

Introduction: Neighborhood Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are the primary tool used by Design Review Boards. The U District neighborhood design guidelines apply to development that is subject to design review in the designated University Design Review area.

Guidelines define the qualities of architecture, urban design, and public space that make for successful projects and communities. There are two types of guidelines used in the Design Review Program:

- **Seattle Design Guidelines**—applying to all areas of the city except for downtown; and
- **Neighborhood design guidelines**—applying to a specific geographically-defined area, usually within a neighborhood urban village or center.

Once City Council adopts a set of neighborhood guidelines, they are used in tandem with citywide guidelines for the review of projects required to go through Design Review. Both sets of guidelines—citywide and neighborhood—are consulted by the Boards. **Neighborhood guidelines are very helpful to all involved in the design review process for the guidance they offer that is specific to the features and character of a specific neighborhood.**

As a general rule, quantitative items such as the depth of a setback or the amount of required transparency, are zoning code issues; qualitative items, such as stating the desired relationship between an entry and the street, or how a building design concept breaks the massing into a base, middle, and top, are appropriate for design guidelines.

The U District Guidelines reveal the character of the U District as articulated by the neighborhood’s residents, businesses, and property owners. The guidelines help to reinforce existing character and protect the qualities that the neighborhood values most in the face of change. Thus, a neighborhood’s guidelines, in conjunction with the Seattle Design Guidelines, can increase overall awareness of design priorities and encourage involvement in the design review process.



U District Neighborhood Guidelines Update Timeline

Today's conversation about what aspects of urban design are most important to subareas of the U District's character as the neighborhood evolves will help guide OPCD staff in drafting preliminary Design Guidelines, which will then be shared for further comment and review by the community.

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- COWEN PARK**
- NORTH TIER**
- THE AVE**
- WEST EDGE**
- CORE**
- 17TH AVE**
- RAVENNA/ U VILLAGE**
- Design Guidelines do not apply to areas in the University of Washington Major Institution Overlay*

Cowen Park

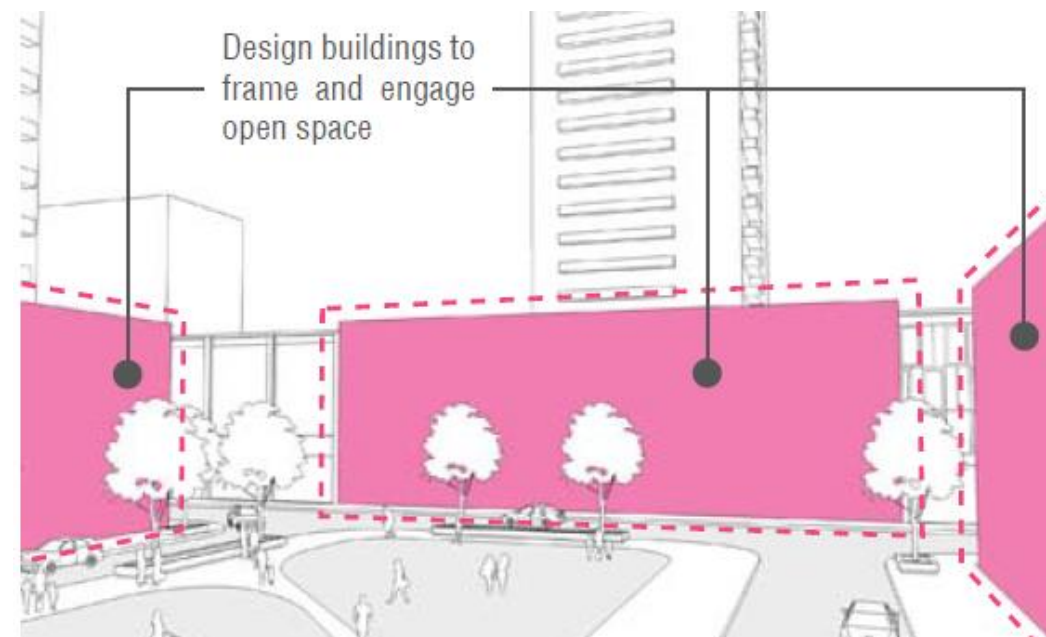
Existing Design Guidelines: None (area recently added to University Urban Center community)

Design Considerations

- Should this area be a designated gateway?
- How should development respond to the park?

Questions

- Does this area have a special character, certain design features, or urban form that is unique to the place or responds to the particular context?
- What are the existing urban design characteristics that should be reinforced with new development? In other words, what are the identifying features of this place?
- Are there any desired urban design characteristics that the design guidelines should help to create?



17th Ave NE

Existing Design Guidelines

- *The 17th Avenue NE (boulevard) character, with landscaped front yards and uniform street trees, is an important neighborhood feature to be maintained.*

Design Considerations

- Are there unique development and siting patterns that should be continued, such as larger front setbacks, locating private amenity spaces along the street, and prominent, highly detailed entries?
- Are there special architectural or material considerations?

Questions

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U Village & Ravenna

Existing Design Guidelines

- *Retain existing trees on the wooded slopes in the Ravenna Urban Village.*
- *For areas within the Ravenna Urban Village, particularly along 25th Avenue NE, the style of architecture is not as important so long as it emphasizes pedestrian orientation and avoids large-scale, standardized and auto-oriented characteristics.*
- *For properties facing the Burke Gilman Trail, new buildings should be located to minimize impacts to views of Mount Rainier, Cascade Mountains and Lake Washington, and allow for sunlight along the trail and increase safety and access.*

Design Considerations

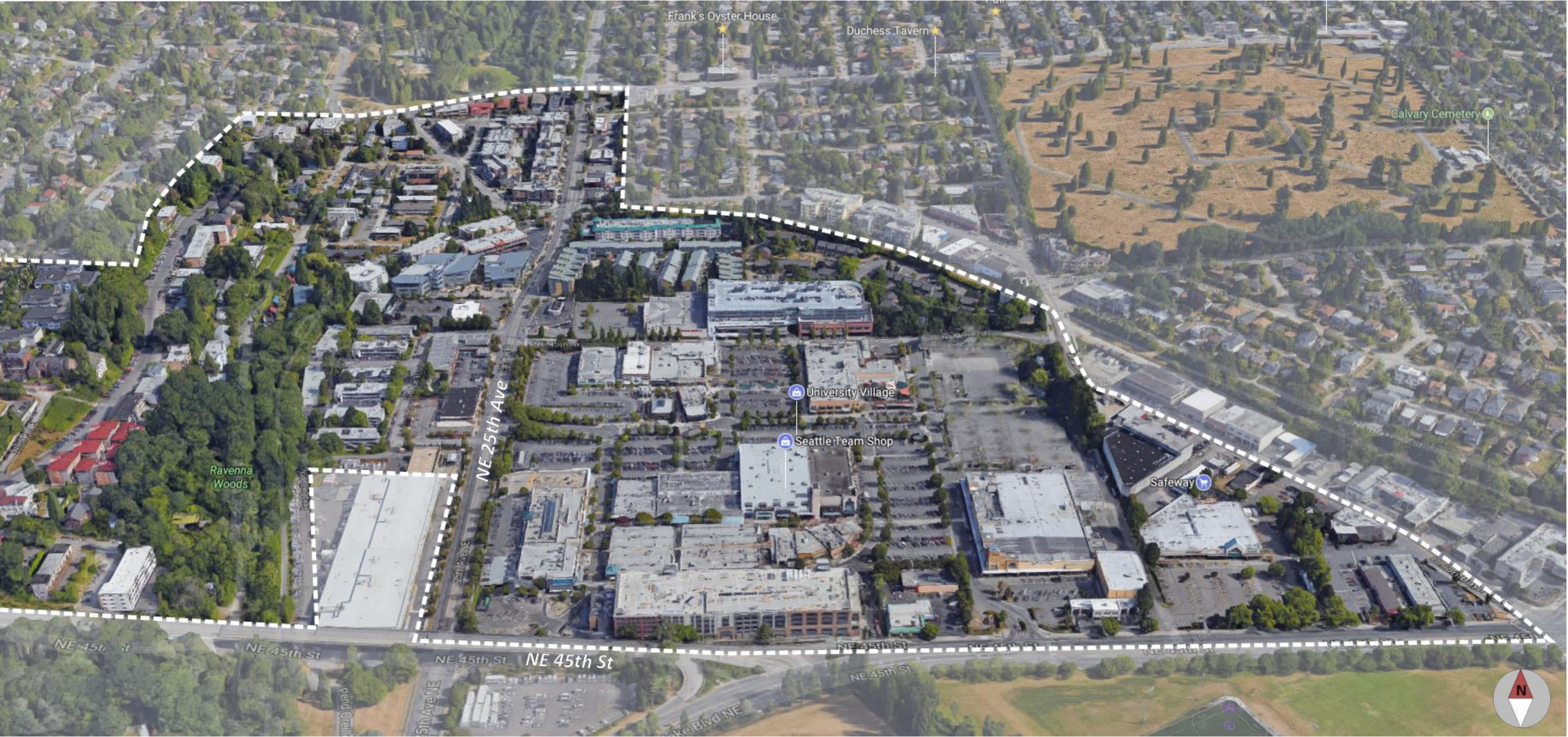
- Are there areas that should be gateways or prominent corners?
- How should new development respond to the Burke Gilman?
- How should development along 25th interact with the street and the public realm?
- Are there desirable patterns for new residential developments in regards to entry locations, public realm interaction, and design?

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What design features can contribute to a pedestrian-oriented residential area?



North Tier & West Edge

Existing Design Guidelines

- Along zone edges and specified streets, step back upper floors above 40', or modify the roofline to reduce the negative effects of the allowable height limit

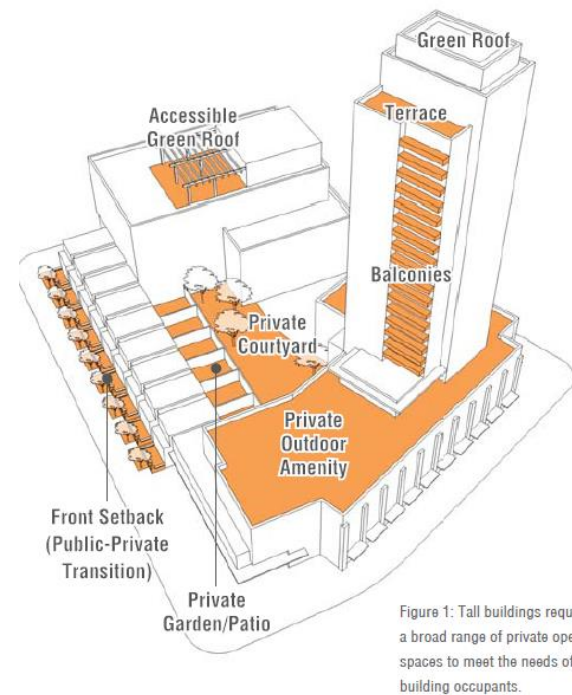
U District Design Framework describes these areas as transitions from the dense core to more lowrise residential areas. In particular, the West Edge would likely be contain student housing.

Design Considerations

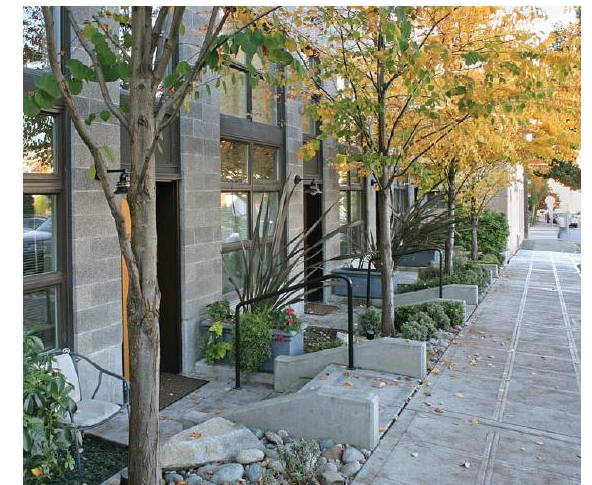
- How can a residential character be preserved and enhanced in these areas?
- Are there prominent development and siting patterns that should be continued?
- Consider individual unit entries vs. multiple unit entries and the desired relationship with the street.
- Are there special architectural, landscaping, or material considerations?

Questions

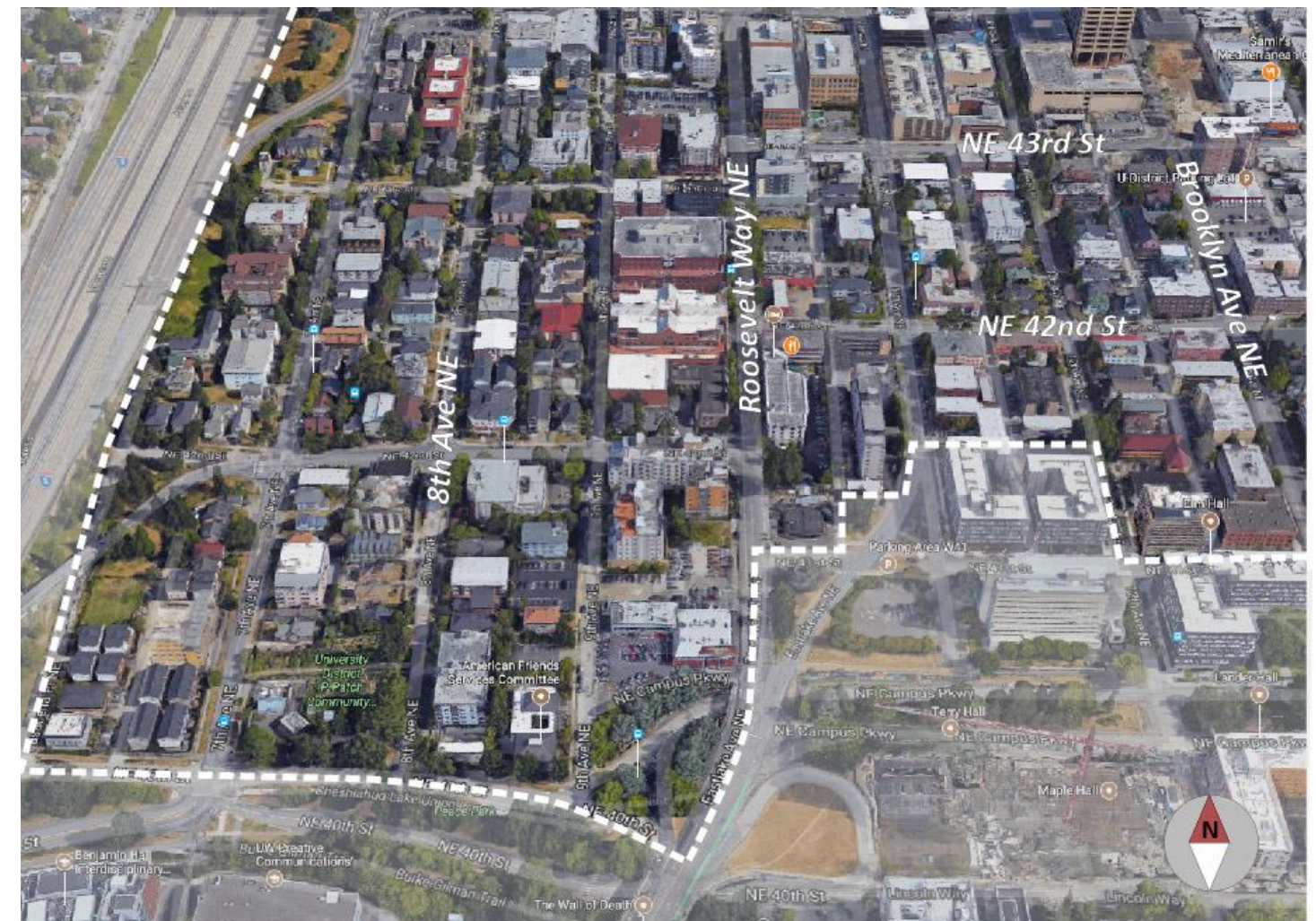
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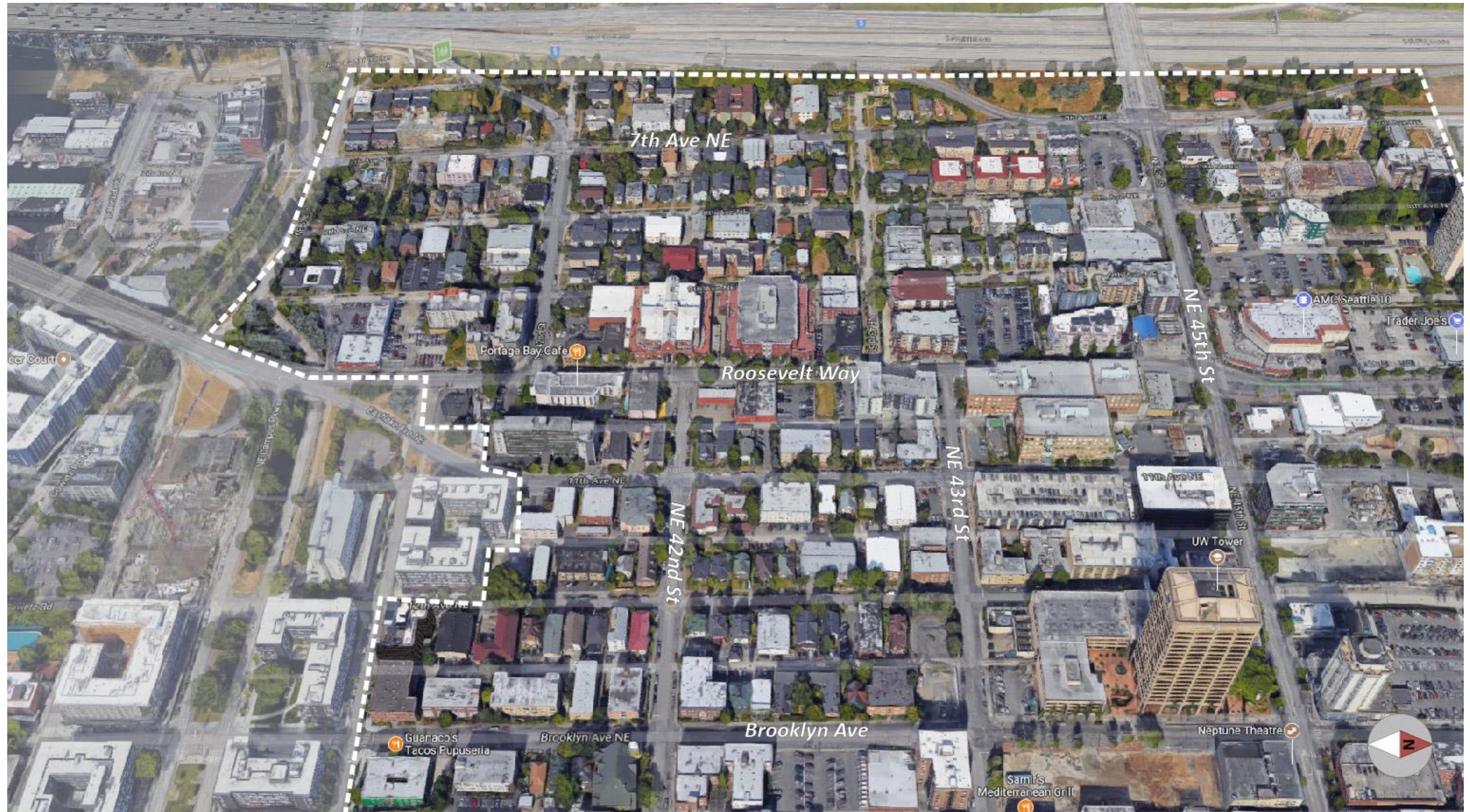


Are some types/locations for private amenity space more desirable than others?



Consider different types of unit entries, and how each of these impacts the character and activity at the streetscape. Is one more desirable? Are there special design considerations for each?





The Ave

Existing Design Guidelines

- Minimize shadow impacts on blocks with narrow right of ways, including University Way.
- On Mixed Use Corridors, consider breaking up the façade into modules of not more than 50 feet (measured horizontally parallel to the street) on University Way and 100 feet on other corridors, corresponding to traditional platting and building construction

Design Considerations

- How can an eclectic, pedestrian-oriented character be preserved and enhanced in these areas?
- Are there prominent development and siting patterns that should be continued, such as narrow storefronts?
- Are there special architectural, landscaping, or material considerations to accommodate and enhance the activity on the Ave?

Questions

- Does this area have a special character, certain design features, or urban form that is unique to the place or responds to the particular context?
- What are the existing urban design characteristics that should be reinforced with new development?

