

5. Guidelines for Improvements to the Public Realm

2022-05-15 **General Information**

Public realm items in the streets, alleys, parks, and plazas contribute to the recognizable Pioneer Square identity. Such items should contribute to the character of the district and should be of high quality. The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that publicly owned spaces and the features within them provide a safe, secure, and maintainable environment that contributes to the District's historic and pedestrian oriented character. While some of the street activities, construction materials, technologies, and public objectives (e.g.: American with Disabilities Act) have changed since the District's era of development (roughly between 1890 and 1940), new improvements should be as consistent and complementary to the District's historic context as possible.

Applicants are encouraged to consult The Alliance for Pioneer Square's Street Concept Plans. The Board will consult these plans in its review of applications involving the public realm. <https://allianceforpioneersquare.org/wp/what-we-do/public-realm/streetscape-concept-plan/> . See also Section 1. General Principles and Guidelines.

Public realm elements addressed in the following guidelines are:

- a. Sidewalk Paving.
- b. Alleys and alley paving.
- c. Curbs and curb ramps.
- d. Streetlights and signals.
- e. Areaways and prism panels (in sidewalks).
- f. Street furniture.
- g. Public art
- h. Street trees and vegetation.
- i. Bus shelters
- j. Outdoor cafes.
- k. Vending in a public space.
- l. Wireless facilities and appurtenances

a. \Sidewalk Paving

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Pedestrian activity is the District's lifeblood and requires safe, comfortable sidewalks. Many sidewalks in Pioneer Square are cluttered with obstacles and are too narrow to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic. Sidewalk width varies within the District, and there

are many sidewalks with steep cross slopes. Additionally, areaways can constrain sidewalk reconfiguration. Creating safe, accessible pedestrian movement will often require unique solutions.



Figure xxx Two of several areas in Pioneer Square with inaccessible or raised sidewalks

Guidelines

- i. Streets within the District are to be paved according to standard SDOT practices.
- ii. When replacing or constructing sidewalks, adhere to Pioneer Square standard scored grid and finish. Special pavement treatments may be considered along special streets such as Occidental Avenue S as approved by the Board and SDOT.
- iii. Add admixtures to new sidewalk pavement to match adjacent pavements. Submit samples to the Board indicating the color and finish of proposed new sidewalk paving.
- iv. Artwork and inlays within sidewalk pavement may be allowed provided they do not diminish pedestrian safety or universal access. Art in the public pavement must address surface textures, potential tripping hazards, etc. to ensure public safety and access.
- v. Sidewalk extensions (bulb-outs) are encouraged at appropriate intersections and crosswalks to provide additional sidewalk space and greater visibility for pedestrians.

b. Alleys and Alley Paving

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Alleys were part of the planned street grid when the city was developed to provide access to buildings and back of house services. Originally the alleys were paved in bricks or cobbles surrounded by less ornate but functional building facades. Though some alleys have been patched or have uncompleted repairs and paving alterations, alleys contribute to the character of the District. Alleys, like other elements of the public realm, are now used for pedestrian movement, events, and a few storefronts as well as vehicular traffic and service.

Guidelines

- i. **Pavement Repair:** Unit paved alleys should not be patched with any material other than approved unit paving or the original unit material. When the approved unit paving or original unit material does not exist, small repairs can be made in kind using the existing material.
- ii. **Alley paving:** If alleys are to be repaved, they are to be paved with unit paving materials. ~~Three types~~ Remolded paving bricks, cobbles, and interlocking brick-tone pavers are acceptable in the District. Alleys proposed using the approved plans PSB10015 for the Nord and Pioneer Passage Alley model project which include a combination of historic brick, new brick and stone units are approved following administrative review for consistency with the approved plans.
- iii. **Alley pavement inlays** as described in the Alliance’s Street Concept Plans document are encouraged.
- iv. **Alley Lighting:** For building mounted alley lighting see Section XXX.i (building mounted lighting).iv. See also Section g below



Figure xxx. Example of appropriate new alley repaving.

c. Curbs and Curb Ramps

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Granite curbs are typically the original construction material and still common within the District. They are also a signature feature of Pioneer Square’s pedestrian environment and part of the District’s history. Curb ramps with truncated dome warning panels (or plates) are a contemporary and necessary addition to the District. The detectable warning panels must have high contrast visibility for the visually impaired. The yellow plastic panels are more prone to deterioration so metal panels are preferred if they visually contrast sufficiently with the ramp’s pavement.



Figure xxx. A typical granite curb illustrating both straight and curved segments

Guidelines

- i. Where granite curbing presently exists, it will be the required replacement material.
- ii. The Board may require installing salvaged granite curbs where they are missing.
- iii. Natural patinaed cast iron detectable warning plates are preferred. Alternative materials and colors should use the most subdued color available that still provide the necessary visual contrast and sound/texture indication. Dark metal warning plates and light-colored concrete ramps may be a solution that combines durability and appropriate materials with visibility requirements.



Figure xxx. Preferred metal curb ramp

d. Areaways and Sidewalk Prism Lights

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Areaways are usable areas constructed under the sidewalk between the building foundation and street wall. Areaways were created after the Great Seattle Fire of 1889 when the District was rebuilt, and the street elevations were raised. Building standards adopted shortly after the fire required fireproof sidewalk construction to replace the pre-fire wooden sidewalks. Areaways are part of the City's right-of-way; however, the space is often available for use by the adjacent building owner.

The most significant qualities of an areaway are its volume of space, which provides a record of its history, and the architectural features that render its form, character, and spatial quality. These features include use of unit materials (brick or stone), bays articulated by arches and/or columns, ceiling vaults, and other special features including tilework or skylights (sidewalk prism lenses). The historic characteristics of areaways should be preserved.

In 2001, the Seattle Department of Transportation completed a survey of approximately 100 areaways in the District. Each areaway was rated in terms of its structural condition and presence of original historic characteristics. A range of structural repairs options were proposed based on the structural and historical ratings. The 2001 Seattle Department of Transportation Areaway Survey shall serve as a guide for the Board's decision making on future alterations or repairs to areaways in the District.

SDOT has performed a more recent survey to examine the areaways' structural integrity, but that survey does not address historic preservation objectives. In reviewing proposals to modify or abandon areaways, both objectives should be considered.

The glass sidewalk prism lights are one of the unique elements in the District, and their retention is important to Pioneer Square's visual character



Figure xxx. Example of an original areaway with prisms (left) and a new areaway prism panel (right)

Guidelines

- i. When areaway prisms and/or the panels in which they are situated have deteriorated to the extent that action is necessary, the preferred option is repair of the panel and replacement in-kind of damaged prisms. Only when the panel and/or prisms are deemed unrepairable by the Board is panel replacement allowed.
- ii. The glass sidewalk prism lights are one of the unique elements in the District, and their retention is required. The Board maintains the right to require applicants for sidewalk repair to repair sidewalk prism light panels and individual prism lights that have deteriorated into a state of disrepair.
- iii. The color of the prism should be consistent with the aged glass color found in the District. Only when repair of an individual glass light is determined by the Board as not repairable, a new glass prism infill may be considered if it is installed in such a way that it continues the pattern and shape of the prism panel. Exception: If glass prisms are not available, the Board may consider a substitute material that approximates the color and translucency of the prism.
- iv. When most of the prisms in a panel are lost or damaged and removal and replacement of the panel is allowed, the remaining useable prisms will be salvaged and given to SDOT for use in other individual prism repair situations. The panel must be replaced with a new panel with a similar pattern and size of prisms.

e. Streetlights and Signals

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Pioneer Square's globe lights are a unique element and provide a unifying streetscape element. The three and five globe lights shown below approximate the design of those from the original 1908 fixtures. The base of the five-globe light is original. In 1925, bronze light pole bases such as the ones shown on the three-globe pole were added. The three globe fixtures on the poles were replaced in the 70's but they are the same design as the original 1908 poles and bases remain from 1925. Many have been updated with new LED bulbs

The high level "cobra head" lights do not relate to the pedestrian environment but are sometimes necessary for pedestrian and traffic safety. The Aladdin's lamp design with a curved arm is the traditional model used where a high-level fixture is necessary. Traffic signals are typically mounted on brackets extending from a streetlight pole, but there are also post mounted and wire mounted signals.

Guidelines

- i. Retain the 3 and 5 globe pedestrian lighting and the bronze "Chief Seattle" bases. Where it is necessary replace the bronze bases with new bronze bases with the Chief Seattle design.
- ii. Retain existing bracket mounted traffic signals. Replace modern post top signal poles with traditional poles and bases.
- iii. Retain existing "Aladdin lamp" high level streetlights as necessary for adequate street lighting. Otherwise, minimize the visual impacts of higher level (typically 30' high) streetlights.

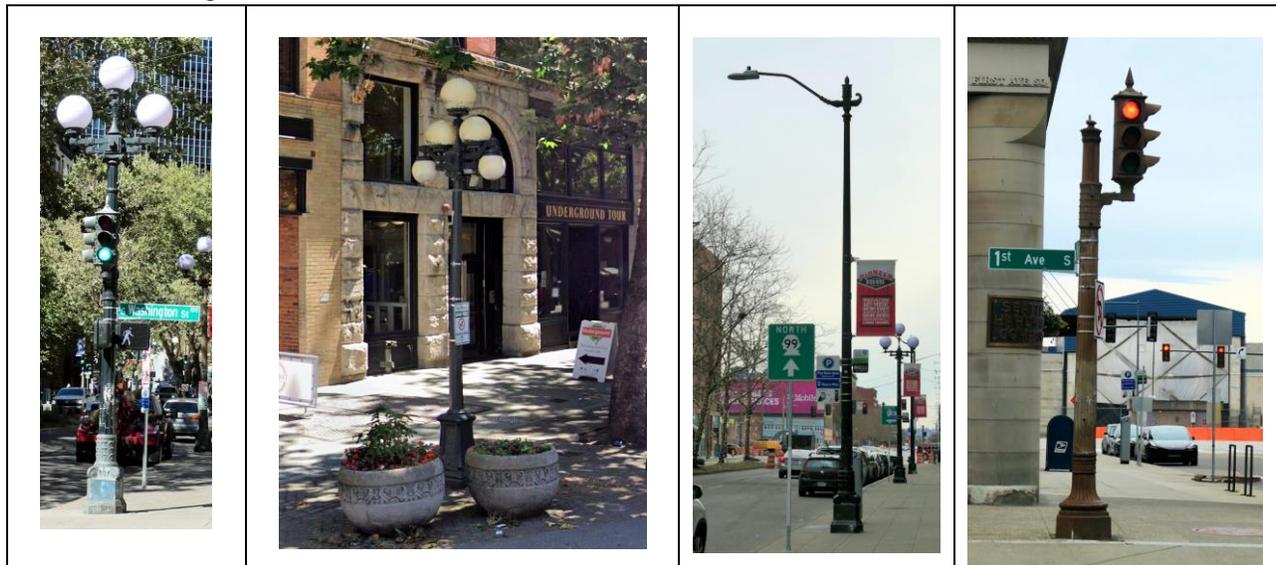


Figure xxx. Typical 3 globe pedestrian light fixture with bracket mounted traffic signal (left), 5 globe pedestrian light fixture at Pioneer Square Park (center left) Aladdin lamp streetlight (center right) and post top mounted traffic signal (right)

f. Street Furniture

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Street furniture adds function, pedestrian comfort, and amenity to the public realm. While there are many options for elements such as seating, bike racks, and trash receptacles, street furniture that features a “traditional aesthetic” common before the 1940s is most appropriate. The guidelines ii through ix in this section are derived from The Alliance for Pioneer Square’s Street Concept Plans.

Guidelines

- i. General. 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, vending carts, bike racks which are both permanent and mobile. ~~Pay phones~~, Mailboxes, trash receptacles, and newspaper stands shall be 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. (7/99,
- ii. Seating. Choose benches and seating furniture with simple, clean design and that allows for multiple social configurations and street conditions. Provide universally accessible options. Use Historic District options for permanent seating. (seating types that were common before the 1940s).



Figure xxx. (Left: A traditional and appropriate bench. (Right): the currently preferred waste receptacle

- iii. The City standard shown in the figure above is acceptable. The Board may require a different decorative “wrap” on the surface of the container.
- iv. Bollards. Retain historic character within the District. Finish must be durable, powder coat or better – color dark green. An appropriate choice is Fairweather Model B-3, 6”with spherical top and 2 collars

- v. Newspaper racks. Consolidate news racks into a singular stand and designate specific locations where they are permitted within the District.
- vi. Bike Racks. Use Pioneer Square standard inverted “U” rail type 27” wide x 33” high with 1.5” square tube. Provide 2 points of contact for bicycle.
- vii. Water fountains. Retain, repair. and maintain existing.



Figure xxx The standard bollard, bicycle rack, and drinking fountain to be used in Pioneer Square

- viii. Utility boxes. Locate underground where possible. Encourage current Native American artwork program and consider other community-based art. .

Public art.

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Art in the public realm is an important part of the Pioneer Square's history and identity. Public art is allowed if it does not reduce safety or security and is maintained appropriately.

Guidelines

Art on public property will be reviewed by the Board for safety, durability, and security objectives.

g. Street Trees and Landscaping

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Street trees have been an important feature in the District since the 1970s when several trees were planted to enhance the pedestrian environment. Some of the District's streets feature relatively uniform plantings of distinctive street trees. For example, the London plane trees on 1st Avenue S and Occidental Avenue S as well as the sweetgum trees on 4th Avenue provide a distinctive character and streetscape continuity. While the trees provide a consistent backdrop that reinforces the District's identity, smaller plantings such as hanging baskets and planters add color, texture and pedestrian interest and are therefore positive features to be encouraged.

Tree health is an important consideration in the District's appearance and Pioneer Square's trees provide important ecological services, even in an intense urban setting. Trees and landscaping in the public ROW add shade, heat mitigation, color, and texture to the pedestrian experience. Therefore, the management of the District's "urban forest" is critical to the Pioneer Square's identity and livability. Planting and maintaining healthy urban trees require thoughtful consideration of many factors such as overhead wires, sunlight, soil condition, visibility, and sufficient space for root growth. All tree planting and landscaping in the public ROW should be coordinated with the SDOT Landscape Architect to ensure that the plantings conform to City standards and best practices for human safety and tree and plant health.

Guidelines

- i. As a condition of a decision of approval the Board may require that the applicant meet with the SDOT Landscape Architect to determine what actions regarding existing or proposed street trees should be taken to ensure human safety, plant health and maintenance of public rights-of-way.
- ii. Adhere to all SDOT standards related to street trees landscaping in the public ROW.
- iii. Use of flexible porous pavement. If a synthetic porous pavement material such as Flexi-pave is to be used within a tree pit, the color must have a brown tint resembling bark or mulch. "Chestnut" or "Cypress" are acceptable color examples.
- iv. Tree removal will require a Certificate of Approval. Tree pruning will be considered the in-kind maintenance and is encouraged for the health of the trees and buildings.

- v. Median strips and permanent plant beds shall contain plants approved for urban conditions, combining evergreen shrubs with ground cover and, where appropriate, flowers
- vi. Hanging baskets with seasonal flowers are recommended. Seasonal flower baskets can be hung on existing brackets without review. Installation of new brackets or planter boxes will require review. The brackets for the baskets or planter boxes should be compatible with the architecture of the building and the character of the district. Attachment should be in the mortar joints rather than brick or stone or in a manner that is least damaging to the building material or architectural details. Landscaping, baskets, pots, or planter boxes should not contain plants that will attach to the building, and they must not impede the pedestrian flow on the sidewalk. Approval of use of landscaping, baskets or planter boxes or green roofs shall be based on the applicant's maintenance plan and ongoing maintenance the landscaping
- vii. Planters. Locate where there will not interfere with pedestrian movement. Construct of durable and maintainable materials such as concrete, cast iron, and stainless steel. Planter locations and design are subject to review by the Board. Applicants must commit to maintaining the planter area. Submit a maintenance plan as part of the Certificate of Approval application.

i. Bus Shelters

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Bus shelters are designed, located, and installed by King County Metro and reflect a contemporary, utilitarian character.

Guidelines

- i. The location and design of public bus shelters is subject to review by the Board. Bus shelters in front of contributing buildings are not recommended and should be avoided. Bus shelters shall not obstruct pedestrian movement and shall not be placed immediately adjacent to a building.
- ii. Bus shelters should, to the extent feasible, not conflict with the District's historic character. For example, while bus shelters should be recognizable as part of the transportation system, they should not feature bright contrasting colors, stylistically contemporary or unnecessarily decorative elements. They must not incorporate elements or materials that are not allowed in the district such as internally lit signage, off premise signage, or street furniture (trash receptacles, etc.,) that do not meet these guidelines.

j. Sidewalk and Outdoor Cafes

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Sidewalk cafes can increase public use, enjoyment, and safety of the public places and are encouraged. Sidewalk cafes are areas within the sidewalk where temporary seating is permitted for customers to a specific business. Sometimes such seating areas are situated on a platform that extends beyond the curb line into a parking lane. A café permit allows a food service establishment to provide table service within a designated seating area on the sidewalk, curb space (this type of café is known as a streater), or other public space. Alcohol may be served if approved by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board. Cafés require a form of demarcation, which can be fencing, planters, or pavement markers.

Guidelines

- i. General: Outdoor cafes are subject to approval by both the Board and SDOT. In determining the appropriateness of the design of the sidewalk café including structural elements, furniture and planter boxes and pots the Pioneer Square Preservation Board shall consider the following:
 - Compatibility design of the sidewalk café elements with the building façade and the character of the District,
 - Compatibility of color with the building and the District,
 - Durability and quality construction of all elements
 - Transparency of the railings, fenceless sidewalk cafes are encouraged when the SDOT and WA Liquor Control Board condition of a fenceless sidewalk café are met. Fenceless cafes and outdoor seating in a public ROW require a Certificate of Approval.
 - Number and placement of umbrellas to ensure compatibility with transparency and signage regulations
 - A maintenance plan is provided for care of planter boxes and pots and their continued approval is based on adherence to the maintenance plan
- ii. Enclosures and other appurtenances supporting outdoor cafes must be removable and must not impede pedestrian movement.
- iii. Covered outdoor cafes are not permitted in the District except outdoor cafes may be located under existing permanent building mounted canopies or awnings for weather protection.
- iv. The maximum height for a fence, railing or enclosure around an outdoor café or other similar use is 42" above grade. An enclosure must feature at least 50% transparency. That is; solid or opaque elements (rails, slats, etc.) must not cover more than 50% of the any vertical surface of the enclosure. There shall be no advertising or signage on the enclosure.
- v. Platforms or decking are only permitted when it is necessitated by a topography grade that exceeds 8%.
- vi. Plastic furniture or railings are not allowed.

- vii. No walls or roofs of any kind are permitted to enclose sidewalk cafes.
- viii. Umbrellas are discouraged where overhead coverage (weather protection) is already provided by awnings or canopies.
- ix. Attachments to the sidewalk and decking should avoid prisms and should not penetrate through the sidewalk into the areaway.
- x. In addition to the Pioneer Square District guidelines, the specific regulation of SDOT (Seattle Department of Transportation) including clear pedestrian paths, setback requirements, egress and railing requirements as outlined in CAM 2503 must be met. http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/stuse_sidewalkcafe.htm



Figure xxx. Outdoor cafes

k. Vending in a public space

Rationale, Context, and Intent

Seattle’s street and sidewalk vending program allows businesses and entrepreneurs to operate mobile vending businesses on our streets and sidewalks. These vending opportunities help encourage walking, add vitality to our streets and sidewalks, and promote local economic development. The Board does not review applications for food trucks parked in the public right of way. These guidelines apply to displays of goods on sidewalks that a business may establish on a temporary basis during the times that the business is open. A permit from SDOT is required for vending in a public right of way.

Guidelines

- i. Street vending locations and permitted activities are subject to approval by both the Board and SDOT. The Board will consider:
 - Whether or not the display impedes pedestrian mobility or creates a safety hazard.

- Whether or not the display substantially obscures the adjacent building's architecture
 - Whether or not the display detracts from the District's historic character.
- ii. Street vending displays are allowed when the building is open. They must be removed from the public right of way when the business is closed.

I. Wireless facilities and appurtenances

Rationale, Context, and Intent

SDOT Directors Rule 02-2020 establishes the City's design standards for small wireless facilities on poles in the public place (also known as right-of-way) for which there is a valid lease or wireless site agreement, including those poles that are owned in whole or in part by the City, and privately-owned poles in the public place. In addition, proposals for the location and construction of wireless facilities are reviewed by the Board and require a Certificate of Approval. .

Guidelines

- i. Wireless facilities, their mountings and equipment are subject to approval by both the Board and SDOT. The Board may require that a wireless facility proposal be relocated or redesigned to prevent impacts to a historic feature in the District. Such features include, but are not limited to areaways, poles, artwork. Chief Seattle bronze pole bases, special pavements and other features in the public realm.
- ii. Wireless facilities and similar elements are not allowed on:
- Poles within medians or traffic circles or islands.
 - SDOT traffic and pedestrian signal poles.
 - Poles with globe-light luminaires
 - Poles where wireless facilities would require relocation of decorative banners or hanging planters
 - Decorative poles, not including Chief Seattle poles and Aladdin lamp poles,
 - Poles within an [Approved Street Concept Plan](#) area identified in Streets Illustrated, unless the City determines it fits within the street concept plan
- iii. Wireless facilities shall be as small as feasible. The Board may require that the facilities be reduced in size or relocated.
- iv. Wireless facilities must include features addressed in these guidelines, such as the Chief Seattle bronze pole bases.

- v. Wireless facilities shall not impact areaways unless there is no other feasible location. In such cases the Board may require special measures to reduce impacts to the historic resource
- vi. Applicants for wireless facilities must demonstrate the need for such an installation at a particular location to the Board.
- vii. The maximum size of wireless antennas shall be:

For canister antennas:

- Maximum height: 36"
- Maximum width: 16"
- Maximum distance from the pole surface to edge of antenna: 28"

For panel antennas:

- Maximum height: 36"
- Maximum width: 14"
- Maximum distance from the pole surface to edge of antenna: 16"