



The City of Seattle

Pioneer Square Preservation Board

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PSB28/26

Staff Report

Board briefing meeting Feb 18, 2026

Board Members Please Note: The citations from the District Ordinance, Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District, and Secretary of the Interior's Standards listed below are for your consideration in addition to any other citations you find relevant in considering each application.

021825

Bike Scooter Parking Corrals

34 locations around Pioneer Square

Kim Pearson, SDOT

Briefing on proposed installation of marked parking areas and bike racks

Staff report: This is a proposal for installation of bike corrals that includes the Pioneer Square standard bike racks, plastic white posts, and thermoplastic markings on the ground. Six corrals have been installed without approval and another on private property.

Some Board members may recall that there was concern with the installation of one of the locations as the Board was reviewing the installation of a sidewalk café at the location the corral created a pinch point for pedestrians. The Board thought the restaurant should have priority over the sidewalk rather than a scooter rental company and noted there were other locations nearby that would have been better for all users of the sidewalk.

The code states No person shall alter... construct, ... make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces"..., changes of use refer to buildings, structure or lots, but also written in to the sidewalk café codes, therefore staff agrees that the Board is limited to the visual changes, though allowance or not of the visual changes may affect the use.

The Board approved a custom bike rack design that was submitted by the Alliance for Pioneer Square. 102 have been installed throughout Pioneer

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Square. Where these were installed in brick, the Alliance in partnership with SDOT showed careful installation to penetrate the mortar joints rather than the brick itself. Mortar joints can be repaired but bricks cannot. While the bricks along Occidental were not original they have may were installed to be compatible with the historic district and may be considered something that has gained historic significance over time. The bricks where they have needed to be replaced have been difficult to match. There are at least three new locations on brick surfaces. The affect of the thermoplastic on brick if it were to be removed, is unclear.

Previously there have been bulb outs to enhance pedestrian safety at several intersections.

The Board had previously required planters to be used for the 2nd Ave bike lane, however there were sections where the installed planters were being used as seating. Not only did that inhibit the survival of the plantings, it created a pedestrian and bike conflict causing accidents. The Board approved the change to the plastic pickets to replace the planter on this stretch in response to the immediate safety issues, but the pickets were to be kept repaired and in good condition and I recall this solution was meant to be a temporary solution. The Board has approved the temporary use of plastic pickets in the 3rd and Yesler pilot project while they were testing an increased width of sidewalk with bus operations. The project has now installed concrete sidewalks to replace the pickets. When the Board approved the Yesler bike lane extension the proposal included temporary plastic pickets to re angle traffic at Yesler and with intention that future utility repairs would then allow the be “used for future park expansion, crosswalk and curb ramps.”

Generally, when plastic pickets have been proposed, the Board has asked for alternative solutions that have a quality appearance compatible with the historic district and are more durable or have approved them as an intended temporary solution.

When the guidelines were written there were bike and scooter rentals did not exist, so no guidelines were written to directly address their installation. The Board has previously relied on guidelines generally talking about changes to the district fitting in and installation not harming materials. The Board considered bike racks as street furniture – “street furniture will be reviewed by the Board as to their specific compatibility within the Preservation District.”

Staff have received complaints about the rental bike and scooters being left blocking entrances to a storefront and has been CC’d on a letter the Alliance for Pioneer Square wrote to SDOT stating that while they appreciate a

commitment to pedestrian safety, “this approach does not align with the current needs or context of Pioneer Square.”

Code Citations:

Seattle Municipal Code

23.66.030 Certificates of Approval required

Certificate of approval required. No person shall alter, demolish, construct, reconstruct, restore, remodel, make any visible change to the exterior appearance of any structure, or to the public rights-of-way or other public spaces in a special review district, and no one shall remove or substantially alter any existing sign or erect or place any new sign or change the principal use of any building, or any portion of a building, structure or lot in a special review district, and no permit for such activity shall be issued unless a certificate of approval has been issued by the Department of Neighborhoods Director.

Rules for the Pioneer Square Preservation District

III. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION AND NEW CONSTRUCTION

In addition to the Pioneer Square Preservation District Ordinance and Rules, The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation with Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, and the complete series of Historic Buildings Preservation Briefs developed by the National Park Service shall serve as guidelines for proposed exterior alterations and treatments, rehabilitation projects, and new construction. (7/99)

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

New construction must be visually compatible with the predominant architectural styles, building materials and inherent historic character of the District. (7/99) Although new projects need not attempt to duplicate original facades, the design process ought to involve serious consideration of the typical historic building character and detail within the District.

XI. STREET FURNITURE

All other elements of street furniture will be reviewed by the Board as to their specific compatibility within the Preservation District. This review will be extended to all bus shelters, bollards, signal boxes, mailboxes, pay phones, trash receptacles, newspaper stands, and vending carts which are both permanent and mobile. Pay phones, mailboxes, trash receptacles, and newspaper stands shall be located in the sidewalk zone adjacent to the curb, in line with street trees and light standards to reduce impediments to pedestrian flow and to avoid obscuring visibility into street level retail storefronts.

Secretary of Interiors Standards

3. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
4. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved.
5. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use.
6. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
7. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

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Pioneer Square Preservation Board Coordinator