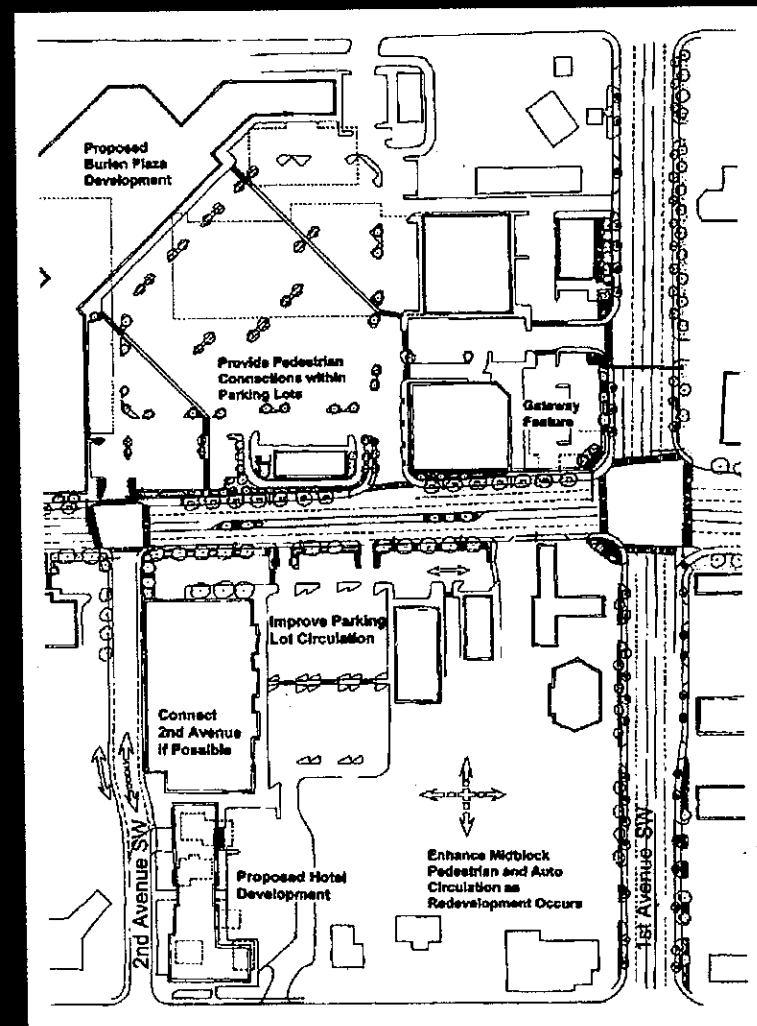
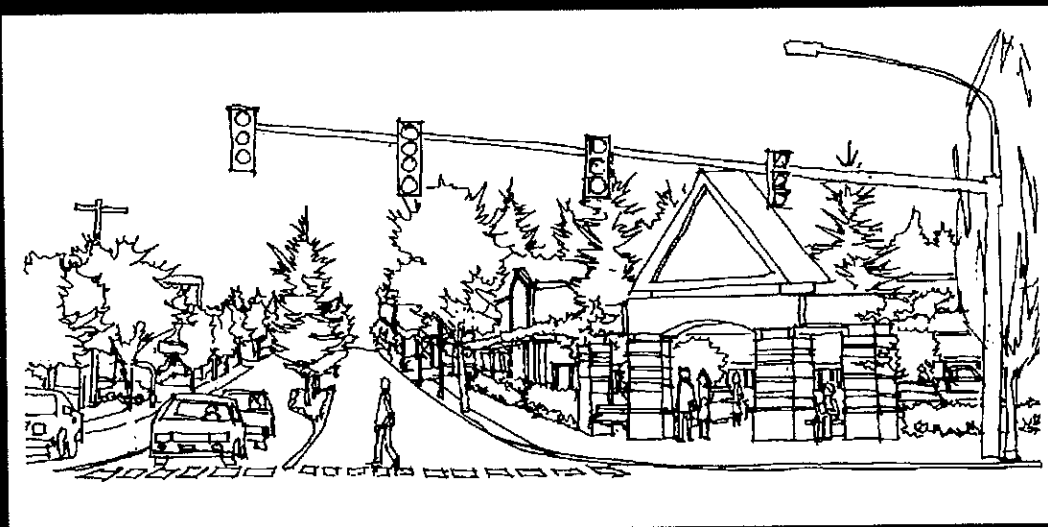
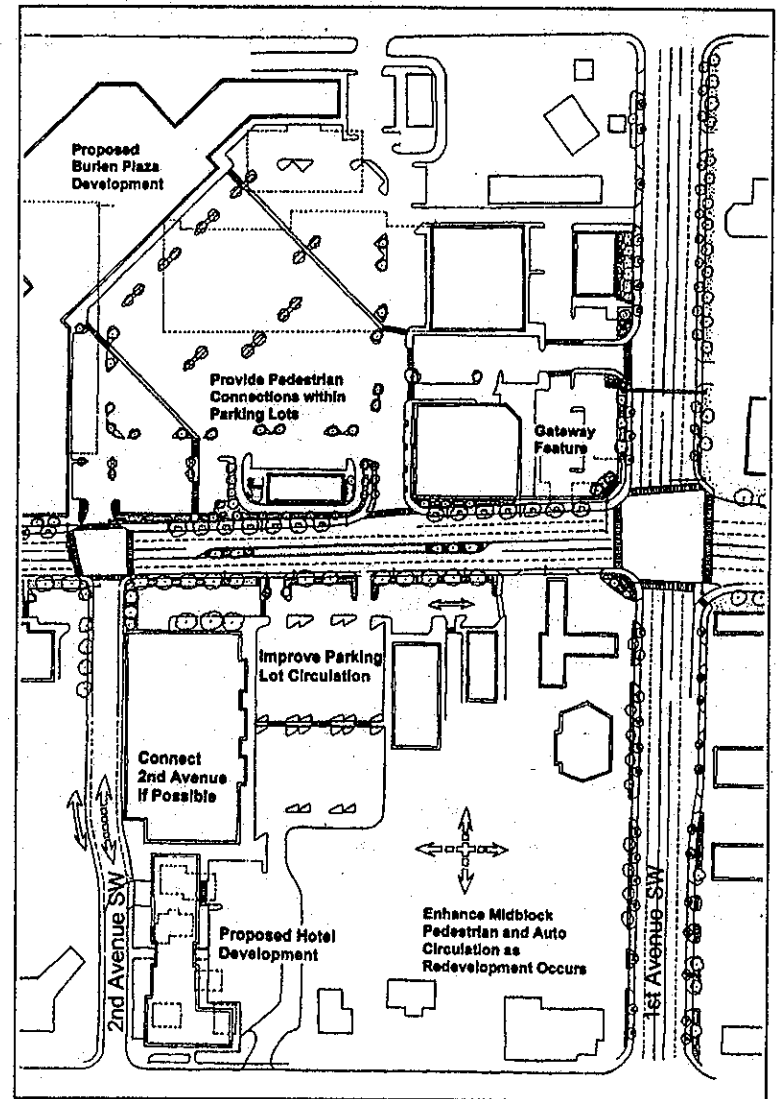
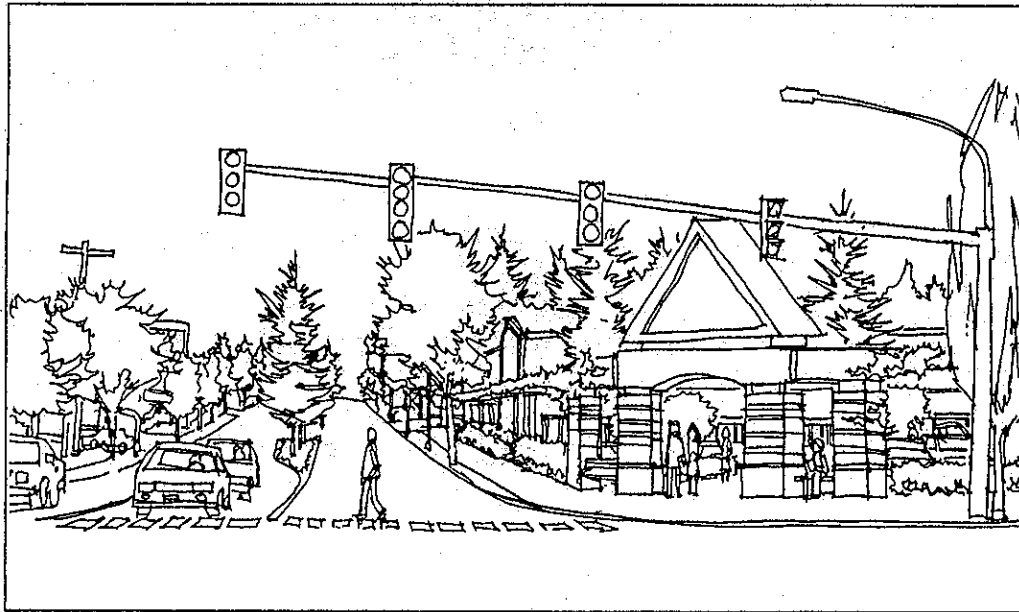


# Burien Gateway Design Report



Draft for Review by the Burien City Council, November, 1998.

# Burien Gateway Design Report



December 1998

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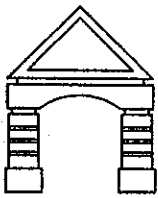
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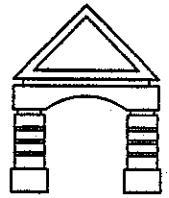


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# INTRODUCTION



The Northeast Gateway is roughly a 15 acre area centered on the 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. The Gateway is the main access point for vehicle traffic entering the city from state routes 509 and 518. The *Burien Comprehensive Plan* refers to the Northeast Gateway as a Special Enhancement Area calling for quality design and distinct landscaping identifying the entrance to the city. The intent of this plan is to provide recommendations for public improvements and private development that create a strong sense of identity for downtown and the city as a whole.

## History

Until incorporation in 1993, Burien and the Northeast Gateway area developed under King County's jurisdiction. Although parts of Burien developed in the early 1900s, the City and the Gateway area were developed predominately in the 1950s and 60s. Many of the buildings existing today, particularly along 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, date back to that era. Burien Plaza, on Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street, was developed in 1966. Following incorporation, the City adopted the *Burien Comprehensive Plan* in 1997, marking the beginning of a dramatically new direction for the Burien "area" — its citizens in control of their own destiny for the first time.

## Existing Conditions

A visitor's current first impression of Burien via the Northeast Gateway typically isn't a positive one. Approaching the city from the east on State Route 518, visitors first encounter a distracting series of large overhead highway signs, followed by the expansive 148<sup>th</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> intersection. The development pattern around this intersection is typical of suburban communities that developed rapidly in the post war era: strip commercial uses, large asphalt parking lots, limited or nonexistent pedestrian facilities, and very little landscaping. The result is an ambiguous environment devoid

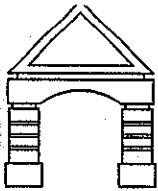
of identity or character. First Avenue South is a continuous auto-oriented commercial strip stretching from Seattle southward through Burien to Normandy Park and Des Moines. Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street is the primary access from State Route 518 into Burien's downtown and residential areas. Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street includes a variety of automobile-oriented commercial uses transitioning into residential areas. With major redevelopment plans submitted for Burien Plaza on the northwest corner of 148<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>, the city has the opportunity to influence the future direction in the design of the Northeast Gateway, and thus, the remainder of the city.

## Planning Process

Starting in the month of June, consultants and the project team held several meetings on the Northeast Gateway involving property and business owners, developers, city staff, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) officials, elected officials, and interested citizens. At the first public meeting in July, goals, objectives and the overall vision for the Northeast Gateway were developed. Based on the goals and objectives and discussions with developers, property owners, and public officials, the project team prepared a concept plan for the Northeast Gateway for presentation at a public meeting in September. These concepts were carried forward with acceptance at the Nov. 2, 1998, open house/City Council meeting.

## Related Plans

The implementation of this plan will be coordinated by the City with the recommended activities and projects of a number of closely related plans, including the 1998 Downtown Burien Economic Enhancement Strategy, the Southwest 152<sup>nd</sup> Street Design Study, and Pedestrian Connections and Street and Parking Lot Landscaping Plan.



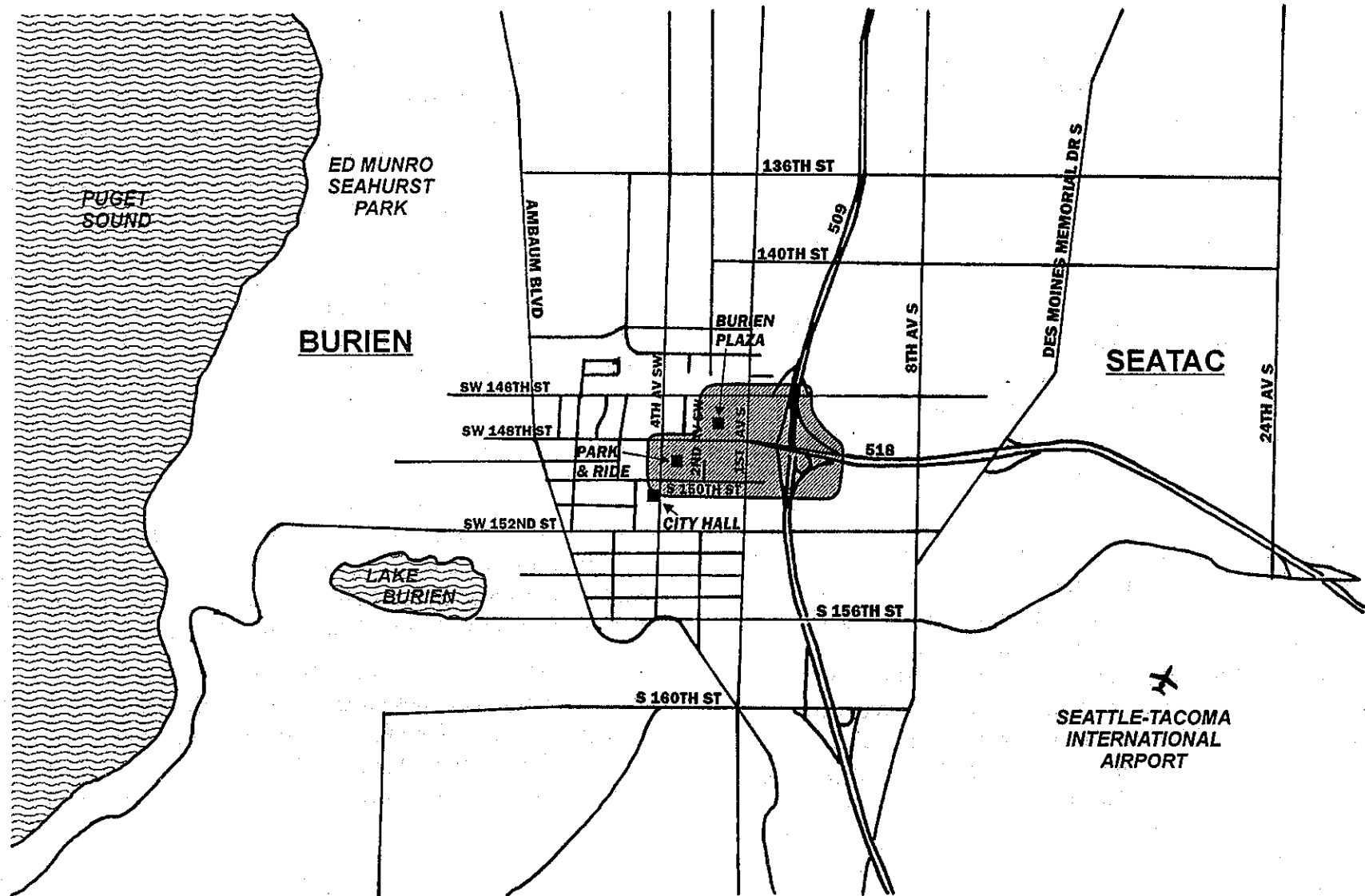
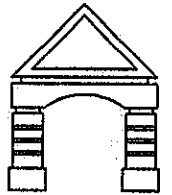
# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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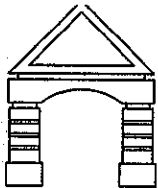
The following is a list of goals and objectives resulting from input at the July 14, 1998 workshop.

- Create a strong sense of identity for Burien.
- Recognize and enhance the excellent views to Mt. Rainier.
- Demand quality in new development.
- Be bold and forward thinking with regards to streetscape improvements and design (while retaining smaller scale).
- Portray an image of the city and sense of community consistent with the pride Burien residents have of their existing residential neighborhoods.
- Utilize the gateway as a welcome mat to Burien.
- Create larger gateways at 509 and 518 leading to a succession of smaller gateway elements towards downtown.
- The gateway should welcome people to Burien as well as thank them as they leave.
- Play off of the styles of the 50s and 60s on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue with a modern touch established through artwork, signage, banners, etc.
- Identify Burien with greenery, rather than large "hard" features currently found in the gateway area.
- Use street trees to soften the streetscape.
- Turn the highways into greenways (e.g. Olympia and I-90).
- Soften the buildings in the gateway area with plantings near the buildings.
- Minimize the impacts of the highways, bordering Burien.
- Create gateway elements to draw people from the freeway into the city center.
- Assist businesses and property owners in enhancing the overall image of the gateway area.
- Improve the architecture and maintenance of the buildings and businesses in the gateway area.
- Cater to business needs in a tasteful manner.
- Improve the facades of gateway area businesses.
- Provide amenities for the community that may add to the attraction of the gateway area.
- Create pedestrian friendly atmosphere on Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Create a system of pedestrian trails and pathways.
- Encourage more housing around the gateway area.
- Improve the quality of signage in the gateway area.
- Create sign standards that are unique to Burien and help outsiders identify the city or the gateway area.

# GATEWAY LOCATION







# NORTHEAST GATEWAY CONCEPT

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This plan was intended to establish design guidelines encouraging quality design reinforcing or creating a positive image for the Northeast Gateway and the city. During the first public meeting conducted in July, it became evident that a number of public-oriented improvements, combined with extensive coordination with the developers of the Burien Plaza on their redevelopment plans, would garner the most attention of this plan.

These public improvements primarily include street landscaping improvements such as creating a median on 148<sup>th</sup> Street with signature conifer trees that work to break up the expanse of concrete and asphalt within the area. Street landscaping improvements together with attractive redevelopment of Burien Plaza are certain to make substantial impacts on the quality of future development of the surrounding area.

In refining the actions of this plan, it was critical to acknowledge the various functions of 148<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, and their relationship with adjacent areas or other parts of the city and region. Most importantly, the freeway approach and the intersection of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South and Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street function as the principle gateway into the downtown area, and for that matter, all of Burien. The plan recommends City coordination with WSDOT on improving the landscaping along the highway adjacent to Burien and cleaning up the chaotic and intrusive overhead highway signs (*see Appendix for more details on specific highway sign improvements*). It also recommends working with Burien Plaza developers to create a major gateway feature that is integrated into Burien Plaza, and sets the tone for other improvements.

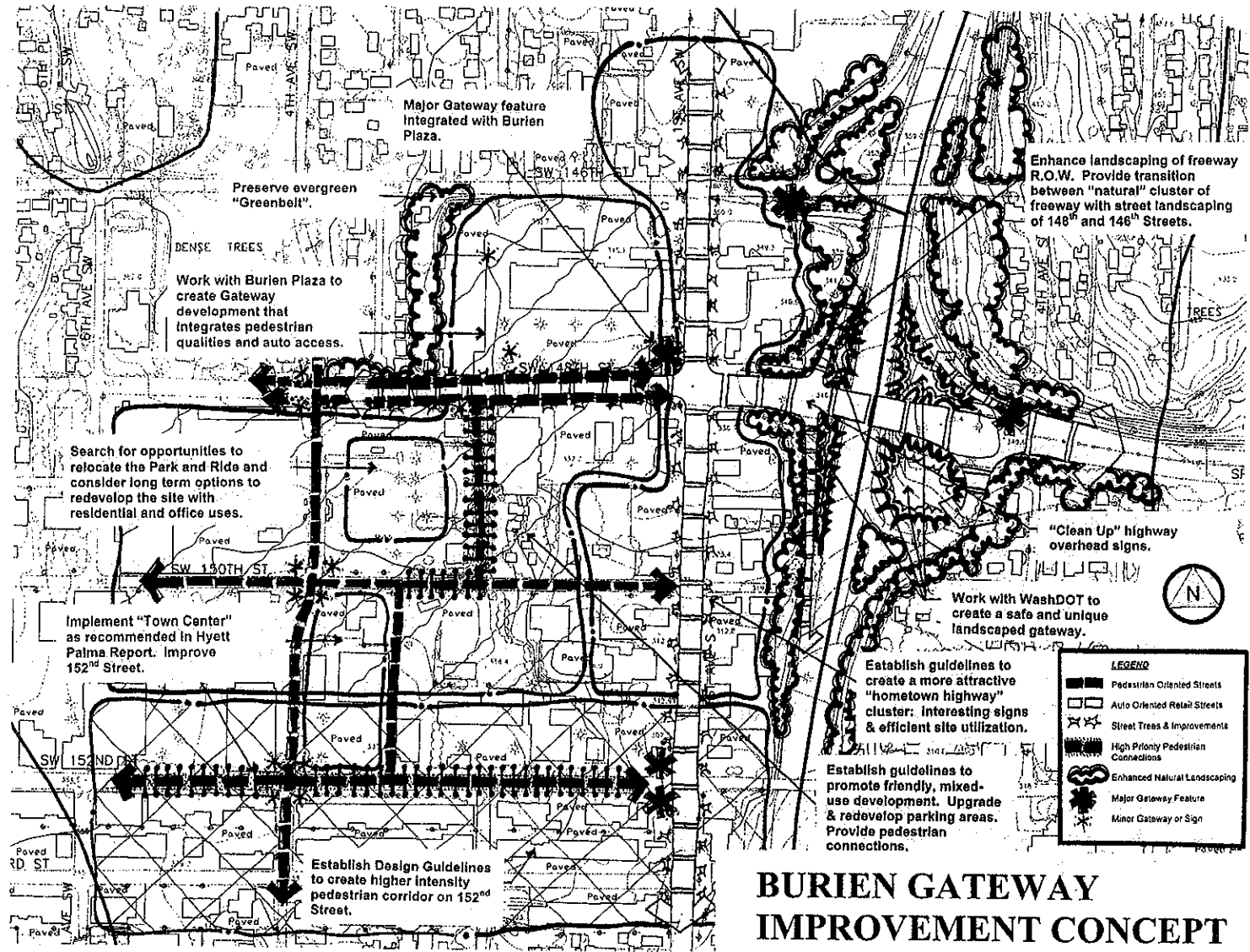
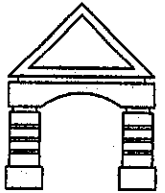
The Northeast Gateway's function in relation to downtown is critical — most people need to travel through this area to get to downtown. Thus, providing an attractive transition from the automobile-oriented character of 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue toward the pedestrian domain of downtown is important. Considering the large size of the blocks and decades of uncoordinated development in the area, midblock pedestrian connections need to be established. Conversely, the plan recommends providing guidelines and measures to promote pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development, particularly on Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street and toward downtown. Upgrading and redeveloping the area's abundant parking areas will be important.

First Avenue South functions as one of the city's only through roads and subsequently attracts various automobile-oriented service and complementary uses. While recognizing its existing function, the plan proposes actions aimed at improving the visual appearance of this arterial and making a statement of quality and identity. It encourages the utilization of creative and interesting signs playing off of the liveliness of the 1950s and 60s.

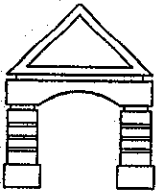
Consider options for the Park-and-Ride lot, such as redesigning the site to integrate it more with its surroundings or relocating the parking lot portion of the Park-and-Ride, thus providing more land available for redevelopment. Encourage the development of hotels and/or mixed uses that include housing, particularly on the south side of 148<sup>th</sup> Street.

Finally, implement the "Town Center" concept as recommended in the recent Downtown Burien Economic Enhancement Strategy report prepared by Hyett Palma.





## BURIEN GATEWAY IMPROVEMENT CONCEPT



# LANDSCAPE CONCEPT

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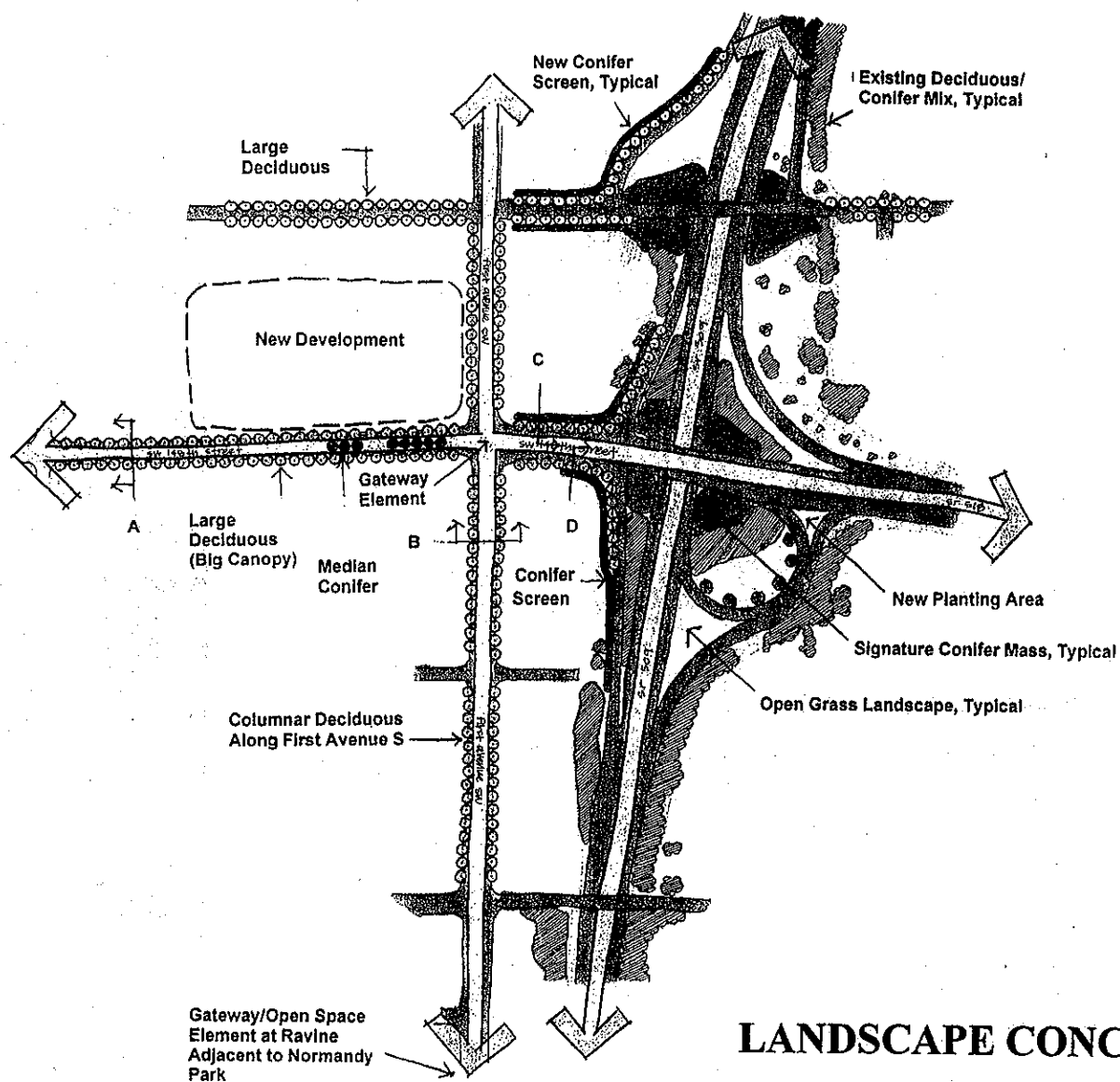
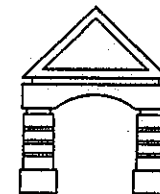
The overall Northeast Gateway landscape concept focuses on softening the environment through a simplistic design scheme that seeks to set a tone of continuity in a somewhat chaotic environment. Upon entering Burien, motorists will encounter a series of gateways progressing from naturalistic and informal features along the freeway to more formalized landscaping features along the streets. The design also seeks to provide consistent layers of colors and textures to stimulate interest, particularly involving the changing of the seasons. A major goal of developers, city officials, and property owners was to provide year-round greenery acknowledging Burien's location within the Puget Sound.

Highway landscaping beginning just to the east of the 509/518 interchange seeks to channel the motorist's view down the corridor while providing subtle clues as to the sense of arrival to a "place." This will be accomplished through masses of signature conifers on the four corners surrounding the interchange, providing a dramatic natural gateway. This design is repeated on a smaller scale at the 509/146<sup>th</sup> Street SW interchange. A consistent row of tall, narrow conifers is proposed beyond the street trees along the off ramps to screen the back side of the businesses along First Avenue from view.

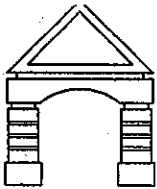
Formalization in the landscaping design begins at the approach toward 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue as street trees spill from 148<sup>th</sup> (and 146<sup>th</sup>) out onto the sides of the off ramps.

The plan for 148<sup>th</sup> Street includes a mixture of conifers and deciduous trees. The popularity of the existing large mass of conifers directly to the west of Burien Plaza provides the inspiration to use evergreens in the design of 148<sup>th</sup> Street's landscaping plan. Thus, the development of a street median with conifers plays an important role in making a powerful statement for the city while reducing the apparent width of the six-lane street. The plan calls for deciduous trees with large canopies along the sidewalks to channel the views down the corridor and provide continuity. More informal plantings are suggested on private property to allow for individual identity for the developments and add visual interest and a variety of color.

On First Avenue South, columnar deciduous trees are recommended along the sidewalks. The intent is to soften the streetscape while allowing for the visibility of businesses and signage along the avenue. Columnar trees are more appropriate given the location of power lines inside of the sidewalk. Similar to 148<sup>th</sup> Street, the plan suggested more informal street trees inside of the sidewalks. The power poles, however, will limit the vertical size of any trees to be planted on the development side of the sidewalks.



## LANDSCAPE CONCEPT



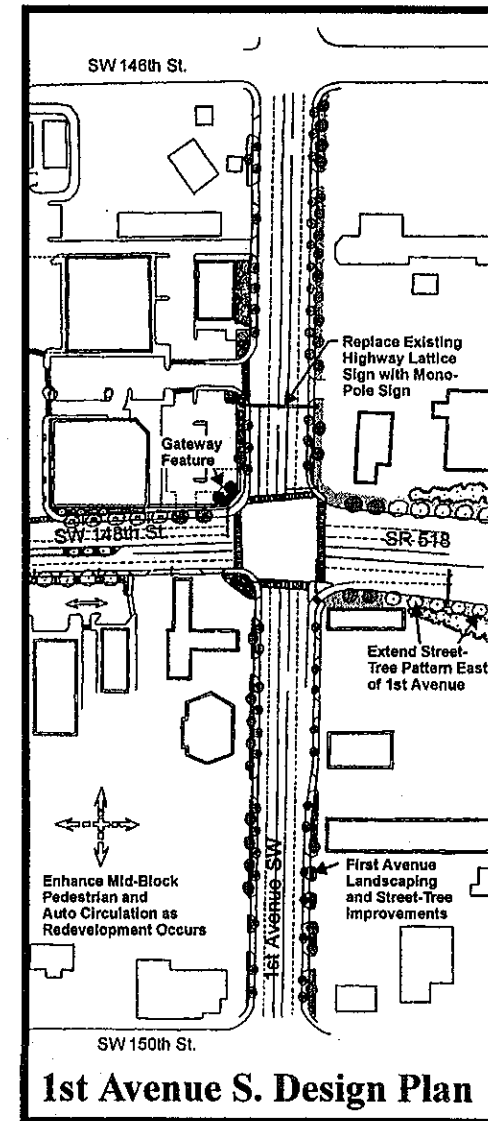
# FIRST AVENUE SOUTH PLAN

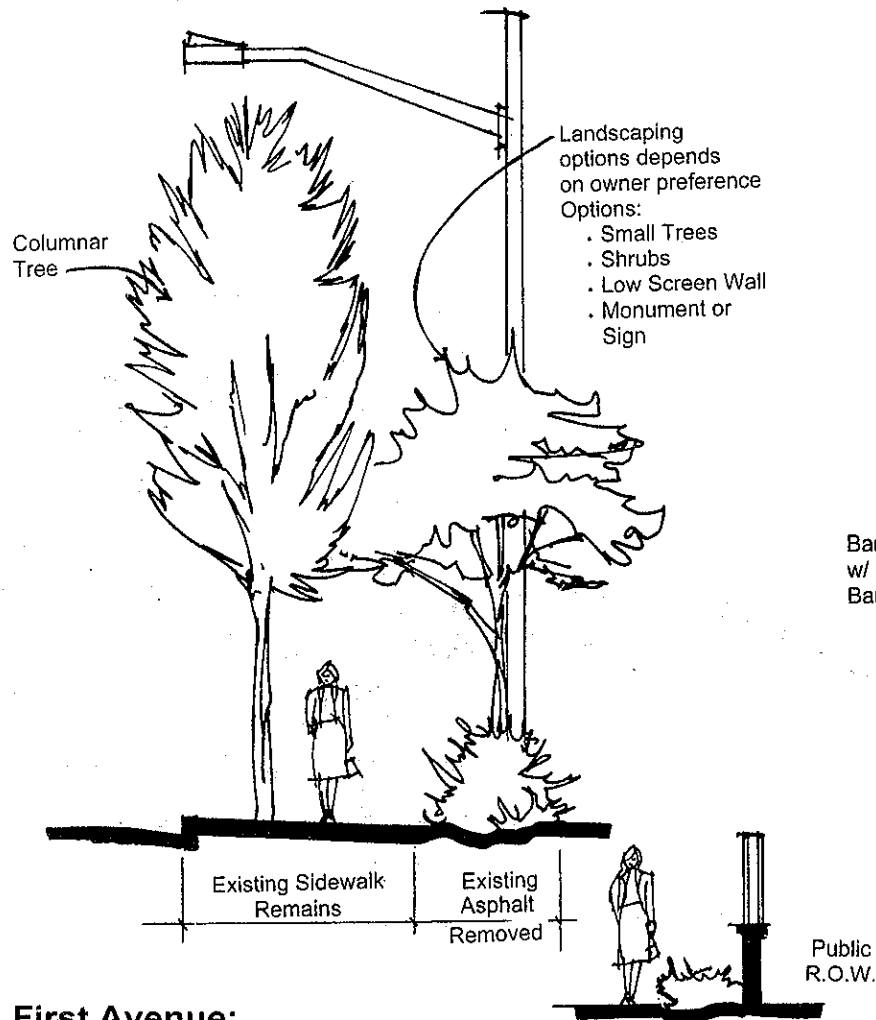
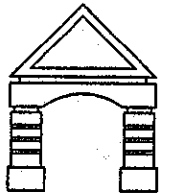
Until nearby SR 509 was built, First Avenue South served as one of South King County's major north-south transportation corridors. First Avenue South still functions as a regional transportation corridor, but on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, the pre-SR509 commercial strip character, with its collection of automobile-oriented service uses, remains. Like numerous other commercial strips developing around the country during the postwar era, First Avenue South developed with almost no design guidance and few amenities such as sidewalks (the sidewalks were only recently installed), landscaping, and street trees. The result is an ambiguous environment devoid of identity or character.

The plan's strategy is to retain its functional automobile-orientation, while improving the visual appearance of the street. Central to the plan are the landscaping improvements. Two options for street improvements were developed. Both call for street trees and landscaping along the sidewalks. The preferred alternative involves the placement of columnar trees on the streetside of the sidewalks (*the details of these options are discussed on the following pages*).

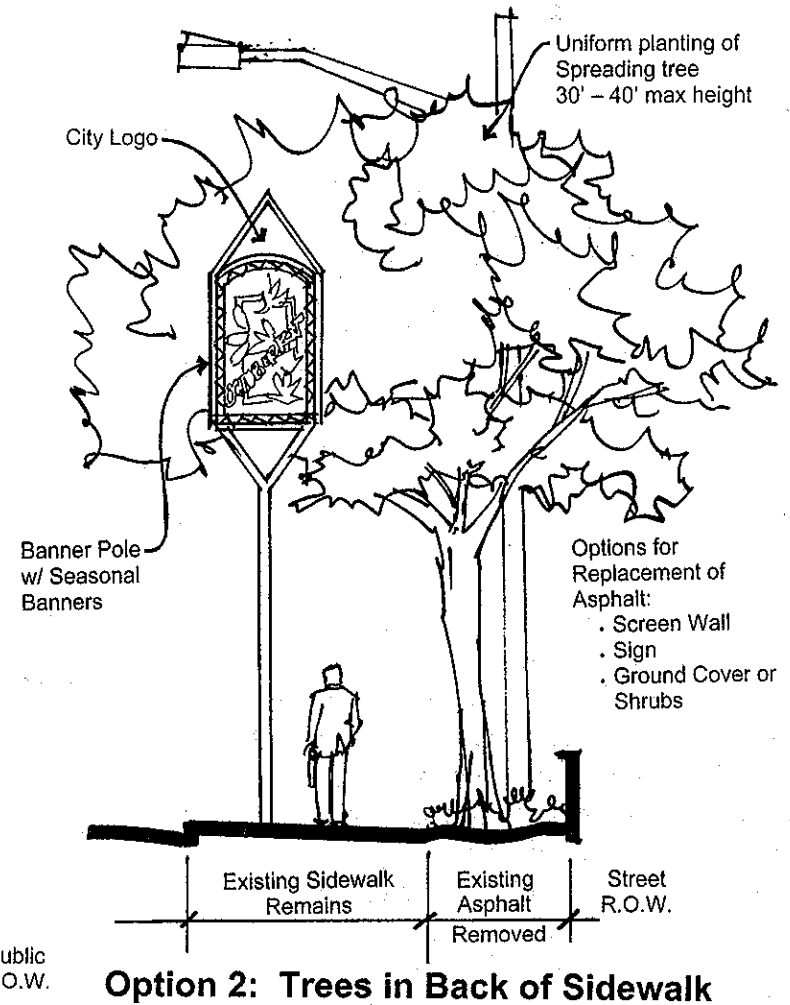
Other activities recommended by the plan include:

- New signage should incorporate playful and interesting styles of the 50s and 60s (*revisions to the sign ordinance*).
- Limit curb cuts in new development or redevelopment; combine existing curb cuts, where possible.
- Provide pedestrian amenities such as connections between businesses; from sidewalks to business entries.
- Replace existing lattice highway sign north of the 148<sup>th</sup> Street intersection with a monotube pole (*see photograph on pg. 14*).
- Varied setbacks (*allow, but not require streetfront buildings*).

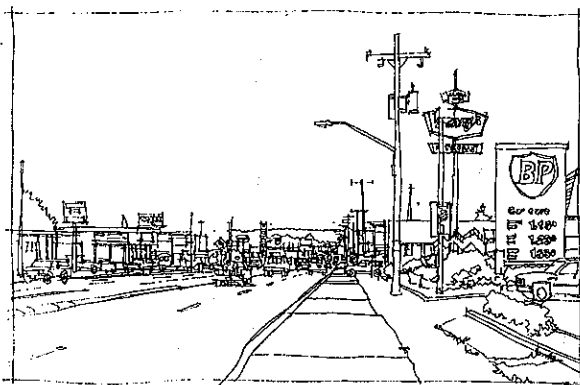




**First Avenue:  
Option 1: Trees Near Curb Line**



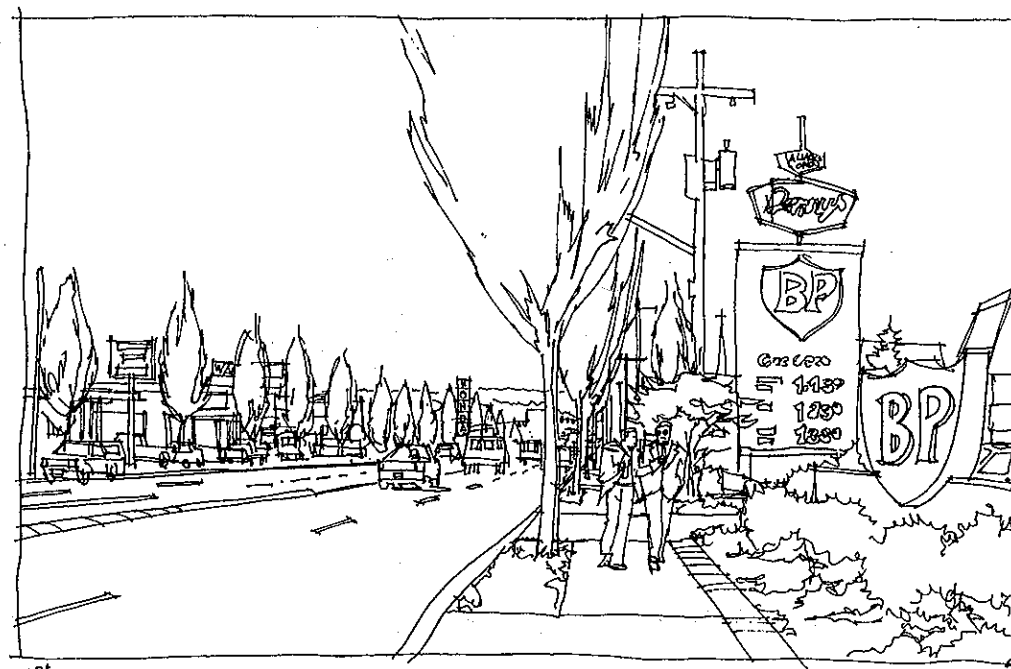
**Option 2: Trees in Back of Sidewalk**



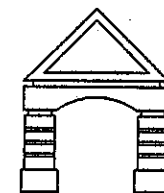
1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW - Looking South  
Existing Conditions

## Alternative A

The preferred alternative calls for the placement of columnar deciduous trees on the street side of the existing sidewalks on both sides of the street. Although there is limited space for individual planting boxes, such trees between the sidewalk and the street make a strong visual statement and improve the environment for pedestrians. These trees can be trimmed up in a manner to allow good visibility of adjacent businesses and signage. Where feasible, the plan recommends landscaping the paved drainage area beyond (development side) the sidewalk. The landscaping options along this strip should depend on owner preference, with options including small trees, shrubs, low screen wall, and/or monument sign.



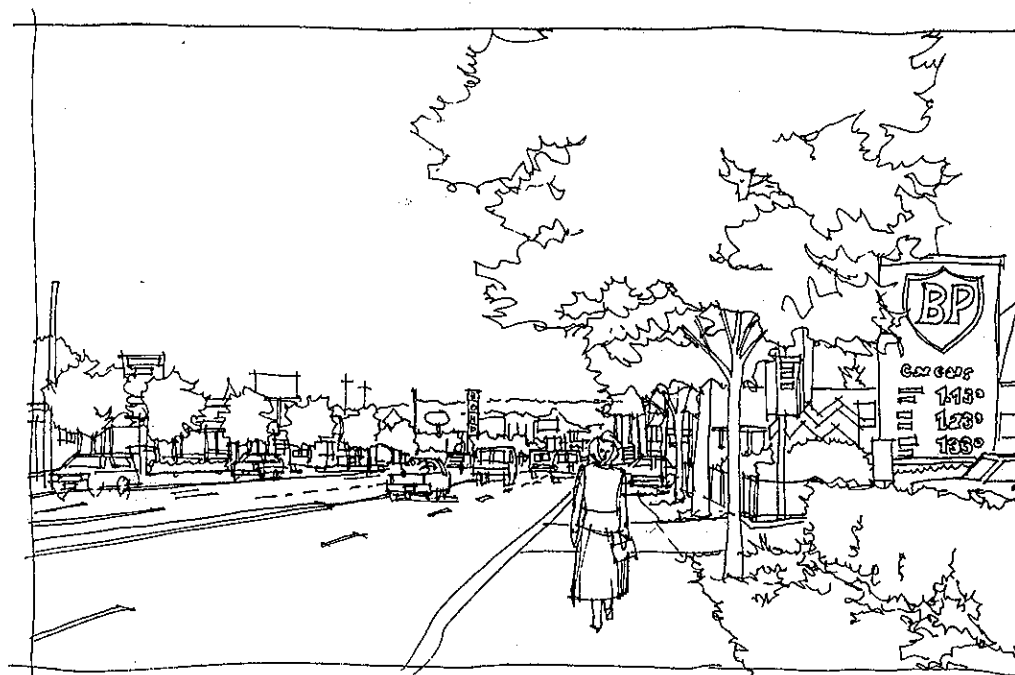
1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW - Looking South  
Alternate A: Columnar Trees Near Curb



## Alternative B

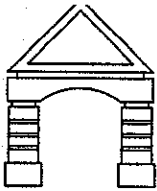
If the placement of street trees along the street edge is not feasible due to space limitations, the plan recommends a uniform row of street trees on the outside (development side) edge of the sidewalk. Due to overhead power lines, the heights of trees here will need to be limited to a maximum of 30-40 feet. Spreading trees are therefore recommended to provide eventual cover over the sidewalks and make a strong visual statement. Other options for the replacement of asphalt outside the existing sidewalks include a screen wall, ground cover, shrubs, and signage. Along the street edge, banner poles with seasonal banners can be placed to provide a sense of identity.

NOTE: To implement either alternative, special care will need to be given to deal with the drainage issue. Unlike most streets with curbs and gutters, the runoff on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South typically drains across the sidewalks to the asphalt area under the power lines.



1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW - Looking South  
Alternate B: Spreading Trees at Back of Sidewalk



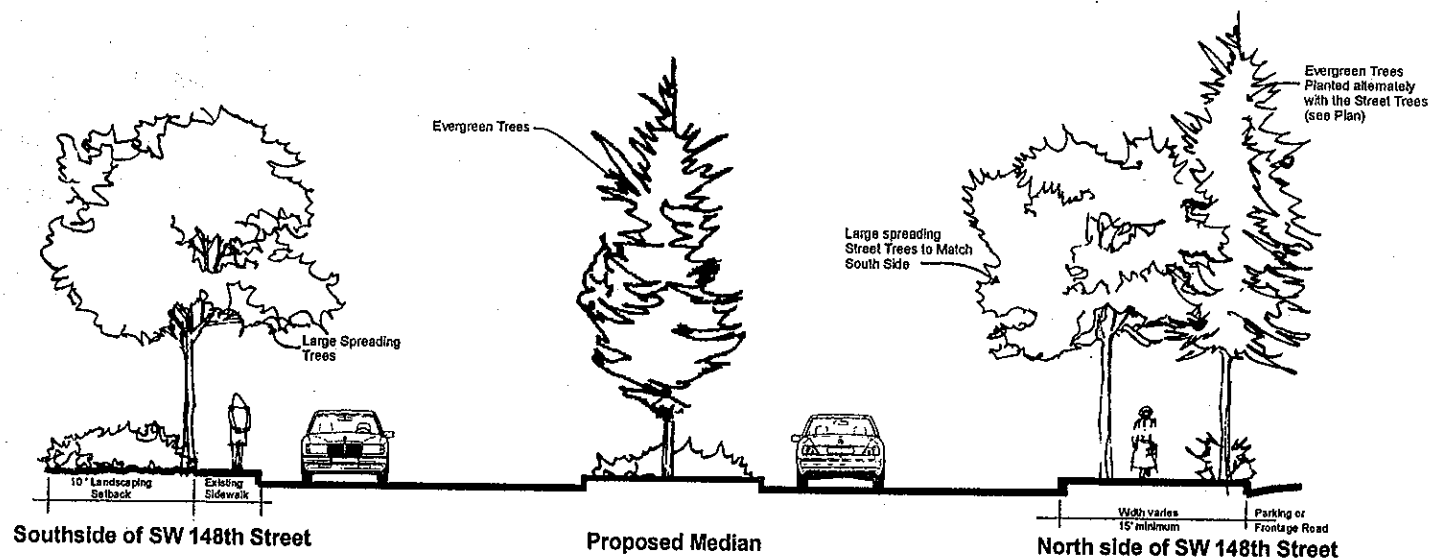


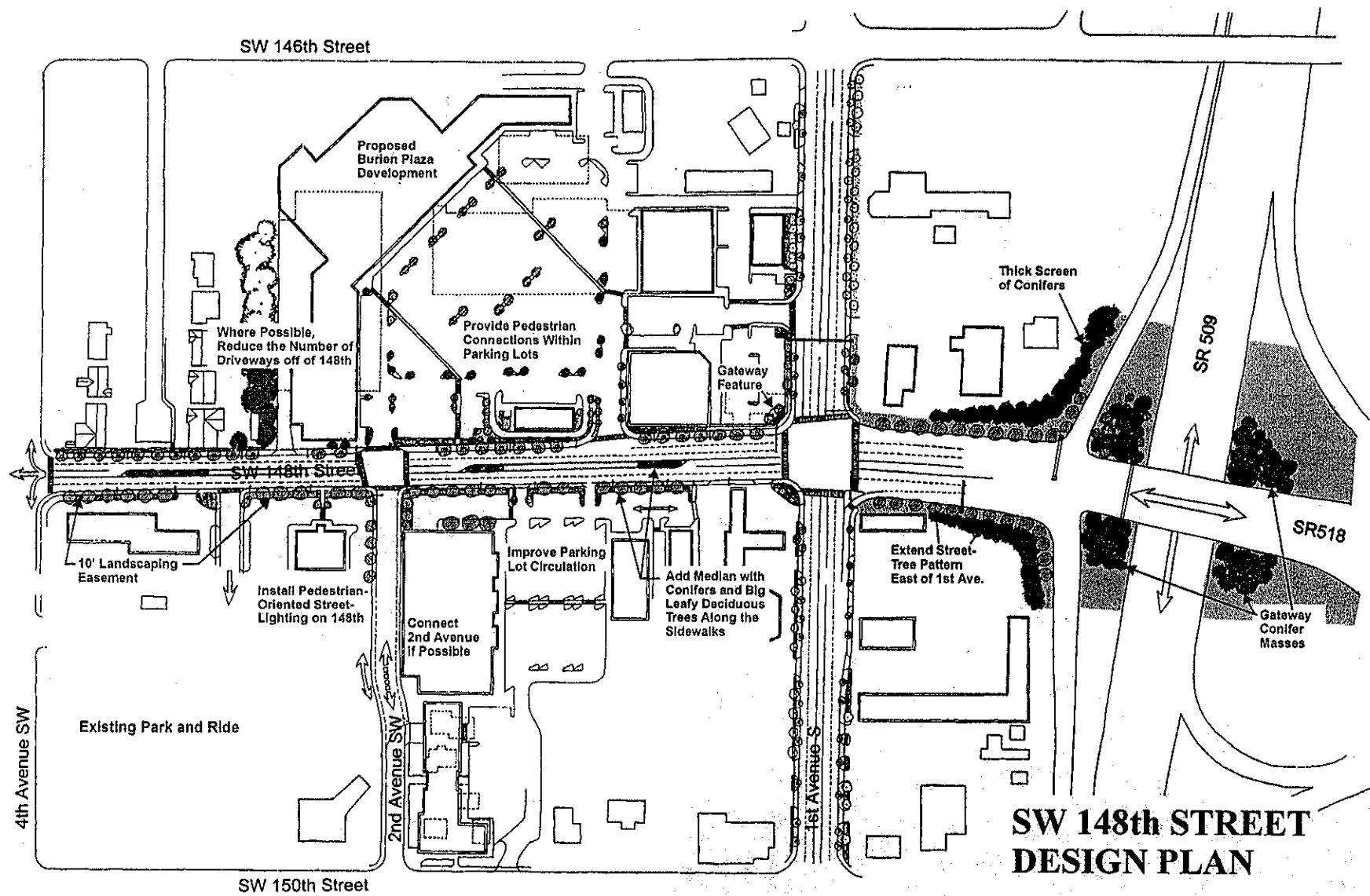
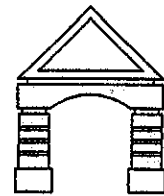
# SW 148th STREET PLAN

Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street is one of the primary roads to access downtown and Burien's residential areas. This road is characterized by ambiguous and disconnected development, large asphalt parking lots, and distracting signage. The proposed redevelopment of Burien Plaza provides a tremendous opportunity to improve the visual appearance and pedestrian environment of the gateway area — and set a positive tone for future gateway area improvements. Plan recommendations focus on creating a vibrant and attractive gateway area with a mix of uses and good pedestrian connections.

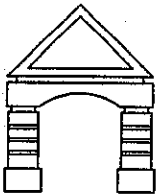
## Recommendations:

- Negotiate site improvements with Burien Plaza developers.
- Provide landscaped median and street trees (*see section drawing below*).
- Obtain a 10 foot landscaping easement on the south side of 148<sup>th</sup> Street, between 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Promote informal plantings within developments and parking lots.
- Encourage streetfront development/orientation.
- Reduce the size of allowable signs.
- Improve pedestrian connections between developments and between sidewalks and business entrances.





## SW 148th STREET DESIGN PLAN



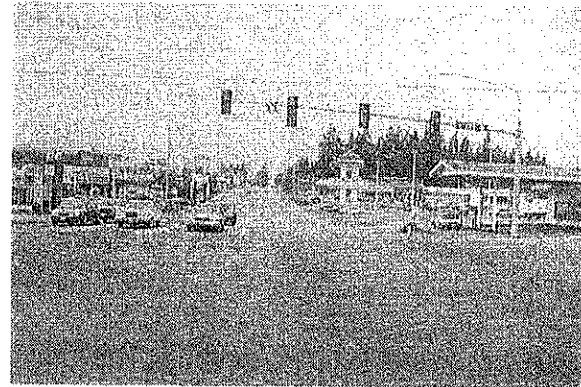
# GATEWAY ENTRY FEATURES

Some of the first things people see as they enter Burien from Highway 518 are a series of large and intrusive overhead lattice highway signs, an expansive asphalt intersection, and an abandoned gas station. The gas station site on the northwest corner of Southwest 148<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue South is particularly visible since most motorists are required to stop at the stoplight and look in its general direction. With the approaching redevelopment of this gas station site and Burien Plaza, the opportunity exists to provide a welcoming entryway feature at this site.



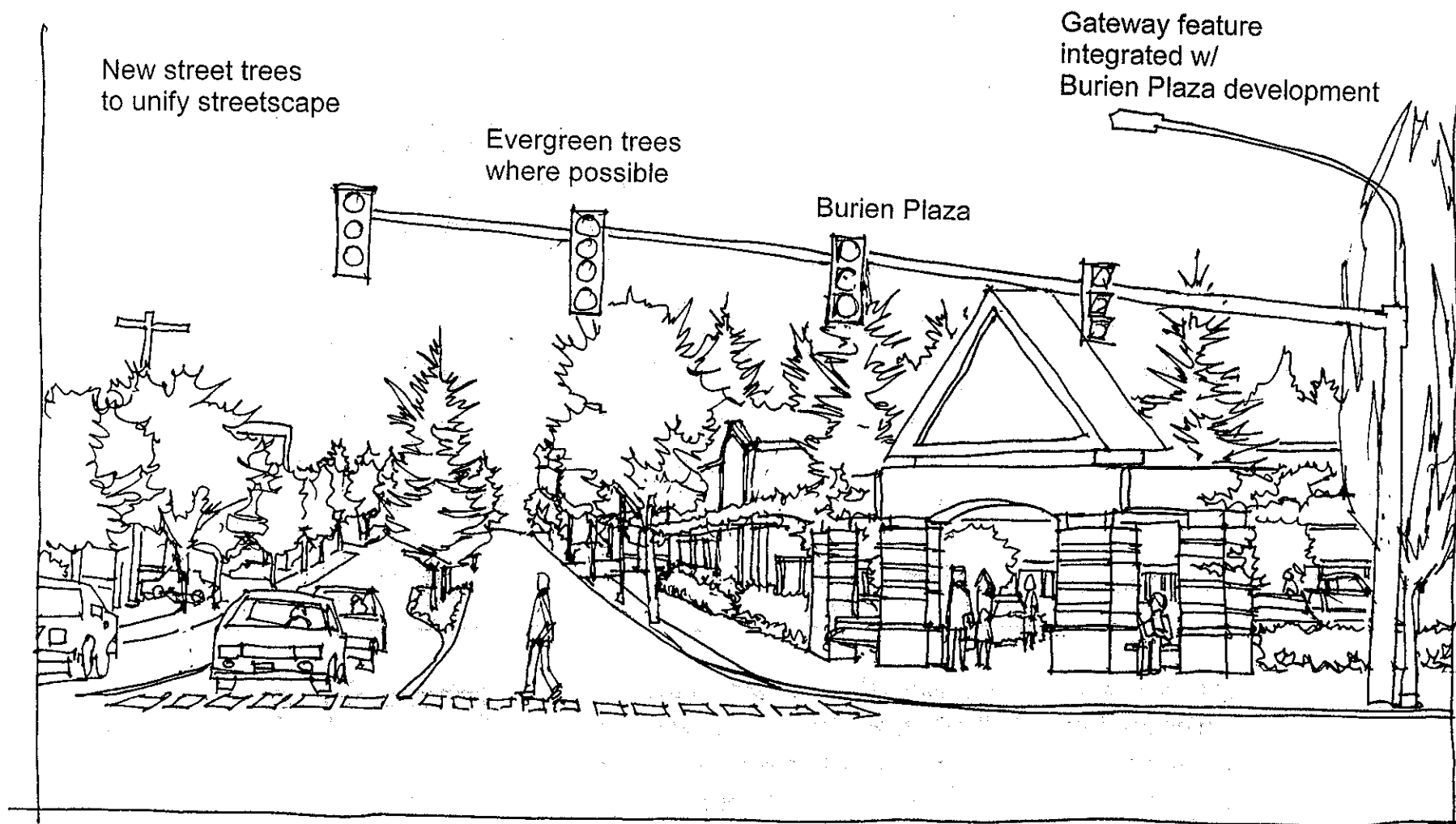
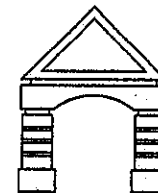
The proposed feature includes borrowed elements such as the triangle used in the city's logo and an arch similar to Lake Burien School's arch.

The plan also recommends the replacement of the highway lattice signs with monotube poles, which are much less intrusive.

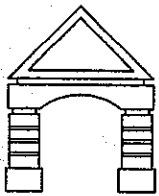


Existing Conditions: Looking west down SW 148<sup>th</sup> Street from 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue S.

Replace existing lattice highway signs with the less obtrusive monopole sign, such as this one in Bellevue.



**SW 148<sup>th</sup> Street Gateway – Looking West**



# BURIEN SIGNATURE ELEMENTS

Gateway element – capital.  
Also could be roof, entry, or  
sign support in other  
situations.

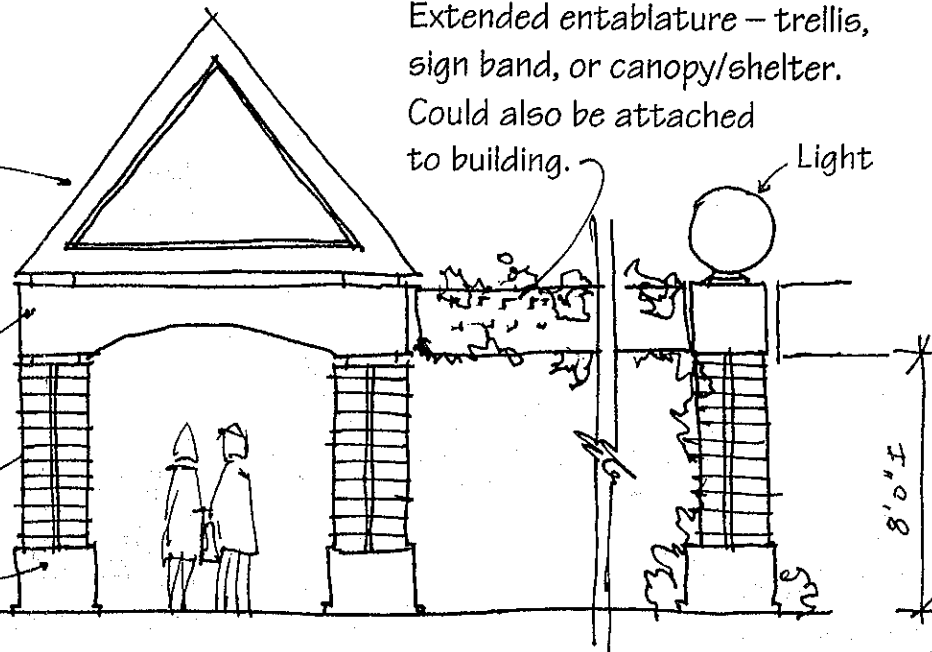
Entablature – arched for  
entry. Also unifying  
horizontal band for  
signs, trellises, etc.

Columns – masonry shown.

Bases – important unifying  
elements.

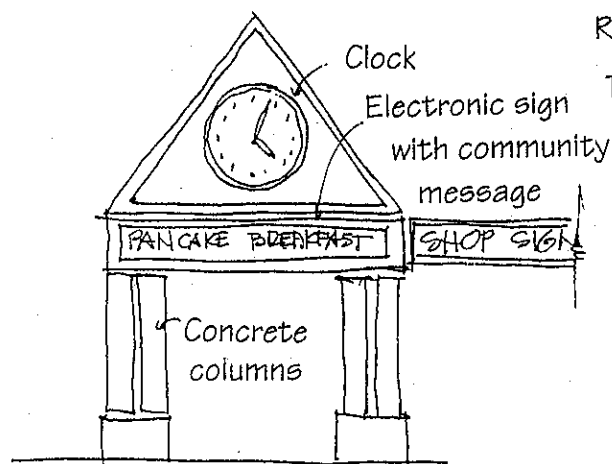
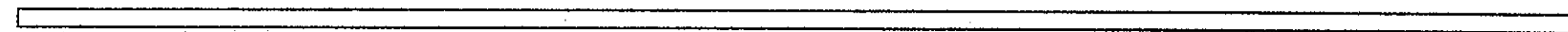
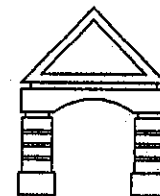
Extended entablature – trellis,  
sign band, or canopy/shelter.  
Could also be attached  
to building.

Light

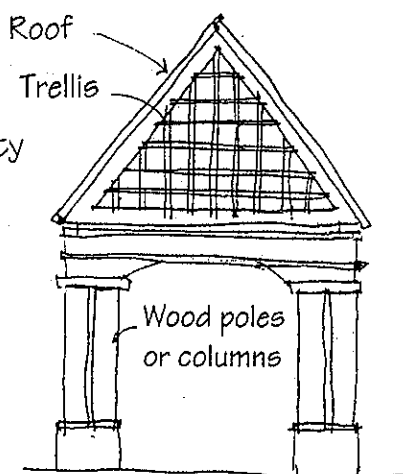


Suggested system of elements ("Kit of Parts") that  
could be used at 1<sup>st</sup>/148<sup>th</sup> intersection but also extended  
to other parts of downtown. The common forms will set  
a unifying character but allow for a variety of sizes,  
materials, and uses. (See variations.)

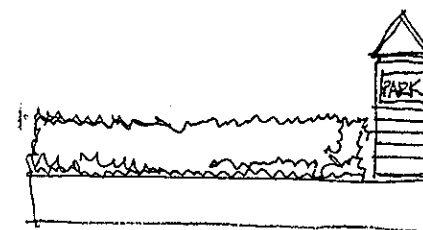
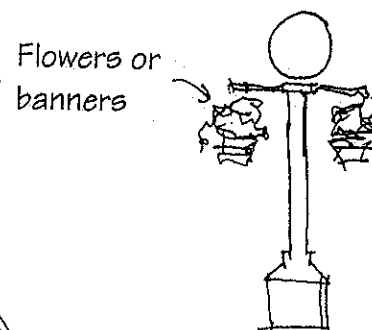
— John Owen/MAKERS 9/24/98



Variations of Signature Elements



Wooden park structure or gazebo

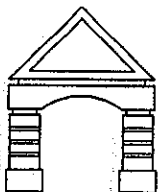


Parking lot screening

Use of Signature Elements for Other Purposes



Suggestions for Use of Signature Elements in Signs



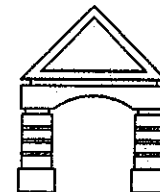
# IMPLEMENTATION

The principal recommendations to implement the plan are summarized below. The body of the report describes the specific actions in more detail. Activities are listed in order of importance within each element (Landscaping, Land Use, etc).

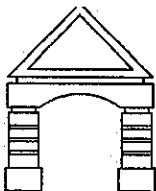
ACTIVITY			PARTICIPANTS					COMMENTS
			Community	City	State	Developer	Other	
APPROX. TIME FAME								
Gateway Elements								
G-1	Gateway feature at 1 <sup>st</sup> and 148 <sup>th</sup> .	1999	○	○		●		Continue leveraging gateway feature improvements with developer.
G-2	Replacement of highway lattice signs with monopolies (on 1 <sup>st</sup> , north of 148 <sup>th</sup> and on SR518 on approach to 1 <sup>st</sup> ).		○	○	●			Lobby State (WSDOT) to replace intrusive signs.
Burien Plaza								
BP-1	Leverage on and off-site improvements with Burien Plaza developers such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entryway feature</li><li>• Signage</li><li>• Landscaping</li><li>• Vehicular access</li><li>• Pedestrian access</li><li>• Building design</li></ul>	Ongoing		●		●		

- ◆ Possible lead participant
- Lead participant
- Supporting participant



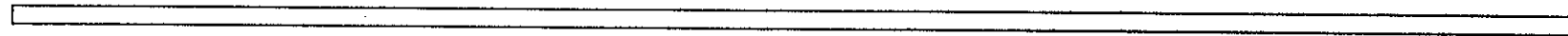
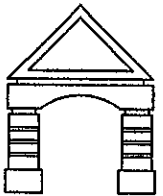


			PARTICIPANTS						
ACTIVITY			APPROX. TIME FAME	Community	City	State	Developer	Other	COMMENTS
Street and Landscaping Improvements									
L-1	Landscaped median on 148 <sup>th</sup>	1999-2000		●			◆		Phase I of public improvements.
L-2	Obtain a 10' landscaping easement on the south side of 148 <sup>th</sup> , between 1 <sup>st</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> .	1999-2000		●				○	Phase I of public improvements. Work with property owners.
L-3	Landscaping, including street trees on 148 <sup>th</sup> .	1999-2000		●			◆		Phase I of public improvements. Leverage with property owners.
L-4	Street lights on 148 <sup>th</sup> .	1999-2000	○	●				○	Phase I of public improvements.
L-5	Preserve the tall row of conifers west of Burien Plaza.	Ongoing	○	○				●	
L-5	Landscaping, including street trees on 1 <sup>st</sup> .			●			○		Phase I of public improvements.
L-6	Banner poles on 1 <sup>st</sup> .		○	●					Phase II of public improvements.
L-7	Highway landscaping adjacent to the 509/518 interchange.		○	○	●				Lobby State (WSDOT) for landscaping improvements.
L-8	Highway landscaping adjacent to 509/146 <sup>th</sup> Street bridge and offramp.		○	○	●				Lobby State (WSDOT) for landscaping improvements.
L-9	Connect 2 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue between 148 <sup>th</sup> and 150 <sup>th</sup> .			◆			◆		Leverage improvements with developers of adjacent property. Consider working 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave. connection into future redevelopment plans for park-and-ride lot.



ACTIVITY		APPROX. TIME FAME	PARTICIPANTS					COMMENTS
			Community	City	State	Developer	Other	
◆ Possible lead participant ● Lead participant ○ Supporting participant								
Private Development								
PD-1	Encourage streetfront development and orientation on 148 <sup>th</sup> .			●		○		Incorporate in ongoing code revisions.
PD-2	Improve pedestrian connections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Midblock</li><li>• Between businesses</li><li>• Between sidewalks and businesses</li><li>• Through parking lots.</li></ul>	Ongoing		●		○		Incorporate in ongoing code revisions.
PD-3	Revise sign code: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce the size of allowable signs, particularly along 148<sup>th</sup>.</li><li>• Encourage the placement of ground or monument signs for businesses along the south side of 148<sup>th</sup> Street in the 10' landscaping easement.</li><li>• Encourage the utilization of creative and interesting signs on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, that play off of the liveliness of the 1950s and 60s.</li></ul>	Ongoing		●				Incorporate in ongoing code revisions.
PD-4	Encourage the development of hotels and/or mixed uses that include housing, particularly in the block bounded by 148 <sup>th</sup> , 1 <sup>st</sup> , 150 <sup>th</sup> , and 4 <sup>th</sup> .	Ongoing		●				Incorporate in ongoing code revisions.
PD-5	Provide flexibility on allowable heights in the gateway area.	Ongoing		●				Incorporate in ongoing code revisions.
PD-6	Upgrade and/or redevelop parking lots	Ongoing	○	○		●		

- ◆ Possible lead participant
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ACTIVITY		APPROX. TIME FAME	PARTICIPANTS					COMMENTS
			Community	City	State	Developer	Other	
◆ Possible lead participant ● Lead participant ○ Supporting participant								
Civic/Public Facilities								
C-1	Consider options for the Park and Ride lot such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improving access and integrating the site more with its surroundings.</li><li>Relocating the Park and Ride to another location while retaining the transit facility function.</li></ul>		○	◆		○	◆	Coordinate with King County Metro on improvement plans for park-and-ride lot. Solicit public participation on any redevelopment plan.
C-2	Implement the “Town Center” concept.		○	●		○		Inventory constraints and opportunities of potential sites. Coordinate with applicable property owners. Solicit public participation.

City of Burien

**MAKERS** architecture and urban design

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