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TELLING A STORY THROUGH PATTERN: WEST MAIN'S APPROACH TO FACADE DESIGN

The use of digital printing on glass offers several advantages over traditional silkscreen methods, especially in projects where custom patterns are integral to the design narrative.

Architectural Glazing has long been an important expressive tool which, when selected and detailed thoughtfully, can contribute to the successful transformation of architectural concepts to reality. A growing number of glass treatments have expanded aesthetic options in addition to the added performance modern insulated glazing offers.



BY PETER KRECH
GRAPHITE DESIGN
GROUP

Beyond the basics of color, tint, and reflectance, designers can further tune glazing systems through additive films, frits and printed media to give the material an added dimension. The result is a high degree of variability of color and pattern, consistent quality control and long-term product stability. In recent years, our practice, Graphite Design Group, has explored digital printing technology across a range of projects.

Most Recently, we used this technique on West Main in Bellevue.

West Main is a three-tower 1,030,000-square-foot office and retail development recently completed downtown designed by a collaboration between Graphite Design Group and Compton Design Office. Long viewed as a suburban companion to Seattle to the west, Bellevue has come into its own as a vibrant, diverse community that is home to numerous global technology companies. Developed by Vulcan Real Estate and occupied by Amazon, West Main is a key project in Bellevue's downtown evolution, as it blends high-tech, high-performance office space with community-focused design features that help tell the story of this place once home to forests, farms, and fruit orchards. Thoughtful use of color and digitally printed glazing helps tell this story.

During early design investigation, it was learned that the site of West Main was once home to a small stream – Meydenbauer Creek – that traversed the hillside site as

Each of West Main's three towers adopts a subtly different window pattern that modulates across the facades, tied together with an overall flow gesture.



IMAGE BY BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER

it meandered to its final outlet on nearby Lake Washington. From this the architectural concept of “flow” was derived and is manifest in the project at numerous scales.

Each of the three towers that comprise the project adopts a subtly different window pattern that modulates across the facades, tied together with an overall flow gesture that legibly traces its way around all the outward-facing tower elevations. Tower 1, known as “push-pull,” employs a gridded mullion system with 10 different panel types, creating depth across the facade. Tower 2, labeled “Weave,” incorporates curved aluminum fins that project from the building, evoking a woven texture. Tower 3, called “Tuft,” uses cruciform-shaped mullions that gradually taper in depth from the center outward.

Color plays a critical role in the facade design of West Main. Each tower is anchored by a full-height mosaic wall composed of over 60,000 individual stainless steel tiles, with color schemes inspired by natural elements.

Tower 1 features shades of blue, Tower 2 is adorned in red hues, and Tower 3 is wrapped in green tones.

At the podium level, the use of digitally printed glass continues this narrative. The street-facing facades on levels 1 and 2 are covered with large-scale graphic patterns, each unique to its respective tower. These patterns resemble a halftone image, where individual dots merge into a cohesive flow when viewed from a distance. The design team drew inspiration from the modulation of the curtain wall above, using geometric shapes that echo the natural patterns found in the landscape.

The printed patterns are carefully aligned with the color palette of each tower — blue, red, and green—creating a visual connection between the upper and lower sections of the buildings. At the main entry, a bridge links two of the towers, introducing a fourth color: orange. This addition emphasizes the area of arrival and connection, serving as a visual focal point that guides visitors into

the campus.

The use of digital printing on glass offers several advantages over traditional silkscreen methods, especially in projects like West Main where custom patterns are integral to the design narrative. Unlike silkscreen frit, which typically involves repeated patterns and limited color options, digital printing allows for virtually any image or pattern to be applied directly to the glass surface. This process uses large-format printers to apply color, which is then baked onto the glass, ensuring durability and stability over time.

For West Main, digital printing enabled the design team to achieve a high degree of variation and complexity in the facade patterns. Each glass panel could be customized, allowing the flow pattern to evolve across the entire facade without repetition. The result is a dynamic, ever-changing surface that responds to the play of light and shadow throughout the

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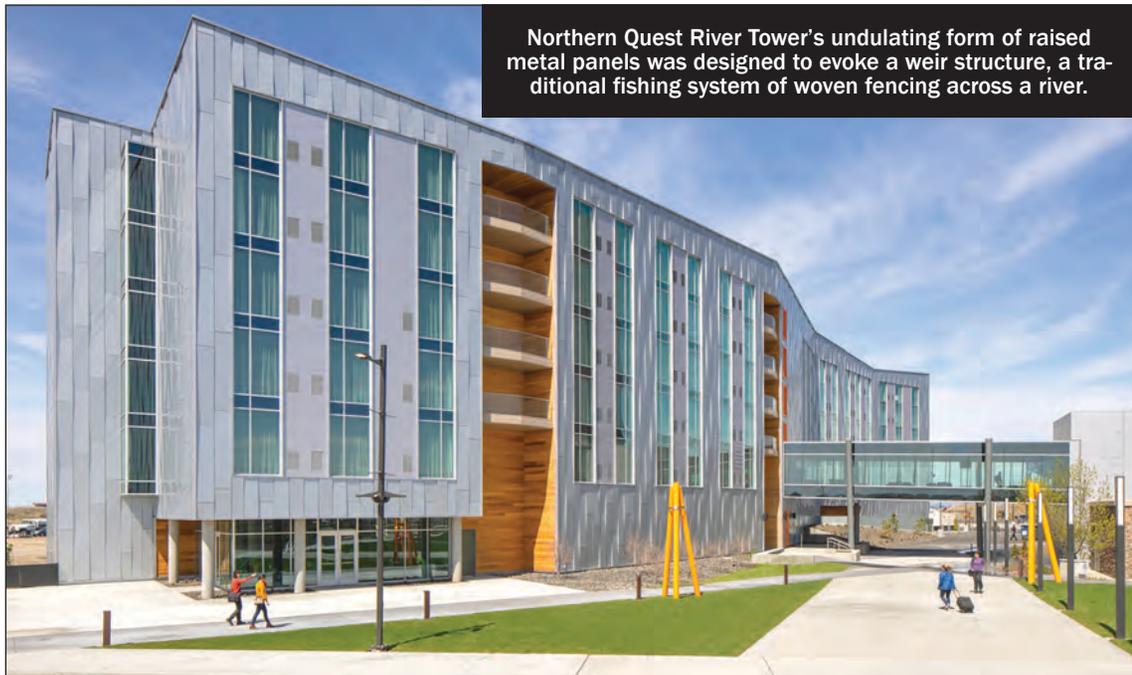
Extensive glazing at Washington School for the Deaf, designed by Mithun, allows conversations to happen freely, and reinforces connection between buildings on campus. PHOTO BY LARA SWIMMER/ESTO.

DJC TEAM

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DESIGNING WITH CULTURAL INTEGRITY

The Northern Quest River Tower team collaborated with the Kalispel Tribe to reference traditional gathering places in its design, proudly expressing a heritage of hospitality as inspiration for a contemporary place to gather and welcome visitors.



Northern Quest River Tower's undulating form of raised metal panels was designed to evoke a weir structure, a traditional fishing system of woven fencing across a river.

PHOTOS BY LARA SWIMMER

When designing buildings, architects start by identifying goals and objectives to guide the process of creating a structure. This includes addressing client aspirations to meet functional and efficiency



BY DAN SNOOK
INTEGRUS

requirements, while providing an aesthetically appropriate and enduring place that fits within its setting. Beyond that foundation, there is much more to crafting meaningful places that respect social, historical, and environmental context. It extends to embodying place, values and identity. For architects, the inclination is to lead by offering

concepts and ideas. When engaging with tribes, it is especially important to first come with an open mind, ready to listen and learn, developing a respectful relationship as partners to reach relevant design solutions.

Working with tribal organizations presents intriguing design opportunities. Integrus has worked with tribes on many types of buildings throughout the Pacific Northwest, in Alaska and California. The River Tower Hotel at Northern Quest Hotel & Casino outside of Spokane offers an example of building a working relationship with tribes, in which maintaining a balance of collaboration, sensitivity to complex histories, and expectations of an aspirational client leads to extraordinary results.

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transformative guest experience that achieves economic goals is paramount. Asking, 'what story do you want your hotel to tell?' anchors the concept for the entire guest journey Tribes have powerful and inspiring stories to tell; learning these stories and bringing their vision to life makes for an energizing and empowering design process. For River Tower, the question asked was 'how can design support the Kalispel Tribe in celebrating their culture and telling their story of the past, present, and future?'

NORTHERN QUEST – RIVER TOWER

Northern Quest Resort & Casino in Airway Heights is the largest casino resort in Washington state, developed by visionary tribal leaders committed to growing a successful multi-faceted destination. Already a popular gaming and entertainment venue, expanding their luxury hotel offerings is a powerful attractor inviting visitors to stay longer. The underlying goal of River Tower was to create a structure embodying heritage and contemporary culture to tangibly connect people with tribal hosts.

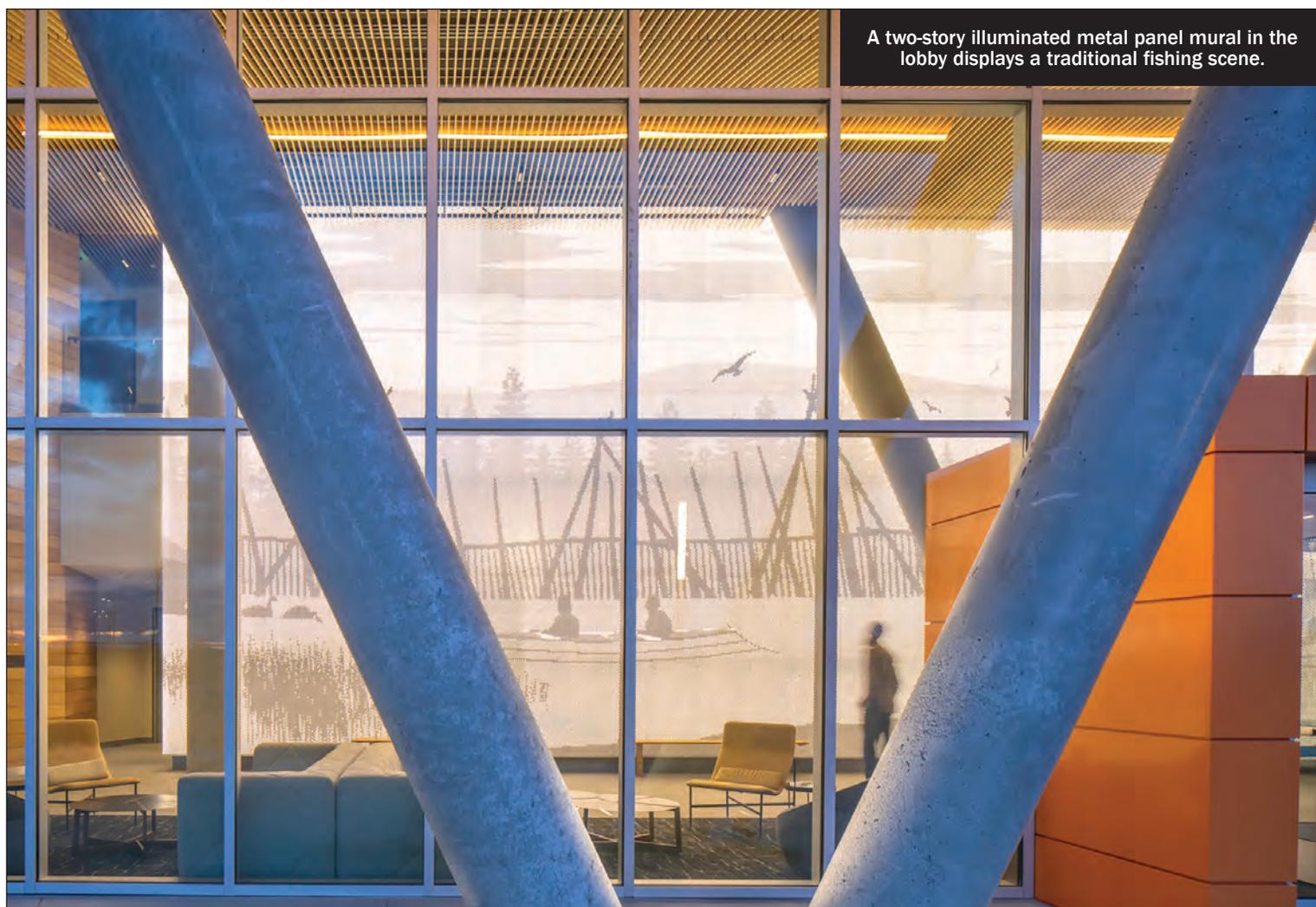
DESIGN PROCESS

At the onset of the design process, the project team met with leaders of the Kalispel Tribe to listen and learn about tribal history, meaningful touchpoints and themes to be incorporated into the hospitality experience. These included the values, history, language and traditions that contribute to their culture.

The team, which along with Integrus included Lydig Construction, The Society, Ankrom Moisan, Coffman Engineering, Parametrix, Berger Partnership and MW Engineers, worked to integrate ideas into a refined hotel reinforcing pride of place and supporting the tribe in authentically telling its story. The hotel was delivered on time and on budget, benefiting from the high level of integration. The result is a landmark destination hotel featuring layered components of cultural significance and tribal identity.

The Kalispel Tribe has a rich history, with homelands in the valleys and along the rivers of the northern Rockies. The Pend Oreille River in particular, remains an enduring heart of their traditional lifeways.

Every design decision supports guest experience and connects to tribal culture and place. The hotel's undulating form of raised metal panels evokes a weir structure,



A two-story illuminated metal panel mural in the lobby displays a traditional fishing scene.

a traditional fishing system of woven fencing extending across a river to snare salmon. These communal weirs were hospitable gathering places where tribes would meet to fish, trade and celebrate.

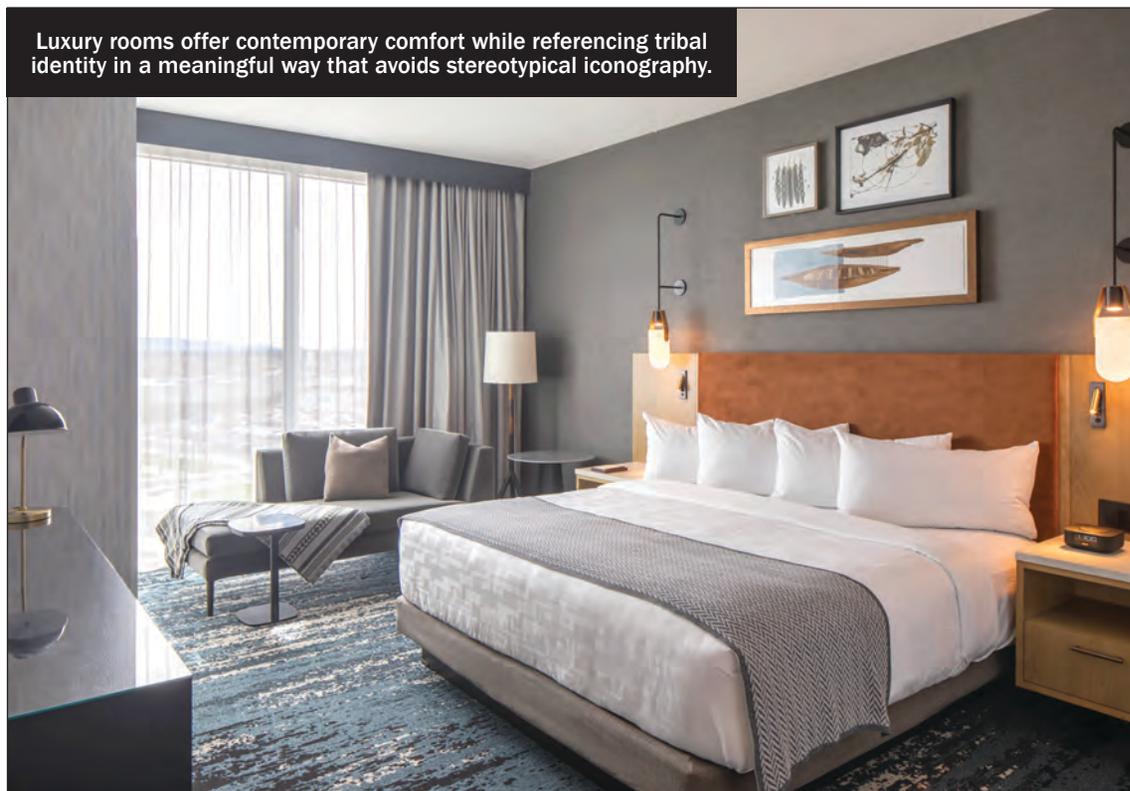
Weaving through the landscape like a weir across a river, the hotel references these traditional gathering places, proudly expressing the heritage of hospitality as inspiration for a contemporary place to gather and welcome visitors. It was important to choose forms, materials, and colors that evoke an emotional response considering cultural and historical context. Referencing these important local gathering places, the River Tower is infused with tradition, integrating components of Kalispel community life.

COHESIVE MATERIAL NARRATIVE

When integrating tradition and cultural stories in design, it is critical to avoid pastiche or stereotypical iconography. It was important to the Tribe these meaningful elements be expressed with a contemporary aesthetic, focusing on the human experience and providing both functional and visual appeal.

At River Tower, visitors are greeted by a spectacular two-story illuminated wall displaying a fishing scene recreated from historical photography. Interior spaces are grounded

Luxury rooms offer contemporary comfort while referencing tribal identity in a meaningful way that avoids stereotypical iconography.



in biophilia, with rich colors and organic texture matching the landscape of the Tribe's ancestral home. Views of the surrounding landscape are visible from dramatic floor-to-ceiling windows at every turn. The hallway carpet features script referencing the Salish language bordered by a profile of a distant mountain range. Each room features artwork created by Tribal members, and curated displays of handcrafted artifacts leave a lasting impression on guests.

OUTSIDE

A skywalk between the tower and casino evokes the historic bridge crossing onto the Kalispel Reservation, a Tribal touchpoint symbolizing coming home. Orange wayfinding pylons emulating structural elements of Tribal logging history guide visitors through the landscape of pine and aspen groves, basalt talus, grasses, firepits and rain gardens.

BEST PRACTICES AND CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure inspiration comes directly from those who are part of the culture being presented, designers need to check the impulse to advance their own independent ideas, prioritizing visioning conversations with client leaders to determine what and how to represent

A planned meander through the district, bolstered by green spaces, will contribute to its walkability.



IMAGES BY SIGNAL ARCHITECTURE + RESEARCH

THE BEND: A DEEPLY ATYPICAL DEVELOPMENT

Led by artists, the non-profit is actively seeking to work alongside those who have shaped Georgetown to recast what a development can do to positively impact a neighborhood.

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BY ERIC
ALOZIE



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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

If you've been to Georgetown, you may have noticed the industrial buildings, or the charming strip of businesses along Airport Way South; but what you likely didn't see were many homes or apartments. Georgetown, despite offering 29,000 jobs, is home to just under 1,500 residents.

Many people would like to live here but can't because of the lack of housing stock and neighborhood services.

This is where the idea of The Bend began, and what it is in its simplest form: When completed, The Bend will offer 1,000 units of housing to Georgetown, making room for 2,500 people across nine blocks. Groundbreaking is expected this summer on the very first building.

At least 600 apartments will be affordable to households earning at or below 70% AMI,

a number that may come down with added community investments in the project. With over 75,000 square feet of affordable living and workspace, it will bring necessities like cultural and community services, grocery stores, an early learning center, artisan workshops, and small businesses, making the neighborhood more vibrant and connected.

THE VISION

The vision for The Bend began with Equinox Studios, which has anchored art in the neighborhood since 2006. Equinox hosts artists and artisans in affordable studios, and attracts visitors to experience and participate in artmaking during open studios, monthly art walks, "Art Attacks" and other public events.

With over 150 practicing artists on one block, this community has built a unique environment that is hard to replicate. The Bend seeks to create more opportunities for artists by providing workspaces and essential amenities that support both their craft and day-to-day living. In 2019, Watershed was formed as a nonprofit 501(c)3 to develop affordable housing; in 2021, we united the development plan for The

Bend with Equinox Studios.

The Bend is deeply atypical as a development – it is a nonprofit, led by artists, driven by the radical inclusion of art, making, and community in affordable housing and public space, and with a commitment list 100 strong – ranging from environmental, to social, to accessibility needs and beyond – to recast what a development can do to positively impact a neighborhood and a community.

This project is ambitious, infused with the gritty, creative spirit of Georgetown. We are actively working alongside those who have shaped this neighborhood into what it is today, carrying its history forward while forging something new.

IMPACT, STARTING WITH CONSTRUCTION

The impact The Bend seeks to make starts with the construction process. Our team has adopted an Equity in Construction (EIC) policy to ensure meaningful subcontracting, material supplier and employment opportunities were accessible to Duwamish Valley and MWBE businesses and residents. Objectives of this policy include working diligently with the general contractor to engage Duwamish Valley Community organizations for the purpose of sharing information on when and how to bid on Bend projects, contracting 25% of the project's total construction costs to Duwamish Valley and MWBE businesses and material suppliers, and requiring project subcontractors with a projected manpower forecast of six or more workers to make an effort to hire at least one qualified Duwamish Valley resident.

These guidelines help us ensure that the local community has the opportunity to become a part of this project, and benefit from the economic impacts of a development of this size.

MAKING ROOM FOR PUBLIC SPACE

Outside of “downtown” Georgetown, the neighborhood isn't very walkable today. The commercial west side of Georgetown has a unique character shaped by its industrial and manufacturing roots. It's a gritty and textured neighborhood that can sometimes feel unapproachable, but there are oases amidst the chaos. The Bend hopes to encapsulate these materials and bring them into the building designs.

The Bend, located between Fidalgo and Dawson,

The Bend is committed to sponsoring and hosting at least 250 works of art in permanent or temporary creations, installations, or events, with an ultimate goal of 1,000 over 20 years.



The Bend is committed to providing essential services to the residents and community. Puget Sound Labor Agency (PSLA) food bank, which Watershed has housed since 2022, will move into a permanent space within or adjacent to The Bend.



anchored by 4th, addresses this by designing not impervious, square blocks of housing, but carving into the blocks to create room for green space, public art, and ground plane interaction along a meandering path that is not only safe, but pleasant.

Signal Architecture + Research has led the development of the “Cookbook of the Street,” an urban planning guide structured around the metaphor of a cookbook, identifying key “ingredients” of the street design, the “tools” needed to prepare them, and examples of what successful “recipes” can look like. Just as in cooking, some ingredients are options, while others are non-negotiable. This framework is meant to guide the creation of meaningful public spaces that reflect much of its existing character yet leave room for improvisation.

The Bend is building in the only place in Georgetown where dense midrise apartments can be built. The commercial zoning in these 9 acres allows a wide variety of

activities at ground level with housing above. Commercial developers have so far overlooked the area and, without a bold plan, higher-cost housing will inevitably overrun this island of opportunity. Duwamish Valley residents have a history of activism and finding creative solutions to community challenges.

100 COMMITMENTS

The Bend is the latest example of resistance and adaptation for and by the people. Our work over the next decade to forge The Bend is guided by five Imperatives and 100 Commitments to our community.

The Bend's five imperatives, organizing the 100 commitments, are:

- **Art as Convener** (for example, commission or acquire at least 60% of artworks from women and BIPOC creators)

- **Environmental stewardship** (for example, install at least 1 watt of solar panels per gross square foot of building area)

- **Diverse and inclusive** (for example, include members of Watershed's communities in decision-making; artists, residents and workspace tenants, local community organizations, and representatives of diverse ethnic and cultural groups, in particular those which have been or are vulnerable of being displaced from the Duwamish Valley)

- **Affordability** (for example, set rents so at least 80% of apartments are rented at prices affordable to households earning at or below 60% of AMI; aim to fill 100% of workspaces with artists and artisans, nonprofits, and neighborhood-serving small business, and lay the groundwork for converting at least 100 units to resident ownerships within 20 years with affordability restrictions)

- **Livability** (for example, provide at least 10 square feet of amenity space per apartment for recreation, exercise, gathering, and/or maker spaces, and programming in each building; provide space for an early childhood education facility and

house a food vendor/grocery in one of the workspaces)

See all 100 commitments here: <https://watershedcommunity.org/our-100-commitments/>

Creating a district that is projected to double the current population of Georgetown comes with the responsibility to be responsive to the needs of the neighborhood today. The industrial and residential are cherished, and in tension with one another: freight traffic versus safe, walkable streets; manufacturing jobs versus the pollution these industries create; families versus airport noise.

Striking a balance between these competing needs is crucial as The Bend evolves to accommodate and integrate new tenants into a place that is loved, and home to a vibrant community today.

Eric Alozie is a project consultant with Watershed, working on The Bend. Lorine Moellentine is an architectural designer at Signal Architecture + Research, working on The Bend.

RESTORING JIM CREEK: A BOLD APPROACH TO SALMONID HABITAT RECOVERY AND LANDOWNER COLLABORATION

Willing landowners enabled designers to prioritize ecological science over logistical constraints in a large-scale intervention to restore hydraulic diversity and improve habitat resilience.



BY MATT
TIEDEMANN & LISA
TARIO
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Snohomish County's Jim Creek, a tributary to the South Fork Stillaguamish River, has long been a refuge for endangered Chinook salmon. However, years of habitat degradation, simplified stream structure and warming waters threatened the viability of this critical waterway. In response, a collaboration between Surface Water Management (SWM), a division of the county's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), environmental engineers and forward-thinking landowners culminated in an ambitious restoration effort – one that embraced risk and innovative hydrological design while putting landowners at the heart of the process.

SCIENCE FIRST, CONSTRAINTS SECOND

The Jim Creek Restoration Project benefited from a fortunate advantage at the outset: willing landowners who were open to collaboration. This led to a fundamental shift in approach: the ability to prioritize ecological science over logistical constraints, ensuring that restoration efforts addressed the creek's most pressing needs.

Early regional studies identified Jim Creek's limitations – lack of deep pools, insufficient wood for cover and rapidly dissipating cold-water inputs from Vos Creek. These factors contributed to declining salmon populations, warranting a large-scale intervention to restore hydraulic diversity and improve habitat resilience.



Matt Tiedemann during a September 2021 field visit.

A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON TRUST

The project team first identified the most effective restoration areas and then engaged landowners in targeted outreach. A defining success of this effort was the partnership with the Anderegg family, who own both banks of Jim Creek where it meets Vos Creek. Their flexibility and enthusiasm helped shape a high-impact restoration design focused on rebuilding natural stream complexity.

SWM and the design team engaged the Andereggs from the outset – explaining the science, setting realistic expectations and welcoming their input. This early and ongoing involvement proved crucial. While many landowners hesitate at the prospect of heavy construction on their property, the Andereggs embraced the vision, actively participating in the design process.

They even kept the team informed about key site changes, documenting the creek's transformation with video updates – especially during critical flood events.

GOING BIG: THE ROLE OF ENGINEERED LOG JAMS

The project team adopted an ambitious design philosophy, opting for Engineered Log Jams (ELJs) – large, strategically placed log structures that promote streambed diversity, create deep pools and provide cover for salmon. The scale of the installations was striking; at least one-third of the channel was intentionally obscured by ELJs, ensuring substantial hydrological influence.

The team used advanced techniques to anchor and interlock structures, allowing the river to interact dynamically with the wood rather than washing it away. By mimicking natural log

jams found in pristine river systems, these structures enhance fish habitat while stabilizing streambanks and improving flood resilience.

THE REAL-WORLD TEST: A RECORD FLOOD

In December 2023, just months after the project's completion, Jim Creek experienced a record-breaking flood event. High water levels, powerful currents and extreme sediment transport created a significant natural test for the project's design. Rather than focusing solely on structural integrity, the team assessed how the restoration elements functioned as intended – mimicking natural processes, promoting habitat formation, interacting with flow dynamics and supporting the overall ecological goals of the project.

For the Andereggs, witnessing their property adapt to such an extreme event was

a powerful validation of their trust in the project. Their videos of the flooding provided valuable insight into how the restoration influenced water movement and sediment deposition, reinforcing the importance of designing for natural processes rather than rigid structural outcomes.

LESSONS FOR FUTURE RESTORATION EFFORTS

Jim Creek's restoration offers a roadmap for future projects facing similar challenges. Several key lessons emerged:

- Prioritize science over convenience – Selecting the most ecologically impactful locations first yields greater restoration success.
- Engage landowners as partners, not just stakeholders – Meaningful communication and collaboration can transform landowners into champions of a project.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SNOHOMISH COUNTY

- Embrace risk and think big – Small-scale interventions often fail to achieve meaningful ecological improvements. By designing for bold hydraulic changes, the Jim Creek project delivered lasting habitat benefits.
- Monitor and adapt – Ongoing observation, especially in the wake of extreme weather events, ensures restoration work meets its goals and informs future efforts.

A MODEL FOR PUGET SOUND CONSERVATION

As climate change intensifies flood events and further strains Pacific Northwest salmon habitats, Jim Creek serves as a powerful case study in restoration done right. It demonstrates that the correct mix of scientific rigor, collaborative landowner engagement and willingness to take bold risks can help revitalize degraded streams.

For business and environmental leaders in the Puget Sound region, the project underscores an essential truth: conservation and economic interests need not be at odds. By investing in smart, science-driven restoration efforts, communities can build both ecological resilience and stronger, more engaged partnerships between the public and private sectors.

The Jim Creek project was funded by grants from the

Jim Creek in Snohomish County in September 2024. Mimicking natural log jams found in pristine river systems enhanced fish habitat while stabilizing streambanks and improving flood resilience.



State of Washington Salmon Recovery Funding Board through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), the State of Washington Department of Ecology, and by Snohomish County Surface Water Management Utility fees.

Matt Tiedemann is a senior engineer with Natural Systems Design (NSD), the lead engineering firm

on the Jim Creek Restoration Project. Lisa Tario is a river engineer at Snohomish County Department of

Conservation & Natural Resources (DCNR) Surface Water Management Division.

Nicole and Jimmy Anderegg, who own both banks of Jim Creek where it meets Vos Creek in Snohomish County.



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DESKS TO DWELLINGS: TACKLING OFFICE-TO-RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

Despite potential cost, design, and regulation constraints, adaptive reuse projects can pencil out when designers understand which challenges to expect.

Within large cities nationwide, office-to-residential conversions offer the chance to simultaneously address the need for more housing and alleviate office vacancies. Developers are studying vacant office buildings in Seattle to determine whether multi-unit residential conversions are possible. This process isn't as simple as adding a bed and calling it a day.



BY BRYAN ZAGGERS
COUGHLIN PORTER
LUNDEEN

Yet despite potential cost, design, and regulation constraints, adaptive reuse projects open the door to creative and valuable opportunities.

Understanding specific challenges, such as building code and those in the diagram, makes navigating these projects more manageable. Working hand in hand with architects, contractors, and other consultants at the beginning of a project makes it easier to renovate the existing office to function better as a residential building, since challenges such as rerouting plumbing and HVAC require coordination between multiple trades.

Through collaborative efforts, these projects can bring us closer to tackling the housing shortage and repurposing vacant office buildings. Converting unoccupied commercial spaces for residential use offers a more sustainable solution to housing issues while revitalizing commercial districts with increased foot traffic for local businesses.

INCENTIVES FOR OFFICE-TO-RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

Government bodies and municipalities across the U.S. are listening to developers and are seeking ways to facilitate the opportunities presented by these projects by offering incentive programs. These programs attempt to streamline the process and speed up the

redevelopment of vacant office buildings.

While each city has its own program, Seattle specifically confronts cost alleviation and regulatory requirements. The Seattle City Council's sales and use tax deferral on construction costs lowers overall project expenses as long as the developer dedicates 10% of units for affordable housing throughout 10 years. The city council also eliminated design reviews and development standards for office-to-residential conversions, reducing the time a project spends in the approval process, which can be several months. In addition to cost incentives, small expansions to existing structures are permissible to accommodate new residential use.

The city of Seattle hopes these legislative changes will result in 1,000-2,000 new homes in the next seven years, and office-to-residential conversions offer a less wasteful means of tackling the housing crisis.

THE QUEEN OF CONVERSION CANDIDATES

In the last twenty years, 1.3 percent of the total commercial space in the Seattle area (which includes 14 office buildings) has been converted or is planned to be converted into housing, hotels, or life science labs. The 201 Queen Anne Ave. N project is among them, with construction starting within the next two months.

Before starting the project, Coughlin Porter Lundeen's structural engineers dug through archival drawings and reports to gain a fundamental understanding of the existing building. Access to prolific drawing and report archives is crucial to providing an accurate assessment and determining feasibility of the adaptive reuse transformation.

The vacant four-story office's revitalization into a 74-unit apartment building is possible due to the building's relatively small floor plate and existing two-story parking garage tucked neatly into the sloped site. As office-to-residential conversions become more common in

3D View of 201 Queen Anne Avenue, a 1980s office building which will be converted to housing later this spring.



RENDERING COURTESY OF BOARD & VELLUM

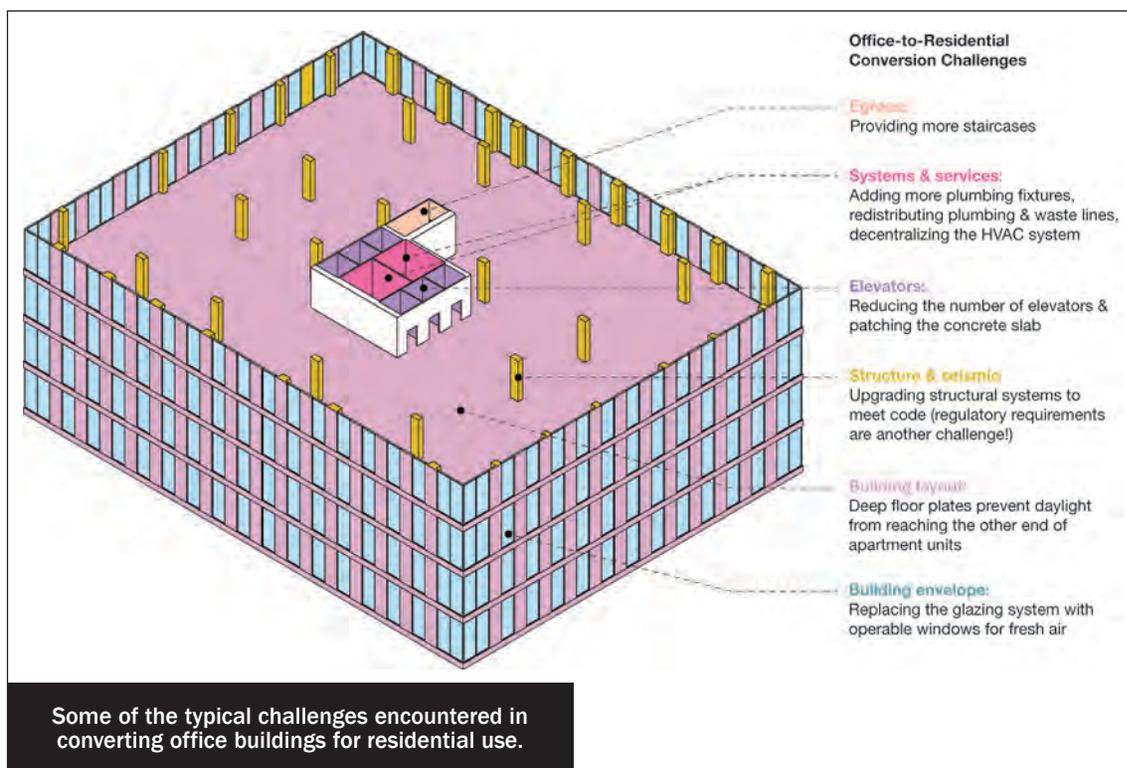


DIAGRAM BY COUGHLIN PORTER LUNDEEN

Seattle, it's more likely that two- to six-story buildings will be rehabilitated due to their size, in contrast to New York City's fleet of high rises. Zones in Seattle which allow conversion projects typically have buildings with fewer floors.

RESPONSIBLE, RESOURCEFUL DESIGN

Conversion projects are often labeled as cost prohibitive without fully understanding cost saving opportunities. The design team

can maintain as much as possible from the building's existing structure while balancing necessary changes. This eliminates unnecessary demolition, reducing waste and embodied carbon from

LEVERAGING DEAFSPACE PRINCIPLES AND MASS TIMBER TO ADVANCE SCHOOL DESIGN

Tuned for the needs of Deaf and hard-of-hearing youth, design strategies at Washington School for the Deaf could benefit any learning environment.

For many, Deaf schools are the only place where communication is fully accessible. Many students experience isolation in home communities where American Sign Language (ASL) signers are few and far between.

As a residential campus, the Washington School for the Deaf is more than a school — it is home.



BY JOANN HIND-MARSH WILCOX
MITHUN

One student expressed, “when school feels like an institution, I feel institutionalized.” This underscores the importance

of providing biophilia-rich environments that reduce stress, improve well-being, and foster student community and belonging. Shauna Bilyeu, executive director of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth and WSD explains, “many of our students live on campus from Sunday through Friday, so it was important that the school feel like home. I wanted buildings that were happy and full of light. To me, that meant mass timber.”

The recently completed \$61 million, 50,000-square-foot progressive design-build campus expansion by Skanska and Mithun provides a full suite of academic, administrative and physical education programs for 150 students. Divine Academic includes areas for administration and staff support, a K12 library and zones for elementary and secondary teaching spaces, including 14 classrooms with shared project-based learning labs, and eight labs for ASL, art, science, life skills, transition (work force training) and culinary programs.

Hunter Gymnasium bookends the new campus entry and includes a competitive gym, weight room, teaching space for health, as well as gym support and a public lobby. Site improvements include parking and arrival areas, a central courtyard, two all-weather sports fields and a new inclusive playground. The new buildings join existing

At the school entry, a sheltered campus gateway invites lingering, conversation and interpersonal connection while relaying Deaf pride.



PHOTOS BY LARA SWIMMER/ESTO

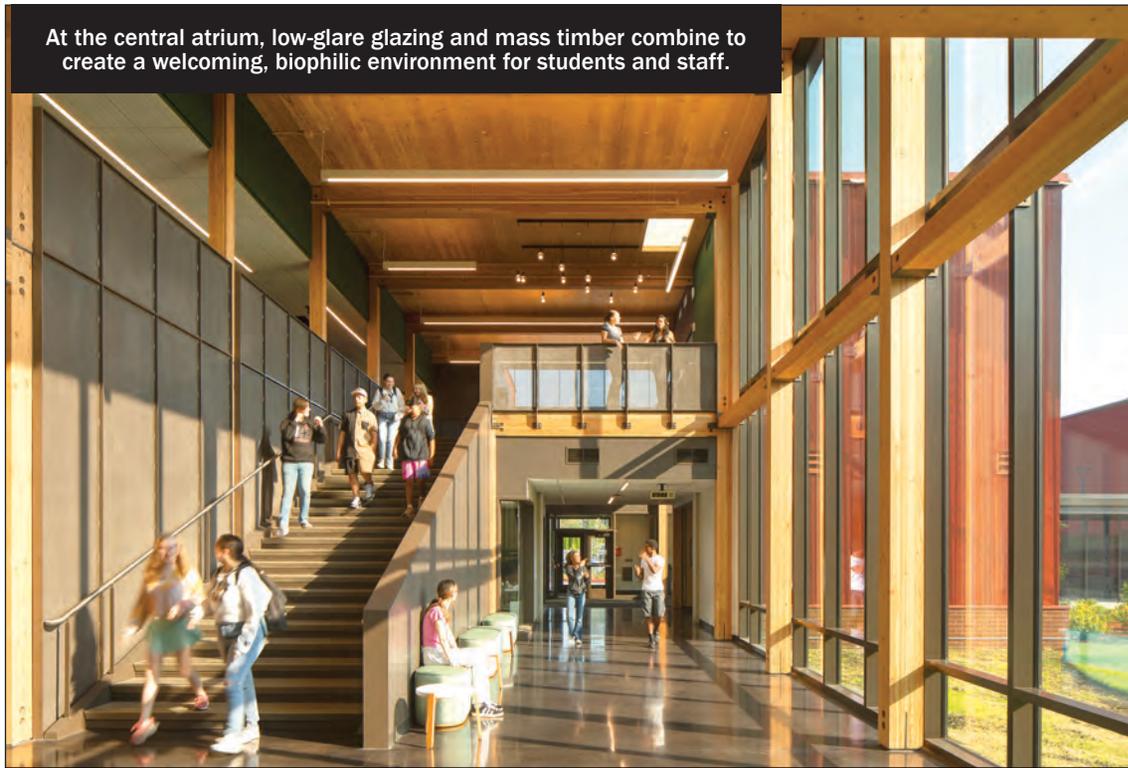
campus facilities for residential life, dining and theater.

DEAFSPACE PRINCIPLES AT THE FOUNDATION

The project centers the Deaf experience. Students, staff and community directed design development and ensured the school's educational goals were achieved while honoring Deaf culture. Deaf-led workshops activated broad user engagement, informing a design that contributes to campus connectivity, transparency and a sense of belonging.

Central to the success of the WSD project is its adherence to Gallaudet University's DeafSpace Design Guidelines, which focus on optimizing the relationship between the built environment and the sensory experiences of deaf individuals. Five key principles — space and proximity, sensory reach, mobility and proximity, light and color, and acoustics — guide every aspect of the design to foster inclusivity and create spaces where all users feel welcomed and

At the central atrium, low-glare glazing and mass timber combine to create a welcoming, biophilic environment for students and staff.



supported.

Now that the project is complete, WSD students are immersed in spaces that are Deaf-centered, resulting in a fully accessible learning environment that engages

the whole student through heightened sensory experience, responsively tuned to each program, pedagogy and purpose.

The design facilitates spatial awareness ‘in 360

degrees’ through visual and tactile cues to improve orientation and wayfinding, including spatial organization between program areas, glazed corners, and vibratory floors that all enable

an enhanced sensory reach from the environment to the signer. The size, layout and furnishings were determined by the space needed to maintain clear visual communication of the full signing space, including facial expressions.

Circulation and gathering spaces are designed to enable signers to move through space uninterrupted and scan their surroundings easily while navigating with conversation partners. High-performance, low-glare glazing optimizes controlled daylight and minimizes eye strain from backlit conditions, providing soft, diffused natural light. Electric lighting is both soft and even, designed to eliminate shadow patterns and fully illuminate the signer's space, including facial expressions.

Background noise, acoustics and reverberation were tightly controlled. The structure was designed to optimize acoustics using mass timber, with acoustic testing to ensure that productive vibration facilitates communication for deaf students and extends proprioceptive reach to foster a heightened sense of awareness within space.

MADE FOR MASS TIMBER

The academic building's structure renews memories of a demolished campus landmark, the Red Barn by Deaf architect Olof Hanson (1862-1933), where generations of alumni learned a trade. Wood celebrates the school's deep roots in the Pacific Northwest and finds equilibrium between reflection, or the preservation of campus memory, and the community's desire to embrace transformation and latest thinking in education facility design.

In this way, the mass timber design significantly reduces embodied carbon and supports occupant wellbeing — reducing stress, improving daylighting and increasing engagement in a conducive, home-like learning environment, highly tuned to maximize ASL/English bilingual instructional practices, equipping students to thrive.

The project employed a cost-saving design to enable mass timber construction within the owner's budget, pioneered by Mithun and PCS Structural Solutions in their white paper, Mass Timber Schools: Building for Wellness. The design utilizes a 12' x 24' wood column layout with cost-efficient triply CLT, providing flexibility for various room sizes and proportions while ensuring that all spaces remain col-

umn-free.

This unique design approach also eliminated the need for girders at the core and perimeter, allowing the windows to extend all the way to the underside of the floor of the upper story, bringing natural light further into the building and showcasing the exposed timber structure, creating a cohesive and aesthetically pleasing design.

These collaborative design components were enabled by the progressive design-build approach the Department of Enterprise Services selected for WSD, promoting continued cooperation between the construction and design teams from project conception through completion. The mass timber frame and decking were installed in just 19 days by an integrated team of carpenters and steel workers, rather than two separate crews working independently, vastly speeding up the installation process. Sealer was applied to the mass timber components at the factory and before delivery to the project site. Once on site, each column was wrapped with a water resistant and UV protective wrap to shield the columns from moisture intrusion and UV degradation. This sufficiently shielded the timber from the elements, even during Washington's wettest part of the year, resulting in minimal remediation from water stains and sun bleaching.

A NEW MODEL FOR BROAD APPLICATION

More than just a learning environment, Washington School for the Deaf (WSD) Divine Academic and Hunter Gymnasium is home for some and a model for all, with broad lessons to teach.

The project's mass timber structure delivers a welcoming, non-institutional aesthetic, serves as a critical element supporting Deaf users' interaction with the physical environment, and contributes to low embodied carbon emissions of 88.5 kgCO₂e/m². The design's deep integration of universal principles for accessibility, alongside a deep understanding of culture and learning experiences, demonstrates that design has the power to ensure every student, of every ability, is equipped to thrive.

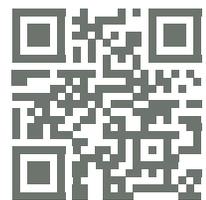
JoAnn Hindmarsh Wilcox is an architect and partner at Mithun who has completed more than 60 K-12 school projects.

Learning spaces leverage a mass timber kit-of-parts approach that amplifies vibration to extend users' perceptive reach and is driven by the spatial needs, U-shaped furniture arrangements, lighting and acoustic characteristics that benefit Deaf students.



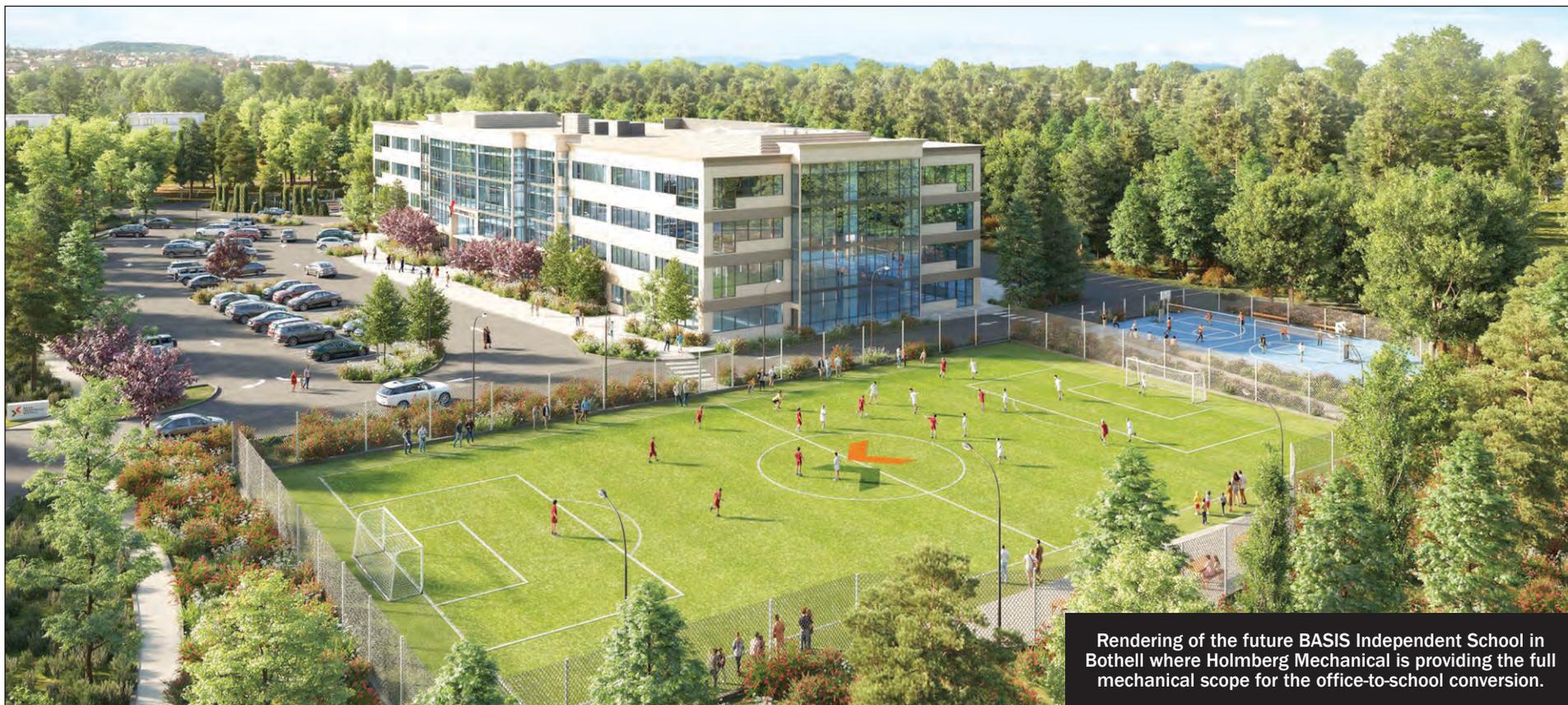

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Rendering of the future BASIS Independent School in Bothell where Holmberg Mechanical is providing the full mechanical scope for the office-to-school conversion.

IMAGES COURTESY OF HOLMBERG MECHANICAL

TRANSFORMING TODAY'S VACANT OFFICE BUILDINGS INTO TOMORROW'S EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Collaborative visioning, creative thinking and available space have created new possibilities for private schools to consider sustainable alternative locations for future growth.

When we notice an increase of “for lease” signs in windows of empty office buildings, it does not sit well with communities, not to mention it’s aesthetically unappealing. In the construction industry, as demand for education grows and commercial office space declines in utilization, repurposing vacant office buildings into schools presents a compelling opportunity. This transformation comes with unique challenges and opportunities in engineering, mechanical, plumbing and fire protection systems.



BY ANGELA WHITE
HOLMBERG
MECHANICAL

ASSESSING EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

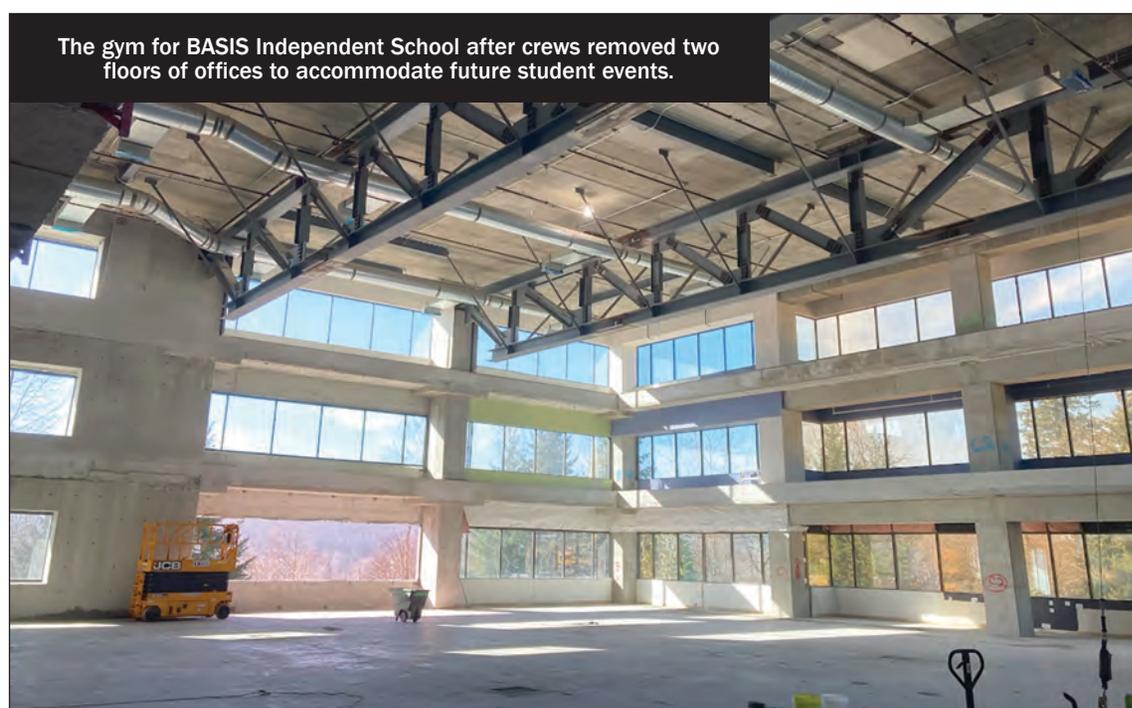
Building use conversion includes evaluating the existing mechanical infra-

structure. Office buildings are typically designed for a different occupancy load and operational schedule than schools, meaning systems like mechanical and plumbing, must be adapted. Schools require better air quality, increased ventilation, and specialized zoning for classrooms, cafeterias and gymnasiums, which may necessitate upgrades to existing systems.

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS AND AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Indoor air quality is a top priority for educational spaces. Many office buildings have mechanical systems designed for lower occupant densities, which may not provide sufficient fresh air for a school environment. Retrofitting may involve:

- Upgrading air handling units to support increased ventilation needs.
- Implementing demand-controlled ventilation to optimize energy efficiency.
- Enhancing filtration systems to meet building codes



The gym for BASIS Independent School after crews removed two floors of offices to accommodate future student events.

and standards for educational facilities.

PLUMBING AND RESTROOM MODIFICATIONS

Schools have significantly different plumbing require-

ments than office buildings. Restrooms need to accommodate higher usage, with additional fixtures installed to meet building codes for educational occupancy. Additionally, the conversion may require:

- Installing water fountains and bottle-filling stations.
- Repurposing existing space for the addition of locker rooms with showers, toilets, sinks, etc., plus laundry facilities.
- Modifying or expanding

restrooms to support student capacity, and ensuring accessibility compliance with ADA standards.

- Science rooms require dedicated sinks and accommodations for acid waste; art rooms need sinks that contain clay/sediment traps; cafeterias require preparation sinks, grease traps and food service equipment.

- For a mechanical designer, these projects have special considerations such as increasing fresh air requirements and updated code compliance for fresh air due to higher density learning environments. Each project includes energy improvements which include high-efficiency equipment and building automated control systems.

- Restroom facilities also require upgrades and additions, such as locker rooms with showers that a typical office building would not need. The same is true for redesigning an existing corporate break room and reimagining it into a commercial kitchen to feed students.

BENEFITS OF OFFICE-TO-SCHOOL CONVERSION

Here's why it can be a great idea:

Even with the betterments to the facilities, the cost-benefit analysis far exceeds that of building a ground-up new structure. Repurposing a vacant building is the best way to align with sustainable construction practices, reducing demolition debris in landfills, limiting the manufacturing of new equipment, and lowering the project's carbon footprint.

Another benefit to this type of renovation: utilities, roads and public transportation access are already in place, making it easier for students, parents and staff to commute.

Permitting departments in certain municipalities encourage adaptive reuse and offer incentives.

Most office buildings are located in a commercial/industrial district. A school built within these areas makes it convenient for working parents who work within the area to drop off and pick up their kids. Schools that

are located in commercial/industrial districts can partner with local businesses to provide students with real-world learning experiences by collaborating with nearby businesses.

Schools are enticed by the room for expansion of vacant office buildings, with many buildings having multiple floors or large open areas that can be adjusted as the school grows.

Adaptive reuse can shorten construction timelines compared to building from scratch, which means students are in classrooms more than traditional ground-up construction.

Regular activity around the building reduces crime and improves public perception of the area, increasing safety.

CHALLENGES OF OFFICE-TO-PRIVATE SCHOOL CONVERSION

While repurposing a vacant office building into a school has many benefits, there are also challenges to consider:

Converting office structure ceiling heights for multipurpose rooms like gymnasiums, theaters, STEM labs, open learning areas, etc. can be expensive and challenging to execute. Modifying existing window placement and accessing natural light must be considered for future students during the redesign period.

For elementary-age schools, designing and coordinating outdoor space is critical. Most office buildings typically do not have enough room for playgrounds, so creativity for adding is required.

Parking and traffic flow regulations for schools may differ from those for office buildings, requiring adjustments to accommodate student drop-offs and pickups.

Soundproofing may be needed if the building is located in a high-traffic area or if floors are stacked in a way that could cause noise disruptions.

Office-to-school conversion projects may need to add fencing to deter unwanted visitors from seeing or entering the school grounds.

A REWARDING CHALLENGE

Transforming an office

building into a private school is a rewarding challenge that requires careful mechanical planning. By addressing mechanical, plumbing and safety upgrades proactively, mechanical contractors play a vital role in creating a safe, efficient, and inspiring learning environment.

"The opportunity that we have witnessed in two recent projects (Summit Classical Christian Issaquah & Basis Independent Bothell) has provided an eye-opening experience for us as a mechanical contractor," Chris Ebbert, Holmberg Mechanical's Sheet Metal Superintendent said. "It has allowed the schools, community, and student body to repurpose existing structures into a much-needed resource and at times, a fraction of the cost. In the mechanical sector, it also lets us engineer and repurpose an existing system that has been well maintained in its previous life. This provides the end user with a first-class structure and mechanical system."

Angela White is Holmberg Mechanical's Marketing/PR Manager.

Roddy Sairol, a Local 66 sheet metal craftsman for Holmberg Mechanical, installs duct work for better air ventilation for students at Summit Classical Christian School in Issaquah, previously a vacant office space.





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FIVE IN 2025: DESIGN TRENDS TRANSFORMING OUR CITIES

Design Forecast is Gensler's annual exploration of the most relevant issues facing the design and architecture industry.

Finally, in 2025, our Pacific Northwest cities are emerging from the challenges of the immediate post-COVID era. Characterized by low utilization of our



BY RYAN HAINES
GENSLER SEATTLE

central business districts, available retail storefronts, and the remaining effects of a general lack of citizen presence and accountability in our downtowns, we are seeing life not just return to our cities, but the "green shoots" that suggest we are turning the corner from surviving to thriving.

Challenges remain, just as they always had, as cities grapple with adapting to policy changes, behavioral shifts, population growth, shifting employment models, housing scarcity and affordability, tax base erosion, aging infrastructure, and significant shifts in demand in our real estate ecosystem. It's a time to assess what we want from our cities and how we will move forward toward that goal.

There are signals of change in many cities that will define the future of our downtowns, though their relevance and impact will continue to differ from one city to the next. At Gensler we recently published our 2025 Design Forecast spotlighting five transformative forces set to shape the future of urban life, emphasizing human-centered, adaptable spaces and a shift toward resilient urban environments.

1 Experience-driven lifestyle districts reignite global cities

Mixed-use lifestyle and entertainment districts will take center stage in 2025 as the new anchors for cities looking to drive community engagement and bring people together around visceral shared experiences. Hospitality, retail, sports and residential spaces make up the mix of these experience-driven areas, whose rise is also driving demand for safe streets and reliable transit



222 Fifth is a 200,000-square-foot, cutting-edge research and development (R&D) building that prioritizes flexibility, tenant engagement and sustainable design.

PHOTO BY HEYWOOD CHAN

options.

While central business districts were historically the heart of a downtown, the shift in our work patterns left many of them less able to provide the critical mass of activity needed to anchor the arts, retail, entertainment, dining and tourism that make cities healthy.

While the Seattle metro area has historically seen less mixed-use development than other adjacent markets, a focus on creating new and continuing to expand existing mixed-use lifestyle and entertainment districts in

Seattle is critical, including around our sports venues, neighborhood centers, retail nodes, and specifically in our downtown office buildings. These districts go beyond traditional retail and residential spaces by creating immersive destination environments where people can live, work, play, and connect in a seamless, integrated way.

By incorporating art galleries, performance spaces, and great food, these areas attract both locals and visitors seeking unique, layered and shared experiences.

They align with Seattle's broader goals of promoting livability, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility, while also offering new opportunities for social and economic development.

2 Sustainable design supercharges innovation, values

With organizations everywhere increasingly wary of climate risk, buildings designed with resilient and sustainable strategies are trading at premium values. This sustainable surge is also driving demand for game-

changing innovations in construction processes and the materials industry. Adaptive reuse of old buildings, energy-efficient designs, weather-scenario planning, and other green techniques are anticipating local climate challenges while lowering waste and carbon. Solutions such as mass timber, low- or no-carbon interior finishes and furnishings, and zero-carbon cement are leading a materials revolution.

The growing demand for sustainable design in Seattle, driven by our region's love for stewardship, and

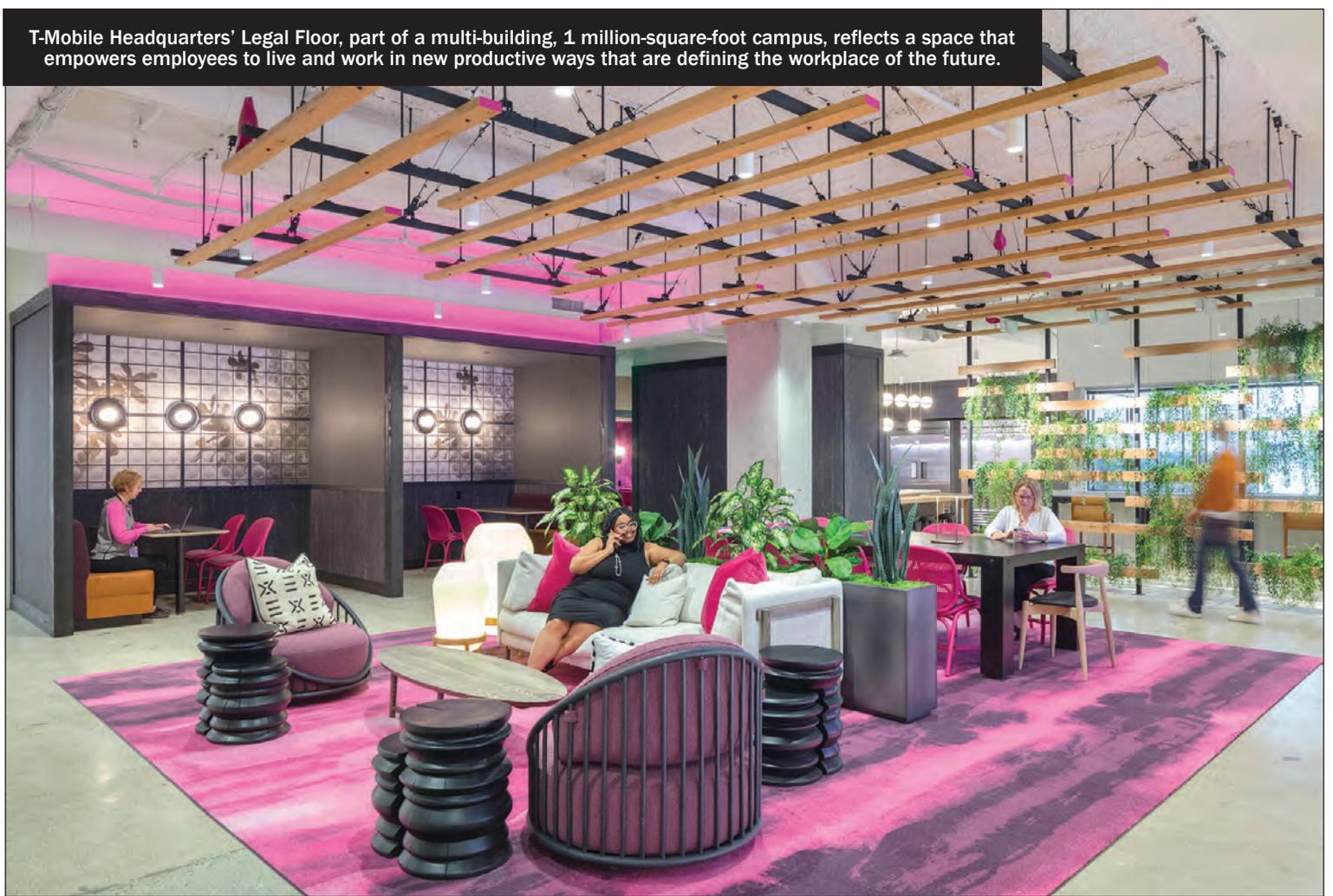
innovation and expressed through our tenants and residents willing to pay a premium for innovative and sustainable places, is pushing developers, architects, and city officials to explore and support the integration of new technologies and creative approaches that minimize environmental impact while enhancing urban livability. From net-zero energy buildings to green roofs and solar-powered operations, the city's focus on sustainability is pushing boundaries in design and construction, making Seattle a leader in the development of resilient urban spaces. Green spaces and sustainable public amenities improve the quality of life for everyone, particularly in underserved communities.

3 Deeply discounted buildings drive conversion boom

With aging office buildings and other devalued assets trading at deeply discounted rates, the adaptive reuse boom is poised to create valuable new real estate beyond just office-to-residential conversion. As the cost of capital comes down, 2025 will usher in a new financial environment that will inspire developers to seek out creative conversions of all types, including retail to healthcare, retail to sports, office to senior living, office to science labs, and more.

The promise of conversions to rebalance the utilization of existing buildings to match the new demand profile and solve our housing shortage has been slower to emerge than we would like. As significant as our office vacancy is, we live in a region with so many attractive qualities from globally respected talent, beautiful natural surroundings, thriving arts, sports & entertainment, and a great food ecosystem. This fundamental strength and the optimism it affords us has tempered the decline in building valuations that are fueling the conversions in other markets.

Recent tax abatement and city development process streamlining is helping to make more conversions a reality. By converting older office buildings, warehouses, and industrial structures into mixed-use residential, commercial, and entertainment spaces, developers can meet the growing demand for housing in urban areas without the high costs associated with new construction. Developers, near and far, are taking notice of the opportunity in our city. With subtle changes in the financial markets, we will see these



T-Mobile Headquarters' Legal Floor, part of a multi-building, 1 million-square-foot campus, reflects a space that empowers employees to live and work in new productive ways that are defining the workplace of the future.

PHOTO BY HEYWOOD CHAN

revitalizing projects start to pencil and move towards realization.

4 Talk turns to action on attainable housing

Attainable market-rate housing becomes the number one priority for cities around the world in 2025 as new financial incentives and lowering interest rates converge with changes to zoning laws and building codes to create an attractive market for housing developments of all types.

The ongoing conversation around attainable housing has shifted to action, as city leaders, our largest employers, developers, and community organizations increasingly prioritize the creation of affordable housing for residents at various income levels. Local government has implemented policies that encourage the construction of more attainable housing options. The public and private sectors have come together to fund and implement innovative housing solutions, including modular homes, micro-apartments and adaptive reuse of older buildings. In exchange for increased development limits, developers are increasingly embracing projects that incorporate affordability alongside market-rate units, ensuring that new developments serve diverse com-



Bluevale at 510 5th Ave. S.W. is an example of a recent successful office-to-residential conversion.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GENSLER

munities.

5 The workplace of the future has arrived

The future workplace is here now, and it's all about employee experience, inspiration, and the value proposition realized by building owners and developers. In 2025, tenants will continue their flight to quality in search of workplace experiences

that motivate employees and meet their professional aspirations. Landlords looking to compete must be laser focused on transforming their spaces into fully amenitized, Class A buildings close to transit and within the 20-minute lifestyle mix. For some time, the Seattle office market has been driven by the expectations of our Tech workforce. Owned

and leased buildings alike feature more of a mixed-use, experience-driven approach to space including creating space for small businesses to serve key roles in the daily ecosystem for their employees. Multi-tenant landlords understand the expectations of the non-Tech business sector have followed and that

DESIGN TRENDS — PAGE 27



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UNLOCKING HOUSING IN BELLEVUE

How architects and developers can capitalize on the new Eastside transit infrastructure, including new design opportunities brought forth by future upzoning.



BY SKYE
BREDBERG



JOHN
STOUT

WEBER THOMPSON

the single downtown core but still near amenities, housing and transit. This model blends the benefits of suburban and urban planning, distributing population and jobs across a larger urban area to reduce congestion, travel time and carbon emissions and increase accessibility, diversity and resilience.

WHERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

How can we design and plan buildings that meet the challenging market conditions facing development, while also creating a new type of urban center that is not car dependent and is more engaging at grade? Cars are not the enemy here, but it is short-sighted to assume all future development should treat cars and parking as the priority simply because that's how we do it today.

The Eastside developed around a car-centric culture. As a result, the buildings and neighborhood amenities are spread out, a problem that the light rail network and new pedestrian amenities improves upon but does not completely solve.

People in the Northwest love the ability to drive for weekend fun: skiing, hiking, or a weekend road trip, but the daily commute, a dinner downtown, or running errands is where we can reduce vehicle dependency with strategic planning and excellent design. An at-grade network that encourages walking, biking, and easy access to light rail and other public transit stations makes those quick trips possible without flooding the streets with more traffic. Design can support this by creating more engagement at the ground plane, with a mix of uses and more residential amenities, an opportunity that the new Wilburton zoning will provide.

ADDRESSING HOUSING AND THE GROUND PLANE

The two largest challenges we face today are tackling the housing crisis and finding new ways to activate the ground plane to encourage interconnectivity without zoning-required retail. Bellevue's 2044 Comprehensive Plan and upzoning of targeted neighborhoods is a step toward increasing density and the housing supply, but the design community

needs to remain diligent in communication with these jurisdictions and stakeholders, to ensure momentum is maintained and that zoning aligns.

At the ground plane, the traditional method of screening the ground level in retail and assuming it will provide vibrancy on the street can no longer be the only solution in the post-Covid and online shopping era.

Developers and cities should consider how lobbies, amenities and hybrid environments can connect to the pedestrian realm instead of just relying on a specific use. Transparency is important, but so is character and activity, both of which are missing from an empty retail storefront.

Housing can help remedy the issue by placing residential balconies, windows and units closer to grade, with updated zoning that removes arbitrary step backs and allows flexibility at the property line facades. We should move beyond requirements that are vestiges of early century planning allowing housing to be closer to grade, both increasing density and providing activity and more eyes on the street.

Towers can exist above and connect with public space below instead of always being required to step back, where those step backs result in forced massing that is disconnected from active uses. Current zoning is working against new design solutions to preserve century-old practices and ideologies, and so perhaps the traditional wedding cake zoning needs a quiet death.

THE BIG PICTURE

New larger residential floorplates that increase efficiency, much taller zoning heights that align with construction types and methodologies, and unlimited or bonus FAR for housing are just a few of the changes in the pipeline for these upzones. Paired with the effects of House Bill 1293 that is targeted towards streamlining and shortening the entitlement and permit processes; by clarifying design guidelines and the submittal process, regulations are finally taking a step into the 21st century.

Transit, upzoning and new state laws are combining to create a torrent of opportu-

Artist rendering of a well-connected, pedestrian focused ground plane for a large-scale development.



RENDERING COURTESY OF WEBER THOMPSON

What's going on in Bellevue? Just in case you've scrolled past all the articles in your news feeds lately, 2025 will be a big year for the Eastside. The long overdue East Link Light Rail Extension will finally open, creating the first new mass transit connection between Seattle, Bellevue and Redmond since the opening of the original Evergreen Point floating bridge in the 1960s.

To respond to such a major infrastructure overhaul, the city has been busy reconsidering land uses and rewriting code to upzone land around those stations. The largest upzone will occur in the Wilburton neighborhood just across I-405 from Downtown Bellevue, transforming nearly 300 acres of warehouses, parking lots and car dealerships into high density Transit Oriented Developments (TOD), with big incentives for all housing types.

Paired with the explosive job growth on the east side in the last decade, these changes are laying the groundwork for a new type of urban center; one built around light-rail, bike, pedestrian and automobile corridors, all coalescing in relatively low-density zones that have huge potential for growth.

WHAT CAN WE LOOK AT FOR INSPIRATION?

Imagine South Lake Union and Denny Triangle with a new light rail system running through its heart. Or consider B.C. to the north, where Vancouver's former suburbs of Burnaby, Surrey and Brentwood, all exploded with shopping, entertainment and high-density residential centers when the new light rail and upzoning occurred.

It's a concept known as polycentric cities, where the urban center becomes decentralized, giving people opportunities to live outside

nity and unlocking density for underutilized areas on the Eastside. Our design approach needs to evolve with it, prioritizing how large projects can fully capitalize upon the new transit, bike and pedestrian infrastructure to create highly livable and desirable neighborhoods, not just suburbs.

Skye Bredberg is a senior project manager and senior associate at Weber Thompson, managing complex projects in Bellevue and Seattle. John Stout is a design principal in the firm's high-rise studio working on large complex, multi-building developments.

FROM OBLIGATION TO DESTINATION: RETHINKING WORKPLACE DESIGN

Mindful selection of programs and amenities creates high-value interactions and experiences for employees.



BY JOSLYN
BALZARINI



CHRISTA
JANSEN

HKS

Seattle is one step closer to achieving 2019 foot traffic levels, as employees slowly – or fairly rapidly, in some cases – filter back into the workplace. As corporate leaders continue to enforce new return-to-office mandates, many companies must now resume new build or renovation projects that were temporarily halted during a period of heightened risk and uncertainty.

While the “Great Remote Work Experiment” led many employees to replicate their ideal workstations at home, such individualized spaces, while great for heads-down work, can limit the potential of users. So, what can companies do to encourage employees to come back to the office? Culture will play a big role for many organizations looking to implement new policies.

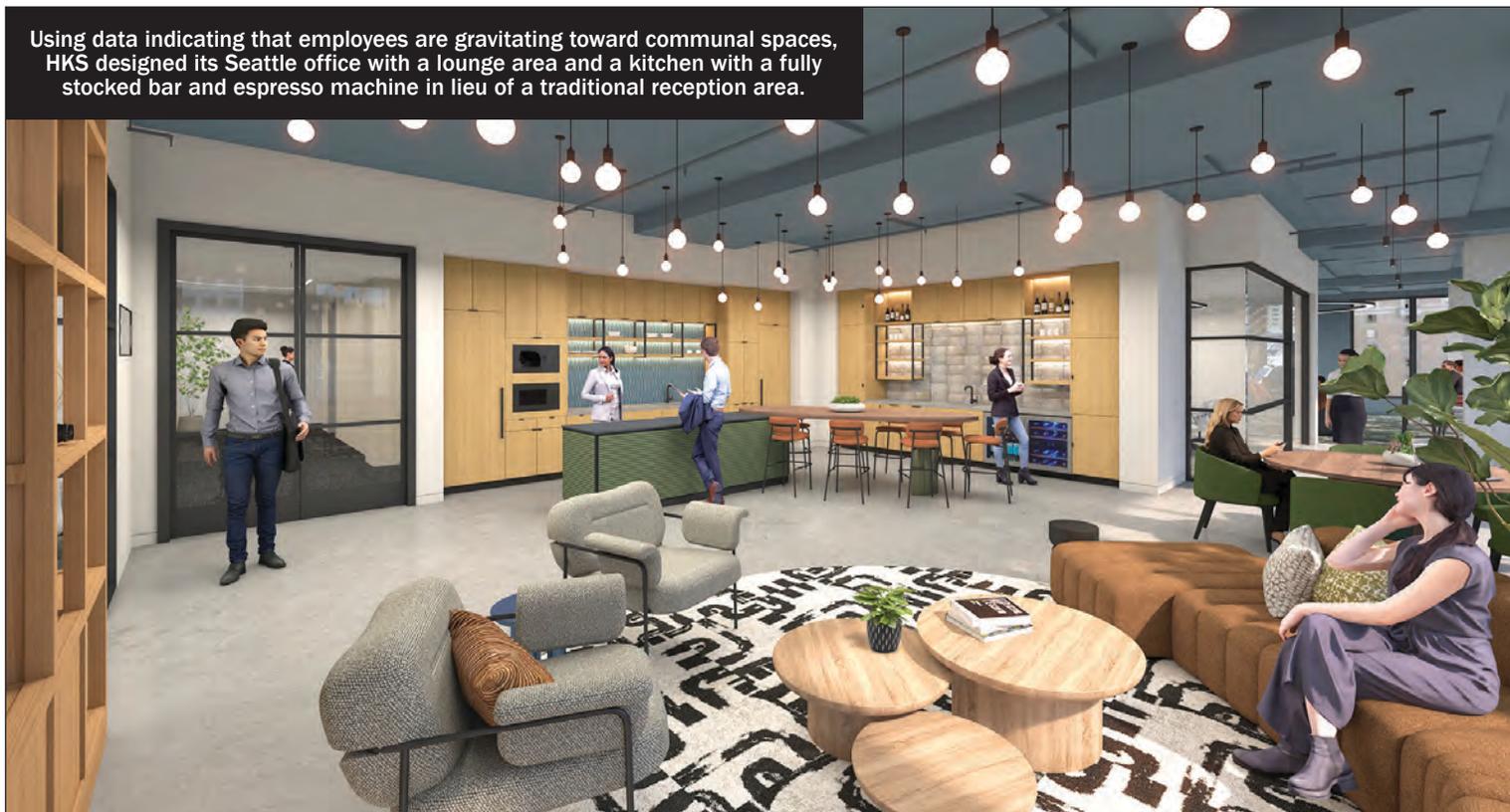
PRIORITIZING CONNECTION

When rethinking workplace design, companies that are purposeful in the selection of programs and amenities that define their space create high-value interactions and experiences for employees in return.

While every company’s culture is different, one thing remains the same: people crave connection. After restrictions were first lifted three years ago, people flocked to restaurants and other types of shared cultural events, desperate for meaningful interactions. Drawing inspiration from the hospitality industry, design teams have since worked to erase employees’ perception of the traditional office space, bringing in different elements that have encouraged users to think of the workplace in a completely new way.

Data collected onsite further informs design decisions today. Whereas some companies track badge swipes, others are monitor-

Using data indicating that employees are gravitating toward communal spaces, HKS designed its Seattle office with a lounge area and a kitchen with a fully stocked bar and espresso machine in lieu of a traditional reception area.



RENDERING COURTESY OF HKS

ing patterns in various locations within the office, finding that employees are gravitating toward communal spaces over individual workstations. With desk occupancy rates lower than 50%, companies are now downsizing assigned individual space to allow more room for team-based activities.

FINDING WHAT’S MISSING

To supplement studies on the workplace, HKS conducts intensive research on each client and their location to ensure their culture and surrounding influences are represented visually, physically and emotionally in the workplace. Visioning sessions then further our understanding of a clients’ needs, serving as another essential data collection process during the onset of a project.

During these high-level exercises, designers have a rare opportunity to connect and speak with representatives from every division within an organization, guiding group members through thought-provoking activities to learn about the organization’s ethos and workplace improvements without getting too tactile. Only then do you realize what’s missing from an organization’s work environment and what design solutions will resonate and have the greatest impact on employees.

Cyber safety company Gen’s new Silicon Valley hub embodies a hybrid, people-first solution with flexibility to meet the daily demand of its workforce and accommodate peak occupancy for special events with the surrounding business community.



PHOTO BY GARRETT ROWLAND

RETHINKING DESK AND MEETING SPACE

When HKS first entered the Puget Sound marketplace in June of 2023, we moved into several adjoining co-working spaces totaling less than 1,000 square feet. Though HKS has been deliv-

ering projects in the Pacific Northwest since 1994, this was the firm’s first physical office in the region, serving as a temporary base while leadership searched for and eventually built out a new workplace that embodies our values and equips us with new amenities to better serve our clients as well as

our staff.

In mid-February of this year, we officially moved into our permanent workplace located on the sixth floor of the 400 University Building. Spanning 6,000 square feet, HKS’ new office will accommodate roughly 42 people on average per day across a diverse range of workspaces

designed to elevate in-office experiences.

When first entering the space, employees and their guests are immediately ensconced in a hospitality-focused environment that allows users to flow freely from one space to another. You won't find a reception desk here but rather an inviting and comfortable lounge area and a kitchen with a fully stocked bar and espresso machine.

Without assigned seating, employees have the autonomy to choose where to work based on their shifting needs and schedules. While less than 50% of our footprint is dedicated to traditional desking, we have enclosed quiet spaces available for employees to focus on heads-down work or engage in virtual meetings. Alternative work points are positioned throughout the office, including an active resource center, large mock-up area and various conferencing spaces all supplied with VTC capability.

Post-pandemic, these egalitarian meeting rooms have become essential workspaces for companies to find the best talent during the recruiting process. Equipped with advanced conferencing technology, employers can simulate in-person interactions with potential new employees, clients and colleagues located halfway across the world.

To accommodate strategic planning sessions, HKS also installed a dedicated design charette space, where project teams can collaborate on intensive project work, using whiteboards, pin-up space and monitors for digital content, from anywhere between one week to one month. When in need of a break, employees can rest and reflect in a designated wellness room, which doubles as a private space for new mothers. Further informed by the firm's Insights Report on "Creating a Brain Healthy Workplace," all workspaces were designed with social, cognitive and emotional health in mind, including the office's most unique feature: "the Showbox."

Named after Seattle's historic music venue, the Showbox is an immersive community space with technology that projects floor to ceiling and wall to wall on a large, curved 180° vertical service, allowing users to have a unique 1:1 scale viewing experience of new and in-progress projects – either in design or being constructed in real time. One of only three design studios in the U.S. and the only firm on the West Coast with this powerful

visioning technology, HKS' expanded design capabilities reinforce its commitment to design excellence, allowing teams to analyze environmental factors and conduct virtual site walks in cities around the world. Additional uses include showcases, client presentations, firmwide conference calls and local office celebrations.

THE EVOLUTION OF FITNESS AMENITIES

While the modern-day office has transformed to proactively support mental health and elevate in-person

interactions, many employees are equally focused on supporting physical health in the workplace. To meet heightened demand for pickleball courts and other fitness amenities, many building owners across Seattle are beginning to add or update their shared spaces to become more desirable workplace destinations.

Come Spring 2025, a new HKS-designed pickleball facility will open on the second level of Rainier Square, offering members the latest in training technology to help improve their game. Strategically positioned at the build-

ing's tree line, the new pickleball center's indoor courts allow for yearlong usage while also fostering connection to the outdoors. With event capabilities and access to a number of onsite restaurants, this elevated pickleball experience is at the forefront of new corporate wellness initiatives.

As Seattle employers continue to contemplate the future of their workplace, company culture will remain a driving force in bringing employees back to the office. Thoughtful design that prioritizes the shifting needs of all employees has the power to

reshape the workplace from an obligation to a destination.

By creating new opportunities for meaningful interactions and unique experiences, organizations not only elevate employee morale, but also instill a sense of trust and loyalty, making them stronger than ever before.

Joslyn Balzarini is a principal and commercial interiors studio practice leader at HKS in Seattle. Christa Jansen is a principal and regional design director of interiors at HKS in Seattle.

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THE TIMBER ADVANTAGE: THE FUTURE IS BUILT WITH WOOD

Using mass timber streamlines project timelines, reduces soft costs for time on-site, enhances durability and aesthetics, contributes to healthier environments, supports regional economies and reduces the industry's significant carbon footprint.

Our built environment is one of the planet's biggest polluters, with buildings responsible for roughly 39% of global energy-related carbon emissions, 28% of which are operational and 11% from building materials and construction alone.

While this is certainly not a revelation, the window for meaningful change is closing fast. The need for architecture, design, and construction solutions that don't just check the sustainability box, but actually move the needle — achieving sustainability goals, enhancing durability, and sustaining economic growth — has never been more pressing. The salve? Mass timber.



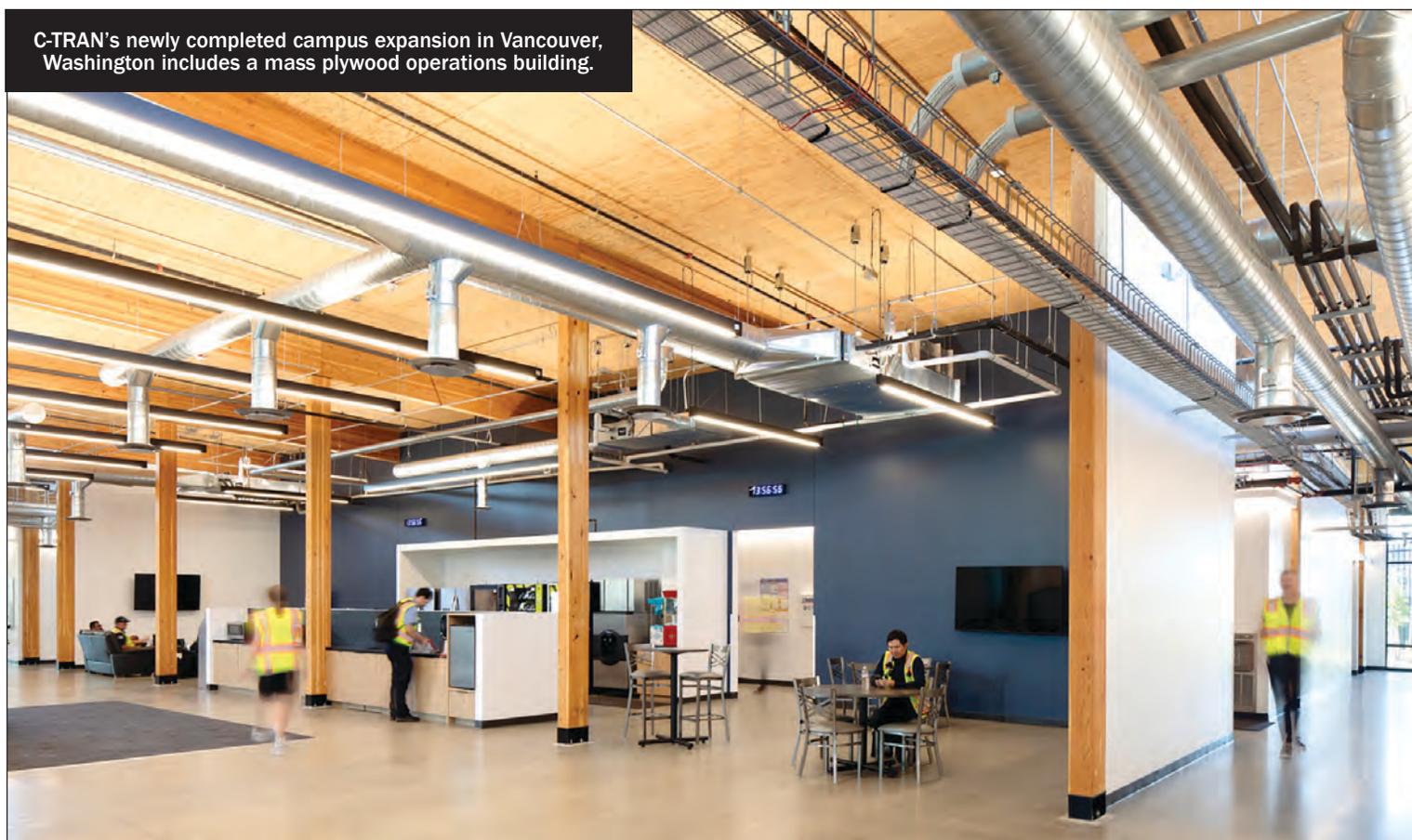
BY MICHAEL GREAT
ANKROM MOISAN

Now gaining momentum across the Pacific Northwest with large-scale developments like Portland International Airport's nine-acre mass timber terminal, the region is emerging as a global leader in sustainable construction innovation. Surrounded by some of the country's largest timber resources, the Pacific Northwest is well positioned to shift development to mass timber — unlocking a scalable, high-performance solution to not only reach sustainability goals but enhance durability and sustain regional economic growth.

THE CASE FOR MASS TIMBER

Despite its long history, mass timber — a building material made from multiple layers of wood — has yet to see widespread use due to factors like the high premium on base material costs, perception and restrictive code requirements.

Once a common construction material, mass timber was largely phased out during the 20th century in favor of concrete and steel. Concrete, for example, offers flexibility for cellular layouts; it is, however, notoriously slow to construct, cold to the touch and contributes sig-



C-TRAN's newly completed campus expansion in Vancouver, Washington includes a mass plywood operations building.

PHOTO BY SHELSI LINDQUIST

nificantly to atmospheric carbon. As the world grapples with the negative environmental impact of traditional building materials, mass timber is making a comeback, and so are the myriad benefits it possesses.

Mass timber is more than just a sustainability win — it's an investment in both pre- and post-construction efficiency, resilience and well-being. Its ability to streamline project timelines, reduce soft costs for time on-site, enhance durability and aesthetics, contribute to healthier environments, support regional economies, and aid in reducing the industry's significant carbon footprint makes it a powerful tool for the future of sustainable construction.

SEQUESTERING CARBON

Mass timber offers significant environmental benefits, notably in its ability to aid in reducing carbon emissions. Wood is the only scalable building material that sequesters carbon, carrying

the potential to aid in reducing the building industry's significant share of carbon emissions production by 14-31%.

Mass timber also requires less energy to produce compared to traditional building materials like steel and concrete. This reduced amount of energy demand aligns with the Living Building Challenge and LEED life cycle analysis criteria. These advantages allow the industry to substantially respond to climate change and its currently massive carbon footprint.

The material also offers an opportunity to improve forest health — it can be produced from thinning, less commercially desirable trees, creating more space for healthy, strong trees to thrive. This further enhances mass timber's carbon sequestration efforts and supports the long-term vitality of forests.

STRENGTH, COMFORT, AND WELL-BEING

Highly durable and energy

efficient, mass timber boasts impressive fire resistance and the ability to withstand extreme temperatures. Unlike traditional lumber, which has a low fire rating, mass timber's massive panels char on the outside during a fire, forming a protective outer layer that helps retain the building's structural integrity.

Mass timber's multi-layered panels provide strength without added weight, allowing it to be constructed on confined sites. Furthermore, the material's low thermal conductivity offers warmth and comfort not found in concrete or steel, making it a unique and durable choice for modern construction. Combined, these characteristics enhance safety and durability while also contributing to occupant well-being, creating spaces that feel secure, stable, and naturally comfortable.

Mass timber's advantages go beyond performance and resilience, however. While its structural benefits are

undeniable, the material also enhances the experience of a space. The natural warmth and elegance of wood evoke a sense of comfort and connection to nature, aligning with the growing demand for biophilic spaces. The material enhances the visual environment while contributing to a healthier atmosphere, improving the well-being of those who inhabit and frequent these spaces.

THE FINANCIAL UPSIDE

Although the base material cost of wood is currently high, savings from shorter project timelines, reduced onsite labor, lower import duties, and other operational efficiencies can offset the initial premium. Additionally, mass timber performs better thermally, further enhancing its long-term cost-effectiveness.

Often sourced and produced locally, the transportation and storage costs of mass timber are also minimized. The prefabricated

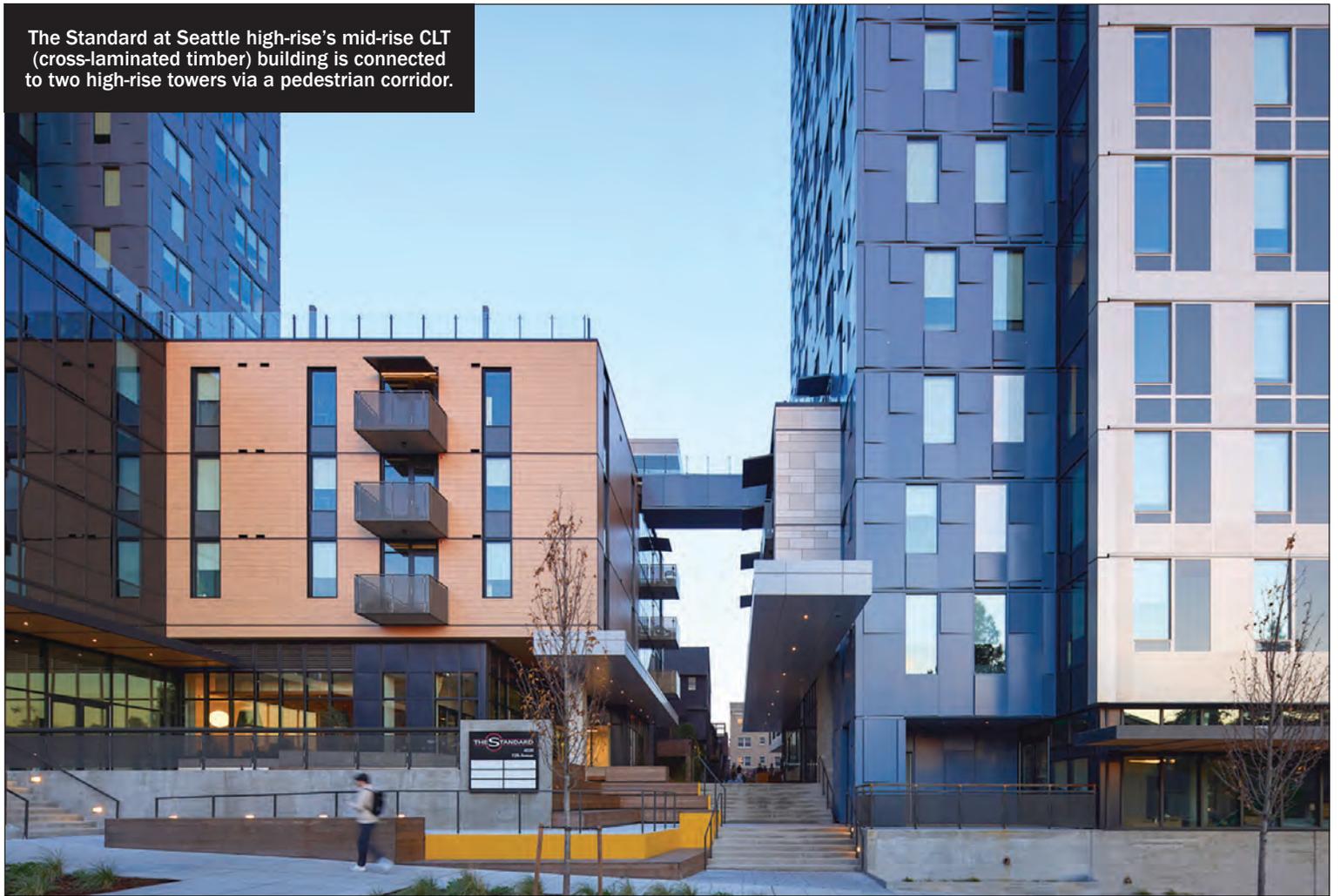
nature of the material allows for quicker assembly, yielding less soft costs related to project management, street closures, and material storage. This streamlined construction process, in turn, allows for earlier occupancy and a quicker return on investment.

Shifting to mass timber development also carries the potential to boost rural economies by generating demand for sustainable forestry. Supporting local wood producers and creating jobs in these communities helps stimulate economic growth and balance wealth distribution between urban and rural cities and towns in timber country, encouraging a more sustainable and equitable approach to development.

This combination of cost savings, improved efficiency, and economic empowerment is an attractive incentive to developers, architects, and communities seeking to balance financial viability with sustainability goals.

Mass timber offers an impactful, multi-faceted solution to the urgent challenges of sustainable development, and a shift to mass

The Standard at Seattle high-rise's mid-rise CLT (cross-laminated timber) building is connected to two high-rise towers via a pedestrian corridor.



TIMBER — PAGE 27

PHOTO BY MORIS MORENO

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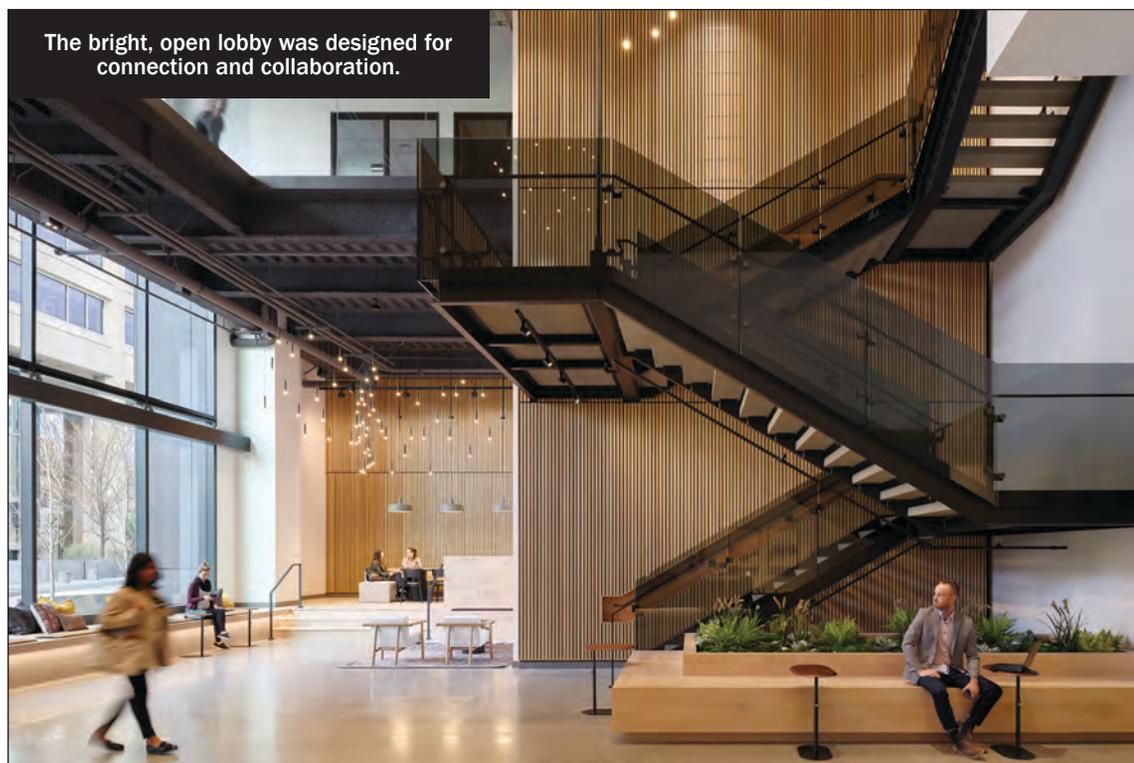
THE GATEWAY BUILDING: A NEW URBAN LANDMARK

The project serves as a gateway between campus and community and exemplifies how architecture can work in harmony with major infrastructure.



Thoughtful setbacks, active ground-level spaces, and a welcoming streetscape aim to strengthen the connection between the university and the surrounding district

PHOTOS BY KEVIN SCOTT



The bright, open lobby was designed for connection and collaboration.



BY ERIK MOTT & AMRIT RANDHAWA
PERKINS&WILL

Nestled above one of Seattle's busiest light rail stations, the Gateway Building (formerly called the University District Station Building) is more than just an office tower — it is a carefully orchestrated convergence of transit, architecture and urban vitality. Rising 13 stories above Brooklyn Avenue, the 266,000-square-foot building connects with the station below, creating both a gateway to the University of Washington and a cornerstone of the district's evolving identity.

COMPLEX COORDINATION OVER AN ACTIVE STATION

Building over an active light rail station presents a unique set of challenges. The structural design, led by Magnusson Klemencic Associates (MKA), had to account for existing underground infrastructure while ensuring the tower's loads imposed on the existing substructure were within the parameters under which the station was designed. Perkins&Will worked closely with Sound Transit to ensure integration where the two structures connect, aligning their requirements and minimizing any impact on the station while GLY Construction, the general contractor, expertly sequenced activities to keep pedestrian access open and transit operations running smoothly.

A key innovation was the strategic placement of structural transfer beams within the tower superstructure, which minimized the impact on the station below while maximizing usable space in the tower.

Additionally, construction required precise logistics to accommodate the constraints of a dense urban site. Deliveries were carefully scheduled, and material storage was optimized to ensure minimal disruption to transit

riders and nearby businesses. This level of coordination underscores the project's technical complexity, and the collaborative effort needed to execute it successfully.

A GATEWAY TO CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY

Located along Brooklyn Avenue, the Gateway Building serves as a key entry point to the University of Washington (UW). The design embraces this role, linking with the neighborhood's evolving greenbelt and enhancing the pedestrian experience. Thoughtful setbacks, active ground-level spaces, and a welcoming streetscape reinforce its role as a gateway, strengthening the connection between the university and the surrounding district.

Beyond its physical presence, the Gateway Building serves as a bridge between academia and industry. As part of UW's West Campus Innovation District, the building fosters collaboration and economic growth, supporting the district's transformation into a hub for research, entrepreneurship and urban development.

A defining architectural feature is the aperture on the west façade, a recessed opening that breaks up the building's massing, introduces a striking visual identity, and frames views to the plaza at UW Tower to create an urban micro-campus. This design move balances aesthetic refinement with functional benefits, creating visual interest while enhancing the building's connection to its surroundings.

From the south façade and covered rooftop terrace, users have a direct line of vision to Mount Rainier, the North Cascades, and the Seattle skyline. The ground floor further supports the public realm with retail spaces that engage with the streetscape, fostering an active and inviting environment.

SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

The Gateway Building is designed with Seattle's progressive sustainability goals in mind, incorporating numerous environmentally responsible strategies:

High-performance glazing minimizes solar heat gain

while maximizing natural daylight, reducing reliance on artificial lighting thus saving energy on heating, cooling and lighting

Sunshades on the south façade and vertical fins on the west and east elevations mitigate solar exposure, optimizing energy efficiency and occupant comfort.

A green roof equipped with a 60 kW photovoltaic array generates renewable energy and mitigating the urban heat island effect

Enhanced bike storage and shower facilities encourage alternative transportation, reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles.

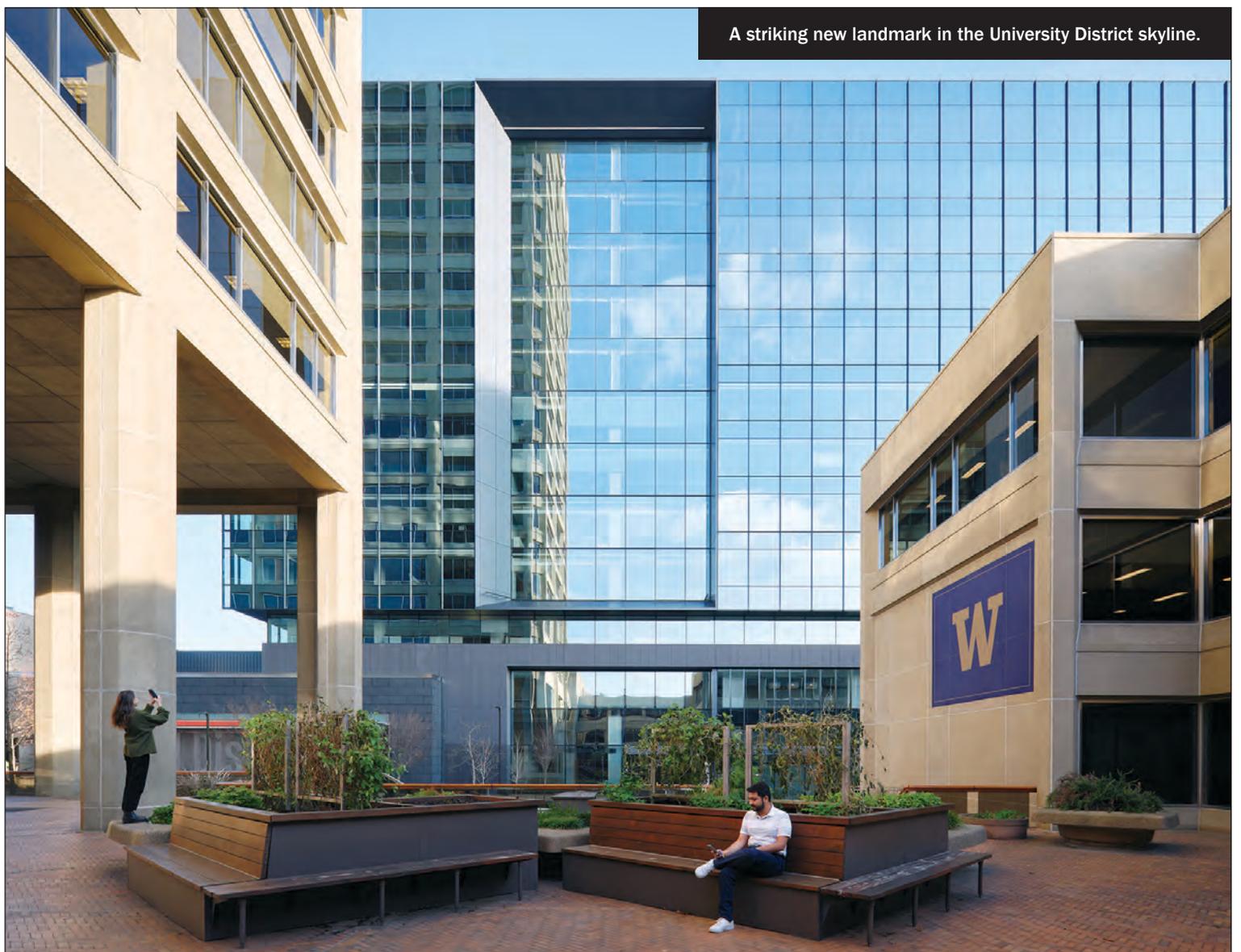
By leveraging its adjacency to a high-capacity transit hub, the building inherently reduces its carbon footprint, supporting a more sustainable urban future. Furthermore, low-impact materials were carefully selected to enhance durability while minimizing embodied carbon and toxicity improving the health and well-being of the occupants

TRANSIT-INTEGRATED URBANISM

As a model for transit-oriented development, the Gateway Building exemplifies how architecture can work in harmony with major infrastructure. With direct light rail access to downtown Seattle, the Eastside, and SeaTac Airport, the building enhances urban mobility. The design prioritizes pedestrian flow, with carefully coordinated entry points that align with existing pathways. Strategic design elements transition from train to workplace, contributing to a more connected and efficient urban experience.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILING & MATERIALITY

Beyond its functional role, the architecture of the Gateway Building reflects a commitment to refined detailing and high-quality materials. The façade employs a sophisticated interplay of fiber cement panels and glazing, creating a dynamic expression that shifts with the changing light. Metal accents introduce subtle variation in texture and reflectivity, adding depth to the overall composition. Inside, carefully considered material selections and precise detailing contribute to a sense of craftsmanship and refinement throughout the building. Adaptable office spaces prioritize flexibility, ensuring long-term usability for evolving workplace needs.



A striking new landmark in the University District skyline.

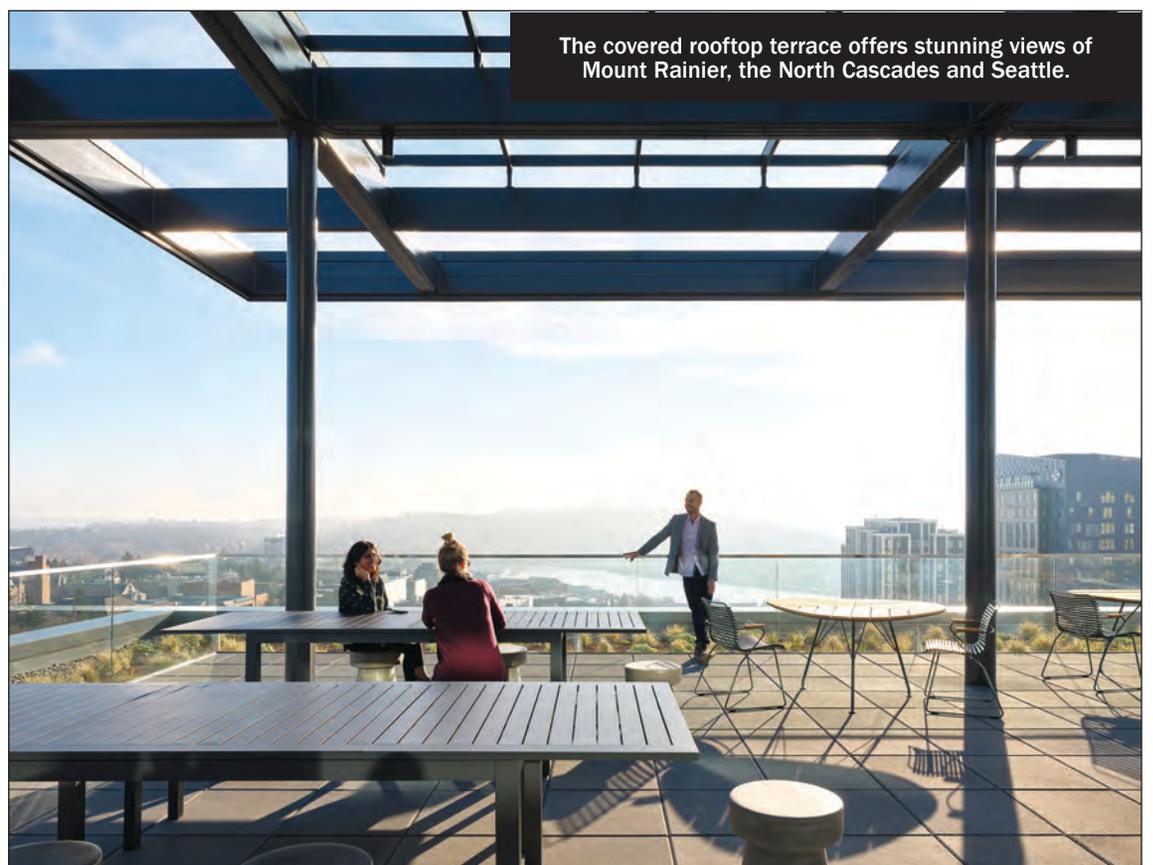
THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

A project this complex required extensive coordination among multiple stakeholders. Perkins&Will partnered with Lincoln Property Company to ensure the building's design and programming contribute to the long-term vitality of the area. Sound Transit played a critical role in facilitating integration with the station, while GLY's urban construction expertise helped navigate logistical challenges. MKAs' structural solutions were key in making the tower possible within the constraints of an active transit hub.

The success of the Gateway Building demonstrates the power of collaboration in transit-oriented development. The integration of infrastructure, commercial space, and the pedestrian realm sets a strong precedent for future urban projects, offering valuable insights into balancing complex site constraints with ambitious design goals.

A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The Gateway Building is a vital piece of Seattle's evolving transit network, a gateway to UW, and an architectural statement in its own



The covered rooftop terrace offers stunning views of Mount Rainier, the North Cascades and Seattle.

right. Through a synthesis of design innovation, engineering ingenuity and collaborative problem-solving, the Gateway Building stands as a model for how cities can thoughtfully integrate transit, commercial develop-

ment, and public space.

As urban centers continue to grow, projects like the Gateway Building demonstrate how strategic planning and design can create sustainable, transit-connected communities that enhance

the urban experience.

Erik Mott is principal and design director at Perkins&Will. Amrit Randhawa is a Designer II at Perkins&Will, specializing in education, healthcare and sustainable technologies.

ENGINEERING HEALING: COLLABORATIVE SUCCESS AT MARY BRIDGE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Designing healthcare facilities for children requires a different approach, one that accounts for patient demographics and developmental needs, visit frequency and typical length of stay, and seeing the space through the eyes of a child.

After more than 30 years of sharing space with MultiCare Tacoma General, Mary Bridge Children's Hospital is preparing to open its own dedicated facility in early 2026 — one designed entirely with kids in mind. Serving 100,000 pediatric patients annually, the new hospital and expanded outpatient center will offer a child-centered environment that prioritizes comfort, healing and play, even in the face of illness.



BY DOUGLAS LACY
WSP USA

Hospital leaders believe this standalone space will transform care for generations to come, and getting there required a unique collaborative effort. Designers, builders, and stakeholders had to do more than work as a team — they had to see the project through the eyes of a child.

SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN

The needs of pediatric patients can differ markedly from the needs of their adult counterparts, so designing and engineering healthcare facilities for children requires a different approach, one that accounts for patient demographics and developmental needs, visit frequency and typical length of stay, research and technology, specialized equipment and more.

Consider how lighting might appear different to someone three feet tall than to someone six feet high. Lighting also plays a role in both physical safety and psychosocial wellbeing. Mary Bridge Children's Hospital addresses this by incorporating dynamic color-changing lighting in play spaces and public areas as well as using tunable white lighting throughout the hospital. These tunable white lights can lead to better patient outcomes, especially in NICU and behavioral health rooms.

"The team's lighting program for this hospital is

PROJECT TEAM

Owner:
MultiCare Health System

MEP Engineering, Acoustics, Lighting, Sustainable Design:
WSP USA

Architect:
Earl Swensson Associates

Contractors:
Layton Construction and Abbott Construction

Owner's representative:
Turner Townsend

Mechanical contractor:
Hermanson

Mechanical contractor:
SJI

Electrical contractor:
Valley Electric

designed to support wayfinding and wellbeing, but it's also about creating a sense of wonder for the children," said Lilian Fu, vice president and national lighting practice lead at WSP in the U.S.

CONNECTED CARE

Children's hospitals also often involve multidisciplinary care teams and large support networks, such as classmates and sports teams, which can require larger and more flexible spaces. Further, new technologies in pediatric care, such as hybrid operating rooms and fetal MRI, can mean that children's hospitals are more technologically advanced than general healthcare settings.

"These larger, technology-supported spaces necessitate additional planning for everything from electrical load to room size, shape and set-up," says Douglas Lacy, senior vice president and engineering lead for WSP in the U.S. "By prioritizing a

The new Mary Bridge Children's Hospital opens for patients in early 2026.



RENDERINGS BY EARL SWENSSON ASSOCIATES

Coordinated multidisciplinary design created healthy spaces indoors and out on the new campus.



child's unique needs, hospitals can create environments that support the physical and emotional wellbeing of young patients and their families, as well as the dedicated healthcare professionals who care for them."

HEALTHY HOSPITAL, HEALTHY KIDS

Sustainability in a healthcare setting can cover a range of aspects, including reduced carbon emissions, high quality indoor environments, use of healthy materials and enhanced facility resilience — all of which contribute to the wellbeing of the people inside the buildings.

"The energy-saving measures for Mary Bridge were multidisciplinary in nature, starting with a high-performance central plant that utilizes energy recovery chillers and heat pumps," said Zach

Stevens, vice president, WSP in the U.S., who serves as the project's sustainability lead. "Condensing gas boilers that provide backup and that only engage in peak low ambient conditions prioritize lower energy use while increasing the hospital's resilience."

Indoor environmental quality is another important factor to consider in children's hospitals, since poor indoor air quality can negatively impact health, especially for the 120,000 youth in Washington with asthma. WSP's team used an advanced computational fluid dynamics simulation to ensure that combustion exhaust from the boilers and generators would not enter the building.

Stevens says, "Reducing combustion is a major health benefit, not just for reducing the health impacts of climate change in the long run, but with respect to rates of respi-

ratory illness, especially in children."

The result of energy-saving LED lighting, design for future full electrification, and other measures was a 75% reduction in emissions, equivalent to 3.2 million vehicle miles, and a 48% energy reduction when compared to a median existing hospital.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE: INTEGRATED PROJECT DELIVERY

Achieving healthy, dedicated pediatric spaces like those at Mary Bridge Children's requires a team effort. Having the designers, builders, trades, and craftworks engaged in a collaborative environment can deliver child- and family-friendly spaces that are cost-effective and comparatively fast to construct compared to

INTEGRITY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

cultural elements. This exploration uncovers opportunities to integrate heritage into design.

At River Tower, touch-points throughout the hotel and landscape incorporate tribal culture, traditions, values and pride of place that resonate with the client community and are discernible by visitors without being overtly instructive. In working with any group, it is important to respect that different backgrounds represented bring a variety of perspectives and sensitive experiences to be respected in presenting culture and history. This extends to differences in communication styles that can

inadvertently impact discussions, which can be offset by mutually establishing clear guidelines for respectful conversations.

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

The distinctive River Tower Hotel celebrates hospitality, pride of heritage and is a contributing element of Tribal growth and regional impact supporting a promising future. Grounded in cultural roots, it expresses the Tribe's modern way of life and projects a vision for ongoing success.

Dan Snook is an architect and associate principal at Integrus Architecture, focused on civic work and hospitality projects.

DESIGN TRENDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

shared building amenities are less about ping-pong and more about healthcare options, childcare, healthy food, nearby entertainment, access to transit, and connections to professional networks.

A diversity of support space types with differing lighting, aesthetics, postures, and size empowers employees to be successful in their work mission, which is closely tied to satisfaction and engagement. These are the new amenities - those that help us thrive in times of change. More landlords are also thinking beyond their own properties to invest in these amenities in the

urban fabric rather than behind security turnstiles. This is good for our cities.

We are at a defining moment for our cities, where bold ideas and inventive solutions are needed to reshape the human experience. I'm inspired by the potential of design to create a more sustainable future that truly connects with and empowers people in impactful ways, and I look forward to the partnerships we'll forge to make it happen.

Ryan Haines is a Principal at Gensler in Seattle focused on partnering with local and global clients to prepare for the future.

FACADE DESIGN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

day, much like the natural movement of water.

The facade design of West Main demonstrates the potential of digital printing technology to go beyond mere aesthetics. By embracing the flexibility of digitally printed glass, Graphite was able to create a facade that tells a story — one that connects the modern campus to the natural

and historical context of the site. The patterns of flow, color, and form serve as a visual narrative, linking the project to Bellevue's geographical history and creating a sense of place that resonates with the community.

Peter Krech is a founding principal of Seattle-based Graphite Design Group.

TIMBER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

timber can address the growing demand for more environmentally responsible building practices.

From significantly reducing the industry's carbon emissions to promoting healthier environments and fostering economic growth within communities, it

supports a more sustainable construction process and offers long-term benefits that surpass traditional building materials and approaches. It should be the baseline assumption for every new development, creating a lasting positive impact on the future of our planet, our

buildings and the well-being of those who inhabit them.

Michael Great, design director of architecture at Ankrom Moisan, has over 20 years of design experience spanning housing, senior housing, office and healthcare.

HEALING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

traditional construction methods, while bringing cost assurance to health systems.

To deliver on that objective for the new Mary Bridge Children's, the project's many design partners collaborated under a single integrated project delivery contract, chosen because it enhances communication and buy-in of project outcomes while reducing both material and intangible waste.

"Most of the integrated delivery we do in healthcare is what I call behavioral integration, focusing on achieving the goals and conditions of satisfaction for the client," says Lacy. "Owners are generally dissatisfied with how megaprojects are delivered — over budget and over schedule — and this contracting method can turn the tide on that dissatisfaction. On this project, we spent a fair amount of time getting behaviors right in the early stages, employing some lean strate-

gies and figuring out how to approach problems."

TARGETED VALUE THROUGHOUT

One of those approaches was target value delivery, which established MultiCare's value priorities and set cost targets before the design stage. This method aligned the design and construction process to avoid cost-overruns and ensured that the hospital was built efficiently — all while maintaining children at the heart of value decisions.

"There are different ways to do risk mitigation on large projects. One way is to split it up into many pieces so no one piece can sink the ship. The other way is to pull everyone closer together so that you can rely on each other not to sink the ship. The latter is more like a real relationship, taking more work to build but being more beneficial in the end," adds Lacy.

Finally, the group added major

trade partners through a component team structure, which allowed the owner, designers, builders, and trades to analyze options to keep the project within its target value budget while ultimately serving children and families.

"We onboarded trade partners based on qualifications and capacity during schematic design and aimed for early procurement releases for major equipment. Prefabrication of components also played a significant role. We had bi-weekly target value delivery meetings to track costs and ensure we stayed within budget. This deep collaboration led to project success for both the client and the community."

Douglas Lacy is a lead electrical engineer at WSP in the U.S., works with healthcare clients nationally, and is an active member of the Lean Construction Institute.

CONVERSIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

new building materials.

The 201 Queen Ave. N. architect, Board & Vellum, is preserving the façade but painting it from an outdated 1980s tan to a sleek onyx, alleviating significant project cost burden. Although most of the window system remains, a certain amount of the glazing will be replaced with operable windows to allow fresh air into apartment units. A small expansion consisting of a fifth-floor penthouse breaks up the façade with a warm touch of wood on top of the existing concrete structure.

Rather than removing any part of the outdated structural and seismic system, Coughlin Porter Lundeen is mitigating the existing reinforced concrete structure by incorporating two high-tech seismic upgrade methods. One acts like a shock absorber during an earthquake, while the other reinforces the existing concrete columns by wrapping them in thin but strong polymer material.

Seismic upgrades can be a considerable expense for conversion projects. Still, creative decisions such as rehabilitating the existing structure rather than replacing it with new systems can avoid excessive cost increases and schedule delays.

A CITY PARTNERSHIP

Due to the transformative nature of office-to-residential conversions, coordination with the city of Seattle is essential because these projects often involve negotiation. In some ways, our Coughlin Porter Lundeen team members act like an owner's representative, navigating the negotiation process and helping the design team understand code requirements, while making a convincing case to the city for the proposed design during the project review process.

As these project types address larger public policy goals, the city is increasingly willing to

provide flexibility for addressing Seattle's unique Substantial Alteration requirements regarding structure, seismic, fire, life safety, accessibility and energy conservation.

Office-to-residential conversions push the boundaries of tackling big-picture issues like providing housing stock and addressing office vacancies. They maximize the inherent potential of existing buildings and eliminate the need to construct new ones.

These projects are becoming increasingly viable with innovative design solutions, Seattle's strategic incentives, and proactive collaboration with city officials. As these adaptive reuse projects become more common, Seattle steps closer to a future where adaptability is key to sustainable urban living.

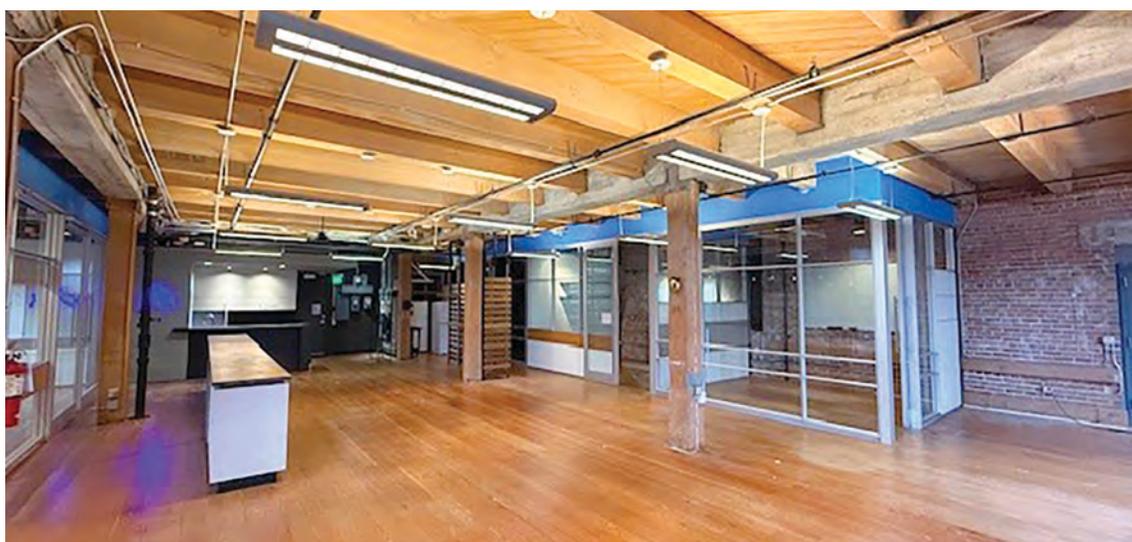
Bryan Zagers is a structural principal at Coughlin Porter Lundeen.

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