PUBLIC SPACE

Sign Specifications

City of Seattle
Department of Construction and Inspections

REQUIREMENT AND PLACEMENT OF SIGN

PUBLIC SPACE
Sign Specifications

Background

As part of the City's inventory of open spaces, there are several privately owned spaces that are the result of bonus programs or other types of development approval conditions. Some of these spaces do not have proper signage, and the general public is unaware of their location and public access requirements.

This "Public Space" plaque is required for property owners to identify these spaces for public use.

Downtown Amenity Standards

The Downtown Amenity Standards include requirements for the ongoing operation of amenity features, which apply to the successor owners and operators of the buildings and lots where the amenity features are located.

From Section One, I. Identification:

"Each amenity feature ... shall be identified clearly with the City' s public open space logo on a plaque placed at a visible location at each street entrance providing access to the amenity feature. The plaque shall indicate, in letters legible to passersby, the nature of the amenity feature, its availability for general public access, and additional directional information as required by the Director."

Open Space Amenity Standards

From SMC 23.58A.040.C: Open space amenities not in Downtown zones shall be identified clearly with the City' s public open space logo on a plaque placed at a visible location at each street entrance providing access to the amenity. The plaque shall indicate, in letters legible to passersby, the nature of the bonus amenity, its availability for general public access, and additional directional information as needed.

The Logo

The logo consists of both an image and the words "PUBLIC SPACE." The image is a pictogram representing a downtown city block or building, a tree and an opening. This is an abstract representation of the various types of amenities that have been provided by builders in the downtown zone as a public benefit, i.e.: hillclimbs, plazas, retail areas, etc.

Use of Logo

The logo is available in one-color or two-color versions, and well as with a white background, and a reversed version on a dark background. These will be provided to you as vector files (being the most commonly used file format used in the sign-making industries) as well as .tiffs (not recommended).

- The logo may not be rotated , stretched or reproduced out of focus.
- The protection zone surrounding the logo must be at least as large as 10% of the area of the logo itself.

Allowed Variations

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Logo could be reproduced in a monotone scheme without the green.

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Logo reversed onto dark background is also quite readable.

Logo Colors

To keep the logo recognizable from one place to another, the logo needs to be reproduced as close to the image files given as possible. In some cases, black may be substituted for another dark shade, and the white for another very light shade (such as brushed chrome or other metals) as long as contrast and glare is fully considered.

- The green tree for the two-color version should be a Pantone 362, or an adjacent color.

Placement of Sign

The placement of the plaque will be determined by the integration of the sign into the space and building architecture.

Minimum Requirements

1. Visible from the right-of-way (ROW).
2. Placed at all entryways to public spaces provided as an amenity.
3. Placed at a minimum height of 44 inches.

Sign could be placed on walls, columns, windows, etc., as long as it meets the three minimum requirements stated above.

Alternatively, a secondary sign could be placed within the pavement or on low retaining walls as long as there is a primary sign at the more accessible height of 44 inches or more.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMPLES

Sign Must Include

- ☐ The Public Space logo as given on disc, using either the one-color or the two-color version.
- ☐ Explanatory statement: "Provided as a public amenity for additional building rights. SMC 23.49.013".
- ☐ City of Seattle logo, as provided on disc.

Sign Could Also Include

Property owners are encouraged to include any of following that apply:

- ☐ hours the space is accessible
- ☐ handicap accessibility information (is there an alternative route to the public space?)
- ☐ list type of amenity or amenities provided
- ☐ name of building, contact information
- ☐ alternate language in addition to English

An example of a sign that would include additional information regarding the space and accessibility.

More information on ADA Standards can be obtained online at:

https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/113-ada-standards/background/adaag

Materials Used

Public Space signs could be made of a number of different materials to suit your site providing that it fulfills the following criteria for legibility.

Finish and Contrast:

An eggshell finish (11 to 19 degree gloss on 60 degree glossimeter) is recommended. Research indicates that signs are more legible for persons with low vision when characters contrast with their background by at least 70 percent. Contrast in percent shall be determined by:

$$\text{Contrast} = [(B_1 - B_2)/B_1] \times 100$$

where B_1 = light reflectance value (LRV) of the lighter area and B_2 = light reflectance value (LRV) of the darker area.

Print only on a solid background. Overprinting (type on an imaged background) is unreadable for people with low vision and perceptual difficulties. Printing on a textured or patterned background, such as wood or marble, can cause the same difficulties unless contrast is maximized (see above formula).

Avoid distorting type. If printed on a translucent material such as glass or plexiglass, a solid color will need to be applied to back to prevent letter shadows.

Fonts

The font used as part of the logo cannot be altered. The following are guidelines for fonts used on any other part of the sign created.

Use typefaces that are readily legible. Trebuchet MS was selected for the logotype, though it is not recommended for rest of the text (lowercase is less legible). Typefaces that are easiest to read are sans serif, or simple serifs, with a uniform line weight.

The following fonts are examples of legible fonts that could be used:

Helvetica (medium)
Arial (regular)
Frutiger (regular)
Gill Sans (regular)
Myriad Pro (regular)
Century Schoolbook (regular)
Times New Roman (regular)

The following fonts examples are NOT suitable:

Helvetica (light) or Helvetica (bold or black)
Arial Black or Arial Narrow
Myriad Pro (light, condensed) or Myriad Pro (bold)
Century Schoolbook (bold)
Times New Roman (bold)
Avoid Decorative Fonts, such as:
Western, Scripts, Modern, & All-cap fonts

Example

A public space sign at the Washington State Convention Center uses a brushed chrome (to reduce glare) with engraved, dark lettering.

Additional Font Tips

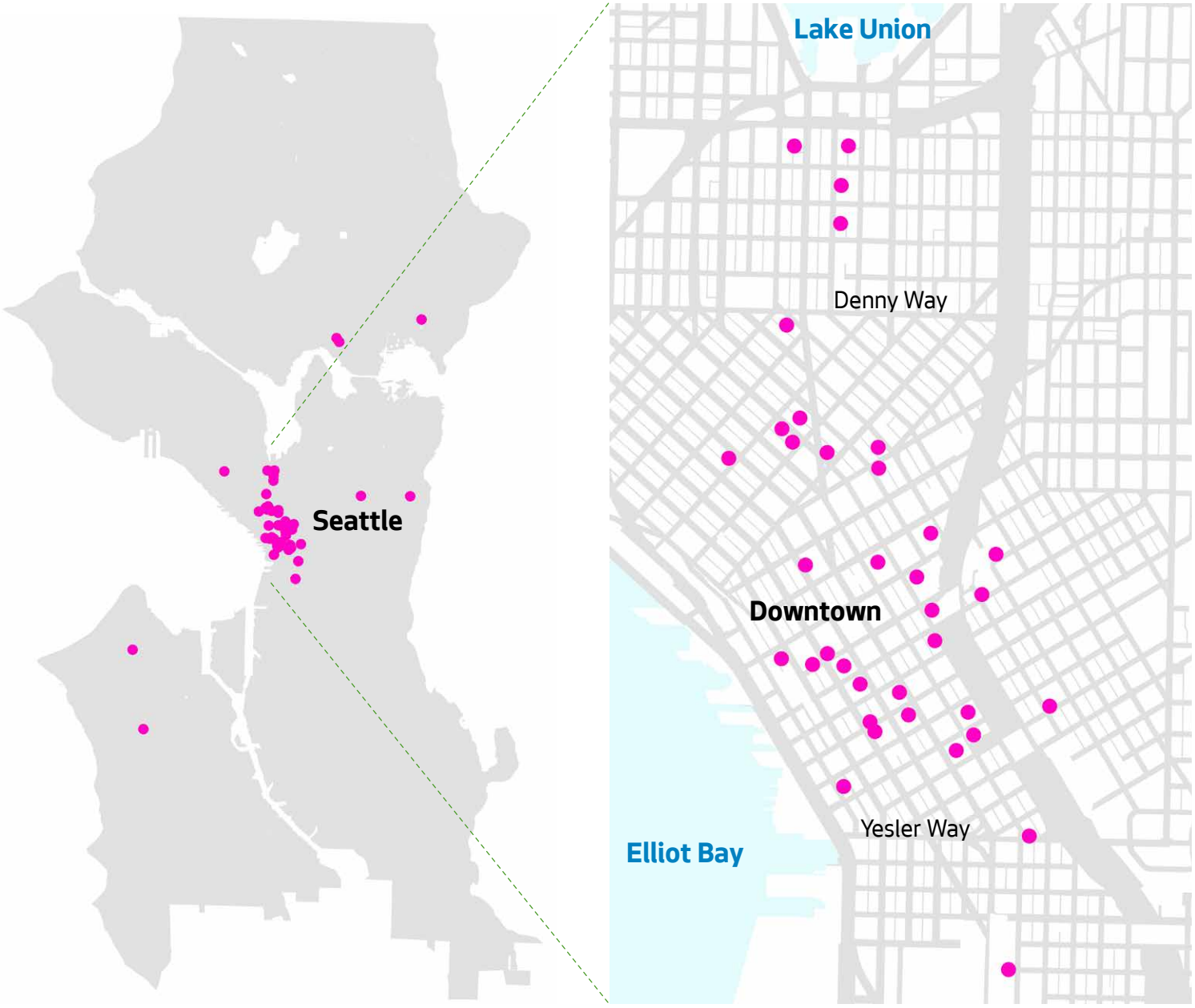
- ☐ Blocks of capital letters, underlined or italicized text are all harder to read. A word or two in capitals is fine but avoid the use of capitals for continuous text. Underlining text or setting it in italics should always be avoided and an alternative method of emphasis used.
- ☐ Keep to the same amount of space between each word. Do not condense or stretch lines of type. We recommend aligning text to the left margin as it is easy to and the start of the next line and keeps the spaces even between words. We advise that you avoid justified text as the uneven word spacing can make reading more difficult.
- ☐ The space between one line of type and the next (known as leading) is important. As a general rule, the space should be 1.5 to 2 times the space between words on a line.

MINIMUM SIZE OF SIGN

Minimum Size of Sign Indicating a Public Space

Size of sign needs to be appropriate to the viewing distance. Calculate the likely distance from a passerby could see your sign from the right-of-way. The below chart lists the minimum size of sign, logo, and font size appropriate to the viewing distance.

VIEWING DISTANCE	SIZE OF LOGO & SIGN (width × height)	SIZE OF FONT (measured from baseline to top of ascender or capital letter)
Up to 5 feet	logo 8 × 7 inches sign 11 × 11 inches	45 pt or $^{5}/_{8}$ inch tall
Up to 10 feet	logo 16 × 7 inches sign 20 × 20 inches	72 pt or 1 inch tall
Up to 20 feet	logo 26 × 22 inches sign 30 x 30 inches	100 pts or 1½ inches tall

Learn more at: https://seattle.gov/sdci/resources/privately-owned-public-spaces
https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/incentive-zoning-program

Map showing Seattle's privately-owned public spaces.