

# Urban Design Element

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## Background and Analysis

### Purpose and Relationship to GMA

Urban design is defined as that branch of planning which is primarily concerned with the functional and visual relationships between people and their physical environment, and the ways in which those relationships can be improved. Urban design is not a required element under the Growth Management Act, but it is an important concept that contributes directly to the community's quality of life and the achievement of the GMA's planning goals.

Urban design has three distinct components, which vary in scale. These are described below.

#### Urban spatial structure

This is urban design on a large, or macro, scale. It involves the deliberate distribution, scaling, and combination or separation of land uses to create an integrated whole which defines the form of the community. For example, it involves locating, linking and defining roles for activity centers, open spaces or major transportation corridors.

#### Urban beautification

This is urban design on a medium scale. This involves the landscaping or beautification of public and private areas of the City and the defining of the relationship between the physical location of different uses and the placement of buildings.

#### Urban decoration

This is urban design on a small, or micro scale. It involves projects such as the choice of street furniture or colored and textured pavers to decorate an area such as Main Street. Like urban beautification, many of the decorating activities carried out in the renovation of areas such as Bothell's Main Street are thought of as being urban design, but in reality they are simply the micro component of the overall urban design concept.

Although the City at present has no formal design review board which oversees and implements a formal design review process, the City conducts design review in conjunction with any application for permit review. Currently, building and site design standards are regulated within the Bothell Municipal Code. The regulations contain standards for, building design, setbacks, building placement, impervious coverage allotments, critical areas protection and preservation, and natural vegetation retention. These standards all contribute to the design of individual projects and to the overall design of the community. The City's role in urban design is a large and important one since the public sector has traditionally had responsibility for the open space, transportation, utilities, and permitting portions of planning. By the same token, the concept of overall design control on a large (i.e. "citywide") scale is best overseen by the public sector.