

CORRIDOR UNITY AND THEMATIC ZONES

The next two chapters present the DAG's consensus on aesthetic concepts for the corridor and community thematic zones. For this discussion, the highway corridor and the community places that weave around and along the highway were treated as non-intersecting landscapes. In reality they are of course closely intertwined and will be designed as integral to each other.

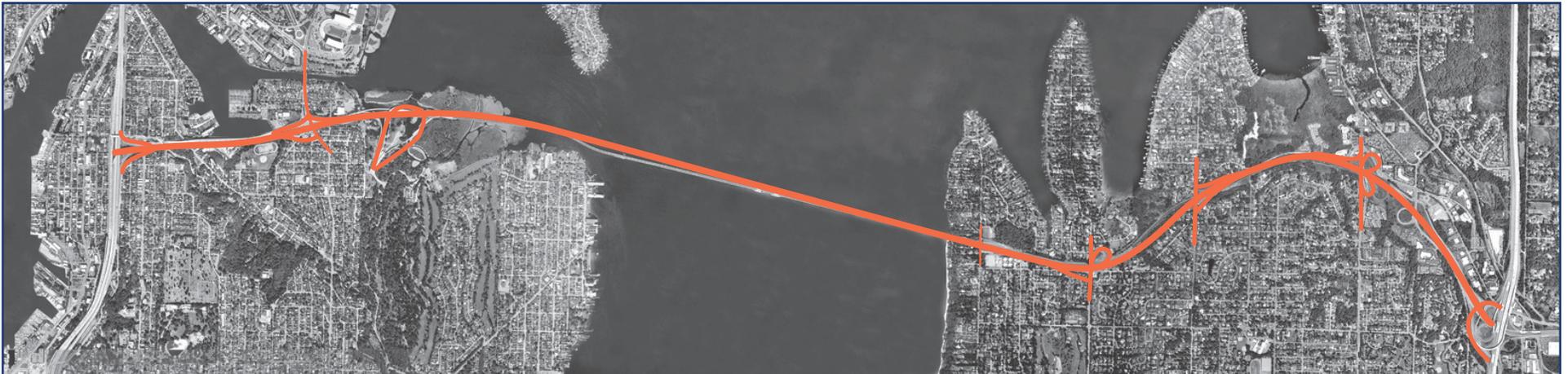
The transitions from highway corridor to local community also have high potential for creative context-sensitive and aesthetically successful design solutions. In these places the resolution between the corridor character and its materials with the local character and its materials merits special attention. This will be the focus of future work where a master strategy for the Preferred Alternative will be devised during the design of the new SR 520 facility.

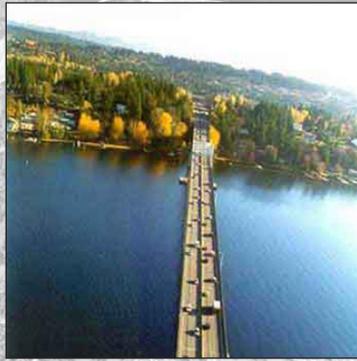
Corridor Unity is presented first, followed by Thematic Zones. Lake Washington is considered to be part of the Corridor Unity discussion because it is a waterscape

of regional importance and the floating bridge is a distinctive feature on the lake.

Both the Corridor Unity and Thematic Zone chapters present ideas and images for these guiding concepts:

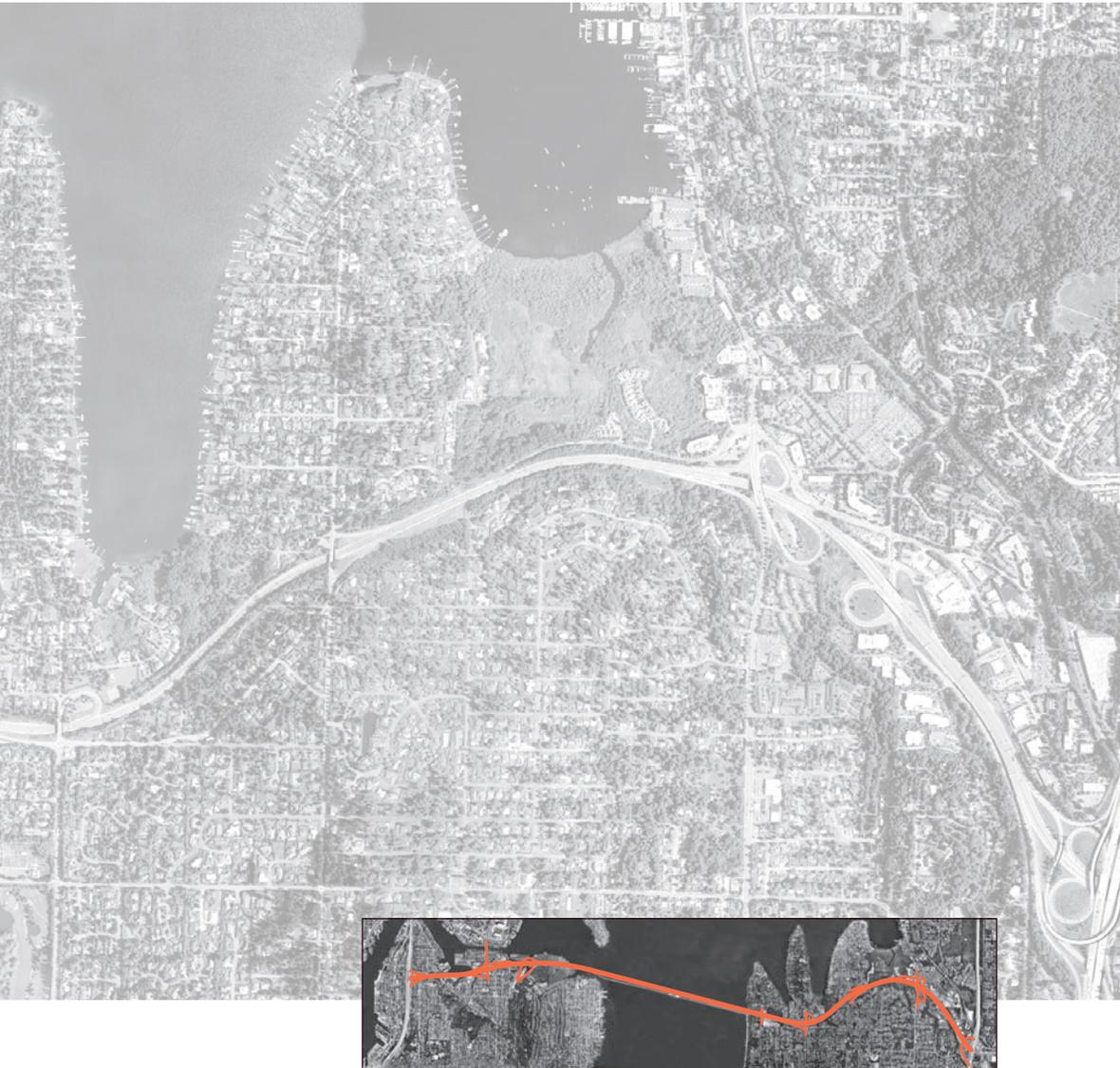
- **Theme** expresses an overall aesthetic character.
- **Goals** establish the desired visual and aesthetic qualities of the new facilities and corridor.
- **Opportunities Maps** show where there are places or objects that are significant to the community and that should be given aesthetic treatment.
- **Principles** describe how the places near or components of the facility should interrelate in order to meet the aesthetic goals.
- **Palette** defines preferred materials, colors, form, and line for the elements of the facility.





Photographs of today's corridor

CORRIDOR UNITY



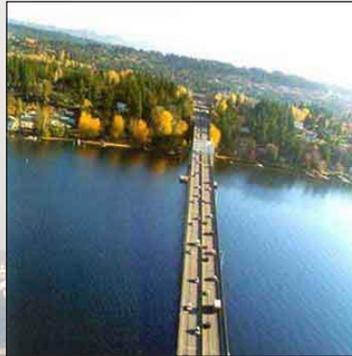
This section presents the unifying aesthetic theme that emerged from the DAG workshops. This theme was inspired by the existing character of the natural environment and is enhanced by a forward-looking, contemporary awareness.

SR 520 runs through a wide range of landscape types. Because many of the landscapes are communities and residential neighborhoods, it is important to design for two scales: the scale of the highway corridor and the scale of the local community. Corridor scale acknowledges that SR 520 is an important regional connector and carries many travelers between Seattle and the communities east of Lake Washington.

In this Handbook “corridor” is the highway driven by motorists and includes the shoulders and walls that border the edge of the roadway. Motorists experience high speed travel on a single band of road and cover a series of landscapes quickly. The ability to experience the corridor and a variety of landscapes in a short time means that the motorist-observer can integrate that experience and see the highway as a unified, single domain. This scale of corridor unity is in contrast to the thematic zones where viewers are moving slowly or are stationary and the landscape experience is much more limited.

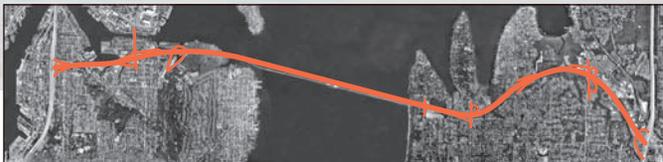
Corridor unity means that the SR 520 corridor would have a recognizable look and a distinctive character that are created by the interplay among the aesthetic elements of the facility. To achieve this, there must be one big idea that acts as an organizing theme for the design.

SR 520 already has a corridor character that has been shaped by the highway’s relationship with the surrounding geology, geography, and development. Its character is defined by the interplay of water and land, valleys and ridges, the rhythm of the many bridges, the extensive tree matrix, and views of distant mountains.



Photographs of Lake Washington scenes

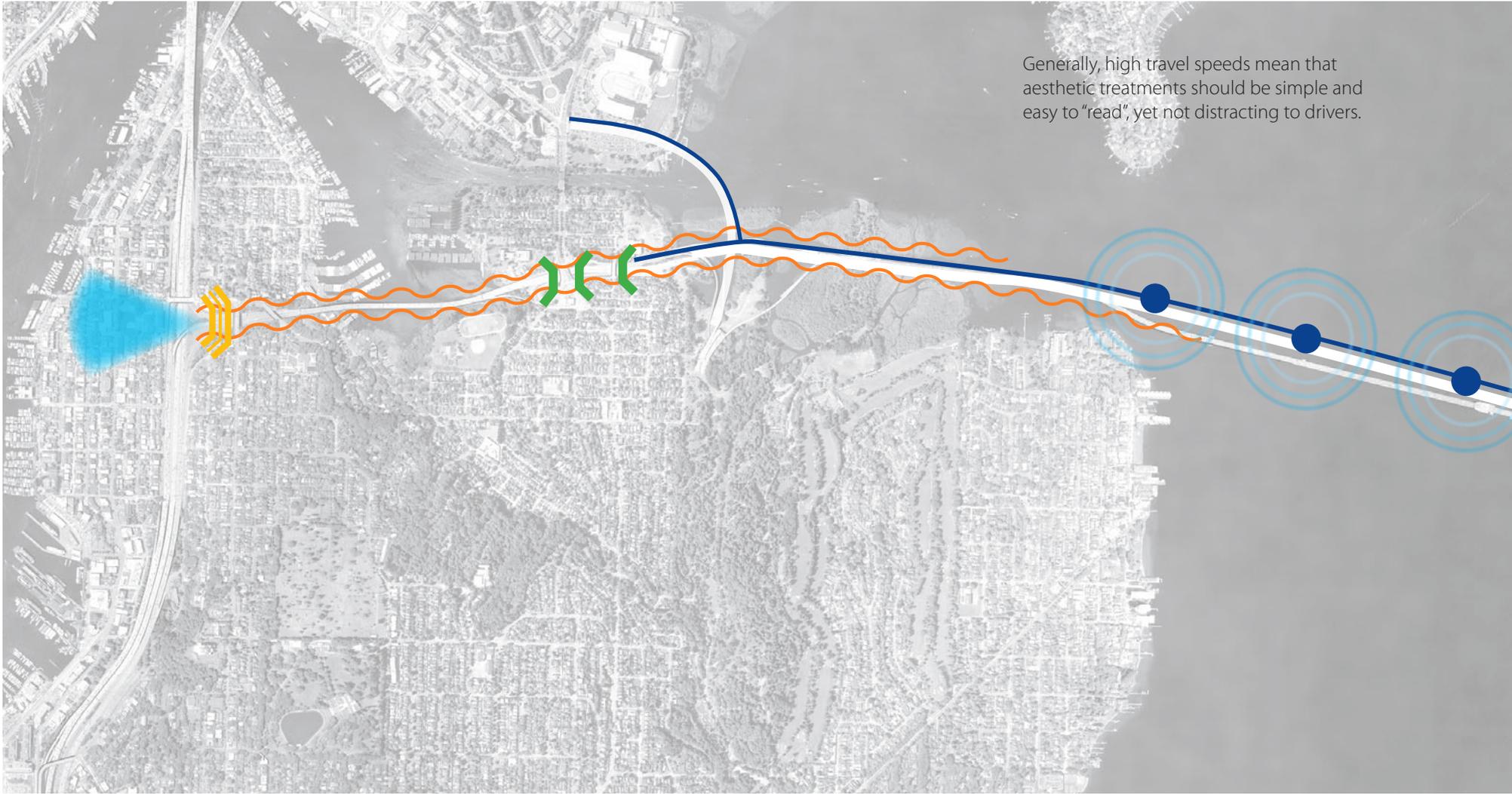
Lake Washington



Lake Washington could be considered as the thematic zone that lies between the Eastside and Westside communities. However, the lake's communities extend far beyond the project boundaries and the SR 520 floating bridge across Lake Washington is a regional facility. For these reasons Lake Washington is considered as part of the Corridor Unity discussion.

Lake Washington has been an activity center for livelihood and recreation as long as humans have lived in the area. The lake and its shoreline have supported fishing, settlement, logging, portage of goods, and transit. There are two distinguishing features that define the visual character of Lake Washington. One is the broad expanse of sky and water, which exposes motorists to the elements and the progression of seasonal colors and light that would otherwise be only available to boaters and shoreline residents.

The second distinguishing feature is the floating bridge itself. The Evergreen Point Floating Bridge is a remarkable structure that combines bridge and boat engineering technologies. This bridge has the distinction of being the world's longest floating pontoon bridge (7,578 feet). The floating bridge allows motorists to experience crossing Lake Washington at close to water level, with broad mountain views of the Cascade and Olympic Mountains and Mount Rainier. Like an iceberg, it is difficult to grasp the true size and complexity of the bridge because only a portion of the entire structure is visible above water. Supporting anchors, cables, and most of the pontoon height are under water.



Generally, high travel speeds mean that aesthetic treatments should be simple and easy to “read”, yet not distracting to drivers.

Gateways

- I-5
- Evergreen Point Road

Walls

SR 520 Regional Trail

- Belvederes

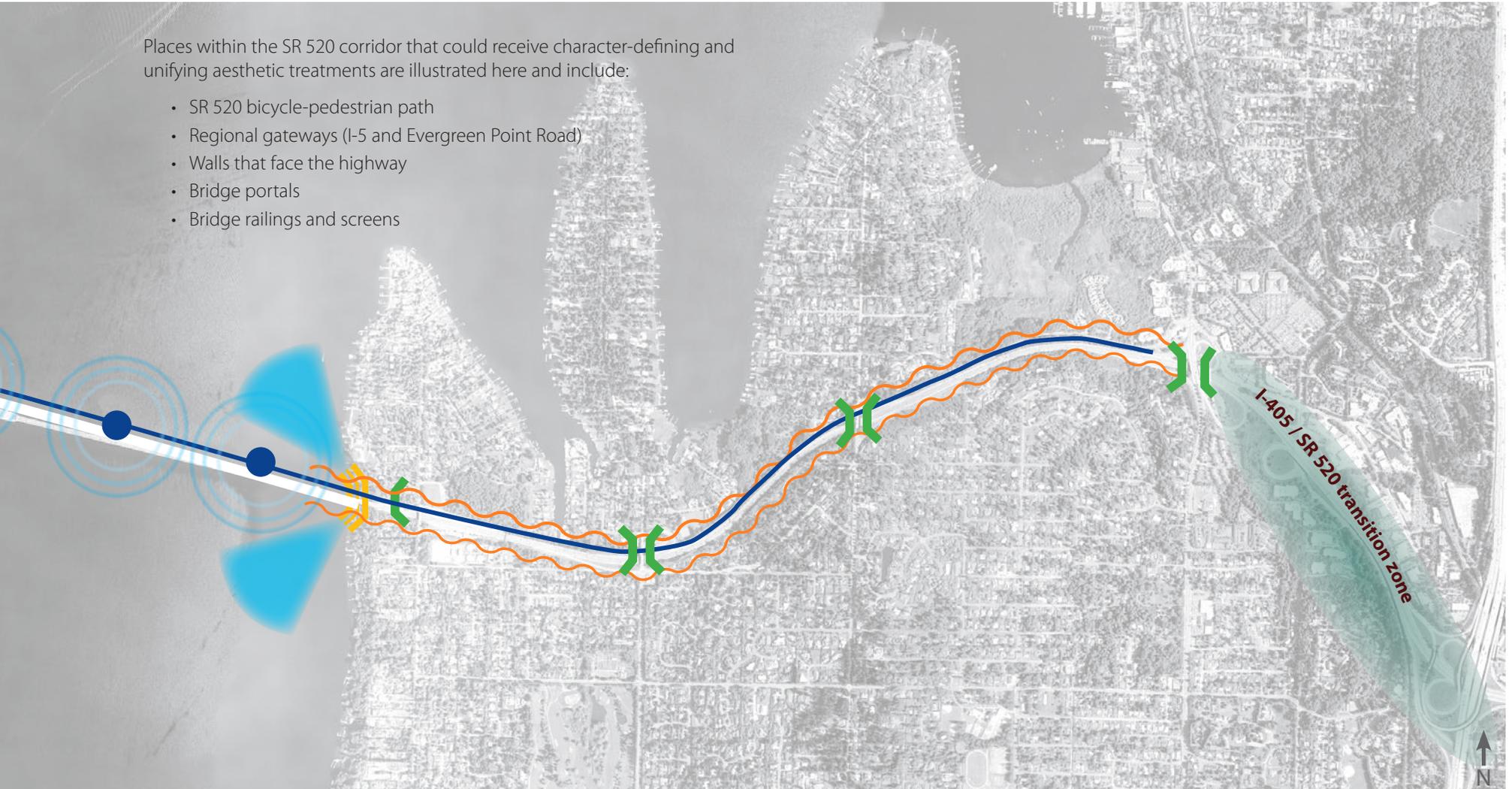
Views

Bridges, portals, railings, screens

Corridor Elements and Opportunities

Places within the SR 520 corridor that could receive character-defining and unifying aesthetic treatments are illustrated here and include:

- SR 520 bicycle-pedestrian path
- Regional gateways (I-5 and Evergreen Point Road)
- Walls that face the highway
- Bridge portals
- Bridge railings and screens



“Contemporary expressions within a naturalistic setting”

GOALS

A coherent and graceful facility and corridor that reflects a harmonious relationship with surrounding landscapes, structures, and other elements of the corridor. This can be accomplished through ---



-- the sculptural use of natural materials (Stormwater wetlands, Portland, OR; Murase)



-- structures that are designed to blend with the landscape and appear organic, mature, and well-established



-- reflecting and framing the landscape and views (Cloud Gate, Chicago, IL; Kapoor)

GRACEFUL

TRANSPARENT

SLEEK

Corridor Theme - Naturalistic Contemporary

AESTHETIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES



Maple Valley Library (Swift & Co.)

1. Design the walls, lids, bridges, and portals to flow seamlessly into one another in a thematic way and to blend smoothly with the surrounding terrain.
2. Soften the appearance of new structures with foliage.
3. New structures and features should add beauty to the surroundings in an unobtrusive way.
4. Landscaping should integrate with and enhance surrounding native vegetation.



Rainier Vista, University of Washington (Olmsted Brothers)



Stourhead; England (Hoare)

5. Frame vistas at gateways and lids.
6. Avoid overdone Pacific Northwest stereotypes.
7. Use lighting where appropriate to add beauty and make a structure iconic.



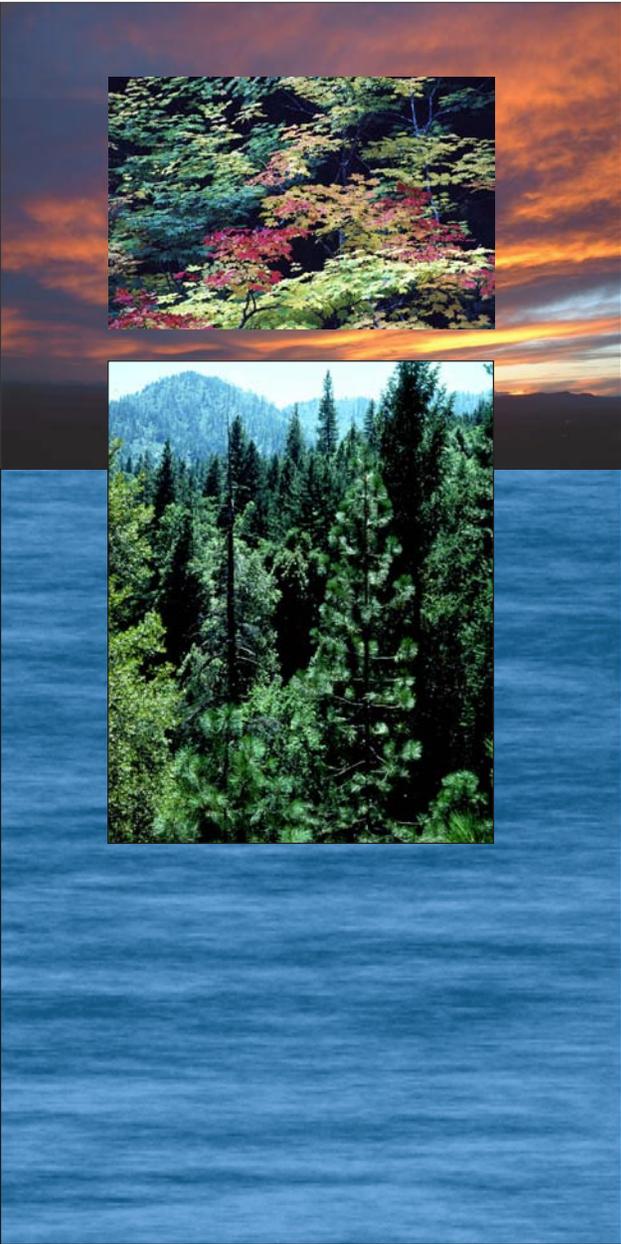
Grizedale Sculpture Project; Cumbria, England (Goldsworthy)

8. Use gradual transformation of corridor elements to create a feeling of dynamic change with movement through the corridor.

PEACEFUL

VERDANT

LAND - WATER INTERFACE



COLORS

Light, warm, subtle
Counterpoint to silvery blues of sky and water
Complement greens of foliage

MATERIALS

Pacific Northwest stone, wood, concrete, tile
High craftsmanship in using these materials
Native trees and shrubs



Sound wall with landscaping (FHWA)

Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park;
Illinois (Puryear)



NOAA Steps; Seattle (G. Trakas)



Corridor Unity Palette

LINES

Smooth and fluid expression of form
Well designed and crafted connections and transitions



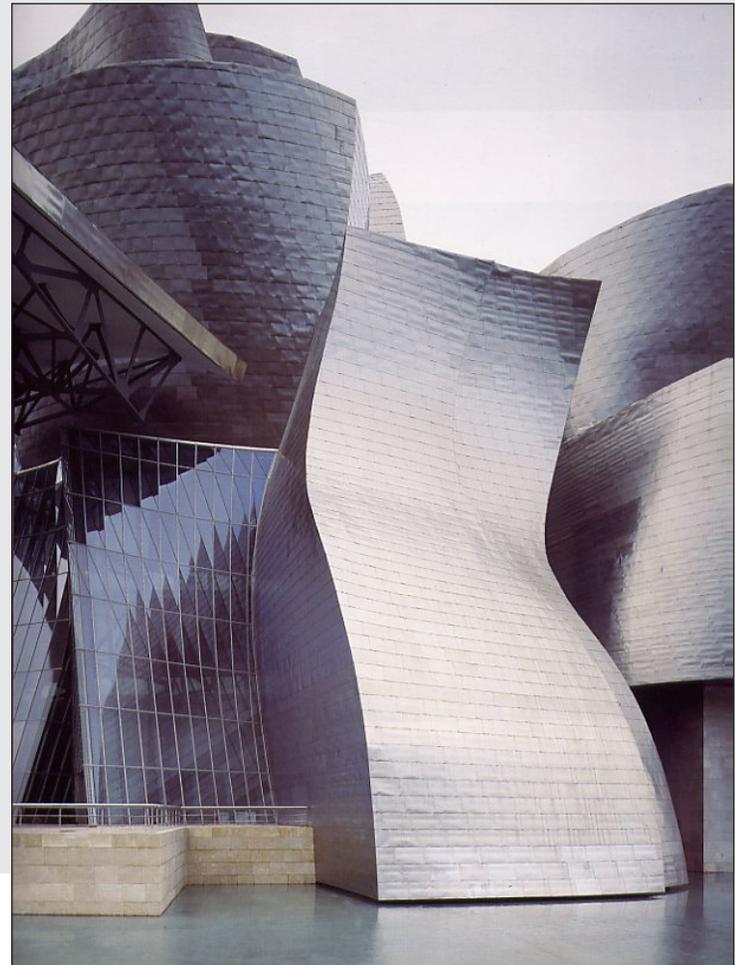
Aurora Bridge; Fremont, WA

FORM

Reveals function and structure gracefully and with clarity



West Trent Bridge



Guggenheim Museum; Bilbao, Spain (F. Gehry)

Naturalistic or Natural?

We discussed the difference between a natural landscape and a naturalistic landscape and concluded that the SR 520 landscapes would be “naturalistic” based on these definitions:

Naturalistic: representing what is real; not abstract or ideal

Natural: existing in or produced by nature; not artificial or imitation

(Source: wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)

A natural wetland

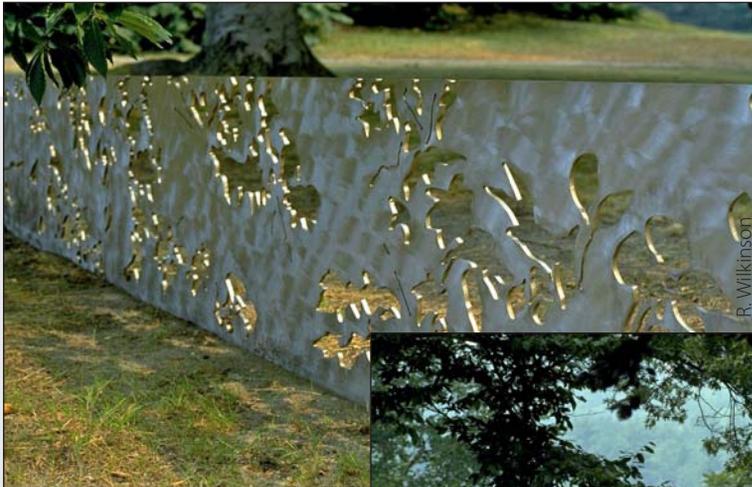


Naturalistic plantings would then be characterized by the arrangement of plant species according to how those native plants might grow in their natural, undisturbed environment (Source: www.csu.org/environment/xeriscape/resources/page3862.html)

A naturalistic stormwater wetland



Examples of Naturalistic Contemporary



Right and above: Filigreed Line
Wellesley University, MA (Irwin)



Far right: Gallery of New
South Wales, Australia
(Stackhouse)



Right: Grizedale
Sculpture Project;
Cumbria, England
(Goldsworthy)



Far right: Rio
Grande Nature
Center; New
Mexico

