

12.5 DPA 4 – OTHER COMMERCIAL AREAS

Category Amend #2095	Form and Character/ Revitalization/ Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Justification	Other commercial areas (sites outside of Downtown and the Trans Canada Highway Corridor) form an important part of the overall character of Duncan. Consequently, standards of care should be taken in the planning and design of these properties. A consistent standard for commercial development encourages owners to invest in their commercial properties, and can create a positive image for the City's commercial areas among residents and visitors.
Objective	The objective is to ensure that new commercial development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is compatible with surrounding land uses; • complements the social and environmental goals of this Plan; • is constructed to high standards, both material and aesthetic.
Guidelines	The following guidelines are specifically applicable to sites such as neighbourhood, service and tourism commercial developments which are not part of the Downtown or the Trans Canada Highway Corridor. <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>
Local Context	The site design of commercial development 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architectural consistency within a commercial area, e.g. follow local development patterns (i.e. geometry of streets, open space and view corridors, common setbacks, and streetscapes) is strongly encouraged. The continuation of such patterns should contribute to a unified visual appearance within an area. • Compatibility with existing development with respect to the siting of buildings, exterior finish, design, scale, and height of buildings, landscaping and design of parking areas is encouraged. • An environment that is safe, user-friendly and visually appealing from a pedestrian perspective should be created. • View corridors or vistas (e.g. between buildings, along/ from roadways, and to natural features such as Mt. Prevost and Mt. Tzouhalem, Somenos Marsh, and the Cowichan River) should be maintained, enhanced, or created. • The character of neighbouring non-commercial properties should be respected to achieve some visual harmony and neighbourliness.

Transitions

Commercial areas can sometimes have negative impacts on adjacent areas. The orientation, scale, form, height, setback, materials and character of new commercial developments are controlled by development permit areas to ensure compatibility with the surrounding community.

- Buildings should be sited to ensure maximum privacy to adjacent residential properties.
- The impacts of noise, glare, shadows, and penetration into airspace on adjacent residential properties should be avoided.
- Effective transitions should be provided by a combination of the following methods:
 - fencing, combined with dense naturalized shrubbery or hedges;
 - landscaped earth berms;
 - dense shrubbery or hedges capable of impeding sound travel through to adjacent properties; and
 - trees that can grow to sufficient height to screen the commercial use from a 3 storey multi-family dwelling.
- Proposed future uses of adjacent properties should be considered in assessing the compatibility of proposed commercial developments in neighbourhoods.

Coordinate Building and Site Design

- Architectural design and building materials should be of a high standard to ensure a character of development that signifies quality, stability and permanence.
- Similar design characteristics, colours, materials and textures that are harmonious throughout, without being identical to separate buildings within a larger commercial complex should be used.
- The use of brick, finished concrete, architecturally faced block, stucco, or wood for exterior finishes, excluding roof treatments are encouraged. The use of untreated or unfinished concrete, metal, or aluminum as a final building finish is not encouraged.
- Monolithic structures (i.e. box stores) and long expanses of straight walls facing the roadway should be avoided. Visual interest should be created using variations in height, building orientation, roof treatment, and frequent window spacing to give the impression of small blocks. The maximum uninterrupted length of a building facing the public road must not be more than 15 metres before a major break.
- Large expanses of any one material should be avoided, unless effective architectural details are used to break up the visual monotony.
- All sides of a building should be consistent in detail and character.
- Elements should be incorporated into walls facing roadways and adjacent residential areas that add variety and vertical definition such as windows, entrances, and sloped roofs.
- Where building elevations are visible from adjacent roads or properties, these elevations should be finished and treated similarly to the front elevation.
- Buildings should be located close to the front lot line.

- Variations in the character of rooflines, sloping roof lines, gables and dormers should be utilized. Flat roofs are discouraged. However, other interesting roof treatments will be considered.
- Unsightly roof elements, including mechanical equipment and vents should be enclosed by roof parapets or other forms of solid screening.
- Protection from the elements should be provided through the use of awnings, roof or building overhangs. Coverings should be a minimum of 1.5 m and no higher than 3 m in height.

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- With the exception of HardiePlank and similar cementitious sidings, use of artificial materials (those that are made to appear as something they are not such as vinyl siding) is not permitted.

Screening and Landscaping

- Landscaping should be provided with the objective of providing:
 - An effective transitional buffer through the use of open space, landscaping and edge treatment, where practical, to protect the privacy of occupants of properties adjacent to residential development.
 - A consistent visual image between adjacent properties along the streetscape.
 - Low-height vegetation between adjacent driveways to mitigate the visual impact of paved surfaces.
 - Some effective screening at the time of planting.
 - Landscaped pedestrian walkways to and from buildings and parking areas.
 - An attractive streetscape to screen off-street parking, services, and storage areas, and to enhance the overall development:
 - All areas not covered by buildings, structures, and parking should be fully landscaped;
 - Natural vegetation should be retained where possible to enhance the character of the development and integrate it with the existing landscape;
 - Significant stands of trees, where present, should be preserved;
 - An underground irrigation system must be incorporated into landscaping except for areas left in a natural state;
 - Landscape screening must be provided along all property lines abutting neighbouring properties at least 1.5m high; and
 - Garbage containers and utility kiosks are to be screened by solid fencing or landscaping or a combination of the two.
- A solid decorative fence or landscaped strip/ screen not less than 1.5 m high composed of grass, earth berms, shrubs, trees, hedges, other vegetation, or a combination of these should be provided in the following areas:
 - along the property edge next to roadways;
 - between parking areas, roadways and buildings;
 - between different parking areas;
 - between buildings and parking areas; and
 - along rear and interior side lot lines adjacent to a zone which permits residential use.

- The use of indigenous plant species and species which may be considered drought resistant is encouraged in all landscaping.
- Existing trees should be maintained and enhanced by additional plantings wherever possible, allowing adequate exposure to business fronts.
- Landscaping should be designed to maintain sight lines for personal safety, and to avoid physical obstructions for people with disabilities.
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- A landscaped screen, not less than 1 m in width and not less than 1 m in height where more than 3 parking spaces are provided is required.
- All plant material and contractors' work should meet or exceed the standards of the BC Nursery Trades Association or the BC Society of Landscape Architects.
- The use of fences or retaining walls along the public road frontage should be avoided. Where fences or walls are provided, they should be no more than 10 m long without a break or jog, a maximum of 1.5 m in height, and architecturally detailed.
- Public art and street furniture should be incorporated.

Loading Areas, Utility and Storage Structures

- Loading areas, utility and storage structures (including garbage receptacles) should be located in a safe and convenient location on-site (preferably not in any required front or exterior side yard setback), so that they do not impede vehicular or pedestrian traffic or sight lines and, where possible, these structures should be clustered.
- Utility and storage structures (including garbage receptacles) should only be permitted in landscaped areas when integrated with the landscaping in a manner that is unobtrusive, does not deteriorate the plantings and landscape material within the landscaped area; and does not interfere with sight lines.
- Loading areas, utility and storage structures (including garbage receptacles) should be screened from adjacent roads and residential properties either by decorative fencing or by landscaping, or a combination of the two, with a minimum height of 1.8 m. The use of chain link fencing is not encouraged.
- Garbage receptacles stored outdoors should be surrounded with a solid enclosure on all sides, that cannot be seen through, with a minimum height of 1.5 m.
- The storage of toxic, combustible or potentially hazardous material such as liquid petroleum products, fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides outside buildings is prohibited.
- Wiring (on-site and existing) should be placed underground, where possible.

Signs

- All signage should conform to the provisions of the City's Sign Bylaw.
- All signs should be coordinated architecturally with the overall design of buildings and landscaping. Multi-unit buildings should have unit signs of compatible size, arrangement and character.

**Surface
Parking and
Access**

- The use of fascia type signs (on building surfaces) and awning mounted signs is encouraged. Spot lighting is preferred to backlit signs.
- Variances may be permitted to allow signage constructed using tubular neon, provided that the signage is complimentary to the form and character of the commercial building, is in keeping with surrounding commercial development, and does not negatively impact neighbouring residential areas.
- Parking areas should be located away from the street, preferably at the rear, to create a more aesthetic and functional design.
- Safe and convenient access for cars to parking areas and people from cars to buildings should be provided. Parking areas should be designed with the following features:
 - close access to main building entrances;
 - clearly marked, well lit pedestrian routes;
 - appropriate signage to assist people in locating pathways and building entrances;
 - adequate lighting that eliminates dark or shadow areas; and
 - opportunity for casual surveillance from a number of locations.
- Access for vehicles should be separated from pedestrian walkways, provide safe separation distances from nearby road junctions and not encourage left turns onto or from roads of a collector status or higher where alternatives are available.
- On-site roadways should provide safe and convenient access for emergency and service vehicles.
- Disabled or drop-off/ pick-up parking should be located close to building entrances.
- Bicycle parking, preferably covered, should be provided.
- Vehicular access to parking, loading, storage, and refuse areas through residential areas (and abutting residential uses) is discouraged.
- Parking areas and internal access roads should be constructed using a permeable surface, alternatively other rainfall capture facilities (catch basins and landscaping) should be used to mitigate the environmental impact of the first 30 minutes of peak runoff flows (see also Policy 10.3.3).
- Variances for reductions in off-street parking requirements may be permitted where the request for such variances is supported by a Parking Demand Study for the proposed use, prepared for the City of Duncan by a qualified professional. The Parking Demand Study may consider proximity to bicycle routes and public transit as mitigating factors in determining the demand for off-street parking.
- Concrete curbs, boulevards, and sidewalks should be provided along all road frontages.

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.
- Design 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.

Drive-through windows

Businesses may require drive-through windows as an important part of their service. Special care must be taken in site planning and locating drive-through facilities to avoid traffic congestion on-site and conflict with neighbouring properties.

- Drive-through windows and associated stacking lanes and equipment should be screened from adjacent properties and from adjacent public sidewalks.
- Adequate stacking length should be allowed for in vehicular circulation to avoid interfering with non-related pedestrian and vehicle movement.
- Screening and covering of drive-through windows should be integrated with the design of the building.

Shared Road Access With Neighbours

The amount of frontage devoted to vehicle access can be significant. Where neighbouring commercial developments each provide their own multiple access points, the street frontage becomes fragmented. This breaks the continuity of the sidewalk or safe pedestrian path along the street, and creates multiple conflict points between cars and pedestrians.

- Wherever possible, combined access to main roads with neighbouring commercial property should be sought and, where achieved, secured by way of a reciprocal access easement registered on title.

Storm Water Management

- Stormceptors™, or equivalent approved equipment, should be incorporated to remove oil wastes and sediments from storm water.
- Storm water discharges should be designed based on Best Management Practices as recommended in the publication titled *Urban Runoff Quality Control Guidelines for BC* (Ministry of Environment).

Lighting

- Sufficient lighting to ensure pedestrian and vehicle safety should be provided.
- Lighting should be designed to minimize the illumination of any adjacent residential properties.

- Lighting should be designed to minimize its impact on the night sky. Outdoor lighting is the main source of light pollution. To minimize this impact, outdoor lighting should be regulated to control the quantity, quality and direction of night lighting.
- Light standards should be in keeping with the overall development of the property.
- Building frontages should be well-lit to clearly identify the business. Ground level businesses are encouraged to utilize attractive display lighting to animate the streetscape.

Personal Safety

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

Environmental Impact

- The basic principals of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) should be incorporated.
- 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.

Amend #2095