



North Highline Design Standards examples

The North Highline Design Standards are regulations set by King County to promote positive, community-oriented development in the North Highline area. They were approved by the County Council and Executive in 2023 as [KCC 21A.60](#). This document is a supplement to the North Highline Design Standards Bulletin and is intended to provide examples and suggestions in meeting the North Highline Design Standards code requirements.

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Checklist of requirements in KCC 21A.60.030

The following things are required for a preapplication conference specific to these design standards.

- Project narrative (KCC 21A.60.030.A.2)
- Context analysis (KCC 21A.60.030.A.3)
- Site plan with a list of required content (KCC 21A.60.030.A.4)
- Building plan that includes architectural intent and building designs (KCC 21A.60.030A.5)
- Web-based community input survey (KCC 21A.60.030.B.1)

Here are some examples of items that meet these requirements.

- A project narrative shown within a web-based community input survey
- A context analysis example
- A table that can be used to help with calculating GreenCenter scores for vegetation requirements
- Sample photos of features appreciated by community members during project engagement

Example – Web-based community input survey with narrative

KCC 21.60.030 requires a web-based survey that collects community input, in addition to a public meeting and mailings to both notify interested parties and solicit feedback. The intent of the survey is to both inform the public and collect their thoughts on how site improvements can improve their communities. This should be a simple web page that provides information on the project and collects community feedback. The following screenshots show an example that was created using Google Forms.



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Location:

- In White Center (unincorporated King County), one of the most ethnically- and income-diverse neighborhoods in Washington, and an area chronically underserved and under-resourced due to ineligibility for city investments.
- Site of the former public health center at 10821 8th Ave SW in White Center, next to Dick Thurnau Memorial Park.
- Near schools, public transit, and retail services in the community walking distance to Evergreen H.S., Cascade Middle School and Mt. View Elementary.

Project Schedule:

Community engagement, design, and permitting are ongoing through 2022. The project secured a major funding award from King County in 2021 and continues to seek additional funds from state and private sources in 2022, with ground-breaking expected in early 2023.

Project Information:

- Document Link [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](#)
- Video Recording [xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](#)

Proposal



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Comment to the project: *

Your answer

Contact Information (optional)

Your answer

Submit

Clear form

Example – Context analysis (KCC 21A.60.030.A.3)

A context analysis documents an understanding of the urban form and neighborhood character of the project site. This analysis shall include:

- Discussion of neighborhood demographics
- Inventory of historic structures, local businesses, artwork, landmarks, and culturally significant elements within 500 feet of the site
- An analysis of the current uses within five hundred feet of the site, including building footprints, existing businesses, private and public lands, and public facilities
- Location and dimensions of existing rights-of-way, including streets, sidewalks, and parking areas. Landscape features and stormwater drainage elements should also be included.
- Identification of street type and frontage type as required by KCC 21A.60.040

Analysis of current uses example

This example project is at 10708 16th Avenue SW. The site is bounded by 16th Avenue SW and SW 107th Street. The first of these two streets is the main street leading to downtown White Center, and the second leads to the White Center Library and Mount View Elementary School. The site is also close to other local destinations such as the Steve Cox Memorial Park, Saar's Super Saver Foods, Castillos Supermarkets, and Centro Familiar Cristiano Seattle (see map on next page).

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- Major Arterials
- ▨ Bus Route
- ⊞ Bus Stops
- ▨ Pedestrians Crossings
- Local Destinations/Public Facilities
- ▨ Sidewalks

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Example – Analysis of culturally significant elements

White Center’s cultural diversity is reflected in its architectural forms, signage, plantings, and building colors. Stores, local churches, and two local ethnic supermarkets (#2 below) are decorated with murals that add to the sense of place. Many buildings are painted in bright colors (#s 4 and 5 below), and the signature Mexican restaurant (#1 below) features tropical plants that reinforce its cultural identity. All of these features can serve as references for new projects.



● Local Destinations/Public Facilities ● Arts/Cultural Expressions

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Example – demographics discussion

White Center is a culturally diverse community. The following fact sheet presents a demographic profile of the area, broken down by population and households, providing a cultural context for the design of the project.

15,995
People
Total Population
White Center, WA

50%
of total population
Males

50%
of total population
Females

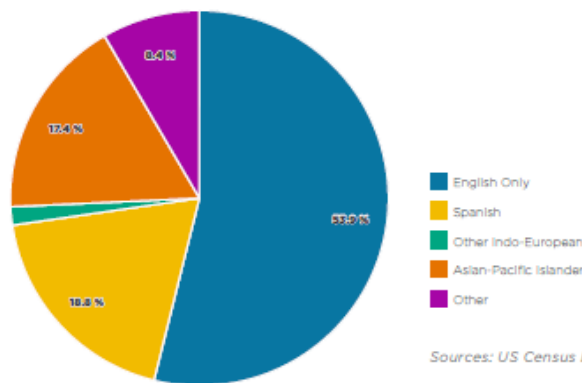
35.6
Years Old
Median Age

22%
Population Under Age 18
Children

12%
Population Age 65 and Over
Seniors

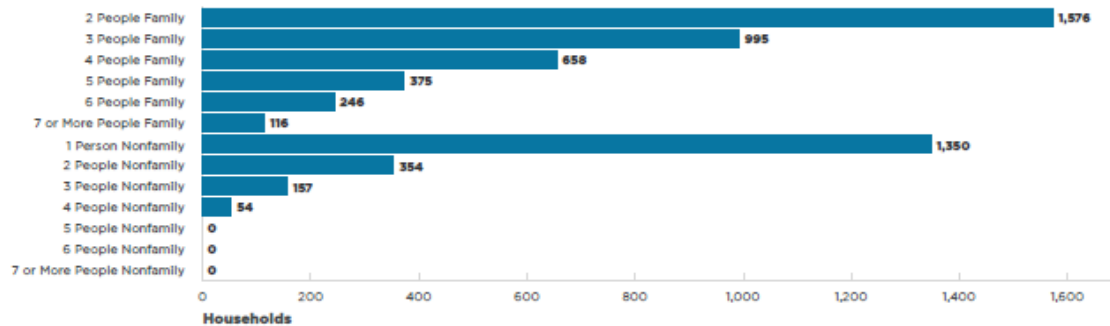
65%
of total population
People of Color

Language Spoken at Home



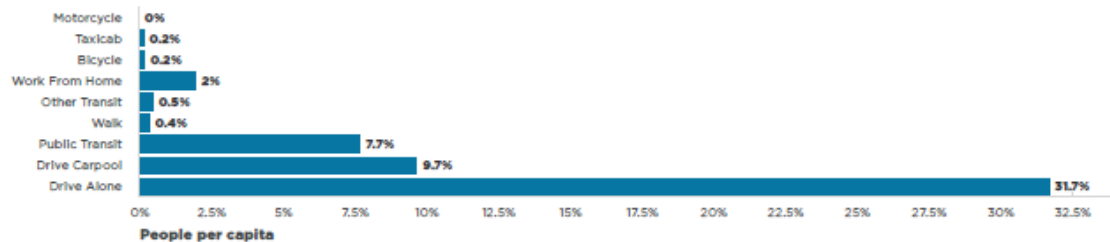
Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2016-2020

Household Size



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2016-2020

Commute Type



Sources: US Census Bureau ACS 5-year 2016-2020

GreenCenter requirements (KCC 21A.60.060)

White Center has one of the lowest percentages of canopy cover in the County. The GreenCenter requirement was adopted in 2023 to do the following:

- Improve the appearance of the neighborhood
- Reduce stormwater runoff
- Cool the neighborhood during heat waves
- Provide habitat for birds and insects
- Support local business districts
- Reduce crime

Developments that are subject to the North Highline Design Standards are required to meet a GreenCenter score of 0.3, which is an equivalent of 30% canopy cover on the site. The director of permitting may allow modifications in the Main Street frontage area per KCC 21A.60.060.A.

A Microsoft Excel GreenScore Calculation Worksheet is available on the North Highline Urban Design Standards website [URL NEEDED].

Important notes

- If different landscape elements cover the same area, such as groundcover under a tree, count the full square footage of each element.
- Plants between the property line and the road can be counted, but only if the King County Permitting Director or County Road Engineer approves.
- Landscape elements that also meet other rules in KCC Title 21A can be counted.
- For plant walls, count only the space covered by plants. The walls must be strong, have enough space for plants to grow, have watering systems, and have surfaces that plants can stick to.
- For small bushes, plants, ground covers, and grass, count the space on the ground they cover.

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Sample photos and diagrams of features appreciated by community members

The following photos and diagrams are examples of features that were either liked by North Highline community members, provided by community members as favorable features during project engagement, or diagrams created through the assistance of a community advisory group.

Public realm design



Photo credit: MIG|SvR

Accessibility and Welcome

Universal design for the benefit of all.

Streetscape



Supporting Activity in the Public Realm



Public spaces that are accessible and support a variety of functions to meet a range of community needs.

Site accessibility

Accessibility for all should be a priority for the site. For example, outdoor seating should not block sidewalk

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accessibility for persons with disabilities, including those who use canes, wheelchairs, and guide animals. The site should provide a clear/unimpeded accessible path in front of the proposed storefront. This includes a clear path at least 48 inches wide with slopes that meet 2018 IBC Accessibility/2017 ANSI.



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Stormwater and landscape design



Functional and Attractive
Stormwater Solutions

*Examples of stormwater treatment integrated in the landscape frontage.
(Berger Partnership)*



Ensuring Sufficient and Sustainable
Landscape

North of Roxbury Street, the City of Seattle Green Factor applies to new development, and results in the kind of streetscape desired per North Highline community input.

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Building design



Hirabayashi Place, in Seattle's International District, has a clear architectural concept that provides both consistency and interest, using modulation of well-proportioned solid elements and recessed grouped windows. Artist-created panels are based on Japanese fabric, appropriate for a building that honors Japanese-American civil rights hero Gordon Hirabayashi. (InterIm/Mithūn)

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Example of mid-block site using side setback to create interesting interior public access for through-space. (Chophouse Row)

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Examples of modulation breaking down building mass. (Midtown Center, by Weinstein A+U and Lake Union Partners)



Building Bulk and Massing

modulation, material and color changes

ground level setbacks

This example makes use of a setback ground level and contrasting materials to create generous space and reduce building volume. (KIRIN Apartment. By Jonhston Architects)

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Reflecting Culture

Panels and soffit along the street include artwork by artists rooted in the Black community at Seattle's Central District.

Architecture promoting retention of White Center's commercial core character

Facade Terminology

- Cornice
- Building mounted lighting integrated
- Signage location
- Transom windows
- Canopy
- Entry
- Transparency Zone
- Base



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Example: Facade Character Elements

Awning

Display windows provide interest and visibility to and from the sidewalk

Planter



Example: Facade Character Elements

Strong, simple design provides rhythm at the street and individuality for store fronts

Signage opportunities for wall-mounted signs above and projections for blade signs

Outdoor tables and seating



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Example: Facade Character Elements

Integrated canopy offers weather protection and opportunities for lighting

Facade pulled back from property line adds sidewalk space and reduces need for vestibule

Property line



Example: Facade Character Elements

Generous overhang provides weather protection

Multilingual signage highlights the cultural diversity of North Highline



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Example: Facade Character Elements



- Plantings
- Art
- Street display
- Seating and tables

Example: Facade Character Elements



- Iconic canopy highlights the entry
- Detailing at entry
- Prominent signage at pedestrian eye level

Art and murals rooted in community values



White Center's murals express the varied cultures of the community.



Local pride can be seen in this "White Center" mural.