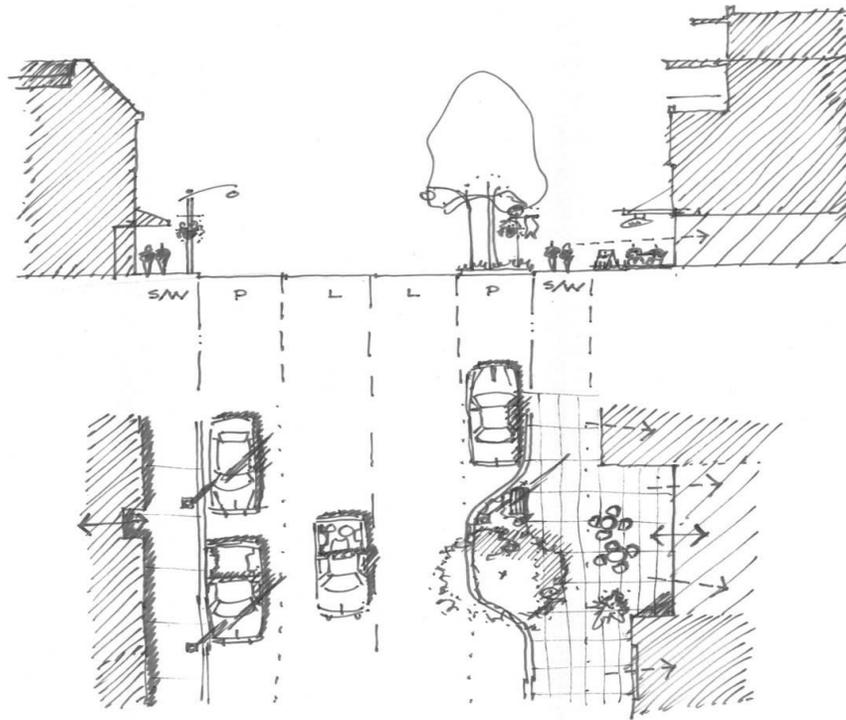


**12.3 DPA 2 – DOWNTOWN**

<b>Category</b> Amend #2095	<b>Form and Character/ Revitalization /Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>
<b>Justification</b>	The justification for this designation is to ensure that Council has the ability to secure necessary information and establish conditions for developments within the Downtown (see Map 2) to ensure that their form and character is of high quality and compatible with surrounding uses. The underlying intention of the guidelines is to help create an economically viable, safe and beautiful downtown that will provide an appropriate setting for the diverse activities and needs of residents, business interests, public agencies and visitors.
<b>Objective</b>	<p>The City wishes to encourage sensitively integrated, high quality redevelopment within Downtown. These guidelines give physical design direction for urban growth, conservation and change. The City of Duncan supports and promotes the idea that Downtown is the civic centre and commercial heart for the entire Cowichan Region. Downtown plays a vital role as the central meeting place for the Cowichan Valley residents as they 'go to town' to run errands and connect with others in the community. Key design objectives for downtown include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain small town feel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public spaces, public art, rights of way, plazas and parks</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Create opportunities for face to face meetings</li> <li>• Maintain the original hierarchy of buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Civic and public</li> <li>○ Mixed use (retail and commercial plus residential)</li> <li>○ Residential apartments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Design good contemporary architecture which compliments historic structures but does not mimic them</li> <li>• Avoid unrelated, fake or arbitrarily conjured, design themes</li> <li>• Maintain high quality buildings and landscaping standards that reflect the importance of downtown to the region.</li> <li>• Produce sustainable and ecologically sensitive design</li> <li>• Preserve existing heritage building character</li> <li>• Organize parking in small clusters, dispersed throughout the core and screened from view</li> <li>• Design downtown buildings and spaces that consider spaces which <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Draw youth to the core</li> <li>○ Make it safe to walk at night</li> <li>○ Address the needs of downtown residents</li> <li>○ Celebrate diversity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recognize the interrelationship of adjacent land uses</li> <li>• Commemorate the Cowichan River</li> <li>• Develop business that compliment rather than compete with neighboring malls</li> <li>• Respond to weather conditions - protection from the summer heat and winter rains</li> <li>• Create an identifiable downtown district - accessible from the highway corridor</li> </ul>

<b>Application</b>	<p>Where some element of the design does not comply with a guideline, a justification stating the divergence and reason should be made. The City may diverge from the guidelines where a compelling rationale, which preserves the intent of the guidelines, is provided.</p> <p>Variations may be considered for: height or required setbacks from front, rear, and/or side yard lot lines, and where the intent of the variance is to create an improved building envelope, minimize environmental impact, create a better relationship between and among buildings or where a setback is adjacent to park land or existing uses where the impact of the variance(s) being sought relative to the variance would be minimal or minimized through screening or a significant change in elevation.</p>
<b>Guidelines</b>	<p>The following guidelines are specifically applicable to the area of Downtown identified as DP – 2. (See Map 2.)</p> <p><i>Applicants should provide a checklist or statement indicating how their proposal complies with these guidelines. Where some element of the design does not comply with a guideline, a justification stating the divergence and the reason should be made. Council may diverge from the guidelines where a compelling rationale that preserves the intent of the guidelines is supplied.</i></p>
<b>Design of the Public Realm</b>	<p>The design guidelines for private property are informed by the vision for the public realm. The following guidelines express the vision for Downtown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Downtown is a defined precinct, illustrated and reinforced by such measures as the pavement materials used in the City Square.</li> <li>• Downtown is walkable, with sidewalks and a series of pathways which include streets, lanes, alleys and short-cuts.</li> <li>• Markers, landscaping materials and other creative materials help to direct people and encourage exploration, rather than relying too much on signage and simple wayfinding.</li> <li>• Nodes are established and celebrated throughout Downtown; paths connect and intersect with them and places are created – people meet, pause, sit and encounter others in the community. This could include the installation of benches or other seating/resting areas.</li> <li>• Landmarks such as public art, interesting landscape features, even buildings, are located in special places to help orient people to various features and provide identifiable places for people to rendezvous.</li> </ul>



A  
Less like this

- A** This side of the street has:
- a minimum-sized sidewalk
  - a single entrance with no view to the activities in the building
  - no landscaping (except a hanging flower basket)
  - a continuous parking band
  - no set-back.

The building is 3 storeys high plus the one storey fake sloped roof.

B  
More like this

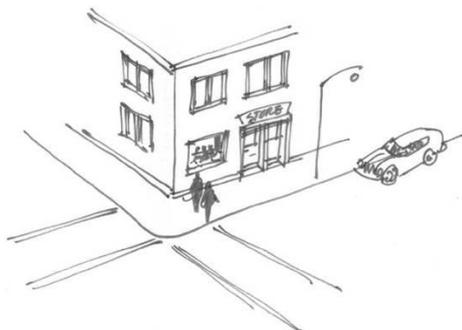
- B** This side has:
- a sidewalk that is wider to accommodate more pedestrians in the commercial core
  - building setbacks that vary to make small squares for outdoor uses
  - landscape and tree 'bulges' that bring greenery into the downtown (note that in this example, the private development is coordinated with the public right-of-way design)
  - a more transparent ground floor to allow building activities to visually 'spill' into the street
  - a building with an extra floor drawn to the set-back with a stepped back top floor
  - public amenity concessions such as public art, open space, street trees and landscaping, special paving and street furniture etc.

**Building Form,  
Siting, Height  
and Massing**

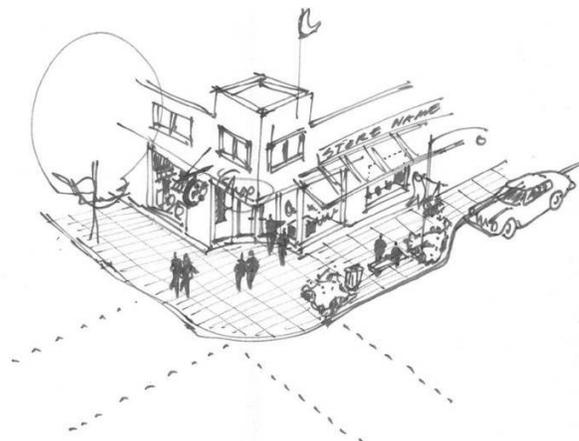
The siting of buildings can define the relationship between the public street and a private development and can establish a unique sense of place for the downtown. Height and massing of a building are integral components of a distinctive form for the community. The space along any right of way creates the dominant presence that people experience and create an atmosphere.

- Each building and location will present a unique set of design imperatives. Generally, the siting of the building should not crowd the pedestrian realm, sending the message that the pedestrian area is unimportant, yet the building should provide a defined edge and consistent street edge that is inviting to people.
- View corridors or vistas (e.g. between buildings and to natural features such as Mt. Prevost and Mt. Tzouhalem should be maintained, enhanced, or created.
- Buildings should not expose their service and refuse areas to the street

Less like this



More like this

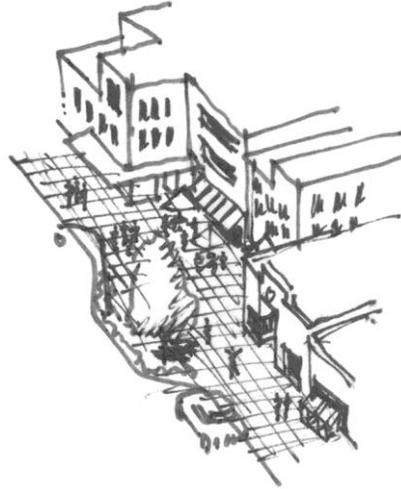


- Corner buildings should be sited so they are:
  - Set back to allow small gathering places.
  - Conducive to pedestrian movement.
  - Afford commercial exposure on both elevations.
  - Provide display windows or where there is no commercial activity encourage high architectural detail.
- Build-to lines are preferred over set-backs (with the exception of corner lots) which allow too much variation and unpredictable, undefined space.
- Where buildings are set back, they shall not have parking between their front façade and the street, rather there should be hard and soft landscape treatment, public art, gathering places or other attractive elements.
- A minimum of 75% of a building's principal or front façade must be between 2 and 2.5 metres from the property line in the downtown core – i.e. most of

the building should be close to the street edge.

- The City may approve variances where the siting of buildings can be shown to lessen environmental impact.

Illustration of the effects of variable **build-to** lines.



### Architecture

Along with the street pattern, there are a number of historic buildings in Duncan that contribute to creating a dignified presence in Downtown. It is imperative that new and redeveloped buildings (material and architecture) subscribe to the same high standards of design and construction.

- Where restoration of an existing historic building is proposed, heritage elements should be retained and reinforced and should adhere to the guidelines established by the City of Duncan.
- Large expanses of featureless walls should be avoided.
- False fronts should be avoided.
- Materials should be used consistently and in unison so that all aspects of the building are considered to be in public view.
- The materials and finishes for retaining walls, fences and or other architectural screening devices should be composed and considered with those of adjacent buildings.
- The traditional technique of retail and mixed commercial storefronts should be used to encourage street continuity and casual window-shopping along the sidewalk.
- Doorways and bay windows should be inset from the property line with windows, to maximize retail window area.
- Protection for pedestrians from the elements should be provided using canopies, arcades and windbreaks, particularly at building entrances, along storefront facades and at transit stops.

Screening

- Berms, fences or landscaping should be used to visually separate commercial rear yards and service areas from adjacent and nearby buildings.
- Service areas into the building should be incorporated into the site design to screen them from view.

Roof Design

- Exposed rooftop or ground-mounted utilities to views from nearby buildings should be avoided. Mechanical equipment appearance, noise and emissions and mitigate the negative impacts should be considered.
- Roofs should be considered as useable and possibly green outdoor space and they should be accessible from inside buildings.
- The roof of every building should be considered as visible from other buildings as the walls and windows. Roof colours and materials that imitate a material that they are not should be avoided.
- Traditional roof forms intended for low buildings types should be avoided on higher buildings.

Windows

- Mirrored glass or other opaque materials should be avoided at street level.
- Inset rather than flush windows should be encouraged.
- Mimicry of heritage windows should be avoided.

Personal Safety

- The impact the design of the building has on the individual safety should be considered e.g. avoid recesses, dark alcoves, the creation of hiding spots, and isolated areas. The Checklist for Safety Planning and Design (Appendix 9) should be referred to.
- The basic principals of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be incorporated.

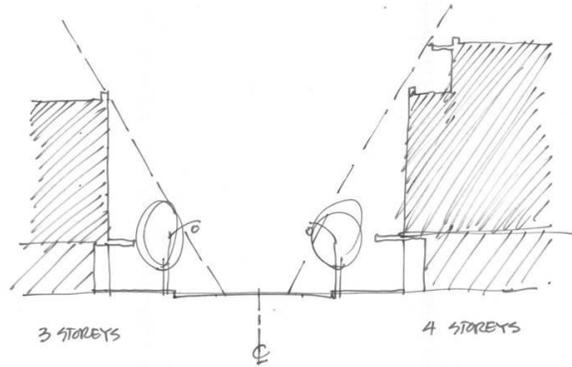
**Building  
Entrances**

A properly placed and clearly visible entrance enhances the role of the streetscape and creates an easily readable environment. By placing building entrances in a simple and straight-forward relationship to the principal frontage street, the orientation and general level of comfort of the building for site users is improved and thereby the economic success and vitality of Downtown.

- Entrances should be clearly visible and directly accessible from the principal frontage street. If this is not possible, an architectural element such as a gateway or archway may be used to signify and indicate the entrance.
- Entry design should be in scale and character with the building and carefully integrated with the overall architectural approach.
- Details and finishing materials should avoid fakery and the application of imported themes and thematic elements especially at entryways.
- Entrances, universally accessible to people with mobility challenges should be utilized.

Buildings stepped back at upper floors help reduce or eliminate the negative effects of taller structures by allowing the same view of sky and daylight as lower buildings, as well as reducing the visual impact of the upper floor.

The benefit of an extra floor can also be used to help sponsor an improvement to the public realm. This affords a balance between private benefit and public good.



**Courtyards**

It is important to add interest and adventure for those exploring on foot. Courtyards provide such an element and can enhance the urban experience.

- When a courtyard faces the street, minimum setback should be approximately 3 metres (10 feet).
- Private through-courtyards should have complimentary street furniture elements and paving materials similar to those on the public streetscape, to present a seamless relationship between public and semi-public space.
- The effects of lighting, alcoves and landscaping on personal safety should be considered.

**Building Materials**

The City does not wish to impose or prescribe the use of particular materials on buildings; however it is useful to establish criteria which encourage the use of certain materials to promote consistency and a cohesive presentation throughout the Downtown core.

- Locally produced high quality and authentic materials such as locally produced or manufactured concrete, wood, brick and stone should be used. Fake materials should be avoided.
- If stucco is to be used, cement stuccos are preferred as the look is more authentic and light reflective. Additionally, they are compatible with heritage buildings as a result of how they were traditionally made.

Colours

- Natural and locally inspired or derived colours are preferred. Ideally, the predominate colour palate will come from integrally coloured natural materials such as stone, wood and brick.

**Bylaw 2037**

- Exterior paint colours for buildings should conform to a historical colour palette such as that developed by Benjamin Moore paints.
- The use of high intensity, black and fluorescent colours is strongly discouraged.
- Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colours, including primary colours.
- The use of artificial materials (those that are made to appear as something they are not such as vinyl siding, mirrored glass, molded 'river rock') is not permitted.

**Bylaw 2058**

- HardiePlank and other cementitious sidings are permitted.

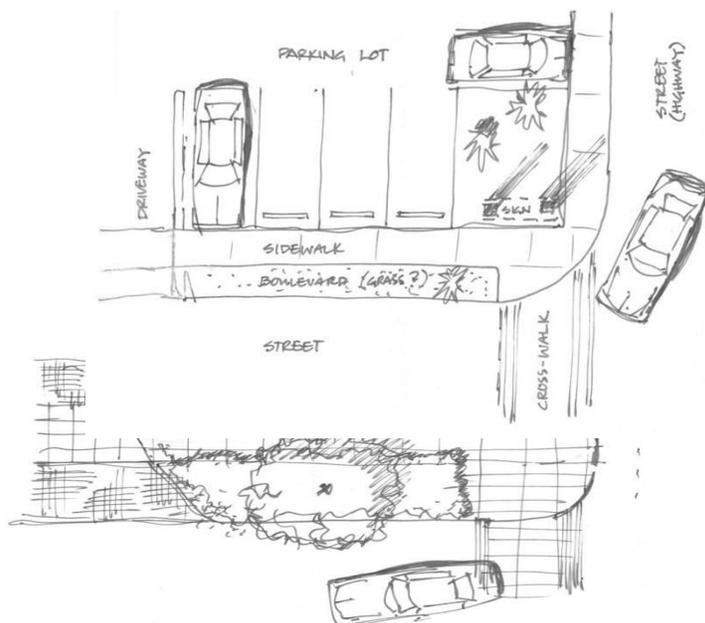
### Surface Parking

As the need for parking is crucial to commercial success, surface lots have become a dominant feature in the urban landscape and therefore have a disproportionate influence on the visual character of Downtown. Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact of parking so as to correct the imbalance of the auto over the pedestrian environment.

- Parking behind or under buildings should be located:
  - Where this is not possible or practical, parking spaces should be provided at the side of buildings or as a last resort, located no closer than 4 metres from the front property line and behind screening.
- Parking to the property line shall not be permitted.
- Alternatively, remote parking (parking located off site but within easy walking distance (100 to 150 metres) should be allowed. Cash in lieu of providing parking stalls (Bylaw 1784) is another option for developers wishing to forego on-site parking.
- Lots (and cars) should be screened by landscaping and/or fencing. Fence material should be compatible with the exterior finishes of adjacent buildings.
- Parking spaces near pedestrian paths should extend 0.5 metres beyond the standards, to allow for car overhang (standard stall length ranges from 5.5 to 5.7m).
- Parking lots of neighbouring developments should be linked with one another via pedestrian pathways or laneways.
- Parking layout should facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians by providing walkways separate from the traffic lane. Pedestrian routes should be designed to appear as conventional pedestrian sidewalks, giving priority to pedestrian movement within the lot.
- Tree planting and other landscaping features at intervals should be encouraged throughout the lot as their canopy provides shade and their height mitigates safety issues regarding sight lines.
  - The suggested standard is no less than one tree for every four stalls of 90 degree parking.
- Parking should conform to universal accessibility regulations.
- Design for maximum efficiency, including smaller parking stalls for compact cars to reduce the overall land requirements
- Top-shielded lighting should be used to minimize dispersion of light.
- Surfaces: whenever possible, permeable paving surfaces should be used, in conjunction with contamination traps, in order to minimize storm drain use and the effects of the run-off.
  - The use of concrete, preferred unit concrete pavers) made with high-fly ash content is more ecologically sound than asphalt and therefore its use encouraged. In addition, its lighter colour is more

suiting to the hot Cowichan Valley climate as it absorbs less solar heat and reduces excessive heat radiation back into the atmosphere.

- Arbours, archways and pergolas can be used to highlight parking site entries.
- Security and safety should be planned for though good parking lot design:
  - Windows and public areas should be located to allow for passive surveillance of parking areas.
  - The creation of recessed entrances, alcoves or other enclosures commonly associated with garbage areas should be avoided.
  - Lighting in parking lots should not be higher than 5 metres from the ground (see lighting section).



- Parking lot right against sidewalk
- Sidewalks along side of moving traffic
- Driveway crosses over sidewalk
- Large corner radius (encourages fast turns)
- No relief/refuge at corner for pedestrians

*Less like this*

- Planted Boulevard between sidewalk and traffic
- Corner 'bulge' for more planting and trees
- Special paving for pedestrian areas
- Bench and refuse container
- Planted screen in front of parking (if parking must be at "street edge")

### Access

Cars are welcome in Downtown, however, poorly designed parking and driving lanes will undermine its appearance and safety and pedestrians will disappear. Good parking and access design will tame traffic, increase predictability and reduce conflicts.

- Building any new driveway accesses that cross sidewalk should be avoided; where possible, use rear lane access.
- Where driveway access already exists or is necessary, the driveway should be paved with special paving materials (e.g. brick, stamped concrete).
  - Large expanses of asphalt are to be avoided.
- A rumble-strip of paving (minimum of 2.5 metres wide for the width of the driveway) across the driveway should be located in the private property

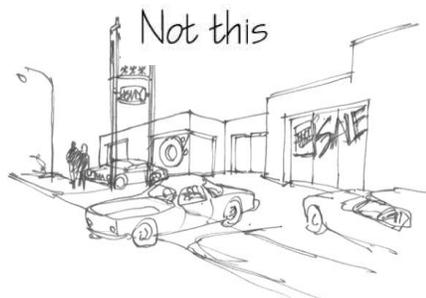
side of the sidewalk, to warn drivers of the pedestrian sidewalk crossing. The strip should have a distinct texture and look that is complimentary to the pavement designs of the City square, with mortared stone or heavily textured concrete.

- Where the sidewalk crosses the driveway, the sidewalk should be maintained at grade. It should never be discontinued and, if possible, should not dip down to accommodate an apron.
  - Where possible, the apron should be on the boulevard. Where this is not practical, there should be paved strip on the driveway access on both sides of the sidewalk.
- Loading and delivery areas shall be confined to the rear of buildings.
- Access points for corner sites should be located as far from the intersection as possible.

This



Not this



**Structured Parking**

- Where there is underground or structured parking, the sidewalk should be maintained at grade and the pavement should be marked to alert both drivers and pedestrians of the up-coming intersection.
  - Attention to sightlines (both driver and pedestrian) is especially important in this compact urban environment.
- Shared access between landowners is encouraged.
- Designing for personal safety (see **Appendix 9**) and crime prevention (CPTED Principals) is of paramount importance
  - This includes issues associated with appropriate levels and locations of lighting.
- Screening of service areas and unsightly equipment and machinery (air systems etc.) should be attractive and contribute to a feeling of safety.
- The exterior design should be integrated architecturally to look like a commercial building rather than institution or warehouse.
- Designs should pay attention to the aesthetics of parking infrastructure details such as ticket booths.

**Signage**

Storefront signs contribute to the form and character of a community. Elements such as: continuity in the number of signs per location, orientation, size, style and

materials, help create a cohesive identity for the downtown, allowing customers to easily identify their destination as they circulate the core.

- All signage must conform to the provision of the City's Sign Bylaw.
- Signs should complement the architectural design and materials of the buildings and the adjacent landscape.
- Applicants must provide a 'sign plan' which identifies the location and style of the various signs, illustrating consistency in signage throughout the development.
- Building identification is encouraged, for the benefit of both pedestrians and drivers, particularly at street corners. Reverse lit design (*see inset*) is preferred. Back lit signs shall not be permitted.
- Signs can be printed onto awnings but the lettering must be modest in size and carefully integrated into the scale of the canopy. The intended viewing audience for such a sign is the pedestrian across the street, or the slow-moving driver.

### Canopy Design

Canopies provide interest and diversity to the streetscape as well as vital shelter from the elements. Often canopies and awnings are an after-thought - installed after the building has been designed and built. This is unfortunate.

- Canopies and awnings should be intentionally designed as an integral part of the architecture.
- Canopies shall not be back lit.
- Barrel awnings should be avoided.
- Fabric colours should not be garish, rather subdued and complimentary to the surrounding built and natural environment.

### Public Art

The private realm offers an excellent opportunity to enrich the visual experience, attract attention and expression as well as support existing public art (totem poles and some mural paintings) in the public realm. Public art promotes investment, community ownership, and pride.

- Any new development or redevelopment shall incorporate public art into its design. (See Section 8.3.)
- Accommodate external murals (two dimensional).
- Sculpture installations are strongly encouraged (three dimensional).
- Art installed in private lobbies should be visible from the street, when possible. The inclusion of artworks into the design enhances both the private development and the public realm.

### Lighting

Adequate lighting will result in increased safety by illuminating paths for pedestrians, making pedestrians visible to drivers and generally discouraging crime. In addition, better lighting will encourage more walking at night, resulting in improved health and more vibrant street life after dark.

- Lighting standards of a more human scale shall be encouraged (3-4 metres above the ground).
- High level lighting is not necessary in the core, nor should it be allowed.
- Ensure pedestrian walkways and vehicular access points are well and

warmly lit, including any cut-through paths or alleyways that are created on a site.

- Lighting that results in glare into adjacent residential properties should be avoided.
- Overhead wiring should be buried or relocated where possible.
  - Minimize the number of hydro lines crossing the street.

**Landscaping**

Investment in landscaping will have profoundly beneficial results. The City understands that the imperative to make Downtown 'greener' is both a public and private responsibility.

- Every development shall plan and maintain substantial areas of small and large shrubbery and trees.
- Even in zero lot-line situations, some form of vegetation shall be considered as part of every commercial development.
- Tree installations should be coordinated with the City's Public Works department.
- Plant species should be indigenous or compatible and should require only nominal seasonal watering. See the City's Planting Plan (Appendix 10) to ensure the development landscaping plan is compatible and complimentary.
- Columnar trees should be reserved for wide areas in the public realm such as boulevards and parking lots to create shade.
- Trees and other planting which have less invasive roots are desired.
- Landscaping should be designed to maintain sight lines for personal safety, and to avoid physical obstructions for people with disabilities.
- A Landscape Plan, developed by a certified Landscape Architect, should be submitted as part of the development application, to ensure appropriate, interesting and sustainable landscaping is installed.

**Vacant Sites**

Neglected, vacant sites leave a negative first impression. This is exacerbated by garbage, graffiti and vandalism.

- Temporary fencing should be avoided and all perimeters of private properties should be treated as determining elements of the public realm. Ambient lighting for safety and visual interest should be included.
- Sites left undeveloped for an extended time shall be landscaped or in some way mitigated to avoid looking as though they are abandoned and uncared for.
- New developments and redevelopments should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by incorporating any or all of the following strategies: building siting; choice of building materials and colours; energy efficiency measures; highly insulated building envelope; use of renewable energy for heating and cooling; bicycle parking and storage facilities; electric vehicle parking and support facilities; and reduced automobile parking in accordance with relevant Bylaw provisions.

**Environmental Impact**

Amend #2095