

12.3 DPA 2 – DOWNTOWN

Replaced by Schedule B
To Bylaw 3178

Category Amend #2095	Form and Character Revitalization Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Energy and Water Conservation
Justification	The justification for this designation is to ensure that Council can secure information and establish conditions for downtown development, to facilitate the development of high-quality form and character, and compatibility with the surroundings. 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.
Objectives	The City wishes to encourage sensitively integrated, high-quality development 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:



Downtown Character and Aesthetics

- 1) Retain small town feel and preserve existing heritage building character (e.g. through the use of red brick as an important example of local vernacular design).
- 2) Encourage contemporary architecture which complements historical structures but does not mimic them.
- 3) Avoid unrelated, fake, or arbitrarily conjured, design themes. Maintain high-quality buildings and landscaping standards that reflect the importance of downtown to the region.
- 4) Organize parking in small clusters, dispersed throughout the core and screened from view.

Ecological Sensitivity

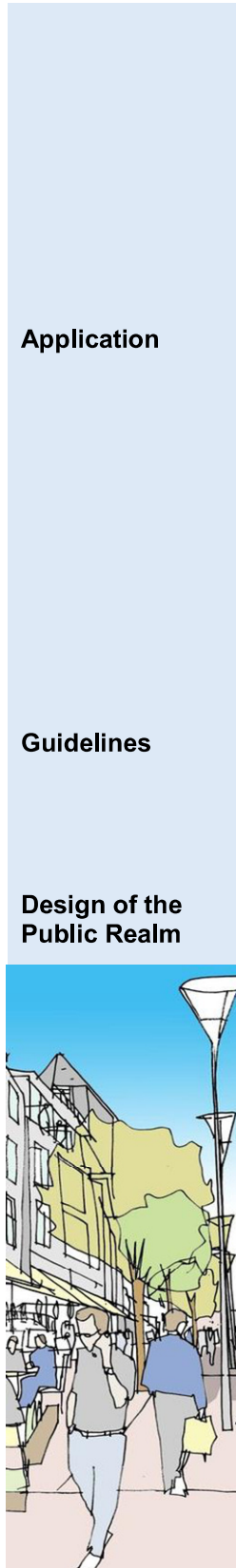
- 5) Ensure maximum efficiency of land use.
- 6) Facilitate sustainable and ecologically sensitive design.
- 7) Respond to the climate of the Cowichan Valley – protection from the summer heat and winter rains.

Accessibility

- 8) Enhance connectivity to the Cowichan River (e.g. through exploring opportunities to create a corridor to connect from the City to the river).
- 9) Create an identifiable downtown district, accessible from highway gateways.
- 10) Retain downtown as walkable, with a series of routes including sidewalks, lanes, alleys, short-cuts, and pathways.

Inclusivity

- 11) Create high-quality, mixed-use infill development, which:



Application

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.

Variations may be considered for:

- height – provided that the building will not shade public spaces or block important views
- setbacks from front, rear, and/or side yard lot lines
- improving a building envelope
- minimizing environmental impact
- creating synergy between buildings and spaces, where adjacent uses would be minimally impacted

Guidelines

The following guidelines are specifically applicable to the area of Downtown identified as DPA 2.

Applicants shall provide a checklist or statement indicating how their proposal complies with these guidelines.

Design of the Public Realm

The design guidelines for private property are informed by the vision for the public realm. The following guidelines express the vision for Downtown:

Streetscapes

- Downtown is a defined precinct, illustrated and reinforced by visually pleasing streetscapes, featuring unique paving materials, streetlights, and street trees.

Wayfinding

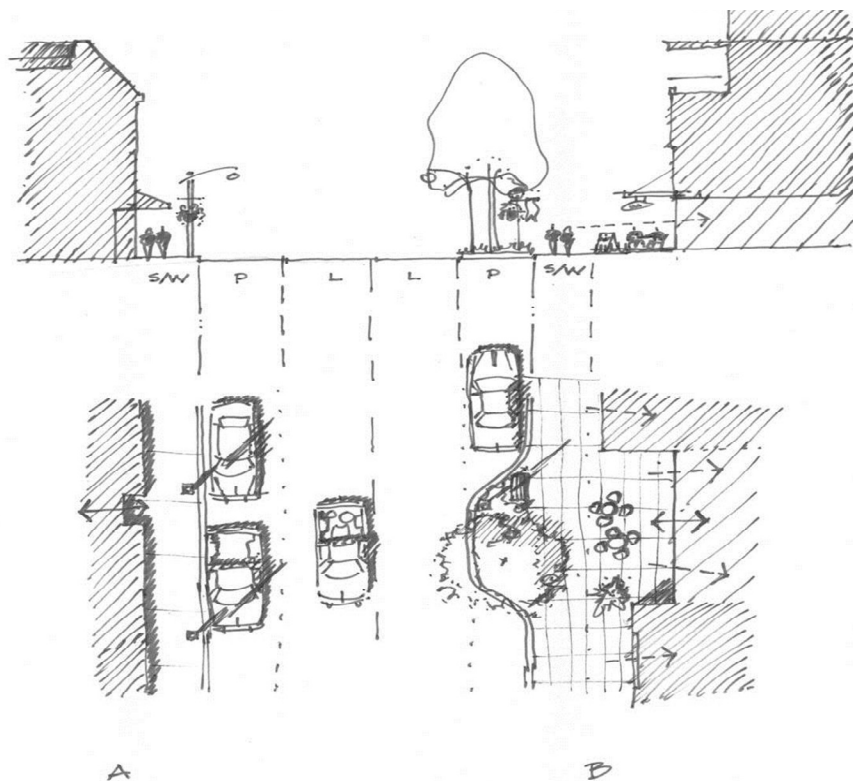
- Markers, landscaping materials, and other creative wayfinding materials help to direct people and encourage exploration, rather than relying too much on signage.
- Landmarks such as public art, interesting landscape features, even buildings, are oriented to provide identifiable places for people to rendezvous.

Connectivity

- Downtown is walkable, with wider sidewalks, lanes, alleys, shortcuts, and pathways through parks.
- 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.



Comparison of poorly designed public realm (left) and properly designed public realm (right)



Less like this

More 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.** This side has:
- a sidewalk that is wider to accommodate more pedestrians | 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.

**Architecture,
Form and
Character**

The visual appearance of a building plays a key role in contributing to the overall atmosphere of the downtown and sets a precedent for future development. Careful consideration should, therefore, be taken with the exterior design of any new development to ensure it blends with its surroundings and represents the best possible image for the City through high-quality urban design.

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 demonstrate the same high standards of design and



construction.

General

- Each building and location will present a unique set of design imperatives. The siting of the building should not crowd the pedestrian realm, yet the building should provide a defined and consistent street edge that is inviting to people.
- Buildings should not expose their service and refuse areas to the street.
- Where restoration of an existing historic building is proposed, heritage elements should be retained and reinforced.
- Large expanses of featureless walls should be avoided.
- False fronts should be avoided, unless being used to shield rooftop mechanical systems from view.
- Materials should be used consistently so that all areas of the building exterior are considered to be in public view.
- 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.
- New downtown development should utilize:
 - Visually interesting roof forms and pitches.
 - Building materials that are durable, high-quality, attractive, and enhance surrounding development.
 - Stepped or distinctive massing and architectural treatments to break up the volume of a building and provide opportunities for balconies and rooftop terraces.
 - Articulated building design detailed with varied cladding material, windows and doors, and patio features to reduce massing, promote architectural definition, and create visual interest.
 - Complementary exterior finishes including roofing materials, window treatments, trim or fascia, door styles, and other finishing details.
 - Porches and windows overlooking the street to increase natural surveillance, personal interaction, and public safety.
- Where development is proposed adjacent to a lower-density zone, the size and siting of buildings should be sympathetic to the size and scale of adjacent development and complement the surrounding uses.

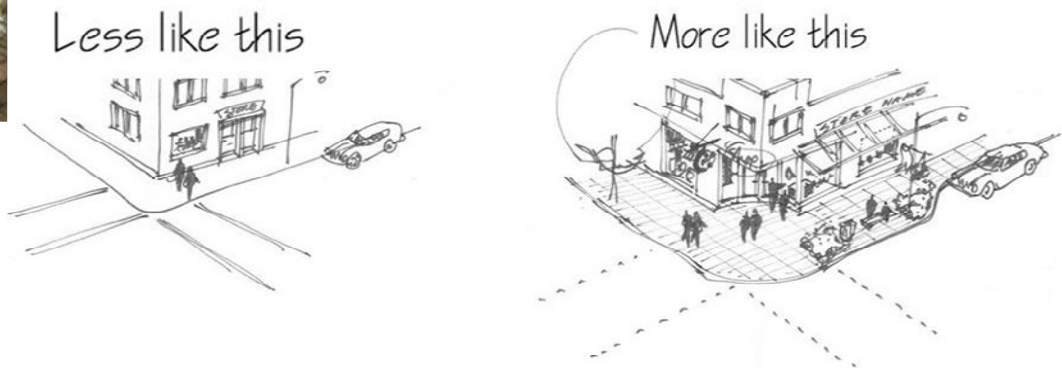


Illustration of how building form and siting influences the public realm

Roof Design



- Roof-mounted utility and communication equipment should be screened from view by structural features that are an integral part of the architectural design.
- Green roofs are encouraged; roofs should be considered useable as green outdoor space and they should be accessible from inside buildings.
- The roof of every building should be considered visible from other buildings, similar to the walls and windows.
- Traditional roof forms intended for low building types should be avoided on higher buildings.

Windows

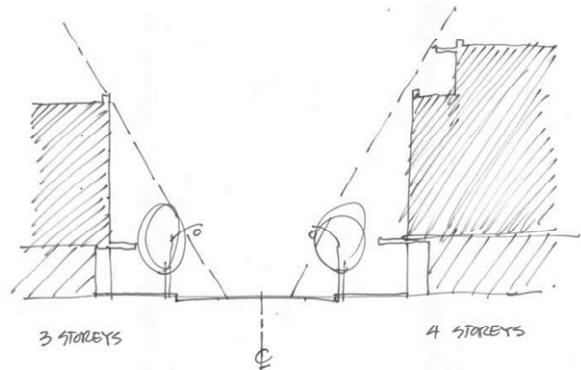
- Mirrored glass or other opaque materials at street level should be discouraged.
- Window displays and visibility into the store are encouraged.
- Inset rather than flush windows are encouraged.
- Mimicry of heritage windows should be avoided.

Mixed Use Guidelines

- Mid-rise and high-rise multi-unit residential buildings are encouraged to be stepped in order to provide opportunities for balconies and rooftop terraces to take advantage of sunlight and views.
- The exposed undersides of balconies and porches that are visible from a street or public walkway should be clad with exterior materials that result in a finished appearance and which complement the palette of exterior materials used on the rest of the building.

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 floors.

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.



Orientation

Site design is one of the most critical aspects of a successful project. Decisions made at the conceptual design stage have repercussions throughout the design development process.

- New downtown development should front abutting roadways.
- New development on a corner site should be designed to contribute to both streetscapes.
- Corner buildings should be sited so they:
 - Are set back to allow small gathering places.

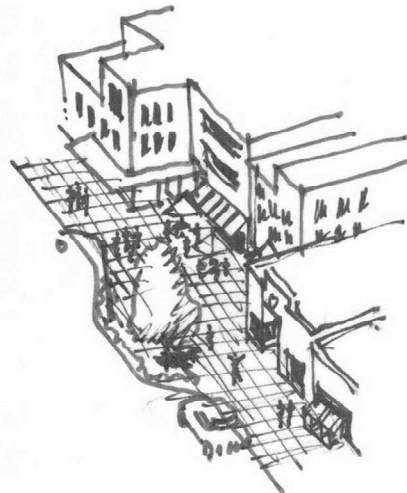


- Are conducive to pedestrian movement.
- Afford commercial exposure on both faces.
- Provide display windows or where there is no commercial activity encourage high architectural detail.
- Buildings should be constructed near the front or exterior side property line(s). Variations in the setback from the property line(s) may be appropriate when the resulting setback provides greater accommodation for pedestrian circulation, outdoor dining areas, enhanced entries, public art, street furniture, and improves the pedestrian realm.
- At street level, buildings should have strong entry features (such as overhangs, porticos, and awnings) and architectural designs that encourage interaction with the street.
- Accessible travel routes to building entrances, parking, and/or recreational areas should have a hard slip resistant surface with a defined border of alternate material or texture to distinguish the sides or ends of paths and shall conform to the requirements of the current British Columbia Building Code.
- If adjacent to a residential development, buildings should be sited to ensure sufficient visual privacy, as well as protection from site illumination and noise.

Mixed Use Guidelines

- New mixed-use development should:
 - Maintain, enhance, or establish view corridors or vistas between buildings, along/from roadways, and to natural features such as Mt. Tzouhalem or Mt. Prevost.
 - Allow sunlight penetration through increased fenestration where sun exposure is maximized.
 - Ensure that units have their façade facing and engaging the street.
 - Minimize visual intrusion and the casting of shadows onto the private outdoor space of adjacent residential units (unless adjacent residential units are legal non-conforming and re-development by zoning is anticipated)
 - Be sited and oriented to overlook public streets, parks, and walkways.

Illustration of the positive effects of variable building setbacks.



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 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.
- Primary entrances should be situated on the building façade that is orientated to the primary street.
- Buildings on corner lots should situate their primary entrance facing the intersection on the corner of the building.

Mixed Use Guidelines

- Mixed-use residential buildings should provide separate entrances for the residential and commercial components.

Open Space

It is important to add interest and adventure for those exploring on foot. Courtyards, plazas, squares, recessed balconies, atriums, and rooftop gardens provide such an element and can enhance the urban experience.

- Semi-public open spaces shall be designed to promote social interaction, barrier free access, and social inclusiveness.
- When a courtyard faces the street, the minimum setback should be at least 3 m.
- Private through-courtyards should have complementary street furniture elements.
- Measures should be taken to enhance public safety and security such as carefully considering the placement of lighting, alcoves, and landscaping.
- Pedestrian-scale amenities and details should be incorporated into the design through the appropriate use of lighting, public art, street furniture, paving materials, or other architectural and landscape features.
- Open spaces should be orientated to receive the most natural light with amenities such as shade trees or trellises added to provide sun relief.

Mixed Use Guidelines

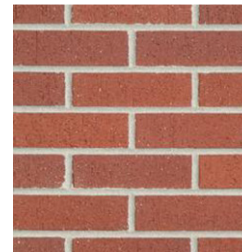
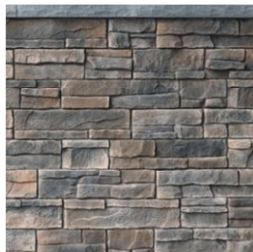
Private open space should be included as an integral part of mixed-use developments.

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.

- Natural and locally inspired materials such as locally produced or manufactured concrete, wood, brick and stone are preferred while simulated or artificial materials, other than fibre cement siding, 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 finishing materials are preferred. Ideally, the predominant colour palette will come from natural materials such as stone, wood, and brick.
- Exterior paint colours for buildings should be derived from historical colour palettes, such as: Benjamin Moore 'Historical Colours' Palette, Sherwin Williams 'Exterior Historic Colours', Cloverdale Paint 'Artisan Canadian' Palette, or General Paint 'Color Directions Exteriors' Palette.
- The use of high intensity, black, and fluorescent colours as the primary building colour 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 discouraged.

Amend #2037

Amend #2058

Surface Parking

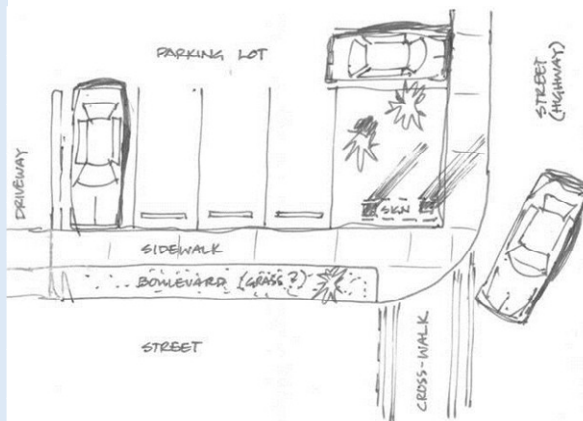
As the need for parking is crucial to commercial success, surface lots have become a dominant feature in the urban landscape and, therefore, have a disproportionate influence on the visual character of Downtown. Every effort should be made to mitigate the impact of parking to shift priority to active transportation.



- All surface parking should be provided on-site and be located at the rear of the building or within the building structure.
- Parking lots (and cars) should be screened by landscaping (trees or shrubs) and/or fencing. Fence material should be compatible with the exterior finishes of adjacent development.
- Chain link fencing is not permitted.
- Parking lots of neighbouring developments should be linked with one another with pedestrian pathways.
- Shared driveway access and consolidated parking is encouraged to reduce the number of vehicle access points.
- Parking layout should facilitate the safe movement of pedestrians by using unique paving materials or landscaping to provide clearly marked walkways separate from traffic lanes.
- Tree planting and other landscaping features at intervals should be encouraged throughout the lot. The recommended standard is no less than one tree for every four stalls of 90-degree parking.
- Parking lots should be designed to provide the most efficient use of space, including smaller parking stalls for compact cars, to reduce the overall land requirements

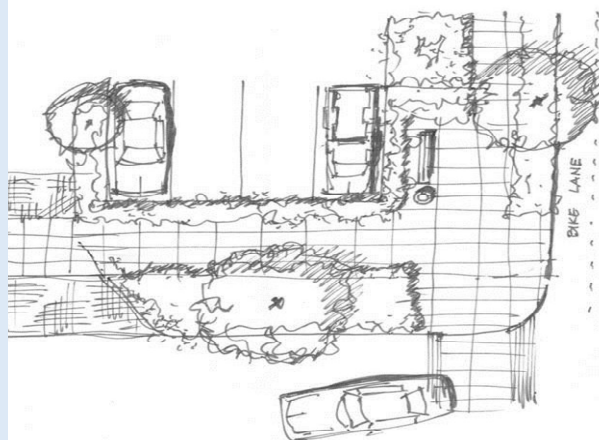
- Parking lot lighting should not be intrusive to neighbouring residential properties.
- Permeable paving material, bioswales, or rain gardens should be incorporated into parking lot design to reduce the amount of storm water runoff.

Less like this



- 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

More 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")

Illustrations (above) comparing undesirable and more desirable street corner design

Access

Cars are welcome Downtown. However, the needs of vehicles, pedestrians, and other modes of transportation must be balanced to ensure that Downtown is easily accessible and safe for all users. Good parking and access design will tame traffic, increase predictability and reduce conflicts.

- Building a new driveway access that crosses a sidewalk should be avoided; wherever possible access should be provided from the rear, or be shared with a neighbouring property.

- Where driveway access already exists or is necessary, the driveway should be paved with special paving materials (e.g. brick, stamped concrete).
- 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 complementary to the pavement designs of the City square, with mortared stone or heavily textured concrete.
- Where a sidewalk crosses a 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 a 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.

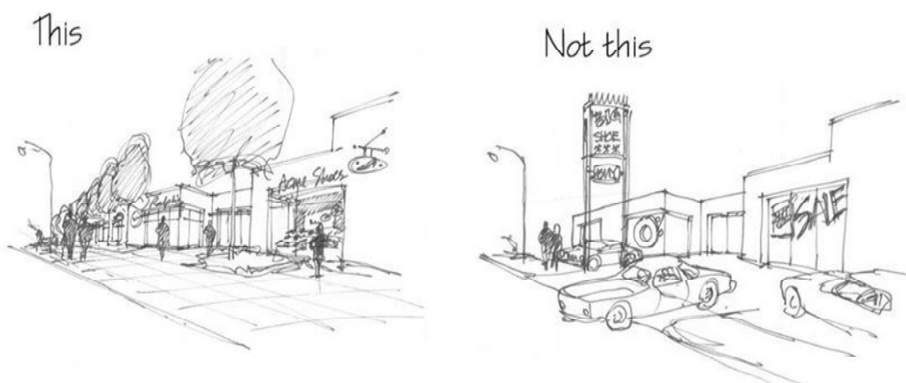


Illustration of desired streetscape design

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 upcoming intersection.
 - Attention to sightlines (both driver and pedestrian) is especially important in this compact urban environment.
- Designing for personal safety and crime prevention (CPTED principals) is of paramount importance.
 - This includes issues associated with appropriate levels and locations of lighting.
- The exterior design should be integrated architecturally to look like a commercial building rather than an institution or warehouse.

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.
- For major developments, applicants must provide a 'sign plan' which identifies the location and style of the various signs, illustrating consistency in signage throughout the development.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building identification is encouraged, for the benefit of both pedestrians and drivers, particularly at street corners. • Halo-lit channel letter design is preferred. Internally illuminated signs shall not be permitted unless only the lettering is illuminated and the background is substantially opaque. <p>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.</p>
Canopy Design	<p>Canopies provide interest and diversity to the streetscape as well as vital shelter from the elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canopies and awnings should be intentionally designed as an integral part of the architecture. • Awnings shall not be back lit. • Barrel awnings are not permitted. • Fabric colours should be subdued and complementary to the surrounding environment.
Public Art	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any new development or redevelopment shall incorporate public art into its design. (See Section 8.3.) • Opportunities for the accommodation of external murals should be considered • Sculpture installations are strongly encouraged • 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	<p>Adequate lighting will result in increased safety by illuminating paths for pedestrians, making pedestrians visible to drivers, and discouraging crime. Also, better lighting will encourage more walking at night, resulting in improved health and a more vibrant street life after dark.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting standards of a more human scale shall be encouraged (3-4 metres above the ground). • High-level lighting is not necessary for the core. • Ensure pedestrian walkways and vehicular access points are well and warmly lit, including any cut-through paths or alleyways that are created. • Lighting that results in glare into adjacent properties should be avoided. • Overhead wiring should be buried or relocated where possible. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimize the number of hydro lines crossing the street. • Developments should employ energy efficient lighting design such as Light Emitting Diodes (LED) and motion or photo-sensitive lighting for all outdoor lighting.
Landscaping and Screening	<p>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.</p>



- Every development shall plan and maintain substantial areas of small and large shrubbery and trees.
- Even in zero setback situations, some form of vegetation shall be considered as part of every commercial development.
- Shrubs, grasses, and groundcover plantings should be plant species native to the eastern Vancouver Island and/or drought tolerant ornamental species requiring minimal watering.
- A variety of street trees selected from the City of Duncan Preferred Planting List should be incorporated into the landscape plan; tree species shall be selected to establish the landscape character for a given street.
- Columnar and small ornamental trees should be installed within narrow boulevards where soil volumes and growing space are insufficient for full canopy trees.
- Larger, full canopy tree species should be installed along the boulevard or within curb bulges where soil volumes are sufficient and tree canopies can be accommodated.
- Landscaping should be designed to maintain sightlines for personal safety and to avoid physical obstructions for people with disabilities.
- Permeable paving materials should be used in plazas, courtyards, walkways, and parking areas.
- Rooftop gardens, green roofs, and living walls are encouraged.
- A Landscape Plan, developed by a Registered Landscape Architect, should be submitted as part of the development application, to ensure appropriate, interesting, and sustainable landscaping is installed.

Screening

- Landscape screening should be used to visually separate commercial rear yards and service areas from adjacent and nearby buildings.
- Service areas, including mechanical systems, should be incorporated into the site design and screened from view from the street.
- Materials and finishes for retaining walls, fences, and/or other architectural screening devices should be composed and considered with those of adjacent development.

Vacant Sites

Neglected, vacant sites leave a negative first impression. This is exacerbated by lack of maintenance, 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.
- Chain link fencing is not permitted.
- 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 from looking as though they are abandoned and uncared for.

Accessibility and Personal Safety

- Accessibility should be addressed in site, building, and landscape design, to address the needs of all users.
 - Disabled access should be incorporated in the main access.
 - When provided, access ramps or related features should be visually integrated into the overall building design and site plan.
 - Accessible travel routes to building entrances, parking, and/or recreational areas should have a hard, slip-resistant surface with a

**Environmental
Impact**
Amend #2095

defined border of alternate material or texture to distinguish the sides or ends of paths, and shall meet the requirements of the current British Columbia Building Code.

- The basic principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be incorporated into building and site planning/design (e.g. avoid recesses, dark alcoves, the creation of hiding spots, and isolated areas). Refer to the Checklist for Safety Planning and Design (Appendix 9).
- 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.
- Building design should include passive heating, lighting, and cooling design features.
- Landscaping and building design should consider the incorporation of natural daylight and seasonal shade needs.
- Adaptive reuse of buildings and on-site materials is encouraged, where permitted within the BC Building Code and under relevant legislation.
- Development projects should minimize impervious areas and incorporate on-site integrated stormwater management solutions.