

18.120.300 SITE ELEMENTS AND DESIGN

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18.120.310 INTRODUCTION

This Section addresses the size and design of site elements such as landscaping, parking areas, walkways, open spaces, site furniture, and fences. Whereas OMC 18.120.200 (Site Planning) addresses the location and configuration of such elements within the framework of site planning, this chapter adds provisions for their physical characteristics. This section does not apply to site features in the public right of way.

18.120.320 PARKING AREAS

A. INTENT

1. To reduce the visual presence of parking on Downtown streets, public spaces, and adjacent development.
2. To increase pedestrian access.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. Parking lot design standards. These guidelines are in addition to OMC 18.38.220 (parking design standards) and 18.36.180 (parking lot landscaping and screening.) See also Section 18.120.220 on Specially Designated Streets for parking lot location guidelines.
2. Walkways through parking areas. Developments shall provide specially marked or paved walkways through parking areas. Generally, walkways shall be provided at least every four rows or at least every 180 feet, whichever will yield more walkways. Align the walkways to connect with major building entries or other sidewalks, walkways, and destinations. Walkway shall be a minimum of 4 feet wide (unobstructed clear width excluding vehicle overhang.)



Figure 18.120.320.B.1: Parking area walkway examples. Note that clear walkway width must account for vehicle overhang.

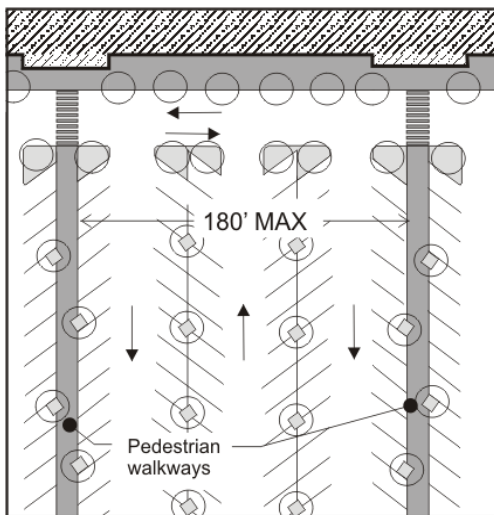


Figure 18.120.320.B.2: Example parking area walkway configuration.

3. Bumper overhang next to walkways and landscaping. Where angle or perpendicular parking abuts a landscape strip or walkway, provide a 2 feet wide paved area to prevent the vehicle's overhang from infringing on the walkway or landscaping.

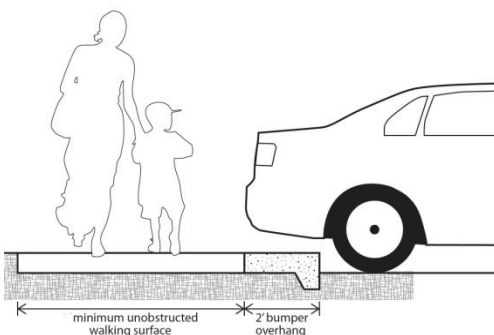


Figure 18.120.320.B.3. Concrete extension to accommodate bumper overhang.

18.120.330 PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED OPEN SPACE

A. INTENT

1. To ensure that accessible open spaces, whether public or private, are safe, comfortable, usable, and attractive.
2. To provide spaces for informal activities such as picnicking, relaxing, meeting friends, and, as appropriate, children's play.
3. To establish the minimum standards for how pedestrian oriented open space will be developed when it is proposed to satisfy provisions of 18.120.230 C, D, and E or when it is proposed as part of a new development or redevelopment project.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. Pedestrian oriented space elements. Providing "Pedestrian Oriented Open Space" is an option for satisfying some requirements in sections 18.120.230.C, D, and E. (Allows buildings on Type A, B, and C streets to be set back from a public right of way if the setback area meets pedestrian oriented open space standards.) Pedestrian oriented open space used to satisfy these requirements shall meet the following standards in subsections a. and b.:
 - a. Pedestrian Oriented Open Space shall feature:
 - i. Location: Pedestrian areas are to be located adjacent to areas with significant pedestrian traffic to provide interest and security, such as adjacent to, or visible from, a building entry. Such areas are to provide visual and pedestrian access into the site from a street, private access road, or non-vehicular courtyard.
 - ii. Surface: Paved walking surfaces of either concrete, walkable crushed rock, or approved unit paving.
 - iii. Seating: At least 2 feet of seating area (a bench or ledge at least 16 inches deep and appropriate seating height) or one individual seat per 60 SF of plaza area or open space.
 - iv. Landscaping: Provide components that add visual interest and do not act as a visual barrier. This could include planting beds, potted plants, or both.
 - b. A Pedestrian Oriented Open Space shall not have:
 - i. Unscreened adjacent (immediately next to or adjoining) parking areas or service areas (e.g., trash areas). Such features must be separated with Type 1 screening as described in OMC 18.36.060.

- ii. Cannot be immediately next to or adjoining chain-link fences.
- iii. Cannot be immediately next to or adjoining "blank walls" without "blank wall treatment." (See 18.120.480).
- iv. Cannot include vehicle travel through the area, except for emergency vehicles, and those related to open space activities such as food trucks.

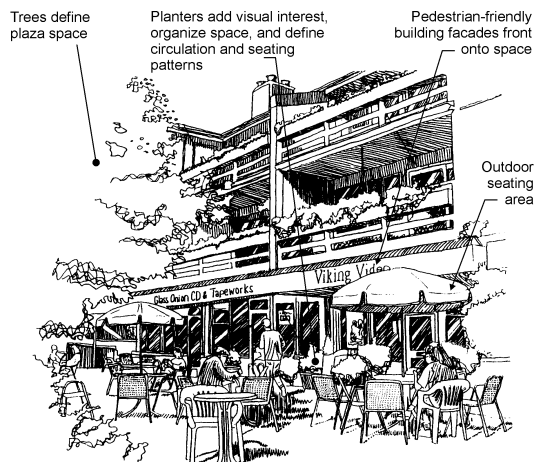


Figure 18.120.330.B.1. Illustration of favorable elements of a Pedestrian Oriented Open Space and example of a successful space on the right.

18.120.340 LANDSCAPING

A. INTENT

These guidelines do not supersede Chapter 18.36 OMC which establishes development standards for landscaping as part of site development. They augment those standards with design requirements specific to the Downtown. Where there is a conflict between the provisions of this section and OMC 18.36, the City will determine which provisions apply based on which best meets the intent of the design guidelines as follows. These guidelines do not apply to public projects within the public right of way. For the purpose of this section, “landscaping” and “landscape elements” include plant materials and their beds, pavements, walls and fences, water features (except shorelines covered by the City’s Shoreline Master Program), site furnishings, trellises, planter boxes, “green walls,” and related elements. The intent is to:

1. Support the provisions of Chapter 18.36 OMC: Landscaping and Screening.
2. Create landscaping, including plantings, ground forms, natural elements paving and hardscape, site furniture, and other site features an integral part of the overall site and community design.
3. Complement the architecture, other site elements and the visual appearance of the neighborhood, as well as the Northwest environment.

4. Encourage compositions of plant materials and site features that create an appropriate visual character such as formal, informal, or natural.
5. Use landscape design to help define a distinctive design character that distinguishes different Downtown Design Sub-Districts and Downtown Olympia as a whole.
6. Reduce the summertime heat and glare buildup within, and adjacent to, parking lots.
7. Reduce landscape maintenance requirements and help ensure that the landscape elements are attractive and healthy over time.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. The Core, Business Corridor, and North Capitol Way Sub-Districts:

- a. General Character and Intent: This area is envisioned to be intensively developed, therefore landscaped areas are likely to be limited. Incorporate landscape elements to enhance building forms and provide smaller scale visual interest. Emphasize uniform plantings in a linear or geometric pattern, with plants pruned into regular shapes and symmetric landscape layouts with straight walkways rather than naturalistic landscape layouts.
- b. Plant Materials: Use durable, well suited ornamental trees and shrubs to complement building. Plantings may be structural, space defining features.
- c. Pavements: Use high quality pavements such as concrete and pavers. Asphalt and gravel are prohibited.
- d. Furniture and Site Furnishings: Provide site fixtures to complement the materials and character of the development's building. Select furniture and lighting that reflects the historic character of the Core and Capitol Way Corridor.



Figure 18.340.B.1: Relatively formal space defining landscaping is appropriate where there is room in the Core and along Capitol Way.



Figure 18.120.340.B.2: Small scale landscape enhancements are appropriate if maintained.



Figure 18.120.340.B.3: Landscaping can be effective in enhancing and softening formal building elements, especially in more intense areas such as the Core and along Capitol Way.

2. Waterfront Sub-District

- a. General Character and Intent: The waterfront, especially in the Percival Landing segment, features a variety of landscape characters ranging from naturalistic compositions of grasses and driftwood to lawn areas with floral edges. Seasonal displays that enhance specific areas (typically outdoor dining areas) add color. Emphasize naturalistic plantings and, as an option, add seasonal displays in landscape improvements.



Figure 18.120.340.B.4: Existing landscaping in the Waterfront Sub-District features a wide variety of plantings and characteristics. Note the mix of seasonal floral and naturalistic plantings, and the backdrop of large evergreen trees.

- b. **Plant Materials:** For properties along West Bay and Percival Landing, a wide range of landscape character may be incorporated depending on the available space, pedestrian activities, and adjacent buildings. On sites facing East Bay, select plant materials to reinforce streetscape design and provide screening of unsightly areas. All plants on Waterfront sites must be salt and ground water hardy.
- c. **Pavements:** Pavements along the esplanade must conform to the standards established by the City. Other pedestrian walking surfaces must continue the esplanade standards or feature decorative pavement to accentuate special areas, unless site constraints warrant departure in which case the applicant will need to demonstrate that the alternative will achieve the design intent.
- d. **Furniture and Site Furnishings:** Site furniture shall be functional and weather resistant. If a more specialized design is desired, reflect a maritime character.

3. Art/Tech Sub-District

- a. **General Character and Intent:** The Art/Tech Sub-District is intended to provide for a mix of robust activities that may require frequent deliveries and outdoor work space. The character should reflect that quality, so landscape features should be hardy and limited to those areas not needed

for active uses. The visual character of the area can be greatly enhanced with compact landscape screening and plantings in areas where people will pass or congregate such as building entrances and outdoor seating areas. Because of the envisioned variety of site uses and conditions, individual, site-specific landscape solutions may be necessary and desirable.

Some developments in the Art/Tech Sub-District, such as those shown below in Figure 18.120.440.B.5, include extensive garden areas in an otherwise industrial setting. Such gardens with plantings, special features, and art are encouraged where they do not conflict with site activities.



Figure 18.120.340.B.5: Some informal landscaping treatments that would be appropriate in the Art/Tech area but not necessarily in other Sub-Districts.

The guidance below is primarily for sites with more intensive industrial activities.



Figure 18.120.340.B.6: Attractive gardens that provide excellent examples of oases within an otherwise industrial setting. This intimate juxtaposition of workshop and garden experiences is quite unique to Downtown Olympia and a major asset.

- b. **Plant Materials:** Plant materials must be maintainable in the areas they are planted. Large scale trees, used to soften the “semi-industrial” character of this area, may be planted where there is room for the crown and the root system. On sites where vehicle traffic is expected, plantings and their root systems must be protected with measures such as raised beds, bollards, and special soil treatments.
- c. **Pavements:** Emphasize utilitarian pavements such as asphalt and concrete, but artistic pavements and details are encouraged, especially if they relate to on-site activities.
- d. **Furniture and Site Furnishings:** Select site furnishings that reflect the activities and conditions on the site. For example, do not use delicate, residential quality furniture near industrial activities. Artwork installations are acceptable. Lighting can be utilitarian or industrial in character but shall not produce glare, especially onto adjacent properties.

4. Entertainment Sub-District

- a. **General Character and Intent:** There is generally very little space for substantial landscaping in the Entertainment Sub-District because most buildings front directly on the street. There are exceptions, such as City Hall, which does feature a small plaza with landscaping and site furniture. The intent of the guidelines for the Entertainment Sub-District is to create an especially vibrant, colorful day and nighttime pedestrian environment with interesting details. Where possible, emphasize small scale landscape features such as baskets and planters to enhance the pedestrian experience.



Figure 18.120.340.B.7: Plant beds in front of City Hall. Note the raised beds that enable easy maintenance and the bands of ornamental pavement.

- b. **Plant Materials:** Where possible, provide and maintain small scale ornamental plants to add color and texture to the area.



Figure 18.120.340.B.8. Small scale plantings that add pedestrian interest. Note how the simple planter with grass defines the space and makes it more inviting.

- c. Pavements: Standard concrete pavements are acceptable. Where space allows, such as in entryways, add small areas of unique and high quality pavements such as tile and terrazzo to add pedestrian interest.
- d. Furniture and Site Furnishings: Furniture and site features, such as lighting, shall be easily maintainable and made of durable materials and relate to the character of the building's architecture.

5. Residential Neighborhood Sub-District

- a. General Character and Intent: The Residential Neighborhood Sub-District includes two distinct types of land uses: 1) single and multifamily residences and 2) office buildings, often associated with the Capitol Campus. Additionally, small retail is encouraged in some areas.

For residences and mixed-use projects, employ a mix of trees, shrubs, ground cover, and some lawn to both frame and enhance new development. Storefronts shall feature pedestrian oriented façades so there may not be opportunities for landscaping if small retail shops are developed. Where appropriate, add landscape screens to enhance privacy and reduce impacts on adjacent properties. Dense screens over 4 feet in height that prevent views from the street into front yards are prohibited as they present a security hazard. Landscape layouts can either be formal with symmetric, space-defining plantings, or can be informal with irregular plantings in a more “natural” composition.



Figure 18.120.340B.9: Formal residential landscaping (left) and more informal landscaping (right).

New office buildings may either feature one of the residential options described above, or if there is sufficient open space on the site, new developments may emulate the Campus's Olmsted landscape character, which is typified by a layering of plant materials from lawn to low shrubs to trees around open areas, to create room-like spaces. Within these spaces, passive, palliative use is encouraged with curving pathways, furnishings, and features that take advantage of the site's natural assets such as view corridors, landforms, or specimen plants. If the Olmsted design character is chosen, the design should feature asymmetric plantings of large (at maturity) trees, ample lawn areas, some ornamental shrubs or beds, and curvilinear walkways.



Figure 18.120.340.B.10. The Capitol Campus reflects the Olmsted Firm's design character with informal groupings of large trees, curvilinear walkways, and lawn areas.

- b. **Plant Materials:** A wide range of plant materials is appropriate for residential development. Residential lots may feature formal or informal gardens, lawn areas, or more naturalistic landscaping emphasizing native species. Landscaping in residential development shall avoid large paved areas except for small plazas designed for relaxing that feature ornamental plantings and furniture.

For non-residential development, if the Olmsted landscape character is

selected, large (signature) trees and curving lawn areas shall predominate with shrubs and planting beds used as building enhancements and space-defining elements. Residentially scaled landscaping described above is appropriate for small spaces. The use of landscaping to facilitate the transition between large and small buildings or between residential and commercial development is encouraged.



Figure 18.120.340.B.11: An Olmsted-style landscape design approach applied to an urban setting.

- c. Pavements: Paving shall consist of concrete pavements, unit pavers, or decorative elements such as tile.
 - d. Furniture and Site Furnishings: Site furniture is not necessary in residential development, although trellises, canopies, attractive gateways, and other site features can enhance a residential complex. All site lighting, including parking lot lighting, should be pedestrian scaled with luminaires generally less than 15 feet above grade.
6. **Perimeter parking lot landscaping.** Adhere to standards in OMC 18.36.180 (which requires a 10 foot wide landscape buffer in the front façade, or 5 feet on the side) or as an alternative, parking lot perimeter screening may consist of the following (interior parking lot landscaping is still required): **NOTE: May move these provisions to Landscaping Chapter, OMC 18.36.**
- a. Provide a planting bed, at least 5 feet wide that incorporates a low masonry wall, 2-1/2 feet to 3 feet tall with landscaping and/or trellis as described below. When parking is adjacent to a right of way, the planting bed shall be on the street-side between the parking area and street facing front of the wall. The planting bed shall feature the following plantings:
 - i. Deciduous and/or evergreen trees spaced to create a continuous canopy (approximately 30 feet on center or as directed by the City). Alternatively, a trellis and shrubs, as in Figure 18.120.340.B.13 may be substituted for the trees.

- ii. Shrubs provided at the rate to provide complete coverage of the planting strip within three years of planting.
- iii. The wall shall be constructed of brick, stone, decorative concrete or concrete block, or other permanent material that provides visual interest and helps to define the street edge as determined by the City. (See Figure 18.120.340.B.10 for an example). The wall and bed should be relatively continuous but may feature breaks at key points for pedestrian access.
- iv. The City may require breaks in the wall and planter strip to facilitate pedestrians entering the site.

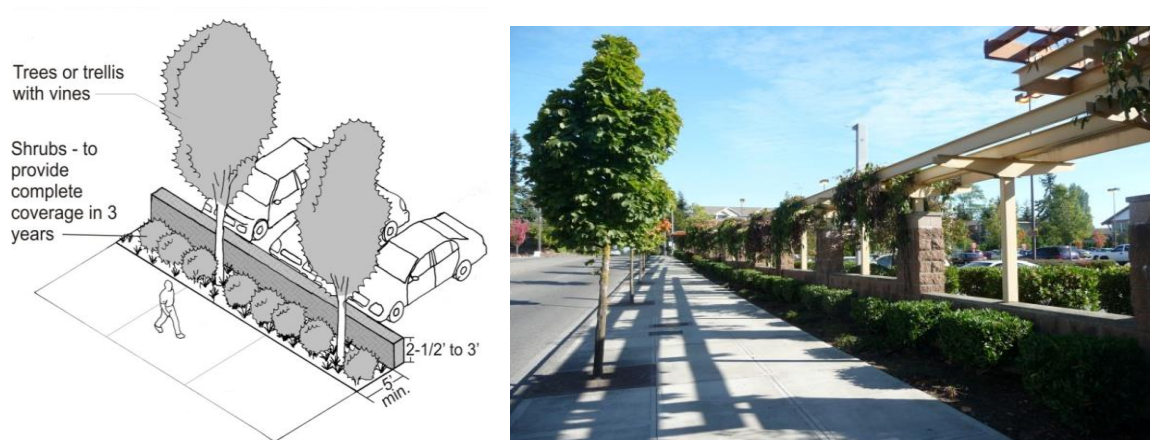


Figure 18.120.340.B.12: Parking area planting buffer with low wall and landscaping. Illustration with trees (left) and example with trellis (right).

- 7. **Green walls.** Green walls are acceptable and may be used in all Sub-Districts and on designated historic properties, when approved, if the City determines that it does not detract from the site's historic character. Green walls shall be properly irrigated and maintained.
- 8. **Stormwater management techniques.** Rain gardens and other landscape techniques to reduce stormwater runoff are encouraged in the South Capitol Way and Residential Neighborhood Sub-Districts.

18.120.350 WALKWAYS AND CIRCULATION ELEMENTS

A. INTENT

- 1. To provide safe and direct pedestrian access that accommodates pedestrians of all ages and abilities, minimizes conflicts between pedestrians and vehicular traffic, and provides pedestrian connections to neighborhoods.
- 2. To accommodate bicyclists.

3. To provide attractive internal pedestrian routes, promote walking, and enhance the character of the area.

Notes: The provisions of this Section do not apply to the areas added to sidewalks to meet the setback requirements to achieve a 12-foot or 10-foot wide sidewalk in 18.120.240 C, D, and E.

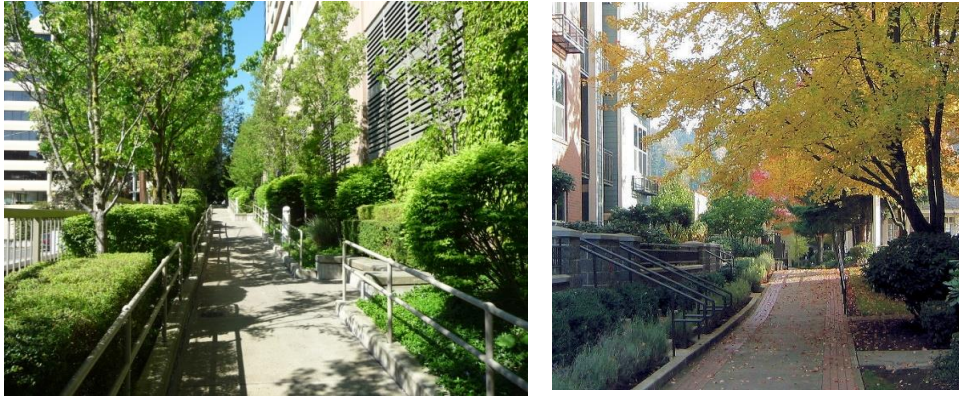


Figure 18.120.350.A: Well-designed pedestrian ways are important in urban areas.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. Walkway widths. Walkways in developments (not within the public right of way) shall be sufficiently wide to serve their intended purpose and level of use. All required walkway width dimensions above are to be clear of permanent obstructions.
 - a. All walkways shall be at least 4 feet wide with widened areas for two wheel chairs to pass, except for walkways for very occasional use such as paths to a service area serving a single residential unit.
 - b. Walkways to main entrances to commercial businesses shall be at least 6 feet wide.
 - c. Walkways to assembly type spaces such as theatres and auditoriums where heavy pedestrian traffic is anticipated shall be at least 10 feet wide.
 - d. Walkways where bicycle traffic is anticipated shall be at least 10 feet wide with a 2 foot wide shoulder (12 feet total width) and signed and configured for safe pedestrian traffic as well as bicycle movement.
2. Walkway safety. Provide clear visibility along the walkway in developments (outside the public right of way). For safety and wayfinding, landscaping shall not block visibility to and from a path in a way that conflicts with the guidelines in OMC 18.120.280. Maximize visibility where paths cross vehicle routes such as alleys and driveways so that pedestrians and drivers can clearly see each other.
3. Walkway enhancements. Where walkways in developments (outside the public

right of way) are within 5 feet of a “blank wall” measured perpendicularly to the wall (see section 18.120.480), at least one of the following measures must be incorporated:

- a. Blank wall treatment per Section 18.120.480, or
 - b. A landscaped strip, at least 3 feet wide between the wall and the walkway featuring shrubs, trees, and/or vines as approved by the City.
4. Pedestrian circulation where façades face parking areas. Where a building’s main entrance or a walkway to a primary entrance faces an off-street parking area rather than the street, provide wide walkways with street trees and pedestrian lighting adjacent to the façades of retail and mixed-use buildings. Walkways shall be at least 12 feet wide to allow for 8 feet minimum unobstructed width and landscaping and include the following:
- a. Trees, as approved by the City, shall be spaced as directed by the City dependent on the size of the tree at maturity. Trees shall be placed in grates or landscaped planting beds. Breaks in the tree coverage will be allowed near major building entries to enhance visibility. However, no less than one tree per 60 lineal feet of building façade shall be provided.
 - b. Pedestrian oriented lights spaced no more than 40 feet on center (average).



Figure 18.120.350.B.1: Left: Illustration of requirements for a building front facing a parking area. Right: Example of a successful pedestrian sidewalk between parking lot and storefront.

5. Separation between internal walkway and ground related residential units. For residents’ privacy and to maintain a comfortable transition between the walkway and the interior of the residence, residences with ground floor living spaces facing a walkway shall be set back at least 10 feet from the walkway and/or raised at

least 3 feet above grade. The area between the residence and the path must be either landscaped, stairs/an entry, or feature a deck, porch, or other space for outdoor living.



Figure 18.120.350.B.2: The raised floors and setbacks from a walkway provide privacy for the residents and an inviting transition from the public realm to the private living space.

18.120.360 LIGHTING

A. INTENT

1. To encourage the use of lighting as an integral design component to enhance buildings, landscaping, or other site features.
2. To increase personal safety and security.
3. To increase night sky visibility and to reduce the general illumination of the sky.
4. To reduce horizontal light glare and vertical light trespass from a development onto adjacent parcels and natural features.
5. To enhance the night time pedestrian environment, especially in the Entertainment Sub-District.
6. To increase design consistency within the development.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. Site lighting levels. All publicly accessible areas shall be lighted with levels as follows:

Condition	Lighting levels in foot-candles on the ground		
	Minimum	Maximum	Preferred
Low or non-pedestrian and vehicular traffic areas, private parking lots, secure storage areas, etc.	.5	2	1
Moderate pedestrian areas and building entries, most walkways, some pedestrian oriented open spaces, etc.	1	4	2
High pedestrian areas such as building entries and areas where personal security is a concern	2	4	3
Public parking lots	1	2	1

The maximum exterior light level anywhere is 5 foot candles, measured on the ground. Lighting shall be provided at consistent levels, with an average lighting level to minimum lighting level uniformity ratio no less than 3:1, to create gradual transitions between varying levels of lighting and between lit areas and unlit areas. Highly contrasting pools of light and dark areas shall be avoided.

2. Light quality, height, and shielding. Adhere to the following unless there is a compelling reason to the contrary:
 - a. Parking area lighting fixtures shall be fully shielded; dark sky rated and mounted no more than 20 feet above the ground (15 feet high maximum in the Residential Neighborhood Sub-District), with lower fixtures preferable so as to maintain a human scale.
 - b. Exterior lighting shall not spill onto adjacent properties.
 - c. Pedestrian lighting shall have a maximum height of 15 feet.
3. Architectural lighting. Steady, non-flashing lighting of building features, artwork, and special landscape elements may be allowed, subject to the findings of the City that the light causes no significant adverse impact.
4. Character of light fixtures and mounting. The design character of site and building mounted lighting must be consistent with the site's architecture. Alternatively, the design of site and building mounted lighting may be unobtrusive without embellishment or specific character, provided the lighting fixture's visibility is minimized.

18.120.370 OTHER SITE FEATURES

A. INTENT

1. To ensure that site features such as walls, fences, poles, gates, and screens are well constructed and easily maintainable.
2. To enhance the pedestrian environment and the general appearance of Downtown.

B. REQUIREMENTS

1. Fences and walls.
 - a. Except where full screening of service areas, utilities, mechanical equipment, or other facilities are placed, fences shall not obscure building fronts or site features.
 - b. Fences and walls shall be made of durable, easily maintainable, and vandal resistant materials.
 - c. Except in the Art/Tech Design Sub-District and for Port of Olympia properties, chain link fences are prohibited along the street facing fronts of properties in the Downtown. Chain link fences may be used for temporary purposes such as construction or short-term security. Where permanent chain link fences are employed, they must be black vinyl coated.
 - d. Wooden fences are prohibited in the Core, Entertainment, and South Capitol Way Sub-Districts as they are less permanent and do not contribute to the historic and urban character desired there.

Where a retaining wall adjacent to a public sidewalk is necessary for development, step the wall back so that the top of the wall surface closest to the sidewalk is no more than 30 inches high. If greater height is required, construct terraces no more than 30 inches high with at least 18 inches horizontal steps between each terrace riser. See Figure 18.120.360.B.1. The City may allow other configurations, such as a higher wall set back from the sidewalk and landscaped, provided such a wall is necessary for development and the objectives of this section are achieved.

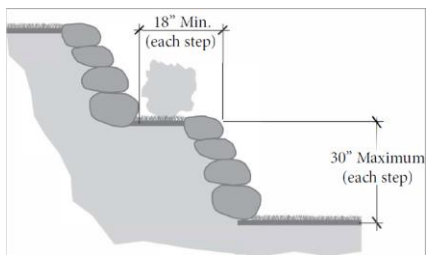


Figure 18.120.370.B.1: Allowable terrace configuration for wall or rockery adjacent to a public sidewalk. Note that this illustration shows a stone wall but other masonry and concrete walls are acceptable as well.

2. Poles and other vertical elements outside of the public right of way. Minimize vertical site elements on property outside of a public right of way except for those intended specifically to add to the pedestrian environment.

- a. Wires and other hanging features are prohibited except for otherwise allowed temporary features such as permitted signs.
- b. See also guidelines for service areas and mechanical equipment, OMC 18.120.170.

Exception: This guideline does not apply to desirable vertical elements intended to enhance the pedestrian environment such as weather protection, flag poles, banners, art installations, artistic lighting, supports for hanging flower baskets, trellises, and supports for green walls.

3. Alcove (recessed entry) gates

- a. Alcove gates should be made of durable, easily maintainable and vandal resistant materials. To reduce the likelihood of graffiti, avoid gates with smooth surfaces unless they can easily be repainted or cleaned.
- b. Chain link or wooden alcove gates are prohibited along the front of properties. The City may make exceptions for creative applications.
- c. Alcove gates shall be installed in a manner that can be easily removed in the future with minimal damage to the building.
- d. For historically designated properties or properties within the Downtown Historic District, see OMC 18.105, Historic Structures and Buildings within Historic Districts, and 18.12.090, Historic Preservation.