COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

CHAPTER 7

City of SeaTac
everywhere's possible

SeaTac 2035

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION CD-3

MAJOR CONDITIONS CD-4

GOALS AND POLICIES CD-5

GOAL 7.1 PROVIDE A POSITIVE SEATAC IMAGE CD-5

Gateways CD-5

Streets with Trees CD-5

Parks, Open Space, and Greenbelts CD-6

Vistas and Viewpoints CD-7

Transitions and Relationship of Land Uses CD-8

Historical and Cultural Resources CD-9

Public Safety CD-9

Citywide Parking and Access CD-9

GOAL 7.2 PROVIDE A PEOPLE-ORIENTED URBAN CENTER CD-10

Transit Communities CD-11

Pedestrian Environment CD-12

Quality of Building Design CD-13

Retrofitting Existing Development CD-14

Civic Facilities CD-15

GOAL 7.3 ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL AREAS' CHARACTER CD-16

Housing Options and Neighborhood Character CD-16

Neighborhood Retail and Services CD-17

Short-Platting CD-18

GOAL 7.4 PROMOTE WELL-DESIGNED BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CD-18

GOAL 7.5 STRENGTHEN POSITIVE AIRPORT ATTRIBUTES CD-19

Linkages CD-19

Airport Buffers CD-19

Design Connections CD-20

GOAL 7.6 ATTRACT MAJOR INSTITUTIONS CD-21

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES CD-22

INTRODUCTION

This Element builds on SeaTac's existing character and natural assets to guide the physical appearance of the City's built and natural environments. It offers design strategies for buildings, streets, and landscapes to enhance the identity of the City and contributes to the quality of its neighborhoods.

The Community Design Element provides the policy context for design standards in the zoning code, development review and incentive programs, as well as City staff, Planning Commission, and City Council work plans.

This Element is closely coordinated with the Land Use Element and distinguishes and reinforces land use designations' characters with appropriate design strategies. A particular emphasis is on creating attractive and comfortable development in close proximity to light rail stations, as discussed in the Land Use Element. This element is also tied with the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, Transportation, and Environmental Elements to jointly address user-friendly, pleasant, and "green" open spaces and paths.

Additional community design goals and policies are found in the City Center Plan, South 154th Street Action Plan, and Angle Lake District Station Area Plan.

MAJOR CONDITIONS

Several community design-related issues face SeaTac. Many of these issues overlap with topics covered in other elements of this Comprehensive Plan.

Some of the major community image challenges include:

- Most of the development along SeaTac's main commercial corridor, International Boulevard, represents pre-incorporation development patterns, and does not adhere to urban design principles for active centers.
- Most of SeaTac's residential neighborhoods lack a sense of cohesion and character due to the City's unincorporated history, the major physical presence of the Airport and associated facilities, and other commercial development.
- Although the City has established identifiable gateways at some entry points, other gateways are less obvious to travelers arriving to SeaTac.
- Some of SeaTac's arterial streets do not have street trees or sidewalks.

GOALS AND POLICIES

This section contains SeaTac's community image goals and policies. **Goals** represent the City's objectives related to community image, while **Policies** provide more detail about the steps needed to achieve each goal's intent.

GOAL 7.1

Provide residents and visitors with a positive, identifiable image of the City of SeaTac.

Portions of SeaTac are easily confused with neighboring communities. Gateways and streets with signature trees and elements can contribute to community pride by establishing a character that says "my town." They can also attract financial investment to SeaTac by setting it apart from other places.

Figure 7.1. Existing gateway on South 188th Street

Gateways

Policy 7.1A

Design and install gateways at entry points to the City.

Entry points include major arterials and freeway off-ramps at the City limits and when entering the City from the Airport.

Streets with Trees

Street trees enhance a city's image and property values, provide visual and physical continuity, and reduce the impacts of development on drainage systems and natural habitats.

Policy 7.1B

Preserve existing vegetation and street trees.

Existing, mature trees are imperative to the City's image and walkability.

What's going on now with SeaTac trees?

Segments of Des Moines Memorial Drive South in the western part of the City are lined with mature street trees (the historic memorial elms). The City has initiated efforts to provide street trees throughout SeaTac, and considers including street trees in street improvement projects such as: International Boulevard and S 188th Street.

Studies have shown that property values are higher where street trees are present, and planting street trees is a powerful way of changing the character of an area. The City should work with landscape architects to develop a street tree plan to determine the appropriate type, size, spacing, and location of street trees. Trees should be placed within the street's amenity zone to define and protect space for pedestrians.

Figure 7.3. Appropriate vegetation and soils enhance aesthetic, safety, and ecological attributes of the street and walkway.

Also see Policy 10.3D in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element regarding open space in commercial and residential development.

Figure 7.4. Well-designed, shared open spaces in multifamily developments help build social connections between neighbors.

Policy 7.1C
Require site-appropriate installation of trees and other vegetation along streets.

Figure 7.2. Street trees improve the human experience on auto-oriented roads.

Parks, Open Space, and Greenbelts

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of this Comprehensive Plan elaborates on the value of providing, preserving, and maintaining open spaces and greenbelts throughout the community for recreational and wildlife habitat benefits. This section focuses on their community design contribution, particularly when provided in conjunction with private development. SeaTac should strengthen its image by requiring parks and open space with redevelopment and keeping parks, open space (including hillside vegetation), and greenbelts intact and safe from threats of sprawling development patterns.

Policy 7.1D
Require developers to provide publicly accessible open space (e.g., neighborhood pocket parks and plazas) in commercial zones, and require private open space (e.g., decks, balconies, small yards, terraces, courtyards and children's play areas) in all townhouse, multifamily, and mixed use developments.

Publicly accessible open space in high activity centers is a valuable amenity to residents and employees in the City. Such open space may include small pocket parks, seating areas, playgrounds, landscaping, public sculpture, fountains, street furniture, pathways, and ponds.

Policy 7.1E
Preserve wildlife habitat and corridors to provide visual and physical relief, and to enhance SeaTac's image as a "green" environment.

Policy 7.1F
Require or incentivize the connection and linkage of parks, boulevards, neighborhood greenways, open spaces, and greenbelts in any redevelopment.

Link open spaces within SeaTac and to those across city boundaries to ensure functional and visual continuity.

Figure 7.5. Elda Behm Paradise Garden Pond at Highline Botanical Gardens in North SeaTac Park. The Botanical Gardens are located near the North SeaTac Park Community Center and provide a unique educational and recreational opportunity for local residents and visitors.

Figure 7.6. Well-connected open spaces create stronger communities.

Figure 7.7. Open space provides for public enjoyment in SeaTac's City Center commercial district.

Vistas and Viewpoints

Spectacular views of the Kent Valley and the Cascade and Olympic Mountains are visible from several areas of the City. These views provide a sense of orientation and connection to the landscape that reinforces SeaTac's community image.

Policy 7.1G
Identify, classify, and preserve existing and potential public viewpoints.

Existing and potential vistas from public places should be designated and given a protected status. There are various types of views: some are panoramic, others are more focused. Views may be experienced from a moving vehicle or a stationary vantage point. New viewpoints can take various forms such as "scenic routes," pullouts, or overlooks. The creation of new viewpoints may involve property acquisition or the development of existing rights-of-way.

See related policies in the Transportation Element.

Strategies to focus growth and limit sprawling development found in the Land Use Element support these community image policies.

Transitions and Relationship of Land Uses

The City of SeaTac has a variety of land uses within close proximity—such as parkland next to neighborhood commercial development and low-density neighborhoods near higher-density commercial development. In most cases, adjacent incompatible uses can be attributed to the lack of strict County standards prior to incorporation. The City has aimed to correct such development by focusing commercial development within the Urban and City Center and away from nearby neighborhoods. The City will need to continue to promote comfortable transitions in use, scale and intensity between these areas.

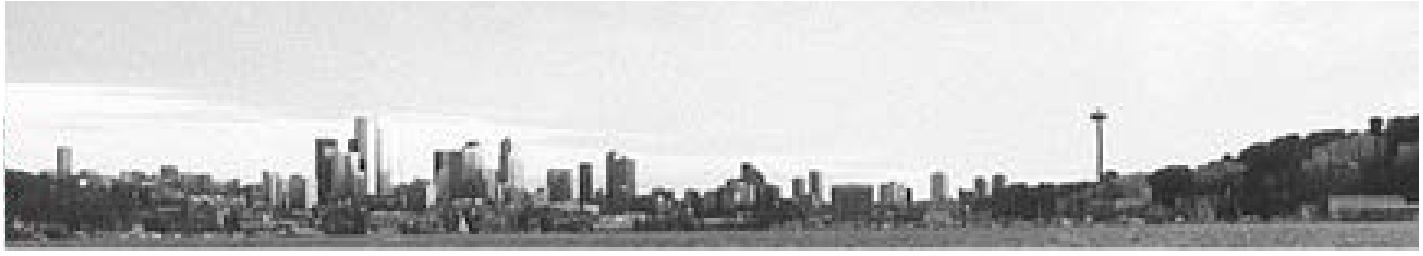

Figure 7.8. The Seattle skyline provides an example of transition: more intense uses dominate the city center and smaller, less dense areas serve as a buffer to nearby neighborhoods.

Policy 7.1H

Encourage development patterns with architectural and landscape elements that create compatible transitions between land uses of different intensities.

Careful site planning, buffers, landscaping, and building design and placement should be used to produce harmonious transitions between zones. In particular, multifamily residential development and commercial development should be designed and scaled in a manner that is compatible with adjacent lower density neighborhoods. When Residential – High Density uses are located adjacent to Residential – Low Density areas, require additional buffering, building setbacks, or upper story stepbacks.

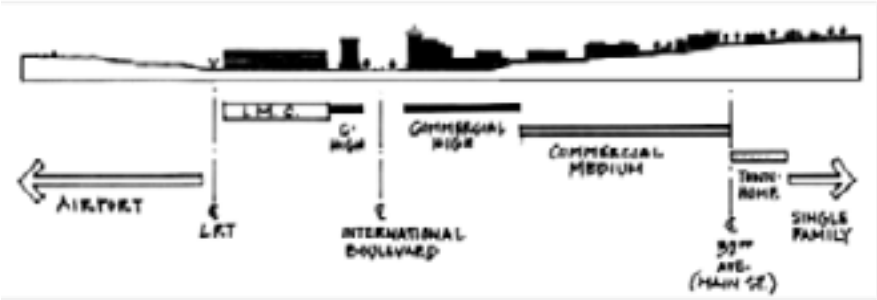

Figure 7.9. Transition areas in the City Center: In general, high-intensity commercial development occurs along International Boulevard, medium-intensity development transitions to a community street with low-intensity uses to the east.

Policy 7.1I

Transition to lower building heights and densities moving outwards from the Urban Center.

Historical and Cultural Resources

Historical and cultural resources within the City include the Historic Cemetery on S 200tth Street, Earthworks Park, Military Road (one of the first in the area used by non-native settlers), the Airport, and Des Moines Memorial Drive South (including the remaining historic WWI commemorative elm trees). These resources have the potential to be indentity-building features.

Policy 7.1J
Identify, commemorate, and preserve the City's historical and cultural resources.

Inventory places, events, and people that contributed to the evolution of the community and trace this back to Native American influences. Once completed, choose appropriate methods of recognition.

Public Safety

Policy 7.1K
Increase the sense of community safety through the use of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).

CPTED standards can improve safety and reduce criminal behavior in a community. Require new development to follow CPTED standards. In existing areas, identify and implement measures that correct "Areas of Concern" that could jeopardize personal safety or promote criminal activity. These include dark corners, unlighted parks, large unsupervised commercial parking lots, and abandoned buildings. Physical signs of deterioration and neglect provide opportunities for criminal behavior and often make residents feel vulnerable and unwilling to intervene to protect their community. Improve community appearance and deter crime by requiring housing maintenance and removal of weeds, junk, and abandoned vehicles from yards. Increase pedestrian activity and their ability to be "eyes on the street" with pedestrian-scaled, low-level lighting and reduce opportunities for destructive or criminal behavior.

Figure 7.10. Defining the public to private space transitions makes pedestrians and residents feel safer.

Citywide Parking and Access

The City's commercial areas are largely dominated by automobile parking facilities. Much of this parking serves travelers: car rental agencies, park and fly lots, and lodging. Any surface or structured parking should create a positive visual impact for these businesses and the City as a whole.

Policy 7.1L
Require parking to be located away from the street front or buffered with landscaping or design elements to reduce its visual impact in commercial and higher density residential areas.

Policy 7.1M
Enhance the visual character of surface parking areas through screening and vegetation.

Figure 7.11. Interior landscaping and pedestrian improvements in surface parking lot

Trees within surface parking areas provide shade and significantly enhance the visual impact.

Policy 7.1N
Ensure that the appearance of parking structures makes a positive contribution to the image of the City.
Structured parking is a much more efficient use of land than surface parking. As the city develops, parking structures will become more common. The City should ensure that parking structures contribute positively to the image of the City by requiring innovative, quality architectural and landscape design solutions.

Figure 7.12. Retail development partially conceals a parking structure through innovative architectural design (Boulder, Colorado).

Policy 7.1O
Provide alleys or encourage development to utilize alleys where possible to separate service access and parking from the street frontage in Residential – Medium Density and High Density designated areas.

Policy 7.1P
Incentivize the transition from surface parking to structured parking in Commercial Medium Density and High Density designated areas as structured parking becomes more economically feasible.

GOAL 7.2
Provide a well-designed, pedestrian-friendly, and community-oriented environment in the Urban Center.

Implementing the City Center and station area plans will redirect the form and appearance of development along International Boulevard into a true urban center. Developers are more likely to invest in an area when they are confident that the level of quality in their projects will be matched and reinforced in other projects. The following policies encourage a uniformly high level of quality which, in turn, may catalyze further development and improvement by the private sector.

The City Center Subarea Plan, S 154th Street Station Area Action Plan, and Angle Lake District Plan promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development (TOD). The following policies elaborate on these concepts.

Figure 7.13. The Hilton Hotel redevelopment included street frontage landscaping, street trees, and widening of the 8 foot sidewalk to 12 feet.

Policy 7.2A
Implement the City Center and Station Area Plans to encourage the development of distinctive focal points (i.e., high activity neighborhood and commercial centers) within the Urban Center.

Policy 7.2B
Require appropriate tree planting and landscaping throughout the Urban Center with new development.

Policy 7.2C
Encourage attractive and well-scaled signage along International Boulevard.

Large advertisement signs and billboards are a recognizable feature along some parts of International Boulevard. While such signage may be appropriate for a fast-moving highway corridor, it is not supportive of a people-oriented urban center and stifles investment in high profile, high-quality developments.

Transit Communities

These policies are intended to foster transit-oriented development around SeaTac's three light rail stations.

See related policies in the Transportation Element.

See related policies in the Land Use Element.

Policy 7.2D
Partner with developers to catalyze high-quality, transit-oriented developments in the station areas.

Station areas will evolve over many years into village-like places. The City should take the lead on establishing the character and level of quality during the initial phase(s) of development. Public amenities should be provided, such as comfortable walking, bicycling, and resting environments, small parks and plazas, pedestrian-scaled lighting, weather protection, and bicycle storage.

Figure 7.14. The transit plaza at International Blvd. and S. 176th Street provides access to buses, the SeaTac/Airport LINK station, and the airport terminal.

See related policies for publicly owned connections to transit stations in the Transportation Element.

Policy 7.2E
Require clear and reasonable connections (e.g., station platforms and pedestrian paths) between new development and the light rail stations.

Pedestrian Environment

For an urban center to be lively and appealing, it must offer safe, convenient and attractive places for people who move around on foot. If an urban center is oriented only to vehicles, it will be lifeless, intimidating, and even hazardous.

Streets constitute the traditional, time-tested public realm for pedestrians. Other elements, such as overpasses and through-block walkways can supplement the basic network of street-related sidewalks, but the sidewalk network should be the principal element, and the one to which the most design attention is given. Human scale details are important for piquing pedestrians' interest and increasing their level of comfort.

Policy 7.2F
Incorporate sidewalks and pedestrian-oriented street furnishings along streets within the Urban Center.
Street tree or landscape buffers separate fast-moving volumes of vehicles from pedestrians. Sidewalks must be sufficiently wide to offer a sense of safety and comfort along intensively traveled streets. On the other hand, very wide sidewalks (in excess of 15 feet) should be reserved only for places with extremely high pedestrian activity, as such sidewalks will seem devoid of people and threatening. Furnishings should be designed and located so that they reinforce pedestrian activity. This includes the use of benches, small-scale lighting, waste receptacles, pay phones, and touchable artwork.

Also see the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenbelts policies above

Policy 7.2G
Establish a variety of public spaces throughout the Urban Center.
Public space comes in many forms: streets, large parks, small parks, pocket parks, plazas, courtyards, gardens, and so forth. An urban center must, over time, provide a diversity of public spaces to help create a greater sense of identity and places that can be enjoyed by residents, employees, and visitors. Some will be developed by the City or other agencies, while some will be privately provided with new development.

Figure 7.15. A "pocket park" offers visual relief and passive recreation opportunity in an urban area.

Policy 7.2H
Encourage connections between the Urban Center and nearby neighborhoods.
The Urban Center needs to be linked to the neighborhoods surrounding it. While such linkages can be enhanced by transit, the principal means should be through sidewalks, walkways, and other ground-level corridors, particularly creating east-west connections to the adjacent neighborhoods. While most have been developed as a part of the public streets and open space network, new development should be required to add linkages to this network, and there may be some instances in which pathways could be cut through private property via access easements.

Policy 7.2I
Provide safe methods such as signalized crossings, textured crosswalks, and pedestrian islands within the planted median for people to cross major streets at regular and convenient intervals.
Very wide streets carrying heavy traffic volumes, such as International Boulevard, should have special features to allow for safe and convenient crossings on foot. Despite the attraction of overpasses, they are expensive and cede the street space to vehicles, creating a problematic and unsafe street environment. Therefore an emphasis on at-grade crossings is preferred. Efforts should be made to keep intersections clear of non-directional signage and vegetation that impairs visibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.

See the Transportation Element's policies for pedestrian infrastructure.

Policy 7.2J
Encourage pedestrian and bicycle connections through large blocks.
Urban Center development must allow for internal pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The City will need to negotiate with private developers to create through corridors for convenient pedestrian and bicycle access between destinations. These connections should be primarily outside the buildings, while others could be interior.

Also see Land Use Policy 2.1C.

Quality of Building Design

Buildings should respond to their context, including nearby buildings, the network of public streets and sidewalks, and natural areas to create a lively and comfortable human environment that builds SeaTac's urban character. The Urban Center is intended to be developed at a higher intensity of land use than areas outside its boundaries. This section guides new developments so that they evolve into a comfortable and compatible whole.

Policy 7.2K
Maintain the City Center's and Station Areas Plans' development standards for building design and orientation to ensure that buildings are designed to accommodate a comfortable and pleasant human experience on the street and are visually pleasing above.
Buildings should be oriented towards the human experience of the city, particularly on the ground floor. People need stimulation, places to rest, and weather protection to feel comfortable along a street. This means that:

- Buildings should have human-scale architectural features on the lower levels;
- Entrances should be frequent, identifiable, and accessible from a public sidewalk;
- Ground floors should enliven the street through the use of adequate transparency;
- Upper floors should use a stepping or terracing technique to avoid a street "canyon" effect, and the top should contribute richness and character to the skyline with varied roof forms; and

Figure 7.16. Development that has a distinct base, middle, and top

Figure 7.17. Varied and creative architectural design enhances community character and image.

- Rooftop mechanical equipment should be attractively incorporated into the design or concealed.

Policy 7.2L
Encourage developments to include design features that unify SeaTac's Urban Center character balanced with individual, creative architectural designs.
The City should select a few design characteristics (e.g., ground level arcades) that would build SeaTac's identity if repeated in new developments. A "theme" should be avoided to maintain authenticity and variety. Inspiration may come from regional climate and vegetation or the airport.

Policy 7.2M
Provide a variety of public amenities throughout the Urban Center.
All developments should contribute to an appealing and lively public realm. Accordingly, buildings should provide exterior and interior public spaces, connections to the sidewalks and between properties, pedestrian fixtures and furnishings, and art. Additional public amenities include restrooms, day care facilities, bicycle facilities, and community meeting spaces.

Also see Land Use Policy 2.1C.

Retrofitting Existing Development

While the International Boulevard area transitions to a vibrant urban center, some existing buildings may not meet the intent of the Community Design policies. If they have sufficient life remaining in their structural and mechanical systems, it may be important to maintain and preserve them to ensure a variety of property values in the Urban Center.

Having a variety of building ages, types, and sizes in a city accommodates a greater diversity of businesses and residents. Maintaining older buildings, and thus, less expensive rents, is one way of encouraging small, resident-owned businesses and affordable housing (encouraged in the Land Use Element Policies 2.2E, H, and I).

Policy 7.2N
Encourage flexibility in the Zoning Code and urban design standards which balances the community's desire to create a well-designed urban center with the preservation and maintenance of viable commercial and residential developments.

Apply standards and guidelines in a manner that does not discourage reinvestment in viable developments. It is important to establish a redevelopment threshold for applying code requirements. If this threshold is set too low, it can discourage needed renovation work. If it is set too high, it can forestall the desired character for the Urban Center.

Civic Facilities

SeaTac's Urban Center should provide a range of spaces and places for civic and community functions such as public meetings, government services, ceremonial events, and community festivals.

Policy 7.2O
Create public spaces within the Urban Center.

Urban centers are stronger and more focused when they have one or more major public parks or squares. Such a place is seen by the community as a "commons" when it is publicly owned, programmed, monitored, and maintained. A privately provided plaza may not accomplish the same result, since it is not "held in common" by the community.

Figure 7.18. A civic park in the urban center accommodates recreational needs of residents, tourists, and employees.

Policy 7.2P
Encourage the development of buildings and structures in the Urban Center which provide civic functions.

Public facilities should be encouraged to locate within the Urban Center. Symbolic civic features, such as a monument, observation platform, or clock tower can reinforce the civic identity of SeaTac.

Policy 7.2Q
Include art with public improvements.

SeaTac can contribute to the world-renowned Pacific Northwest's public art legacy by funding programs and projects or providing substantial development incentives for incorporating art. Artists should be included on design teams to integrate art with many public environment elements (e.g., lighting, railings, walls, benches).

Policy 7.2R
Incorporate Bow Lake and Angle Lake as major elements in the image of SeaTac's Urban Center and City Center.

The Urban Center contains two lakes: Bow Lake and Angle Lake. The City should continue providing public gathering and performance space at Angle Lake Park. Bow Lake is, at present, inaccessible and virtually unseen. It is predominantly privately owned with hotels on the west and south sides and a large mobile home park on the east side. It is an amenity that could be combined with a public park or plaza to make it a focal point of the City Center. Special expertise will be needed to allow access to Bow Lake while still permitting it to perform its natural functions as part of a designated sensitive area.

Figure 7.19. Bow Lake and viewing platform

The Housing Element addresses the provision of a range of housing affordable to all income groups. This section of the Community Image Element discusses the design and compatibility of various types of housing.

Accessory dwellings can be a low-impact and effective way to increase housing choices and affordability, maintain neighborhood character, and provide extra income for existing residents.

See the Land Use Element Policy 2.3B.

GOAL 7.3

Enhance the character of residential areas and promote a range of well-designed housing types.

Infill development should be carefully managed so that new investment can take place without radically altering the existing positive aspects of neighborhood character.

Housing Options and Neighborhood Character

Policy 7.3A

Ensure that accessory dwellings are subordinate in size and appearance to primary residences, to protect and maintain the existing neighborhood character.

Figure 7.20. An example of a detached accessory dwelling unit that is subordinate in size to the primary dwelling, but has complementary design features.

Attached single family housing (e.g., townhouses) are appropriate at the border between higher-density housing and single family detached areas.

Figure 7.21. Townhouse development may serve as a buffer between low- and high-density developments.

Policy 7.3B

Require high-quality multifamily building and site design that fosters a sense of community, relates to the street, has unobtrusive parking arrangements, provides usable open space, and ensures compatible transitions between different types of housing.

The City should apply design standards to multifamily and townhouse development to minimize the appearance of garage doors, activate the street with entries and associated patios or stoops and limited front setbacks, consider roof pitch, and limit the number of units in any one row to maintain small block sizes.

Site design should include landscaped parking areas, common space, especially with play areas, and pedestrian walkways separated from vehicular areas. All multifamily complexes should provide an integrated mix of one, two and three-plus bedroom apartment types in order to maintain the neighborhood character. Principles of "crime prevention through environmental design," such as the provision of adequate lighting, centrally placed activity areas, visible pathways and entries, and the placement of windows and balconies that create "eyes on the street" can contribute to a sense of community, ownership, and personal safety. The development's edges should respect neighboring housing with glare-free lighting, landscaped perimeters, and appropriately located and designed refuse and storage areas.

Figure 7.22. *Multifamily housing development with high-quality design standards*

Multifamily housing (e.g., condominiums and apartments) should be well designed to provide pleasant and safe environments for residents and to be compatible with surrounding development.

Neighborhood Retail and Services

Neighborhood-oriented commercial services should carefully consider the location and screening of parking, loading, and refuse areas, lighting, facade treatment (especially the sides facing residential), roof form, and signage to enhance neighborhood character.

Policy 7.3C
Develop standards and guidelines for neighborhood commercial areas.
Design standards and guidelines tailored to neighborhood retail and dealing with elements such as setbacks, signage, and landscaping can create smaller-scale commercial areas that fit comfortably within a neighborhood.

SeaTac encourages neighborhood-serving retail and services in most places (see Land Use Policies 2.2G through 2.2K).

Figure 7.23. *Pearl Street Mall, Boulder, Colorado*

Figure 7.24. Orenco Station, Hillsboro, Oregon

Policy 7.3D
Develop and apply transition standards to neighborhood commercial development when it is adjacent to housing.
Landscaping and street furniture are transitional elements that provide a complementary environment for adjacent commercial and residential development.

Short-Platting

Short-platting provides an opportunity for increasing the number of single family houses and allows a property owner to obtain additional income through selling off a portion of a large parcel. SeaTac's historic pattern of single homes on large lots has provided many short-platting opportunities. In the process, though, short plats can change the neighborhood character by injecting new access drives, closer proximity of buildings and more impervious surfaces. The process of individual property owners short platting their properties at different time also hinders coordinating through-block access, potentially impeding emergency services. Development standards should ensure that short-platting does not radically alter established neighborhood settings.

Policy 7.3E
Ensure that Residential Low Density development standards, including setbacks and access standards, such as width and surfacing, are appropriate for small lot or short plat subdivisions.
Standards that are suitable for multi-lot developments may not be necessary or appropriate for short plats.

GOAL 7.4

Promote well-designed developments in the Business Park, Industrial, and Aviation Commercial zones that respect the natural environment.

Development in the Aviation Commercial Zone is governed by the ILA between the City and the Port of Seattle. In general, development outside of the airport proper is subject to City development regulations.

Policy 7.4A
Ensure that Business Park, Industrial, and Aviation Commercial developments apply high design standards with respect to site planning, natural areas, transit use, pedestrian movement, and parking facilities.
Implement design and lot coverage standards for commercial and light industrial areas outside the Urban Center to foster high quality development and to minimize their impacts on nearby land uses. Consider the preservation of natural areas as well as the function of the business area, and the movements of pedestrians and transit as well as that of motorized vehicles.

GOAL 7.5

Strengthen the positive attributes of SeaTac International Airport's presence in the City of SeaTac.

The Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (Airport) is an important facet of the City's image. Design characteristics that build on the significance of travel and international access should be encouraged in SeaTac to distinguish it from other communities and affirm the Airport's presence.

See related policies in the Land Use Element's Aviation Business Center (page LU-15), Airport (page LU-16), and Essential Public Facilities (page LU-20) sections.

Figure 7.25. The south terminal access point from International Boulevard accommodates both cars and pedestrians.

Linkages

Policy 7.5A

Extend design elements from the Airport into the community.

To maintain and improve visual linkages, install, or in private development encourage, landscaping, building design features, and colors that complement Airport facilities and connect the City to themes of travel and international access.

Policy 7.5B

Improve the character of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between the Airport and the community.

Customers, visitors and employees need safe, convenient, and attractive multi-modal access to and from the Airport. The City and Port should partner to link the nearby neighborhoods, commercial areas, and the Airport with comfortable routes that utilize the urban design elements discussed in the Urban Center section (Policies 7.2F-R).

Figure 7.26. The Angle Lake & S 200th Station Area Plan suggests ways to connect neighborhoods to transit.

Airport Buffers

Buffers should add to the overall community image while securing the airport perimeter. The buffer areas should appear as a natural extension of the landscape.

Policy 7.5C

Partner with the Port to screen undesirable views.

Buffers should screen loading and parking areas with well-designed, sight-obscuring fencing, closely spaced evergreen planting, and/or other devices.

Figure 7.27. Bicycle parking at the airport

See parking screening design guidance on pagepage CD-9 for suggested strategies.

Figure 7.28. Landscaping conceals the Port of Seattle's north parking lot on 24th Avenue and South 152nd Street.

Policy 7.5D
Develop viewpoint parks containing landscaping, signage, and other enhancements to strengthen the Airport's positive image in SeaTac.

Design Connections

New and expanded Airport buildings along International Boulevard in SeaTac's Urban Center can contribute to creating a high-quality community character.

Policy 7.5E
Partner with the Port to infuse high-quality art, architecture, and landscape architecture in Airport development.
Visually integrate development on both sides of International Boulevard to create inviting spaces and reduce the sense of separation. Airport, City, and private development should blend relevant public art with high-quality building and site design to produce a setting that is bold, distinctive, and unique. Design themes could draw from concepts such as "diversity of cultures," "international access through travel," or "Pacific Northwest history."

See related policies in the Open Space Element.

Figure 7.29. Water feature at the Airport's south Terminal

GOAL 7.6

Attract and encourage major institutions that are well designed and beneficial to the community.

Policy 7.6A

Require institutions to contribute publicly accessible amenities and a high design quality.

Large institutions should benefit the community image. For example, the Federal Detention Center, located on South 200th Street, enhanced the character of the area through attractive landscaping and building design.

Figure 7.30. *Federal Detention Center located on South 200th Street and 26th Avenue*

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section identifies the specific steps, or **implementation strategies**, that achieve this Element's policies. It also identifies the group(s) with **primary responsibility** for carrying out each strategy and the expected **time frame** within which the strategy should be addressed. Policy summaries are included in the table for reference.

As the Primary Responsibility column indicates, many of the implementation strategies will be initially undertaken by a specified board or commission. In most cases, the City Council will analyze the specific board/commission recommendation and make the final decision about how to proceed.

The time frame categories are defined as follows:

- Short-Term..... one to five years
- Medium-Term .... six to 10 years
- Long-Term ..... 11 to 20 years
- Ongoing..... the strategy will be implemented on a continual basis

The time frames are target dates set regularly when the City Council adopts amendments to the Comprehensive Plan.

The list of proposed implementation strategies is a minimum set of action steps and is not intended to limit the City from undertaking other strategies not included in this list.

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.1 GENERAL ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY IMAGE			
GATEWAYS			
7.1A Design and install City gateways.	Install distinctive physical features, such as specimen trees, seasonal color, art work, lighting, distinctive landmark building and monument forms, or combinations thereof, to produce a gateway effect at freeway off-ramps and at City limits.	Staff	Short-Term
STREETS WITH TREES			
7.1B Preserve vegetation.	Require substantial relocation/ replacement mitigation measures through the Zoning Code where preservation of significant trees is deemed by the City to be impractical.	Planning Commission, City Council, Staff	Short-Term
7.1C Require street trees and vegetation.	Develop and adopt a street tree plan for major arterial streets specifying standards for site preparation, suitability of species, size, spacing and tree maintenance.	Staff	Short-Term
	Maintain and enhance Zoning Code landscaping requirements for new development.	Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
	Continue to apply for tree planting grants.	Staff	Ongoing
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND GREENBELTS			
7.1D Require open space.	Develop urban design framework plans to identify locations and types of desired publicly accessible open spaces.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
	Update or maintain commercial development code to require publicly accessible open space.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Require or develop incentive system for design features and furnishings.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.1E Preserve greenbelts.	Identify greenbelts in SeaTac.	Staff	Short-Term
	Examine, and adopt where appropriate, techniques in use elsewhere in the region to preserve greenbelts.	Staff, City Council	Short-Term
	Develop and adopt cluster development regulations and tree retention regulations where appropriate.	Planning Commission, City Council, Staff	Ongoing
7.1F Require or incentivize connections between open spaces.	Develop an open space network plan and indicate desired connections [see Policy 10.7D regarding Des Moines Creek Trail extension].	Staff	Short-Term
	Update Capital Improvements Program to include linkages on applicable public rights-of-way.	Staff, City Council	Ongoing
	Acquire property or easements for linkages where possible.	Staff, City Council	Medium-Term
	Require or incentivize publicly accessible connections in redevelopment.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
VISTAS AND VIEWPOINTS			
7.1G Identify, classify and preserve public viewpoints.	Inventory and map existing views and vistas.	Staff	Short-Term
	Explore the use of Zoning Code requirements for new development to preserve views.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Designate scenic routes and add viewpoints provision to the Capital Improvement Program.	City Council, Staff	Long-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
TRANSITIONS AND RELATIONSHIP OF LAND USES			
7.1H Create compatible transitions between different development intensities.	Develop and apply design guidelines to transitional areas (especially between residential and commercial zones) that address: • Site planning (e.g., setbacks and building placement and orientation), • Landscaping and buffers, and • Building design (e.g., upper story setbacks and human scale features) and scale.	Staff, Planning Commission	Short-Term
7.1I Transition to lower intensity from high intensity Urban Center.	Update development code as needed to ensure building heights, floor-area-ratios, lot coverage, and/or other tools transition from high to low intensity.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES			
7.1J Identify, commemorate, and preserve historical and cultural resources.	Identify and list the City's historical and cultural resources. [See also Policy 10.7G.]	Planning Commission	Short-Term
	Establish interpretive and commemorative signs and displays.	Staff	Short-Term
	Determine if any structures warrant preservation.	Staff	Short-Term
PUBLIC SAFETY			
7.1K Require use of crime prevention through environmental design.	Consult community to identify "Areas of Concern" including but not limited to dark corners, abandoned buildings, unlighted parks, adult uses, and large unsupervised parking lots.	Staff	Short-Term
	Continue education efforts with apartment building owners regarding CPTED techniques.	Staff	Ongoing

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.1K Continued	Develop and apply CPTED design standards to new commercial and multifamily development, including: • Require new buildings to have windows facing the street or public area to enhance surveillance. • Require recreational facilities and open spaces to be multipurpose (i.e., useful to a number of different user groups). • Require the installation of sidewalks and human-scale street lighting to promote pedestrian safety.	Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
CITYWIDE PARKING AND ACCESS			
7.1M Enhance the visual character of surface parking.	Encourage owners of existing lots to provide trees around the perimeter of their lots.	Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
7.1N Ensure that the appearance of parking structures makes a positive contribution.	Develop design standards or guidelines to address parking structures' visual appearance and compatibility with its context.	Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
7.1O Use alleys.	Designate areas where alleys are required with new development and apply alley standards. Consider public-private partnerships to build alleys or place on Capital Improvement Program.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
7.1P Incentivize the transition from surface to structured parking.	For Commercial Medium and High Density designations, explore the feasibility of and apply incentives and requirements for providing structured parking rather than surface parking.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
	Limit surface parking through impervious surface limits.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.2 PROVIDE A PEOPLE-ORIENTED URBAN CENTER			
7.2A Implement the City Center and Station Area Plans to develop focal points.	Implement all public actions identified in City Center and Station Area Plans.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
	Require new developments to implement the City Center and Station Area Plans.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Where possible, fund or partially fund public gathering space projects.	Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
	Explore the possibility of a joint public/private 'flagship' project.	City Council	Ongoing
	Amend the Zoning Code to include minimum density standards for the HCT districts.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
7.2B Require tree planting and landscaping.	Develop a street tree plan.	Staff	Short-Term
	Update the Zoning Code to specify types of trees suitable, as well as size, quantity, and distance between plantings for the landscaping to create a positive impact.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	The Zoning Code shall be revised to develop alternative landscaping standards for high density build-out and parking structures.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Develop incentives for early removal or replacement of nonconforming signs.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
TRANSIT COMMUNITIES			
7.2D Catalyze high-quality, transit-oriented development.	Update Zoning Code to reflect the City Center and Station Area Plans' recommended types of uses and the size and design of buildings that are in close proximity to major transit stations.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Where possible, fund public amenities (e.g., trails, small parks and plazas, pedestrian-scale lighting, weather protection, etc.) to catalyze development.	City Council, Planning Commission, Staff	Ongoing

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.2D Encourage the Coordinated Development of Station Areas.	Develop a plan conceptual for each station area, suggesting the form and type of development, with target years for the completion of major components.	Staff	Short-Term
7.2E Require connections between development and light rail stations. .	Require new development to integrate with and provide comfortable, usable connections to light rail stations.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Continue to work with Metro and Sound Transit to ensure that the needs of transit riders are met along the streetscape.	Staff	Ongoing
	Working with Sound Transit and Metro, ensure that all major transit areas are visible, accessible by sidewalks, well-lit, attractive, and offer cover from the elements.	Staff	Ongoing
PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT			
7.2F Incorporate sidewalks and pedestrian-orientated street furnishings.	Place station area plan recommended sidewalk construction, improvements, and pedestrian features in the Capital Improvements Program.	Staff, City Council	Short-Term
	Develop and apply design standards to new development to achieve high-quality street furnishings and amenities.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing
7.2G Establish a variety of public spaces throughout the Urban Center.	Seek public-private partnerships and/or fund the construction of public spaces (e.g., pocket parks, small gathering spaces; see Policy 7.2O for major public spaces).	Staff, City Council	Short-Term
7.2H Encourage connections between the Urban Center and nearby neighborhoods.	Provide City Center and station area plans recommended pedestrian connections between the Urban Center and adjacent neighborhoods through zoning standards and the Capital Facilities Program. Obtain access easements as feasible.	City Council, Planning Commission	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.2I Provide safe methods for people to cross major streets.	See the Transportation Element for intersection, mid-block crossing, and pedestrian refuge improvements strategies.		
7.2J Encourage pedestrian and bicycle connections through large blocks.	Require or incentive pedestrian and bicycle connections through large blocks.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
QUALITY OF BUILDING DESIGN			
7.2K Maintain the City Center's and Station Area Plans' development standards to ensure comfortable and pleasant human experience.	Apply and/or enforce design standards to achieve people-oriented architectural and site design (see features listed under Policy 7.2J).	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
7.2L Encourage unifying features and individual, creative architectural designs.	Determine and require a selection of physical characteristics to be incorporated into development projects, for example, seasonal plantings, public spaces, canopies and other weather protecting devices, roof forms, ground level articulation of building facades, terraced building forms, or combinations of these elements.	City Council, Planning Commission, Staff	Short-Term
7.2M Provide a variety of public amenities.	Update zoning provisions for the Urban Center to include a list of desirable public amenities, some mandatory and others encouraged with incentives (in the form of additional development).	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
RETROFITTING EXISTING DEVELOPMENT			
7.2N Encourage flexibility in the Zoning Code and design guidelines to not discourage retrofitting existing development.	Work with property owners in suggesting configurations and improvements that support Urban Center principles.	Staff	Ongoing
	Prioritize the kinds of improvements to be required during remodeling or renovation. These could include pedestrian access and circulation, signage, and landscaping.	Staff	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
CIVIC FACILITIES			
7.2O Create public spaces within the Urban Center.	Evaluate options for acquiring and developing a public space, including private sector partnerships.	Staff	Ongoing
	Organize a design competition to ensure quality and innovation in the final design.	Staff	Short-Term
	Establish a civic park or square identified in a subarea plan through the Capital Facilities Program.	City Council, Staff	Short-Term
7.2P Encourage the development of buildings and structures in the Urban Center which provide civic functions.	Establish one or more civic structures within the Urban Center.	City Council	Medium-Term
	Encourage public-private projects to provide civic functions.	Staff	Ongoing
7.2Q Include art with public improvements.	Include artists on design teams for public projects.	City Council, Staff	Ongoing
	Update the Zoning Code to include incentives for the provision of public art in private developments.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Establish a threshold above which public improvements will be required to include public art.	City Council, Staff	Short-Term
7.2R Incorporate Bow Lake and Angle Lake as major elements in the image of SeaTac.	Continue programming activities at Angle Lake and explore ways to make Bow Lake an accessible and appealing focal point for the community.	Staff, Planning Commission	Ongoing
7.3 ENHANCE RESIDENTIAL AREAS' CHARACTER			
7.3A Ensure that accessory dwellings are subordinate in size and appearance to primary residences.	Maintain the Zoning Code's design standards for accessory dwellings.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Ongoing

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.3B Require high-quality multifamily building and site design.	Update the Zoning Code with multifamily design standards that consider: • Relationship to street, • Orientation to and provision of open space, • Public to private space transitions, • Refuse containers, storage areas, bicycle parking, and garages integration in overall design, • Parking area location and landscaping provisions, • Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, • Height limitations for multifamily buildings adjacent to single family detached housing to maintain privacy, • Setbacks at transitions between zones, • Trees and landscaping use where privacy buffers are needed, • Prohibition of unsightly storage areas near or adjacent to neighboring residential areas, and • Pedestrian-scale and non-trespassing lighting.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL AND SERVICES			
7.3C Develop standards and guidelines for neighborhood commercial areas.	Update the Zoning Code standards and guidelines to create smaller-scale commercial areas that fit comfortably within a neighborhood.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Provide incentives for the inclusion of desired public amenities.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.3D Apply transition standards to neighborhood commercial development when adjacent to housing.	Update the Zoning Code with transition standards.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
	Update Zoning Code so that hotels and motels are a conditional use in neighborhood commercial zones and only allowed as part of a larger mixed use project.	Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
SHORT-PLATTING			
7.3E Ensure that access standards are appropriate for small lot subdivision.	Review the "short plat" development standards, in accordance with the Housing and Neighborhood Element's strategies.	City Council, Planning Commission, Staff	Short-Term
7.4 PROMOTE WELL-DESIGNED BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT			
7.4A Ensure high design standards in Business Park, Industrial, and Aviation Commercial development.	Develop and apply design standards to Business Park, Industrial, and Aviation Commercial that address: • Site planning, • Natural areas preservation, • Transit use, • Pedestrian movement, and • Parking facilities.	Staff, Planning Commission, City Council	Short-Term
7.5 STRENGTHEN POSITIVE AIRPORT ATTRIBUTES			
LINKAGES			
7.5A Extend design elements from the Airport into the community.	Explore visual linkages: landscaping, signs, building design features, color, and other cues to connect to themes of travel and international access.	Staff	Short-Term

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
7.5B Improve character of pedestrian and transit connections between the Airport and the community.	Explore ways of providing functional and comfortable connections with the Airport into the ILA.	City Council	Ongoing
	Work with the Port of Seattle to promote a network of safe, convenient, and attractive linkages within the Urban Center that utilize the urban design elements discussed in the Urban Center policies (7.2F-R).	City Council, Staff	Ongoing
	Work with the Port of Seattle and Sound Transit to develop an automated pedestrian/personal conveyance system (such as moving sidewalk or Personal Rapid Transit) to connect the Airport terminal with the City Center core.	City Council, Staff	Short-Term
	Work with the Port of Seattle to preserve a non-automated pedestrian link to connect the Airport terminal with the City Center core.	City Council, Staff	Short-Term
	Establish a level of service for a City Center – Airport terminal pedestrian/ personal conveyance system.	City Council, Planning Commission, Staff	Short-Term
AIRPORT BUFFERS			
7.5C Partner with the Port to screen undesirable views.	Work with the Port to devise standards and methods for fencing and screening at agreed sites and locations (e.g., loading and parking areas).	City Council, Staff	Ongoing
7.5D Develop viewpoint parks.	Work with the Port to identify appropriate locations for viewpoint parks with landscaping, signage, and other enhancements.	City Council, Staff	Ongoing

PROPOSED POLICIES	IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	TIME LINE
DESIGN CONNECTIONS			
7.5E Infuse art and design in Airport development.	Work with the Port of Seattle in encouraging imaginative art, architecture, and landscape architecture on Port of Seattle property. Design themes could draw from concepts such as "diversity of cultures," "international access through travel," or "Pacific Northwest history."	Planning Commission, City Council, Staff	Ongoing
7.6 ATTRACT MAJOR INSTITUTIONS			
7.6A Require institutions to contribute publicly accessible amenities and a high design quality.	Work to establish interagency agreements when major institutions decide to locate here.	City Council, Staff	Ongoing