain link) and maintain views rather than create a wall effect.

- Green (vegetated) fences are highly encouraged.
- Not applicable to industrial properties.

3.10.2 At industrial properties, the creative treatment or screening of chain-link fences and alternatives to chain-link fences are encouraged.

3.10.3 Permanent refuse, utility, or service installations should be screened with fences of wood, iron, concrete, landscape plantings, or other approved materials (not chain link) to the minimum height necessary.

- These installations should be located away from public spaces, particularly the Waterfront Walkway.
- Not applicable to industrial properties.



*An example of successful screening of utilities in Tacoma. Screening is provided through the combination of a fence of wood and iron, not chain link, and landscape planting.*



*Several examples of permanent fences that are more attractive alternatives to chain link fences. The first two fences maintain views and incorporate landscape materials and artwork to improve the aesthetics of the site. The last fence is an example of how industrial properties can maintain site security without negatively impacting the adjacent sidewalk.*

## 3.11 Marina Gates

3.11.1 Marina security gates should be located on access ramps or other locations where they do not impede public circulation, particularly circulation on the Waterfront Walkway.

3.11.2 Marina security gates should be transparent.

3.11.3 Provide safety and security without the use of industrial materials, such as razor wire, barbed wire, and chain-link fences.

## 3.12 Guardrails

Views of the water are an invaluable public resource along the Waterfront Walkway. The design of railings should therefore reflect the character of access along the Waterfront Walkway. Public access to the water should be provided for all people regardless of age or physical abilities. While sometimes necessary for safety, railings should, to the extent possible, not obstruct views. Railings can be reduced in height to allow children or those in wheelchairs unobstructed views. Railings can also be designed to increase transparency, limiting the width of rails and stanchions and reducing the amount of opaque materials. In some areas along the Walkway, it may be preferable to use low walls that serve a dual function of safety and providing seating.

3.12.1 Where possible, guardrails should be designed to provide visual access, encourage interaction with the water's edge, and promote diverse shoreline treatment.

- To design guardrails that allow maximum views of the water, guardrails should not exceed 3.5 feet in height and should use no more than 30% opaque or solid elements.
- If under 2 feet, walls may be solid to encourage seating along the water.

3.12.2 Guardrails and handrails that relate to the architectural or landscape style of the public access area are preferred.

3.12.3 Materials that are high-quality, durable, and suitable for the marine environment that will resist rust over time should be used whenever possible.



*This marina gate along the Thea Foss is located so that it does not impede public circulation. It is also transparent so as not to impede views of the water.*



*This guardrail along Ruston Way ensures safety while still providing visual access.*



*Along the Portland waterfront, a low wall is used instead of a guardrail to provide seating and encourage interaction with the water's edge.*



*Area logos*

### 3.13 Signs

Clear and consistent signs should direct the public to locations of interest along and adjacent to the Tacoma Waterfront.

#### Logos

3.13.1 The Thea Foss or Ruston Way design standard logos should be used on area signage, bike racks, waste receptacles, benches, and other Waterfront Walkway site details.

3.13.2 Where applicable, the logos shown here should be used.

#### Building Sites

3.13.3 Whenever possible, signs should be similar to the building and/or building site in design, color, and materials. Strong signage that clearly calls out the identity of users is encouraged.



*An example of strong signage clearly calling out the identity of the building user.*

## Directional

3.13.4 Signs should be located, oriented, and scaled primarily for pedestrians.

3.13.5 Directional and location signs should identify civic buildings, community gathering places, public parks, and other locations of public interest.

3.13.6 Directional and location signs should identify the Waterfront Walkway. Such signs should use the City-approved Walkway signage.

- A directional sign should be posted where a public access corridor leading to the Walkway intersects a public street.
- A location sign should be posted where a public access corridor intersects the Walkway intersects, and at any other locations where a sign would assist the public in understanding the intended Walkway route.

3.13.7 Directional and location signs should identify shoreline public access locations not associated with the Waterfront Walkway. Such signs should use the state-approved shoreline public access signage shown at right.

## Educational/Interpretive

3.13.8 Where appropriate, informational, educational, and interpretive signs relating to the history of the Tacoma Waterfront and Tacoma's maritime history are encouraged.



*State-approved sign indicating access*



*City-approved sign indicating access*



*An educational sign along Ruston Way with interpretive information.*

Parking should be provided on the upland side of the Walkway so it does not interfere with public access.

### 3.14 Parking and Staging Areas

To improve the continuity of the waterfront, enhance public access, and ensure an attractive shoreline, parking and staging areas should be redeveloped over time. In general, no new surface parking lots should be developed, with the exception of industrial uses. New parking should be provided in structures as opposed to surface lots and should be located on the upland side from the Waterfront Walkway so as not to negatively impact the public realm.

3.14.1 Areas devoted to parking should be minimized and their visual impacts should be mitigated through siting, design, and careful planning.

- Parking can be provided in structured garages on the upland side of the Waterfront Walkway.
- Where appropriate, surface parking can be provided on the upland side of the Waterfront Walkway. Parking areas should be reasonably sized and adequately screened from pedestrian ways with landscaping, fencing, trellises, and/or walls.
- Large expanses of parking can be broken up visually by planted medians with shade trees. Medians should be located so that they buffer pedestrian circulation routes while still respecting views to the water.
- Rather than developing parking incrementally on a project-by-project basis, shared parking can be used to provide for the efficient utilization of valuable waterfront land.

3.14.2 Signage should be used to distinguish public parking and staging areas from private parking areas to ensure proper use.

3.14.3 Provide staging areas along the Waterfront Walkway for convenient access.

3.14.4 Points of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and/or bicyclists should be minimized.

- Where possible, driveways can be consolidated by interconnecting parking and sharing parking to reduce the number of curb cuts.
- The paving of the pedestrian walk should be continuous to indicate that pedestrians have priority over vehicles crossing the Walkway.
- Vehicle access should have to ascend a driveway apron to reach level of pedestrian/bicycle travel.
- Carefully design parking areas to maximize the number of stalls provided while using a minimum of the limited available space.



*Currently along Ruston Way, parking is often provided on the waterway side of the Walkway. This is not preferred as it reduces public access and poses points of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians and bicyclists.*



*The use of shade trees and landscaped islands should be used to break up large expanses of pavement and soften the visual impact of parking areas.*

