

# **ASTOR-WEST URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT**



## **STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DESIGN GUIDELINES**

ASTORIA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
1095 DUANE STREET  
ASTORIA OR 97103

SEPTEMBER 2016

"WHERE PRESERVATION MEETS PROGRESS"

**Astor-West Urban Renewal District  
Storefront Improvement Program  
September 2016**

## Background

The City of Astoria Development Commission (ADC) has created a Storefront Improvement Program for businesses in the Astor-West Urban Renewal District. Officially approved in 2016, the ADC has set aside matching funds (grants/ loans) to be allocated on a first come, first serve basis with a focus on West Marine Drive. The program is envisioned to improve the appearance and attractiveness of the exterior facades of properties in the Astor-West Urban Renewal Area for the purposes of revitalizing the area, increasing its visual appeal, creating a healthy climate for small business, and to leverage private investment for catalytic changes. It is also intended to restore and preserve the unique historic character of the buildings in the Uniontown Historic District area and provide a consistent aesthetic for a storefront commercial area in an urban context.

### **Astor-West Urban Renewal District Boundary**

The Astor-West Urban Renewal Area, created in 2002, is located on the west side of Astoria, extending generally from Columbia Avenue west to Smith Point. The area includes property with frontage on West Marine Drive and both land and aquatic areas lying south of West Marine Drive within Port of Astoria area.



## Authorization

Astor-West Urban Renewal Plan Section 650.D, Proposed Urban Renewal Projects, Development and Redevelopment, states that *“The Renewal Agency is authorized to provide loans or other forms of financial assistance to property owners wishing to develop or redevelop land or buildings within the renewal area, or to persons desiring to acquire or lease buildings or land from the Agency. The Agency may make this assistance available, as it deems necessary, to achieve the objectives of this Plan.”*

## **Purpose**

Astor-West Urban Renewal Plan Section 400, Objectives, states *“To accomplish its mission the Agency will develop and implement an urban renewal program known as the Astor-West Urban Renewal Plan. The primary objectives of the Plan are to improve the physical conditions, functional relationships and visual quality of the area and to eliminate blight in order to create a climate more conducive for private development of property.”*  
*“The Plan will assist in meeting the Community’s economic development objectives through redevelopment of key sites, assisting with the construction of needed public facilities, improving transportation and utility facilities in the renewal area, rehabilitation of older and historic structures, and creating public amenities. Activities supported through the Plan will be in conformance with the Astoria Comprehensive Plan and will complement the Port of Astoria Central Waterfront Master Plan.”*

## **Plan Projects**

Astor-West Urban Renewal Plan Section 400.E, Rehabilitate Building Stock, identifies a goal to *“Upgrade the stock of existing structures in the renewal area in a manner which contributes to the historic and working-waterfront character of the area.”* The objectives of this goal are: *“1) Improve the appearance of existing buildings in order to enhance the overall aesthetics of the renewal area; and 2) Help in improving the safety of older buildings in regard to seismic stability, fire safety, building code compliance and accessibility to persons with disabilities.”*

## **Additional Regulations**

All development within the Urban Renewal Area shall conform to the conditions, limitations, and restrictions contained in the Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, State of Oregon Structural Specialty Code based on the Uniform Building Code, and other applicable codes of the City of Astoria. Development shall also conform to any applicable State and Federal laws and regulations controlling the use of property.

*In the case of buildings designated as historic, before being renovated, the proposal must go through a separate review process with the Historic Preservation Officer and/or the Historic Landmarks Commission.*

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

## Introduction

The Uniontown Design Guidelines provide a framework to review projects within the Astor-West Urban Renewal District (AW-URD) boundaries, aiding designers, property owners, businesses, and developers in understanding the Urban Renewal District's design expectations on projects where AW-URD funds are requested. The guidelines ensure a degree of order, harmony, and quality within the built environment; they allow the development of buildings and projects that are attractive individually yet contribute to the area with sensitivity to the historic character of the City.

***The guidelines do not prescribe specific design solutions, nor are they rigid requirements without flexibility.*** Rather, the design guidelines provide a descriptive template for maintaining and improving the character of the Uniontown area, without dictating or prescribing a specific *style or theme* such as Craftsman over another vernacular. Applications will be considered and evaluated on whether the proposal meets the general design intent of the area, not on every aspect of the design guidelines. However, the Astoria Development Commission and in certain cases – Historic Landmarks Commission and Design Review Committee- will reserve the right to request changes to proposed plans and may approve or deny any request based on how well the proposal complies with these guidelines.

A portion of the Astor-West Urban Renewal District is within the boundaries of the Riverfront Vision Plan Bridge Vista Area and Overlay Zone. The purpose of the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone (BVO) is to implement the land use principles of the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan (December 2009) as they pertain to the Bridge Vista Area. The BVO Zone is intended to serve objectives including supporting water-dependent and water-related uses and new uses consistent with Astoria's working waterfront; encouraging design that is compatible with the area's historic and working waterfront character; protecting views of and access to the Columbia River; enhancing open space and landscaping, particularly adjacent to the River Trail; strengthening the pedestrian orientation and gateway characteristics of the area; and allowing for commercial and residential uses that complement the Downtown core and support other planning and development objectives for the area. The BVO Zone extends from approximately the West Mooring Basin to 2nd Street and between West Marine Drive / Marine Drive and the northern edge of overwater parcels on the Columbia River, as shown in the City's Zoning Map. Applications are subject to any requirements of the BVO Zone.

The guidelines also recognize Uniontown to be a "*town center*" where buildings in most cases are built edge-to-edge and engage the streets; this town center image is maintained and strengthened by the guidelines. The Port area has been a working waterfront from the beginning and buildings in that area should reflect the industrial working waterfront atmosphere with special attention to the historic seafood industry building designs. Since the program is aimed at restoration/renovation of existing buildings, the Design Guidelines do not address new development. However, new construction and rehabilitation should respect the unique qualities of the existing Uniontown-Alameda National Register Historic District and are subject to Historic Landmarks Commission and Design Review Committee approval.





Columbia Ave & W Marine; Portway Street and W Marine Dr.



These guidelines address Astoria's unique "sense of place," its special quality and personality. Astoria is a riverfront town with a rich sense of history. The Design Guidelines address various aspects of the area including historic design and development, building characteristics, lighting, signage, and pedestrian orientation and circulation. These guidelines reflect the general characteristics of commercial buildings in this area. It does not fully reflect the characteristics of industrial or residential properties in this area. For residential properties, also refer to the "Rehabilitating Astoria Right" design guidelines (November 2013). Industrial buildings should generally consider the design guidelines for commercial buildings below, but with the acknowledgement that the industrial nature and style of the building may not be conducive to all design elements listed. Finally, a supplemental set of design guidelines can be found in "Portland Main Street Design Handbook (2011)."

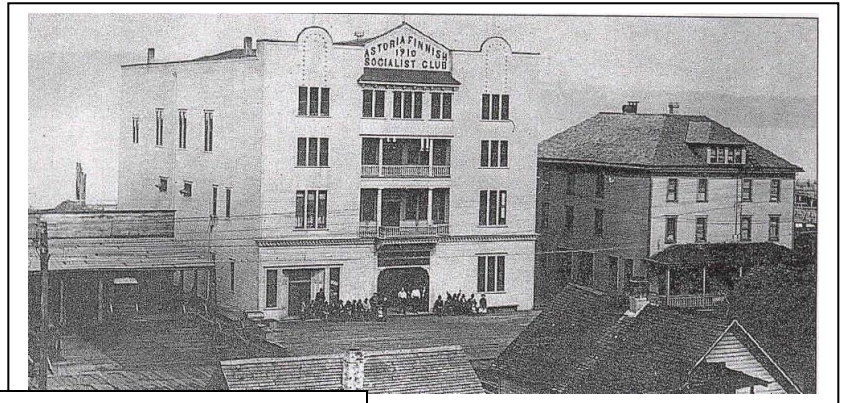


400 Block W Marine Dr.; Port Piers 2 & 3



## Historic

Historic architecture guidelines promote quality development while reinforcing the historic character of the Uniontown area. The guidelines promote architectural types indigenous to Uniontown and/or Astoria as a whole. Buildings in this area should seem to be "at home" there, reflecting its character and heritage, suiting its climate, landscape, and street grid.



Historic Uniontown: W Marine at Basin; W Marine near Bay Street

*Historic building renovation, restoration, or additions should respect the original structure.*

Astoria has a great inventory of historic structures, both commercial and residential. Historic rehabilitation and preservation is the City's ultimate goal, but total preservation of existing buildings may not always be a financially viable option, especially where buildings have been altered over time. Compromised rehabilitation solutions may be necessary to maintain the health and economic vitality of Astoria allowing for adaptive reuse of buildings.

Building renovation proposals should consider and respect the following architectural features:

- Basic building style/elements
- Roofs
- Doors
- Windows
- Siding and wall treatment
- Awnings
- Lighting
- Signs
- Pedestrian orientation and circulation
- Landscaping

## **BASIC BUILDING STYLE/ELEMENTS**

The guidelines address building styles and elements that give Astoria its special "character" as a unique collection of spaces and buildings, not simply a group of individual projects that could be anywhere USA. While building styles and elements are unique to each building, their individual style should be respected and should contribute to the overall character of the Uniontown/Port area.

Recommended:

- Buildings should retain significant original characteristics of scale, massing, and building material along street facades.
- Additions to buildings should not deform or adversely affect the composition of the facade or be out of scale with the building.
- Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship should be treated with sensitivity. All buildings should be respected and recognized as products of their time.



Mid-century “slip covers” should be removed when possible.  
Solid waste disposal enclosures to screen from view.  
Utility/mechanical equipment enclosures to screen from view.



Examples of recommended solid waste disposal area and mechanical equipment enclosures.

#### Not Recommended:

Incompatible additions or building alterations using contemporary materials, forms, or colors on building facades.  
Projecting wall-mounted mechanical units.



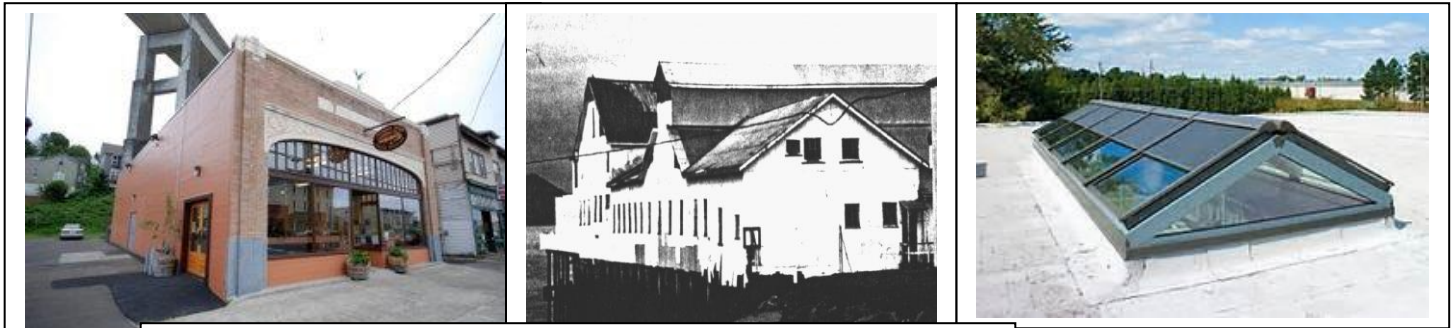
Examples of building elements not recommended: wall mounted mechanical, incompatible alterations, slip cover

#### ROOFS

Roof designs and elements should reflect the traditional designs found in the historic Uniontown Area. False roof elements or brightly colored or metal materials do not blend with the existing architecture of the area.

#### Recommended:

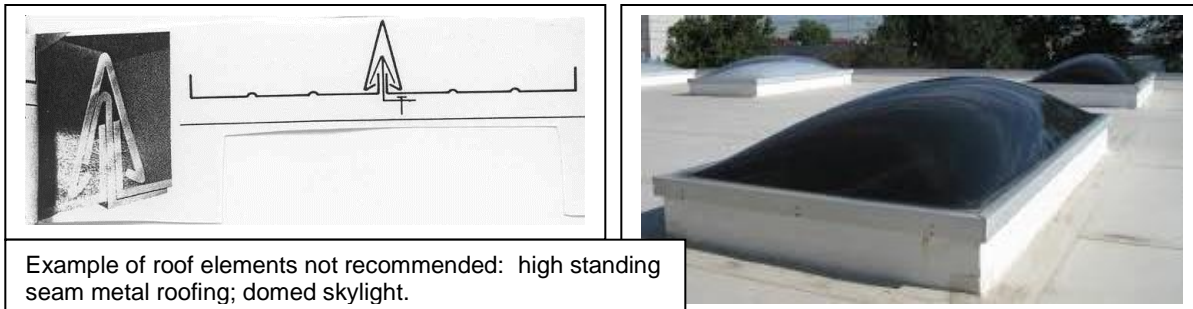
Materials such as cedar shingle, composition roofing.  
Materials on industrial may be galvanized corrugated metal , low profile standing seam metal, roll down.  
Roofing materials should be gray, brown, black, deep red, or other subdued natural color.  
Single gable with low pitch.  
Repetitive gable with steep pitch.  
Shallow eaves on industrial uses.  
Flat or gable roof behind parapet wall.  
Structural skylights, flat panel skylight or roof window, monitor roof on ridge, small shed dormers.



Examples of roof elements recommended: flat roof behind parapet wall; industrial multiple gables, monitor roof, and shallow eaves; and gable skylight.

#### Not Recommended:

False mansard or other applied form.  
High profile standing seam metal roof.  
Brightly colored roofing material.  
Dome skylights.



Example of roof elements not recommended: high standing seam metal roofing; domed skylight.

## DOORS

Entries to buildings should be inviting and create a safe, ADA compliant, entry into the building. Primary business entry doors for retail and commercial establishments should be transparent so that passersby may see the activity within the building, allowing the building to add life and vitality to the street. Doors with extra-large openings blending the activity of the street and the interior are appropriate for restaurants and cafes and are a good reuse of former garage door openings. Existing garage doors that are restored and operable can create an inviting atmosphere for retail type businesses and expand useable area for additional seating.

#### Recommended:

Doors should remain recessed when feasible.  
Large cafe or restaurant doors that open the street to the interior by pivoting, sliding, or rolling up overhead.  
Doors comprised of a minimum 50% window area in the door.  
Building lighting emphasizing entrances.  
Transom, side-lites, or other door/window combinations.  
Doors combined with special architectural detailing.  
Double or multiple door entries.  
Well-detailed or ornate door hardware. Location of contemporary hardware should be compatible



with the design of the door.



Example of doors recommended: retain original opening dimensions, recessed, compatible contemporary hardware; single or double doors with side lites. Entry lighting in recess entryway. Transom windows above door.



Examples of doors recommended: roll up doors to create open space into the buildings, recessed door

#### Not Recommended:

- Solid metal or wood doors with small or no windows.
- Automatic sliding doors.
- Primary entry doors raised more than three feet above sidewalk level.
- Doors flush with building facade.
- Clear anodized aluminum frames.
- Reflective, opaque, or tinted glazing.



Examples of doors not recommended: solid, automatic sliding, flush with facade.

## WINDOWS

Retail and commercial uses should provide windows that add activity and variety at the street level, inviting pedestrians in and providing views both in and out. Windows are great opportunities for display of products and to allow natural light into the interior spaces.

### Recommended:

Windows, including transoms, should retain their original size and location, including recess from plane of facade.

Windows that open by pivoting, casement, single hung, or other shuttering.

Painted wood or stucco panels or tile clad panels below windows.

Bottom of the window sill should be a minimum of 18 inches above the ground or floor elevation.

Clear glass.

True divided lites.

Boldly articulated window and storefront trim.

Non-industrial uses - At least 40% of the ground-floor street-facing facades of non-industrial uses should be covered by windows and at least 30% of the upper-floor street-facing facades should be covered by windows.

Industrial uses – Should have windows on facades visible to the public; if not visible to public, should at least have clear story or transom windows on upper facade levels.



### Not Recommended:

Residential-styled window bays on commercial buildings.

Half-round or other similar forms.

Tinted glass.

Simulated divided lites.

Sliding windows.

Vinyl windows.

Nondescript, flat, blank walls at street level.

Blocked out windows.

Windows that extend beyond the plane of the building facade.





Examples of windows not recommended: blank walls, windows covered over with boards, paint, or slip covers, windows replaced with different dimensions.

## SIDING AND WALL TREATMENT

Siding material, design, and color mixed with transparency create visual variety. In many areas, wall treatment can do more to attract customers than the use of excessive signage. The wall area should become the backdrop for the other building details and features such as window & door casings, pilasters, and other decorative features that help create the character of the area.

### Recommended:

- Variations in wall cladding materials and patterns consistent with historic patterns.
- Natural or subdued building colors.
- Limited use of bright accent trim colors.
- Use of durable materials such as brick, stucco, granite, pre-cast concrete, board and batten, or horizontal wood siding at the ground-floor level. Industrial uses may include galvanized corrugated metal.
- Belt courses, pilasters, and medallions.



Examples of recommended siding: variety and compatible materials and colors.

### Not Recommended:

- Cladding materials such as corrugated metal panels (unless used within an industrial building) or spandrel glass.
- Poorly detailed panels or those without detailing.
- Neon or other fluorescent colors.
- Bright or primary wall colors for the entire wall surface.
- Flagstone, simulated river rock or other similar veneer cladding.
- Painted brick.

Non-durable materials such as synthetic stucco, EIFS, or shingles at the ground floor.



Examples of siding not recommended: panels without detailing, spandrel glass walls, and corrugated metal panels.

## AWNINGS

Awnings should not dominate or overwhelm the building; rather, the awning should serve as mere backdrop for building or tenant identification.

Recommended:

Work with adjacent business owners to develop a consistency in awning design.

Consider retractable awnings which provide variable sun shading and weather protection and a variation in appearance.

Fixed awnings should be of traditional sloped top shape, with open or closed side panels, and fascia skirting, or traditional industrial flat shape, depending on building style.

Fascia skirts (valance) are a good opportunity for lettering signage.

A range of fabrics colors offer opportunities for individual expression.

Utilize weather and solar resistant fabrics.

If awnings are fixed consider pedestrian down lighting below.

Consider fixed awnings over second story windows for solar control and color.

Install awnings below architectural bands or transom windows when possible.



Examples of recommended awnings: retractable, fixed, industrial flat.

Not Recommended:

Fixed “bubble shaped” awnings.

Vinyl or other non-compatible material awnings.

Awnings improperly sized for the building/entry/window.

Lighting of awning externally or internally.





## LIGHTING

Lighting should not only provide nighttime security, but also encourage nighttime patronage of businesses and restaurants. Lighting should create an atmosphere of festivity and activity - especially where special elements or places are concerned. Utilitarian application of glaring, offensively colored lights, and overlighting (i.e. "light pollution") are not appropriate for Astoria. Lighting should be designed to avoid unnecessary illumination of residential areas. Lighting should not cast glare onto adjacent properties or streets in any way that decreases the safety of pedestrians and vehicles. Lights may, however, be used to create effects of shadow, relief, and outline that add visual interest and highlight architectural features or aspects of the building.

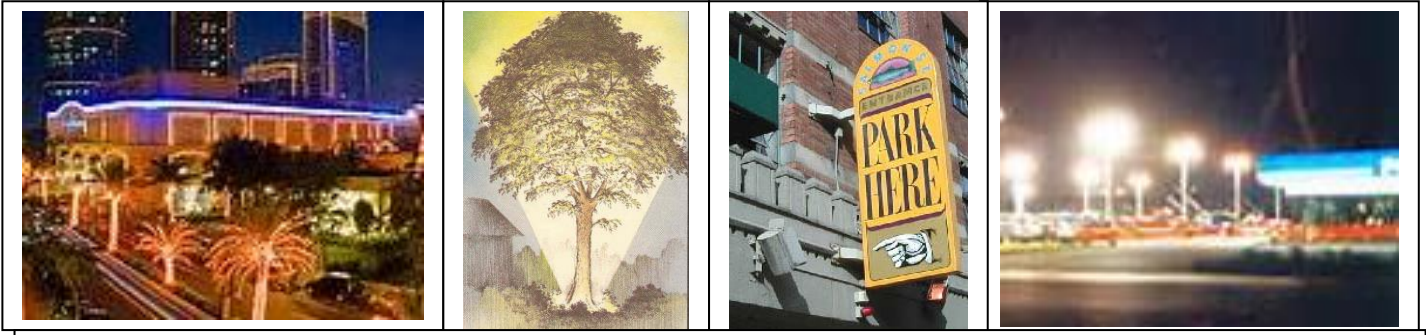
### Recommended:

- Exterior building lighting, downcast, diffused.
- Wall-washing lighting fixtures. Fixtures concealed and integrated into the design of buildings or landscape walls and stairways.
- Decorative wall sconce and similar architectural lighting fixtures.
- Bollard lighting that is directed downward toward pedestrian walkways.
- Historic light fixtures along streets and in parking lots.
- Gooseneck lighting that illuminates wall-applied signs.
- Sign silhouette backlighting.
- Incandescent or fluorescent bulb or low-voltage lighting.
- Parking lot lighting, low bollards or downcast, diffused lighting.
- Landscape lighting, minimal to enhance landscaping without lighting up the night sky.



## Not Recommended:

- Neon silhouette accent lighting.
- Fluorescent tube lighting.
- Security spotlight.
- Signs lit by lights containing exposed electrical conduit, junction boxes or other electrical infrastructure.
- Up lighting or light that shines into the sky, other properties, or traffic.



Examples of lighting not recommended: neon lined building, up lighting, exposed electrical infrastructure, security spotlighting

## SIGNAGE

Signs should make it easy to locate and identify businesses as well as provide other information relevant to getting around and doing business in Astoria. However, signs should never overwhelm neither buildings nor landscape. Moreover, signs should provide information in a highly graphic format that is complementary to the architecture. Logos, symbols, and graphics are encouraged. A strong pedestrian orientation and scale should be encouraged for all signs.

## Recommended:

- Wall signs.
- Hanging or blade signs.
- Projecting signs.
- Window signs.
- Information and guide signs.
- Monument signs.
- Temporary signs on a limited basis.
- Sign lighting should be exterior, downcast; use of neon light signs.
- Easels and chalkboards in pedestrian areas.
- High quality, professionally-painted and designed sandwich boards.



Examples of signs recommended: blade, monument, wall, chalk board



## Not Recommended:

- Unframed vinyl banners.
- Large portable signs.
- Excessive window signs.
- Awning signs except on valance.
- Signs which impede or obstruct pedestrian access.



Examples of signs not recommended: poorly designed sandwich boards, banners, excessive window signs

## PEDESTRIAN ORIENTATION AND CIRCULATION

These guidelines address the ways in which buildings and spaces may be designed to create a convenient, comfortable, human-scaled environment that people will want to frequent.

### Recommended:

- Define the pedestrian environment. Landscaping and building design should minimize and screen pedestrians from vehicles and nuisances such as noise and odors.
- Protect the pedestrian from the elements.
- Provide places for stopping and viewing to create successful outdoor spaces.
- Integrate barrier-free design.
- Windows should be transparent and/or have displays at street level.
- Protect or recess the entry bays.
- Landscaping to minimize pedestrian exposure to parking lots (visual and physical separation such as 36" to 42" hedge, or ornate fence).
- Parking lots set back from sidewalks or other pedestrian paths.
- Develop pedestrian routes that are attractive and convenient. Sidewalks should be continuous. Walkways should be direct and free of barriers such as utility poles or other obstructions. Extended café spaces on sidewalks are encouraged, but must be located flush with storefront to not impede pedestrians.



Examples of pedestrian areas recommended: storefront windows, recessed entry, outdoor spaces, defined pedestrian area, and protection from elements.



Examples of pedestrian elements recommended: separation between parked vehicles and pedestrian areas, defined pedestrian area

#### Not Recommended:

- Indirect or circuitous pedestrian routes.
- Pedestrian route obstructions.
- Parking lots with no visual or physical barrier for pedestrians.
- Nondescript, flat, blank walls at street level.
- Blocked out windows.
- Sidewalk interruptions such as vehicle curb cuts or change of grade.



Examples of pedestrian areas not recommended: parking not separated from pedestrian area, blocked sidewalks, blank walls

## LANDSCAPING

The purpose of landscaping is to enhance the appearance of the City as part of commercial developments, including parking areas. Landscaping provides both physical and visual buffers between incompatible uses such as vehicle areas and pedestrian areas. It also provides habitat for migratory birds, shade for pedestrian areas, and increases the aesthetic value of the area. Landscaping is closely linked to "Pedestrian Orientation and Circulation."

#### Recommended:

- Landscaping between parking areas, streets, and sidewalks.
- Hedge or decorative fence to minimize pedestrian exposure to parking lots (visual and physical separation such as 36" to 42" hedge, or ornate fence).



Native plants. Raised planters with annual or perennial flowering plants.  
 Portion of required landscaping could consist of non-vegetative features such as benches,  
 interpretive signage, pedestrian courtyards, drinking fountain, restroom, etc.  
 Columnar street trees with durable tree grates.  
 Permeable paving and other stormwater management techniques.  
 Clustering of trees along waterfront.  
 Drought resistant plants or use of irrigation system.



Example of recommended landscaping: non-vegetative landscape features, separation of pedestrian areas, columnar street trees.

Not Recommended:

Wide branching street trees.  
 Wood chips or pebbles alone as ground cover.  
 Plants of insufficient size / caliper/non-native



Examples of landscaping not recommended: insufficient sized plants, excessive use of wood chips as ground cover; wide branching street tree.