

Richmond Hill Urban Design Guidelines

BUILDING A NEW KIND OF URBAN

September 2013



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PART II

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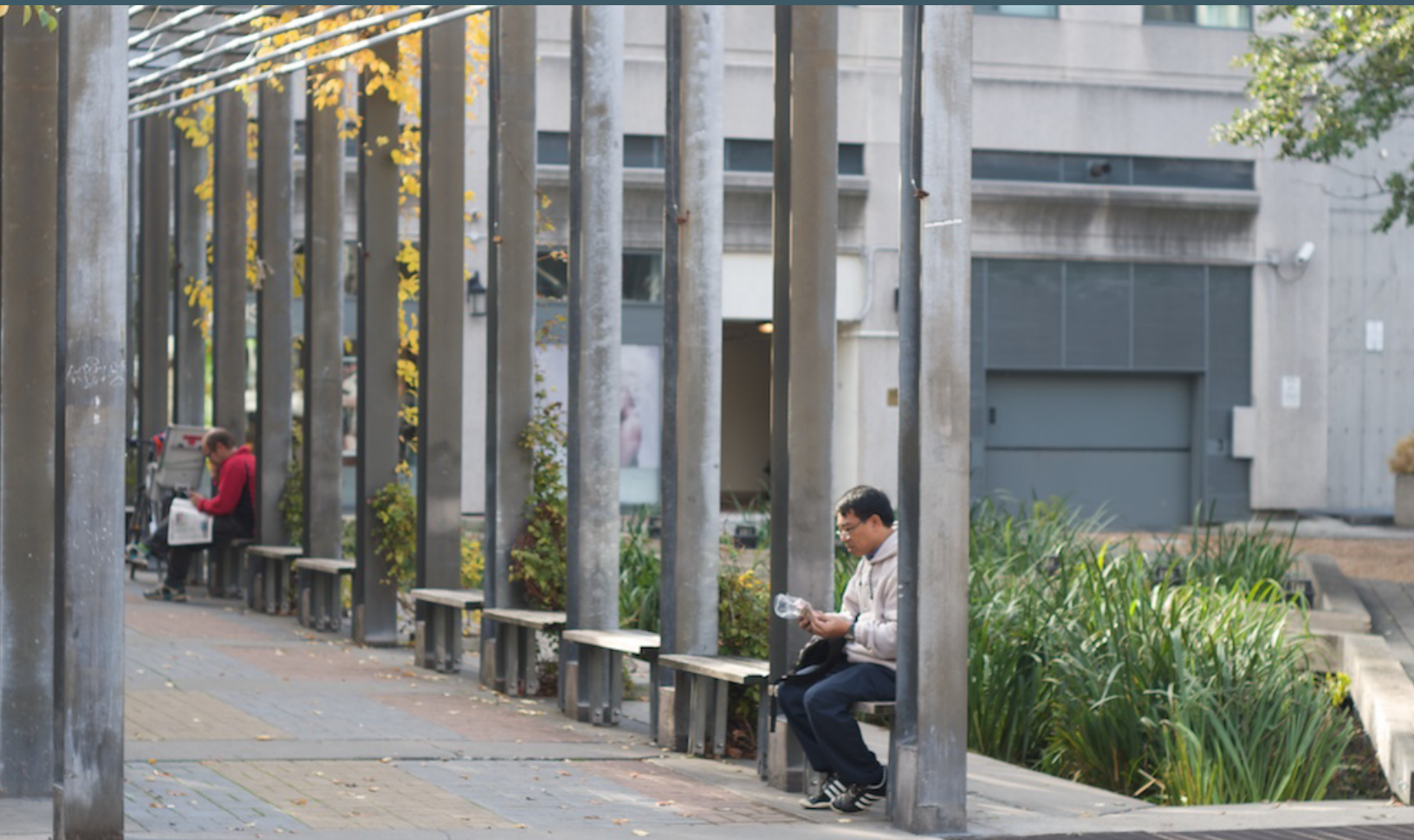
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1

vision for building a new kind of urban community



Vision

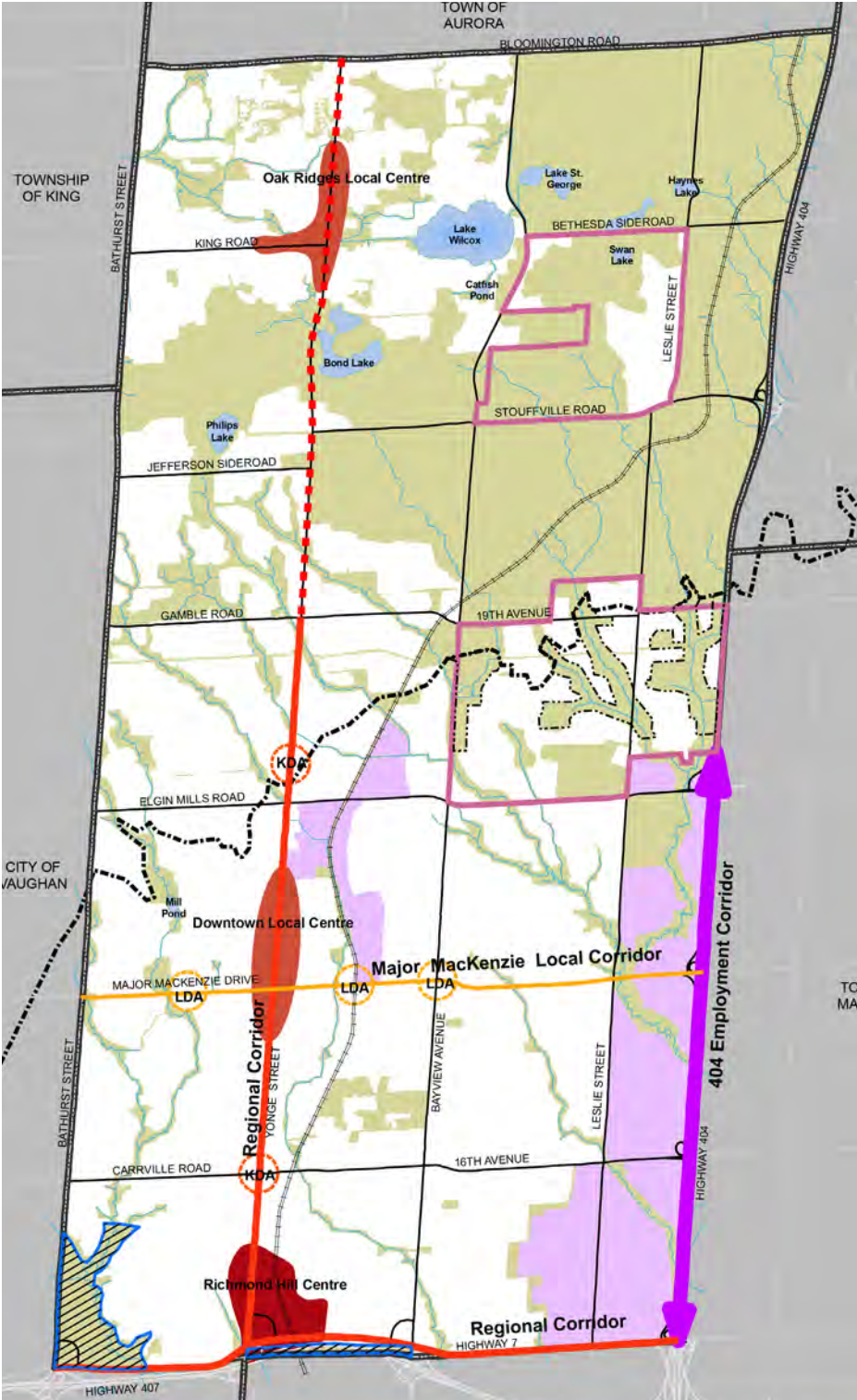
Strive for design excellence in the public and private realm by recognizing and enhancing the inherent and unique aspects of Richmond Hill and creating new focal points, gateways, experiences and landmarks.

The policies of the Richmond Hill Official Plan (OP) – *Building a New Kind of Urban* recognize that excellence in urban design is important to reinforcing the human-scale of the planned Urban Structure. These Urban Design Guidelines further articulate the vision for city building at a scale that reflects the local context and positively contributes to the Town’s character and identity. New development will be more pedestrian-oriented, compact and human-scaled, with the objective of promoting mobility and walkability, fostering social interaction, and ensuring compatibility with the existing context. These Urban Design Guidelines seek to bring the Official Plan to life by visually articulating the *new kind of urban* environment that is desired.

Re-imagining how the existing physical environment will evolve to meet a collective desire for a *new kind of urban* community represents a fundamental shift in the Town’s approach to design. Over the past few decades, Richmond Hill’s physical environment has largely been created to accommodate the automobile. Within the decades to come, the design of the Town’s physical environment will be focused on places that are created for people. This does not mean that the automobile will no longer be part of our environment - it will. The difference will be the way in which it is accommodated. Design will prioritize and better integrate the movement of people and alternative-transport (e.g. transit, cycling, etc.) over the infrastructure needed to support the automobile. This means thinking about the way parking areas are located and designed, how built form is oriented, where loading and servicing occurs, and what collectively these types of design decisions mean for the pedestrian-realm over time.

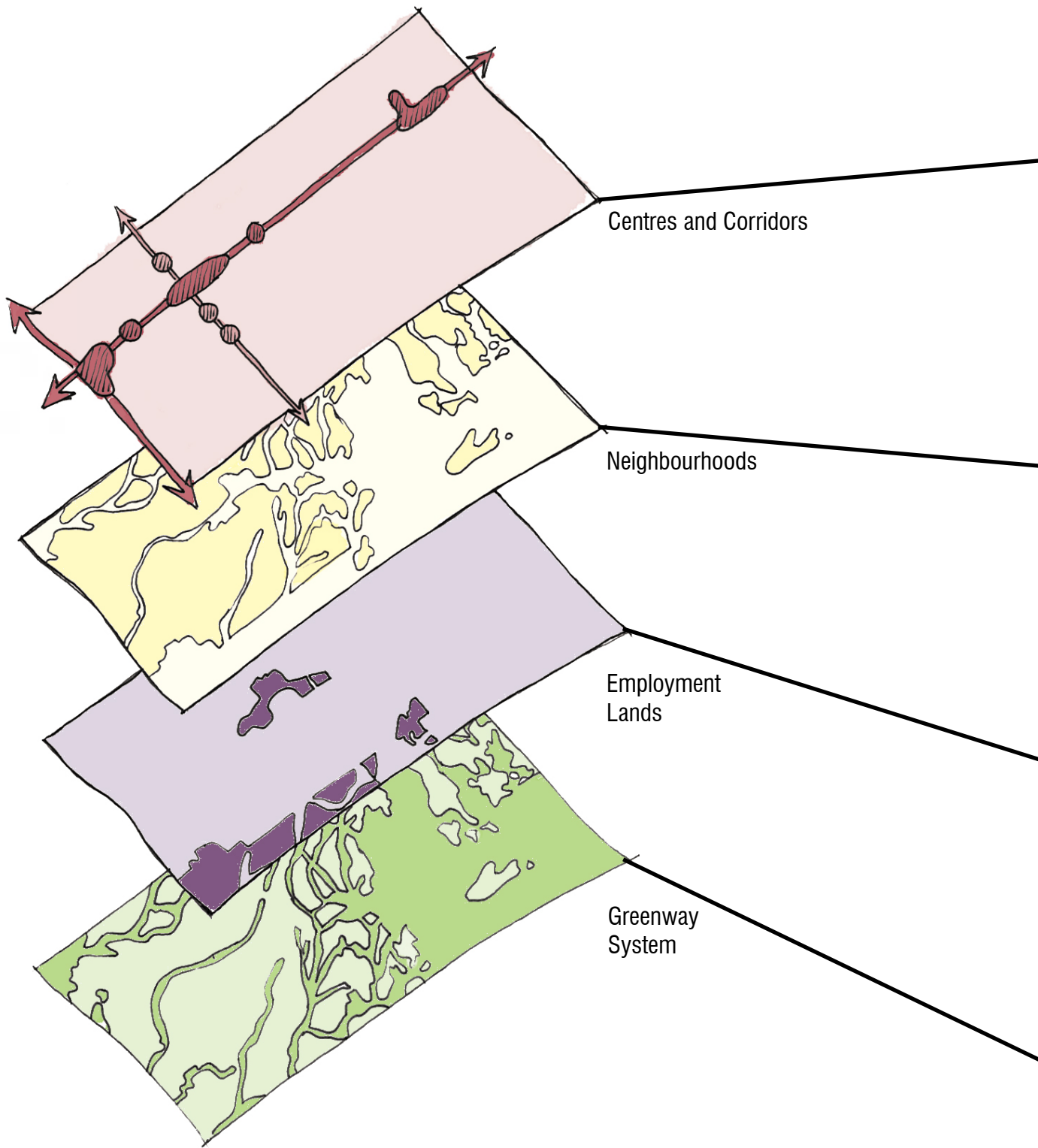


Design to prioritize transit, cycling, and walking



Planned Urban Structure
(Richmond Hill Official Plan Schedule A1)

Design in the decades to come will focus on enlivening the pedestrian realm, re-connecting areas within the planned Urban Structure, establishing better connections to adjacent areas including the Town's Greenway System, and ensuring human-scaled and physically compatible new built form across the community. All scales of design – from town-wide to community, site, and building-design scales - will be impacted by this shift. Innovative and creative design solutions that contribute to the quality and character of Richmond Hill and that ensure physical compatibility with the scale of surrounding areas will become the norm as Richmond Hill evolves into a more mature, urban community. A *new kind of urban* environment in Richmond Hill is about building a better pedestrian realm one development at a time, as much as it is about making sure that each new development fits well with and enhances what is and will be around it.



Components of the Planned Urban Structure



Town-wide place-making design efforts will focus on the Town’s planned Urban Structure, which includes a series of centres and corridors, a connected Greenway System, neighbourhoods, and employment areas. Richmond Hill’s skyline will become more defined as a new iconic outline of planned pulse points along the Yonge Street corridor that correlate with the hierarchy of the Urban Structure. The Greenway System will continue to speak to Richmond Hill’s landscape-oriented identity as its physical presence, connectivity and visual continuity is strengthened through sustainable design techniques. New human-scaled centres will be created around planned and existing points of convergence including:

- Richmond Hill Centre around the Richmond Hill Centre transit terminal;
- Yonge and 16th Avenue Key Development Area (KDA) around Hillcrest Mall;
- Yonge and Bernard Avenue KDA around the Bernard transit terminal;
- Oak Ridges Local Centre around the historic Oak Ridges commercial core;
- Downtown Local Centre around the historic Village Core;
- Newkirk Local Development Area (LDA) around the Major Mackenzie GO station;
- Trench Street LDA around the York Central Hospital; and
- Bayview LDA around the BayMac Shopping Centre.

Pedestrian-oriented Corridors along Yonge Street, Highway 7, and Major Mackenzie Drive will connect the centres together, fostering new built form typologies that prioritize and enhance the pedestrian realm.

Community-building design efforts within the new centres, along the corridors, and within the existing neighbourhoods and employment areas will help to improve connectivity, vibrancy, and the overall experience of these places from the perspective of pedestrians and transit riders. New plans of subdivision in both infill and remaining greenfield conditions will improve the connectivity of the existing physical fabric through the creation of new streets, pathways/trails/sidewalks, and a human-scaled, pedestrian realm.

New focal points will be established using public infrastructure, community facilities, public realm design and built and natural heritage features. New views, vistas and experiences will be created to enhance the Town's landscape-related identity, strengthening the physical presence of the Greenway System over the long term. All development will be compatible with the planned scale and character of adjacent areas, producing new opportunities for unique street siting, landscape, and built form transitions, and connections to adjacent areas.



Option for redevelopment of the Richmond Hill Centre at Yonge Street and Highway 7



Option for redevelopment of the South Hill shopping plaza on the north east corner of the Yonge Street and 16th Avenue KDA

Site and building design will become more integrated, exploring and offering unique design solutions that collectively contribute to a vibrant pedestrian-realm. New urban spatial conditions will be fostered that create vibrant, interesting, and compatible spaces for people to walk, congregate, and play. These spaces will function as new “seams” in the urban fabric, stitching the physical environment together over time into a connected urban open space system. New building typologies will be designed to unite the site and the surrounding context. Rather than a building being designed as an object in space, buildings will help to create and enhance a vibrant pedestrian-realm. This type of integrated design is about more than putting new buildings in the right place on the site. It is about designing in a way that allows new buildings to capitalize on the inherent and unique aspects of a site and its relationship to the surrounding context, including the planned vision for what is and will be around it in the future. In this sense, a *new kind of urban* built form is as much about good architecture as it is about enhancing the pedestrian realm and the spaces around and between sites. Site and building design will consistently be expected to improve the pedestrian realm while ensuring compatibility with the planned scale and character of adjacent areas.

These Urban Design Guidelines articulate the Town’s preferences for how each planning application can contribute to *Building a New Kind of Urban* community through design. *Building a New Kind of Urban* community through design excellence is a vision that will evolve based on the design principles outlined in this document.



Mixed use buildings provide opportunities for unique design solutions, like integrating an adjacent urban park.



Low-rise buildings can enhance the pedestrian realm through site and building design, like this street-facing townhome with recessed garages.



The Renaissance building is a local example of a mixed-use building on Yonge Street in downtown Richmond Hill that enhances the pedestrian realm by stepping the building and articulating the building facade.

2

introduction



Introduction

Richmond Hill has been recognized for its desirability and livability, and seeks to maintain and enhance this distinction. As Richmond Hill continues to grow and mature as a community, the benefit that responsive and stimulating design can have on the Town's cultural, economic, and environmental health, and the community's quality of life has become increasingly clear. Great cities have beautiful buildings, attractive public space, and a variety of cultural and recreational opportunities that make them attractive places to live as well as distinctive destinations. Throughout the world, cities that value design and demand design excellence not only raise the quality of life for those who live, work and visit them, they are also more competitive in attracting businesses and institutions and promoting tourism.

The great cities of the world are generally remembered and cherished for the quality and character of their public spaces—the streets, plazas, and parks where people experience the city. People's experience and memories of a city tend to be shaped by qualities that directly affect their experience: Do they feel safe walking the city streets? Is it clear and convenient how to move about in the city? Are there comfortable and attractive places to sit and take in the surroundings? Is it easy to use transit and explore the city without a private vehicle? Are people out and about enjoying themselves? Are there distinctive features such as fountains, public art, or landscaping that are attractive and memorable?

All of these questions go directly to the quality of a city's urban design, addressing essential placemaking qualities that are important to residents, visitors, and businesses alike. The Richmond Hill Urban Design Guidelines seek to inform designers, reviewers, and decision makers about the elements of good urban design and the importance of creating environments for people as Richmond Hill evolves into a *new kind of urban* community.



Local examples of good urban design.

2.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of these Urban Design Guidelines (UDGs) is to provide guidance – in words, pictures, and illustrations – on the Town’s expectations with regard to good urban design. This document presents a set of cohesive urban design directions intended to provide a reasonable degree of certainty with respect to the Town’s general urban design aspirations for development and redevelopment within Richmond Hill. The UDGs convey the Town’s expectations for urban design excellence across Richmond Hill—from the neighborhoods, to the centres and corridors along Yonge Street, Highway 7 and Major Mackenzie Drive, to the employment lands. To advance the vision set forth in the Richmond Hill Official Plan (OP) to become a *new kind of urban* community, the UDGs have been prepared to describe how all forms and scales of development can contribute to making Richmond Hill a unique and special *new kind of urban* community.

The UDGs should be read in the context of the policies of the OP and in conjunction with the requirements of various regulatory documents including but not limited to: the Town’s Zoning By-laws, Sign By-law, and applicable Richmond Hill standards and specifications. In addition to these requirements, it is well understood that the Ontario Building Code, as amended from time to time, impacts quite significantly on the final form of development in a community.

2.2 Background

The UDGs were prepared using a four stage process similar to that used in other planning policy projects. The four stages are: Research Stage (Technical Consultation, Preparation of Draft Document), Community Consultation Stage, Approval Stage, and Implementation Stage.

The UDGs were initiated in 2011. Following initiation, Research and technical consultation was undertaken to prepare a Draft Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) document for public input and discussion. The Draft UDGs were released for public review and comment in May 2013.

An Open House and Development Community Forum was held following the release of the draft UDGs on June 25, 2013 to allow stakeholders an opportunity for input and collaboration .

The Final UDGs were considered and approved by Council on November 25, 2013.

2.3

Organization of the Guidelines

These UDGs consist of seven (7) sections:

1.0 Vision for Building a New Kind of Urban

Provides a brief summary of the Vision for Building a New Kind of Urban community as it relates to the evolution of Richmond Hill's physical environment.

2.0 Introduction

Introduces the UDGs, explaining the purpose of the document, background process/consultation, organization, tiers of design guidelines, and how to use the UDGs.

3.0 Design Towards Place-making

Provides guidelines that foster place-making at the Town scale (e.g. the Greenway System, the Skyline, the Streetscape, Parks, the Urban Open Space System, etc.).

4.0 Community Design

Provides guidelines that are applicable to the creation of new community-scale developments including the design of streets and street elements within the centres and corridors and, where anticipated, within the neighbourhood and employment areas.

5.0 Site Design

Provides general site design guidelines for all forms of development.

6.0 Building Design

Provides general building design guidelines for all forms of development and certain specific types of built form (e.g. tall buildings, mid-rise buildings, etc.).

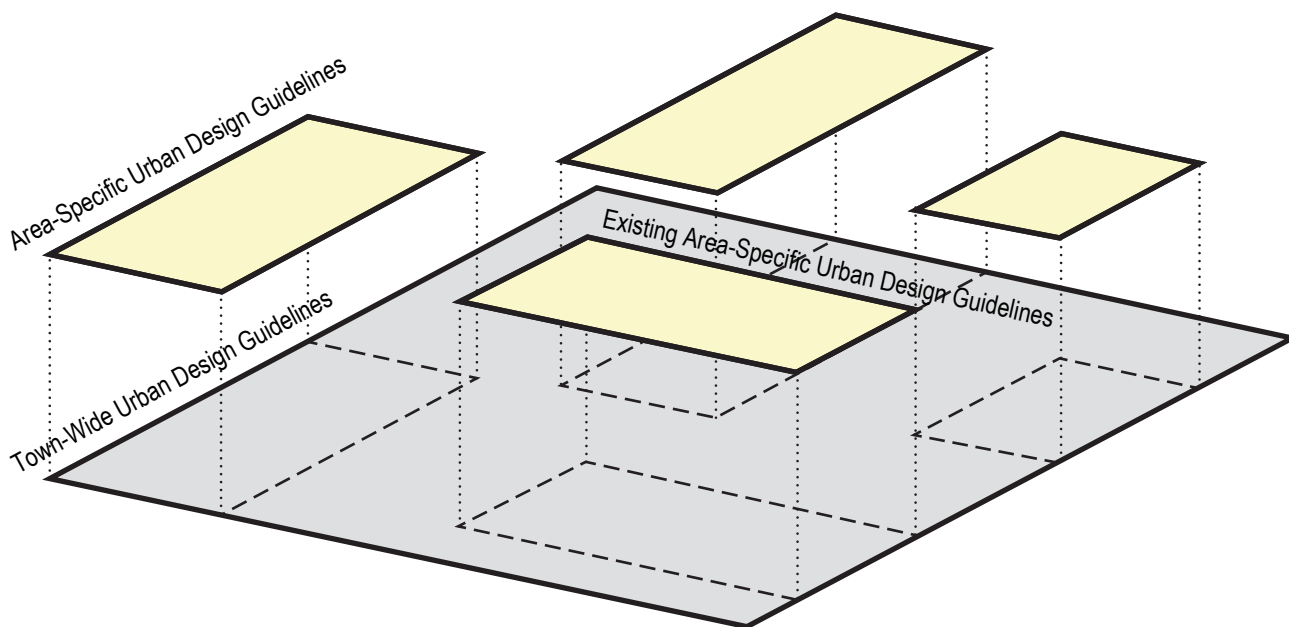
7.0 Implementation

Outlines how these guidelines will be implemented as part of the planning application review process. This section also provides recommendations for implementation strategies that would assist in furthering the Town's leadership role in promoting design excellence.

2.4 Tiers of Urban Design Guidelines

As previously noted, while the UDGs are relatively general in nature, more detailed area-specific urban design guidelines may be derived in the future as Richmond Hill continues to urbanize. In general, the tiers of design guidelines that will exist in the future will build on each other. Any area-specific urban design guidelines will supplement the UDGs, adding specificity unique to a particular area within Richmond Hill (e.g. Richmond Hill Centre, Downtown Local Centre, etc.).

In the case of a conflict between any of the Town-wide UDGs and any future area-specific urban design guidelines, the more area-specific guideline will apply.



2.5

How to use these Urban Design Guidelines

The UDGs are intended to provide a comprehensive platform on which creative urban design dialogue can continue to occur as part of the Town’s on-going city-building. The UDGs articulate the Town’s preferences and do not preclude alternatives, as guidelines, there is flexibility afforded in their application. The UDGs are not intended to be interpreted and applied independently of each other, instead the application of each guideline should be weighted across the board to determine whether the overall intent of the UDGs is being met.

The “**Guidelines Section Links**” lists other sections in the Urban Design Guidelines the reader should consult.

The “**Official Plan Policy References**” lists policies in the Richmond Hill Official Plan that relate to a particular section of the Urban Design Guidelines.

Guidelines Section Links:
4.1 4.2 4.3 5.2 5.3

Official Plan Policy References:
3.4.1

3.6

Streetscape

Principle - Foster four streetscape types to create more human-scaled streetscapes including: Residential Streetscapes; Mixed-Use Streetscapes; Employment Streetscapes; and Alleys/Mews.

Guidelines with a common theme (relating to the same aspect of design) are grouped together under **titles** and **subtitles**.

The “**Principle**” statement gives an overview of the section and what the guidelines are intended to accomplish.

Certain Sections include a “**Rationale**” paragraph, which describes the design conditions necessitating the design guidelines.

Rationale

Richmond Hill’s street network is comprised of arterial streets, collector streets, local streets and lanes. While these streets serve an important functional role in the movement of goods throughout the Town, they are equally important as a place for people to meet and socialize.

Each of the four streetscape types will have a distinct public realm made up of: the “Travelway Realm”, whose primary function is to accommodate vehicular, bicycle circulation, and the “Pedestrian Realm”, whose primary function is to accommodate pedestrian circulation.

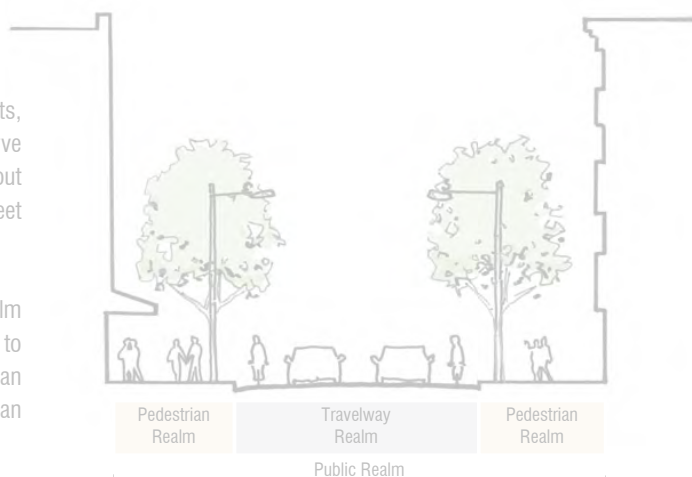
The focus of this Section is the Pedestrian Realm. The Pedestrian Realm will be enhanced as part of the planning approvals process to serve as a social space, an amenity space, and a pedestrian circulation route to serve as the part of urban open space system providing connections and enhancements to the Greenway system.

Character of Four Streetscape Types

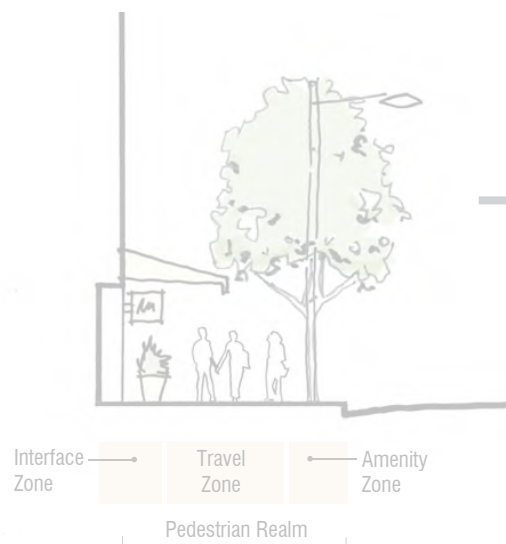
Guidelines

Residential Streetscapes

- 1/ Define Residential Streetscapes to include an intimate pedestrian-scale that promotes walking and residential activities, as well as green amenity through continuous landscaped boulevards and front yards.



Components of a streetscape's public realm



Three zones within the Pedestrian Realm

Guidelines: Each individual guideline addresses a single condition and provides direction for the type of design solution(s) the Town is looking for as part of the planning process.

Images and diagrams are included to give a visual description of the guidelines. Note however that the images should not be seen as the only potential solution.

3 design towards place-making



3.1 Urban Structure

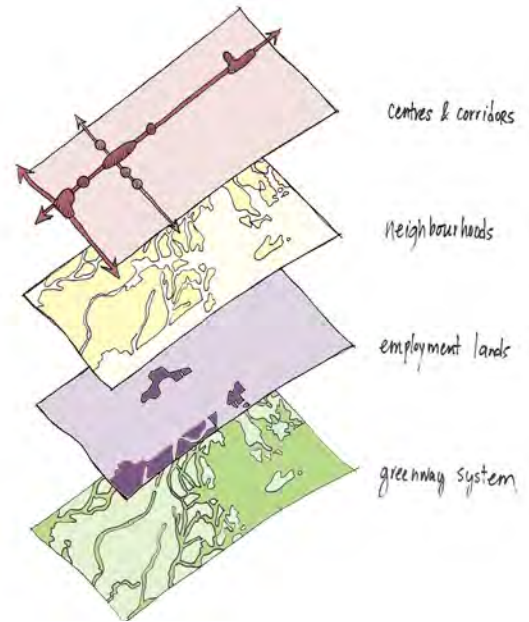
Principle - Use the Urban Structure, as defined in the Richmond Hill Official Plan, as the spatial framework for development over the long-term.

Rationale

Richmond Hill's Urban Structure is comprised of four components: the Centres and Corridors, the Neighbourhoods, Employment Lands, and the Greenway System. The guidelines in Chapter 3 are intended to foster place-making across the four components of the Urban Structure.

Guidelines

- 1/ The Urban Structure, as defined in the Richmond Hill OP – Building a New Kind of Urban, shall form the spatial framework for development. Throughout the Urban Structure, development shall include built form transitioning to the surrounding areas and ensure the creation of a high-quality, human-scaled, pedestrian-oriented public realm.



The four components of the Urban Structure.



Richmond Hill Centre will be the highest, most dense area of the Town in the future



The Downtown Local Centre will have a new Uptown District



A new mixed-use Key Development Area will evolve around Hillcrest Mall



All Centres and Corridors will be more pedestrian-oriented



Neighbourhoods will remain low-rise in character



Employment lands will continue to be the focus of high-quality jobs



A connected Greenway System will be protected and enhanced

3.2

Greenway System

Principle - Protect and enhance the Greenway System over the long term.

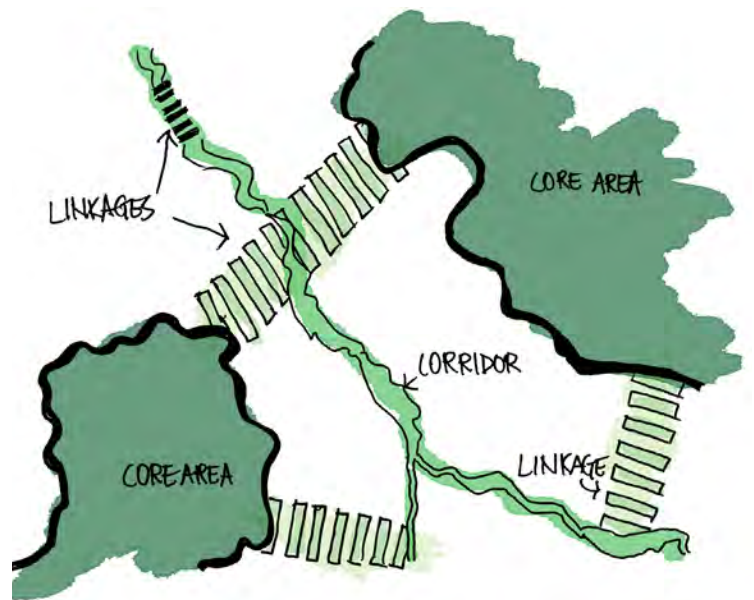
Guidelines

Managing the Greenway System

- 1/ Improve the connectivity of the Greenway System through the creation of new natural and urban open space linkages.

Improving Connectivity

- 2/ Manage, restore, and enhance existing features/functions to minimize impact and improve ecological function.



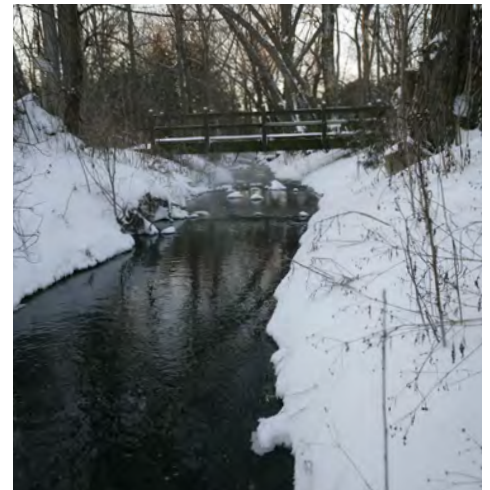
The Greenway System includes core natural features and functions and linkage areas to connect the core features together



Core Area - Wetland - Snively Street



Core Area - Woodland - Jefferson Forest



Core Area - Valleyland



Linkage Area - Stormwater Management Pond



Linkage Area - East Humber Trail



Linkage Area - Agricultural field on the Oak Ridges Moraine



Urban Open Space - Park



Urban Open Space -Green Roof



Urban Open Space - Rain garden

Strengthening the Physical Presence of the Greenway

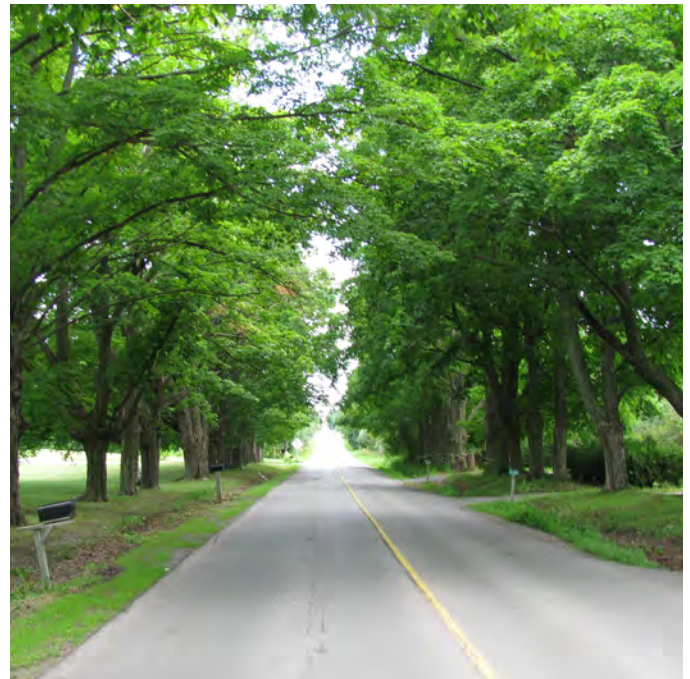
- 3/ The Town will work with Conservation Authorities, the Region, the Province, and other stakeholders to strengthen the physical presence and experience of the Greenway System. For example, Richmond Hill's current naturalization efforts and community stewardship initiatives could be enhanced to strengthen the visual prominence of the Greenway System.
- 4/ Enhance the visual prominence of the Greenway System through the creation of new linkages, or by selecting species for their colour, shape, or height and planting them in a location or pattern to highlight key gateway points of the Greenway System, natural features within the Greenway System, or to direct people's attention or people themselves into a particular part of the Greenway System.

Framing and Enhancing the Edges of the Greenway

- 5/ Include a diversity of species along the edge of the Greenway System that are compatible with and enhance or protect the vegetation communities within that portion of the Greenway System. Fast-growing edge species that are adapted to the harsher conditions found along new edges/disturbed areas are recommended. Plantings should be designed to emulate a natural edge condition with smaller sized plant material at the front, and larger sized plant material directly adjacent the edge of the Greenway System.



Shorter, hardy plants are planted at the edge of this path in the Greenway System, with larger plants and trees set further back



The tree allee on Leslie Street strengthens the visual prominence of the Greenway System on the Oak Ridges Moraine

3.3

Sustainable Design

Principle - Optimize sustainable design techniques to better integrate the built and natural environments and enhance the Greenway System through the process of urbanization.

Guidelines

- 1/ Refer to the Sustainability Metrics.
- 2/ Refer to the Urban MESP.



The Oak Ridges Community Centre is certified LEED Silver



An urban approach to stormwater management where the cleaning of stormwater becomes both a public amenity and a point of functional beauty

3.4 Skyline

Principle - Promote the establishment of a skyline by directing high-rise built form in a series of pulses that correspond with the centres of the urban structure.

Guidelines

Visual Interest

- 1/ To create an attractive skyline along the Centres and Corridors, provide a variety of design expressions to articulate the top of tall buildings, including articulated rooftop designs with varying heights and setbacks.
- 2/ Design the upper portion of the building to promote visual interest and variety across the Town’s skyline. Dynamic building tops are encouraged, and transparency of materials and controlled reflectivity are possible opportunities to create visual interest. Designs are encouraged to be bird-friendly.

Sky View

- 3/ To avoid view blockage and preserve sky exposures that enhance the pedestrian realm at street level, mass and site buildings to maximize solar access and views both within and around the site. Some design treatments to maintain skyview include maintaining a minimum separation distance of 25m in all directions between high-rise buildings, using smaller floor plates, avoiding long, continuous building forms without spatial breaks, and designing buildings with setbacks and sculpted tops.



Site buildings to maximize skyview



A new skyline will be established through a series of pulses in building heights in the Centres and Key Development Areas

Massing

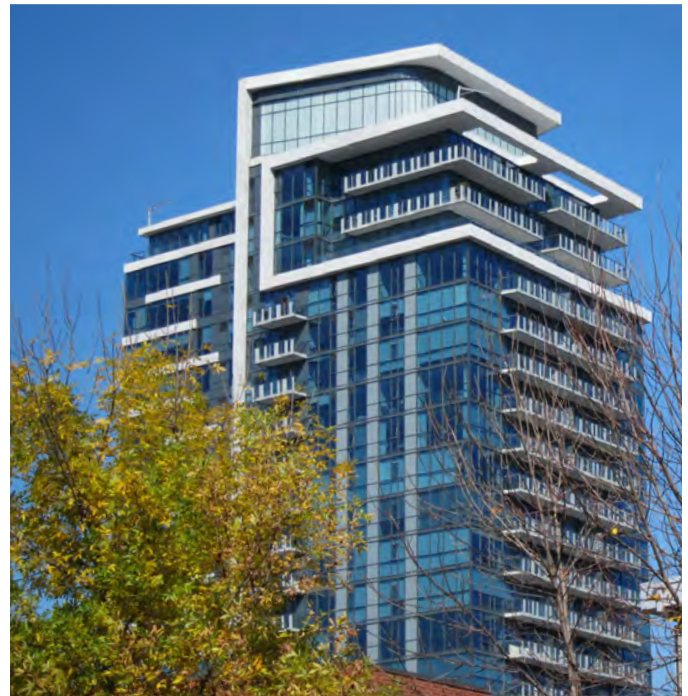
- 4/ The tops of buildings contribute to the skyline that will come to define Richmond Hill. Accordingly, they should be designed, primarily through their massing and form and secondarily through their materials, not only to create a distinctive structure, but as a conscious effort to articulate the space around them (See Section 6).
- 5/ Design the tops of buildings to be distinct, within the planned context of the Town's skyline. The uppermost floors and the penthouse levels of tall and mid-rise buildings should be designed as part of a building's top.
- 5/ Use a sculptured top to lend a distinctive identity to the building while helping to orient people as they approach and move about Richmond Hill. The gradual subtraction of mass towards the top floors reduces the appearance of the overall bulk and generally produces a more interesting building form. As buildings increase in height, the more visible upper portion should be shaped and finished to appear increasingly slender and more ornamental.
- 6/ Consider the tops of buildings from several distances and in different conditions in the day and night.

Building Branding

- 7/ Design building tops to accommodate building branding proportional to, and complimentary in colour and material appearance with the architecture.



The gradual subtraction of mass and use of different materials reduces the overall bulk of this building, while creating a distinct top



Designing the uppermost floors and penthouse levels as part of the top of a building can help to define the building mass and the larger skyline

3.5

Transition in Scale

Principle - Ensure appropriate built form and landscape transitions between and within the four components of the urban structure.

Guidelines

Compatibility/‘Fit’ with Adjacent Low-Rise Dwellings

- 1/ Transition the height of buildings adjacent to low-rise dwellings into a higher built form as the distance to the low-rise dwellings increases.
- 2/ Set back buildings along side streets to provide transitions to adjacent low-rise dwellings with front yards.

Continuous Rear Access System

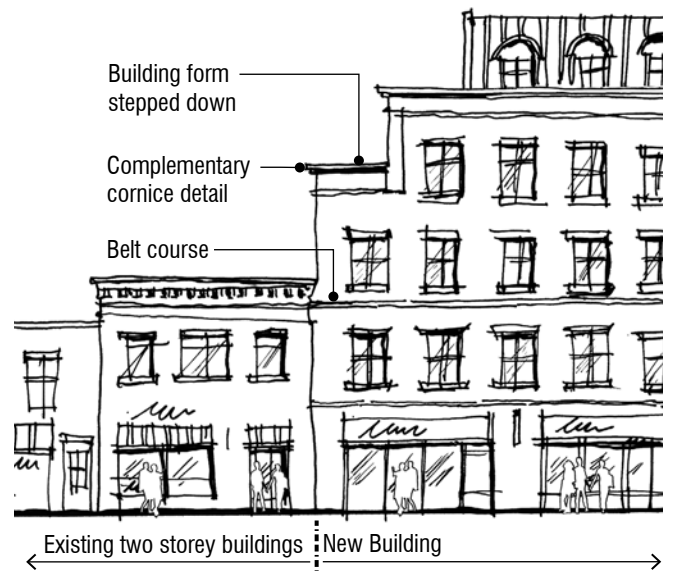
- 3/ In the centres and corridors, establish a continuous rear access system as a means of ensuring built form compatibility to adjacent low-rise dwellings.



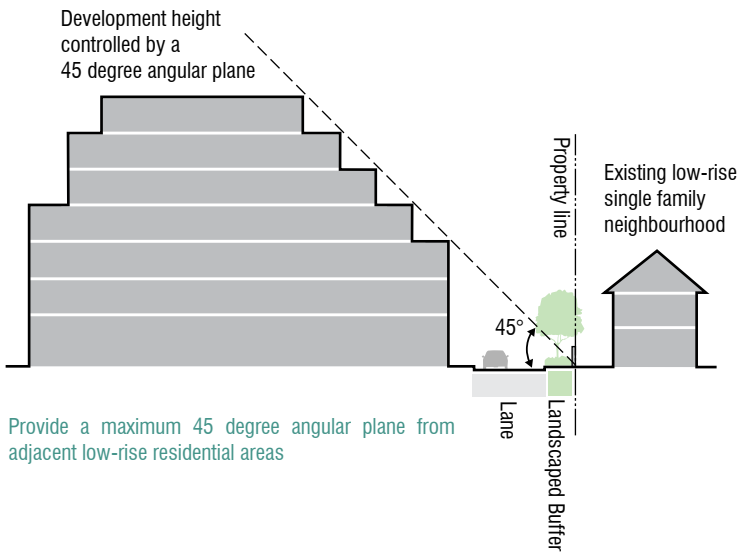
The Renaissance Building in the Downtown increases in height towards the middle of the site, transitioning from the low-rise character of the Village on Yonge Street and the low-rise neighbourhood on Church Street



A setback between these two houses helps transition between their heights



The new building on the right transitions from the low-rise building by incrementally increasing the height, using stepbacks, as the building progresses away



Angular Plane

- 4/ Within the centres and corridors, ensure built form compatibility and transition of building heights with adjacent residential areas by providing a maximum 45 degree angular view plane projected from the adjacent low density residential or medium density residential property line.
- 5/ Where a public or private laneway abuts a site, the laneway may be included for the purposes of establishing the angular plane.



A laneway and a 45 degree angular plane was used to transition between this mid-rise building and the adjacent townhouses

4.1	4.2	4.3	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	3.4.1	3.5.2	3.5.4
5.7	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8			

3.6 Streetscape

Principle - Foster four streetscape types to create more human-scaled streetscapes including: Residential Streetscapes; Mixed-Use Streetscapes; Employment Streetscapes; and Alleys/Mews.

Rationale

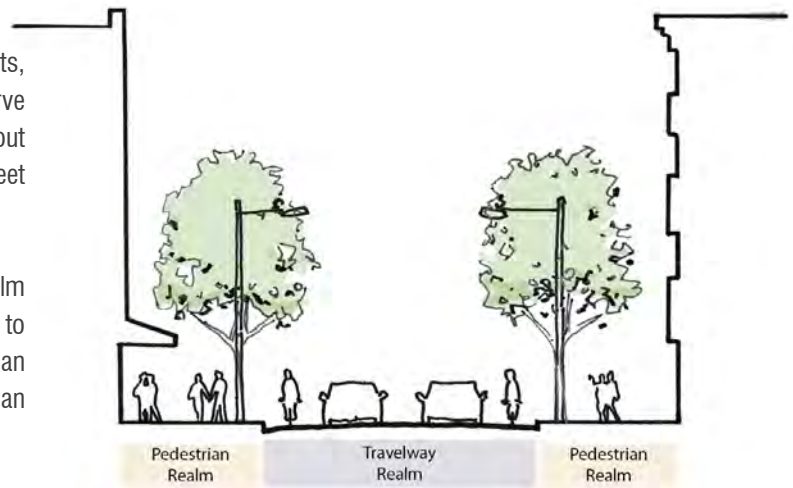
Richmond Hill’s street network is comprised of arterial streets, collector streets, local streets and lanes. While these streets serve an important functional role in the movement of goods throughout the Town, they are equally important as a place for people to meet and socialize.

Each of the four streetscape types will have a distinct public realm made up of: the “Travelway Realm”, whose primary function is to accommodate vehicular, bicycle circulation, and the “Pedestrian Realm”, whose primary function is to accommodate pedestrian circulation.

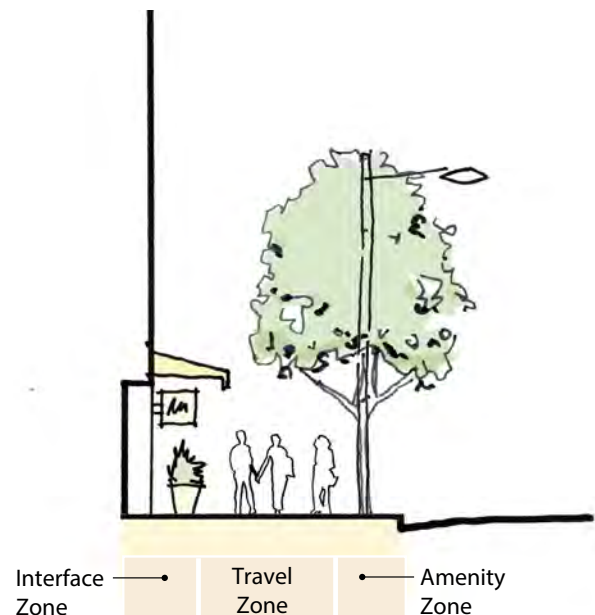
The focus of this Section is the Pedestrian Realm. The Pedestrian Realm will be enhanced as part of the planning approvals process to serve as a social space, an amenity space, and a pedestrian circulation route to serve as the part of urban open space system providing connections and enhancements to the Greenway system.

For the purposes of this document the Pedestrian Realm is defined as the outer portion of the streetscape. It includes three zones (see diagram at right):

1. The Amenity Zone (e.g. street light/treed boulevard area);
2. The Travel Zone (the circulation area); and
3. The Interface Zone (landscaped front yard, access to buildings or pedestrian amenity area with patios or cafés).



Components of a streetscape's public realm



Three zones within the Pedestrian Realm

Amenity Zone

Design to provide both a physical and psychological buffer to pedestrians between the travelway realm and the sidewalk, including such features as street trees, landscaping, street lighting, and bike racks. Features should be designed to add colour and festivity to the street and further enhance the pedestrian experience. The Amenity Zone is also the appropriate location for most above-grade utilities and service facilities, such as parking meters, fire hydrants and waste receptacles.

Travel Zone

Design to provide an unobstructed, linear sidewalk space that is wide enough to accommodate projected volumes of pedestrian traffic.

Interface Zone

Design to be responsive to and support the adjoining use, which, depending on context, may mean providing a clear zone for store entrances, a landscaped zone for residential uses, a furnished zone for outdoor dining, or a naturalized area beside the Greenway System.



Provide an unobstructed linear sidewalk space in the Travel Zone



Street trees, landscaping, and street lighting are included in this Amenity Zone to create a comfortable pedestrian experience along this shopping street



Outdoor furnishings can be included in the Interface Zone to support adjoining uses

Character of Four Streetscape Types

Guidelines

Residential Streetscapes

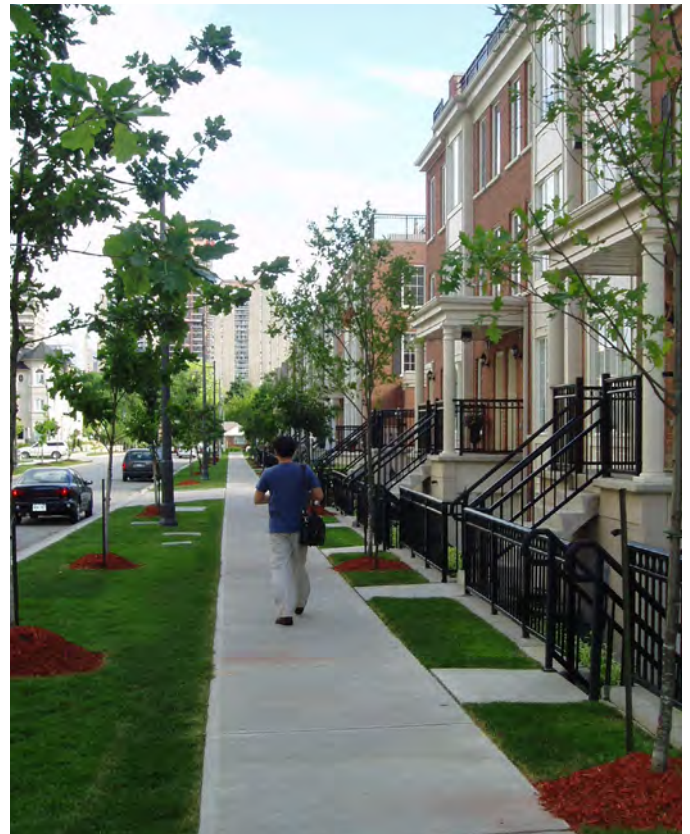
- 1/ Define Residential Streetscapes to include an intimate pedestrian-scale that promotes walking and residential activities, as well as green amenity through continuous landscaped boulevards and front yards.



This residential streetscape has a tree-lined sidewalk, green lawns, and landscaped front yards, creating an inviting pedestrian atmosphere



Porches, street trees, and front yard landscaping can all be used to create more pedestrian-oriented streetscapes



A more urban residential streetscape can enhance the pedestrian realm through building design, in addition to providing more urban landscaping

Mixed-Use Streetscapes

2/ Define Mixed-Use Streetscapes within the Centres and Corridors to provide an active Pedestrian Realm that includes:

- Continuous street trees;
- Flower beds or other landscaping features, where appropriate;
- Unique lighting, banners, signage and street furnishings;
- Spill-out activity such as patios and cafés;
- Urban open spaces providing a place for rest and respite;
- Broad, continuous and distinctly paved sidewalks and crosswalks;
- Sidewalk bump-outs at intersections;
- Decorative elements such as potted plants, architectural features or public art that help to activate the streetscape, visually enhance the building frontage or entrances, and generally create visual interest at the pedestrian-scale.



Canopies, street trees, bicycle parking areas, and on-street parking work together to create a more urban pedestrian realm



A combination of architectural features, potted plants, and a distinctly paved sidewalk create an inviting atmosphere on this mixed-use street

Employment Streetscapes

3/ Define Employment Streetscapes in Employment Areas to include a Pedestrian Realm that consists of:

- Continuous street trees;
- Sidewalks;
- Connections to transit stops;
- Landscaped areas with substantial plant material and/or landform for screening and buffering; and
- Landscaped pedestrian amenity areas.



Landscaped gateway features can help define different portions of an employment streetscape



Walkways between the sidewalk and the front entrance can improve the pedestrian experience on employment streetscapes



Landscaped pedestrian amenity areas can provide employees with a place to sit on their lunch break

Alleys, Mews and Laneways

4/ Create Alleys, Mews and Laneways within the Centres and Corridors. Design characteristics for Alleys, Mews and Laneways should include:

- Unique shared-space design elements with distinct paving systems that prioritize the pedestrian over vehicles;
- Alternative and in some instances dual frontage opportunities to create rear patio/café conditions;
- Improved visual appearance and physical linkages behind buildings;
- Fixtures, such as retractable bollards that can close segments of the Alley, Mew or Laneway from vehicular traffic for occasional street festivals, markets and other events;
- Unique and adequate lighting, banners, signage and furnishings.



Unique lighting, signage and furniture can be used to improve the visual appearance of pedestrian alleys



A rear patio, benches, planters and paving stones help define this pedestrian mews



Paving materials, fencing, and planters can be used to delineate and define pedestrian and vehicular circulation areas along a pedestrian alley

Enhancing the Pedestrian Realm Zones

Guidelines

Amenity Zone

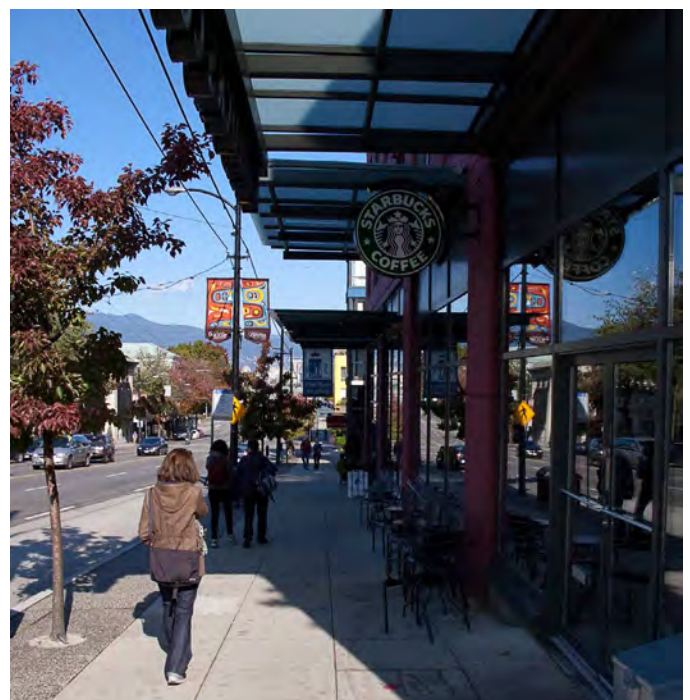
- 5/ Design the Amenity Zone to provide a physical and psychological buffer to pedestrians through appropriate use of features such as street trees, street furniture and street lighting.
- 6/ The Town will work with applicants as part of the planning process to ensure that, at a neighbourhood scale, coordinated design, type, color and material of street trees, lighting, and utilities contribute to a sense of community identity, and reflect and strengthen the local character.
- 7/ Cluster utilities located in the Amenity Zone, where feasible, and screen or buffer utilities to minimize their visual effects on the pedestrian realm. Utility providers are encouraged to consider innovative methods to contain utility services on or within streetscape features such as gateways, lamp posts, or transit shelters.
- 8/ Locate utilities underground whenever feasible, particularly on Mixed-Use Streetscapes to reduce conflict with pedestrian movement and improve the aesthetic character of the pedestrian realm.



Coordinated street trees, planting beds, and tree grates contribute to the character of this Amenity zone

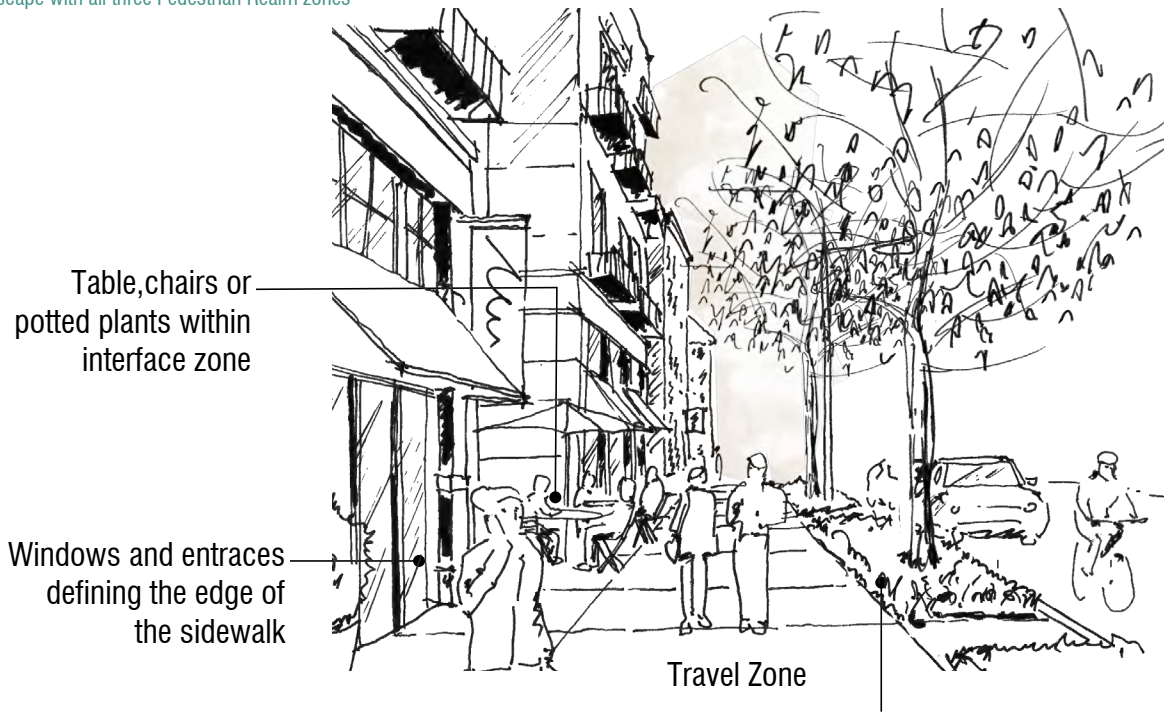
Travel Zone

- 9/ Provide an unobstructed linear sidewalk space that is free of other elements. Public sidewalks should provide a direct and continuous pedestrian network that connects blocks and buildings to each other while accommodating the needs of a broad range of users, including the elderly, those with disabilities, and young children.
- 10/ Provide continuous sidewalks on both sides of Arterial and Collector Streets and, where appropriate, on both sides of Local Streets.
- 11/ Where sidewalks cross driveways, they should be continuous.
- 12/ In Pedestrian Alleys/Mews, use distinctive paving across the entire alley/mew, extending from building face to building face. Use materials to clearly signify and prioritize pedestrian circulation over vehicular circulation.



The sidewalk space along this Travel zone also includes weather protection, further enhancing the pedestrian realm

Streetscape with all three Pedestrian Realm zones



Street trees, planting, lighting or street furniture within the Amenity Zone

Interface Zone

- 13/ Locate street furniture within the Interface Zone in areas of high activity where people are expected to congregate, such as at transit stops, building entrances, in plazas, and close to retail or entertainment areas.
- 14/ Use buildings, landscaping features, furnishings, cafés and patios, fences, plazas, and urban open spaces to define the Interface Zone, create a sense of three-dimensional containment to the streetscape, and allow for people to move out of the flow of traffic, to window shop, and to enter and exit buildings easily.
- 15/ Design buildings to promote walkability through building façade design, including providing weather protective elements such as awnings, canopies, and umbrellas. These elements should provide adequate vertical clearance of the sidewalk within the Travel Zone



Street furniture is provided adjacent this café, an area of high pedestrian activity

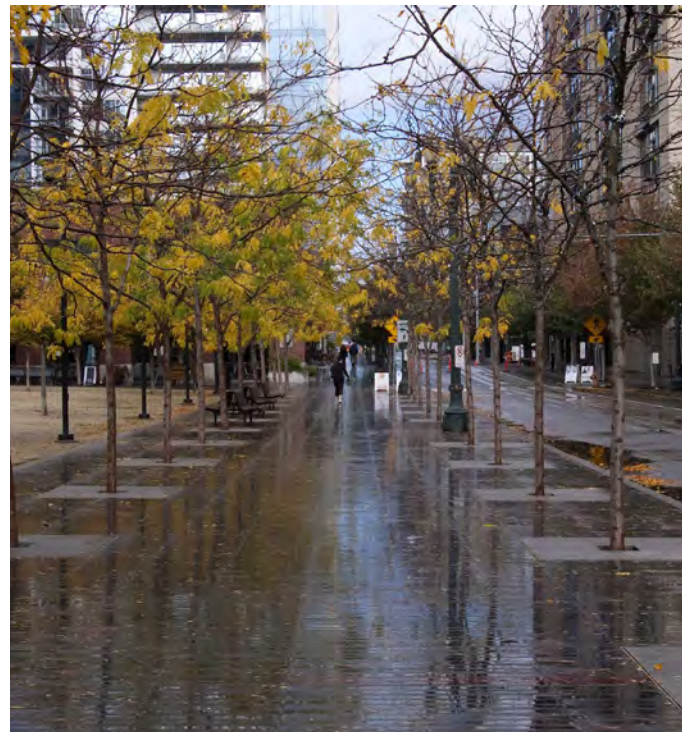
Elements within the Pedestrian Realm

Guidelines

Street Trees

- 16/ Use Street trees as the primary organizing element of all streetscapes, with a consistent rhythm along the street containing a diverse palette of tree species.
- 17/ Use double rows of trees in key areas, such as adjacent to parks or along or within a segment of the centres and corridors to highlight a landmark building or significant view.
- 18/ Locate street trees within the Amenity Zone and offset street trees from other elements.
- 19/ Space street trees consistently at 6.0 to 9.0 m intervals. Consider appropriate clearances from utility boxes and street lights.
- 20/ Consider the type and location of street trees to ensure that higher branching trees are positioned so there is no interference with truck traffic or sight lines at intersections.
- 21/ Preserve existing mature street trees wherever possible to create a greater sense of enclosure along streets.
- 22/ Use tree grates along and within the Centres and Corridors and in any areas with high pedestrian activity to protect street trees and reduce safety hazards.

Fire hydrants	2.0 m, and not in-line with any hose connections
Hydro underground transformer	2.0 - 4.0 m from opening side, or Powerstream spec (whichever is greater)
Light standard/ hydro poles	6.0 m
Bell/cable pedestals	2.0 m
Buried lines	1.0 m (to be determined after locate confirmation as plans are not always accurate)
Edge of Driveway	1.0 m (residential)
From signs	6.0 m
From pillars/fences	2.0 m
Soil Quantity Planting Guidelines	30 m ³ /per tree



A double row of trees along this sidewalk creates a new view down the street and highlights the urban square on the left

Street Lighting

- 23/ Alternate street lighting and street trees within the Amenity Zone.
- 24/ In the centres and corridors, light poles should allow for an armature for the hanging of banners or other amenities (e.g. hanging flower baskets, artwork).
- 25/ Provide additional pedestrian-scale lighting in areas with high pedestrian activity, such as key intersections, transit stops, and at trail crossings.
- 26/ Use a consistent style and size of pole and lighting fixture to differentiate the elements of the planned urban structure. Care should be taken to create a unifying scheme of illumination that is appropriate to the scale of the street and the level and character of nighttime activity in an area. Coordinate pole and lighting fixture design with other street furnishings to establish an attractive and unified design character.



Light poles in centres and corridors should allow for hanging baskets or banners



Design light poles, transit shelter and benches to have a coordinated design and include light poles with hanging baskets to beautify the street



Provide pedestrian-scale lighting in areas with high pedestrian activity

Street Furnishings

- 27/ Provide formal and informal seating wherever possible to increase the number of opportunities for people to socialize and spend leisure time outdoors along streets. The creation of seat walls, steps, and planters that can serve as informal seating areas is encouraged as a means of expanding the seating potential and providing diverse opportunities for social interaction.
- 28/ Place street furnishings to unambiguously indicate public use. Where street furnishings are located in the Interface Zone adjacent to private property, they should be designed in such a way that they do not preclude public use.
- 29/ Design street furnishings to provide a consistent and unified streetscape appearance that is appropriate for the area context. Coordinated design, type, colour and material of street furniture that add to the excitement and vitality of Richmond Hill is encouraged.
- 30/ Place street furniture for universal access and to facilitate use by those of all ages and abilities.



Street furniture located in the Interface Zone should be designed and sited for public use



Providing a wider edge on a planter can create an informal seating area



Formal seating designed to have a consistent appearance with the transit station on the other side of the street

Bicycle Racks

31/ Locate bicycle racks within the Interface Zone in areas that are clearly visible to cyclists from the street and adjoining buildings and public spaces. Placement in view of doors and windows will ensure adequate surveillance from building occupants and visitors. Locate bicycle racks so that parked bicycles do not block the travel path of pedestrians or infringe upon seating areas.

Crosswalks

32/ Crosswalks are defined in accordance with Provincial standards. Where appropriate, provide continuous and connected crosswalks to adjacent sidewalks. The location of crosswalks and design of curb cuts should conform to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act to ensure accessibility.

33/ Consider special paving treatments, such as brick, coloured concrete, and pavers, in conjunction with crosswalk markings to enhance the visibility of crosswalks, improve aesthetics, and serve as a visual and tactile cue to drivers. All crosswalk materials should be durable and stable enough to accommodate vehicle traffic without shifting or settling.

Directional Signage

34/ Incorporate Directional signage to assist in orienting the pedestrian to destinations along streetscapes. Use Directional signage to identify key historic, cultural, civic, and shopping destinations and facilities. Design Directional signage to be visually coherent and compatible with the surrounding character of the streetscape.



The bike racks outside this community centre are within view of the main entrance but out of the way of pedestrian traffic



Walkways across this intersection are made of patterned coloured concrete, clearly marking the crosswalk and aligning with curb cuts

3.7

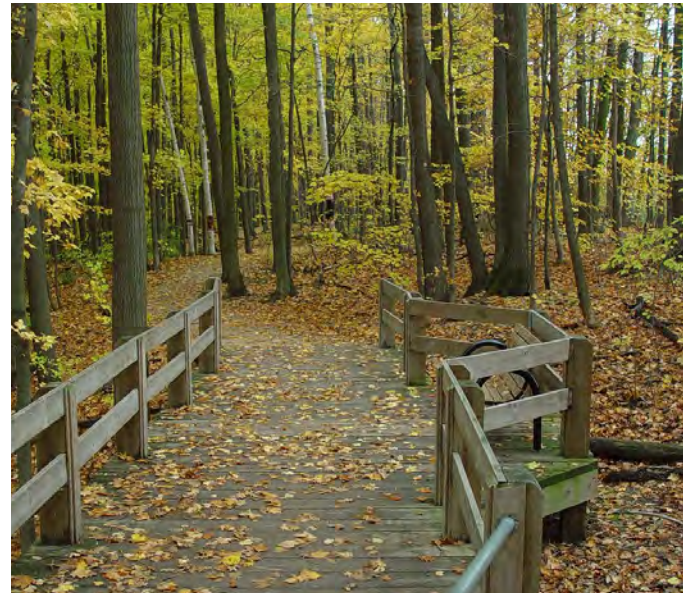
Urban Open Space System

Principle - Establish and expand an interconnected urban open space system within the settlement area that connects the larger Greenway System, enriches the pedestrian realm and improves the ecological function of the urban environment.

Guidelines

- 1/ Utilize parks, storm water management ponds, cemeteries, walkways, trails, utility corridors, sidewalks, bicycle paths, streets and boulevards to establish and expand the urban open space system and create a vibrant, more connected community.

- 2/ Contribute to the connectedness of the urban open space system in, on or around the site by providing spaces that are publicly accessible. Sidewalk cafés or other seating areas, walkways, colonnades/arcades, gardens or urban plazas are encouraged to create a continuous urban open space system over time.



As part of the Greenway System, Twickenham Park has a trail system that connects to other parks and open spaces within the Town



Mill Pond is a natural pond that incorporates recreational activities

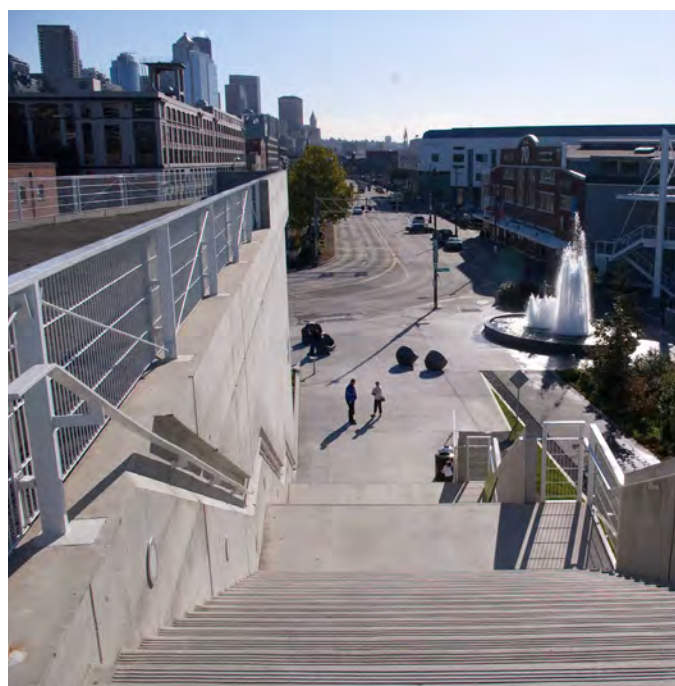
- 3/ Provide seating along walkways and sidewalks and at key scenic viewing locations. Benches and other amenities are to provide at least two metres of unencumbered sidewalk.
- 4/ Relate new urban open spaces to the scale of the part of the Town where they are located, to the width and scale of adjacent streets and buildings, and to the activities and events taking place within them.
- 5/ Use new urban open spaces to further Richmond Hill's identity as a "New Kind of Urban" community by incorporating, where possible, recycled materials in the construction of benches or other seating, tables, playground equipment, or other hard or landscaping surfaces in plazas, squares, or other urban open spaces.

Semi-Public Open Spaces

- 6/ Semi-Public Open Spaces should be open to the public and accessible at all times, without physical barriers or gates.
- 7/ To ensure utilization and presence, the Semi-Public Open Space should be fronted by animated uses with a consistent building setback and a high level of transparency. These would be high pedestrian areas such as restaurants and cafés, preferably with some outdoor seating areas.
- 8/ Distinctive, high quality, and low maintenance paving treatments should be used for the Semi-Public Open Space, and consideration should be given to extending the paving treatment onto the street to give the space further prominence.
- 9/ Features, such as public art, outdoor seating areas, landscaping elements and signage should be located to visually enhance and connect the square to other urban open spaces



Sidewalk cafés and seating are provided along this urban open space



Urban open spaces can provide clear, unobstructed connections within the urban environment, while utilizing the space around infrastructure

3.8

Prominent Sites

Principle - Create focal points through architectural and landscape treatments at gateway and corner sites.

Guidelines

Unified Theme or Character

- 1/ Provide coordinated or complementary design elements in the public and private realm at gateway and corner sites that contribute to a unified theme or character. Unifying elements include features like tree and plant species, decorative street furniture or paving, decorative planters, decorative walls/fencing, public art, architectural elements, building materials, signage, lighting, and other similar elements.



Include architectural features that signify the importance of the corner



The Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts includes bold, expressive building design, creating a memorable landmark building in the downtown

Landmark Buildings

- 2/ Landmark buildings should function as and form an orientation pattern throughout the Town. Both freestanding and attached buildings can be designed to have focal qualities and should be located within gateways or on other visually prominent sites.
- 3/ Landmark buildings should be distinguished through creative architectural expression that contributes to the character of Richmond Hill. Bold and expressive building designs are encouraged through the use of high quality building materials, massing details and other memorable architectural features.



The Benson building includes a chamfered corner, creating a new focal feature in the downtown



Seating and landscaping help unify the features within the semi-public realm to the building



The Central Library is sited at the top of the hill, adding to the character of Richmond Hill

3.9

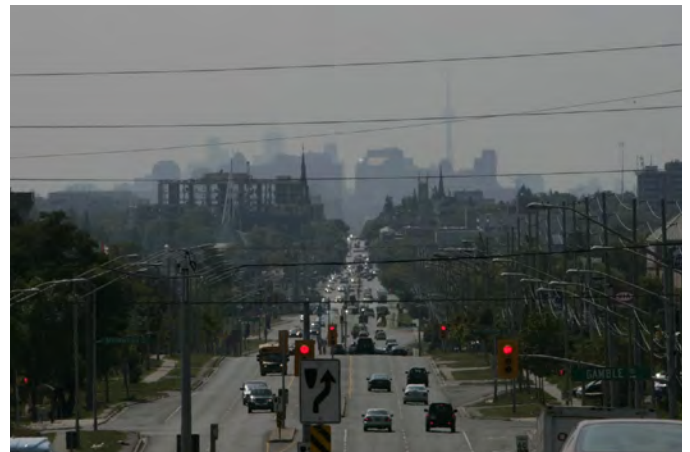
Views and Vistas

Principle - Protect, enhance and create new view corridors and vistas.

Guidelines

Significant Views

- 1/ Protect and enhance the following significant views:
 - a. The views looking north and south on Yonge Street to the church steeples in the Downtown;
 - b. The views looking west on Bethesda Sideroad to Lake Wilcox;
 - c. The views looking south on Yonge Street to the Toronto skyline.



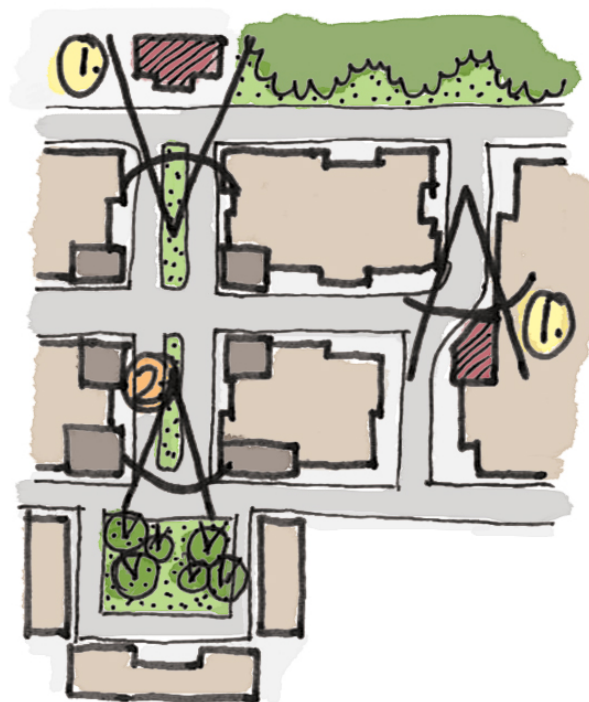
View from Yonge Street looking south to the Toronto skyline



View looking North on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's Village Core

New Public Views

- 2/ Locate and design buildings with prominent architectural features at the end of terminating views and street corners. Emphasize views through vertical articulation, interesting architectural features, alternative building materials, massing details, colour or other design strategies.
- 3/ Maintain or create view corridors through and between sites to visually link the Greenway System, including the parks and urban open space system, to the urban areas of the Town. This will encourage people to enter the Greenway System, along with drawing people from the Greenway System into the centres and corridors, neighbourhoods, and employment areas.
- 4/ Maintain and place street trees to help frame new view corridors.



New public views can be created through the placement of architecturally significant buildings and public parks at the ends of sightlines



Proposed view corridor enhancement to Ransom Park and Richmond Hill United Church

3.10

Cultural Heritage Resources

Principle - Protect and conserve cultural heritage resources to maintain and enhance the identity and character of Richmond Hill.

Guidelines

- 1/ Incorporate and conserve designated cultural heritage resources including cultural heritage landscapes.
- 2/ Prominently integrate cultural heritage resources both functionally and physically in new developments.
- 3/ Respect and have regard for the character, scale and setting of designated cultural heritage resources situated on adjacent properties.



The David Dunlap Observatory will be protected and its cultural heritage landscape will be enhanced



The Lorne Block in the Village is a reconstructed heritage building

4/ Design the podium of tall and mid-rise buildings to respect and reflect the unique urban grain and scale, visual relationships, topography and materials of the surrounding cultural heritage resources. Design tall and mid-rise buildings to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of adjacent listed or designated building(s).



Take design cues from adjacent heritage buildings



The Toront block maintains the heritage characteristics and scale of other buildings in the Village



The massing of the façade on the Renaissance building in the Village enhances the streetscape while maintaining the urban grain characteristic of the area

3.11

Public art

Principle - Incorporate public art to enhance the public realm, promote creativity, and elevate the Town's status as an important centre for arts and culture.

Rationale

The Richmond Hill Public Art Policy was approved by Town Council on June 25, 2012. The Public Art Policy defines public art as a diversity of art that exists in the public realm. It can be either outdoors or indoors, and contributes to a rich environment. It should be accessible to the community at large and encourage community interaction to foster a sense of local pride and achievement.

Richmond Hill encourages diverse expressions of art that reflect the multicultural nature of the Town and elicit emotional responses from the viewers. Both permanent or temporary artworks aim to expand knowledge, and broaden the understanding of the arts and cultural sector within the Town. Public art emphasizes a sense of identity for the Town and has a visual quality, but can be in any media, including performance and events.

Public art should be balanced across the Town in a variety of areas and not restricted to one location.



Public Art used to unify the pedestrian space between two buildings



Public Art used to add visual interest along a boulevard

Guidelines

Integrate Public Art as part of Site and Building Design Process

- 1/ Plan for public art in the conceptual stage of the development in order to integrate art works into the building and site design. Public art should provide a focal point in the development and become a prominent landmark for the community.
- 2/ Public art should be a consideration during the Site Plan review process.
- 3/ Encourage opportunities to incorporate public art into building design as an architectural element, feature or design element. Design elements may include artistic signage, sculptures, light fixtures, wall features, and street furniture and amenities.
- 4/ Use artist-designed functional components in publicly accessible interior areas (lobbies, reception areas, meeting rooms) and outdoor areas (plazas, landscaped spaces). Also consider using artists' design in signage and banners.
- 5/ Sites with public art pieces should include appropriate landscaping materials and treatments that complement the piece.



Public art can help define a public square such as this plaza



Public art incorporated into building design adds visual interest

Forms of Public Art

6/ Public art may include a wide range of art forms. Building or landscape elements, such as fountains, decorative doorways, signage, architectural features, lobby or other public area design elements, murals, sculpture or other graphic expressions of any materials (glass, metal, concrete, fabric, wood, neon etc.) are considered public art.

Themes

7/ Investigate opportunities to link public art with coordinated design elements.

8/ Public art should be site sensitive and should explore opportunities to celebrate historic events and figures of local, national and international relevance.

Durability

9/ Public art pieces should be durable and easily maintained.

Accessibility

10/ Public art should, where feasible, be both physically and visually accessible and barrier free. The incorporation of universal design principles is encouraged.



Public art may evoke a specific theme, and can draw from the history of the area or the former use of the site



Public art should always be accessible to the public, and in this case it becomes a functional piece by allowing children to play on it

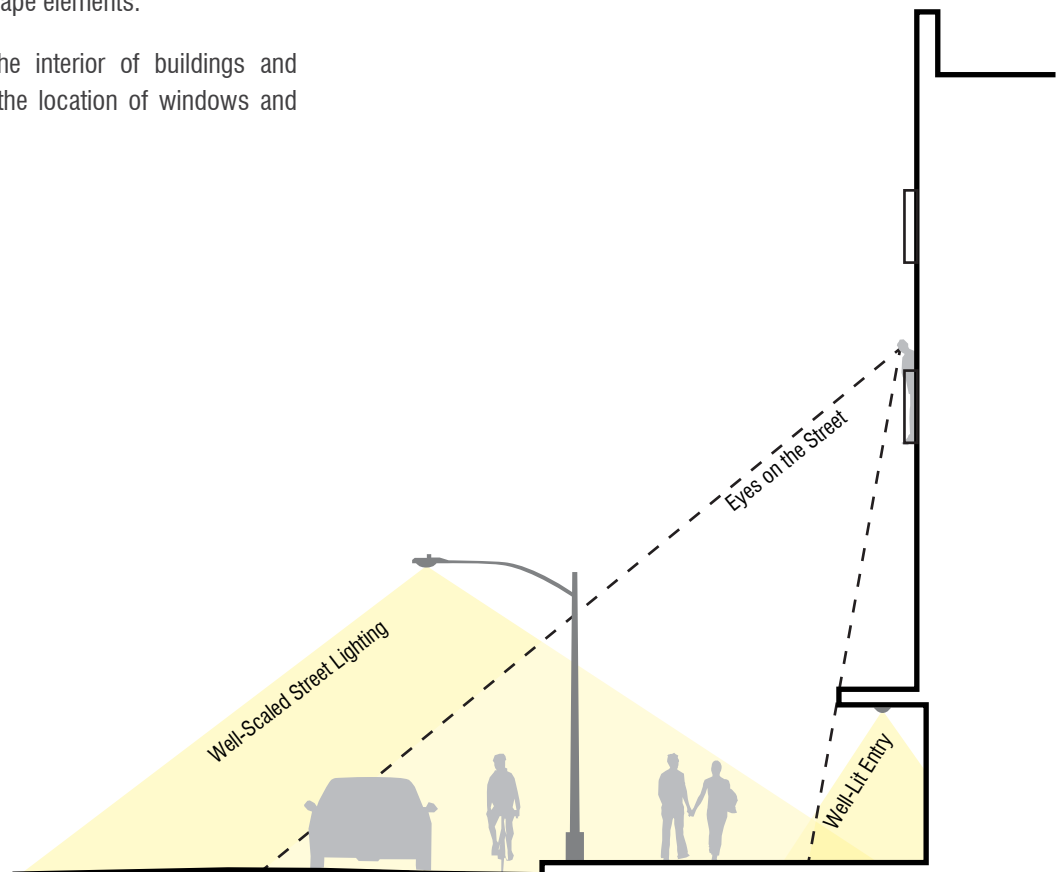
3.12

Safety and Security

Principle - Promote safety and security throughout the Town through appropriate building and site design.

Guidelines

- 1/ Adhere to CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles, including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Ensure sight lines between buildings and pedestrian walkways are unobstructed and well lit.
 - b. Consider views for safety and surveillance opportunities when selecting and siting landscape elements.
 - c. Promote views between the interior of buildings and exterior public spaces through the location of windows and other building openings.



CPTED principles include unobstructed views from buildings as well as well-lit sidewalk and streets

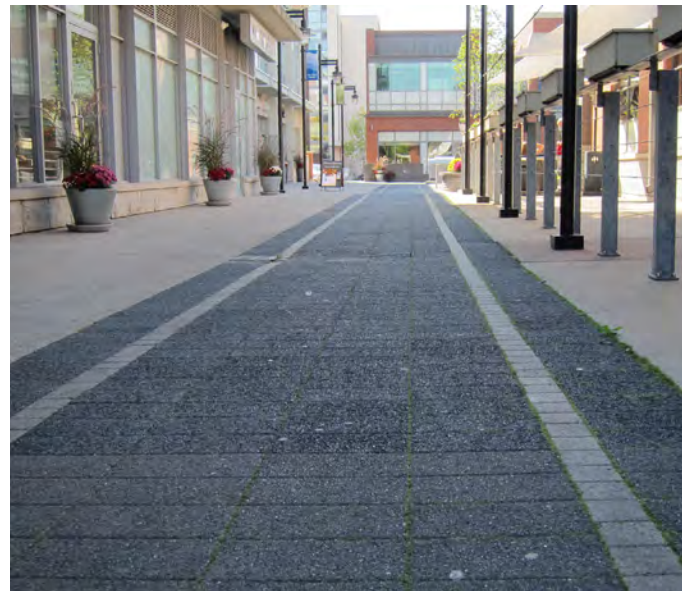
3.13

Universal Design

Principle - Promote a barrier-free environment throughout the Town that facilitates access for persons with disabilities and special needs.

Guidelines

- 1/ Design in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and other applicable Provincial legislation.
- 2/ Design access structures such as ramps to harmonize and integrate with buildings.
- 3/ Provide barrier-free curb or ramp connections between the street and pedestrian walkways.
- 4/ Ensure all new public sidewalks are barrier-free. Street trees and landscaping, seating, public art and signage should not be an obstacle to the barrier-free path of travel.
- 5/ In high activity areas such as the centres and corridors, consider the use of multi-sensory visual and audio queues as well as textured paving to assist in orientation and the existence of potential hazards to disabled individuals. Sensory indicators may be tactile or audible.



Barrier free public path of travel



Textured paving designed to be universally accessible

4 community design



3.1	3.2	3.7	3.9	3.10	4.2
4.3	5.1	5.3	5.6	5.8	

4.2.2	4.3.1.2	4.3.2.2	4.4.2	4.5.2	4.6.2	4.7.2	4.8.1.2	4.8.2.2	4.9.2
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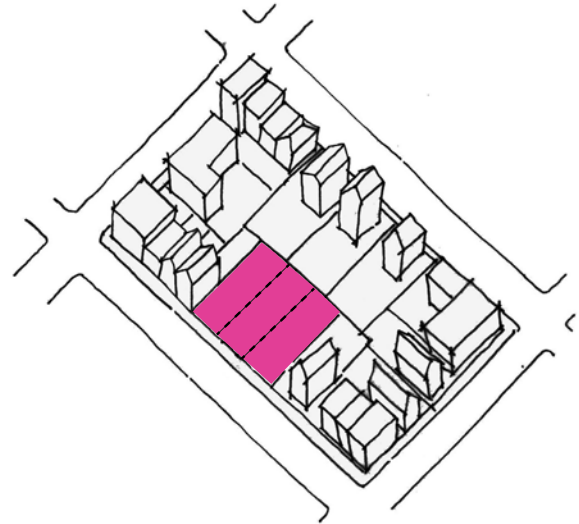
4.1.1

Community Structure & Identity: Content and Character

Principle - Respect the existing and planned character and context of the site and its surrounding area.

Guidelines

- 1/ Ensure that development contextually fits with the various characteristics found within the different areas of the Town (ie. Neighbourhoods, Downtown Local Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, Richmond Hill Regional Centre, Key Development Areas, Local Development Areas). Integrate with or reflect important elements of the existing or planned context by responding to the unique built, natural, topography and/or cultural features around the site.



Consider the context of adjacent lots when designing infill plans



Design infill development to fit with the existing built context, including designing new streets/lanes to connect to existing streets, providing similar lot sizes, maintaining the streetscape character in the neighbourhood, and intensifying the streetscape character on Arterial Streets (e.g. like the townhouses shown along the Arterial above)

4.1.2

Community Structure & Identity: Community Facilities

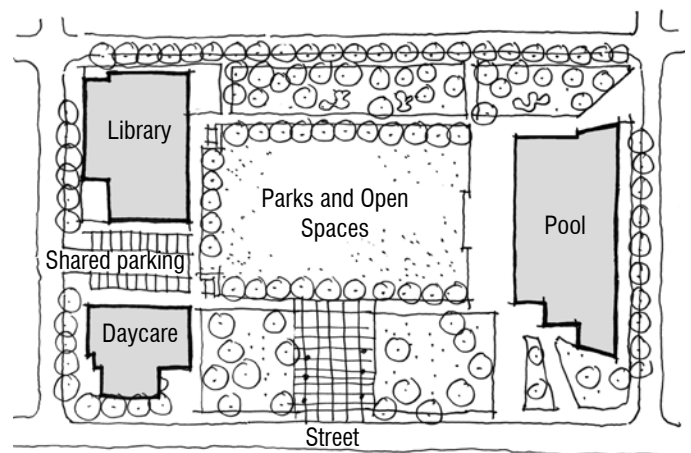
Principle - Treat community facilities as focal points and activity nodes within communities.

Guidelines

- 1/ Site community facilities such as schools, libraries, and community centres to be focal points for the community, and where possible, to create new terminus views.
- 2/ Ensure community facilities are well-landscaped and visible at the pedestrian level, in recognition of their prominent locations.
- 3/ Locate community facilities in close proximity to transit facilities.
- 4/ To promote visibility, maintain community focus and ensure efficient use of land and building resources, site compatible community buildings in close proximity or in the same building or on the same site. A variety of shared use options should be explored, including: Multi-purpose cafeteria and gymnasium; Art, science, and computer classrooms for junior and adult education; Library combining functions of both a municipal branch and school facility; Hardscaped and grassed playing field; and/or, Parking facilities.
- 5/ Incorporate the highest standards in sustainable design. Public facilities with a gross floor area over 500 square metres shall be designed to achieve a minimum LEED Silver standard, or alternative equivalent.



The Oak Ridges Community Centre is a new focal point for the area



Group compatible Community Facilities together, such as a library, parks or open spaces, and other community facilities to create focal points for the community

3.2	3.7	3.8	3.9	3.11	3.12
4.2	4.3	5.5	5.6	5.8	5.11

3.1.8	3.4.4	3.4.5	4.10.9	4.11
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4.1.3

Community Structure & Identity: Parks

Principle - Locate and design parks to create new focal points and to enhance the connectivity of the larger Greenway System.

All Parks

Guidelines

In addition to the guidelines provided in this section, refer to the Parks Plan for guidance on locational criteria and specific park amenities.

Siting and Location

- 1/ Parks should be designed as a focal point for neighbourhoods, and should be centrally located, preferably on a corner of two public streets wherever possible.
- 2/ Parks should be located and oriented to maximize sunlight and be sheltered from the wind and noise of adjacent streets and uses.



Iconic park features, like the gazebo in Mill Pond Park, help people identify with the Park, enhancing community character



Richmond Green Park has a number of distinct features that make it identifiable and memorable to the community

Safety

- 3/ The location of the parks should avoid major grade changes in active areas.
- 4/ Parks should be designed and located to utilize Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles by ensuring clear view into and out of surrounding areas, which include:
 - adequate lighting;
 - fronting buildings to overlook public spaces, especially for playgrounds which should be highly visible to public streets and/or houses to enhance safety.
 - using signs and design for ease of access and egress; and,
 - mix of activity for constant use of the space.

Visibility and Accessibility

- 5/ Highly visible parks should form a linked network to provide a variety of safe recreation and movement options between neighbourhoods and centres and corridors.
- 6/ Park entrance design should be clearly defined using landscaping and architectural elements, and should provide amenities including pedestrian scale lighting, where appropriate, and signage visible from surrounding streets to assist in orientation and use of park amenities.
- 7/ Vehicular connections through parkland should be limited to emergency and maintenance vehicle routes, and access to major park facilities and parking areas.
- 8/ Highly visible connections should link the major park amenities and facilities through walkways and bicycle paths.



The lighting in Richmond Green Park provides a safe and functional space for the community to use at night



An arch over the entrance to Ransom Park improves visibility of the entrance and helps to define the space

Amenities

- 9/ Parks should be located to serve the diverse needs of the community, including facilities for passive (e.g. walking trails, community gardens, seating areas, park pavilions, interpretive displays, public art etc.) and active recreation (e.g. sports fields, skating rinks, bike paths, etc.).
- 10/ Seating and shade areas should be designed in coordination with pathways and play area locations.



Richmond Green Park has both active recreation - ice pads and playing fields - and passive recreation, with a trail network and flower gardens

Community Parks

Guidelines

- 11/ Community Parks should have frontage on an arterial or collector street.
- 12/ Where appropriate, houses should front onto Community Parks on single-loaded streets to emphasize passive security or “eyes on the park” and to frame the park through the creation of built form edge.
- 13/ Community Parks and community centres and libraries should be co-located and share parking in order to reduce the land required for surface parking lots.
- 14/ Community Parks should have public focal area distinguished through elements such as public art, water features, or any other landmark component.



Water features create new focal points in a community, acting as identifiable landmarks



A gazebo and flower garden can create a landmark, like this one in Unity Park



Designing a park to have open sight lines to the surrounding neighbourhood provides “eyes on the park”

Neighbourhood Parks

Guidelines

- 15/ Neighbourhood Parks should have frontage on a collector or local street, and where possible, at the terminus of T-intersection streets and open crescents to create an attractive public realm and enhance safety through casual surveillance.
- 16/ Neighbourhood Parks may be directly connected to school sites to encourage mutual use of outdoor facilities.
- 17/ Development should be designed to front onto the Neighbourhood Park wherever possible.
- 18/ Where residential side or rear yards abut a Neighbourhood Park, fencing and landscaping should be provided to demarcate the public and private realm.
- 19/ On-street parking along public streets is encouraged adjacent to the park.



Helmkay Park, a Neighbourhood Park, is connected to Bayview Hill Elementary School to allow ease of movement between the school and park



Houses that front onto parks provide “eyes on the street”

Linear Parks

Guidelines

20/ The dimensions of a Linear Park should be determined based on local site conditions; however, the minimum width of a Linear Park should be as follows:

Length	Minimum Width
< 50 metres	25 metres
50 – 75 metres	30 metres
75 – 100 metres	35 metres
> 100 metres	40 metres

21/ Linear Parks should be connected to trails and sidewalks within adjacent open spaces, parks, and streetscapes.

22/ Opportunities for resting/seating areas should be provided in areas of high pedestrian activity, and may be combined with Park entrances and SWM facility seating/viewing areas.

23/ Where appropriate, a change in material should be considered on the street where a Linear Park crosses a street. This may include a different paving material than that used on the street, or bollards, post and fencing, pavement markings, and/or signage.



Linear Parks can be used to connect and provide pathways between buildings and open spaces



Use benches to provide seating and resting opportunities in Linear Parks

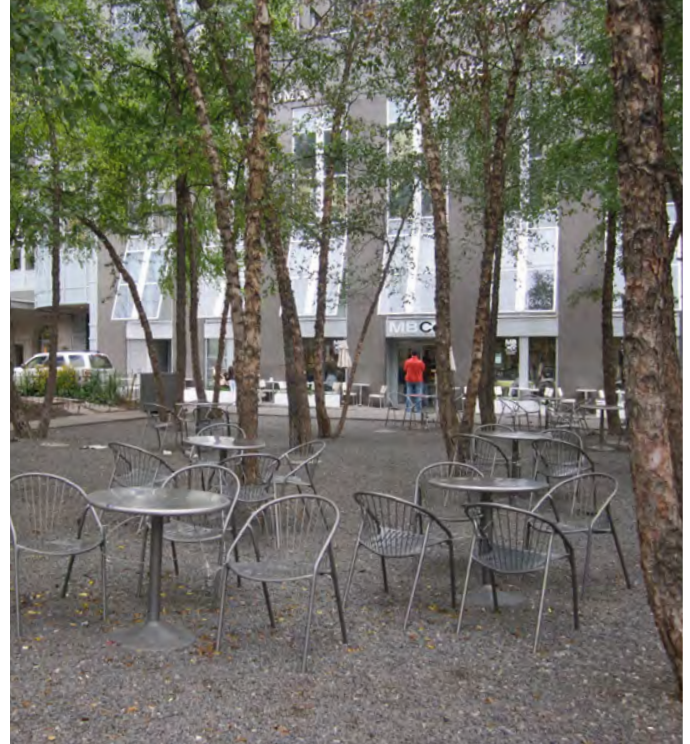


This SWM feature adds the practical function of stormwater management into this park, and also acts as an interesting entrance feature and seating area

Urban Squares

Guidelines

- 24/ Urban squares should be open to the public and accessible at all times, without physical barriers or gates.
- 25/ To ensure utilization and presence, the square should be fronted by animated uses with a consistent building setback and a high level of transparency. These would be high pedestrian areas such as restaurants and cafés, preferably with some outdoor seating areas.
- 26/ Distinctive, high quality, and low maintenance paving treatments should be used for the urban square, and consideration should be given to extending the paving treatment onto the street to give the space further prominence. This additional area would delineate an extended space that could be occasionally utilized for large-scale events such as a farmers market or festival.
- 27/ Features, such as public art, outdoor seating areas, landscaping elements and signage should be located to visually enhance and connect the square to other urban open spaces.



Incorporate low maintenance paving treatments, lighting fixtures, and space for pedestrian seating in urban open spaces



Animate urban squares with restaurants and offices, and incorporate informal and formal seating opportunities



Define larger urban open spaces with high quality paving treatments

4.1.4

Community Structure & Identity: Cultural Heritage Resources

Principle - Incorporate and, where possible, conserve cultural heritage resources to enhance community character.

Guidelines

- 1/ Identify, incorporate, and where appropriate, conserve in situ existing cultural and built heritage features into new communities through street and block layout.
- 2/ To enhance community distinctiveness, design the street and block layout to respond to existing cultural heritage resources, and to maximize views and vistas to cultural heritage resources as important landmarks within the community.
- 3/ Conserve cultural heritage resources including buildings, structures, and landscapes using strategies such as:
 - Preservation - maintaining and/or restoring a heritage resource within its context of setting.
 - Adaptive re-use – rehabilitation and restoration of a heritage resource for a new function.
 - Incorporation – integration of individual components of a heritage resource into a new development.
 - Contrast and compliment– integration of new building materials in a way which respects the integrity of the heritage resource.
- 4/ Ensure that the design and location of lighting, streets, signage, parking, public works facilities, grading and other site features respect the integrity and character of the heritage resource.
- 5/ Ensure that new development adjacent to designated cultural heritage resources is compatible and incorporates a high level of urban design particularly as it relates to views, streetscape character and building material selection.
- 6/ Address the applicable Heritage Conservation District Plan and the recommendations of any applicable heritage impact assessment approved by the Town.



The Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce uses a preserved heritage house as their office, an example of adaptive re-use

4.1.5

Community Structure & Identity: Vista Blocks

Principle - Incorporate Vista Blocks along the edges of the Greenway System, Stormwater Management (SWM) facilities, parks, and urban open spaces to provide views to these features.

Guidelines

- 1/ Provide and design Vista Blocks to enhance viewing opportunities into the Greenway System. Provide amenities within Vista Blocks (e.g. resting spots, pedestrian walkways, lookout sites), as appropriate.
- 2/ Locate Vista Blocks along publicly accessible lands (i.e. streets) to ensure maximum visibility and public accessibility to the feature being framed.
- 3/ Incorporate design elements that are unique to their location within the neighbourhood, and which are coordinated with other structural elements.
- 4/ Large groupings of native shrub, grass, and wildflower species are encouraged to create visual interest, frame the view, and minimize maintenance requirements.



This Vista Block provides a lookout over the Greenway System and includes plantings and a paved seating area



This Vista Block is located off a public street to maximize visibility and accessibility.

4.2.1

Street Network Design: Siting New Streets

Principle - Design blocks and streets to be well-connected, promote permeability and accessibility, and to accommodate a variety of lot sizes.

Guidelines

- 1/ Consider pedestrian and cycling destinations and networks as a priority in determining the street network.
- 2/ Optimize connections for vehicular, cyclist, and especially pedestrian traffic, by designing streets based on a grid pattern that is modified in response to natural open space, built heritage or existing street conditions.
- 3/ Alternative street layouts that reduce the number of driveways and eliminate street-facing garages are encouraged. These include, but are not limited to, the use of rear lanes, mutual drives and the use of window streets in the neighbourhood.
- 4/ Reverse frontage lots shall all be avoided. Achieve positive frontage on arterial and collector streets through the use of rear lane access, rear access from local streets, or single-loaded service streets.
- 5/ Streets should run adjacent to or follow the edge of the Greenway System wherever possible.



A neighbourhood laid out in a grid pattern



The use of rear lanes helps improve the flow of traffic on arterial and collector streets

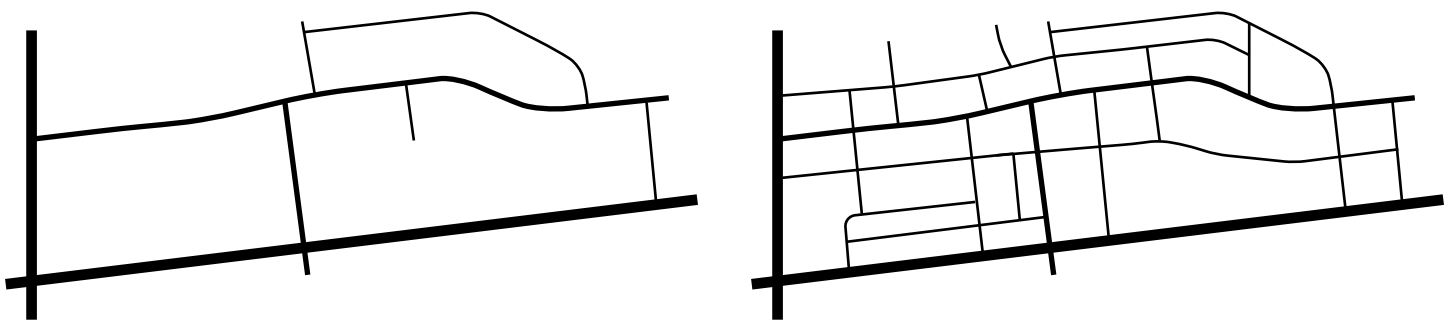
4.2.2

Street Network Design: Connecting to Existing Street Network

Principle - Connect to the existing street network to improve the overall function and permeability of the network.

Guidelines

- 1/ Maximize the number of street connections by pursuing opportunities to connect ending streets to adjacent or new development.
- 2/ Where the topography of a site does not constrain grid-based streets, cul-de-sacs are generally discouraged to reduce interruptions to the flow of pedestrian and vehicle traffic.



Maximize the number of street connections by connecting existing streets in a grid-based pattern as new development proceeds

4.2.3

Street Network Design: Linkages to Cycling Network and Trail System

Principle - Integrate connections from the street network to the existing cycling and trail system.

Cycling Network

Guidelines

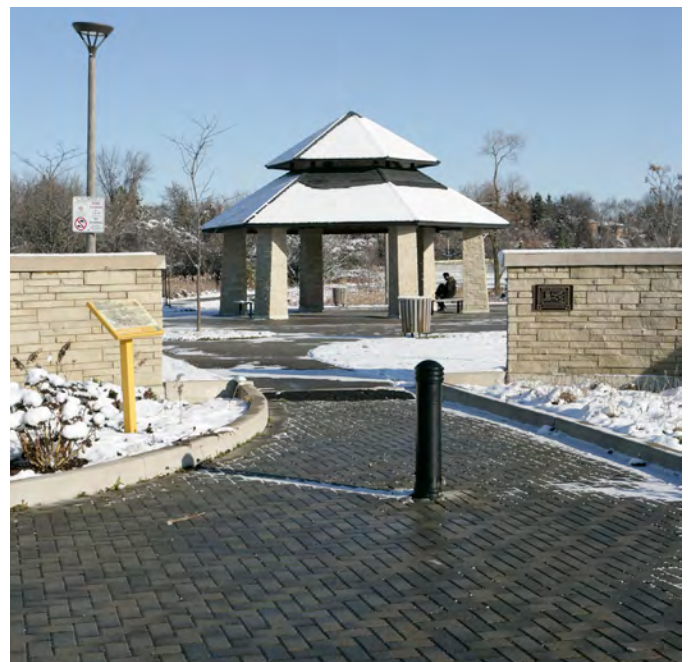
- 1/ Provide direct connections between cycling routes along streets and trails within the Greenway System.
- 2/ Provide route signage where cycling routes intersect with major street intersections.
- 3/ Access to cycling routes should be clear and unobstructed.
- 4/ For further guidance, refer to the Richmond Hill Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.



Provide direct connections to trails within the Greenway System from the street network



Cycling routes should be clearly marked using paint and/or signage



High quality paving and bollards help direct cyclists to the trail system from the street network

Pedestrian Systems & Trail Network

Guidelines

- 5/ Integrate new pedestrian and recreational trails with other existing and proposed trail networks in the Town (or York Region) as identified in the Richmond Hill Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.
- 6/ Trail design should reflect the function and nature of the type of open space it occupies. Trail widths should allow for two-way cyclist or pedestrian passage (e.g. multi-use trail designs).
- 7/ Nature trails should include multiple access points and be accessible and visible from the public street or other public areas. Where appropriate, provide access points every 250 metres for safety and maintenance purposes. Design access points to be barrier free.
- 8/ Include adequate amenities, such as seating, trash receptacles, lighting, signage, route information, and educational/historic information.
- 9/ Within the Greenway System, use low impact materials that are porous and stable. Where topography and environmental conditions allow, trails should provide a surface that enables use by pedestrians, bicycles, and wheelchairs.
- 10/ Consider emergency vehicle access in the design of trails.
- 11/ Lighting levels on trails should be individually determined, particularly where lighting may disturb adjacent residences, natural habitats or have high maintenance costs. Consider the use of solar-powered lighting.



Provide amenities like hard and soft landscaping features, lighting and seating on trails

4.2.4 Street Network Design: Pedestrian Walkways

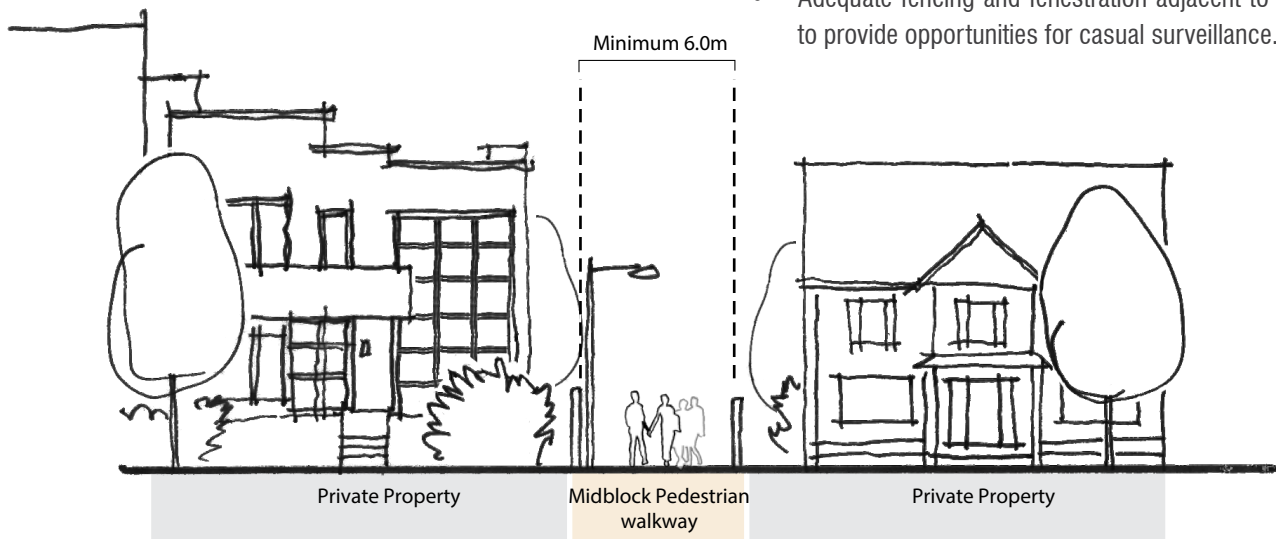
Principle - Design pedestrian walkways that are comfortable, safe and accessible at all times of day and during all seasons.



Providing clear visibility through to the other end of the townhouse block, and incorporating a wide enough sidewalk, appropriate landscaping, and lighting add to the safety and comfort of pedestrian walkways

Guidelines

- 1/ Provide safe pedestrian access to adjacent uses and amenities including the public sidewalk, surface transit stops, parking areas, the Greenway System or other adjacent destinations.
- 2/ Pedestrian walkways blocks should be at least 6.0 metres in width and may include pedestrian-scaled lighting.
- 3/ In order to provide a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians, design pedestrian walkways using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, including:
 - Adequate lighting;
 - Clear sight lines, allowing view from one end of the walkway to the other;
 - Provide appropriate landscaping, avoiding landscaping that might create blind spots or hiding places;
 - Adequate fencing and fenestration adjacent to walkways to provide opportunities for casual surveillance.



Pedestrian walkway blocks should be at least 6.0 metres wide and contain pedestrian scale lighting for safety

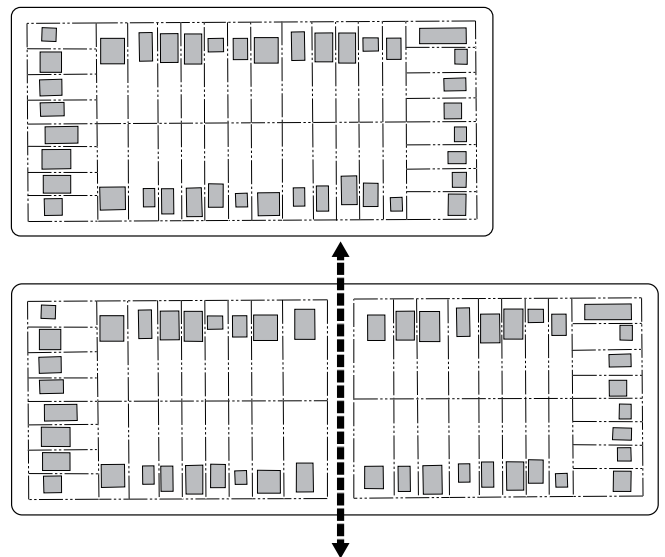
4.3.1

Block Design: Block Length

Principle - Create appropriately sized block lengths that enhance the pedestrian realm and encourage active transportation.

Guidelines

- 1/ Design block lengths to be short to increase the ease and efficiency of pedestrian and cyclist movement. Blocks should generally range in length between 200 and 250 metres to promote walkability, and should not exceed 250 metres.
- 2/ Blocks longer than 250 metres may be considered on an individual basis where shorter block alternatives are not feasible. In such cases, provide publicly accessible through-block pedestrian walkways or a linear park. Mid-block connections could be standard walkways (minimum width of 6.0 metres) or linear parks. Provide downcast pedestrian-scaled lighting as required.
- 3/ To further minimize the visual impact of blocks, turn lots located on the end of the block 90–degrees to face the street.



Include a mid-block pedestrian connection on all blocks longer than 250 metres and rotate lots at the end of a block to face the street



Mid-block connections increase the ease and efficiency of pedestrian and cyclist movement, while creating interesting and unique linear spaces

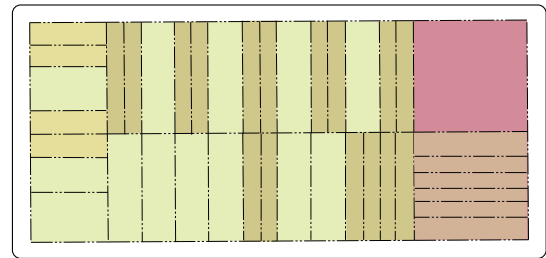
4.3.2

Block Design: Lot Size Variety

Principle - Provide a variety of lot sizes and shapes to ensure a diversity of housing types, sizes, and designs.

Guidelines

- 1/ Provide a mix of lot sizes and orientations to enhance visual interest along the streetscape.
- 2/ Provide simple and rectilinear lot shapes so as not to limit design and siting options. Variations to the traditional lot may be considered to manage slope, property boundary, or density issues.



A variety of lot sizes in a block provides visual interest along a streetscapes



Design lots to be simple, and rectangular, reinforcing the grid pattern

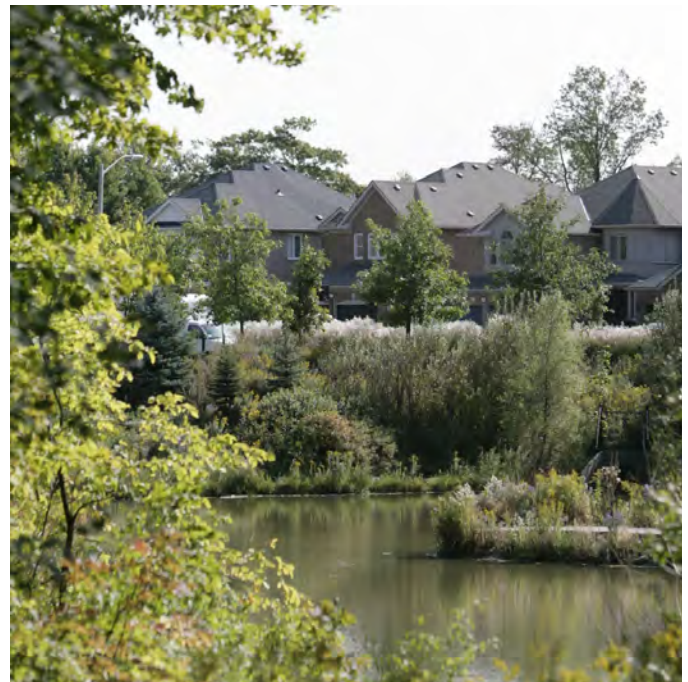
4.3.3

Block Design: Interface with Greenway System

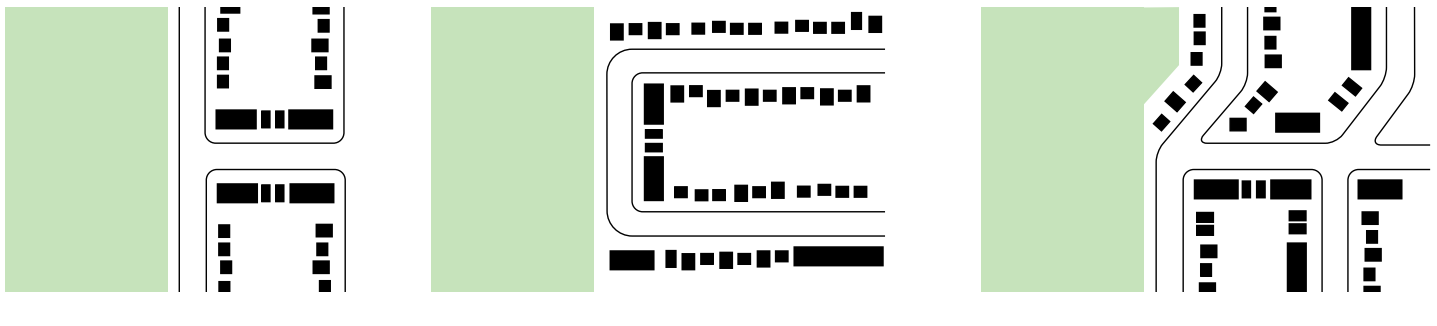
Principle - Provide a positive interface adjacent to the Greenway System by using street and block layouts to maximize views, vistas and connections to the Greenway System.

Guidelines

- 1/ Mass buildings toward the street to define the streetscape edge and promote a pedestrian-oriented environment. Define the streetscape edge through a combination of street trees, plantings, ornamental fencing, architectural walls or other landscape features.
- 2/ Orient the front or side of dwellings onto the Greenway System to frame its edges. Single-loaded streets adjacent to the Greenway System are encouraged.
- 3/ Lots or blocks facing onto parks are subject to architectural and landscaping controls to establish a high quality interface between these uses. See Section 6.0 for guidance related to building design adjacent to the Greenway System.



Houses fronting onto the Greenway System help to define its edge



Single-loaded street designs are the preferred option for development adjacent to the Greenway System, including adjacent to parks, storm water ponds, or other public open spaces

4.3.4

Block Design: Priority Lots

Principle - Use Priority Lots as gateways to the community, setting the look and feel of the interior neighbourhood.

Residential Neighbourhoods

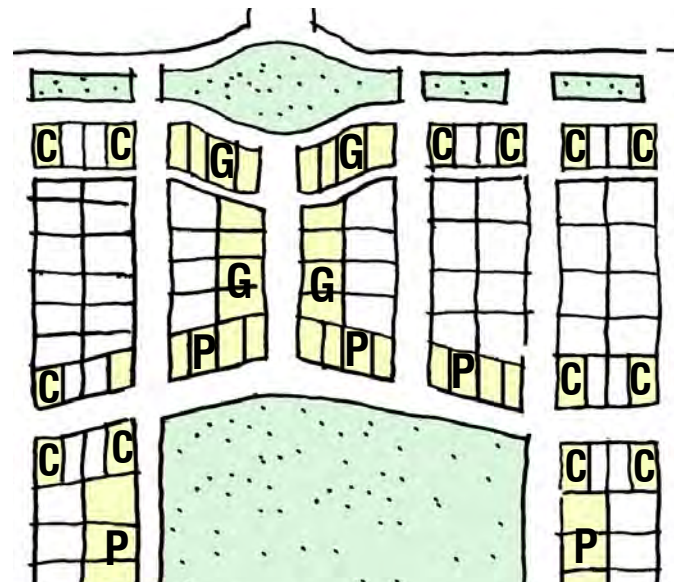
Guidelines

Gateway Lots

- 1/ Ensure the community design incorporates priority lots including: gateway lots, corner lots, view terminus sites, windows street lots, and lots abutting parkland.
- 2/ Gateway Lots are located along the main entrances to neighbourhoods from the external street system. As important markers or wayfinding devices for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists travelling within and through a neighbourhood area, they are usually sited in conjunction with a landscaped community entry feature and should be designed to express the image and character of the community.
- 3/ Locate soft landscaping gateway features (such as planting, shrubs, etc.) within the public right-of-way. These features should be clustered and substantial enough to define the gateway site and street edge, requiring minimal maintenance. Plant material in the daylight triangle should be no taller than 0.5 metres.
- 4/ Locate built or structural landscaped gateway features (such as architectural walls, ornamental fences, signage, etc.) within the gateway lot outside of the public right-of-way. These features should be designed to be compatible with the gateway dwelling in terms of scale, materials, colour and architectural character.

Corner Lots

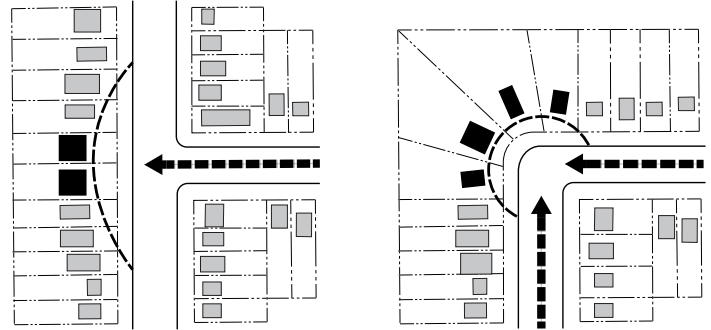
- 5/ Corner Lots play a significant role in setting the image, character and quality of the street and acting as landmark buildings within the neighbourhood. Treat both street-facing façades in a consistent manner with sufficient detailing to relate to the pedestrian scale at the street.



Some examples of Priority lots include: Gateway lots (G), Corner lots (C), and lots abutting Parkland (P)

View Terminus Sites

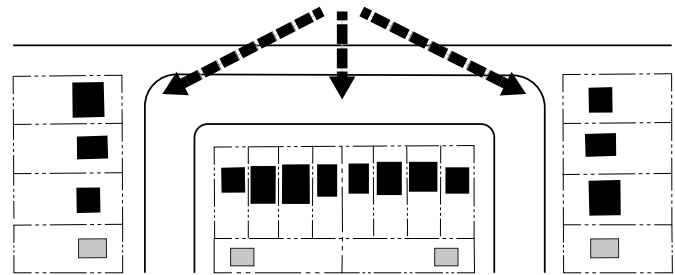
- 6/ View Terminus sites occur at the top of a 'T' intersection, where one street terminates at a right angle to the other and at street elbows. Dwellings on these sites are prominent in the streetscape as they terminate a view corridor and should be designed to provide visual interest.



View Terminus sites are located at the end of a significant view, i.e. the end of a street at a T-intersection or a right angle corner

Window Street Lots

- 7/ Window street lots front onto a local street parallel to an arterial/collector street but are separated from it by a boulevard or buffer. Due to the high degree of public visibility from major streets, dwellings on these lots have an impact on the overall character of the neighbourhood and should be designed to provide visual interest.



Window Street Lots are lots that are visible from a parallel arterial/collector street



Design entrance features in the same style as the housing within the community, setting the look and feel of the interior neighbourhood



Add visual interest along Window Streets through varied roof lines, materials and colour, and enhanced landscaping

Business Parks

Guidelines

Gateway Sites

- 8/ Establish gateway features at the intersection of arterial streets with streets leading into the business park.
- 9/ Design entry gateways to be distinctive and reflective of the community's character and the established corporate image of Richmond Hill.
- 10/ Use landscaping and built form to create recognizable landmarks and community orienting focal points. Landscaping and architecture can help to anchor the overall image of the business park and create a sense of entry.
- 11/ Design gateway buildings to create year-round interest, as well as an attractive night-time appearance.
- 12/ Locate soft landscaping gateway features (such as planting, shrubs, etc.) within the public right-of-way. These features should be clustered and substantial enough to define the gateway site and street edge and require minimal maintenance. Plant material in the daylight triangle should be no taller than 0.5 metres.
- 13/ Locate built or structural landscaped gateway features (such as architectural walls, ornamental fences, signage, etc.) on private lands outside of the public right-of-way. These features should be designed to be compatible with gateway buildings in terms of scale, materials, colour and architectural character.
- 14/ Configure entry features to provide pedestrian access to the site.
- 15/ Use of a minimum 30% evergreen plant materials in the landscape.



Times Square occupies a key gateway site in Richmond Hill. Lighting at night helps to identify this key intersection of the Town



The Headford Business Park entry gateway sets the character and design standard for the business park, and keeps the daylight triangle clear of obstructions

5 site design



5.1

Contextual Considerations

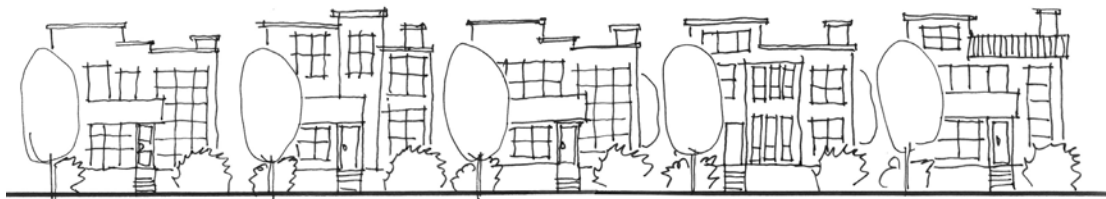
Principle - Reflect and enhance the local context to contribute to the character and identity of the Town.

Guidelines

- 1/ Respect the topography of the site and the surrounding area. Place the building on its site so it responds to the topography of the site, its position in the block, and to the placement of surrounding buildings.
- 2/ Design sites to take advantage of existing natural features as focal features, buffers, grades, or other site amenities through a variety of strategies including tree saving measures, access alignment, and building location and design (custom floor plans).
- 3/ Design buildings and site circulation to preserve, enhance, and create important views and vistas. Where a development makes up part of a street vista to an important landmark (e.g. heritage building or tree, bridge, park, etc.) ensure it is compatible in scale and/or style with the general streetscape.

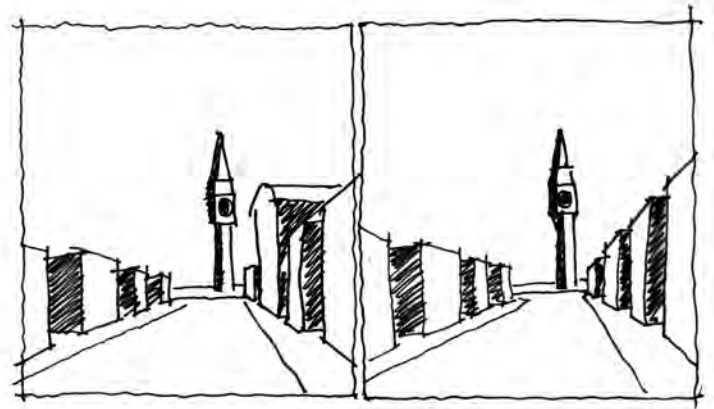


New developments in the Downtown help preserve the existing character by utilizing similar or complimentary materials and preserving sightlines to the church spires

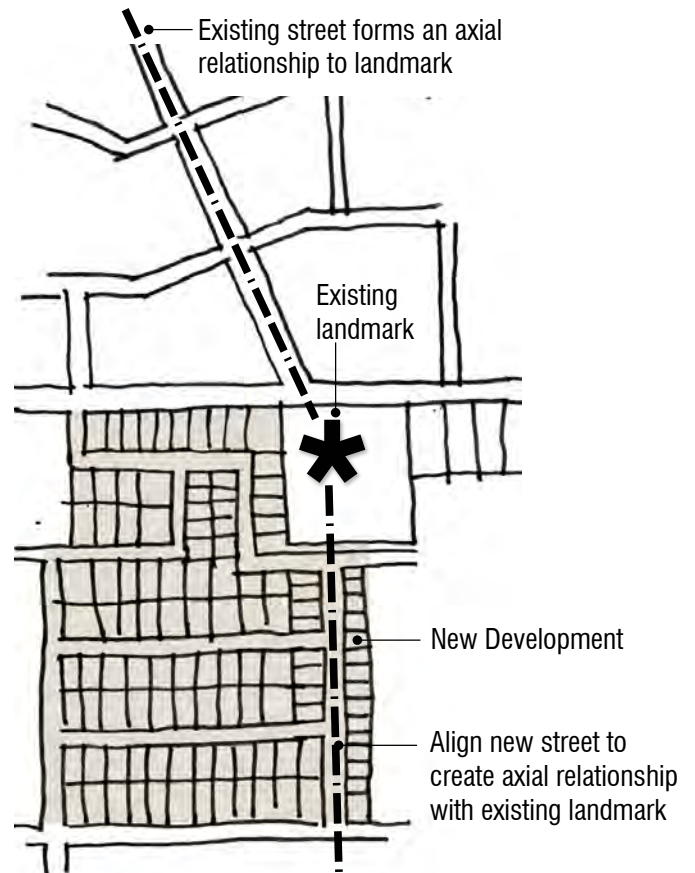


The block on the top has a defined visual character with similar building widths and façade features. The block on the bottom has a mixed visual character that is unified through building scale and placement of features on the façade, even though the buildings have differing styles and details

- 4/ Be sensitive to, and do not negatively impact adjacent heritage properties. New buildings should not visually impede the setting of listed/designated heritage buildings. Where heritage buildings are low-scaled, respect and reflect the unique urban grain and scale, visual relationships, topography and materials of the surrounding historic building(s).
- 5/ In areas with a defined visual character, design buildings to be compatible with the patterns and architectural features of surrounding buildings and streetscape.
- 6/ In areas with a mixed visual character, design buildings to help define, unify and contribute positively to the existing built environment and streetscape.



Design sites to fit within the natural topography of the surrounding area



Height and built form along a streetscape can visually impede a vista (top left), or enhance a vista (top right). Similarly, new streets and built form can be used to reinforce existing views or create new views to existing landmarks (bottom)

5.2

Building Placement, Orientation & Streetscape Interface

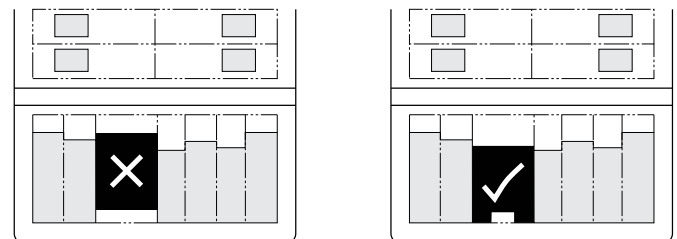
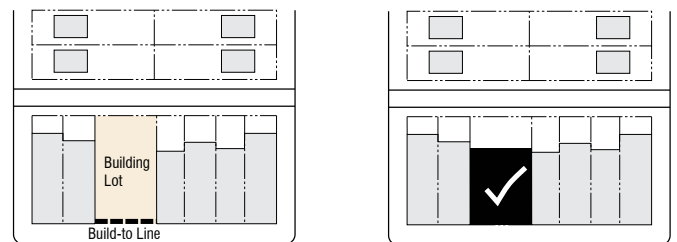
Principle - Place and orient buildings and landscaping to define and enhance the pedestrian environment.

Centres & Corridors

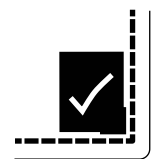
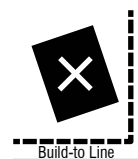
Guidelines

Street wall

- 1/ Place buildings on the site to define a street wall along all street frontages.
- 2/ Locate buildings close to each other to encourage ease of walking between buildings and to public transit.
- 3/ Generally align the street wall with adjacent building façades. Site the street wall parallel to the street, with strategic setbacks for covered walkways, building entrances, plazas, landscaping and other pedestrian amenities that create architectural interest and enhance the pedestrian realm.
- 4/ Slight variations in front yard setbacks may be permitted to create a more interesting streetscape or to integrate and preserve an existing natural feature (i.e. a mature tree).
- 5/ Buildings may be required to be set back at grade to provide a minimum travel zone in areas where the existing sidewalk has a limited width in order to accommodate anticipated pedestrian circulation.
- 6/ Where no street wall exists, locate new buildings with a minimum setback from the street to establish a more pedestrian-oriented relationship between the building and the sidewalk.



Where the existing street edge is at the build-to line, construct new infill buildings to the edge of the build-to line, or with small strategic setbacks to incorporate urban open spaces



The placement of the building on the left does not define a street wall, while the building on the right, placed to have a minimum setback from the street, establishes a more pedestrian-oriented relationship between the building and the sidewalk

Orientation

- 7/ Orient buildings and pedestrian amenities towards streets. Provide multiple active building façades and entrances towards transit stops/stations and parks to provide a sense of enclosure and enhance safety through “eyes on the street.”

Landscape Interface

- 8/ To create an attractive streetscape, use landscaping to frame public and semi-public spaces by incorporating planters, trees, shrubs, and flower beds.
- 9/ Select plant species that, when mature, are of an appropriate scale to the site. For example, to lower the apparent height of a tall building, tree species that will grow tall can be effective in reducing the apparent or perceived height of the building at grade. Alternatively, to frame a wide street, tree species should be large and of sufficient massing to create a sense of enclosure.

Setbacks for Urban Open Spaces

- 10/ Where urban open spaces are desired, additional building setbacks may be encouraged.

Grade Related Residential Units

- 11/ Raise the front door of ground-related residential units in a building by approximately three to five steps above the grade of the immediately abutting sidewalk to ensure a clear distinction between the public and private realm.



The new building on the right compliments the setback of the existing building on the left by placing the building to create a continuous street wall and designing the façade to have similar proportions



A public square and gathering place is created in front of this development through a greater building set back



By utilizing a concrete curb, landscaping, and a short step up, a clear distinction between the private and public realms is created

Employment Areas

Guidelines

Street Edge

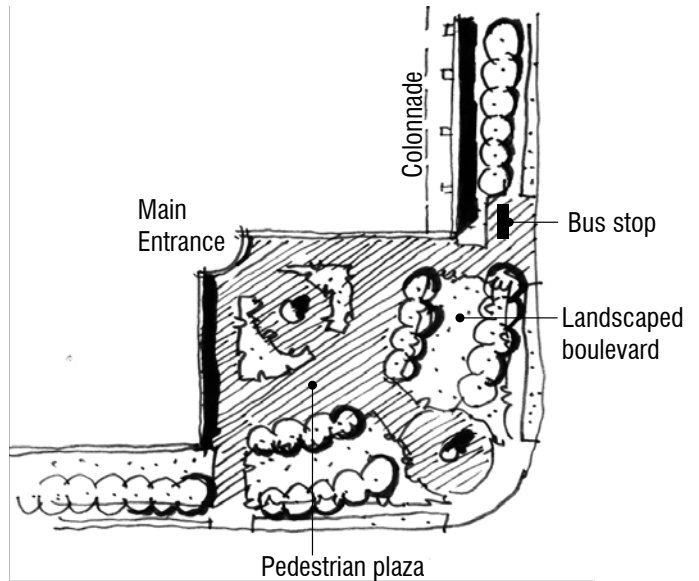
- 12/ On Regional and Local Corridors with public rapid transit, place buildings on the site so as to define the street edge. On sites in these locations, parking shall be directed to the rear or side of the site.
- 13/ On corner sites located at the intersection of an arterial street and a collector or local street, place buildings on the site so as to define the arterial street edge. In these locations, 1 row of parking may be provided adjacent the collector or local street.
- 14/ In all other locations within the Employment Area, site buildings close to the street edge only where necessary. A maximum of 1 row of parking between the building and the street is permitted.

Orientation

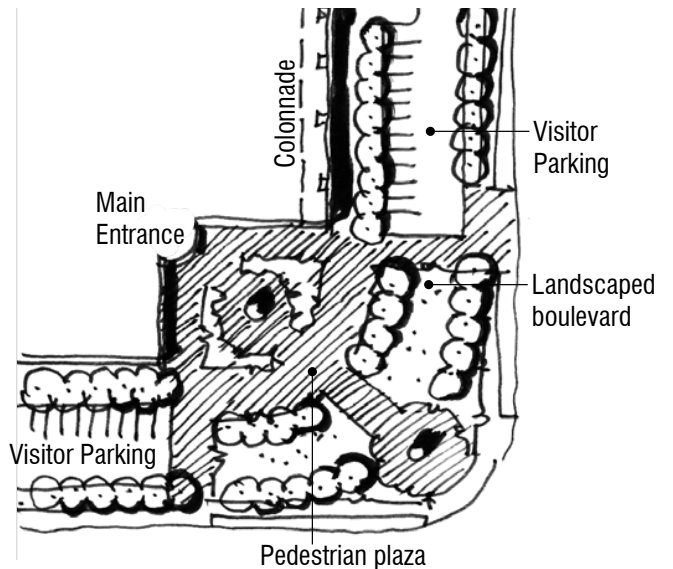
- 15/ Orient buildings towards the street frontage. Orient main entrances to the street, wherever possible.



Orient buildings to the street edge and locate parking behind the building out of public view



Site buildings on a Regional or Local Corridor close to the street, defining the street edge, and ensuring that parking is not situated between the building and the street



On sites at the intersection of an arterial street and a collector or local street, one row of parking may be permitted between the street and the building

Pedestrian Connections

16/ Provide pedestrian walkways between building entrances and destinations such as sidewalks, transit stops, parking areas, trails, and the Greenway System.

Landscaped Interface

17/ Provide a landscaped interface between the street and the building with substantial plantings and incorporate landform, where appropriate.

Pedestrian Amenity Areas

18/ Outdoor seating areas and other pedestrian amenities are encouraged.



This building gives employees access to sidewalks, bicycle parking, and transit stops



This office tower has a substantial amount of landscaping and pedestrian space that is incorporated into the existing landform



This office tower provides pedestrian amenity space in this weather protected outdoor space

Neighbourhood Infill

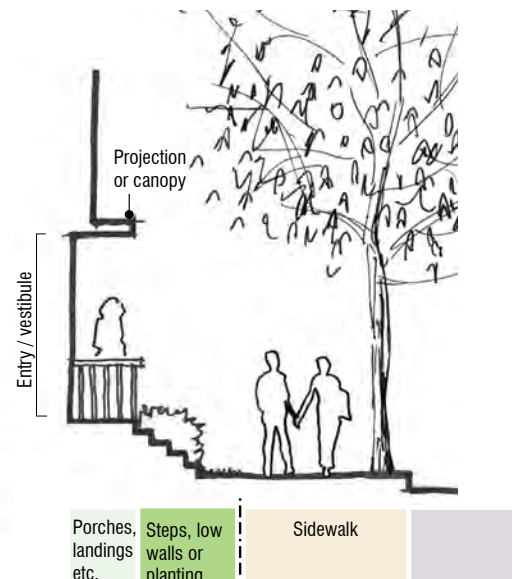
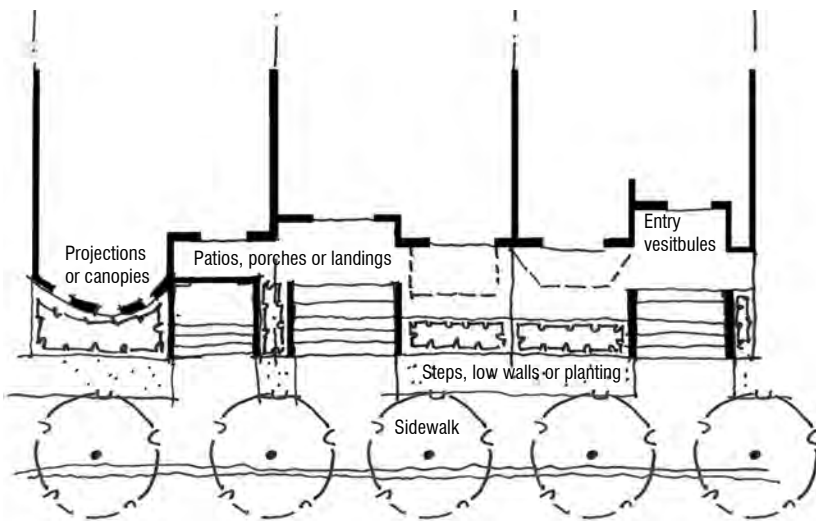
Guidelines

Street Edge/Orientation

- 20/ Respect the traditional street line and neighbourhood character. Locate buildings, including additions, to maintain a similar or respectful setback with adjacent buildings.
- 21/ In areas with varied front setbacks, design building setbacks to act as a transition between adjacent buildings and to unify the overall streetscape.
- 22/ In areas subject to an Infill Plan, refer to the Infill Plan to determine building setbacks.
- 23/ Respect the existing general pattern of side spacing.
- 24/ Architectural features such as porches, bay windows, and raised residential entries are encouraged to project into the front setback.
- 25/ Design the visual quality of both façades on corner lots to be equal in design quality.



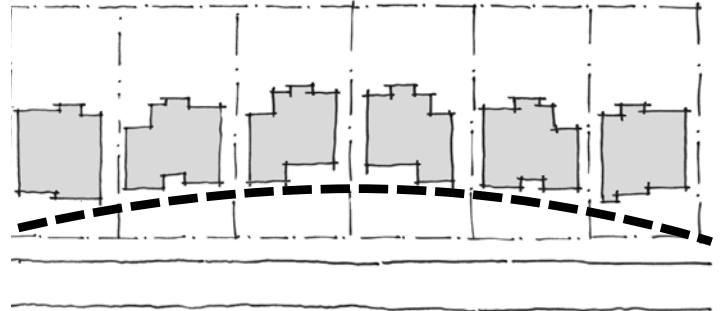
These new developments respect the existing setbacks and character of the neighbourhood



Diagrams illustrating a good landscape interface for the front street edge of townhouse infill units

Landscape Interface

- 26/ Design landscaping to be compatible with landscaping along the existing streetscape.
- 27/ Design sites to preserve healthy, native trees wherever possible.
- 28/ Low walls or decorative fencing within the front setback may be used to define the public realm from the private realm, provided visual connectivity is maintained.



The houses in this diagram have varied setbacks along an arc which creates a varied and more interesting streetscape



Low walls, decorative fencing, and plantings are used to define the public from the private realm

5.3

Interface Condition between Different Uses

Principle - Incorporate site features that create a comfortable transition between different uses.

Centres, Corridors and Ground-Related Residential Uses

Guidelines

Rear Treatment

- 1/ Upgrade and maintain the rear of new building façades in much the same way as street façades, where appropriate, particularly when an opportunity exists to create active retail spaces such as back-of-lot cafés.

Buffers and Setbacks

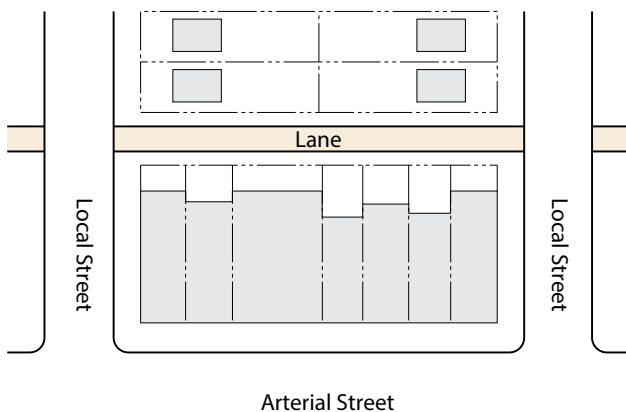
- 2/ Treat the rear or sides of sites with a positive edge such as a laneway, a walkway, substantial landscaping, or setbacks.
- 3/ Provide lanes at the rear of sites to transition between different land uses and to avoid a back-to-back condition. The creation of a rear lane system is required in certain areas and will be encouraged throughout the Town.



By having stores and a café front onto this rear walkway, it allows the laneway to become actively used



The rear of this building makes use of what would otherwise be unused space by creating a small café and pedestrian open space



A continuous rear lane helps transition between the rear lots fronting onto the arterial street and the side lots of the buildings on the local street

Development Adjacent to the Greenway System

Guidelines

- 4/ Use building orientation or massing to optimize connections and views to the Greenway System. Place architectural features such as front doors, windows, porches or balconies to maximize views.
- 5/ Design sites adjacent to the Greenway System to have a clear private-public realm definition through the use of walkways, fencing, and/or landscaping.

Development Adjacent to Natural Features or Areas

- 6/ Where development abuts a natural feature or area, use appropriately sized native species, limit impervious surfaces, provide low impact development approaches, and ensure that lighting is not directed towards the feature.
- 7/ To allow for views and vistas into the Greenway System, provide an appropriate setback to the building face and incorporate stepped or other creative building design features so as to create strong visual and physical links to the Greenway System.

Development Adjacent to Parks or Urban Open Spaces

- 8/ Incorporate site features that address and enhance the adjacent public realm. For example, site design can include wrap around porches, front doors, windows, sidewalk cafés, seating areas, entrances to active-uses at grade, or other pedestrian-oriented site features.



Large porches and windows/doors oriented towards the street help create views towards the Greenway System



Residential development that fronts onto the Greenway System

Employment Areas Near Residential Areas

Guidelines

9/ Provide a landscaped buffer. Consult the Ministry of the Environment's land use compatibility guidelines regarding separation distances to sensitive land uses.

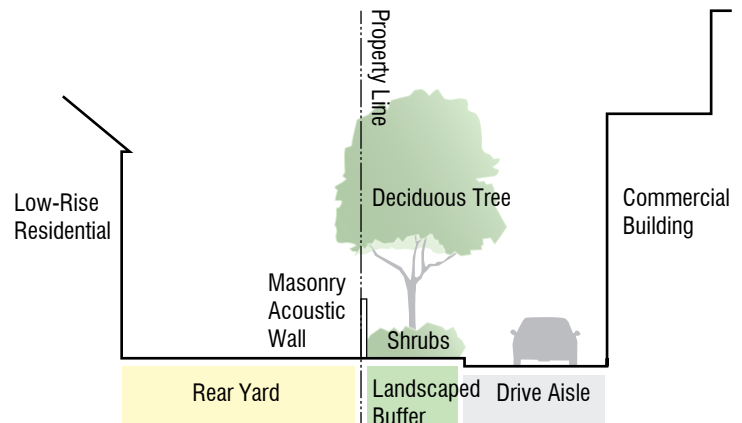
10/ Design landscape buffers to have the following character:

- Should be wide enough to allow a tree to grow to maturity (e.g. have a minimum dimension of 3.0 metres);
- Should consist of plant materials (shrubs and/or trees) when at maturity will form a solid, unbroken, visual barrier, fencing, and/or earth berms;
- Should avoid the widespread planting of monocultural turf grass. Instead, provide groundcovers that need little or no maintenance;
- Where sufficient width is not possible to accommodate shrubs and/or trees, provide fencing or low walls with climbing plants or vines to screen the less desirable visual aspects of new developments.

11/ Where new employment uses are established adjacent to residential dwellings, long blank walls, parking areas, mechanical equipment, servicing or loading areas should be adequately screened with visual barriers, including architectural screening, coniferous plantings, berms, fencing, or a combination of such treatments.



The landscaped buffer around the perimeter of the site helps screen the parking areas and building walls



Screen servicing/loading areas in new commercial developments from adjacent residential uses by providing fencing and landscaping

5.4 Site Circulation and Parking

Principle - Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle circulation and connectivity with adjacent sites.

Pedestrian Connections

Guidelines

- 1/ Provide pedestrian walkways/connections within the site and to adjacent uses and amenities including the public sidewalk, surface transit stops, parking areas, the Greenway System or other adjacent destinations.
- 2/ Provide pedestrian walkways on the site between buildings, through parking lots, and/or through covered building arcades.
- 3/ Pedestrian connections should be continuous, barrier-free, and lead directly to destinations.



Well-designed pedestrian connections allow people to walk directly between buildings, across the parking lot and to the street



Coordinated landscaping treatments on either side of this street help to define pedestrian connections

- 4/ Entry locations to pedestrian walkways should be easy to find, clearly visible, safe and have direct connections to the public sidewalk.
- 5/ Use distinctive pavement or markings for pedestrian walkways/ connections, such as painted patterns, to provide visual identification of pedestrian routes.
- 6/ Provide pedestrian-scaled lighting, benches, trees or other landscaping and planters along pedestrian connections to enhance visibility and security. Relate the scale of light standards to the pedestrian.
- 7/ Where a transit stop is located within walking distance of the site, provide a direct pedestrian connection between the transit stop and the building's main entrance.
- 8/ Pedestrian walkways should be an adequate width to accommodate anticipated pedestrian volumes.
- 9/ Incorporate architectural features such as windows, porches or balconies to front onto pedestrian connections to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort. Where appropriate, orient active uses such as retail stores or cafés to front onto pedestrian connections to provide an active pedestrian realm.



The stone treatment and bollards in this parking lot help to define the pedestrian walkway



Incorporate lighting, seating and weather protection to create a comfortable pedestrian experience all the way to the street along pedestrian walkways



Landscaping is carried over from the sidewalk into this rear lane to create a continuation of the pedestrian realm

Pedestrian Bridges

Guidelines

- 10/ Design pedestrian bridges to allow continuous visibility of any area 20 metres ahead. Eliminate hidden areas or recessed areas that could be used for hiding. Design pedestrian bridges as new focal points throughout the Town, aiming to create new features of the site and the larger community.



Pedestrian bridges should be visually appealing and functional enough to accommodate pedestrian traffic.

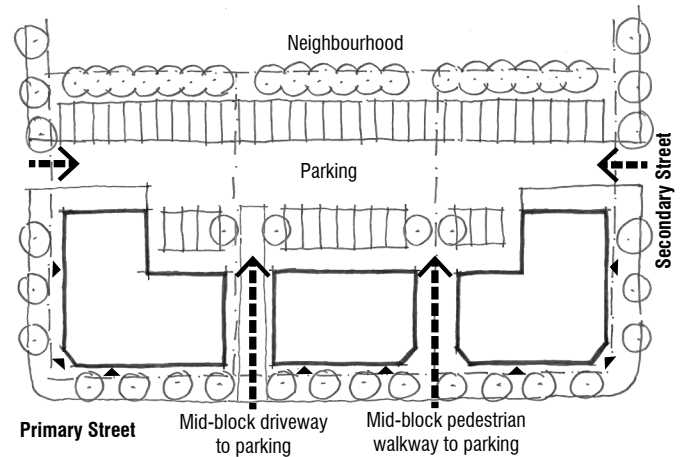


The VIVA-GO Transit bridge is designed to allow continuous visibility through the use of clear glass

Vehicular Access

Guidelines

- 11/ Site vehicular entrances and exits to minimize conflicts with pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles.
- 12/ Avoid areas where high pedestrian traffic/activities are expected by directing vehicular access to on-site parking, loading, and servicing facilities to local streets and rear lanes, and not from the arterial street.
- 13/ Where feasible, incorporate shared driveways in order to reduce the extent of interruption to pedestrians.
- 14/ Provide continuous sidewalks through driveways.
- 15/ Where vehicular access is only feasible from arterial streets, a front driveway may be permitted, provided the following criteria are met:
 - a. Mutual access with adjacent properties are provided, where possible;
 - b. The access point is located away from areas where high pedestrian activities would occur;
 - c. A comprehensive transportation review is undertaken by the applicant to the satisfaction of the Town, which identifies, assesses, and provides recommendations to minimize the impact of the proposed vehicular access on existing or planned pedestrian routes or amenities; and
 - d. The proposed access point is integrated into the site design to achieve a more pedestrian-oriented streetscape.



Parking lots in this block are located behind the buildings and are accessed from the side streets. The three buildings also share a common parking lot and one mid-block driveway accessing the main street



This vehicular access point is designed to be as least disruptive to the pedestrian realm as possible

Pedestrian Drop Off Areas

- 16/ Design pedestrian drop-off areas to minimize conflicts with pedestrian routes. Pedestrian connections should lead directly from drop-off areas to the front entry of the building.
- 17/ Drop-off access should be from rear lanes or secondary streets wherever possible.
- 18/ Avoid placing drop-off areas at highly visible locations, such as the terminus of streets.
- 19/ Provide weather protection for outdoor waiting areas to make getting to and from the site more comfortable. This includes covered waiting areas, building projections, colonnades, awnings and use of landscaping.
- 20/ Design drop-off areas to be pedestrian-oriented, and to include decorative paving material, textures or colours to emphasize pedestrian connections.



Landscaping and paving materials are used to make drop off areas pedestrian friendly



The location of this parking lot helps to minimize conflicts with pedestrian routes



A functional drop off area for this building is located at the rear of the building

Parking

Guidelines

- 21/ Wherever possible, do not place parking between the street and the building. Where a site is being comprehensively redeveloped for higher intensity purposes, accommodate parking below grade, at the rear or side of the building, or on-street to ensure a strong street wall.
- 22/ Underground parking or parking structures are encouraged over surface parking lots where possible and feasible to conserve land, promote compact development, and to minimize heat island effect. As the Town intensifies and develops over time, parking structures should replace surface parking lots.
- 23/ Locate and design parking lots and internal drive-aisles to minimize the number of vehicle crossings over pedestrian connections.
- 24/ Provide appropriate lighting levels and consistency of coverage in parking areas to assist both pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The height and intensity of light standards should be sensitive to adjacent land uses.
- 25/ Preferential parking for energy efficient vehicles and car-share services is encouraged.
- 26/ Opportunities for shared parking on a site or with adjacent properties are encouraged to reduce land devoted to parking.
- 27/ Bicycle parking should be located near the entrance to the building and should include weather protection.



Vehicular access points to parking structures should be located at the rear and sides of buildings



On-street parking is the preferred form of surface parking as it minimizes the disruption to the street wall

Above-Grade and Underground Parking Structures

Guidelines

Integration with the Streetscape

- 28/ Physically and visually integrate underground or structured parking that is part of a larger development with building design.
- 29/ Design parking structures fronting onto streets and public spaces with active at-grade uses to animate the streetscape and enhance pedestrian safety.
- 30/ Design above-grade parking structures to reinforce the intended built character and blend into the streetscape through façade treatments that conceal the parking levels and give the visual appearance of a multi-storey building.
- 31/ Façade design of above-grade parking structures should complement the adjacent buildings in terms of openings, vertical articulation, materials and colours. Pedestrian amenities such as awnings, canopies, and sheltered entries are encouraged.



Designing above-ground parking structures to compliment surrounding building façades can help to reinforce the intended built character of a streetscape



Design façade treatments to conceal parking and give the visual appearance of a multi-storey building



Integrating entrances to underground parking both physically and visually with site and building design and incorporating active at-grade uses helps to animate a streetscape

Pedestrian Entrances, Safety and Security

- 32/ Locate pedestrian entrances for parking structures adjacent to main building entrances, public streets or other highly visible locations.
- 33/ Parking structures should be well-lit, with light-coloured ceilings and walls and a transparent entrance to the stairs and elevators to improve visibility and safety. Wherever possible, minimize the impact of interior lighting on adjacent residential uses.
- 34/ Integrate signage and wayfinding into the design of public parking structures to aid visitors in finding them upon arrival.

Garage Entrances & Vehicular Ramps

- 35/ Locate exterior vehicular ramps and garage entrances to parking structures at the rear or side of buildings away from main building frontages and streets. Avoid siting ramps/entrances at street corners of view termini.
- 36/ Where garage doors are proposed to underground or structured parking, harmonize them with the rest of the building design, and deemphasize their presence through recessing and the use of colour and material.



Garage doors to underground or structured parking should blend in with the rest of the façade, similar to this building



Transparent glass should be used on entrance stairs and elevators to improve visibility and safety



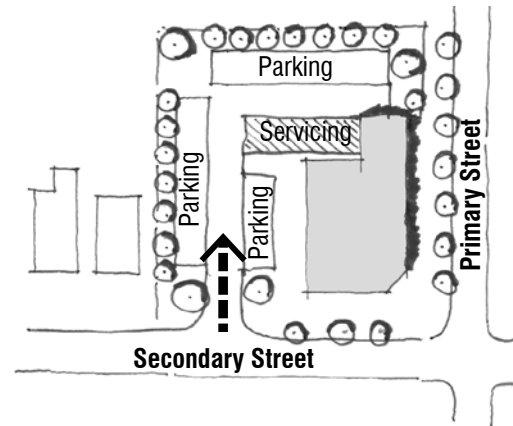
Locating vehicle ramps and entrances to underground garages to the side of a building and deemphasizing their prominence through recessing can help to enhance the pedestrian realm

Surface Parking Areas

Guidelines

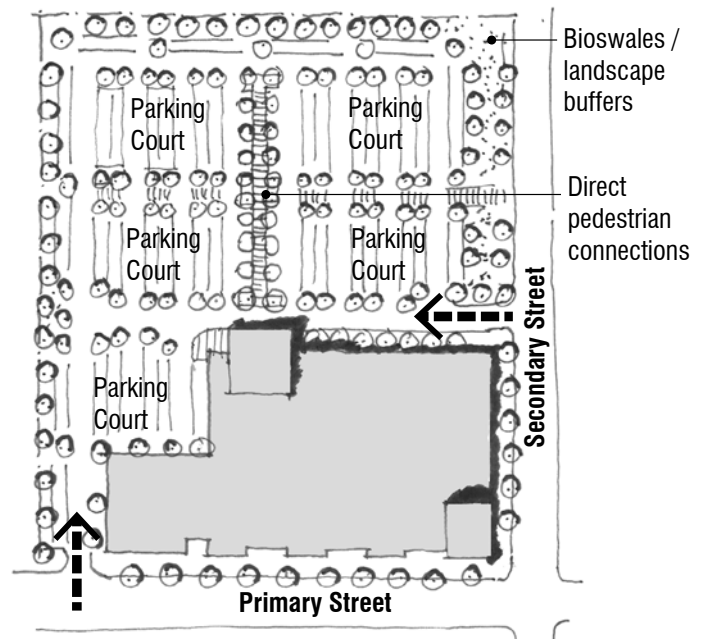
Layout and Orientation

- 37/ Locate surface parking areas at the rear or side of buildings. For corner sites, parking areas should not be located on an exterior side.
- 38/ Where drainage system design permits, surface parking areas may be lowered from the adjacent street grade to reduce visual prominence.



Circulation and Access

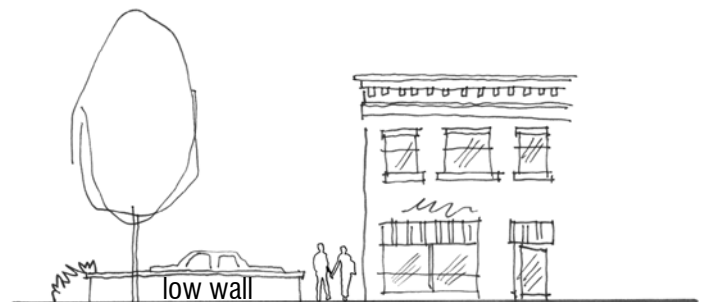
- 39/ Use planting strips, landscaped traffic islands and paving articulation to define vehicle routes and pedestrian walkways, establishing smaller parking 'courts' that minimize the aesthetic impact of surface parking areas.
- 40/ Include direct and safe pedestrian connections while maintaining pedestrian comfort and access in parking areas. Divide large parking areas into smaller parking courts by providing pedestrian connections. Orient pedestrian connections to the building entrance.
- 41/ Place handicapped parking spaces directly adjacent to the main entrance.



Pedestrian walkways and landscaped traffic islands can be used to divide a parking lot into smaller courts

Sustainability

- 42/ Sustainability initiatives are encouraged when designing surface parking areas, including using permeable or light-coloured surface material to reduce solar heat absorption, or designing landscaped islands with bioswales to reduce stormwater run-off. See Sustainable Design Guidelines for further guidance.



Low brick walls may be used to screen parking areas when accompanied by appropriate landscaping

Landscaped Buffers (Site perimeter)

- 43/ Where parking areas are situated adjacent to the sidewalk, provide a landscaped area of at least 3.0 metres wide and a minimum of 30 m³ rooting area between parked vehicles and the sidewalk. This buffer should be located within the private realm so as not to reduce the total sidewalk width. Trees should be planted at intervals of 6.0 to 9.0 metres depending on the canopy size of the trees.
- 44/ Ensure landscaping, or other parking area screening devices, do not obstruct the primary building façade or total visibility of the parking area.
- 45/ Screen parking areas by using ornamental fencing or decorative low masonry walls in combination with a landscaped buffer strip. Design these features so as not to impede pedestrian connections to the site. Height should be no taller than 1.2 m.
- 46/ Use landscaping to identify access points and other site features such as public spaces and transit stops.



Landscaping, and pedestrian amenities can be used as a buffer between surface parking lots and the sidewalk



Trees and landscaping are planted in front of this office building, providing a landscaped buffer and screening the parking from view of the street and sidewalk, while still maintaining full view of the primary building

Internal Landscaping Elements

- 47/ Use internal landscaping elements to define smaller parking courts visually and functionally and reduce the overall visual impact of surface parking areas.
- 48/ Include parking islands at each end of parking aisles abutting the primary circulation route.
- 49/ Design landscaped islands to be raised and curbed, and have a minimum width of 3 metres. They should be planted with trees and other groundcover that is low-maintenance or with decorative paving.
- 50/ Include a 6 inch (150 mm) curb on planting beds and landscaped islands to prevent damage caused by vehicular movements and snow clearing.



Landscaped parking islands help reduce the overall visual impact of parking lots



Defining smaller parking courts using landscaping helps to formalize pedestrian circulation in parking lots



Low masonry walls in combination with a landscaped buffer are an ideal way to screen parking areas

5.5

Landscape Design

Principle - Incorporate trees and other plant materials to enrich the pedestrian experience, enhance the visual image of the site/area, and improve the overall ecological function.

Guidelines

- 1/ Design landscaping to:
 - Add visual interest to open spaces and blank façades;
 - Soften dominant building mass at a pedestrian scale;
 - Provide definition for pedestrian movement and open areas;
 - Provide a consistent visual image between adjacent properties along a street;
 - Screen unsightly areas, and accentuate/frame/reinforce desired views;
 - Provide protection from excessive wind and sun;
 - Stabilize steep embankments.
- 2/ Provide a minimum soil volume of 30 m³ of high quality soil per tree.
- 3/ Provide a watering program for trees for the first 2 years after planting.
- 4/ Landscape spaces between buildings not occupied by driveways or pedestrian connections to create usable open space.
- 5/ Where a development occurs in phases, provide interim sodding of areas devoted to future phases.



Landscape design can be used to screen unsightly areas and soften the building mass and materials at the pedestrian scale



Landscaping helps create an interesting and inviting pedestrian realm along this walkway

Enhancing the Greenway System

Guidelines

- 6/ When plant materials are required in locations proximate to natural features or areas (e.g. wetlands, river valleys, woodlots), special care is required to select species that are indigenous or are not invasive through seed dispersal to these natural areas or root to seed dispersal. Examples of plant species to be avoided in these situations include Norway Maple and its cultivars and varieties, Black Locust, European Buckthorn, Scot's Pine, Japanese Barberry and selections, Purple Loostrife and selections, Periwinkle, and Knotweed species.

- 7/ Avoid planting large masses or significant numbers of a single species, where possible. Plantings of monocultures invite potential problems of significant plant losses due to disease, insect, and/or fungal problems.



Incorporating a variety of different plant species will help to curb plant loss due to disease



Special care must be taken to use native species around natural core features

Enhancing the Pedestrian Realm

Guidelines

- 8/ Group trees and shrubs to frame and soften building elevations and to add visual interest to blank façades, maintain a pedestrian scale, and provide definition to walkways and open spaces.

- 9/ Trees at the street edge should generally be deciduous. Coniferous trees may also be used but only in instances where they do not block street views from buildings.



Landscaping creates comfortable spaces for pedestrians to walk through between two buildings



Landscaping along this public walkway is varied and helps define the public realm and street character, along with softening the building mass

5.6

Stormwater Management Works

Principle - Integrate Stormwater Management Works with the character and function of the environment of which they are a part.

Guidelines

- 1/ Provide Stormwater Management (SWM) facility landscape design in accordance with the Richmond Hill Stormwater Management Landscape Design Criteria and Implementation Guidelines, including but not limited to the following:

Landform and Grading

- 2/ Design grading to reflect the landform character of the surrounding natural landscape.
- 3/ Design and landscape SWM facilities as focal points on a site, incorporating an arrangement of formal planting, seating, and paths that do not interfere with the stormwater management function of the facility.

Orientation

- 4/ Where feasible based on drainage system design, locate SWM facilities adjacent to other elements of the Greenway System.



This SWM pond incorporates a lookout point for pedestrians that does not interfere with the stormwater management function of the feature



Natural plantings can be used to screen outlets in SWM facilities

Planting

- 5/ Focus SWM facility plantings on naturalization and a recognition that intensive vegetation maintenance should not be required to achieve long-term functional and aesthetic objectives.
- 6/ Where a SWM facility is envisioned as a key focal point or feature of an area or as an integral component of a park, consider the incorporation of more formal planting elements. Similarly, where a SWM facility fronts a street, design the landscaping to integrate with the adjacent streetscape, adopting a more formal structure and employing materials of complimentary type and size.
- 7/ Along shoreline areas, incorporate plant materials to achieve public safety, stability, water quality enhancement and nuisance waterfowl management objectives.

Inlet and Outlet Structures

- 8/ Where feasible, conceal inlet and outlet structures using a combination of planting, grading, and natural stone.



Formal planting elements should be employed where SWM facilities front on a street or are adjacent a sidewalk



A more urban SWM pond design becomes a new focal point in this community with pedestrian paths, public art, benches, interpretive signage, and a combination of formal and naturalized landscape treatments

Public Safety, Awareness and Amenities

- 9/ Design SWM facilities to avoid using fencing to promote public access and surveillance opportunities, except along rear or flankage residential property lines. Where there is a need to discourage public access to areas around the perimeter of a SWM pond, living fences and barrier plantings are encouraged over fencing. Use barrier plantings to deter public access to inlets, outlets and outfalls, plunge pools and deep water areas.
- 10/ Public education displays are encouraged to increase public awareness and appreciation of the role of SWM facilities within the community.
- 11/ Include warning signage to Town standards on access routes for SWM facilities to make the public aware of fluctuating water levels during storm events.
- 12/ Incorporate publicly accessible trails for walking and biking into SWM facility access route design where possible and link to the larger Greenway System.
- 13/ Provide a pedestrian-oriented focal area or feature, such as a seating area, where possible.



Benches can be used as a means of discouraging public access to a SWM facility while creating an inviting place to sit



Barrier-free access is provided adjacent this SWM feature



A pedestrian walkway, public art and signage is incorporated into this SWM feature

5.7

Site Lighting

Principle - Incorporate site lighting to enhance safety and accentuate site features in accordance with the Town's Light Pollution By-law.

Guidelines

- 1/ Design site lighting that considers all building and user needs. Particular attention is to be paid to pedestrian areas, driveways, transit stops, parking areas, service areas and buildings.
- 2/ Use pedestrian-scaled lighting to clearly identify pedestrian connections, and illuminate public spaces.
- 3/ Use lighting to accentuate prominent buildings, landscape features and public monuments.
- 4/ Choose light standards for their longevity, quality of materials, resilience to Canadian winters and de-icing salt, as well as for style, scale, and lighting measures.
- 5/ Incorporate special street lighting, where appropriate, to help define or enhance the character of an area.



Downcast pedestrian-scale lighting is placed to accentuate a water feature

5.8

Grading

Principle - Minimize changes to existing grades and match grades to adjacent properties and the street.

Guidelines

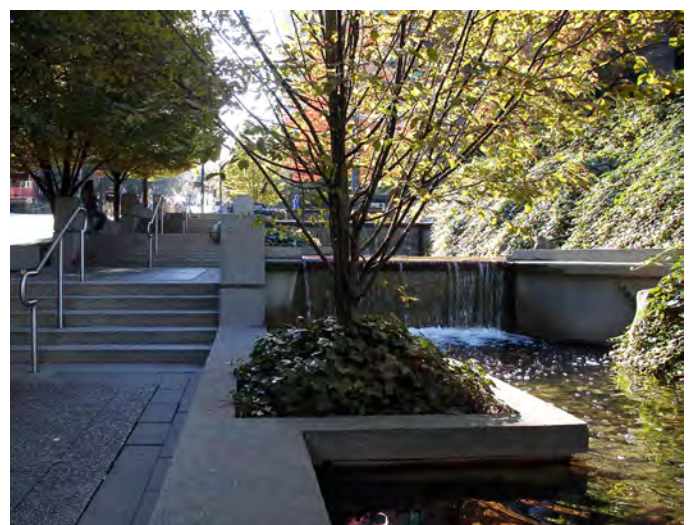
- 1/ Design sites to minimize impact on existing site grades through creative building and site design solutions such as stepped building foundations (floors), alternative building footprint(s), and terracing solutions.
- 2/ Where possible, match grades to surrounding properties and to street grade. Use natural grades across site, and where required, provide an integrated retaining wall system that creates a natural transition in grade across the site and contributes to an attractive streetscape. Retaining walls shall be located entirely on private property.
- 3/ Grading plans must be consistent with and incorporate tree preservation plans.
- 4/ Provide grading and surface treatment in accordance with the *Richmond Hill Accessibility Design Guidelines*.



Stepped building foundations help give the illusion of a level grade



Use creative building design to preserve and match existing grades



Changes in grade can create opportunities for interesting and unique landscape features

5.9

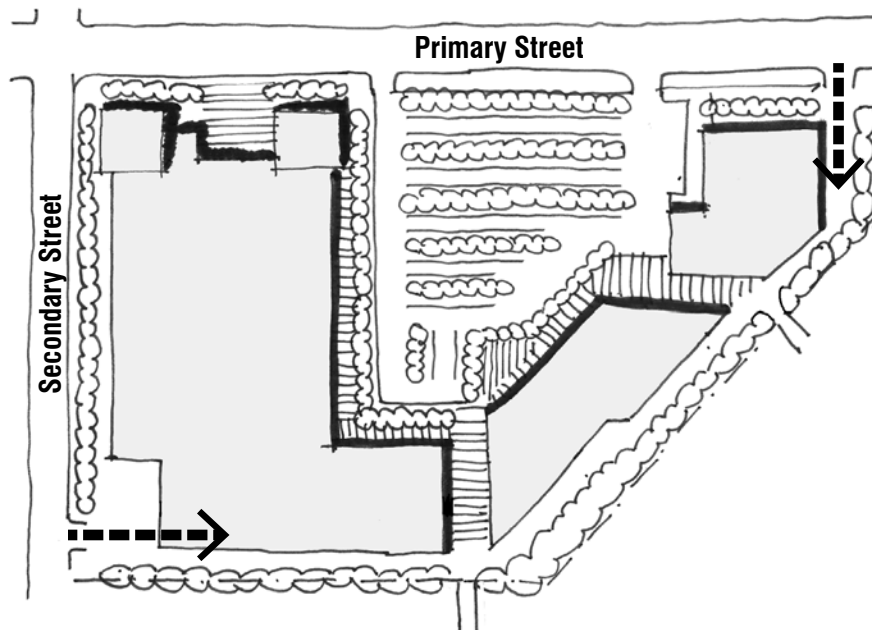
Loading, Servicing and Utilities

Principle - Integrate loading, servicing and utilities on the site to minimize their visual and functional impact on the pedestrian realm.

Layout and Circulation

Guidelines

- 1/ Locate loading bays and servicing facilities (e.g. garage or recycling storage areas) at the side or rear of the site or, where feasible, underneath the site or inside the building. Wherever possible, provide access to these areas from a rear lane or a side street in order to minimize conflict with pedestrian-oriented activities.
- 2/ Locate utilities underground to improve the appearance of the site. Where above ground utilities are necessary, ensure compatibility with other site features to minimize visual impact and minimize conflicts with utilities.
- 3/ Design loading routes to avoid crossing pedestrian connections, transit and cyclist routes, and primary vehicular circulation routes.
- 4/ Incorporate recycling and garbage storage facilities within the primary building or within an accessory structure. Ensure adequate access for the related service vehicle.
- 5/ Site snow storage areas away from landscaping that could be damaged by salt.



The loading/servicing area and parking entrance for this building is located at the back of the laneway and inside the building footprint

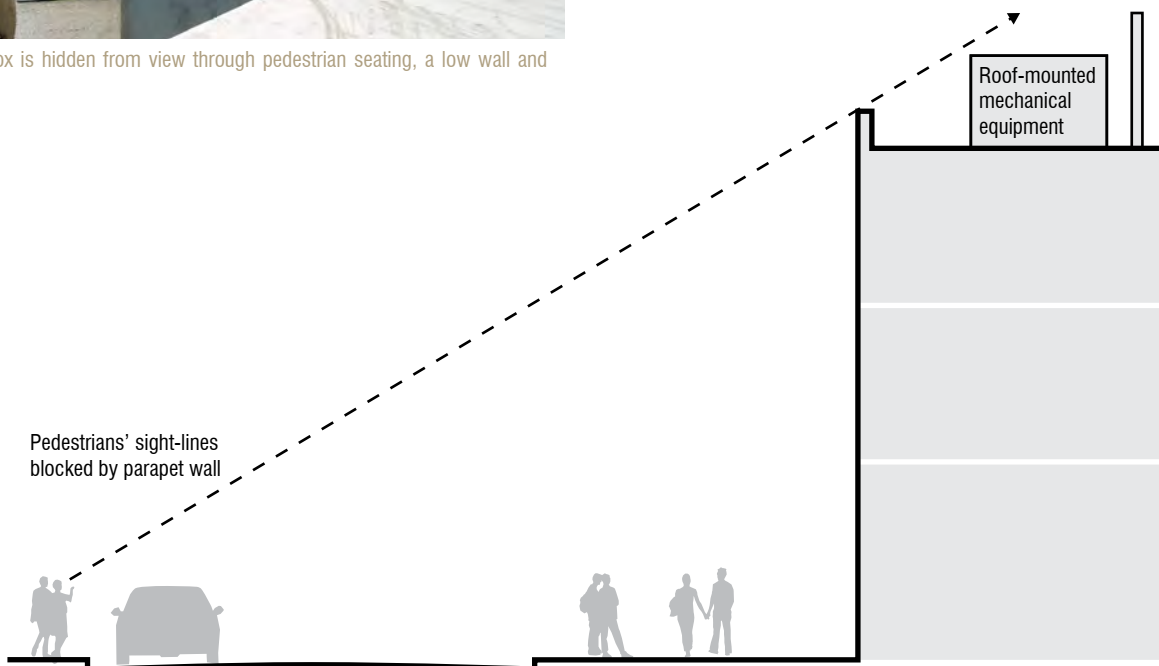


This utility box is hidden from view through pedestrian seating, a low wall and signage

Screening

Guidelines

- 6/ Ideally, use the building mass or other architectural elements to visually screen undesirable site elements from the street or enclose them within buildings on the site. When this is not possible, screen loading, servicing, and utilities with low walls or fences and extensive landscaping (plant materials, berms). The materials and colours of fences and walls used for screening should match the building façade and must maintain appropriate sightlines.
- 7/ Where feasible, cluster utility areas together or incorporate them within streetscape furniture in order to minimize their visual impact on the streetscape.
- 8/ For restaurant uses, design and incorporate recycling and garbage storage facilities in the building and refrigerate the area to suppress odours.



An awning or parapet can be used to screen or block a pedestrian's view of rooftop mechanical equipment

Materials

Guidelines

- 9/ Use materials and colours for loading and servicing enclosures that complement the main building.
- 10/ Design loading and servicing enclosures of materials that minimize visibility (e.g. no chain link fencing).
- 11/ Pave loading and servicing areas with an impervious surface of asphalt or concrete to minimize the potential for infiltration of harmful materials.



Design servicing enclosures using materials that compliment the main building



The paving on this rear servicing lane complements the main building façade, as does the noise wall



Steel beams were used to create visual interest and mask the servicing area between these two buildings

5.10

Noise Attenuation

Principle - Minimize noise to surrounding sensitive uses through site and building design or the incorporation of noise walls or buffers.

Guidelines

- 1/ When noise attenuation walls cannot be avoided, diminish their visual impact on the streetscape by using quality materials and design elements in walls and by including landscaping or other innovative features such as living walls. Install noise attenuation walls on private property.
- 2/ The following paragraphs summarize available noise control measures of which, one or more, may be required to meet the Province's sound level criteria for new noise-sensitive land use developments:
 - a. Site Planning Techniques
 - The use of distance setback
 - Spatial separation such as with the insertion of noise-insensitive land uses and buffers between the noise-sensitive receptors and the noise generators of concern
 - Orientation of buildings and Outdoor Living Areas such as with the use of "service roads" and innovative building layouts
 - Locating mechanical equipment away from noise-sensitive areas
 - Screening noise-generating mechanical equipment adjacent noise-sensitive areas
 - b. Architectural Design
 - The use of solid building walls
 - Placement of windows, balconies and court yards
 - Building height
 - Room and corridor arrangement



Incorporate artwork on noise barriers to add visual interest



Living walls are visually appealing and have the ability to drown out certain noises

c. Selection of Appropriate Building Components

- Acoustic treatment of walls and roof
- Selection of windows and doors
- Installation of appropriate building ventilation or central cooling system to allow windows and doors to be kept closed during the warm season.
- Installation of sound reducing fittings in ducts and opening to the outside.

d. Sound Barriers

- Use of favourable topographic features
- Use of intervening structures to act as sound barriers.



Building design techniques can sometimes be used to reduce certain noises, like this curtain wall does for adjacent streetscape noise



Traditional noise barriers, like fencing and landscaping, can be used to separate sensitive uses from higher activity uses including associated parking lots

5.11

Signage

Principle - Provide signage that compliments the site and building design in accordance with the Town's Sign By-law.

Guidelines

- 1/ Use signage to enhance the architectural character of the building façade. Assess the building to determine what types of signs are appropriate within its frame.
- 2/ If a building is a designated heritage structure, consult historical photographs to establish the types and styles of signs appropriate to it. A heritage permit is required.
- 3/ Ensure that landscaping and signage are in harmony with each other.
- 4/ New area-specific guidelines may be prepared to illustrate special signage areas as part of the Secondary Planning process or for specific character areas, as directed by Council.
- 5/ Use wayfinding signage to assist in the orientation and use of public spaces such as trails within the Greenway System, park entrances, special streetscapes, or in public buildings. On private lands, use wayfinding signage to assist in orienting and directing people towards public spaces or other destinations. Design wayfinding signage to be visually coherent and compatible with the surrounding character of the site.



Examples of different types of signage on a building that would enhance the architectural character of the façade



San Antonio has installed wayfinding signs to help orient the public

6 building design



6.1

Building Design

Introduction

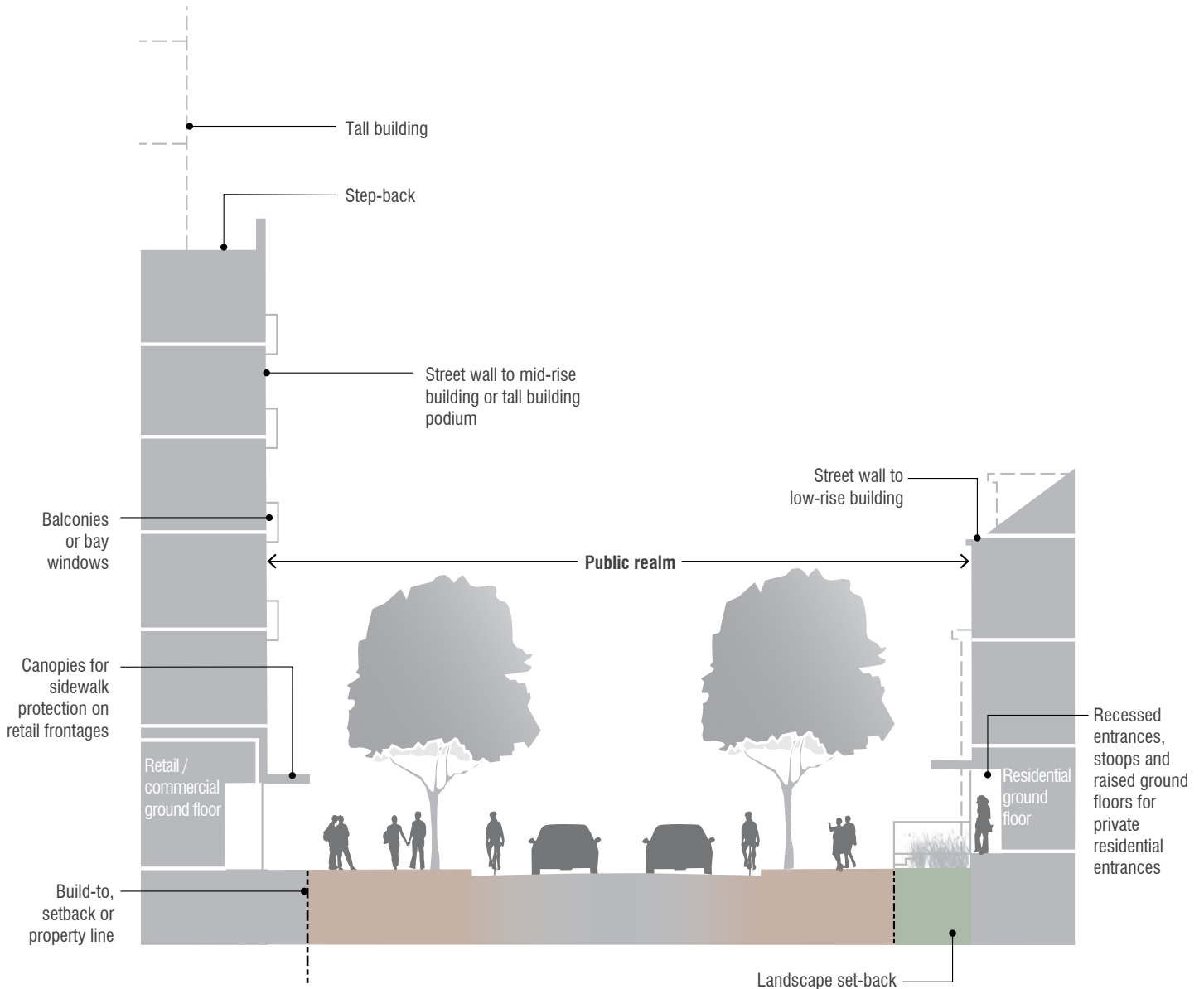
Building design guidelines intend to direct the form and character of buildings that frame, contain and enrich the pedestrian environment. If the overall goal for Richmond Hill is to create a safe, pedestrian-oriented, accessible and equitable urban place then the quality of built form has a significant role to play.

Building design guidelines focus on the external characteristics of building development as well as fit within the context of an area. Generally, these characteristics include: the position and scale of a building, the activities and use at street level, the impact of vehicle access on the pedestrian environment, and the building's architectural elements and their influence on the quality of the pedestrian realm. These characteristics inform the guiding principles and structure of the specific building design guidelines that follow.

The primary purpose of these building design guidelines is to influence the making of functional, memorable, and attractive urban places. This will require each project to reinforce, frame and animate the pedestrian environment and public realm, have a well-mannered transition between high- and low-rise forms, manage access well, and create a memorable visual composition to enhance the streetscape and pedestrian experience.

The guidelines do not prescribe building style. Rather, they inform how a building should contribute to the public realm, and provide sufficient design flexibility to allow a project to appropriately respond to its immediate context and the planning policy for the area. From an urban design perspective, the majority of building types should adhere to a similar set of objectives and principles. Together, the specific guiding principles should apply to each building type described in greater detail in the following sections.

The guidelines place the highest importance on how new buildings frame the public realm and relate to the pedestrian environment. The figure on the facing page summarizes the key building components described in greater detail in the following sections.



Primary street-related building components that influence the quality and character of the pedestrian environment

6.2

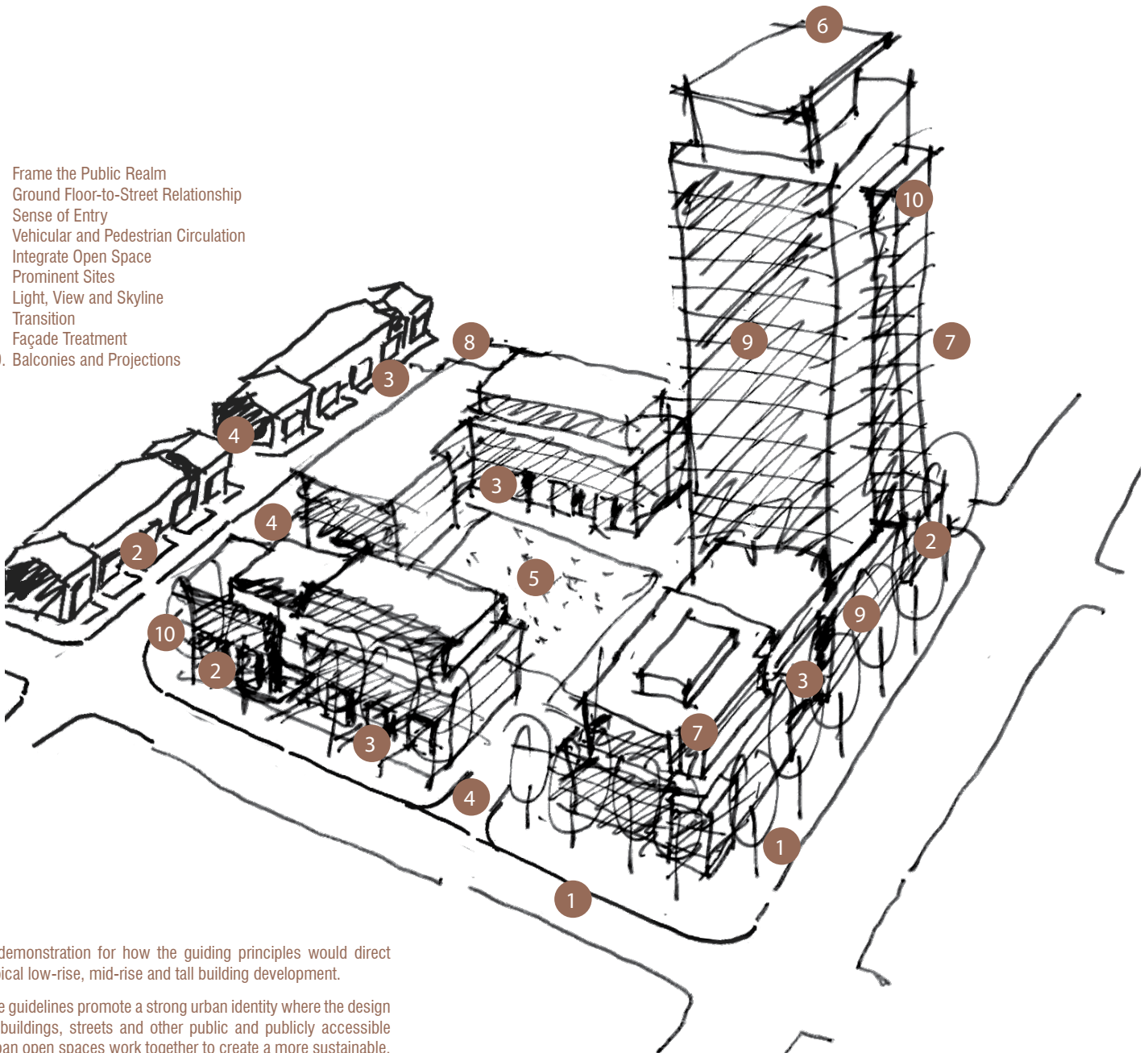
Guiding Principles

The guiding principles place the highest importance on how a building—or collection of buildings—influences the character and quality of the public realm and pedestrian environment. The guideline structure for each building type is organized by the following guiding principles:

1. **Frame the Public Realm:** Position and design buildings to define and enhance the public realm, particularly as experienced by pedestrians.
2. **Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship:** Incorporate into the ground floors the most public and active uses within the building to activate the street.
3. **Sense of Entry:** Provide visible and easily accessible pedestrian entrances from the public sidewalk.
4. **Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation:** Minimize the impact of vehicular circulation and access routes to parking and servicing on the pedestrian realm, while encouraging pedestrian connections.
5. **Integrate Urban Open Space:** Larger projects shall include urban open spaces as part of a larger functional and useful pedestrian environment, and exhibit a positive sense of place, not to simply serve as the setting for a building.
6. **Light, View and Skyline:** The massing of mid-rise or tall buildings shall contribute to an interesting and varied skyline and maintain an adequate view of the sky from ground level.
7. **Prominent Sites:** Provide special architectural treatments for buildings on corners and in other prominent locations such as taller elements, projections or façade treatment.
8. **Scale Transition:** Adverse impacts caused by the confluence of low-rise and tall developments shall be mitigated by creating a comfortable transition in the built form and treatment of the landscape interface.
9. **Façade Treatment:** Design visually permeable, well-constructed building façades of durable materials with a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette.
10. **Building Projections:** Integrate private balconies, outdoor terraces and bay windows into the overall form and design of the buildings.

A more detailed discussion of each guiding principle and how they apply to the various building types follows.

1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Integrate Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Façade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections



A demonstration for how the guiding principles would direct typical low-rise, mid-rise and tall building development.

The guidelines promote a strong urban identity where the design of buildings, streets and other public and publicly accessible urban open spaces work together to create a more sustainable, pedestrian oriented environment.

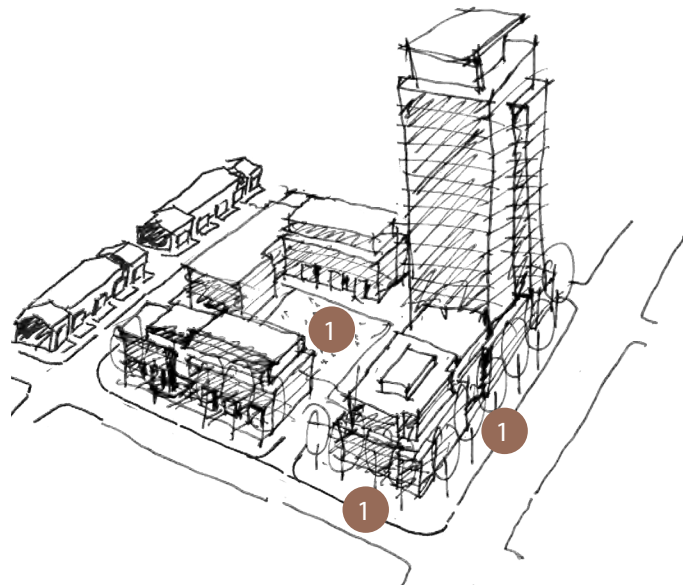
1. Frame the Public Realm

Principle - Position and design buildings to define and enhance the public realm, particularly as experienced by pedestrians.

How a site is organized is the foundation for much of a project's design quality. In an urban setting, the building's primary design role is to contribute to the street wall and frame the public realm. That portion of the public realm might include parks, squares, or streets.

A continuous street wall helps frame the street as a public open space, and encourages pedestrian activity. This is particularly important on streets with at-grade retail uses, which must directly engage with pedestrians.

Small pocket parks or squares can especially benefit from a firm sense of enclosure, with building edges on one, two or three sides. Such enclosure provides a desirable sense of completion or finiteness, and prevents public spaces from getting lost in larger, less defined surroundings.



Buildings can be used to frame the public realm and contribute to its character



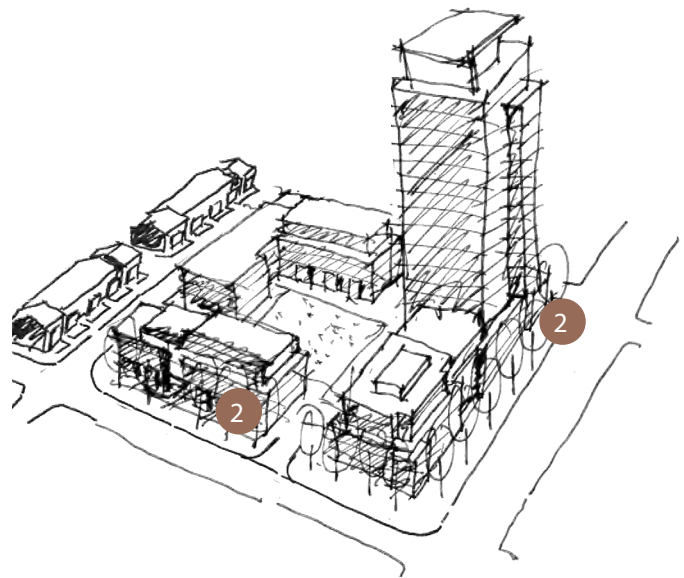
A well designed street wall building with retail uses at grade combines with a high-quality streetscape character to support a vibrant public realm

2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

Principle - Activate the street by incorporating the most public and active uses within the ground floor.

At the ground level, the design and scale of building façades and sidewalks should enhance the pedestrian experience by being visually interesting, active, and comfortable. Buildings should have continuous frontages of grade-related uses with direct access from public sidewalks. Parking shall not dominate a site's public frontage.

In a lively mixed-use urban setting, retail, commercial and community uses are encouraged at street level with a high level of visual transparency and permeability, with many windows and clearly marked entrances. These active uses must be visible from the street to the pedestrian and motorists alike. Where retail is not possible or not permitted, consider live/work units at grade. In residential areas, having the front doors accessible from the street will provide a public-private interface.



Main Street mixed-use buildings with retail at grade



Contemporary mixed-use redevelopment with retail at grade

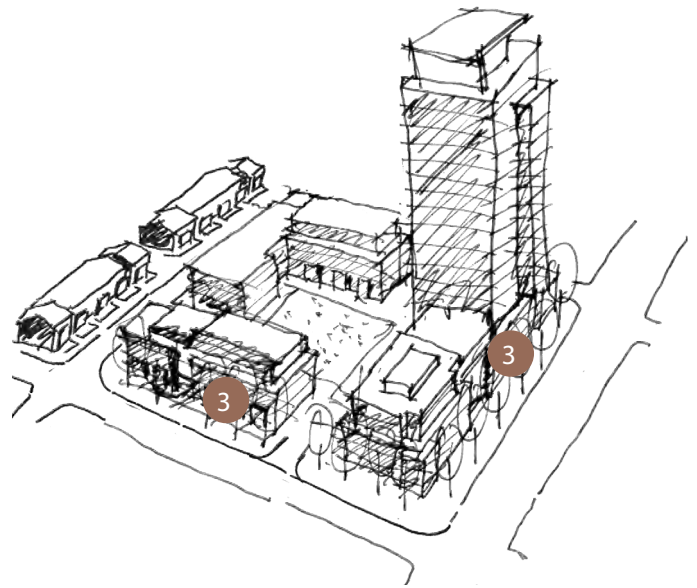


Residential units accessible at grade

3. Sense of Entry

Principle - Provide visible and easily accessible pedestrian entrances from the public sidewalk.

Entrances are special building design features. They should be prominent, highly visible, and of an appropriate scale to their function and frequency of use. Both drivers and pedestrians should easily recognize an entrance from the street. Entrances are an ideal location to incorporate and integrate public/private uses with the building. For single or semi-detached buildings, or multi-unit housing with grade-related units that have individual entrances, elements such as steps, porches or stoops offer space to personalize the street.



Semi-public entrance for low-density grade-related residence



Shared entrance for multi-unit residential building



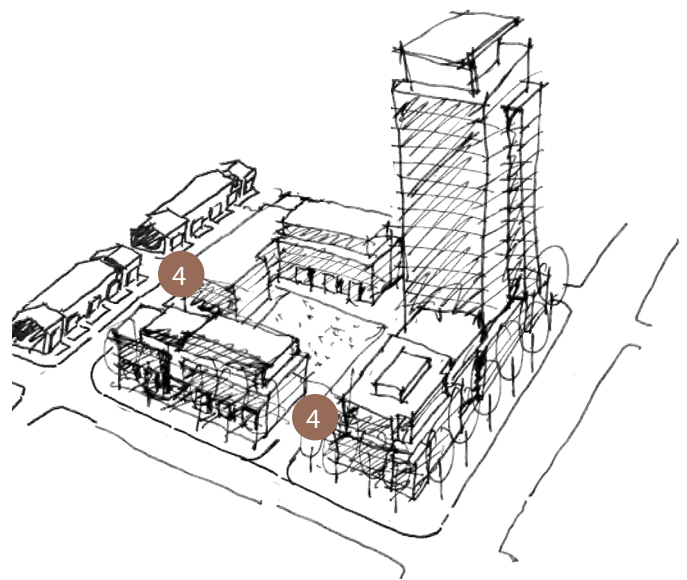
Formal lobby entrance for commercial or mixed-use building

4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

Principle - Minimize the impact of vehicular circulation and access routes to parking and servicing on the pedestrian realm.

With intensification and redevelopment comes the opportunity to reconsider the role of the private vehicle and the space it consumes. New development must balance the need for vehicle parking with the requirements of an active urban environment.

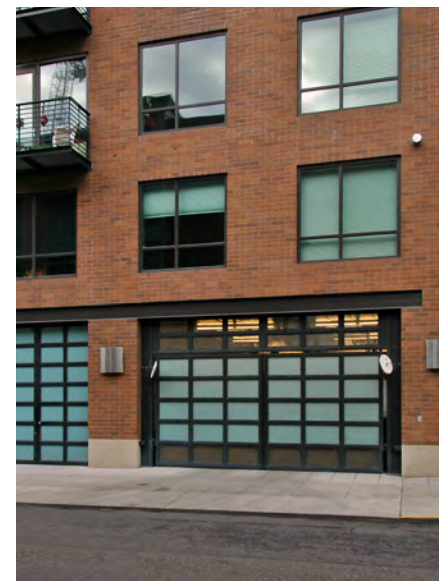
Surface parking should be minimized and the design of parking and service areas should be considered secondary to the primary site and building features. Parking and service areas that are visible from adjacent streets or back onto residential properties should be screened with walls, fences and landscaping. Provide sufficient lighting to ensure safety and security. Break down the scale of larger parking lots with planting islands that may provide additional opportunities for storm water management.



Portal for access to internal parking court integrated into façade design



Shared access to parking between different uses (park, residential, mixed-use and institutional)



Parking garage entrance designed as part of building

5. Integrate Urban Open Space

Principle - Projects shall include urban open space wherever possible as part of a larger functional and animated pedestrian environment, and exhibit a positive sense of place, not to simply serve as the setting for a building.

Well-designed urban open space is a key component of any livable urban environment. A wide range of publicly accessible urban open spaces can complement the more intense building forms that will result from redevelopment to help create a more livable Richmond Hill. New public parks, promenades, streetscape improvements and urban squares, courtyards, mews and semi-private front yards should be combined to form a coherent pedestrian and bicycle-oriented urban open space system.



Semi-public residential courtyard as part of mid-rise development



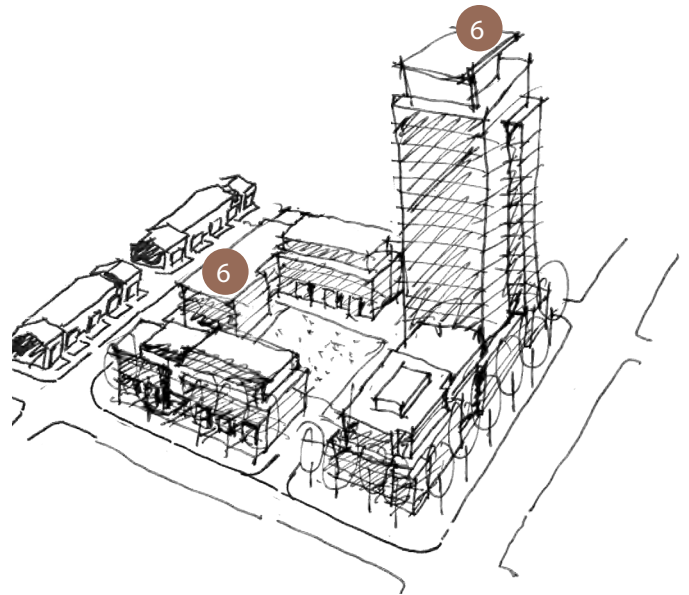
Publicly accessible courtyards provide opportunities for a wide range of activities to enrich the pedestrian realm

6. Light, View and Skyline

Principle - The massing of buildings shall contribute to an interesting and varied skyline and maintain an adequate view of the sky from ground level.

The redevelopment and intensification of Richmond Hill will include low-rise buildings along with mid-rise and tall buildings. These taller building forms should be designed with elegant proportions, fully integrated with their base storeys or podiums.

The height of mid-rise and tall buildings is only one of the dimensions that influence the ground level perception of their mass and bulk. Basic design standards are required to control the spacing and proportion (width relative to height) of buildings in order to maintain the 'sky view'. Buildings above the mid-rise or podium height should be designed as towers, and articulated in a manner to reduce their perceived bulk and improve their contribution to the skyline.



Elegantly proportioned tall building as part of a mixed-use redevelopment project



Tall building respecting the scale and views of the adjacent lower intensity neighbourhood



Proposal for two tall buildings on a street-related podium with appropriate transitions to adjacent neighbourhoods and the primary frontage street

7. Prominent Sites

Principle - Provide special architectural treatments for buildings on corners and in other prominent locations through the use of taller elements, projections or façade treatment.

Buildings located on corner lots or other prominent sites present an excellent opportunity to highlight their unique location. Design strategies include articulated corners, projecting and receding balconies, and accentuating features at various scales. Public spaces at prominent points may also highlight building and site significance, and contribute to an active public realm. The primary entrance to buildings on corner lots should be located at the corner, with architectural features such as double height lobbies, special rooflines, or other building elements like porches or turrets.



Taller architectural elements towards the corner highlight building and site prominence



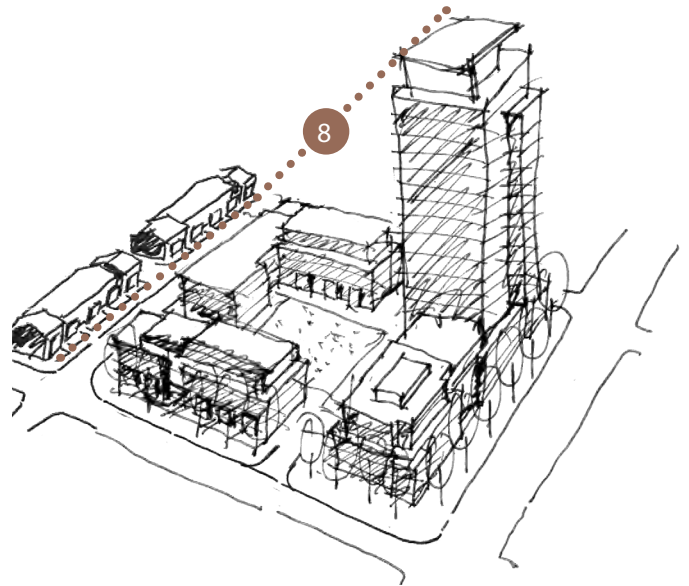
A well-detailed canopy and plaza demarcating the entrance to the Richmond Hill Performing Arts Centre

8. Transition

Principle - The interface between redevelopment sites and neighbourhoods shall respect the character of the neighbourhood and minimize adverse impact by creating a comfortable built form transition.

Richmond Hill is in a new generation of building. The majority of new development will come in forms more intense than in the past few decades. Mid-rise and tall buildings will figure prominently along the centres and corridors, with large areas of new construction already well underway.

These larger buildings should relate to their surrounding context, with a sensitive and graceful transition in scale to adjacent uses, especially to existing low-rise and mid-rise residential buildings, historic structures, and public spaces. The tallest buildings should be located the furthest away from the adjacent uses, with all mid-rise and tall buildings subject to height limits and angular plane controls that may differ with context and geography.



Residential mid-rise development with stepbacks from an urban open space



Mid-rise development with street wall stepbacks and façade articulation to reduce the perception of building mass to the pedestrian



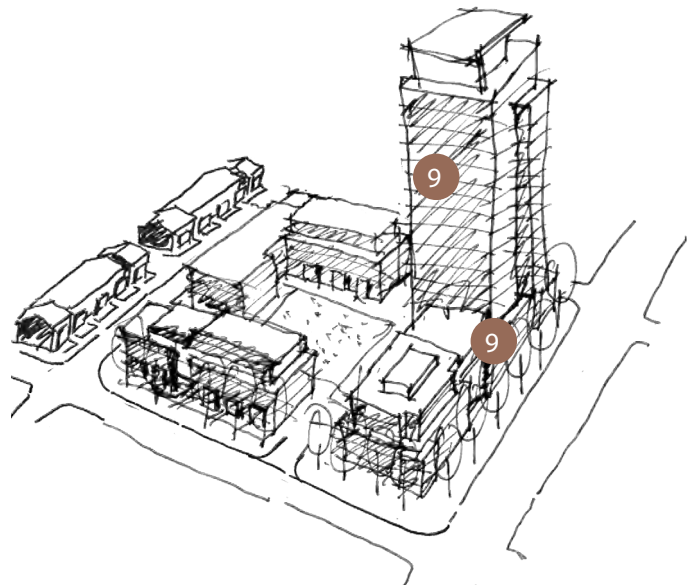
New development fitting within an angular plane projected from the adjacent lower intensity residential neighbourhood

9. Façade Treatment

Principle - Design visually permeable, well-constructed building façades of durable materials with a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette.

As Richmond Hill intensifies, greater demand will be placed on the built environment. It is critical that all new projects, whether buildings or public space, be of the highest quality. One of the key goals to intensification and redevelopment should be to achieve superb building architecture that improves the public realm. New works should respect and fit within their context and improve their overall setting by enhancing the pedestrian realm.

The building façade is composed of many elements that will ultimately give the building its look and feel. It is with the façade that a building can truly begin to express individuality and achieve design excellence. The designer may use many tools—material, colour, articulation, fenestration, projections—to achieve their objectives and put forward a highly creative and responsible proposal.



A well-defined rhythm of piers, windows and projections adds interest and a pleasant scale to a larger building



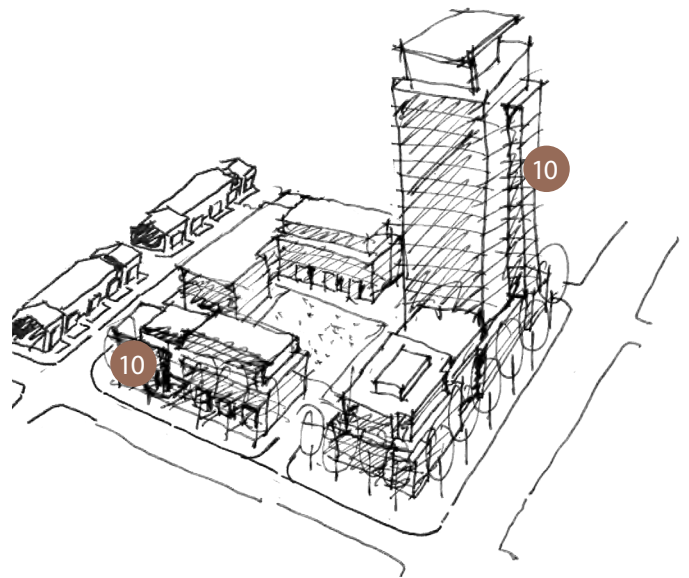
New projects can reduce their visual scale through the use of colour, materials and other architectural elements

10. Building Projections

Principle - Integrate projections such as canopies, private balconies, porches, outdoor terraces and bay windows into the overall form and design of the buildings.

Projections add visual variety and interest to the building façade, and enhance the inside-to-outside connection.

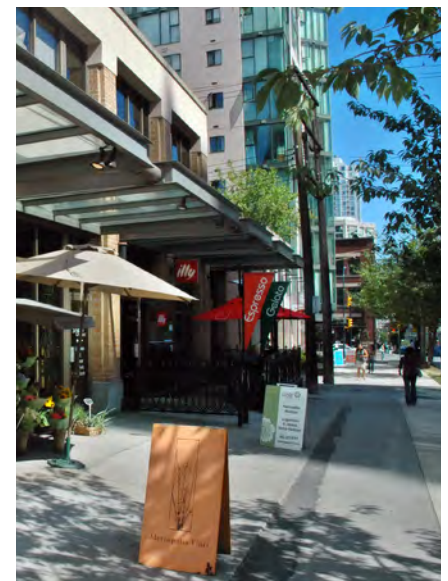
Projections such as bay windows, balconies, canopies, awnings, porches and sunshades provide weather protection for both the pedestrian and the building. Entrance canopies provide cover from sun, snow or rain. Awnings provide similar protective cover for the retail activity at ground level. Well-designed projections can provide an additional layer of detail and individuality to a building and enrich the pedestrian environment.



Balconies integrated into the façade design help to animate the street frontage



Porches and canopies on low-rise buildings offer shelter and outdoor amenity to residents



Canopies and awnings provide shelter and opportunities for retail uses to spill out in to the public realm and engage the pedestrian environment



Low-Rise Residential Buildings: Singles and Semis



Mid-Rise Buildings + Podiums



Tall Buildings



Low-Rise Residential Buildings: Apartments and Townhouses



Retail Commercial Buildings



Industrial Buildings



Office Buildings



Institutional Buildings

Richmond Hill Building Types

The principles and guidelines within this document apply to the follow building types, and are discussed in greater detail in the following sections:

- 6.3 Low-rise residential buildings (walk-up apartments, stacked towns, garden flats, grade-related apartments), singles, semis
- 6.4 Townhouses
- 6.5 Mid-rise buildings and tall building podiums
- 6.6 Tall buildings
- 6.7 Retail commercial buildings
 - 6.7.1 Neighbourhood plazas
 - 6.7.2 Large format retail
 - 6.7.3 Drive through facilities
 - 6.7.4 Automotive service commercial and gas stations
- 6.8 Institutional buildings

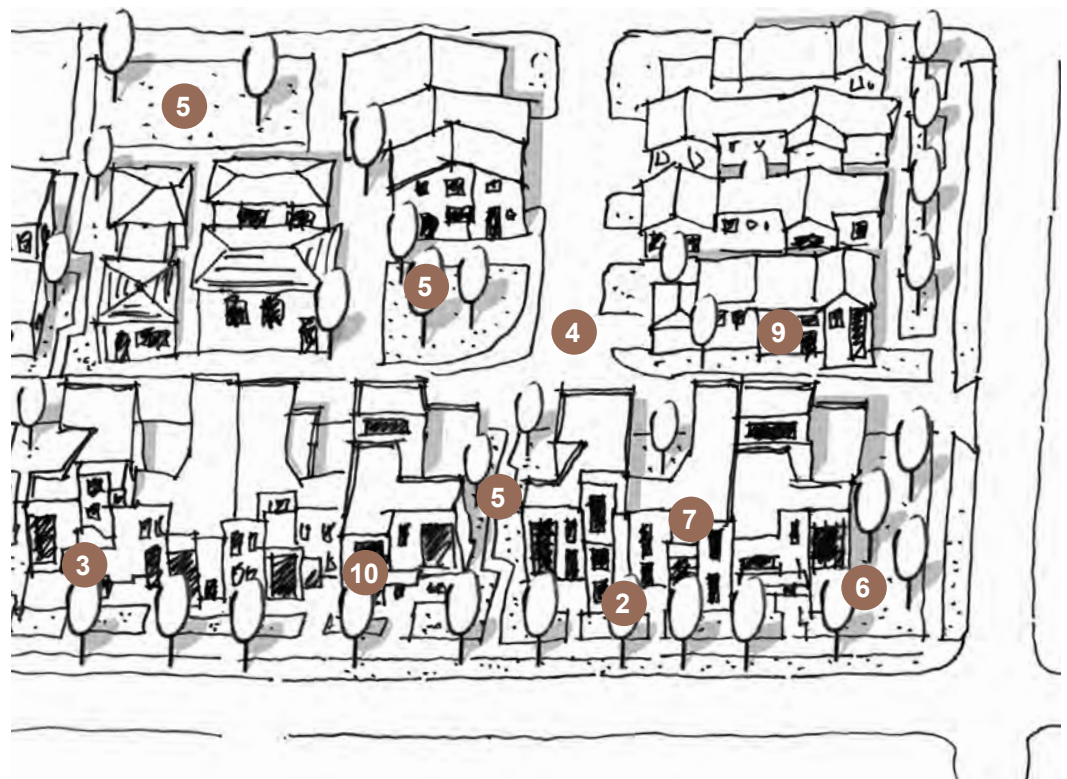
6.3

Low-Rise Residential Buildings

Principle - The design, massing and arrangement of low-rise residential buildings shall contribute to the functional, spatial and aesthetic quality of the pedestrian environment and public realm.

Rationale

Low-rise residential building types can support urban-level densities and should be designed to be compatible with the adjacent neighbourhood. Low-rise residential buildings generally range from 2 storeys to 4 storeys and are typically built in wood frame construction. Low-rise residential may include singles, semis, duplexes, house form apartments, walk-up apartments or stacked townhouses. Access to units is either directly from the public sidewalk, a central lobby, a common corridor or shared courtyard.



1. Frame the Public Realm
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Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

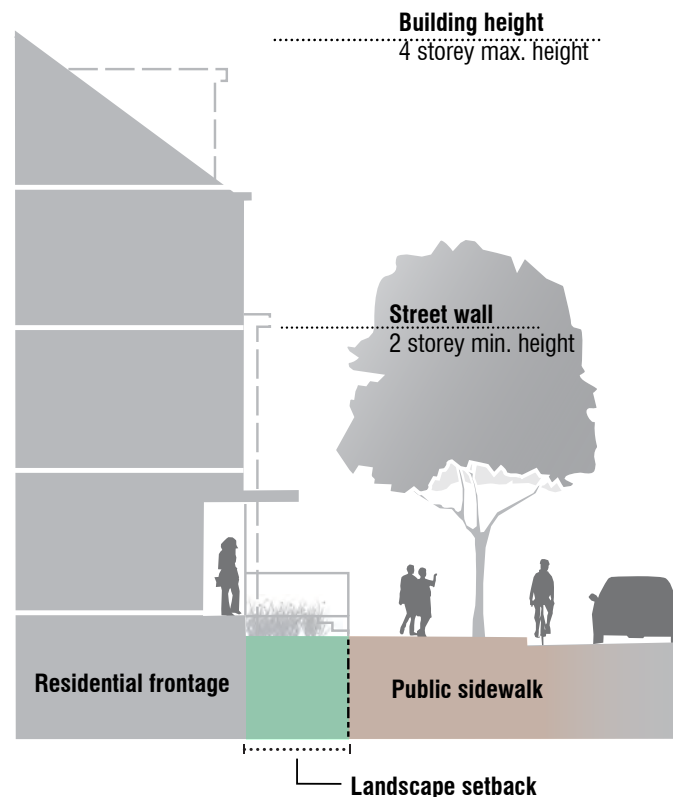
- 1/ Organize low-rise residential buildings to frame the pedestrian realm and create an easily navigable walking environment.
- 2/ Provide a minimum landscape setback between low-rise residential building and the public right-of-way, consistent with adjacent buildings. At the ground floor level, any landscape setback shall be treated as semi-public space.

Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

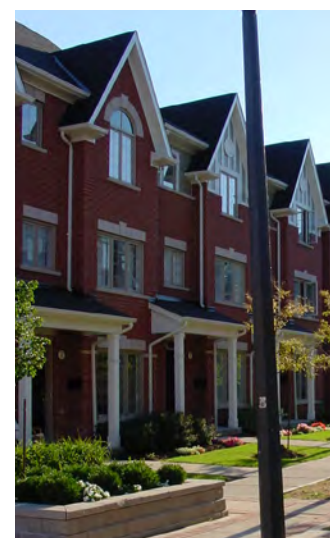
- 3/ Encourage grade-related residential units directly accessible from the public sidewalk to animate the street and provide a higher sense of security and ownership.

Sense of Entry

- 4/ Primary entrances should face the public street, be easily accessible from the public sidewalk and provide legible connections between the public realm and interior circulation spaces.
- 5/ Clearly announce the primary pedestrian building entrance through the use of architectural treatments such as canopies, awnings or double-height lobbies.
- 6/ Use tree planting, soft landscaping, street furniture and surfacing material to define, improve and reinforce pedestrian routes. Provide pathways between residential areas and non-residential sites that directly and clearly connect these areas.



Low-Rise Residential Buildings - typical cross section



The principle entrance of residential units at grade should be accessible from the public sidewalk, but set back a sufficient distance to create a landscaped setback and an appropriate level of privacy

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 7/ Minimize—and generally limit where possible—surface parking. Where surface parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear and side of buildings.
- 8/ Access for vehicular parking and services should be from collector or local streets and to the rear or side of the building.
- 9/ Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian walkways with fencing or landscape buffers. Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the main building.



Pedestrian access to rear lane parking

Integrate Urban Open Space

- 10/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible or private outdoor open spaces at ground level or as part of shared rooftop amenity space.

Prominent Sites

- 11/ Encourage low-rise buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance towards the corner.
- 12/ Where a low-rise building is located on corner sites use architectural features such as porches, doors or windows to present a positive frontage to both streets



Low-rise buildings framing a courtyard

Light, View and Privacy

- 13/ Low-rise residential building height ranges from 2 to 4 storeys consistent with the Official Plan.
- 14/ Design new low-rise residential buildings with a minimum street wall height of 2 storeys and a maximum street wall height of 3 storeys. Step backs of 2 metres are required above the third storey.
- 15/ Screen rooftop mechanical units or incorporate into the overall building design to minimize their visual impact.



Use of architectural elements such as projecting canopies and windows to provide a positive street frontage onto two streets

Transition

16/ New buildings should relate to the scale and height of adjacent low-rise buildings to maintain a well-proportioned street elevation.

Façade Treatment

17/ New buildings should be of their time, respond to their context in a sensitive manner.

18/ Construct low-rise building façades with well-detailed durable materials and exhibit a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette. If live-work, retail or other commercial uses at-grade provide a high level of visual permeability.

19/ Minimize building utilities, vents, service meters and connections on primary street façades, concealed (within the building or by landscape elements) and integrated within the overall design of the building.

Building Projections

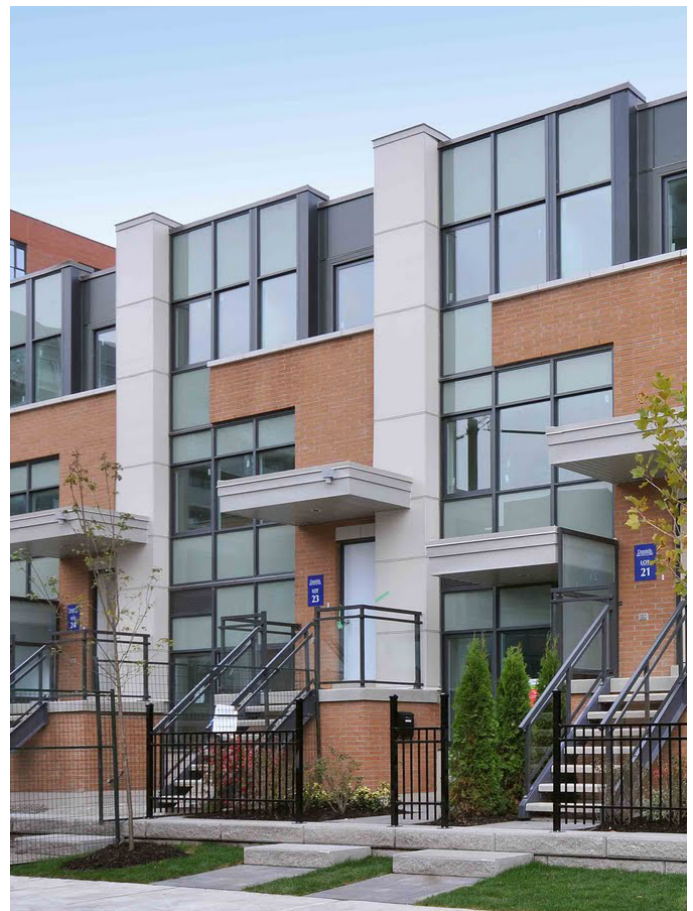
20/ Entrance canopies and awnings shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm.

21/ For the side of a low-rise building with frontage on a main street, only a very small projection zone is permitted to reinforce the sense of continuity of the street wall.

22/ For the side of a low-rise building that fronts on a local or residential street, a larger projection zone from the principal street wall face is permitted.



Articulation of façade materials and massing integrated into the overall form and design of the building



Entrance canopies and repetition of architectural elements create a cohesive visual experience

Singles, Semis and Duplexes

Guidelines

Framing the Public Realm

23/ Infill Development: When there is an existing uniform front and/or side setback with adjacent properties, use a similar setback to fit within the existing streetscape. Consult the applicable infill or tertiary plan, where one has been prepared.

24/ New Development: Design dwellings to frame the street edge with a consistent setback. Front yard setbacks to the main building wall should range between 3.0m and 4.5m, and a minimum of 6.0m to the garage wall. Side yard setbacks should be a minimum of 1.5m, except where a rear yard garage is provided one side setback shall be a minimum of 3.0m to accommodate the driveway.

25/ Encroachments into the front yard setback are encouraged.

Façade Treatment

26/ Articulate the elevation of units through the use of material, colour and architectural elements in a manner that provides variation between dwelling units, but reinforces common characteristics that visually unites the block. The siting of identical building elevations side by side or directly opposite on the same street is strongly discouraged. Buildings with identical front elevations should be separated by a minimum of 2 buildings having different elevations.

27/ Design street-facing garages so that they are not the dominant feature in the streetscape. Garage door widths should be minimized to a maximum of 3 door widths, 1 of which is to be recessed from the other 2 doors. The use of upgraded garage door styles, including integrated glazing and other architectural details, is encouraged.

28/ Select materials and colours finishes that are compatible with the surrounding area, including on side and rear elevations visible from public areas. Use high quality, low maintenance materials on building façades.



Design street facing garages so as not to dominate the streetscape



Providing a variety of roof configurations can create visual interest along a streetscape

29/ Windows, especially ground floor windows, help ensure “eyes on the street” in the neighbourhood. Windows should be large, well-proportioned and consistent with each other and the architecture of the façade. A typical proportion of window area to front façade is between 25% and 50%.

30/ Provide a variety of roof configurations in order to provide visual interest along a streetscape.

Street Relationship

31/ Raise the front door of ground-related residential units in a building by approximately three to five steps above the grade of the immediately abutting sidewalk to ensure a clear distinction between the public and private realm.

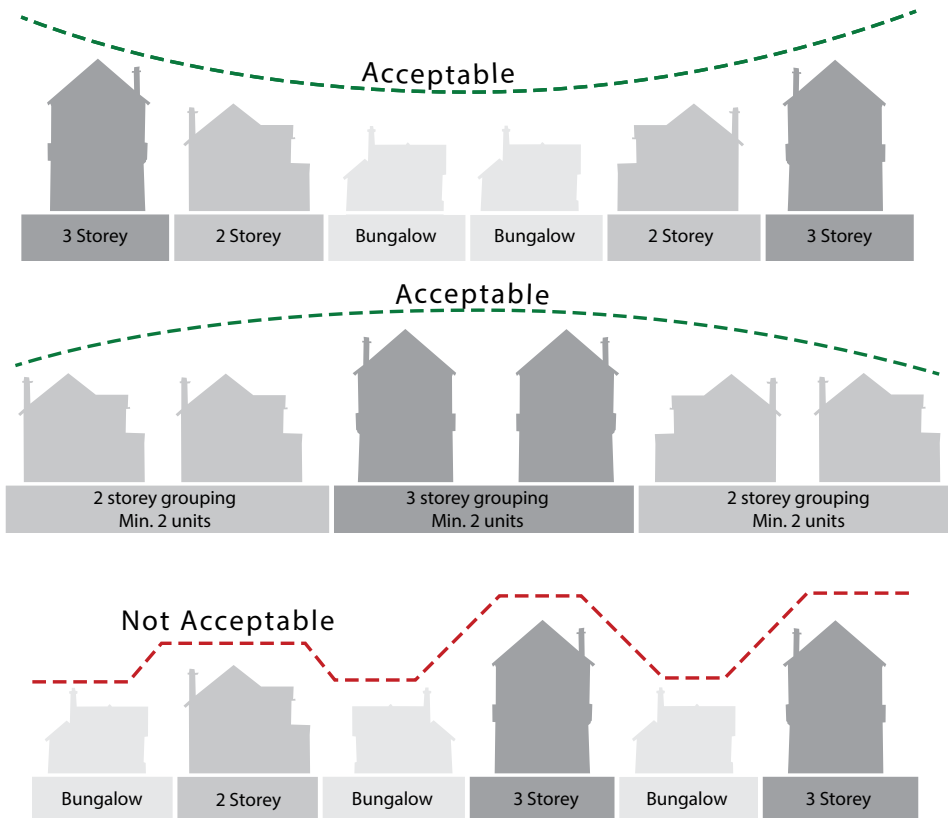
32/ Provide soft landscaping in the front yard and protect existing mature trees. Incorporate landscaping that enhances the character of the street. Most of the front yard should be soft surfaces, not hard and paved.

Transition

33/ Construct at a residential scale, mass, and proportion that contributes to the quality of the streetscape and promotes visual integration of the development.

34/ Create a transition in building heights if the new development is higher or lower than existing buildings. Avoid abrupt variations in building massing, height and size of adjacent structures.

35/ Design bungalows with raised front façades, steeper roof pitches and increased roof massing to provide for better transition with any adjacent 2-storey dwellings.



Building height should remain relatively constant with gentle transitions. Abrupt variations in height should be avoided.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

36/ Incorporate garages oriented towards the front of the dwelling into the main massing of the building. Recess garages to ensure they are flush with the main building face. Garages that are detached from the main dwelling unit in the front yard are not permitted.

37/ Side-facing garages in front of a dwelling are generally discouraged. They may be permitted on lots with widths 21.5m or greater, subject to the following criteria:

- The lot is not a corner lot;
- The wall of the garage facing the street exhibits a high level of design variety, including windows and detailing consistent with the rest of the dwelling;
- Dwellings of this nature are sited in pairs with garages located to the outside of the pair in order to create a courtyard effect between the dwellings;
- Main entry stairs into the dwelling are designed so as to not interfere with vehicular access to the garage; and
- Garage doors are setback a minimum of 7.5m from the side lot line.



Rear lane garage with design features that compliment the main building

38/ Where a rear lane is provided, site garages at the rear of the lot and where possible, pair rear lane garages to allow for an increased rear yard. Design rear lane garages to be complimentary to the main dwelling.

39/ Site rear yard garages as close as possible to the minimum setbacks in order to maximize the rear yard amenity area. Design rear yard garages to be complementary to the main dwelling. Where possible, pair detached rear yard garages to allow for an increased rear yard.

40/ Driveway widths should be no wider than the garages they serve. Locate driveways away from parks, open space features, public walkways, schools and intersections. Where 3-car garages are permitted, the driveway should be tapered to a maximum width of 6.5m at the curb. Reverse sloping driveways (that slope down from the curb to the garage) are discouraged. Permeable paving for driveways is preferred. Driveways should be paired where possible.



Pair driveways leading to rear yard garages and provide driveways that are no wider than the garage they lead to

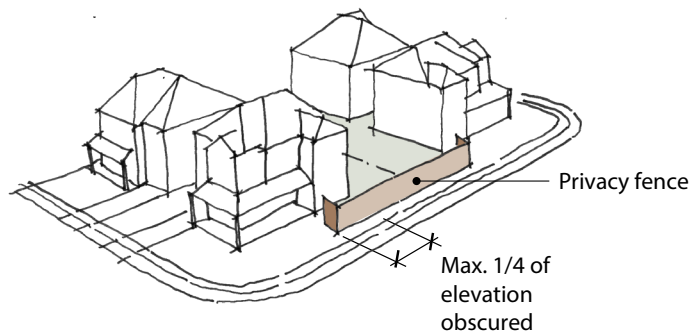
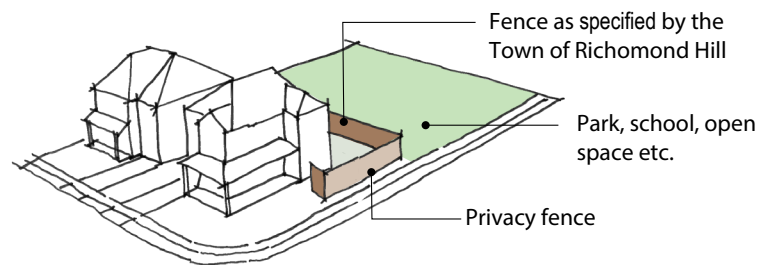
Light, View, and Skyline

41/ Integrate and screen utility meters, transformers and HVAC equipment from public view through the use of recessed walls, inseting within walls, landscaping or other screening solutions. Avoid placing equipment, vents, fans, and other utility equipment on elevations facing a street.

42/ Windows facing interior side yards should be kept to a minimum to ensure privacy. Offset new windows from existing windows on adjacent buildings to maximize privacy.

43/ Indicate fencing locations on the Landscape Plan and the Grading Plan. Fencing for corner lots should be provided by builders/developers, and should return to the dwelling near its rear corner, with no more than 1/4 of the dwelling's flanking side elevation obscured.

44/ Place lighting at each entrance to the dwelling, and provide a minimum of 1 light fixture per garage door. Lighting fixtures should complement the architectural style of the dwelling. Ideally, lighting should be downcast to minimize light pollution and avoid spillover onto adjacent properties.



Property fences for corner lots should cover no more than 1/4 of the flanking side elevation

Sense of Entry

45/ Orient building front entrances towards the street, and incorporate special architectural features, such as porches, or landscaping to emphasize the prominence of the front entrance.

46/ Display the municipal address in a prominent and well-lit location on the front façade.

47/ Provide a clear and unobstructed pedestrian walkway from the sidewalk to the front door.

48/ Provide weather protection to pedestrians at the main entrance through the use of a covered porch, portico, canopy or recess.



Porches, articulated rooflines, landscaping, and colour orient the pedestrian towards the main entrance

Prominent Sites

- 49/ Design units sited at the end of a view corridor, including T-intersections and elbow streets to provide visual interest by incorporating significant architectural details and landscaping.
- 50/ Locate driveways at the end of a view corridor, including T-intersections and elbow streets, to the outside of the pair of dwellings to form a landscaped focal area.
- 51/ Design corner units to incorporate architectural features including corner bays, gables, wrap-around porches, bay windows or other features that articulate and distinguish both façades. Where possible, locate the main entry door on the exterior side elevation with direct access to the sidewalk.
- 52/ Window Street Lots front onto a local street, parallel to an arterial or collector and separated by a buffer or boulevard. Dwellings on such lots should incorporate architectural features including a covered porch, portico, and large, well proportioned windows. The main entrance to the dwelling should be oriented to face the window street.

- 53/ Articulate elevations that face public spaces, including parks and the Greenway System, by incorporating building projections, such as porches, bay windows and entry doors, to maximize opportunities for overview and safety.

Building Projections/Encroachments

- 54/ Projections and encroachments such as porches, bay windows, canopies and stairs into the front yard are encouraged to add visual interest along the streetscape.
- 55/ Covered front porches are encouraged on all dwellings. Design porches with a minimum depth of 1.5 - 2.0m to be functional. Wrap-around porches/verandas are encouraged on corner lots or other locations where the side yard is visible. Porches should not be enclosed.
- 56/ Bay windows are encouraged to provide massing variation and enhance visual interest along the streetscape. Bay windows may project from the building to a maximum of 1.0m.



Window projections and porches are encouraged for all dwellings



Incorporating porches, dormers, and chimney features can help to define a corner lot, articulating and distinguishing both street façades

3.5	3.6	3.7	4.2	4.3	5.1
5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.7	5.8

3.4.1	4.2.2	4.3.1.2	4.3.2.2	4.4.2	4.5.2	4.6.2	4.7.2	4.9.2
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6.4 Townhouse Dwellings

Principle - Townhouse dwellings shall contribute to the functional, spatial, and aesthetic quality of the pedestrian environmental and public realm.

Guidelines

Framing the Public Realm

- 1/ **Front Yard Setback:** Where there is a uniform front yard setback along a street, match this setback and fit into the neighbouring streetscape to create a continuous and legible edge to the public street.
- 2/ **Side Yard Setback:** When integrating new townhouses into an existing streetscape, use a similar side yard setback as neighbouring properties, or as determined to be appropriate through an infill or tertiary plan.
- 3/ **Townhouse Units in a Row:** Townhouses will be limited to a maximum of 8 units (6 preferred). Where 8 units are proposed, each unit's width should not exceed 6.5 m.
- 4/ **Townhouse Unit Minimum Width:** Where units are less than 6 metres wide, parking should be provided at the rear.
- 5/ **Break up the massing of a townhouse block** by providing variety in the design of roofs, or architectural features such as projections, recessing or fenestration.
- 6/ **Provide publicly-accessible pedestrian walkway networks**, where appropriate, as part of a townhouse development so pedestrians can comfortably access neighbourhood services and amenities. Embellish walkways with landscaping and lighting. Provide adequate lighting according to public standards for sidewalks, pathways, parking lots, and lanes to promote safe evening use.



Using a consistent front yard setback and embellishing the area adjacent the sidewalk with landscaping and lighting helps to frame the public realm

Facade Treatment

- 7/ Articulate the elevation of townhouse dwellings in a manner that provides variation between dwelling units, and reinforces common characteristics that visually unite the block.
- 8/ Incorporate a variety of forms, colours, materials, architectural details on the front façade of townhouse dwellings. Designs should maximize windows, doors, front porches and balconies to promote eyes on the street.
- 9/ Select materials and colours of finishes that are complimentary to and enhance the surrounding area, including on side and rear elevations visible from public areas.
- 10/ Design garages in accordance with the following criteria so as not to dominate the streetscape:
 - a. Recess the garage into the building. Maximize projecting balconies or porches, and landscaping along the public streetscape;
 - b. The garage width occupies no more than 50% of the units' lot frontage; and
 - c. Use a minimum of 45% of the area of a front yard or a side yard for no other purpose than landscaping in accordance with the Town's Front Yard Parking, Landscaping, and Driveways By-law.

- 11/ Avoid locating utility meters, transformers, and HVAC equipment along a public street. Where this is not possible, these features should be well-integrated and screened from public view through the use of recessed walls, inseting within walls, landscaping, or other screening solutions to ensure that they are not visible from the street or other public space.

Incorporation of Urban Open Space

- 12/ Provide common or shared amenity spaces such as parkettes or other urban open spaces where appropriate.
- 13/ Provide private amenity areas such as rear yard or roof spaces.



An articulated elevation can help to reinforce common façade characteristics, such as this townhouse achieves with the adjacent heritage home



The garages on these townhouses are recessed and balconies and landscaping are used to enhance the public streetscape



Private amenity spaces provided on the roof can serve as a form of urban open space

Street Relationship

- 14/ Maintain the existing or 'natural' grade at property lines. Avoid artificially raising or lowering grades that would require the use of retaining walls, so as not to adversely affect water run-off and/or connectivity to adjacent properties.
- 15/ To promote privacy between the public and private realm, while providing consistency along a streetscape, minimize the elevation of the front door above grade (3 to 5 steps maximum) in order to provide living space close to grade and to avoid a long barrier-like flight of stairs up to the front porch or stoop.
- 16/ Provide coordinated front yard landscaping including appropriately-spaced deciduous trees and drought-tolerant groundcover/ shrub species to create a visual distinction between the public and private realm.

Transition

- 17/ Construct at a residential scale, mass, and proportion that contributes to the quality of the streetscape and promotes visual integration of the townhouse development. Create a transition in building heights if the new development is lower or higher than existing buildings. Add architectural features – such as porches and bays – to visually reduce the mass of the new building.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 18/ Avoid gated developments and dead-ends. Provide safe, comfortable and easily-accessible pedestrian links to destinations within the new development including schools, trails, parks, transit, and community facilities. Connect pedestrian routes to adjacent developments.
- 19/ On sites with sufficient depth to allow for the creation of a rear lane, locate parking/garages at the rear. Townhouse dwellings with less than 6.0 metre frontages should be accessed from a rear lane.



A combination of deciduous trees and low ground-cover creates a visual distinction between the public and private realm

- 20/ In the centres and corridors, integrate the entrance to underground parking into the overall design of the building elevation through:
 - i. Recessing garage doors from the front face of the building elevation;
 - ii. Using architectural design features to mitigate the visual impact of the garage door; or
 - iii. Other alternative design treatments.
- 21/ Entrances to underground parking should be on the local street, where possible.

Light, View, and Skyline

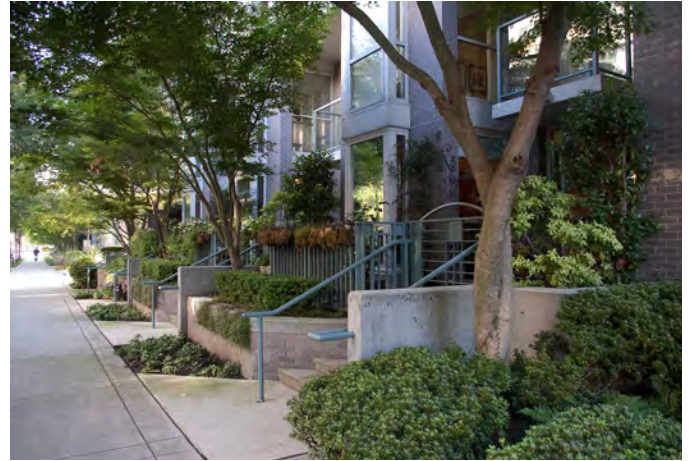
- 22/ Design block townhouse dwellings to avoid an arrangement of units where the front of one dwelling faces the back of another. Position buildings to face one another with a front-to-front and back-to-back relationship. There should be a minimum 15.0 m facing distance between townhouse blocks in order to ensure appropriate light, view, and privacy.
- 23/ Minimize windows facing interior side yards to ensure privacy. Offset new windows from existing windows on adjacent buildings to maximize privacy.

Sense of Entry

- 24/ Orient building front entrances towards the street, and incorporate architectural features, such as porches, or landscaping to emphasize the prominence of the front entrance.
- 25/ Display the municipal address in a prominent and well-lit location on the front façade.
- 26/ Provide a clear and unobstructed pedestrian walkway from the sidewalk to the front door.
- 27/ Provide weather protection to pedestrians at the main entrance through the use of a covered porch, portico, canopy or recess.

Prominent Sites

- 28/ Design units sited at the end of a view corridor, including T-intersections and elbow streets, to provide visual interest by incorporating architectural details and landscaping.
- 29/ Locate driveways at the end of a view corridor, including T-intersections and elbow streets, to the outside of the pair of dwellings to form a landscaped focal area.



Orient entrances toward the street, providing porches, fences, landscaping, and weather protection to create a sense of entry



Using architectural detailing and enhanced landscaping helps to define and add prominence to the corner



Pedestrian connections can be used to provide easy access between townhouse blocks

30/ Design corner units to incorporate architectural features including corner bays, gables, wrap-around porches, bay windows or other features that articulate and distinguish both façades. Where possible, locate the main entry door on the exterior side elevation with direct access to the sidewalk.

31/ Articulate elevations that face public spaces, including parks and the Greenway System, by incorporating building projections, such as porches, bay windows and entry doors to maximize opportunities for overview and safety.

Building Projections and Encroachments

32/ Projections and encroachments such as porches, bay windows, canopies and stairs into the front yard are encouraged to add visual interest along the streetscape.

33/ Covered front porches are encouraged. Design porches with a minimum depth of 1.5 - 2.0m to be functional. Wrap-around porches/verandas are encouraged on corner lots or other locations where the side yard is visible. Porches should not be enclosed.

34/ Bay windows are encouraged to provide massing variation and enhance visual interest along the streetscape. Bay windows may project from the building to a maximum of 1.0m.



Elevations facing public spaces, like this park, can include doorways, dormers, and windows to maximize opportunities for overview



Porches, bay windows, canopies, and stairs are encouraged in the front yard to add visual interest to the streetscape

3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.2
4.3	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.9

3.4.1	4.2.2	4.3.1.2	4.3.2.2	4.4.2	4.5.2	4.6.2	4.7.2	4.9.2
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6.5

Mid-Rise Buildings + Tall Building Podiums

Principle - Mid-rise buildings represent the majority of redevelopment in the Centres, and Corridors. The podiums of tall buildings should follow the design intent and guidelines for mid-rise buildings.

Rationale

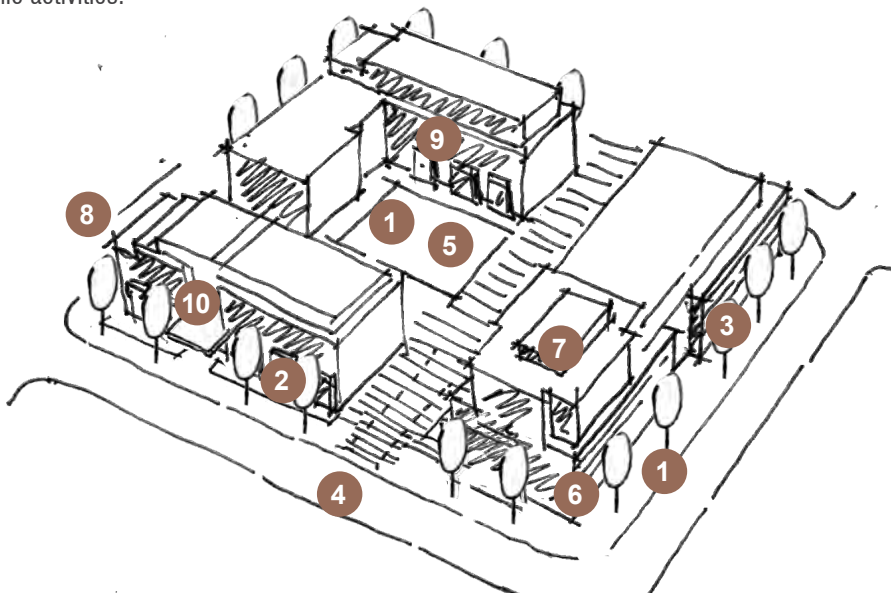
Mid-rise buildings are a building typology with an urban sensibility and will play a considerable role in the evolution and intensification of the Town. Most of the redevelopment in Richmond Hill’s centres and corridors should be in mid-rise buildings that line the streets and other public spaces to give shape and a sense of enclosure to the public realm.

Mid-rise buildings are primarily residential and should include a mix of uses at grade. They are typically above 4 storeys and below 8 storeys in height and constructed from concrete or steel frame with elevators.

The podiums of tall buildings should serve a similar urban design purpose and include all of the qualities of mid-rise buildings by forming well-proportioned urban street walls that enrich the pedestrian experience and support public activities.

Tall building podiums can include residential units, a mix of uses at grade, or common amenity space. They are often at the minimum mid-rise building height, but may be taller to relate to the surrounding context as directed in the Official Plan. Tall building podiums are typically constructed from concrete or steel frame, the same as the tower portion of the tall building.

The guidelines that follow apply to both mid-rise buildings and tall building podiums.



1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Urban Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Façade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections

Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

- 1/ Mid-rise buildings shall form a street wall along the property line or to an appropriate build-to line per Town Zoning-Bylaw that relates to local context, contributes to the spatial proportion of each street, and supports grade-related activities.
- 2/ Above the maximum street wall the building shall have a step back between 3.0 to 5.0 metres to achieve a clearly discernible top to the street wall and minimize shadow impact on the public realm.



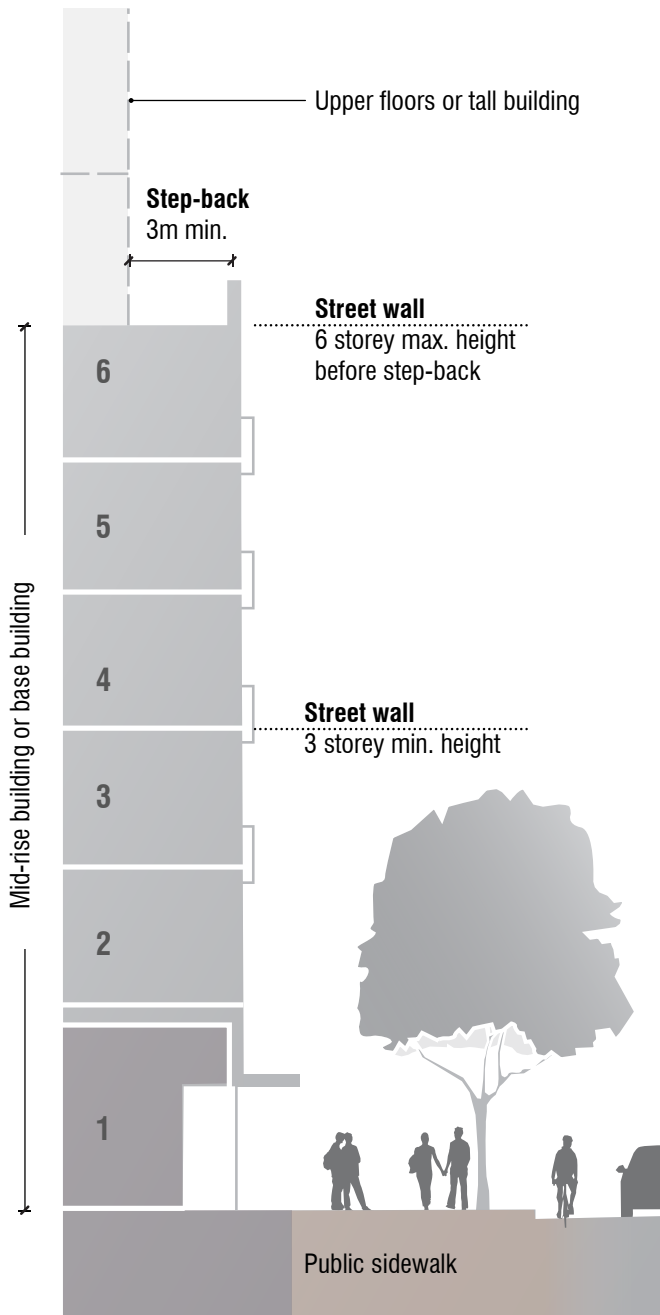
The scale and continuity of the street wall define the street and provide a comfortable scale for pedestrians.



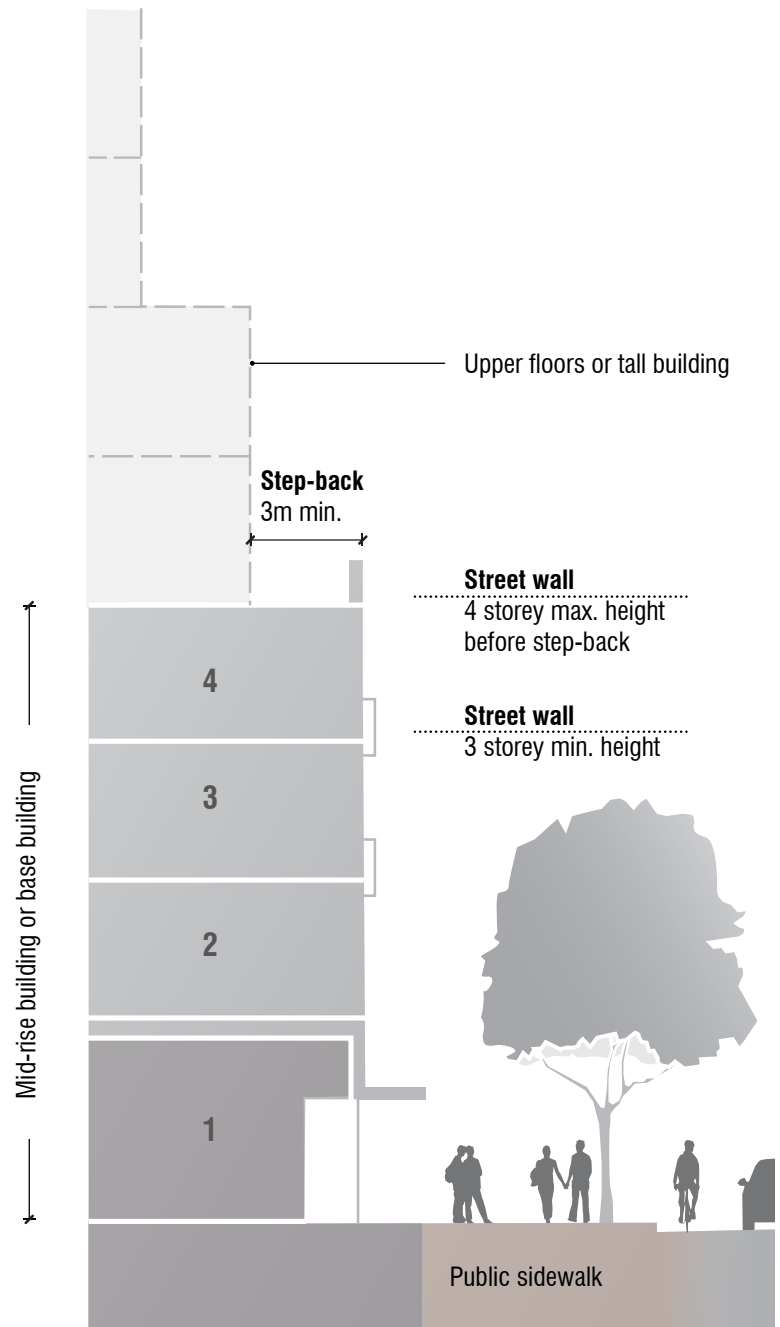
6 storey street wall with stepback to tall building



4 storey street wall

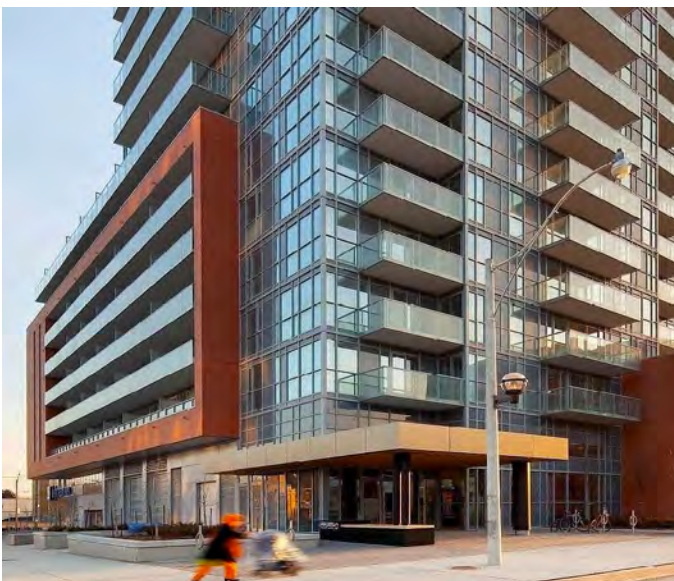


Street wall of a typical mid-rise building within Richmond Hill



Street wall of a mid-rise building within the Civic District, Uptown and Major Mackenzie Local Development Area at Newkirk

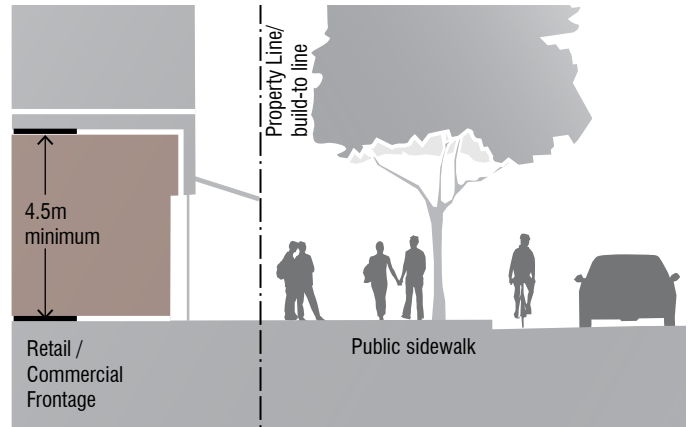
Mid-Rise Building - Street Wall Requirements



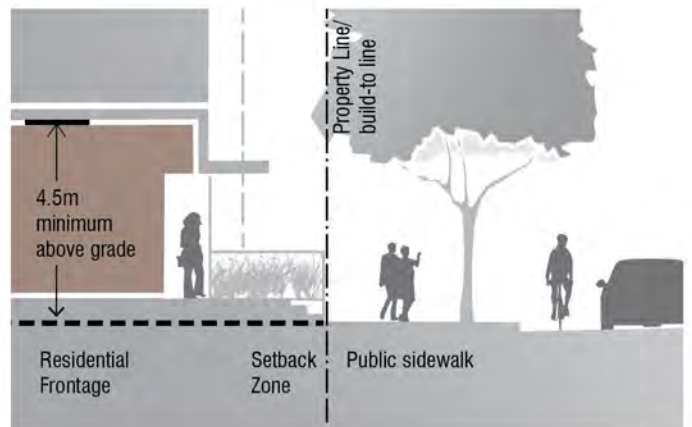
Podiums are the primary way building address the public realm. They use massing, materials and colour to establish, match, or in some cases transition, the prevailing street wall height and overall character of the street.

Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

- 3/ Retail commercial uses at grade or live-work units at grade should have a high degree of transparency with windows for displays and frequent entrances to animate the street environment.
- 4/ The minimum ground floor height for all mid-rise buildings should be 4.5 metres above grade.
- 5/ At the ground floor level, any setback zone shall be treated as an extension of the public realm, to provide additional outdoor space and landscaping opportunities, allow for at-grade uses to expand outdoors, and to encourage street animation. Ground floors for retail commercial uses shall be universally accessible, articulated to respond to human scale and provide good visual connection between interior spaces and the public realm.
- 6/ Where permitted, residential buildings should have grade-related units directly accessible from the public sidewalk to animate the street and provide a higher sense of security and ownership.
- 7/ Ground floor residential units are encouraged to have their principal entrance from local streets where feasible. Frequent residential entries are encouraged to create fine-grained, pedestrian-oriented streets.



Minimum ground floor height for retail commercial uses



Minimum ground floor height for residential uses



Retail commercial uses at street level along arterial streets



Residential grade related units

Sense of Entry

- 8/ Where private courtyards and outdoor spaces are visible from the public realm, consider the pedestrian experience and views from the public realm. These spaces should enhance and not detract from the pedestrian experience of the public realm.
- 9/ For larger buildings with shared entries, entry should be through prominent entry lobbies or central courtyards facing the street. From the street, these entries and courtyards should provide visual interest, orientation, and a sense of invitation.
- 10/ Provide multiple entries at street level where appropriate, if consistent with security and other concerns.



Residential lobby entrance



Retail entrances



Residential entrances

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

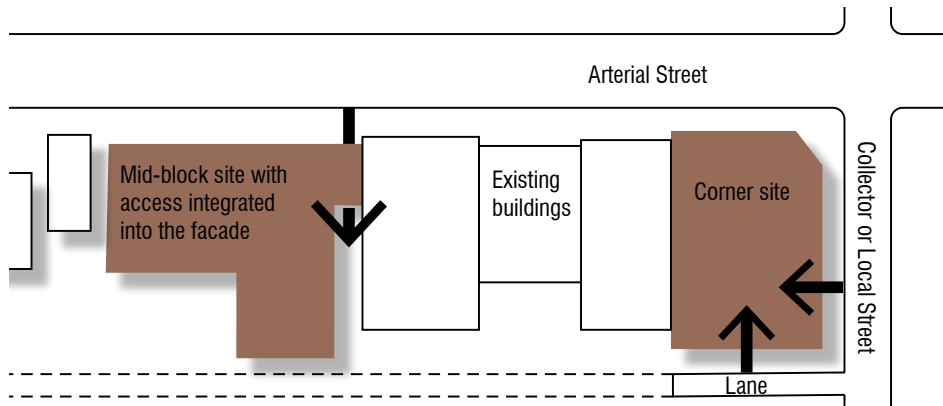
- 11/ Minimize—and generally limit where possible—surface parking. Where surface parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear of buildings.
- 12/ Access for vehicular parking and services should be from collector or local streets and to the rear or side of the building.
- 13/ Vehicular entrances shall be consolidated to serve multiple buildings within each block in order to minimize the number of interruptions in the street wall and to reduce the number of potential conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists
- 14/ Vehicular access should be appropriately integrated into the design of the building massing and public realm, in such a way that it supports the design concept and does not detract from the design of the building elevation and the overall character of the street.
- 15/ Where parking, access and service areas are located in courtyards, design buildings and landscape to minimize visual and noise impacts on outdoor spaces.
- 16/ Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian boulevards with fencing or landscape buffers. Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the primary building.



Parking and servicing access from Yonge Street integrated within a mid-rise building fronting Yonge Street, Richmond Hill



Below ground parking accessed from a collector or local street



Locate vehicular access points at the back of the building, along collector or local streets or via a 'portal' integrated into the design of the façade

Integrate Urban Open Space

- 17/ Position buildings to positively define the shape and function of urban open space.
- 18/ Contribute to a hierarchy of urban open spaces and outdoor environments in a range of publicly accessible, communal, and private open space types.
- 19/ Provide for a range of uses and amenities in well-designed urban open spaces. Avoid ambiguous, unprogrammed or residual orphaned spaces.
- 20/ Enrich the pedestrian experience with private courtyards and outdoor spaces visible from the public realm.
- 21/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible urban open spaces at ground level. Where feasible, design these open spaces in relation to local serving retail uses such as cafés and to the public open space network.
- 22/ In addition to at-grade amenity spaces, integrate outdoor amenity spaces such as roof gardens, or terraces into the architecture of the building.



Large terraces as the mid-rise building steps down in height



Mid-rise buildings framing an outdoor courtyard

Prominent Sites

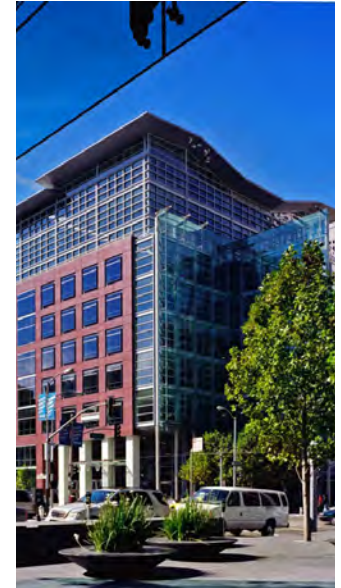
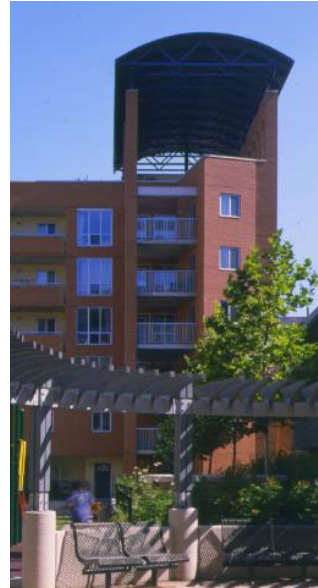
- 23/ Position buildings toward key intersections to emphasise the pedestrian realm at corners.
- 24/ Encourage buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance at the corner.
- 25/ Provide prominent architectural or landscape features (excluding signage) at the corners of sites or intersections to make them stand out from the building pattern along the rest of the block.
- 26/ Maximize the landmark opportunities of particularly prominent corners such as at the intersection of two arterial streets, at a significant bend in a street or at the terminus of a long view. On larger sites, articulate building mass to emphasize a sense of entry into a district or precinct or to distinguish one from another.



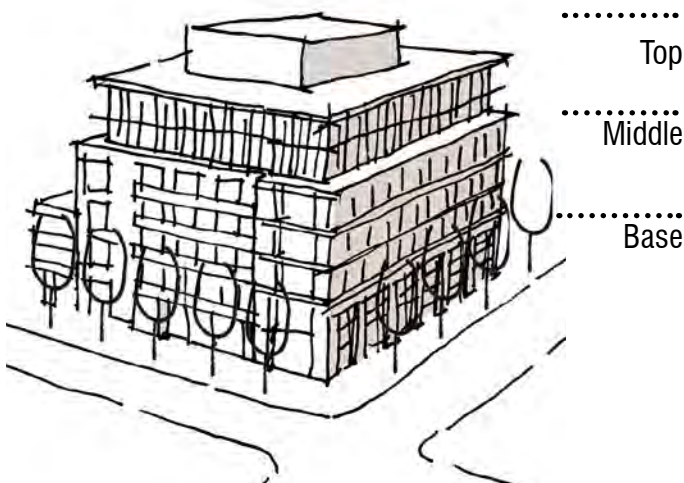
There are many ways a building may treat its corner

Light, View and Skyline

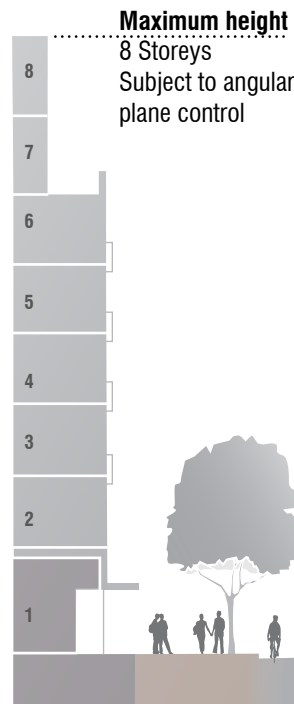
- 27/ The maximum mid-rise building height is 8 storeys, except in the Village Core where the maximum mid-rise building height is 5 storeys.
- 28/ Mid-rise buildings shall be designed with a clear and proportional articulation of podium, middle and top.
- 29/ Integrate the massing, articulation and materiality of rooftop penthouse elements into the overall building design to achieve a distinctive architectural expression of the upper portion of mid-rise buildings.
- 30/ The maximum height for the rooftop mechanical penthouse is 5.0 metres, but may exceed this height if within angular plane and required to better integrate within the overall building design.
- 31/ Roofs shall be visually interesting and use non-reflective, low intensity colours.
- 32/ Rooftop mechanical structures shall be recessed, architecturally integrated and screened.



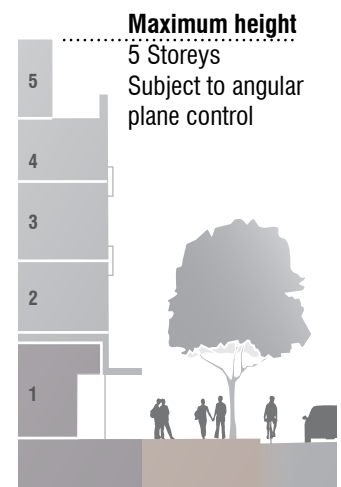
The design of the building top can become a distinguishing architectural feature



Proportional articulation of a podium, middle and top



Maximum mid-rise building height - typical



Maximum mid-rise building height - Village

Transition

33/ To ensure that light, view and privacy is maintained for adjacent low density or medium density residential neighbourhoods, new development will be designed to incorporate transitional zones consisting of:

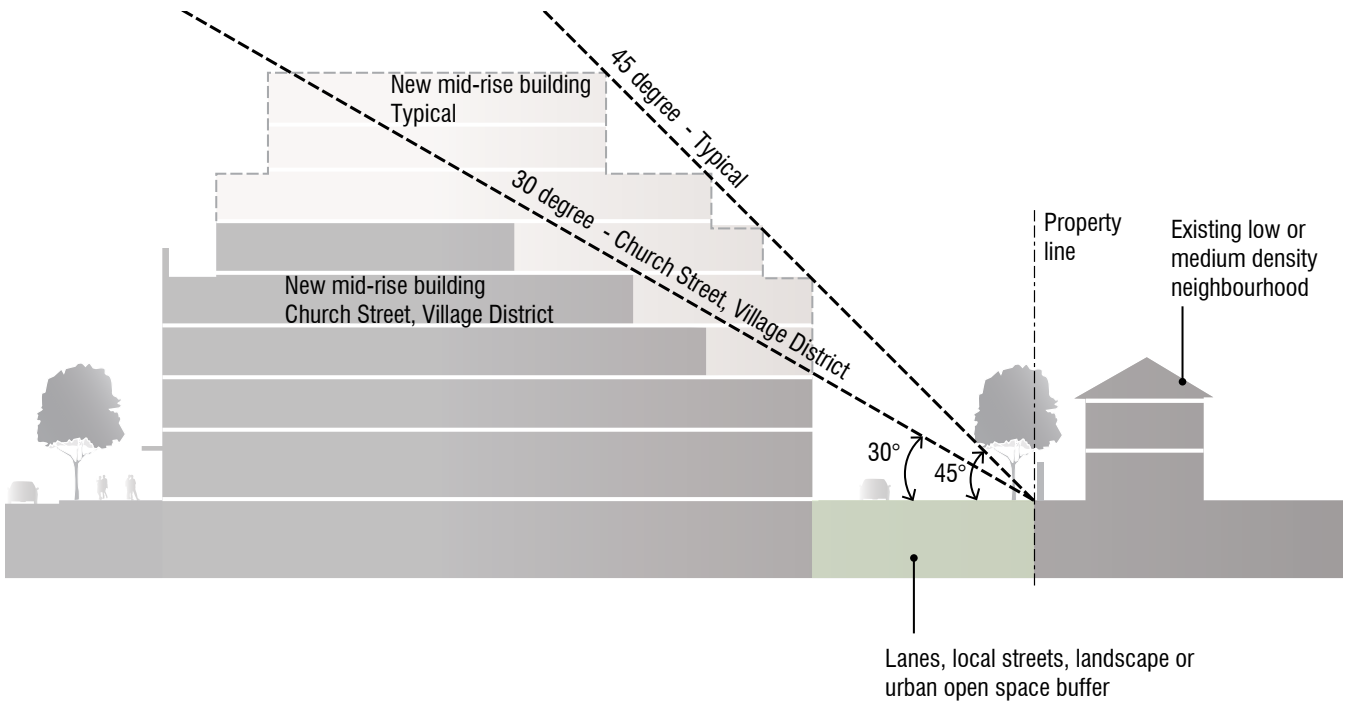
- A minimum 45 degree angular plane measured from the lot line of the adjacent low density or medium density residential area
- A minimum rear yard or side yard setback, measured from the boundary of the adjacent low density or medium density residential area, equivalent to the height of the nearest building on the site
- New local streets or service lanes with grade-related residential entrances facing existing low density or medium density residential neighbourhoods where appropriate and possible, and
- Landscape or urban open space buffers, including parkland where appropriate and possible.

34/ In the Downtown Local Centre, additional transition zones are required:

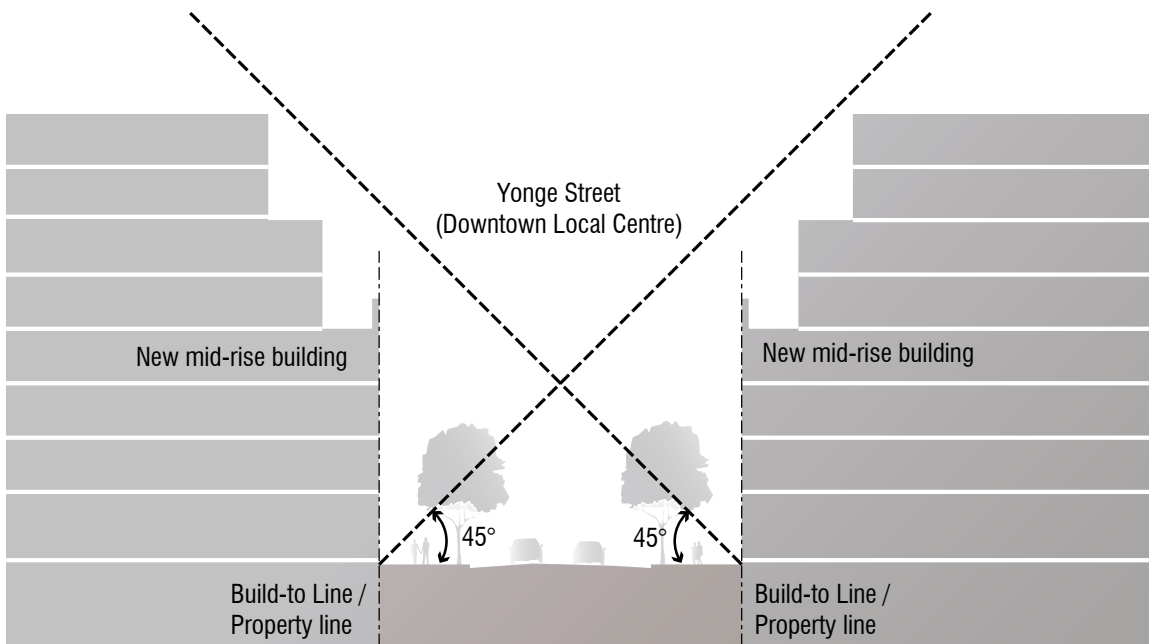
- Development fronting on Yonge Street shall maintain a maximum 45 degree angular view plane projected from the adjacent property line on the opposite side of Yonge Street to maintain the significant views to the church spires;
- Development fronting on Church Street in the Village District shall maintain a 30 degree angular plane projected from the edge of the adjacent property line on the opposite side of Church Street.



New mid-rise buildings and the parts of new mid-rise buildings closest to existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods should be lower, transitioning to taller heights with increasing distance.



45 degree rear façade angular plane control
existing adjacent low or medium density neighbourhoods



45 degree front façade angular plane control
Yonge Street within the Downtown Local Centre

Façade Treatment

- 35/ At the ground level, the design and scale of building façades and sidewalks should enhance the pedestrian experience by being visually interesting, active, and comfortable.
- 36/ Design excellence should be evident in all aspects of building design, including the choice of materials, proportion and massing, detailing, colour, lighting, and all other areas of design.
- 37/ Durability, scale and finish of materials should be appropriate to their use and location, especially for at-grade elements. Achieve a cohesive, finished appearance through-out the building elevations.
- 38/ The scale, articulation, rhythm, proportion, pattern, colour, texture and materials of buildings shall be complimentary to adjoining buildings, existing and new.
- 39/ Avoid large expanses of blank wall. Side walls shall be articulated and designed with an architecturally finished treatments.
- 40/ New development shall not negatively impact existing buildings with side windows.



The design of a buildings façade will largely dictate its character, whether it be contemporary or classical

Balconies and Projections

41/ Entrance canopies, awnings and signage shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm. Canopies or awnings may project over the sidewalk. An encroachment agreement may be required.

42/ Within the street wall:

- For the side of a mid-rise building or a tall building podium with frontage on a main street, a 0.5m projection zone is permitted to reinforce the sense of continuity of the street wall.
- For the side of a mid-rise building or tall building podium that fronts on a local or residential street, a projection zone of an appropriate depth from the principal street wall face is permitted.

43/ Above the street wall:

- Private terraces are encouraged at the upper level step backs.
- Balconies shall not project beyond the primary street wall or building face.



Projections can be reserved or subtle while adding colour, shadow, and personality



3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8	5.1
5.2	5.3	5.4	5.9	5.10	6.5

3.4.1	4.2.2	4.3.1.2	4.4.2	4.5.2	4.6.2
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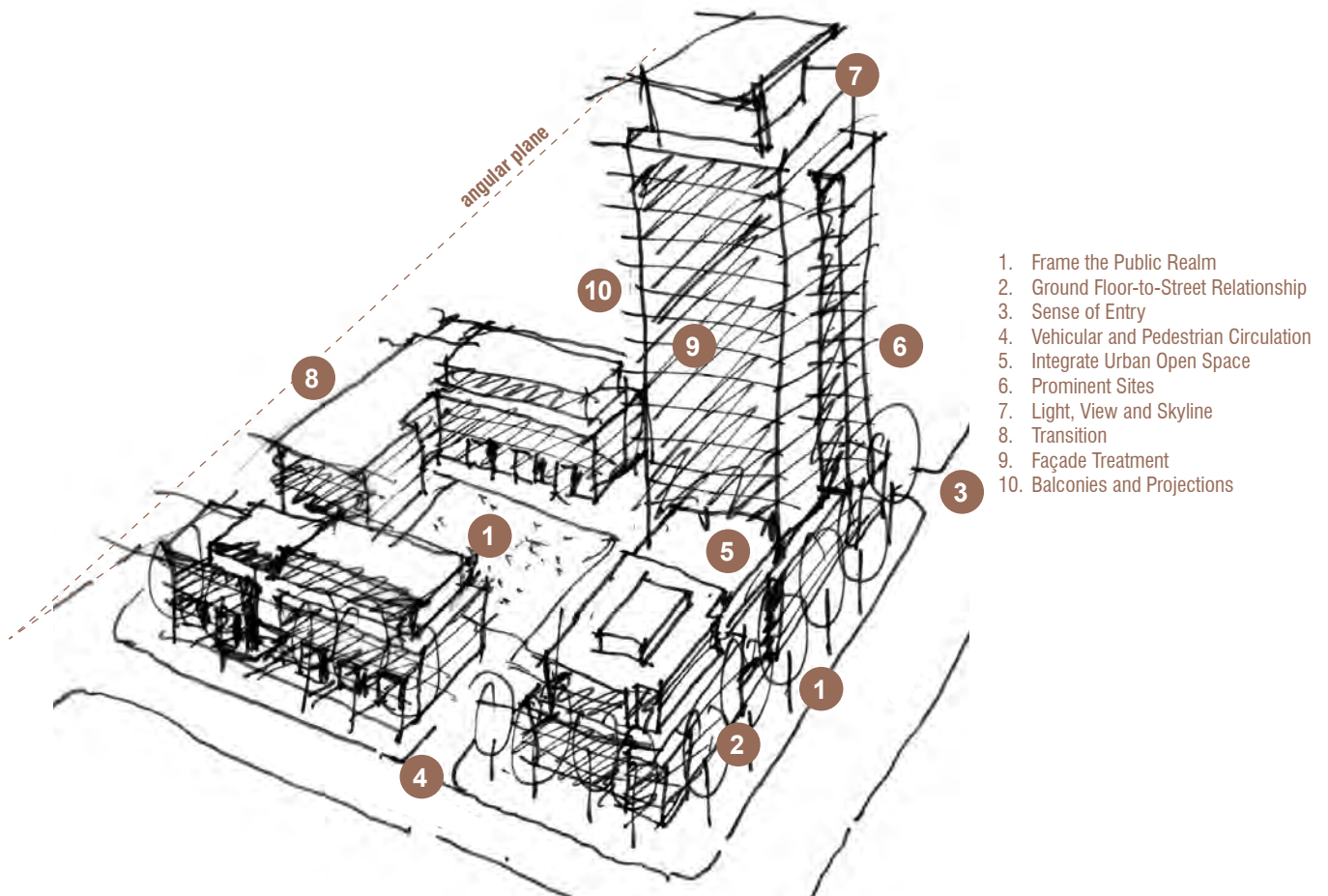
6.6

Tall Buildings

Principle - Tall buildings shall be subject to design guidelines that regulate their placement, spacing, girth and height in order to control their perceived bulk and the proportion of sky views.

Rationale

A key public interest in this regard, is the role of tall buildings to support a coordinated, interconnected, well-designed public realm.

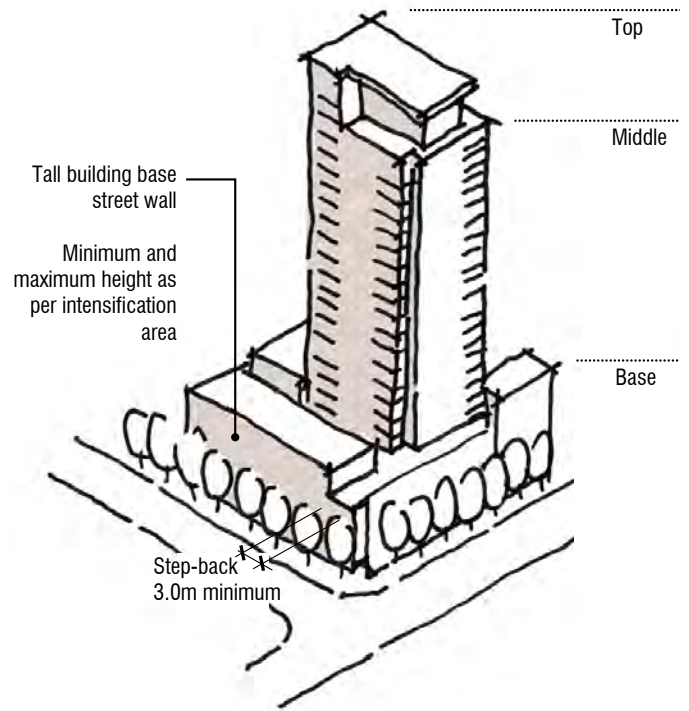


1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Integrate Urban Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Façade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections

Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

- 1/ The tall building podium should adhere to the mid-rise building principles and guidelines within this document.
- 2/ Tall building podiums shall form a street wall along the property line or to an appropriate build-to line that relates to local context, contributes to the spatial proportion of each street, and supports grade-related activities.
- 3/ The minimum tall building podium street wall height generally shall be 3 storeys. In the Richmond Centre, the minimum tall building podium building height is 4 storeys.
- 4/ The maximum tall building podium street wall height shall be 6 storeys, except for the Civic District, Uptown, and the Major Mackenzie Local Development Area at Newkirk where the maximum mid-rise building street wall height is 4 storeys.
- 5/ Above the maximum street wall height, the tall building podium shall have a step back between 3.0 to 5.0 metres to achieve a clearly discernible top to the street wall and minimize shadow impact on the public realm.
- 6/ Tall building projects should demonstrate through wind tests that pedestrian-level wind speeds will meet the “Lawson Pedestrian Wind Comfort Criteria” for sitting, standing and walking as appropriate.
- 7/ Tall building projects will be designed to ensure that a total of five hours of sunlight is available on public sidewalks during the Spring and Fall Equinox.



Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

- 8/ Integrate tall buildings with mid-rise podiums to support the pedestrian environment at ground level.
- 9/ The minimum ground floor-to-ceiling height is 4.0 metres.
- 10/ Retail commercial and live-work uses are encouraged at grade when fronting on main streets.
- 11/ Retail commercial spaces at grade shall be designed to accommodate a range of retail uses, future market flexibility and change of use.
- 12/ Retail commercial uses at grade should have a high degree of transparency with windows for displays and frequent entrances to animate the street environment.
- 13/ Buildings with live-work units at grade shall develop a flexible frontage appropriate to context.
- 14/ Ground floor residential units are encouraged to have their principal entrance from the local neighbourhood streets where feasible. Frequent residential entries are encouraged to create fine-grained, pedestrian-oriented streets.
- 15/ At the ground floor level, any setback zone shall be treated as an extension of the public realm, to provide additional outdoor space and landscaping opportunities, allow for at-grade uses to expand outdoors, and to encourage street animation. Ground floors for retail commercial uses shall be universally accessible, articulated to respond to human scale and provide good visual connection between interior spaces and the public realm.



Shop front windows and frequent entrances line the ground floor of a tall building project



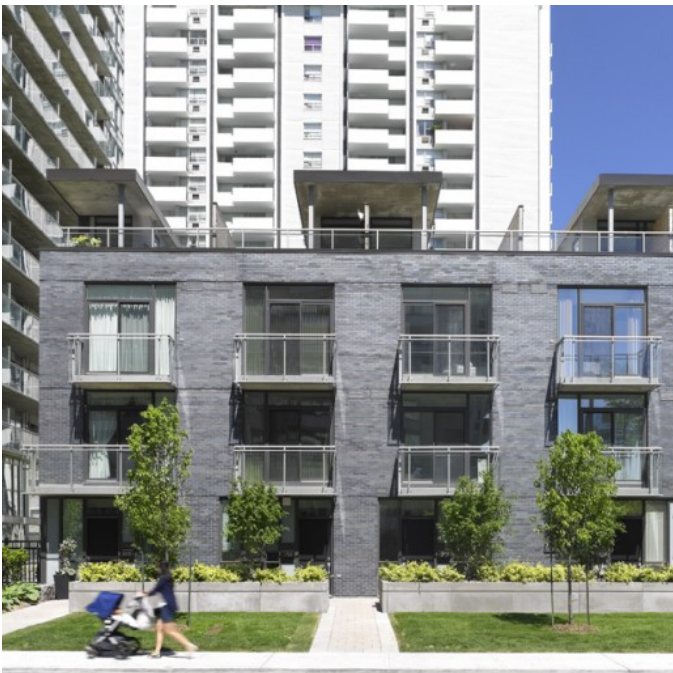
Residential ground floor units in a tall building podium

Sense of Entry

- 16/ Where private courtyards and outdoor spaces are visible from the public realm, consider pedestrian experience and views from the public realm. These spaces should expand on and not detract from the pedestrian experience of the public realm.
- 17/ For larger buildings with shared entries, entry should be through prominent entry lobbies or central courtyards facing the street. From the street, these entries and courtyards should provide visual interest, orientation, and a sense of invitation.
- 18/ Provide multiple entries at street level where appropriate, if consistent with security and other concerns.
- 19/ Entrances shall be fully accessible to all. If a ramp is required, it shall be integrated into the overall design.



An atrium marks the entrance at a prominent intersection



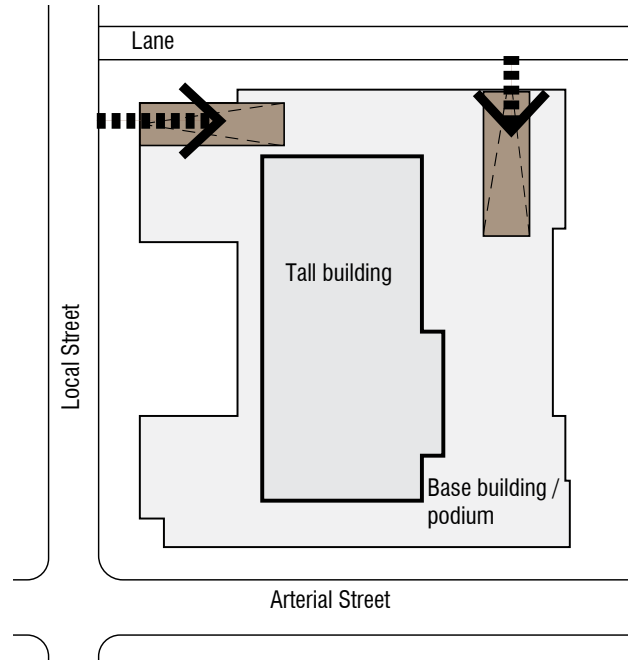
Private grade related entrances for a tall building podium with townhouses



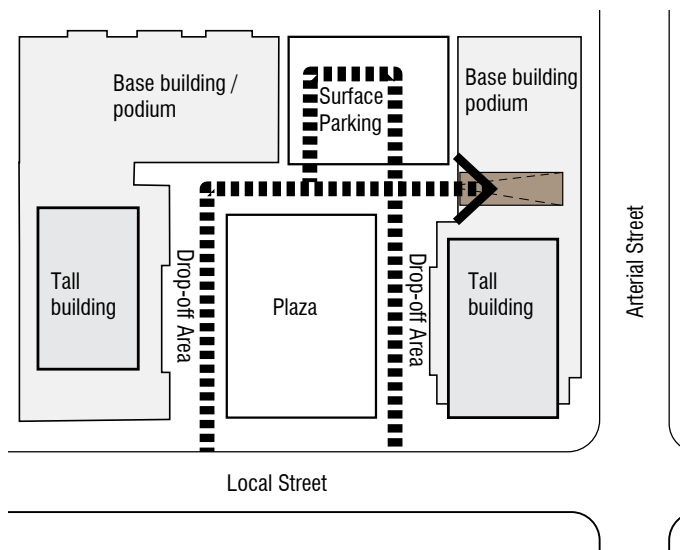
A projected canopy highlights a shared building entrance

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 20/ Minimize—and generally limit where possible—surface parking. Where surface parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear of buildings. Surface parking is prohibited between the building and sidewalk.
- 21/ Access for vehicular parking and services should be from collector or local streets and to the rear or side of the building.
- 22/ Vehicular entrances shall be consolidated to serve multiple buildings within each block in order to minimize the number of interruptions in the street wall and to reduce the number of potential conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists
- 23/ Vehicular access should be appropriately integrated into the design of the building massing and public realm, in such a way that it supports the design concept and does not detract from the design of the building elevation and the overall character of the street.
- 24/ Where parking, access and service areas are located in courtyards, design buildings and landscape to minimize visual and noise impacts on outdoor spaces.
- 25/ Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian boulevards with fencing or landscape buffers. Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the primary building.



Vehicular access should be from collector or local streets and to the rear or side of a building



In larger redevelopment projects, vehicular access, loading and servicing should be integrated into the building massing and public realm



Example of a parking, loading and servicing entrance integrated within the façade design of the podium building

Integrate Urban Open Space

- 26/ Position buildings to positively define the shape and function of open space.
- 27/ Contribute to a hierarchy of open spaces and outdoor environments in a range of publicly accessible, communal, and private open space types.
- 28/ Provide for a range of uses and amenities in open spaces. Avoid ambiguous, unprogrammed or residual orphaned spaces.
- 29/ Where private courtyards and outdoor spaces are visible from the public realm, they shall enrich the pedestrian experience.
- 30/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible open spaces at ground level. Where feasible, design these open spaces in relation to local serving retail uses such as cafés and to the public open space network.
- 31/ Integrate outdoor amenity spaces such as roof gardens, terraces or balconies into the architecture of the building.



Communal open space integrated within a courtyard



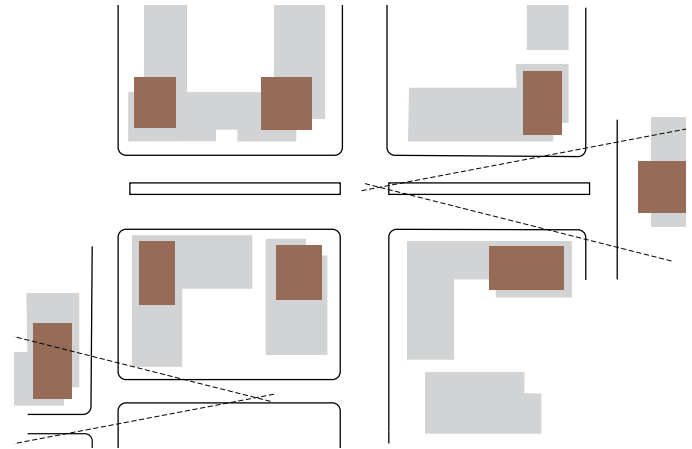
Entrance plaza



Outdoor amenity space integrated into an upper floor terrace

Prominent Sites

- 32/ Position new development toward key intersections to emphasise the pedestrian realm at corners.
- 33/ Encourage buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance at the corner.
- 34/ Provide significant architectural or landscape features at the corners of sites or intersections to make them stand out from the building pattern along the rest of the block.
- 35/ Exploit the landmark opportunities of particularly prominent corners such as at the intersection of two major streets, at a significant bend in a street or at the terminus of a long view. On larger sites, articulate building mass to emphasize a sense of entry into a district or precinct or to distinguish one from another.



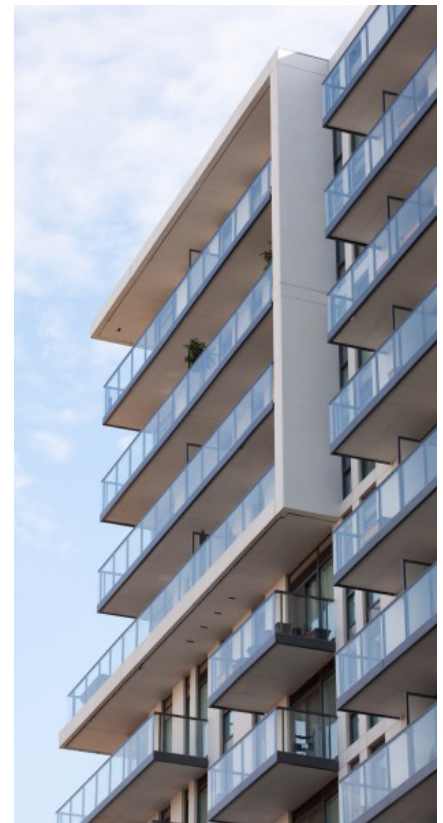
Tall buildings on corners and in other prominent locations should have special architectural treatment and emphasis



Corner entrances are highlighted through a canopy projections or an atrium space

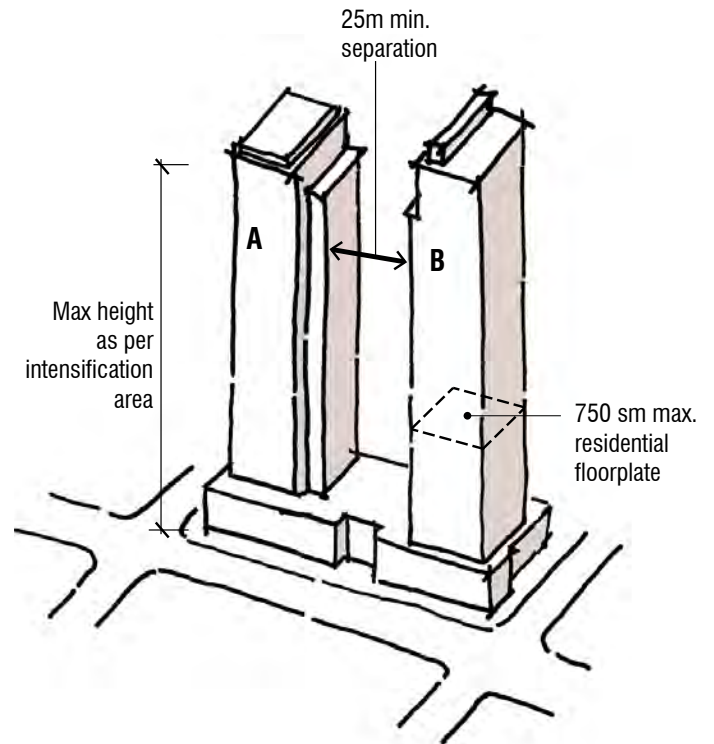


Variation in balcony treatment and building massing can highlight the corner of a tall building



Light, View and Skyline

- 36/ The tallest buildings should be located the furthest distance from low-rise neighbourhoods and the heights should be graduated down towards the neighbourhoods.
- 37/ Orient tall buildings with elongated floor plates in a north-south alignment to reduce shadow impact.
- 38/ Locate tall buildings towards the south side of a block so more of the shadow falls within the block rather than on the adjacent street.
- 39/ Where possible, stagger the location of tall buildings to minimize adverse environmental effects on adjacent development and the public realm, respect sunlight and sky view access, and mitigate pedestrian level wind speed.
- 40/ Position the tallest of buildings toward key intersections to emphasise the 'pulsing' of the Richmond Hill skyline.
- 41/ Tall buildings shall be designed with a clear and proportional articulation of podium, middle and top.
- 42/ Tall buildings should be in point tower—not slab tower—form.
- 43/ Tall buildings shall have articulated upper floors to reduce bulk and achieve a distinct skyline profile.



Tall building height, floor plate sizes and separation distance controls



The tallest buildings should be positioned towards key intersections to emphasise the 'pulsing' of the Richmond Hill skyline

44/ The maximum floor plate is 750 square metres for residential tall buildings above the maximum podium building height. The maximum dimension includes the floor plate bound by the primary building face.

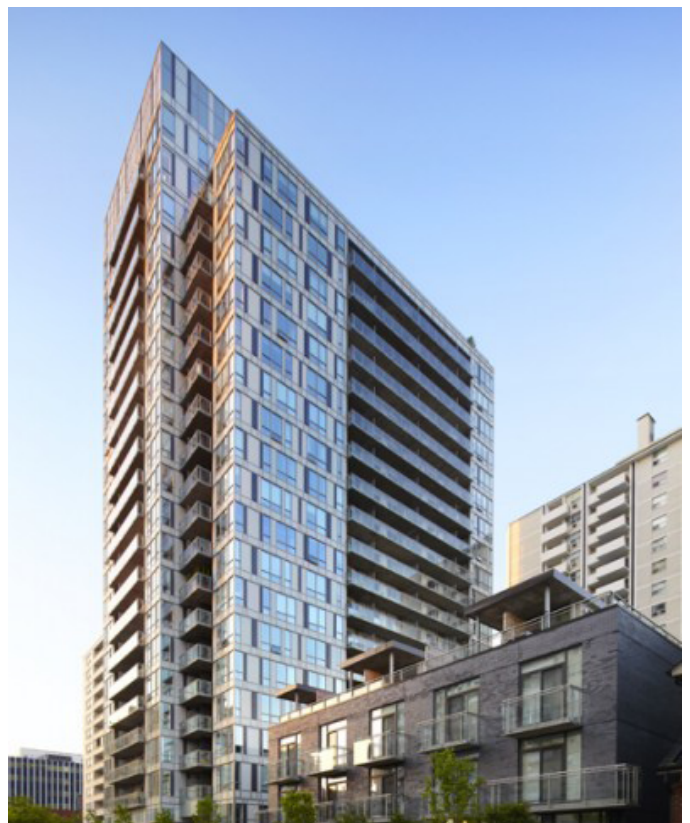
45/ Tall building towers shall be separated by a minimum dimension of 25 metres. Separation shall be measured perpendicularly to the exterior wall or exterior edge of balconies, whichever is closer.

46/ Integrate the massing, articulation and materiality of rooftop penthouse elements into the overall building design to achieve a distinctive architectural expression. Residential units may wrap the mechanical penthouse but must adhere to all built form guidelines.

47/ The maximum tall building height excludes the rooftop mechanical penthouse.

48/ The maximum height for a tall building rooftop mechanical penthouse is 6.0 metres.

49/ Roofs shall be visually interesting and use non-reflective, low intensity colours.

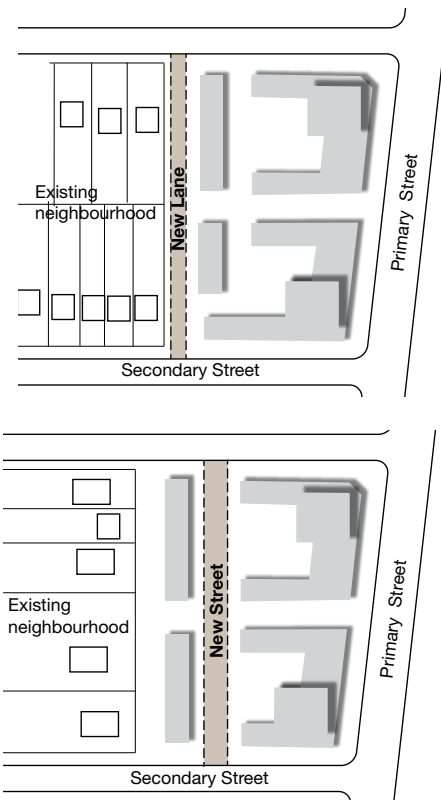


The design of the tall building top and mechanical penthouse can become a distinguishing architectural feature and provide a landmark on the skyline

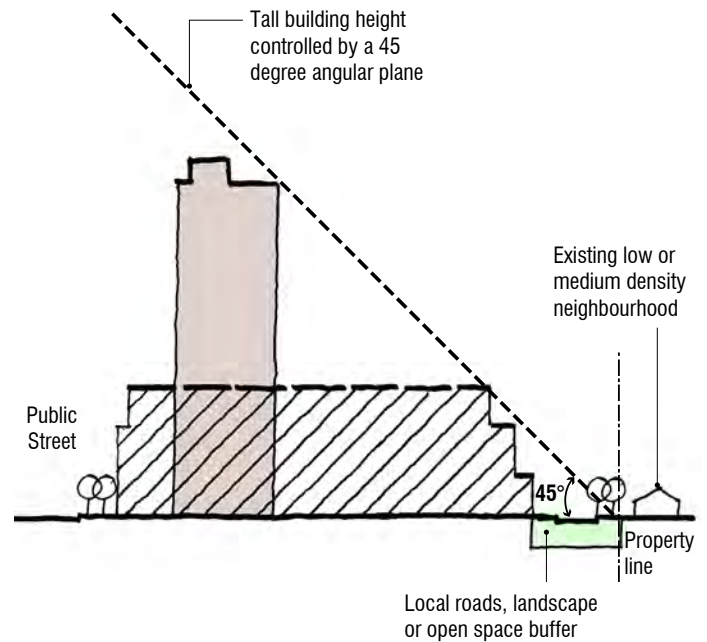
Transition

50/ To ensure that light, view and privacy is maintained for adjacent low density or medium density residential neighbourhoods, new tall building development will be designed to incorporate transitional zones consisting of:

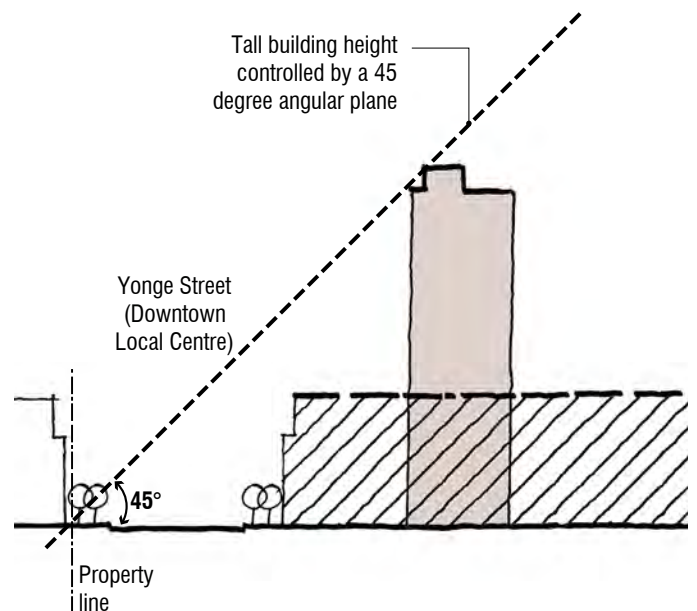
- A minimum 45 degree angular plane measured from the lot line of the adjacent low density or medium density residential area.
- New service lanes or local roads with grade-related residential entrances facing existing low or medium density residential neighbourhoods where appropriate and possible.
- Landscape or open space buffers, including parkland where appropriate and possible.



New Lanes or Streets as transitions between existing low density neighbourhoods and new developments



45 degree angular plane projected from existing adjacent low or medium density residential property line



45 degree view angular plane for developments fronting Yonge Street within the Downtown Local Centre

Façade Treatment

51/ At the ground level, the design and scale of building façades and sidewalks should enhance the pedestrian experience by being visually interesting, active, and comfortable.

52/ Design excellence should be evident in all aspects of building design, including the choice of materials, proportion and massing, detailing, colour, lighting, and all other areas of design.

43/ Permanence, scale and finish of materials should be appropriate to their use and location, especially for at-grade elements. A cohesive, finished appearance should be achieved through-out the building elevations.

54/ The scale, articulation, rhythm, proportion, pattern, colour, texture and materials of buildings shall be complimentary to adjoining buildings, existing and new.

55/ New buildings should be of their time, respond to their context in a sensitive manner, but not be nostalgic.

56/ Avoid large expanses of blank wall where building code allows fenestration. Where not, such as side walls to property lines, walls shall be designed as architecturally finished surface.

57/ New development shall not negatively impact existing buildings with side windows.



The façade of the tall building and its podium should make use of high quality materials that will improve the quality of the public realm



Balconies and Projections

58/ Entrance canopies, awnings and signage shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm. Canopies may project over the sidewalk.

59/ Within the street wall:

- For the side of a mid-rise building or a tall building podium with frontage on a main street, a 0.5m projection zone is permitted to reinforce the sense of continuity of the street wall.
- For the side of a mid-rise building or tall building podium that fronts on a local or residential street, a projection zone of an appropriate depth from the principal street wall face is permitted.

60/ Above the street wall:

- Private terraces are encouraged at the upper level step backs.
- Balconies shall not project beyond the primary street wall or building face.



Balconies and projections can add significant character and interest to tall buildings



6.7.1

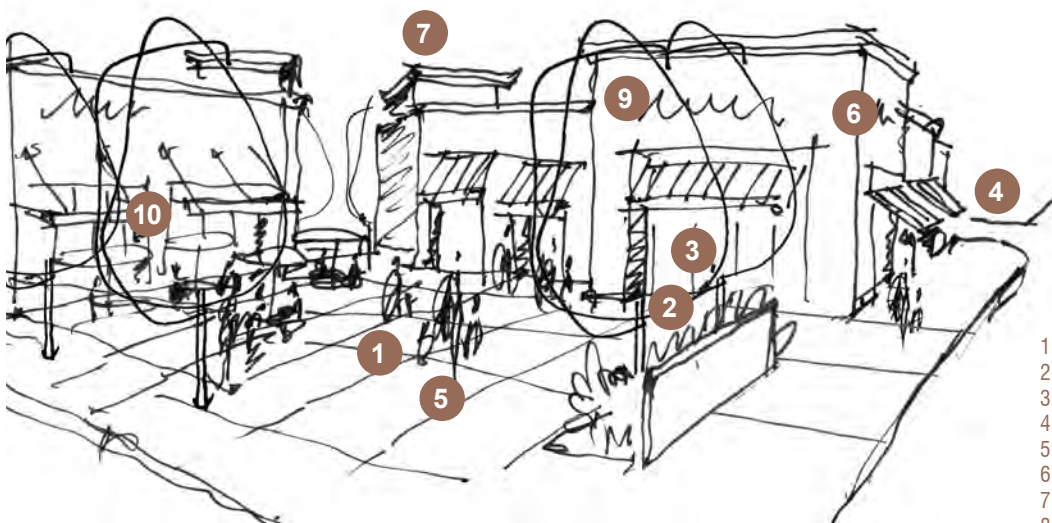
Retail Commercial Buildings: Neighbourhood Plazas

Principle - Neighbourhood-scale commercial development shall contribute to the sustainability of neighbourhoods, provide employment and support daytime and evening activity. Such development shall support an active pedestrian realm, be of human scale, provide amenity and comfort, and encourage walking.

Rationale

Neighbourhood-scaled commercial plazas makes neighbourhoods and communities more desirable. Convenient access to daily goods and frequently required services is a key factor when choosing a place to live. Neighbourhood plazas serve a more local need than larger shopping centres. It must fit within and respect the scale of the neighbourhood, orient to the pedestrian, and encourage people to get out of their cars to enjoy the pedestrian environment within the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood plazas are small-scaled shopping areas. The primary clientele of neighborhood plazas are nearby residents. They often include a pharmacy or restaurant as the anchor with other smaller convenience commercial retail uses. Elements of a well-designed neighbourhood plaza include a unifying site design, common architectural treatment, convenient pedestrian connections within the site and to the adjacent residential neighbourhood, and sufficient on-site parking.



1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Integrate Urban Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Façade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections

Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

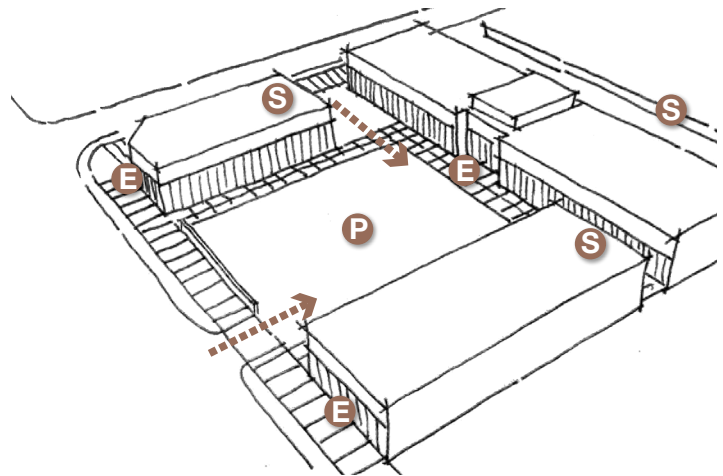
- 1/ Buildings should frame streets and public spaces. Orient buildings to place the longest side towards the primary street frontage. Organize buildings to frame the pedestrian realm and create an easily navigable walking environment.
- 2/ Locate pedestrian entrances towards the primary street frontage. Provide direct pedestrian access from public sidewalk to building entrances.
- 3/ Organize sites to promote future infill development. Introduce an internal street and block pattern into large sites to facilitate intensification over time in an urban way.

Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

- 4/ Retail commercial uses at grade should have a high degree of transparency with windows for displays and frequent entrances to animate the street environment.
- 5/ Reduce the scale of blank walls through fenestration, canopies, arcades and other architectural techniques.
- 6/ Design ground floor spaces to accommodate a range of retail uses, future market flexibility and change of use.

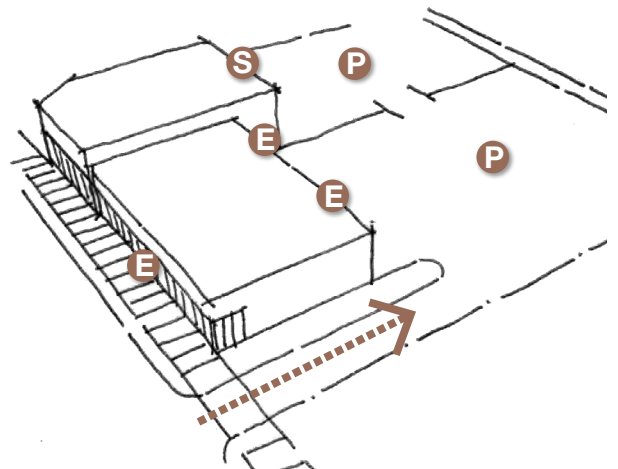
Sense of Entry

- 7/ Clearly announce the primary pedestrian building entrance through the use of architectural treatments such as canopies, awnings or double-height lobbies.
- 8/ At the ground floor level, any setback zone shall be treated as an extension of the public realm, to provide additional outdoor space, allow for at-grade uses to expand outdoors, and to encourage street animation. Ground floors for retail commercial uses shall be universally accessible, articulated to respond to human scale and provide good visual connection between interior spaces and the public realm.
- 9/ Use tree planting, soft landscaping, street furniture and surfacing material to define, improve and reinforce pedestrian routes. Provide pathways between residential areas and neighbourhood plazas that directly and clearly connect these areas.



Retail buildings frame an open space of parking court on a typical corner site

- KEY**
- E Entrance
 - S Servicing and loading
 - P Parking
 - ← Access to parking



Retail buildings frame the street edge on a typical mid-block or corner site

- KEY**
- E Entrance
 - S Servicing and loading
 - P Parking
 - ← Access to parking

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 10/ Minimize, and generally limit where possible, surface parking. Where parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear and side of buildings.
- 11/ Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the main building. Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian boulevards with fencing or landscape buffers.

Integrate Urban Open Space

- 12/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible open spaces at ground level. Where feasible, design these open spaces in relation to local serving retail uses such as cafés and to the public open space network.

Light, View and Skyline

- 13/ Building height should reflect the importance of each street and respect surrounding context.
- 14/ Minimum neighbourhood scale commercial building height is 2 storeys. Upper stories could include other office commercial and professional uses.
- 15/ Single storey commercial buildings should approximate a minimum 2-storey building height. This could be accomplished through a single-storey building with parapet or a double height ground floor.
- 16/ Screen rooftop mechanical units or incorporate into the overall building design to minimize their visual impact.



Surface parking located to the rear of side of buildings provides opportunities for open spaces along the street frontage



Low walls in similar materials to the main building can visually screen parking

Prominent Sites

- 17/ Position buildings toward key intersections to emphasise the pedestrian realm at street corners.
- 18/ Encourage buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance at the corner.
- 19/ Provide significant architectural or landscape features at the corners of sites or intersections to make them stand out from the building pattern along the rest of the block.

Transition

- 20/ 3.0m street wall step backs are required above 3 storeys.
- 21/ To ensure that light, view and privacy is maintained for adjacent low density or medium density residential neighbourhoods, new development will be designed to incorporate transitional zones consisting of:
 - A minimum rear yard or side yard setback, measured from the boundary of the adjacent low density or medium density residential area, equivalent to the height of the nearest building on the site
 - New local streets or service lanes facing existing low density or medium residential neighbourhoods where appropriate and possible, and
 - Landscape or urban open space buffers, including parkland where appropriate and possible.

Façade Treatment

- 22/ Commercial building façades shall be visually permeable, constructed of well-detailed durable materials and exhibit a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette to help activate the public realm.
- 23/ Building utilities, vents, service meters and connections shall be minimized on primary street façades, concealed (within the building or by landscape elements) and integrated within the overall design of the building.

Building Projections

- 24/ Entrance canopies, awnings and signage shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm.



Address corners with architectural and landscape features such as building entrances, canopy projections, façade treatment or outdoor seating areas



A high degree of transparency and frequent entrances animate the street environment

6.7.2

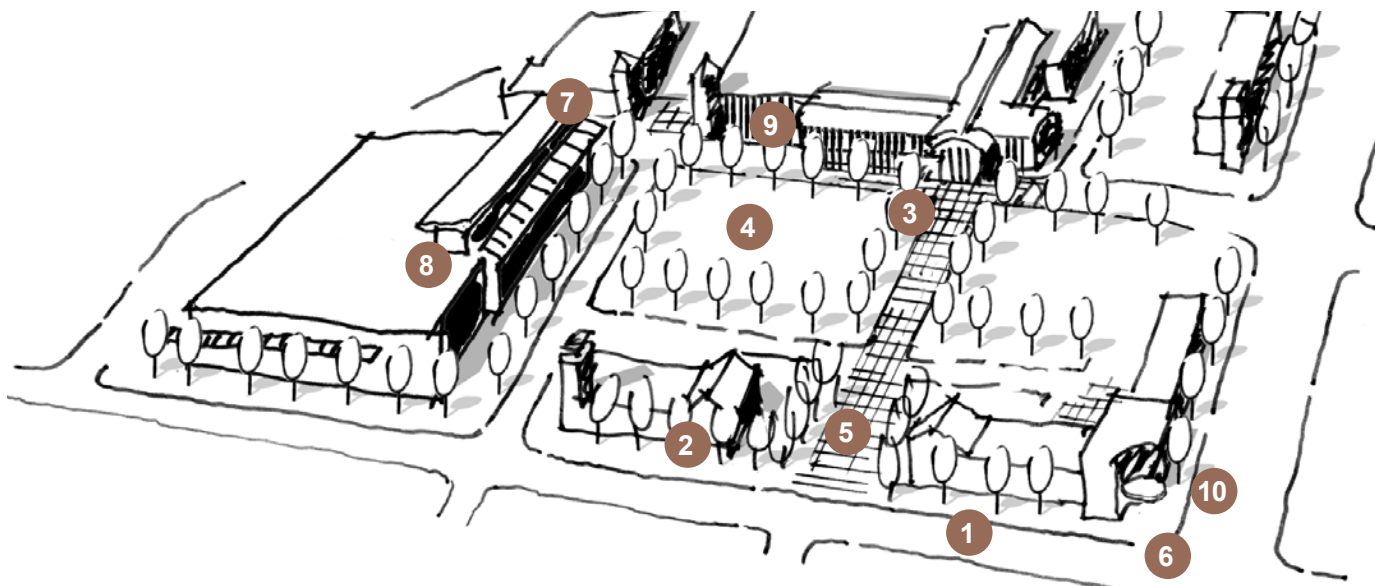
Retail Commercial Buildings: Large Format Retail

Principle - Large format retail commercial development shall contribute to provide convenient access to goods, and services and support daytime and evening activity. Such development shall support an active pedestrian realm, be sensitive to community scale and character, provide amenity and comfort, and encourage walking.

Rationale

Large format retail supports a larger trade area and is generally part of a more comprehensive commercial shopping centre development. Buildings are typically one- to two-storeys and require larger sites and dedicate a higher percentage of the site to parking. The key design guidance for large format retail commercial development focuses on how to improve the site character and architectural quality, make the site more pedestrian friendly, minimize the visual impact of parking on the pedestrian environment, improve sustainability, and provide opportunities for adaptation with infill development over time.

1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Integrate Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Façade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections



Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

- 1/ Buildings should frame streets and public open spaces. Orient buildings with elongated floor plates with the longest side towards the primary street frontage. Organize buildings to frame the pedestrian realm and create an easily navigable walking environment.
- 2/ Organize sites to promote future infill development. Introduce an internal street and block pattern into large sites to facilitate intensification over time in an urban way.

Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

- 3/ Primary (street-facing) façades shall be highly permeable, composed of at least 60% fully transparent glazing, and free of internal obstructions where possible.
- 4/ Reduce the scale of blank walls through fenestration, canopies, arcades and other architectural techniques.
- 5/ Design ground floor spaces to accommodate a range of retail uses, future market flexibility and change of use.

Sense of Entry

- 6/ Clearly announce the primary pedestrian building entrance through the use of architectural treatments such as canopies, awnings, double-height lobbies or transoms.
- 7/ At the ground floor level, any setback zone shall be treated as an extension of the public realm, to provide additional outdoor space, allow for at-grade uses to expand outdoors, and to encourage street animation. Ground floors for retail commercial uses shall be universally accessible, articulated to respond to human scale and provide good visual connection between interior spaces and the public realm.
- 8/ Use tree planting, soft landscaping, street furniture and surfacing material to define, improve and reinforce pedestrian routes. Provide pathways between residential areas and non-residential sites that directly and clearly connect these areas.



Basing new development on an internal street and block pattern can accommodate future infill development



Ground floors with a high degree of transparency and frequent entrances can animate the street environment

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

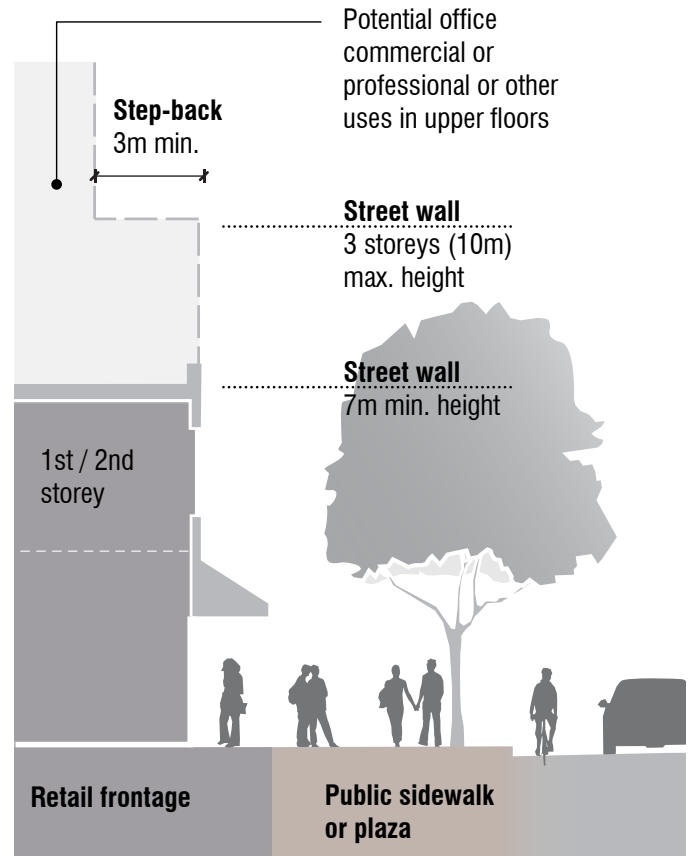
- 9/ Locate primary entrances towards the primary street frontage. Provide direct pedestrian access from public sidewalk to building entrances.
- 10/ An internal network of clearly-designated, appealingly-landscaped and well-lit pedestrian walkways should be provided to traverse routes between parking areas, entrances, and public streets.
- 11/ Where surface parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear and side of buildings. Surface parking lots shall consume no greater than 40% of the primary street frontage.
- 12/ Arrange parking spaces to minimize the number of traffic aisles that pedestrians arriving by vehicle must cross in order to move between parking and building entrance.
- 13/ Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian boulevards with fencing or landscape buffers. Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the main building.
- 14/ Multi-storey stores and integrated parking structures are encouraged.
- 15/ Cart canopy design and material treatment should be consistent with architectural design.

Integrate Urban Open Space

- 16/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible open spaces at ground level. Where feasible, design these open spaces relative to local serving retail uses such as cafés and to the public open space network.

Prominent Sites

- 17/ Position buildings toward key intersections to emphasise the pedestrian realm at corners.
- 18/ Encourage buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance at the corner.
- 19/ Provide significant architectural or landscape features at the corners of sites or intersections to make them stand out from the building pattern along the rest of the block.



Large format retail projects can approximate a main street design character with multiple entrances, architectural details and thoughtful use of materials

Light, View and Skyline

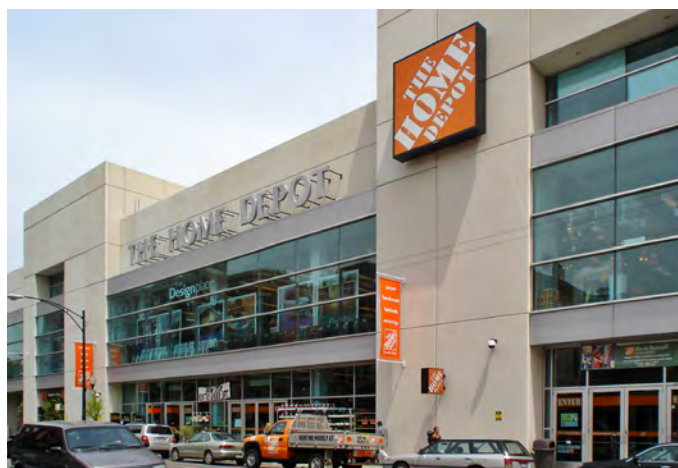
- 20/ Building height should reflect the importance of each street and respect surrounding context.
- 21/ Minimum neighbourhood scale commercial building height is 2 storeys. Upper stories could include other office commercial and professional uses.
- 22/ Single storey commercial buildings should approximate a minimum 2-storey building height. This could be accomplished through a single-storey building with parapet or a double height ground floor.
- 23/ Screen rooftop mechanical units or incorporate into the overall building design to minimize their visual impact.

Transition

- 24/ No angular plane controls for large format retail buildings below 6 storeys.
- 25/ 3.0m street wall step backs are required for large format retail buildings above 3 storeys.

Façade Treatment

- 26/ Large format retail building façades shall be constructed of well-detailed durable materials and exhibit a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette.



Large format retail can modify their building design to present a more urban character better suited to support pedestrian activity

- 27/ Cladding materials should be consistent, or at least complimentary, throughout the development.
- 28/ Building utilities, vents, service meters and connections shall be minimized on primary street façades, concealed (within the building or by landscape elements) and integrated within the overall design of the building.
- 29/ Exterior lighting should be used to highlight façade detailing and indicate primary entrances at night.

Building Projections

- 30/ Entrance canopies, awnings and signage shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm. Canopies may project over the sidewalk.
- 31/ For the side of a large format retail building with frontage on a main street, 0.5m projection zone is permitted to reinforce the sense of continuity of the street wall.
- 32/ For the side of a large format retail building that fronts on a local or residential street, a 2.0m projection zone from the principal street wall face is permitted.



Publicly accessible open space can enliven a large format retail development

6.7.3

Retail Commercial Buildings: Buildings with Drive Through Facilities

Principle - Design buildings with drive-through facilities to support an active pedestrian realm, provide amenity and comfort, and include pedestrian circulation.

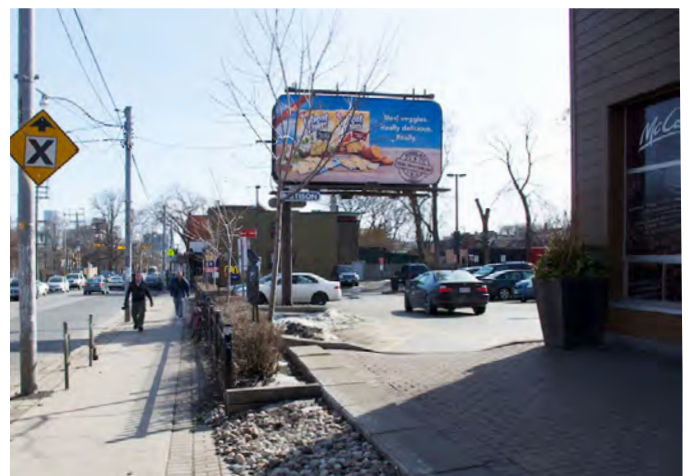
Guidelines

Framing the Public Realm

- 1/ Orient buildings with drive-through facilities to provide a minimal building setback from the public street in order to create a consistent street edge and to give a sense of enclosure that enhances the pedestrian experience. Orient the built form to encourage active frontages along public streets, by locating main entrances and windows directly adjacent to the public sidewalk. Consider a larger setback from the public street only if such setback is properly landscaped and contributes positively to enhancing the public realm.
- 2/ Place the longer side of buildings with drive-through facilities along the street to maximize the presence of a street wall.
- 3/ Minimize, and generally limit where possible, surface parking. Where parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear and side of buildings.
- 4/ Plan the site to include areas for temporary snow storage without conflicting with site circulation, landscaping, and servicing.



A larger setback from the public street is appropriate if the setback properly landscaped, such as through the incorporation of coniferous and deciduous bushes and trees (not just sod)



The parking area for this drive-through is located to the side of the site and is buffered from public view through the incorporation of a slight grade change, a fence, landscaping, and trees

Façade Treatment

- 5/ Maximize transparency and visual connection of the pedestrian-level façade facing the public street by using clear glass windows and doors that maximize views into and out of the building.
- 6/ Treat building façades, especially at street elevation, with particular care for an aesthetically-pleasing presence in the streetscape. Consider the use of appropriate fenestration, well-articulated entrances, roof elements such as overhangs or cornice features, and façade articulation features including changes in wall plane/materials, varied building volumes, and complementary building materials.
- 7/ Design garbage and recycling enclosures that are internal to the building. Where this cannot be achieved, house garbage/recycling in enclosed or roofed structures that are (i) screened from public streets and adjacent properties, and (ii) located to prevent conflicts with on-site circulation. Ensure that the screening design, height, and materials relate to the building's expression and character of the neighbourhood and surrounding streetscape.
- 8/ Architecturally integrate pick-up window areas into the building design. Features such as awnings, canopies or other elements over windows facing the public street or along the street edge are encouraged.



This drive-through site incorporates exterior furniture, a patio, and a walkway to the sidewalk, creating a visually appealing pedestrian experience

Incorporation of Urban Open Space

- 9/ To promote a visually-appealing, comfortable, and pedestrian-oriented experience, design buildings with drive-through facilities to incorporate public amenities (e.g. patios, bicycle parking, phone booths, and exterior furniture) close to building entrances, while not impeding pedestrian circulation. These areas should be visually buffered from the stacking lane.
- 10/ Provide rain, wind, and sun weather-protection canopies at primary building entrances, for exterior patio seating areas along the street, and for specific pedestrian amenities associated with the building.
- 11/ Provide a minimum 3.0m wide landscaped area adjacent to the public street/sidewalk that is attractive and functional, fits well with the existing and planned context, and provides comfortable pedestrian circulation. Coordinate on-site landscaping with streetscape improvements in the public boulevard, particularly in the centres and corridors. Design landscaping to respond to adjacent natural features. Provide landscaped areas that define the primary entrance of the building. Avoid making changes at grade – to be greater than 5% slope – between the site and the public sidewalk in order to maintain direct pedestrian access to the site.



Integrating directional signage at the entrance to stacking lanes and providing pavement markings help to indicate the direction of vehicular travel

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

12/ Clearly demarcate distinct and separate pedestrian circulation routes in conjunction with the vehicular circulation for the drive-through facilities and the larger site through varied paving treatments, pedestrian crossings, pavement markings, and/or raising walkways to curb level. Provide an unobstructed 1.5 to 2.0m wide pedestrian walkway between the public sidewalk and the primary entrance.

13/ Locate vehicular access points to the site as far away as possible from street intersections, and minimize the number of potential vehicular movements around access points. Where possible, (i) locate access points on collector or local streets; and (ii) minimize the number and width of access points from the public street.

14/ Wherever possible, avoid locating stacking lanes between the building and street. Locate entrance points to the stacking lane at the rear of the building in order to minimize queued vehicles from obstructing parking areas and pedestrian/cyclist circulation.

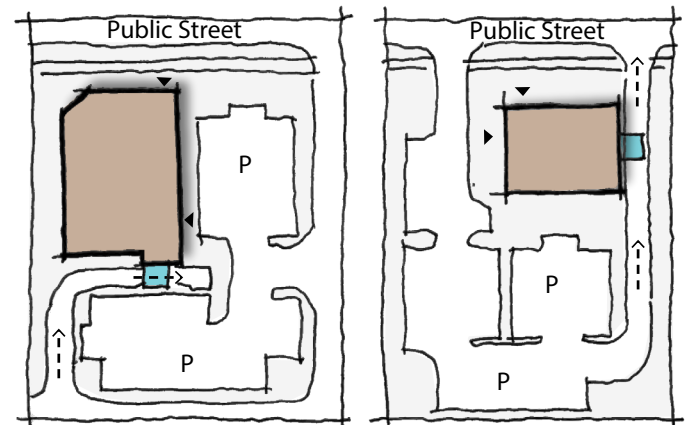
15/ Use landscaped islands, decorative pavement, painted lines, or other barriers to separate stacking lanes from parking areas.

16/ In order to ensure there is no spillover onto the public street, provide adequate stacking spaces. In most cases, provide 7-10 stacking spaces on site for restaurant drive-through facilities and 3-5 stacking spaces on site for banking and other similar non-food-related drive-through facilities.

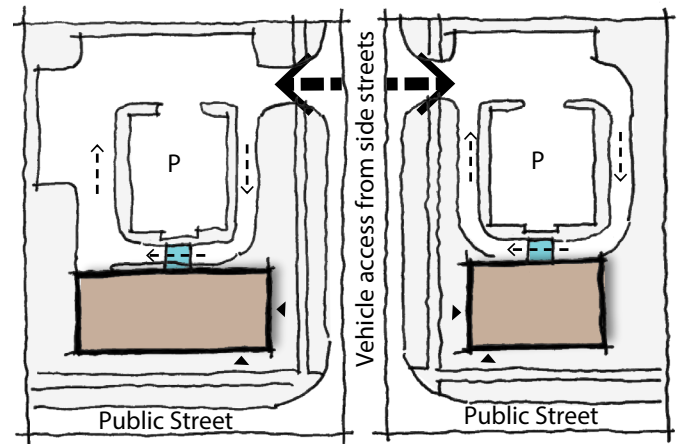
17/ Provide stacking spaces that are 6.0 – 6.5m in length and 2.6 – 3.5m in width. Avoid multiple stacking lanes for a single user. To the extent feasible, design stacking lanes to be linear, with a minimum amount of turning movements. Side-by-side stacking lanes with dual order stations may be considered to improve site layout or circulation.

18/ Provide multiple windows to service the stacking lane in order to reduce idling of queued vehicles.

19/ Provide sufficient signage and/or pavement markings where necessary to indicate direction of vehicular travel and integrate directional signage at the entrance and exit to stacking lanes, where appropriate.



Locate parking spaces and stacking lanes to the side or rear of the site



Locate vehicular access on side streets, as far away from intersections as possible, with pedestrian entrances from the sidewalks



The entrance includes access points from both the parking lot and the public sidewalk

Light, View, and Skyline

20/ Consider the safety of users by maintaining appropriate sight lines and lighting throughout the day. Maintain sight lines from stacked cars to pedestrian crossings by providing low soft-landscaping in such areas.

21/ Locate stacking lanes away from adjacent residential/institutional lands in order to minimize noise impacts associated with buildings with drive-through facilities (e.g. queued vehicles, order board speakers, and outdoor loading/garbage storage areas). Screen noise-generating areas through the incorporation of:

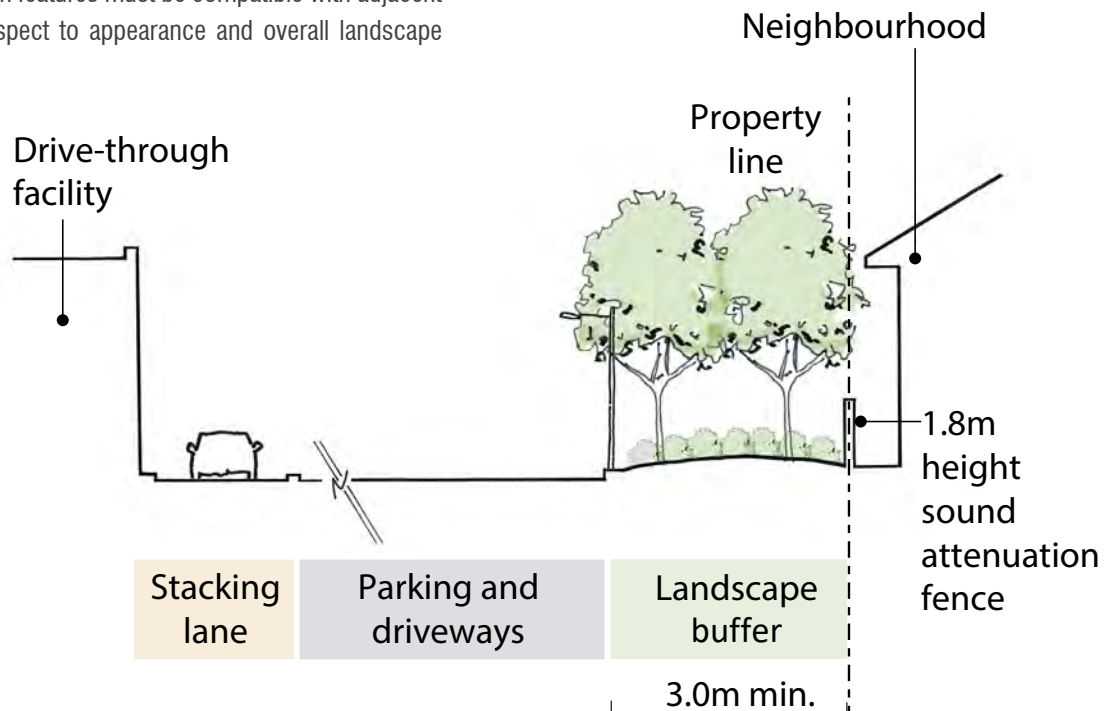
- A minimum 3.0m wide landscaped buffer that may include a noise fence (min. height of 1.8m) and shall include coniferous and deciduous plant materials with a minimum height of 1.8m for coniferous trees and a minimum caliper of 70.0mm for deciduous trees;
- Berming or other earthworks where additional height may be warranted adjacent to residential rear or side yards.

All noise attenuation features must be compatible with adjacent properties with respect to appearance and overall landscape design.

22/ Design lighting to minimize light spillage and glare onto adjacent lands. Provide intensive landscape treatment to screen the impact of vehicle headlight glare onto adjacent residential and institutional lands.

Sense of Entry

23/ Ensure primary entrance doors are clearly visible and directly accessible from (i) public streets and (ii) parking areas. On a corner lot, locate the primary entrance door at the corner or on the more major street.



Drive through lanes should have a 3.0m landscaped buffer and a fence of at least 1.8m separating the drive through from adjacent residential uses.

6.7.4

Retail Commercial Buildings: Automotive Service Commercial and Gas Stations

Principle - Automotive Service Commercial and Gas Stations shall support an active pedestrian realm, provide amenity and comfort and include pedestrian circulation.

Where a drive-through facility is incorporated into an automotive service commercial or gas station site, please refer to Section 6.7.3 - Buildings with Drive Through Facilities.

Guidelines

Framing the Public Realm

1/ Orient principal buildings so their entrances/major windows are clearly visible to the streetscape and pedestrian connections from public streets. Where automotive service commercial and gas stations are permitted, locate the principal building at the street line.

Transition

2/ Introduce special design techniques to ensure that automotive service commercial and gas station sites are sensitive to the existing context, and contribute positively to the streetscape. In specific heritage contexts, additional design criteria for massing, materials, colour, detailing, and landscape treatment may be applied in order to ensure an appropriate design response to the immediate surroundings.

3/ Relate canopy heights and design to adjoining buildings, both within and beside the automotive service commercial site. Canopy edges are an integral part to the overall image/identity of service centres, and determine how the height/mass of the canopy is perceived from the street. The enclosure of the top of the canopy is encouraged.



Enclosing the gas station canopy by adding a green roof is encouraged



Frame the public realm by orienting the principal building to the street, providing pedestrian connections to the sidewalk, and adding pedestrian amenities like this seating area



Provide pedestrian connections between the sidewalk and the main entrance

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 4/ Allow a minimum 6.0 m driving distance between the carwash exit and the public street to minimize tracking water onto the street during winter conditions.
- 5/ Design on-site circulation to minimize conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles by locating the building adjacent to the street and providing adequate landscaping.
- 6/ Design on-site circulation to facilitate unobstructed forward movement by tanker trucks and the safe unloading of fuels.
- 7/ Ensure that signage clearly demarcates queuing lanes and associated parking areas and that such directional signage is highly visible and appropriately located to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment. Integrate high quality signage with the overall building design, and minimize visual clutter on adjacent streetscapes. All signage shall be in accordance with the Town's Sign By-law.
- 8/ Locate all underground structures (e.g. fuel tanks) so as to not encroach within the drip-line of trees to be preserved.
- 9/ Ensure that access to propane-filling areas and storage tanks are protected from vehicles.



Providing an entrance door from both the pump side and the street is encouraged

Light, View, and Skyline

- 10/ Site lighting shall be in accordance with the Town's Light Pollution By-law.
- 11/ Locate noise-generating areas away from adjacent residential/institutional lands to minimize noise impacts associated with gas stations (e.g. carwash openings and propane-dispensing/vacuum stations).
- 12/ Screen noise-generating areas through the incorporation of berming or other earthworks where additional height may be warranted adjacent to residential rear or side yards. All noise attenuation features must be compatible with adjacent properties with respect to appearance and overall landscape design.
- 13/ Where a landscaped buffer is used, it should be a minimum 3.0 m wide and may include a noise fence (min. height of 1.8 m) and shall include coniferous/deciduous plant materials with a minimum height of 1.8 m for coniferous trees and a minimum caliper of 70.0 mm for deciduous trees.



A landscape buffer that incorporates both coniferous and deciduous trees can help to screen automotive service commercial and gas station uses from adjacent residential uses

6.8

Institutional Buildings

Principle - Institutional buildings shall be subject to design guidelines that will improve their contribution to Richmond Hill’s civic identity.

Rationale

Institutional buildings—including schools, places of worship, hospitals, police stations, fire halls, transit buildings, community centres and other civic edifices—help to define Richmond Hill’s civic identity and should stand out from other buildings. The design of institutional buildings should be of high quality and, respect local context and neighbourhood scale, and contribute to the Town’s overall urban form.



1. Frame the Public Realm
2. Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship
3. Sense of Entry
4. Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation
5. Integrate Open Space
6. Prominent Sites
7. Light, View and Skyline
8. Transition
9. Facade Treatment
10. Balconies and Projections

Guidelines

Frame the Public Realm

- 1/ Institutional buildings should be architecturally distinct from the surrounding urban fabric and appropriate to their civic role and importance
- 2/ Locate institutional buildings on prominent sites to reinforce community identity and terminate important views where possible.
- 3/ Institutional buildings should frame streets and public open spaces. Orient buildings with elongated floor plates with the longest side towards the primary street frontage. Organize institutional buildings to frame the pedestrian realm and create an easily navigable walking environment.
- 4/ Organize sites to promote future infill development. Introduce an internal street and block pattern into large sites to facilitate intensification over time in an urban way.
- 5/ Locate pedestrian entrances towards the primary street frontage. Provide direct pedestrian access from public sidewalk to building entrances.

Ground Floor-to-Street Relationship

- 6/ Provide a high degree of transparency at the ground floors to engage public and semi-public activities
- 7/ Reduce the scale of blank walls through fenestration, canopies, arcades and other architectural techniques.



The Richmond Hill Performing Arts Centre is a great precedent for how an institutional building should frame the public realm and relate to the frontage street

Sense of Entry

- 8/ Clearly announce the primary pedestrian building entrance through the use of architectural treatments such as canopies, awnings or double-height lobbies.
- 9/ Primary entrances should face the frontage street, be easily accessible from the sidewalk and provide legible connections between the public realm and interior circulation spaces.
- 10/ At the ground floor level, any setback zone shall be treated as an extension of the public realm, to provide additional outdoor space, allow for at-grade uses to expand outdoors, and to encourage street animation. Ground floors for institutional uses shall be universally accessible, articulated to respond to human scale and provide good visual connection between interior spaces and the public realm.
- 11/ Use tree planting, soft landscaping, street furniture and surfacing material to define, improve and reinforce pedestrian routes. Provide pathways between residential areas and non-residential sites that directly and clearly connect these areas.



Institutional buildings should have clearly articulated and inviting entrances

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

- 12/ Minimize—and generally limit where possible—surface parking. Where surface parking is provided, the main parking area should be located within the interior of the site and to the rear and side of buildings. Surface parking is prohibited between the building and sidewalk.
- 13/ Access for vehicular parking and services should be from collector or local streets and to the rear or side of the building.
- 14/ Drop-off areas for buses and other vehicles should be located to the side of the building and accessed from a collector or local street frontage.
- 15/ Screen servicing and loading access from pedestrian boulevards with fencing or landscape buffers. Locate waste and loading areas so that they are not visible from the public street. Screen or enclose them with similar materials as the main building.



A highly transparent facade can connect indoors and out, informing passers-by of special events and gatherings

Integrate Urban Open Space

16/ Encourage the development of publicly-accessible outdoor open spaces at ground level, as well as rooftop gardens and green roofs.

Prominent Sites

17/ Locate institutional buildings toward key intersections to emphasise their civic importance and shape the pedestrian realm at corners.

18/ Encourage institutional buildings on corner sites to locate their primary entrance at the corner.

19/ Provide significant architectural or landscape features at the corners of sites or intersections to make institutional buildings stand out from the built form pattern along the rest of the block.

Light, View and Skyline

20/ Building height should reflect the importance of each street and respect surrounding context.

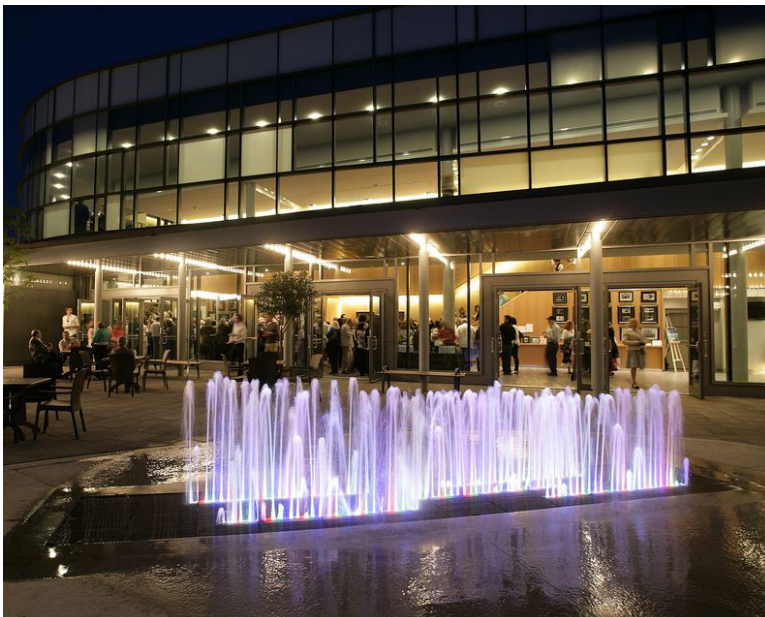
21/ Minimum institutional building height is 2 storeys. Single storey commercial buildings should approximate a minimum 2-storey building height. This could be accomplished through a single-storey building with parapet or a double height ground floor.

22/ Screen rooftop mechanical units or incorporate into the overall building design to minimize their visual impact.

Transition

23/ No angular plane controls for institutional buildings below 6 storeys.

24/ 3.0m street wall step backs are required for institutional buildings above 3 storeys.



Provide opportunities to occupy and activate outdoor open spaces



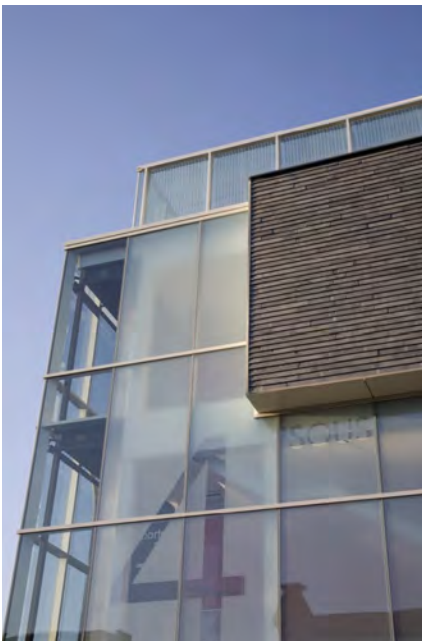
Taller elements can add architectural interest and serve as a landmark

Façade Treatment

- 25/ Institutional building façades shall be visually permeable, constructed of well-detailed durable materials and exhibit a well-considered architectural rhythm and colour palette.
- 26/ Building utilities, vents, service meters and connections shall be minimized on primary street facades, concealed (within the building or by landscape elements) and integrated within the overall design of the building.

Building Projections

- 27/ Entrance canopies, awnings and signage shall be appropriately scaled, attractive and integrated into the architecture of the building to contribute a positive vibrancy to the public realm. Canopies may project over the sidewalk.
- 28/ For the side of a institutional building with frontage on a main street, a 0.5m projection zone is permitted to reinforce the sense of continuity of the street wall.
- 29/ For the side of a large format institutional building that fronts on a local or residential street, a 2.0m projection zone from the principal street wall face is permitted.



Institutional buildings should be well-designed, demonstrate design excellence, and present a different architectural quality and character than residential or commercial buildings.



Institutional buildings offer the opportunity to further sustainable building practises and contribute at a high level to urban design quality

Day Nurseries

Guidelines

30/ Design day nurseries/child care centres in accordance with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services “Planning and Design Guidelines for Child Care Centres”, including but not limited to the following:

Sense of Entry

31/ Locate the main entrance at floor level as close as possible to natural grade to help facilitate access for all occupants.

32/ Provide a level and weather protected area at the entrance large enough to accommodate strollers, bicycles and benches. Ensure these areas do not block entrances.

Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation

33/ Depending on scale and the number of children, provide approximately 3-6 meters of level space for a drop-off point.

34/ Consider the impact of vehicles and increased traffic, especially with respect to the dropping-off and picking-up of children.

35/ Ensure service vehicles operate away from the entrance and drop-off points.

36/ When nurseries are located in schools, the drop-off area should be isolated from the school bus drop-off and turning areas.

37/ A continuous curb or landscaping should be used to separate outdoor areas for children, as well as pedestrian traffic, from on-site parking areas.

38/ Provide colour cues and tactile warnings where there are hazardous areas near walkways and other pedestrian areas.

39/ Design landscaping to direct children away from streets and install guards where there are potential hazards.

40/ Provide easy, direct and secure access from the building to the playground.

Integrate Urban Open Space (Play Area)

41/ Provide a playground for day nurseries that runs for more than 6 hours a day. Locate the playground at grade and adjacent to the premises.

42/ Consider the height of children when selecting plantings and furnishings for these areas.

43/ For playgrounds used by children under 6 years of age, a fenced area with a minimum height of 1.2m (4 ft.) must be installed with a gate. The maximum number of children per fenced area is 64.

44/ Design the playground to ensure constant supervision by staff. Avoid creating blind spots.

45/ Provide primary and secondary exits from the playground.

Light, View and Skyline

46/ Maintain site lines from the interior to exterior as well as vehicles to site, especially where cars or trucks may be reversing.

47/ Fencing should be selected that will allow for privacy, noise reduction and safety, with some visual interest for children.

48/ Fencing should not be climbable (i.e. chain link fencing is easy to climb and therefore should not be used). Fencing should be made of a material and strength to prevent children from getting out of the yard. A perimeter fence of at least 6 ft. is recommended.

49/ Ensure there are no sharp edges or points protruding through the top of the fence.

50/ When pickets are being used, ensure spacing between pickets prevents the passage of spherical objects no larger than 100 mm (4 in.) in diameter to limit the possibility of a child getting their head stuck between pickets.

7 implementation



7.1

Introduction

The previous sections have described the Town's general urban design aspirations for development and/or redevelopment within Richmond Hill. This Section summarizes how the UDGs will be implemented as part of the planning application review process, and as a means to promote design excellence in Richmond Hill. Successful implementation hinges on the fundamental actions described below.

7.2

The Design Review Process

The implementation of the UDGs will occur over many years through individual planning applications, primarily Plan of Subdivision and/or Site Plan applications. Richmond Hill's Design Review Process has largely been handled by Town Staff since 2007 when the Urban Design Division of the Policy Planning Section was established within the Planning and Regulatory Services Department.

Design Review Process for Plan of Subdivision Applications

Plan of Subdivision applications will be evaluated in the context of:

Section 1 – Vision;
Section 3 – Design Towards Place-making (as applicable); and
Section 4 – Community Design.

An Urban Design Report or Brief prepared by a qualified Landscape Architect, Architect, Urban Designer, or Planner shall accompany the Plan of Subdivision application explaining how the proposed Subdivision addresses the relevant sections of the UDGs and explaining any discrepancies (see Section 5.27 (Urban Design Reports/Briefs) of the Official Plan).

Design Review Process for Site Plan Applications

Site Plan applications will be evaluated in the context of:

Section 1 – Vision;
Section 3 – Design Towards Place-making (as applicable);
Section 5 – Site Design; and
Section 6 – Building Design and Specific Buildings (as applicable).

An Urban Design Report or Brief prepared by a qualified Landscape Architect, Architect, Urban Designer, or Planner shall accompany the Site Plan application explaining how the proposed Site Plan addresses the relevant sections of the UDGs and explaining any discrepancies (see Section 5.27 (Urban Design Reports/Briefs) of the Official Plan).

7.3 Zoning By-law

The Planning Act requires the Town to update its Zoning By-law within 3 years of the approval of a new Official Plan. The Ontario Municipal Board granted partial approval of the Richmond Hill Official Plan on April 5, 2012 and the Plan is currently in effect for the majority of the lands in Richmond Hill.

Recommendations to Prepare a Fully Illustrated Comprehensive Zoning By-law

As part of the required update of the Town's Zoning By-laws, it is recommended that consideration be given to preparing a fully illustrated new Comprehensive Zoning By-law. An illustrated Comprehensive Zoning By-law would not only provide the regulatory basis required by the Planning Act to implement the Richmond Hill Official Plan and the direction outlined in these UDGs, it would also provide greater certainty and clarity around the Town's expectations for development. Pre-zoning for the desired types and forms of development transfers a great deal of the risk associated with the planning approvals process to the municipality.

As part of the preparation of the new Comprehensive Zoning By-Law, the physical environment described in the UDGs should be codified, where possible, creating a new "form-based" Zoning By-law for the Town and further articulating the *new kind of urban* community Richmond Hill will become.

7.4 Promoting Design Excellence

A series of leadership initiatives are recommended to further promote the goal of design excellence in Richmond Hill. Reviewing Town design and construction standards, establishing a design review panel and urban design awards or holding design competitions for public buildings/parks, and preparing area-specific urban design guidelines are all examples of things the Town should do to further design excellence in Richmond Hill.

1/ Review the Town's Design Standards and Prepare a Streetscape Master Plan

Full implementation of the design vision outlined in the UDGs warrants changes to some of the Town's existing functional design and construction standards. Many of these standards are based on Provincially-mandated engineering standards. Reviewing the Town's design and construction standards to better reflect the *new kind of urban* community that Richmond Hill is planned to become will take time. Given the magnitude of this type of project, the Town's operating Departments will need to determine an appropriate time to bring a request for budget funding to complete a Review of the Town's Design Standards or to establish Alternative Design Standards. As part of this project, it is also recommended that a Streetscape Master Plan be prepared to describe the specific conditions of the right-of-way envisioned in Richmond Hill.

2/ Establish a Design Awards Program, Design Competitions, and a Design Review Panel

Design Awards Program

The Town should investigate the feasibility of establishing a Design Awards Program. These awards would be used to acknowledge best practices and help to bring awareness to good urban design and its importance in the community. The awards could be hosted annually, or every few years. Recognizing successful design projects at any scale should be a priority as it creates awareness of the importance of good urban design.

Design Competitions for Municipal Projects

The Town should build on its current consultant selection practices by investigating the feasibility of holding design competitions for major municipal projects. Design competitions level the playing field between firms of all experience levels and backgrounds. The focus of a design competition is generally not on cost or pro forma requirements that often underlie the average development application, but rather on spurring creativity, innovation, and inspiration. By holding design competitions, and establishing a jury of both external and internal professional designers, the Town can help to further its role as a design leader, fostering new ideas and solutions to design challenges facing Richmond Hill. Furthermore, by showing an interest in a higher level of design for municipal projects, the Town may inspire others to raise the design quality of their projects.

Design Review Panel

Design Review Panels are used successfully by many cities in Canada and internationally to improve the design quality of buildings and public spaces. The Town should investigate establishing a voluntary Design Review Panel, with the purpose of providing the Planning and Regulatory Services Department with professional design advice on public and private development. By establishing a Design Review Panel, the Town can help to foster an informed, public debate about the importance of good design within Richmond Hill. A Design Review Panel can act as an important voice for the promotion of design excellence in Richmond Hill, helping the Town to provide a leadership role for design professions as part of the planning process.

3/ Prepare Area-Specific Urban Design Guidelines

The Town should prioritize the preparation of more detailed area-specific urban design guidelines. These area-specific urban design guidelines will supplement the Town-wide UDGs, adding specificity by addressing design issues unique to a particular area within Richmond Hill. The following list prioritizes which area-specific urban design guidelines should be advanced first, primarily based on the progress made on the preparation of Secondary Plans and on-going development pressures:

- Downtown Local Centre
- Richmond Hill Centre
- David Dunlap Observatory Lands
- North Leslie

4/ Update the Richmond Hill Urban Design Guidelines Regularly

The Town should establish a monitoring and updating process to track recurring issues or challenges with implementing the UDGs. Issues and challenges should be discussed annually at the very least to ensure the UDGs are achieving their intended goal of promoting design excellence in Richmond Hill. The UDGs will need to evolve as Richmond Hill urbanizes. As intensification becomes more prevalent, additional guidelines might be required to address emergent issues that are not evident at this time. The Town will seek to coordinate the update of this document with the 5-year review of the Official Plan to establish a proactive approach to building a *new kind of urban* community through design excellence in Richmond Hill.

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