



Sammamish Town Center:
Green Spine Design Companion

Preface

The Green Spine was first envisioned in the Sammamish Town Center Plan, adopted in 2008. The Town Center Plan broadly describes the Green Spine as linear open space—or spine—120 feet wide extending north of the Lower Sammamish Commons Park and for at least two blocks north of SE 4th Street. This public open space will vary in size and character from block to block and provide an organizing structure for new urban development, add a visual and recreation amenity, and treat stormwater runoff.

The Green Spine was further defined in the 2009 Sammamish Town Center Infrastructure Plan (TCIP). The recommendations in this document are drawn from the TCIP and are intended to provide more direct guidance for the emerging design of the Green Spine.

This document contains specific definitions of sizes and minimum dimensions of spaces to help guide the design of the Green Spine and the underlying vision for its public spaces. These dimensions are not intended to limit good design, and if developers and projects can display superior results in achieving the vision of the Green Spine public space, departures from these guidelines may be approved by the City.



Sammamish Town Center Identity

Sammamish is Washington's hilltop town:

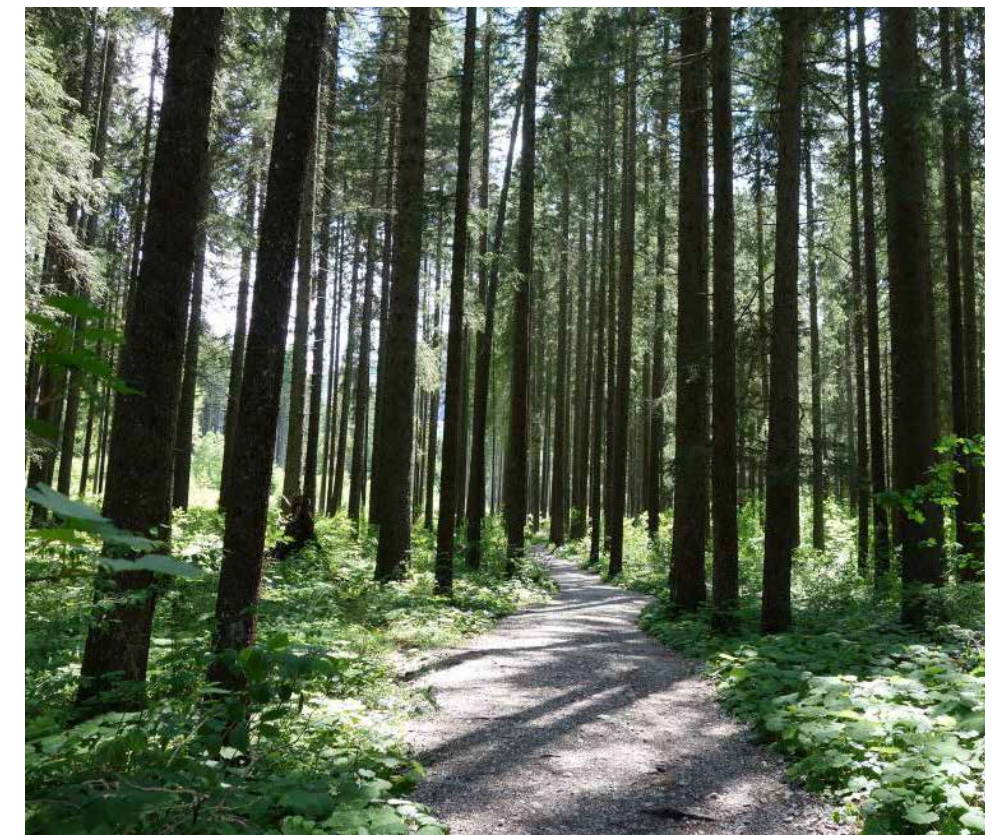
While other cities have historically grown from occupying valley floors or the water's edge, Sammamish, a new city, has proudly planted its flag and is building its city center on top of a ridge. No matter how you arrive to Sammamish, you ascend steep hills. Once you arrive, particularly to Sammamish Commons and Town Center, you are at a high point with views in all directions, including Tiger, Squak, Cougar, Rainier and Baker Mountains, Bellevue and Seattle, and the Olympics and Cascades beyond. Sammamish is poised, overlooking the region.

Powered by tech, rooted in the Cascade foothills:

Sammamish, like much of the Eastside, has a population and economy that is powered by the ingenuity of high-tech employees and employers. However, its character is not shaped by an all too common aesthetic of what is deemed today's contemporary/tech design style, but rather, Sammamish and its citizens cherish the city's unique location and surroundings to shape a unique city, architecture and character. The heavily forested city gives rise to the use of large timber forms in architecture. The foothills' geology and mountain views inspire the use of stone to root architecture to site. The city's sloping, varied topography begs to be leveraged for a unique experience instead of leveled for developments or styles typical of so many other places.

A Town Center like no other:

The emerging designs for Sammamish Town Center will leverage the city's unique physical setting, culture and character to form a new yet seemingly timeless Town Center. Buildings, walkways and open spaces will be oriented to maximize the city's treasured regional views. Topography will be utilized with stairs, ramps and walls that adequately tame topography while also highlighting it. Sensitive areas of the Sammamish Commons will be preserved, protected or enhanced while new open spaces will deliver new high-performance ecologies and green infrastructure. A diversity of building styles will share the common characteristics of being rooted in the land and inspired by the landscape, a Town Center worthy of its hilltop location.



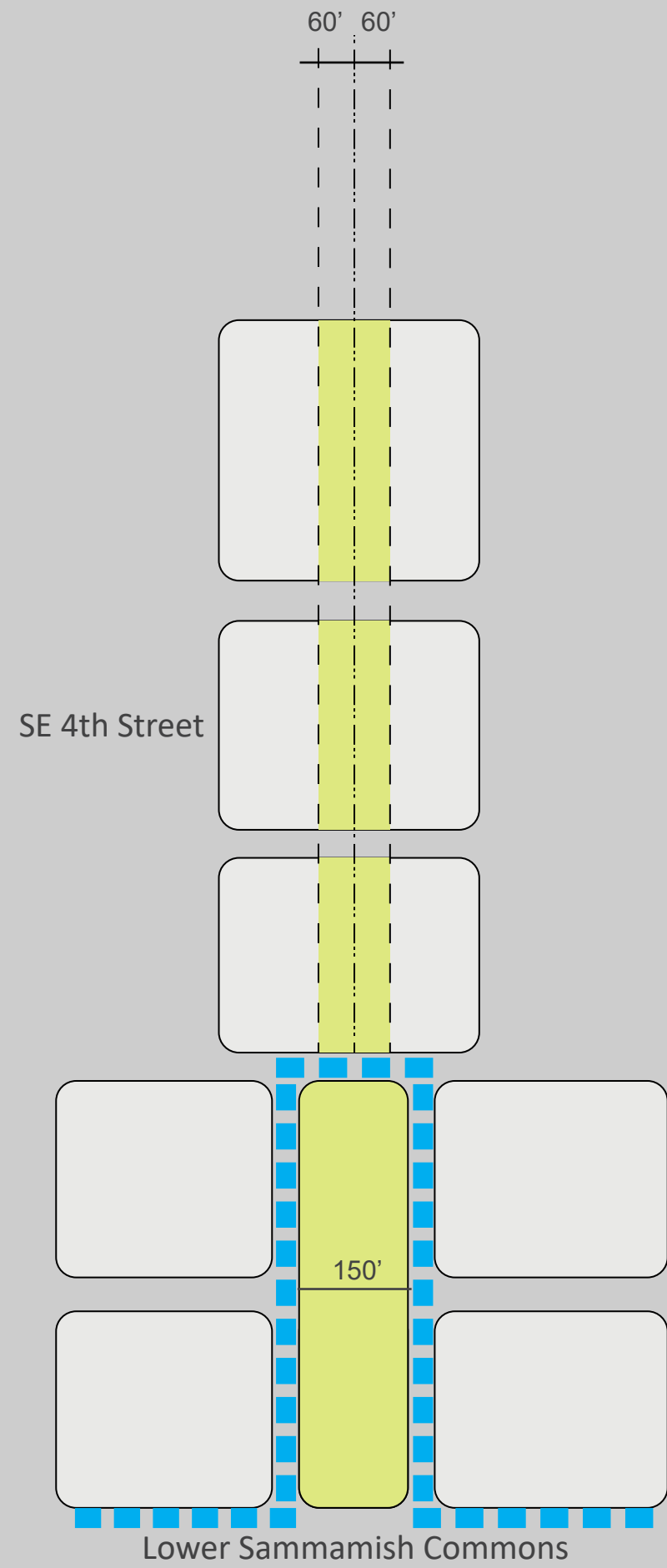
Sammamish Infrastructure Plan (2009)

The Sammamish Town Center Infrastructure Plan is focused on the Core Mixed Use (CMU) area identified in the Town Center Plan as the A-1 Zone. This has been identified as the Civic Center of the town, where the maximum development densities are placed along with the most highly pedestrianized streetscape and open space system. The CMU must be a vibrant, civic, cultural, and economic center connected to the surrounding neighborhoods by both an efficient transportation network and a system of public trails and pathways. It must enable the private and public sectors to develop facilities which respond to the total range of community lifestyle needs embodied in the “live, work, and play” triad. It must also integrate forward-looking stewardship techniques in its open space system and make these techniques visible and interactive with the built environment.

Walkability is a key component of the plan. As such, great attention will be paid to block size, cross-street connections, texture and scale of both vertical and horizontal surfaces, and compatibility of land uses within the district.

A central component of the Plan is a “**Green Spine**”, which is a public open space system which connects the Commons area with the CMU. This open space system also forms the backbone of a network of soft and hardscape areas that connect outward toward the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Furthermore, this open space system could incorporate integrated stormwater management techniques, offering district-wide opportunities for sustainable, cost-effective design solutions.





At its simplest, the Green Spine is a linear corridor of dedicated open space 120 feet wide (60 feet on each adjacent parcel); however, that simplistic definition is simply to define baseline location and size to be dedicated to the Green Spine. The Town Center vision reflected in the infrastructure plan is for a richer, more varied open space.

The Sammamish Town Center Green Spine

Green Spine Form

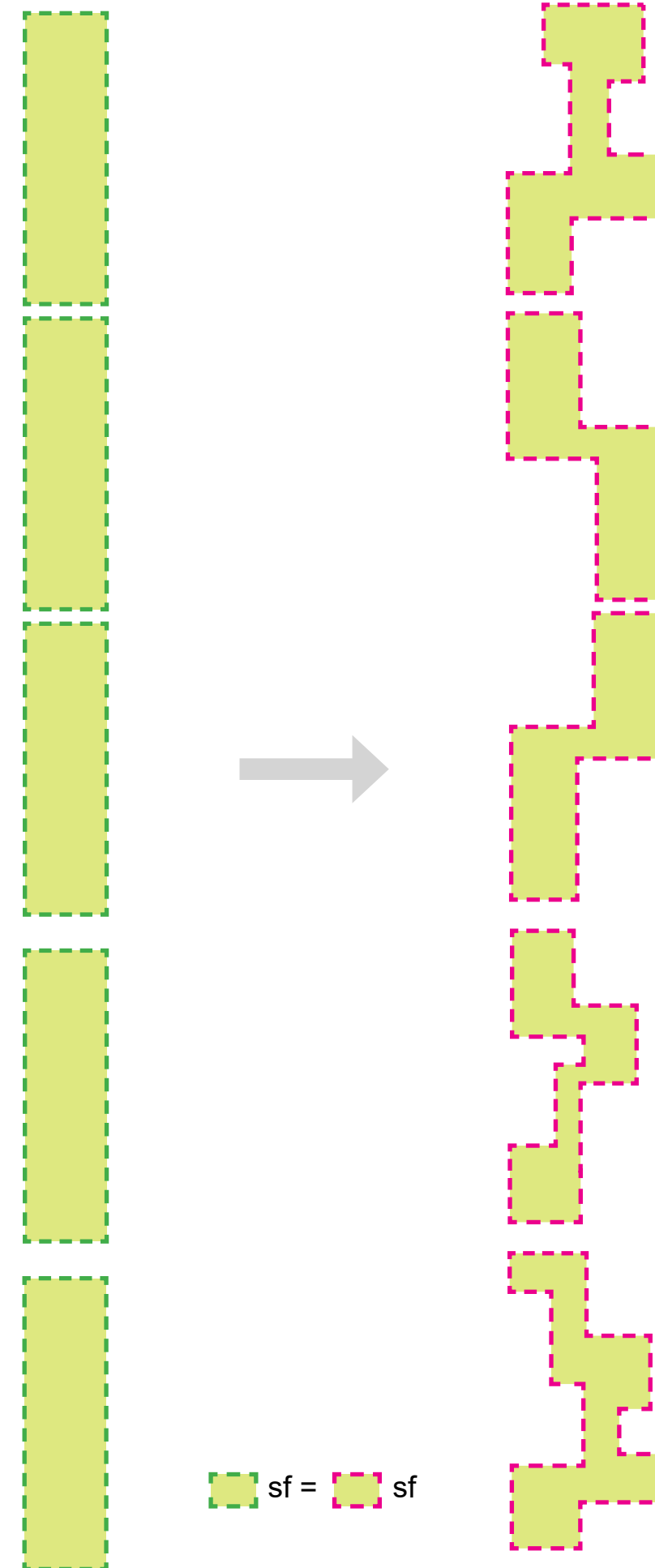
As defined, the Green Spine would be a rectilinear space with adjacent linear developed edges. However, these edges can be varied to enrich the corridor.

Buildings can encroach into the 60-foot planning corridor as long as there is a corresponding setback from the corridor, in essence averaging the corridor width and square feet.

Encroachments and setbacks must be balanced to provide the same square footage of Green Spine open space as the rectilinear planning definition.

Encroachments and setbacks must be coordinated with an overall vision for the Green Spine including the adjacent parcels and blocks to create a cohesive vision.

The layout and form of the Green Spine must comply with the Unified Zone Development planning principles in SMC 21B.95.050 and the Town Center Infrastructure Plan. If an applicant can achieve superior results in their design of the Green Spine, departures from these guidelines may be approved by the City through a Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) or Development Agreement process.



Green Spine And Stormwater

The Green Spine is an excellent opportunity to address stormwater needs, including treatment and storage.

Stormwater features may include green stormwater infrastructure such as bio-retention and infiltration (as deemed appropriate by geotechnical conditions), which have a physical footprint and certain aesthetic associated with them.

Stormwater features may be mechanical in nature, such as structural underground vaults with Green Spine uses over top.

Stormwater structures on the corridor may be balanced to enhance the function of the Green Spine and open space and recreational amenities. Stormwater features' footprints should not be overly consumptive of the Green Spine square footage. Stormwater features in the Green Spine shall be approved by the city on a case-by case basis.

Regional stormwater design: While each development parcel is responsible for its own stormwater treatment, to the degree that multiple parcels and potentially multiple developers want to propose a regional stormwater approach to leverage the whole of the Green Spine in a cohesive manner, the city welcomes consideration of that opportunity.



Green Spine Experience

Specific areas of the Green Spine and the adjacent Sammamish Commons Park can have community events of many sizes and types. Beyond brainstorming new activities and emulating those already done in surrounding areas, what events exist in Sammamish that can find a new home in the Town Center and grow? What are existing ideas and stakeholders in the city that can be leveraged as partners for new programmed activities:

- a. Passive elements:
 - i. Play spots
 - ii. Seating/gathering (small scale)
 - iii. Escape
- b. Weekly events:
 - i. Farmers market
 - ii. Summer concerts
 - iii. Cultural arts programs
- c. Monthly events:
 - i. Art walk
- d. Seasonal events:
 - i. Fairs
 - ii. Festivals
 - iii. Parades
 - iv. Shakespeare in the Park
 - v. Sammamish Days
 - vi. Sammamish Nights
- e. Large scale:
 - i. Concerts, 5000+ visitors
 - ii. Fourth on the Plateau



Green Spine Zones

Character

While the Green Spine is one, cohesive element, it is not homogeneous, but rather has three distinct zones, each with a unique look and feel, but all complementary to each other. Each of these zones has a unique approach to space, scale, building treatment and adjacent land uses and streets.

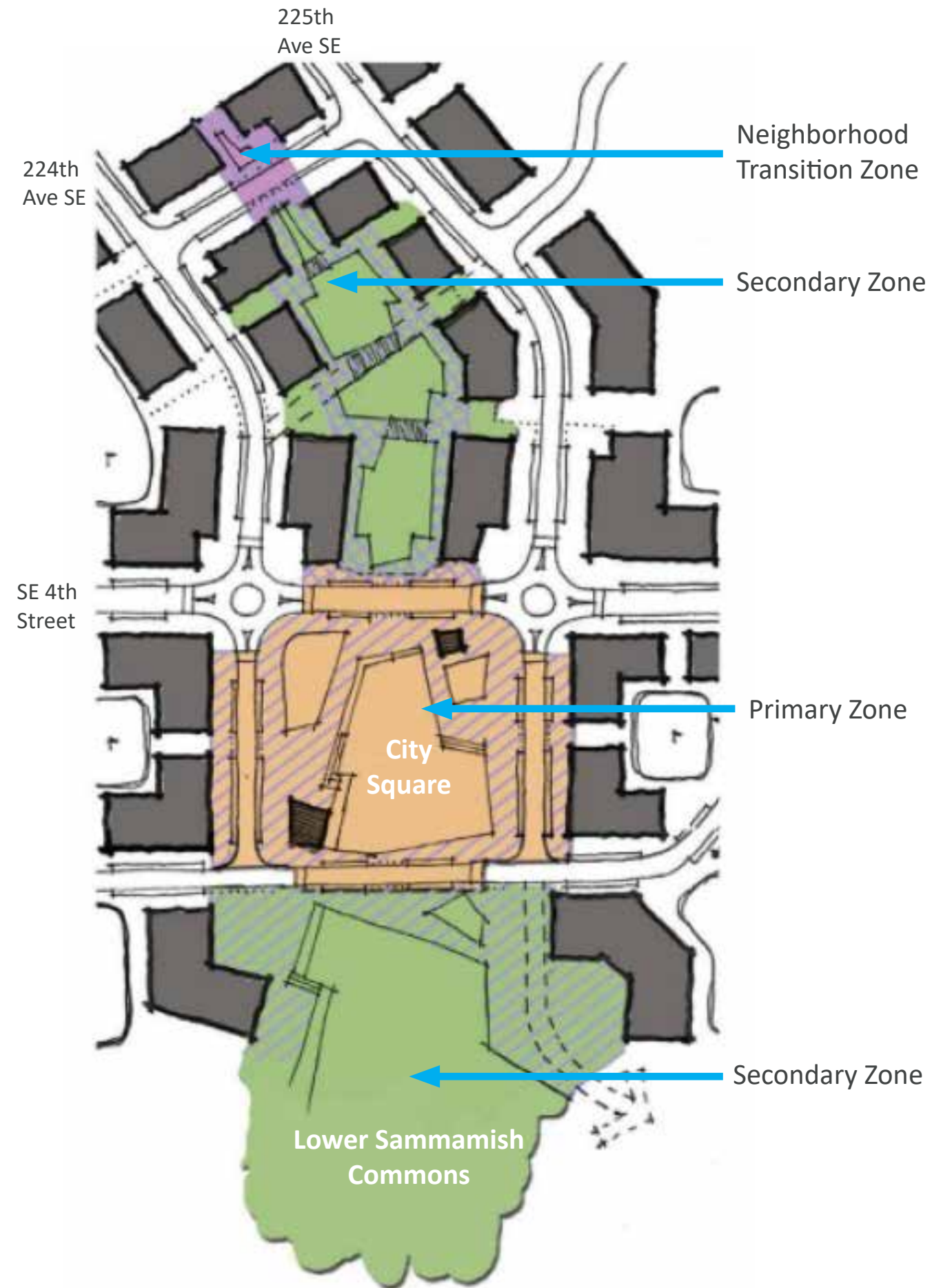
- a. Primary
- b. Secondary
- c. Neighborhood Transition

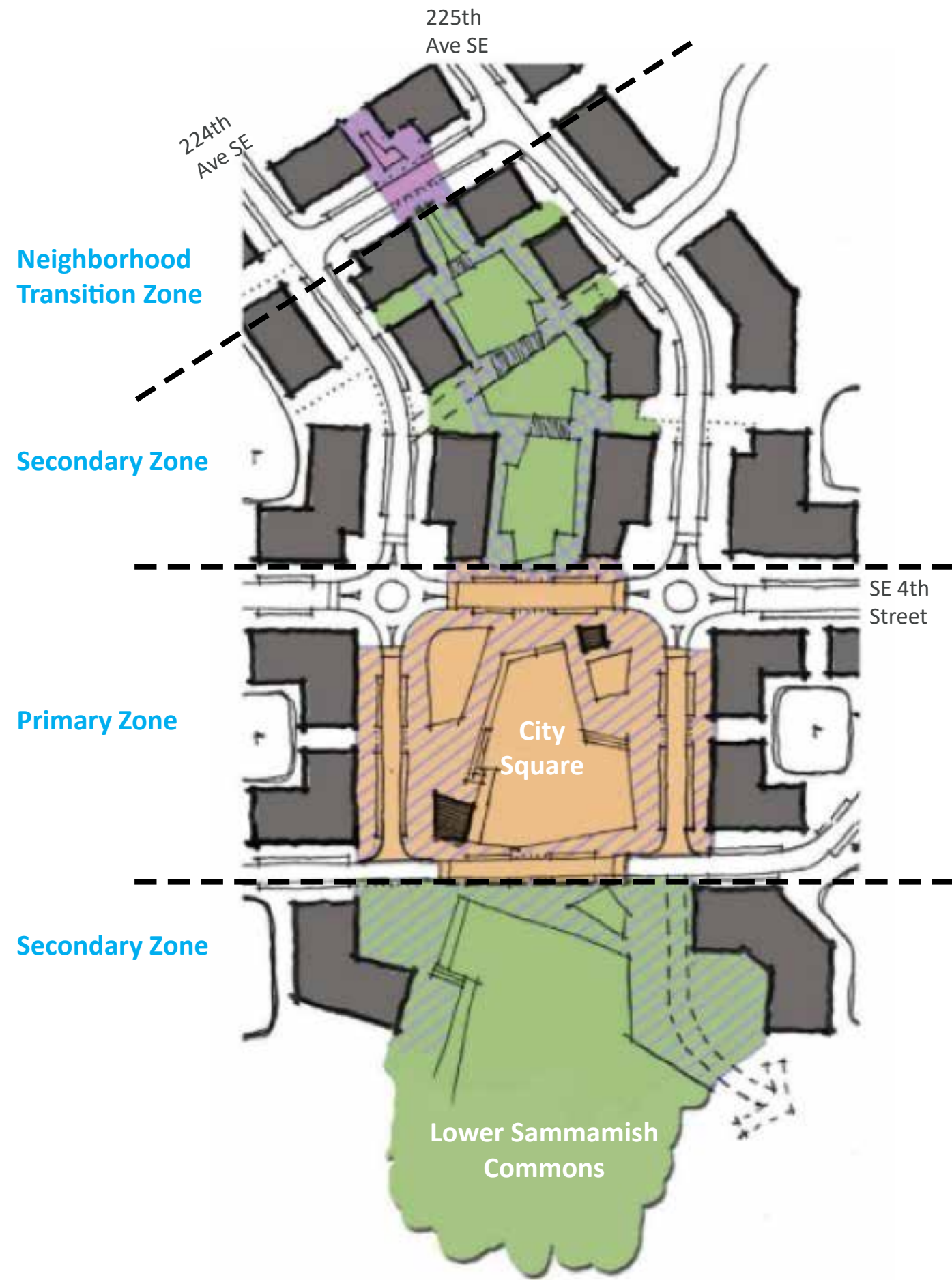
Site Design:

The physical layout and design features within each segment.

Programmed Activities:

The Green Spine is more than a physical space, but will be the home to planned and impromptu activities. While difficult to forecast, and ultimately up to the city and community to realize programming, this document identifies considerations and ideas for the size and types of community activities and events both within specific areas of the Green Spine and the adjacent Sammamish Commons Park.





Zoom In Design

Primary Zone

North of the park edge, in the heart of the Town Center, the Green Spine is at its most vibrant, fronted with businesses and services, with ample room for walking, seating, and other amenities (approximately 50%-70% hardscape). The Primary Zone is considered the Town Center’s “City Square”. This block-size, highly active pedestrian public open space incorporates a variety of forms, colors, and textures, including public art, water features, and a range of different places to sit and gather.



The Primary Zone is significantly paved for intensive use, and planting is appropriate for intensive uses, be it small “area rugs” of lawn, or planting areas that might have a more maintained and ornamental nature to them (and more deliberately protected from human and pet activity).

Site amenities and features include benches, seatwalls, lighting, and plantings arranged to accommodate large regional events (e.g. Sammamish Farmer’s Market) while encouraging casual, more impromptu daily gatherings and social interaction.



Primary Zone

Break up larger hardscape areas with a hierarchy of materials ranging from more utilitarian field paving (large areas, less expensive) to more precious specialty paving (smaller areas, higher quality materials).

Incorporate both fixed permanent furnishings, as well as movable furnishings.

Planting may be physically protected by ornamental fencing, raised amenities (seawalls, benches, etc.) or raised planters.

Buildings or active residential frontages face the Green Spine primarily as activating retail or services, be it a street-oriented space or an internally oriented plaza.



Consider extending some private buildings, such as a bakery or coffee shop with high activity or public buildings, for example a leasable community room with indoor-outdoor spaces that can double as a performance venue or stage with attached public restrooms.



Secondary Zone

The Secondary Zone is located in two separate areas of the Green Spine, including the south end that terminates within the Lower Sammamish Commons Park (LCP) and just north of SE 4th Street for approximately two blocks. This zone, particularly in the north, has a linear parklike character with outdoor cafes and retail fronting the Green Spine.

The southernmost block of the Green Spine, is focused on connecting the Green Spine and Town Center to LCP. This zone has a significant amount of softscape (approximately 40%-60% of the area), with usable lawn areas that welcome a range of community activities (Medium Event Gatherings) and programming.

Design elements include small pocket plazas for quiet gatherings, open lawn areas for unstructured play, and pathways meandering around green infrastructure like raingardens, bioswales, and constructed wetlands.

Note: The Secondary Zone is adjacent to LCP. The Secondary Zone will need to embrace the concepts developed by the Sammamish Commons Park Master Plan in support of the programming of the LCP. The integration of the Secondary Zone and LCP needs to support both the activities of the LCP as well as the daily activities and programming of the Green Spine.



Secondary Zone

Differentiate the hardscape with softscape.

Create an architectural icon for the view corridor toward the Town Center.

Embrace topography by having a subtle recess or valley entering into the Town Center.

Buildings face the Green Spine primarily as activating retail or services.



Neighborhood Transition

The northernmost blocks of the Green Spine, these blocks are predominately ringed by residential units, though some commercial is welcomed. The primary purpose of these blocks is to offer outdoor space and escape from the dense housing that surrounds the Green Spine. The passive escape is largely planting and lawn areas (60%-80% softscape) with a primary trail that connects all the way to Sammamish Lower Commons Park, as well as secondary trails that add to experience and program.

At the north end of the Green Spine is the Neighborhood Transition Zone. This open space area has a local flavor where residents can gather, giving it a different character than the larger Primary Zone. A small, open plaza anchored by a focal feature such as a fountain or public art will reflect the identity of the neighborhood, providing a distinctive and iconic element at the terminus of the Green Spine.



Neighborhood Transition

Primary paved trail: Asphalt, CIP concrete or pre-cast pavers per the 2016 Public Works Standards.

“Deconstructed” playground (play spots)

Secondary trails that add to experience and program

Buildings with their back to the Green Spine are activated with individual unit frontages and common amenity spaces.

Corners of buildings activated with retail/services partially facing the Green Spine.

