

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING May 26, 2025

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SUBJECT FORM AND CHARACTER DESIGN GUIDELINES PROJECT

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw to update Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8) and present the new Form and Character Design Guidelines, and related amendments to the landscape regulations.

Recommendation

That:

1. "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235" (a bylaw to amend the landscape regulations and to replace DPA8 design guidelines) pass first reading.
2. "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235" pass second reading.
3. Council direct Staff to proceed to a public hearing for "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235" prior to consideration of third reading and final adoption, as required by Section 464 of the *Local Government Act*; and,
4. Council endorse the Form and Character Design Guidelines (2025) as attached to the Staff Report titled "Form and Character Design Guidelines Project", dated 2025-MAY-26.

BACKGROUND

The Form and Character Design Guidelines project commenced in February 2024, and two rounds of public engagement were completed in 2024. The proposed final version of the document was drafted in early 2025, and consultation with key user groups was completed in February and March 2025. The April 2025 draft was presented at the 2025-APR-14 Governance and Priorities Committee (GPC) meeting, where the following motion was passed:

"that the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council direct Staff to proceed with preparing a bylaw to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 4500 with the updated Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8) Form and Character Design Guidelines, and related amendments to the landscape regulations; and a bylaw to amend the "Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw 2024 No. 7375", as outlined in the Staff Report dated 2025-APR-14."

In accordance with the *Local Government Act*, the City's Official Community Plan (City Plan) provides the justification and objectives for the City's development permit areas. The City's development permit area guidelines are within Part 18 of the City of Nanaimo "Zoning Bylaw 2011

No. 4500". The purpose of the Form and Character Design Guidelines project is to update the design guidelines in Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8) specifically, to better align with City Plan policies and to reinforce the five City Plan goals in the built form. The form and character design guidelines provide clarity for the development community and City Staff to understand the City of Nanaimo's expectations for site, building and landscape design in new development. DPA8 establishes guidelines for the form and character of commercial; industrial; multi-family residential (which includes intensive residential); and, mixed-use development. DPA8 also promotes energy and water conservation, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the design of new development.

DISCUSSION

The following section provides an overview of the proposed "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235", a bylaw to amend the landscape regulations and to replace DPA8 design guidelines. The proposed amendments to the Zoning Bylaw are also outlined in Attachment A.

In general, "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235" proposes:

Landscaping

- Updates to the requirements and definitions related to landscape buffers, waste management enclosures, and the provision of public plazas.
- Clarification to requirements for fencing adjacent to public parks.
- Updates to Part 17 – Landscaping. Staff found that many aspects in this section can be removed because they have, over time, been addressed by other City bylaws such as the "Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw 2013 No. 7126", "Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266", and the "Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw 2024 No. 7375", as well as the Manual of Engineering Standards and Specifications. In addition, the proposed new form and character design guidelines include greater clarity on expectations for landscape design, and flexibility to adapt to specific site conditions.
- Clarifying that a 'mixed-use development' also requires a form and character development permit.

Form and Character Design Guidelines

- To replace the General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines (1992), and the Triplex and Quadruplex Infill Design Guidelines (1995) with the proposed new 'Form and Character Design Guidelines' (2025).
- To remove the reference to the design guidelines in the neighbourhood plans, because the proposed new 'Form and Character Design Guidelines' have been drafted to include the guidelines embedded within the numerous plans into one document.
- A new Schedule 'E' map to show only the Area Plan areas (that form part of City Plan) for clarity.

Following the 2025-APR-14 GPC meeting, the "Form and Character Design Guidelines" have been improved by replacing a few photos; improving reference to views in Part 3; simplifying the consideration of variances (section 1.4); reordering clauses for clarity; and, improving grammar and spelling in several clauses.

Landscape Security Procedures

The 2025-APR-14 Staff Report outlined anticipated amendments to the Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw to update the landscape security requirements. The best practice advice Staff have received since that time is to include landscaping security requirements in an administrative policy (rather than in a bylaw).

The propose new practice is to:

- Increase general landscape securities from 65% of the cost estimate with a maximum of \$100,000, to 100% of the cost estimate with no maximum;
- Increase environmentally sensitive area restoration landscape security from 100% of the cost estimate to 125% of the cost estimate; and,
- Establish a security release schedule.

The proposed landscape security requirements and phased security release schedule approach is consistent with the practice in other jurisdictions and will more effectively support the installation and maintenance of landscaping in new developments.

Next Steps

The next steps are Council consideration of first and second reading of “Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235”, and to give direction to proceed to public hearing. Following adoption, Staff will communicate the bylaw updates and new design guidelines to relevant stakeholders and user groups such as neighbourhood associations, developers, and the City’s Design Advisory Panel. |

OPTIONS

1. That:

1. “Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235” (a bylaw to amend the landscape regulations and to replace DPA8 design guidelines) pass first reading.
 2. “Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235” pass second reading.
 3. Council direct Staff to proceed to a public hearing for “Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235” prior to consideration of third reading and final adoption, as required by Section 464 of the *Local Government Act*; and,
 4. Council endorse the Form and Character Design Guidelines (2025) as attached to the Staff Report titled "Form and Character Design Guidelines Project", dated 2025-MAY-26.
- The advantages of this option: The proposed DPA8 Form and Character Design Guidelines are an effective tool for implementing City Plan policy and will provide clarity and certainty for the development community to understand the City of Nanaimo’s expectation for urban design. The proposed revisions to the Zoning Bylaw Part 17 ‘Landscaping’, and proposed new DPA8 landscape guidelines will allow for flexibility in responding to site conditions.
 - The disadvantages of this option: If the proposed guidelines do not provide the right balance to ensure appropriate development in the city, Council may wish to direct staff to revise the proposed DPA8 Form and Character Design Guidelines.
 - Financial Implications: The contract with the consultant is complete, and staff are taking on the final steps to complete the project.

2. That Council provide alternate direction. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The purpose of the Form and Character Design Guidelines project is to update the design guidelines in Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8).
- With the updated and more comprehensive landscaping guidance in the proposed DPA8 Form and Character Design Guidelines, amendments to Part 17 'Landscaping' of the Zoning Bylaw and Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw are also proposed.
- It is recommended that Council proceed with first and second reading of "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235", and to give direction to proceed to public hearing.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Summary of Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw

ATTACHMENT B: Form and Character Design Guidelines (2025)

'Zoning Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235' |

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ATTACHMENT A

Summary of Proposed Amendments to Zoning Bylaw

Table 1: Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw (Bylaw No. 4500.235)


Part/Section		Proposed Amendment to Zoning Bylaw and Rationale
(1)	Part 5 - Definitions	The definition of “Buffer Area” to be deleted and replaced with “Landscape Buffer” to improve clarity.
(2)		A definition of “Landscape Buffer” to be added, to clarify the intention of the type of buffer that is required in the Zoning Bylaw.
(3)		A definition of “Public Plaza” will be added to clarify what is meant when this feature is requested as part of a site design.
(4)		A definition of “Waste Management Enclosure” to be added to clarify what is meant when this is required in the Zoning Bylaw.
(5)	Section 6.10 Fence Height	The existing provision for ornamental structures is amended to allow more than one of these structures in yard setbacks with a maximum height of 2.4m and maximum width of 2m.
(6)		It is proposed to move the fence height provision adjacent to a park from Part 17 to Section 6.10 ‘Fence Height’ and limit fence height to 1.2m to allow for natural surveillance.
(7)	Part 17 Landscaping	Staff completed a thorough review of Part 17 Landscaping and found that many aspects in this section can be removed because they have, over time, been addressed by other bylaws such as the Management and Protection of Trees Bylaw, Manual of Engineering Standards and Specifications, Off-Street Parking Bylaw, and the Development Procedures and Notification Bylaw. In addition, the proposed new Form and Character Design Guidelines provide more comprehensive landscape guidelines that allow for adaptation to specific site conditions.
		To clarify where a landscape buffer is required and simplify the existing regulations.
		To add a table outlining the minimum landscape buffer widths to be provided. This simplifies the regulations that are currently in Part 17 of the Zoning Bylaw.
		To clarify that a landscape buffer is not required where a 0m lot line is permitted, where a lot line abuts the same zone, or where an industrial zone abuts another industrial zone.
		To clarify a landscape buffer is not required for lot lines that abut a park and that a fence that complies with Section 6.10.8 is to be provided.
		To allow a public plaza in place of a landscape buffer.
		Specifies requirements for waste management enclosures, simplifying existing regulations in Part 17 Landscaping.
		To require that landscaping be irrigated and maintained.
(8)	18.8.2	To clarify that ‘mixed-use development’ also requires a form and character development permit.
(9)	18.8.3	To replace the <i>City of Nanaimo General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines</i> (1992) and the <i>Innovative Housing for Neighbourhoods: Triplex and Quadraplex Infill Design Guidelines</i> (1995) with the proposed <i>Form and Character Design Guidelines</i> (2025).
	18.8.4	To remove the reference to the design guidelines in the neighbourhood plans, because the proposed new “Form and Character Design Guidelines” have been drafted to include the key guidelines from each of these plans into one consolidated document.
(10)	Schedule E	To update the map in Schedule E to only show the five Area Plan areas (as listed in 18.8.4), and to remove reference to the neighbourhood plan areas that will no longer apply.

FORM & CHARACTER DESIGN GUIDELINES

MAY 2025

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY





When you look at a city,
it's like reading the hopes,
aspirations, and pride of
everyone who built it."
– Hugh Newell Jacobson

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1

INTRODUCTION



1.1 PURPOSE

The *Form and Character Design Guidelines* encourage site and building design excellence, and high-quality development to achieve the goals and policies in *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* (City Plan). *City Plan* establishes Development Permit Area 8 (DPA8) Form and Character, and outlines the justification. The *Zoning Bylaw* specifies that the DPA8 *Form and Character Design Guidelines* apply to commercial, industrial, multi-family residential (which includes intensive residential), and mixed-use development when a Development Permit is required. The *Zoning Bylaw* also contains the exemptions for DPA8. When a property falls within multiple development permit areas, the applicable guidelines for each development permit area apply to the proposed development.

The purpose of the *Form and Character Design Guidelines* is to:

- a) Communicate clear design expectations, and encourage innovative design solutions that align with the community needs and vision as outlined in City Plan.
- b) Encourage a high level of design and quality of construction.
- c) Prepare for climate impacts, promote energy and water conservation, and encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
- d) Support development permit reviews and assessment of development proposals.

The Form and Character Design Guidelines apply to private property. Other reference documents are to be used for design considerations impacting the public realm such as the City's *Manual of Engineering Standards and Specifications* (MoESS), *Complete Street Design Guide*, and the *BC Active Transportation Design Guide*.

The City of Nanaimo values accessibility for all ages and abilities. Site design for new development should create inclusive spaces and allow for the participation of people with diverse accessibility needs in accordance with the *Accessible BC Act*, and buildings must meet the accessibility requirements of the *BC Building Code*.

1.2 DESIGN GOALS

The Form and Character Design Guidelines are built on the foundation of the *City Plan* Nanaimo Framework, which includes Five City Goals and Future Land Use Designations. The Five City Goals include: a Green Nanaimo, a Connected Nanaimo, a Healthy Nanaimo, an Empowered Nanaimo, and a Prosperous Nanaimo¹. The Future Land Use Designations are established to create a thoughtful city pattern with vibrant areas for living, working, and experiencing the city. Each land use designation supports a unique and intentional mix of land uses, building forms and heights, and the *Form and Character Design Guidelines* for new development will help to achieve the *City Plan* goals and vision for each designation. See Figure 1: Future Land Use Designations at a Glance.

Figure 1: Future Land Use Designations at a Glance



¹ *City Plan: Nanaimo Relmaged*: www.nanaimo.ca

1.3 HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The *Form & Character Design Guidelines* are used to inform the preparation and review of applicable Development Permit applications and are intended to allow innovation to achieve the best possible design solutions, recognizing that a development may not be able to meet all of the objectives within the guidelines. The *Form and Character Design Guidelines* are organized into the following sections:

SECTION 1

Introduction

The introduction includes the document purpose, design goals, how to use the document and consideration of variances in the development permit process.

SECTION 2

General Design Guidelines

The General Design Guidelines apply to all commercial, industrial, multi-family and mixed-use development in any land use designation, and set the expectations for site design, building design, and landscape design.

SECTION 3

Design Guidelines for Land Use Designations

In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the Design Guidelines for Land Use Designations will apply to proposed development, and reinforce the unique form and character envisioned in *City Plan* for each Land Use Designation.

SECTION 4

Glossary

The Glossary provides clarity on unique terms used in the design guidelines. Each glossary term is underlined and hyperlinked for convenience throughout the guidelines.

1.4 CONSIDERATION OF VARIANCES

Variances to the regulations in the *Zoning Bylaw* (e.g. building height and setbacks) and *Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw* will be considered as part of a DPA8 form and character development permit application when the proposed variance achieves an overall design that meets the intent of the *Form and Character Design Guidelines*.



2

GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES



SITE DESIGN



Natural Features, Habitats
& Urban Tree Canopy



Connectivity & Mobility



Access, Parking & Loading



Open Space &
Amenity Areas



2.1 SITE DESIGN

2.1.1 Natural Features, Habitats & Urban Tree Canopy

Rationale: Nanaimo residents value nature as a part of the city, not separate from it. Sites should be designed to prioritize and enhance natural features, habitats and the urban tree canopy. Development should support biodiverse and healthy ecosystems, climate resilience, and human health benefits. This should be considered in the earliest stages of site planning. Note that developments near environmentally sensitive areas, steep slopes or hazard lands may be subject to additional development permit guidelines as set out in *City Plan* and the *Zoning Bylaw*.

Guidelines

2.1.1.1 Design and locate buildings to prioritize the retention of significant trees and natural features such as rock outcrops, ridgelines and bluffs. These features should be highlighted within the overall site plan to create a unique sense of place.

2.1.1.2 Consider adjacent landscapes to determine whether preservation and enhancement on-site can add to the creation of an interconnected greenway or open space.

- 2.1.1.3 Where natural features are removed, design to create new opportunities to connect with nature.
- 2.1.1.4 Maintain the integrity and beauty of Nanaimo's natural topography, and reduce the visual impact of development by integrating new development with the natural grade of a site.

- 2.1.1.5 Step building footprints along the natural grade of the site, and locate building entrances to provide an accessible path of entry.
- 2.1.1.6 Minimize exposed concrete foundations and retaining walls, and where present finish with a high quality architectural finish such as stone, brick, patterns, sandblasting or exposed aggregate, and screen with landscaping.

2.1.2 Connectivity & Mobility

Rationale: Private development plays an integral role in facilitating the connectivity of Nanaimo's active mobility network. Active transportation connections within and through development sites should provide pleasant and well-connected routes for pedestrians, cyclists, and other active transportation users. Designing a site to support active transportation circulation and connectivity within the broader network should be considered in the earliest stages of site planning.

Guidelines

- 2.1.2.1 Provide pedestrian and active transportation connections within and through development sites. These connections should:
- i. Provide access to and connections between areas such as building entrances, parking areas, storage, waste management, open spaces, mailboxes and common amenity areas.
 - ii. Be sited and designed in accordance with universal design principles for accessibility, such as using hard surfaces, provision of wayfinding, and avoiding the use of stairs where possible.
 - iii. Be located to facilitate the most efficient route based on proximity to likely destinations (e.g. parks, schools, etc.), topography, and other site-specific factors.
 - iv. Be designed to follow a gentle grade rather than a steep route.
 - v. Ensure clear sight lines, allowing visibility for long sections of mobility routes.
 - vi. Receive natural surveillance.

2.1.2.2 Where a private street is proposed to be integrated into a development site, the street should:

- i. Be designed such that pedestrians are protected and take priority, vehicle speeds are slow, and parking spaces are integrated with boulevards and street trees where possible.
- ii. Meet the *BC Building Code* and the *BC Fire Code* requirements for emergency access.
- iii. Utilize a variety of self-regulating speed reduction mechanisms including, but not limited to medians, pinch-points, raised pedestrian crossings, curves in the road, lane

shifts, speed humps, two-way streets with narrow profiles, traffic circles, diverters, street trees and on-street parking.

iv. Connect to the existing and future street network intersections to shorten block lengths and distances to destinations.

v. Meet universal design principles and the needs of all users, regardless of mode, age, or ability.

vi. Demonstrate that solid waste collection, deliveries, and emergency response vehicles can safely navigate the site.

2.1.3 Access, Parking & Loading Areas

Rationale: The overall site design of new development should accommodate multiple modes of mobility, with careful consideration of diverse accessibility needs.

Guidelines

2.1.3.1 Large surface parking areas should not be located between the front face of a building and the street.

2.1.3.2 Where possible, provide vehicle access, loading, and waste pick up from an adjacent lane or to the rear of a building.

2.1.3.3 Access, parking and loading areas should demonstrate that solid waste collection, deliveries, and emergency response vehicles can safely navigate the site.

2.1.3.4 Locate vehicle access and loading areas such that they avoid conflicts with pedestrian entrances, pathways, and vehicle circulation.

2.1.3.5 Ensure vehicles do not overhang into pedestrian pathways, using design solutions such as curb stops, wider sidewalks, or landscaping.

2.1.3.6 Shared driveways between neighbouring properties are encouraged, to minimize curb cuts and impacts to the pedestrian realm and outdoor amenity spaces.

2.1.3.7 Minimize the negative visual impacts of vehicle driveway entrances, using treatments such as landscape screening and lighting (while maintaining adequate sight lines).

- 2.1.3.8 Minimize the negative visual impacts of parking areas in multi-family, commercial, and mixed-use developments by accommodating off-street parking in the following ways (see Figure 2):
- i. Underground.
 - ii. Partially underground, and screened by landscaping, berms or patios.
 - iii. Underneath the building, provided the design does not negatively affect the street frontage or adjacent properties (e.g. light spillover).
 - iv. Surface parking that is screened from street views and adjacent residential uses and prioritizes pedestrian crossings and pathways (e.g. raised or textured surfaces) through the parking area.
- 2.1.3.9 Maximize stormwater infiltration within surface parking areas by using techniques such as landscaped islands and permeable paving.

- 2.1.3.10 All elements of a site should meet universal design principles to the greatest extent possible, to allow everyone to access site features such as parking and drop off areas, building and elevator entries, common amenity spaces and waste management enclosures.
- 2.1.3.11 Prioritize the placement of high quality start and end of trip amenities (e.g. electric charging stations, bicycle maintenance stations) to encourage active and sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.1.3.12 Short-term bicycle parking racks should be located near main building entrances, preferably with weather-protection, and be designed with two points of contact between the bicycle rack and the bicycle frame.
- 2.1.3.13 Strive for at-grade entrances into long-term bicycle storage rooms, or ramps where necessary.

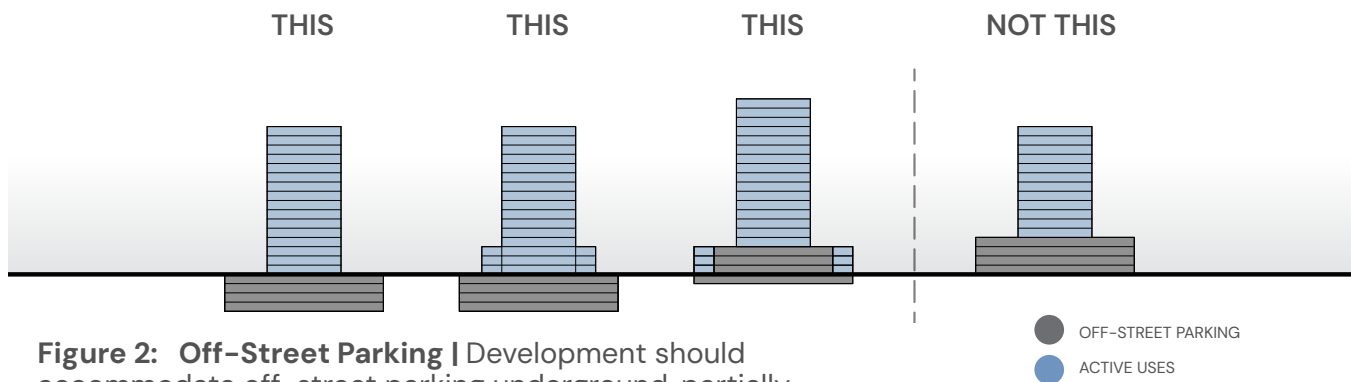


Figure 2: Off-Street Parking | Development should accommodate off-street parking underground, partially underground, or in a manner that does not negatively affect the street frontage.

2.1.4 Open Space & Amenity Areas

Rationale: Multi-family, commercial and mixed-use developments should provide clearly programmed common and private amenity areas that are accessible for all ages and abilities, and that offer respite between concentrations of urban activity. Indoor and outdoor amenities should be integrated with the building and site design to provide interconnected opportunities for people to experience places with a sense of play, reflection, social gathering, and enjoyment.

Guidelines

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2.1.4.1 Ensure both private and common amenity areas are programmed for an intentional use, such as play areas, barbecues, outdoor fitness and seating with a balance of hard and softscape surfaces.</p> | <p>2.1.4.5 Where outdoor amenities are not provided for each residential unit, ensure that adequately sized and programmed common outdoor space is provided on-site for residents.</p> |
| <p>2.1.4.2 Consider access to sunlight, shade, and weather protection when designing private and common outdoor amenity spaces.</p> | <p>2.1.4.6 Provide common amenity areas that are ground-oriented (e.g. courtyard, dog runs) to promote livability and social connectedness for residents.</p> |
| <p>2.1.4.3 Provide private amenity areas for residents at-grade or elevated (e.g. porches, balconies, patios, decks). Where adjacent to the street, consider strategies that balance privacy and visual connection with the street.</p> | <p>2.1.4.7 Ensure common amenity and pedestrian routes meet <u>universal design</u> principles with careful consideration to design aspects such as wayfinding, changes in levels and surface materials, stairs, handrails, pathway edge protection, gates, operating controls and site furniture.</p> |
| <p>2.1.4.4 In buildings with residential use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide balconies and patios with adequate usable space (e.g. for seating and dining) and weather protection. ii. Provide private amenity areas and balconies that minimize overlook onto neighbours, using landscaping and screening between adjacent balconies. iii. Privacy screens should be integrated with the design of the building using similar materials. | <p>2.1.4.8 Where appropriate, provide common rooftop amenities in multi-storey buildings that maximize view opportunities and incorporate weather protection and shading.</p> <p>2.1.4.9 Incorporate landscaped green roofs, where possible, to add visual appeal and reduce heat island effect.</p> <p>2.1.4.10 In buildings with residential use, consider providing indoor storage space for each unit.</p> |

- 2.1.4.11 Where appropriate, incorporate publicly accessible spaces such as courtyards, mid-block connections, entry courts, and plazas adjacent to the public realm. These spaces should:
- i. Be integrated with the design of adjacent buildings.
 - ii. Complement and extend existing or proposed public spaces within streets, lanes, and parks.
 - iii. Create enjoyable spaces for recreation and respite.
 - iv. Be universally accessible for all users.
 - v. Reinforce a sense of place and neighbourhood identity.
- 2.1.4.12 In buildings with commercial use, consider opportunities to provide on-site amenity space for employees.

2.1.5 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Rationale: The goal of applying CPTED principles is to prevent crime by designing a physical environment that positively influences human behavior. The theory is based on five principles: differentiating between public and private space, creating opportunities for natural surveillance, creating a sense of ownership and belonging, encouraging activities that increase the use of an area, and maintenance of a site to discourage disorder.

Guidelines

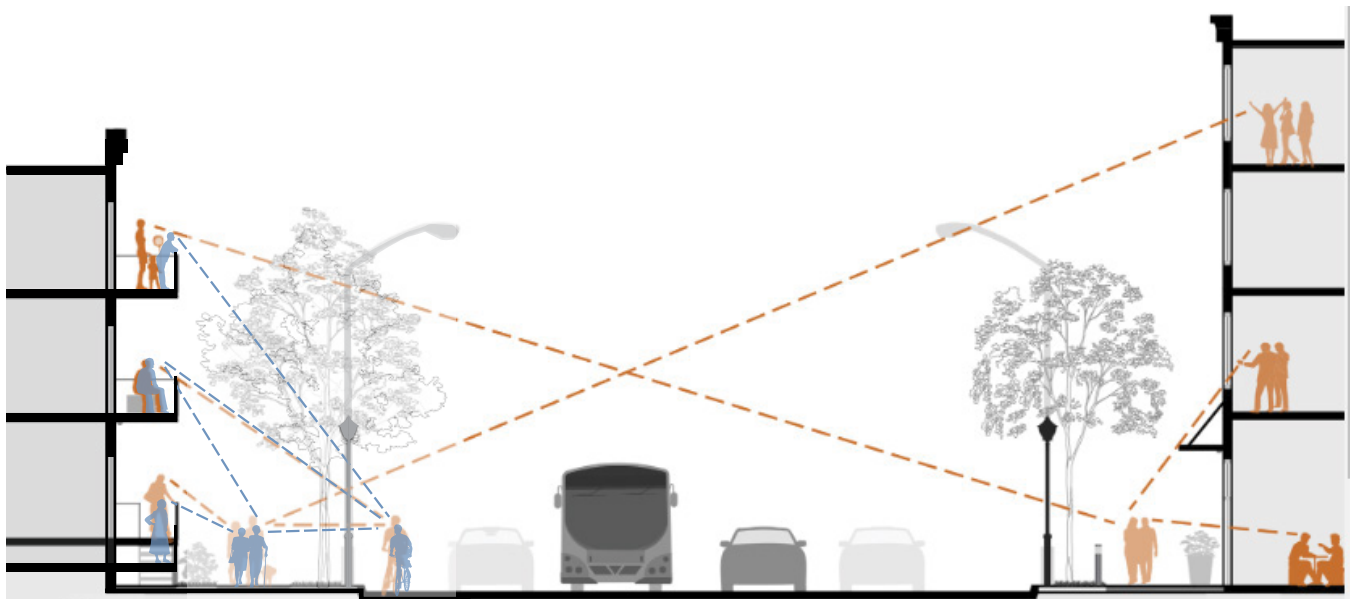
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| <p>2.1.5.1 Provide transitional zones that clearly indicate movement from public to semi-private to private spaces.</p> | <p>2.1.5.4 Install outdoor lighting around building entrances, walkways, common amenities, waste enclosures and parking areas to ensure visibility and wayfinding at night.</p> |
| <p>2.1.5.2 All public and semi-private areas should maintain an unobstructed view (line of sight) from areas that are frequently and regularly occupied.</p> | <p>2.1.5.5 Fences, stairs, walls, and landscaping should not limit visibility or offer opportunities for concealment next to pedestrian pathways, building entries, and common amenities.</p> |
| <p>2.1.5.3 Locate and design windows, balconies and primary building façades to overlook public and common spaces, such as streets, pathways, plazas and common amenity areas, and promote activity and natural surveillance (see Figure 3).</p> | <p>2.1.5.6 Avoid under-utilized spaces and entrapment spots that could provide opportunities for crime.</p> |

2.1.5.7 Side entrances to buildings should be located as close to the fronting street as possible.

2.1.5.8 Loading entrances and parking garages should be well lit and secure.

2.1.5.9 Pedestrian ramps and elevator entrances should also be well lit, secure, and centrally located.

Figure 3: Natural Surveillance | Ensure buildings contain windows that overlook public and common spaces such as the street, parks and plaza areas.







2.2 BUILDING DESIGN

2.2.1 High Performance Buildings

Rationale: New development should contribute to the City’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals by designing and constructing resilient, energy efficient, high performance buildings. High performance building strategies include optimizing site planning and building orientation, designing compact building forms, optimizing glazing and shading, limiting thermal bridging, and using efficient energy consumption systems.

Guidelines

- | | | | |
|---------|--|---------|---|
| 2.2.1.1 | All building façades shall be clad in high quality, durable finishes. | 2.2.1.3 | Reduce the impact of shading onto adjacent buildings and land uses when determining the building siting, orientation and height. |
| 2.2.1.2 | Improve year round comfort and energy needs by orienting the longest face of the building towards the south, where practical, to maximize solar access in the cooler months, and take advantage of natural light (see Figure 4). | 2.2.1.4 | Improve building energy performance, and reduce heat loss, by designing buildings with simple massing, and limited articulation to reduce complex junctions and corners (see Figure 5). |

Figure 4: Solar Orientation | Orient the longest face of the building towards the south to maximize solar access.

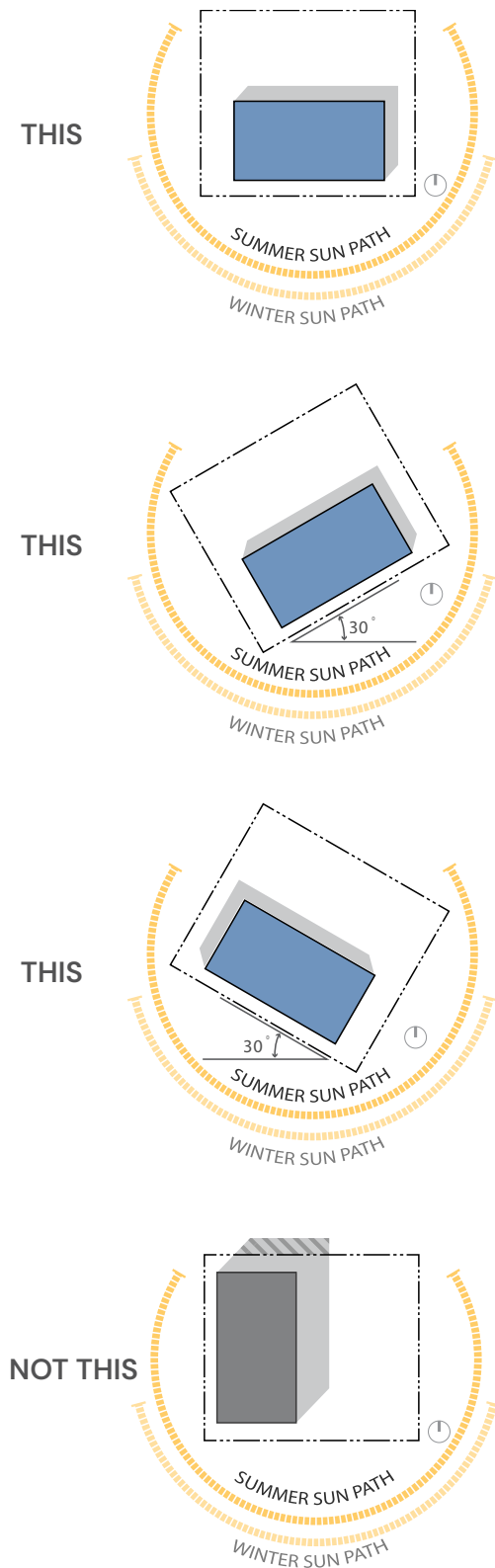
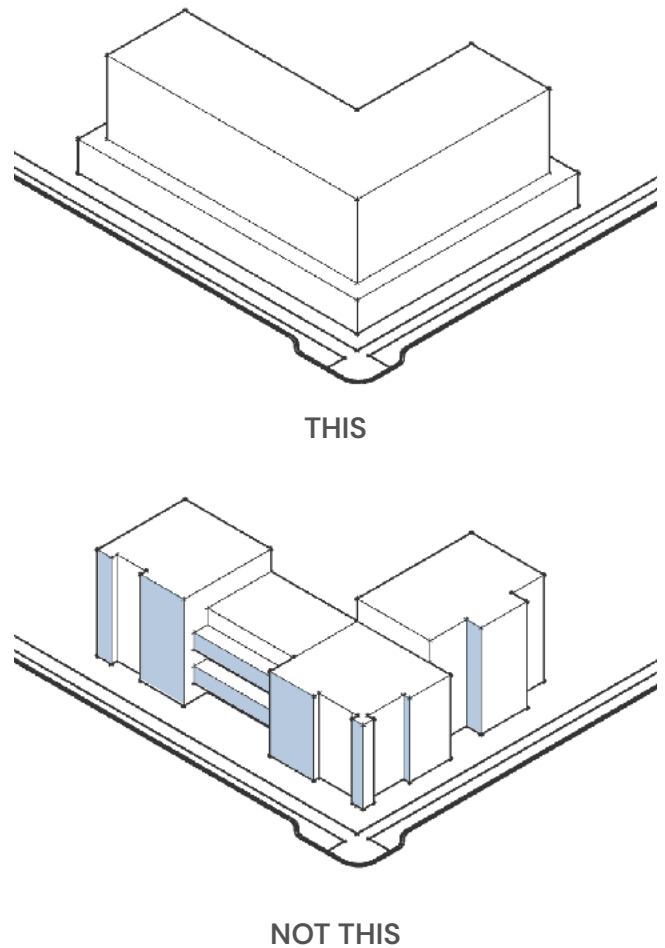


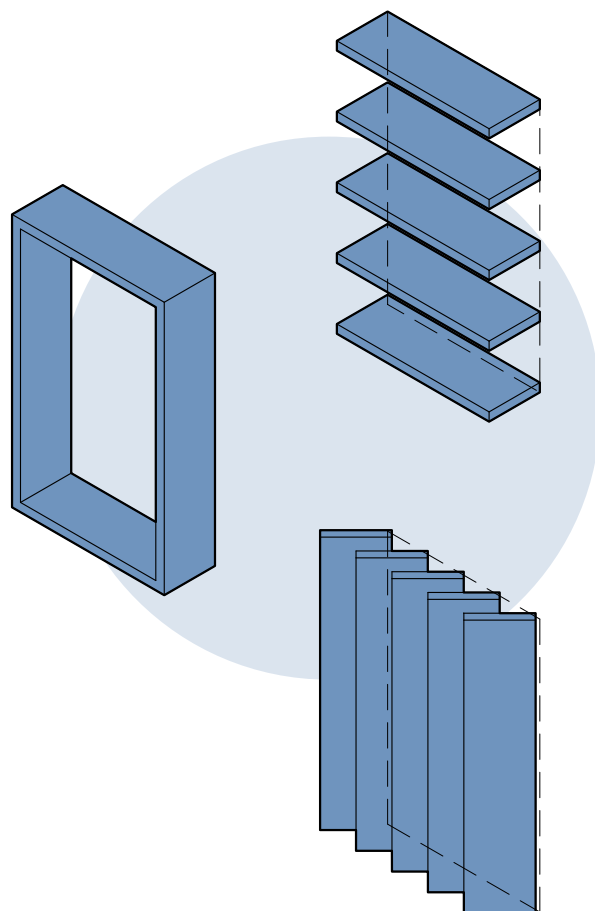
Figure 5: Simple Massing | Design buildings with simple massing.



- 2.2.1.5 To create building interest use design techniques such as strategic window placement, shading features, balconies, and changes to façade colours and textures.
- 2.2.1.6 Optimize the arrangement and types of windows (e.g. operable windows) on the elevation of a building to maximize opportunities for passive heat gain in cooler months, natural light, and natural ventilation.

- 2.2.1.7 For larger buildings, develop a glazing strategy to lower the overall window to wall ratio to reduce heat gain and loss, using strategies such as:
- Use high efficiency glazing where a greater window to wall ratio is desired.
 - Use large windows rather than many smaller windows to reduce heat loss through framing.
 - Optimize daylighting and solar gain potential when establishing window size and location.
- 2.2.1.8 Solar shading devices (e.g. overhangs, louvers, vertical fins, and brise-soleils) should be used to obstruct direct sunlight from entering a building, especially on west and south facing elevations, to reduce the need for additional cooling (see Figure 6).
- 2.2.1.9 Shading devices, where utilized, should be a seamless part of the building architecture, and their form, materials, colour, and texture should enhance the overall aesthetic of the building while maintaining functionality.
- 2.2.1.10 Consider design strategies to reduce the thermal bridging and heat loss potential of balconies.
- 2.2.1.11 To reduce the carbon footprint of building materials consider:
- Using materials with high energy efficiency and performance ratings.
 - Using materials that actively reduce carbon in the atmosphere by sequestering carbon during their lifecycle (e.g. certain types of wood, bio-based products, and innovative concrete).

Figure 6: Solar Shading | Use solar shading devices to minimize unwanted solar heat gain.



- Using locally sourced materials where possible to reduce transportation related emissions.

- 2.2.1.12

Where practical, incorporate on-site renewable energy capture and solar energy systems into the building design as follows:

i.

Roofs and other building surfaces should be oriented and designed to optimize the placement of solar energy collection devices.
- ii.

Design for future solar installations and energy capture by incorporating electrical rough-ins, and designating space for energy storage systems such as battery storage.

2.2.2 Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing Systems

Rationale: Consider the integration of mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems from the outset to ensure that they are seamlessly incorporated into the overall architecture of a building, and do not compromise the functionality and comfort for occupants.

Guidelines

- 2.2.2.1

All mechanical rooftop equipment should be integrated into the design of a building and screened from view, particularly for multi-family residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings.
- 2.2.2.2

Ground level utilities should be screened from view with plant material, earthen berms, or opaque screening that complements the building and site design.
- 2.2.2.3

Position parking vents and other outdoor mechanical or electrical equipment away from pedestrian pathways, balconies, patios, and outdoor seating areas.
- 2.2.2.4

Locate outdoor mechanical units and heat pumps to allow for maintenance access, and ensure they do not dominate balcony space, or conflict with outdoor amenity spaces and pedestrian pathways.
- 2.2.2.5

In commercial areas incorporate armatures, structural support, and electrical outlets on the exterior of buildings for temporary hanging of banners, lights, or fabric canopies to allow for displays and special events.

2.2.3 Bird Friendly Design

Rationale: Birds cannot perceive glass as a solid object and attempt to fly through transparent glass causing bird collisions. Increasing the visibility of glass reduces the risk of bird collisions.

Guidelines

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| 2.2.3.1 Consider the use of high contrast <u>acid-etch</u> or frit patterns to break up the transparency of glass and provide a visual cue that alerts birds of glass, especially for glass that is at a similar height as mature trees, or located near a water body, the sea, or other naturalized area. | 2.2.3.2 Consider the use of exterior screens, architectural mesh, and grilles to obstruct reflections of vegetation and sky, and to break up transparency. |
| | 2.2.3.3 Screen or cap mechanical ducts, intake and exhaust vents, open pipes and rails to avoid nesting conflicts. |



STREET INTERFACE



Active Street Frontages



2.3 STREET INTERFACE

2.3.1 Active Street Frontages

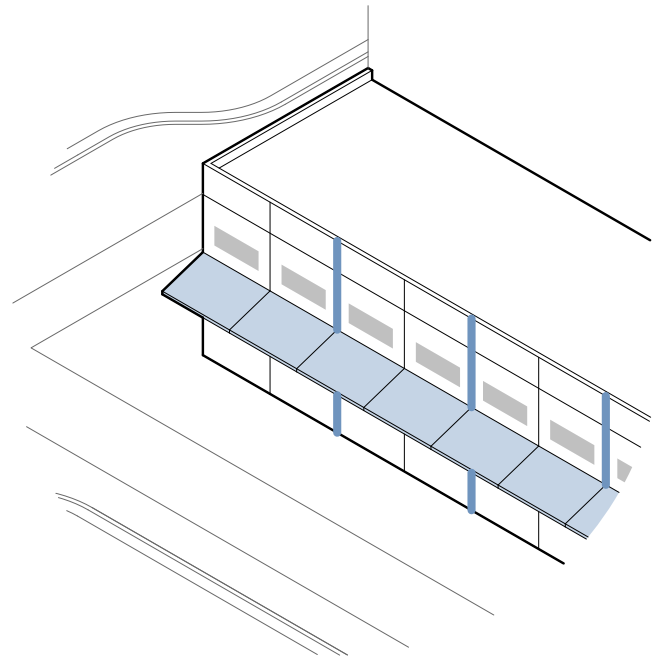
Rationale: The relationship between the street and new development should create an active, engaging, and human scaled pedestrian environment that fosters social connection. The design of new development should provide a fine grained rhythm and pattern along the street frontage using variations in building form and architectural features.

Guidelines

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| 2.3.1.1 New development should establish a continuous <u>streetwall</u> with primary entries facing the public street to create a defined edge and activity. | of existing buildings design the front façade to maintain the rhythm of the street. |
| 2.3.1.2 Design street frontages that break up buildings into smaller frontage units to accommodate multiple commercial or residential units. | 2.3.1.4 Provide entrances from the street for each separate ground-level unit. |
| 2.3.1.3 Where the width of new development is significantly greater than the width | |

- 2.3.1.5 In commercial developments, activate the street by incorporating small setbacks at the street level to accommodate amenities such as sidewalk cafes, patios, and other outdoor seating areas. Ensure these amenities maintain sufficient space for all ages and abilities to move along the sidewalk.
- 2.3.1.6 Commercial buildings should provide accessible entries and continuous weather protection along the street frontage for pedestrians (see Figure 7).
- 2.3.1.7 Create a cohesive rhythm with architectural design features for individual units, such as balconies, canopies, awnings, and façade materials.
- 2.3.1.8 Avoid at-grade blank walls along primary streets, and when unavoidable improve them with art, façade treatments, landscaping or special materials to increase visual interest.
- 2.3.1.9 Signage should be integrated into the design of the site and buildings, with emphasis on clear identification of units in buildings with multiple tenants.

Figure 7: Weather Protection | Commercial buildings should provide continuous weather protection along the street frontage.





LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Multi-Functional Landscapes



Thriving Landscapes



Crime Prevention Through
Environmental Design



Site & Building Lighting



Waste Management
Enclosures



2.4 LANDSCAPE DESIGN

2.4.1 Multi-Functional Landscapes

Rationale: As the city becomes more urban and compact, designing efficient and multi-functional landscapes helps to maximize the use of a site. Landscape design in new development should balance considerations such as climate resilience, accessibility, retention and restoration of natural features, placemaking and neighbourhood character.

Guidelines

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| <p>2.4.1.1 Incorporate best management practices to support watershed health in the design of sites, buildings, and parking areas, including the use of <u>permeable</u> paving, rain gardens, bio-swales, deep absorbent soils, stormwater capture and detention systems, <u>blue-green roof systems</u>, and other emerging techniques.</p> | <p>2.4.1.2 Consider framing important open spaces, views of natural features, and exposed rock outcroppings within the site design.</p> |
| | <p>2.4.1.3 Incorporate landscape features that users can interact with and that reinforce <u>placemaking</u>.</p> |
| | <p>2.4.1.4 Select durable landscape materials and furnishings that are natural, sustainably sourced, re-purposed, or recycled.</p> |

- 2.4.1.5 Incorporate universal design elements in landscapes to allow wayfinding for people of all ages and abilities such as signage, contrasting colours and textures, art, handrails, and lighting.
- 2.4.1.6 When a building's ground floor is elevated above the pedestrian realm, a tiered landscape approach should be used to transition between elevations, using techniques such as low retaining walls with integrated planting, and strategic placement of boulders, shrubs and groundcover.
- 2.4.1.7 Provide opportunities for art and cultural expression to be integrated within the site and landscape design, to reflect the diverse community of Nanaimo and the rich history of the land.
- 2.4.1.8 Where environmental constraints allow, incorporate trails, view points, and rest areas to allow interaction with the natural environment.

2.4.2 Thriving Landscapes

Rationale: By considering site-specific conditions, appropriate plants and materials can create durable and thriving environments while softening the impact of built structures.

Guidelines

- 2.4.2.1 Select and locate trees and plants using 'right plant, right place' principles, including considerations related to:
 - i. Durability, micro-climates, soil suitability, habitat creation, and compatibility with the site conditions.
 - ii. Buffering wind, framing the site, offering shade areas, and reinforcing building entrances with strategic plantings.
- 2.4.2.2 Ensure landscape design achieves favourable micro-climate outcomes through strategies such as:
 - i. Using materials and colours that minimize heat absorption.
 - ii. Planting a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees to provide shade in warmer months and solar access in cooler months.
- 2.4.2.3 Include a combination of trees and plants that are suitable for the Nanaimo area, prioritize native species, and where appropriate incorporate food-bearing trees and vegetation, and pollinator habitat.
- 2.4.2.4 Strive to achieve a higher evergreen tree ratio in the landscape design to replicate a west coast forest environment that maintains greenery in all seasons.

- 2.4.2.5 Design landscaping to ensure that at maturity, plants and trees do not encroach on pedestrian pathways, and canopies grow above the pedestrian realm, maintaining clear and unobstructed routes for pedestrians.
- 2.4.2.6 Where plantings are proposed adjacent to walkways, choose vegetation that does not bear fruit or drop excessive seeds, to mitigate potential slip hazards and maintenance demands.
- 2.4.2.7 Include a variety of sizes and species of trees and plants that offer year-round interest, colour and aesthetic appeal.
- 2.4.2.8 Provide tree and plant spacing that ensures planting beds are full yet far enough apart to avoid crowding over time.
- 2.4.2.9 Use natural plant material instead of artificial turf or decorative rock and gravel wherever possible.
- 2.4.2.10 Trees and vegetative screens should be large enough to break up the overall building mass, particularly in steep sloping areas.
- 2.4.2.11 Use plantings such as cascading plants, terraced shrubs, and green walls to soften and reduce the perceived height of retaining walls and areas of blank walls.
- 2.4.2.12 Encourage appropriate transition and buffering between park spaces and adjacent land uses to balance natural surveillance and privacy of adjacent properties and provide attractive park edges.
- 2.4.2.13 Where existing vegetation is retained, provide appropriate transition between the development site and existing natural features.
- 2.4.2.14 Where existing trees are retained, design to protect their root zones.
- 2.4.2.15 All landscaping work and plant material should conform to the most recent edition of the *Canadian Landscape Standard* published by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects.

2.4.3 Waste Management Enclosures

Rationale: New development should promote visually appealing environments that minimize the impact of unsightly or intrusive features.

Guidelines

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|---|---|
| <p>2.4.3.1 Areas used for solid waste management should be enclosed within a building. If outdoors, fully screen from view and design to include a solid enclosure and gate that complements the building design and meets CPTED principles.</p> <p>2.4.3.2 Enclosures should be adequately sized for the intended use of the site and accommodate the three streams of waste (recycling, organics, and garbage).</p> | <p>2.4.3.3 Where a private garage accommodates a vehicle and waste container(s), ensure functionality for access and egress of vehicles, waste containers, long-term bicycle parking, and other functions.</p> <p>2.4.3.4 Outdoor enclosures should be located to avoid conflicts with pedestrian pathways and building egresses.</p> <p>2.4.3.5 Consider odour abatement measures when waste management enclosures are located near residential units, amenity areas, and public spaces.</p> |
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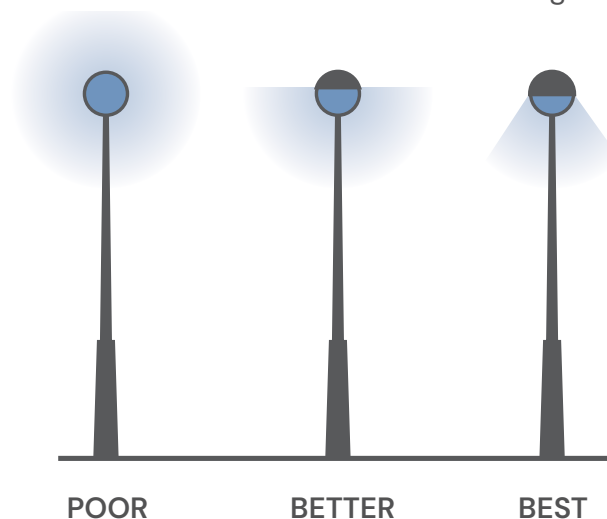
2.4.4 Site & Building Lighting

Rationale: Carefully designed building and site lighting can create a welcoming atmosphere that adheres to dark sky lighting principles and reduces light pollution.

Guidelines

- 2.4.4.1 Exterior lighting should be shielded and downward facing, contribute to lighting of the pedestrian realm, and positioned to highlight building features, signage, art or landscape elements (see Figure 8).
- 2.4.4.2 High quality lighting should be included along the building frontage at a spacing consistent with the rhythm of the façade.

Figure 8: Exterior Lighting | Exterior lighting should be shielded and downward facing.



- 2.4.4.3 Building entrances, addresses, pathways, parking, and outdoor amenity areas should be illuminated at night, while avoiding light spilling into residential units and adjacent sites.
- 2.4.4.4 Exterior lighting should be pedestrian scaled and not produce glare onto residential streets, public walkways, adjacent properties, or the sky.
- 2.4.4.5 Energy efficient lighting should be used, including timers to minimize energy consumption.



3

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

3.1

PRIMARY & SECONDARY URBAN CENTRES



Primary Urban Centre



Secondary Urban Centre

Rationale: Urban Centres are the city's primary hubs of activity with the highest intensity and mix of land uses, including housing, employment, services and community amenities. The Primary Urban Centre is the cultural "heart of the city" and a focal point for community gatherings and celebrations. All Urban Centres, however, are envisioned to continue to develop as transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly built environments. See also *City Plan*, Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations'. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to developments within the Primary and Secondary Urban Centre land use designation.

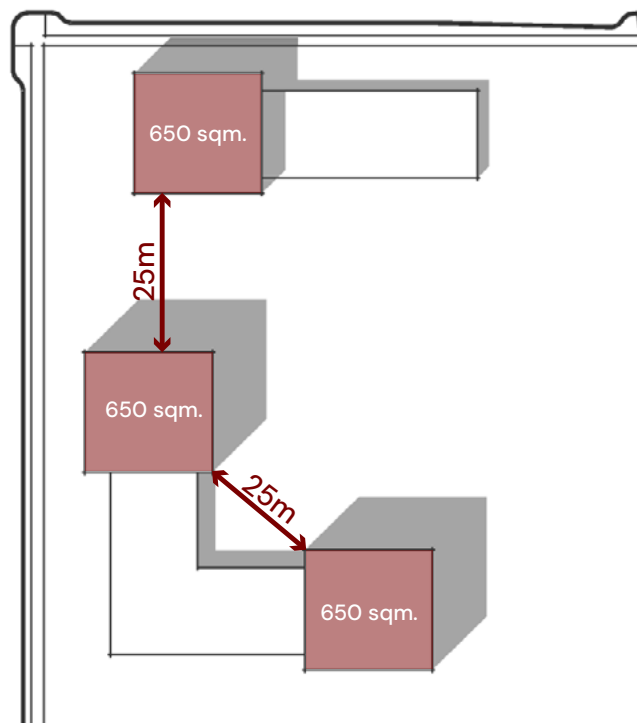


3.1.1 Building Design

Guidelines

- 3.1.1.1 To support placemaking, buildings should incorporate landmark or emblematic design features, such as prominent vertical elements, use of colour, significant corner treatments, plazas and extensions of the public realm.
- 3.1.1.2 The design of new buildings should carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale, and to preserve access to sunlight.
- 3.1.1.3 New development should consider and minimize the impact on existing public view corridors (e.g. views of the waterfront, Mount Benson, and landmark buildings in the downtown).
- 3.1.1.4 For buildings that are taller than six storeys, the following should be considered:
- Target a 25–30 metre separation between building towers (on the same site and between sites).
 - A building base or podium should be clearly defined, with a maximum floor plate area of approximately 650 square metres (see Figure 9).
 - The design of rooflines should be carefully considered to ensure they are attractive from numerous vantage points.
- 3.1.1.5 Roof forms and vertical massing should consider views (for onsite residents), consider and be sympathetic to views from adjacent buildings, and contribute to a diversity of building forms.

Figure 9: Floor Plate Area | For buildings that are taller than six storeys, aim for a 25–30 metre separation between building towers, and target a maximum floor plate area of 650 square metres.



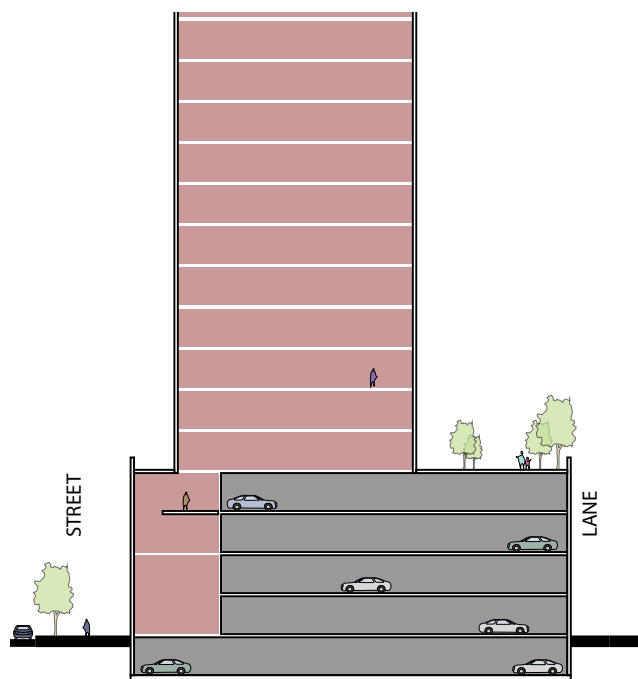
- 3.1.1.6 While excessive articulation is discouraged, the prominence of tower building forms requires special architectural attention to avoid a monotonous building design and treatment to the exterior of a tower.
- 3.1.1.7 Avoid the use of mirrored glazing or excessive amounts of opaque glazing.

3.1.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

- 3.1.2.1 Activate street frontages with outdoor displays, accessible patios and outdoor seating to engage with the public realm.
- 3.1.2.2 Create well-defined and universally accessible primary building entrances along streets and at street corners using design elements such as weather protection, architectural features, high quality material finishes and detailing, signage, and lighting.
- 3.1.2.3 On commercial frontages incorporate generous amounts of windows, glazing, and frequent entrances to create visual interest, punctuation, and rhythm along the street.
- 3.1.2.4 Weather protection should extend over public sidewalks to provide sufficient coverage for pedestrians.
- 3.1.2.5 Residential entrances should be separated from ground floor commercial uses in mixed-use developments. On corner lots, residential entries on the secondary street are supported.
- 3.1.2.6 Above-grade parking structures should be concealed by building floor area, or other strategies to effectively screen the parking structure (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Above-Grade Parking Structures
| Above grade parking structures should be concealed by building floor area



3.1.3 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

- 3.1.3.1

Provide opportunities for social connection through the provision of seating, plazas, and publicly accessible spaces along street frontages and intersections.
- 3.1.3.2

Create opportunities for entry courts, attractive corner plazas, mid-block pedestrian links, and other additions to the public realm.
- 3.1.3.3

Integrate inspirational landscapes with art, cultural expressions, historic elements, and destination amenities to generate community interest, attract surrounding neighbourhoods, and create memorable experiences for residents and visitors.
- 3.1.3.4

Create a unique identity for the development through the cohesive application of building and landscape elements that add interest day and night and create a welcoming site.
- 3.1.3.5

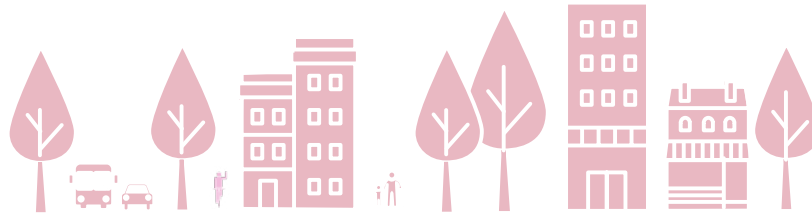
Consider ways to mitigate potential noise conflicts between residential and non-residential uses.
- 3.1.3.6

At-grade surface parking is not supported, except for short-term parking needs such as loading, valet station, and delivery services.
- 3.1.3.7

Fencing in Urban Centres should be decorative, transparent, durable, and high quality. Opaque fencing and chain link fencing is not supported in Urban Centres.

3.2

NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES



Neighbourhood Centre

Rationale: Neighbourhood centres are walkable, local-scale gathering and service destinations that support the daily needs of residents in the surrounding area. See also *City Plan*, Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations'. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to developments within the Neighbourhood Centre land use designation.



3.2.1 Building Design

Guidelines

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|---|--|
| <p>3.2.1.1 The design of new buildings should carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale, and to preserve access to sunlight.</p> <p>3.2.1.2 To support <u>placemaking</u>, buildings should incorporate landmark or emblematic design features, such as prominent vertical elements, use of colour, significant corner treatments, plazas, and extensions of the public realm.</p> | <p>3.2.1.3 Roof forms and vertical massing should consider views (for onsite residents), consider and be sympathetic to views from adjacent buildings, and contribute to a diversity of building forms.</p> <p>3.2.1.4 Residential building design should be distinguished from commercial forms using strategies such as balconies, bay windows, and other architectural detailing.</p> |
|---|--|

3.2.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3.2.2.1 Activate street frontages with outdoor displays, accessible patios, and outdoor seating to engage with the public realm.</p> <p>3.2.2.2 Orient primary building façades and entries to the fronting street(s) or public open space to create a defined edge.</p> <p>3.2.2.3 Create well-defined and universally accessible primary building entrances along streets or at street corners using design elements such as weather protection, architectural features, high quality material finishes and detailing, signage, and lighting.</p> <p>3.2.2.4 On commercial frontages incorporate generous amounts of windows, glazing, and frequent entrances to create visual interest, punctuation, and rhythm along the street.</p> | <p>3.2.2.5 Weather protection should extend over public sidewalks to provide sufficient coverage for pedestrians.</p> <p>3.2.2.6 Residential entrances should be separated from ground floor commercial uses in mixed-use developments. On corner lots, residential entries on the secondary street are supported.</p> <p>3.2.2.7 Above-grade parking structures should be concealed by building floor area or other strategies to effectively screen the parking structure (see Figure 10).</p> |
|---|--|

3.2.3 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

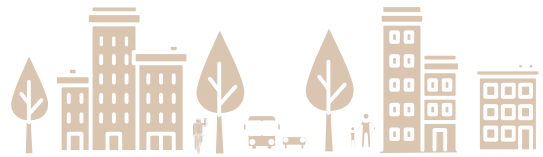
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| <p>3.2.3.1 Increase opportunities for social connection and pedestrian connectivity through the provision of parklets, pedestrian links, plazas, and other common amenity areas (public and private).</p> <p>3.2.3.2 Create opportunities for entry courts, attractive corner plazas, mid-block pedestrian links, and other additions to the public realm.</p> <p>3.2.3.3 Integrate inspirational landscapes, art, cultural expressions, historic elements, and destination amenities to generate community interest and attract surrounding neighbourhoods.</p> | <p>3.2.3.4 Create a unique identity for the development through the cohesive application of building and landscape elements that add interest day and night and create a welcoming site.</p> <p>3.2.3.5 Consider ways to mitigate potential noise conflicts between residential and non-residential uses.</p> <p>3.2.3.6 At-grade surface parking is discouraged, except for short-term parking needs such as loading, valet station, and delivery services.</p> |
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3.3

CORRIDORS



Mixed-Use Corridor



Residential Corridor

Rationale: Corridors connect Urban Centres along major transportation routes, and support medium density residential and mixed-use development. Mixed-Use Corridors are to be places of activity, with residential uses and street-oriented commercial or institutional services at the ground level to serve the surrounding neighbourhood. Residential Corridors are areas that support low to mid-rise residential apartments and townhouses. See also Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations' of *City Plan*. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to development within the Mixed-Use Corridor and Residential Corridor land use designations.



3.3.1 Building Design

Guidelines

- | | |
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| <p>3.3.1.1 The design of new buildings should carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale, and to preserve access to sunlight.</p> <p>3.3.1.2 To support <u>placemaking</u>, buildings should incorporate landmark or emblematic design features, such as prominent vertical elements, use of colour, significant corner treatments, plazas, and extensions of the public realm.</p> <p>3.3.1.3 For buildings greater than four storeys, a building base should be clearly defined and human scaled to relate to the pedestrian realm.</p> <p>3.3.1.4 Residential building design should be distinguished from commercial forms using strategies such as balconies, bay windows, and other architectural detailing.</p> | <p>3.3.1.5 Peaked or sloped roof forms are encouraged on townhouses and low-rise buildings. Where flat roofs are proposed, horizontal overhangs should be provided in varying depths to add visual interest and express individual units.</p> <p>3.3.1.6 Visual breaks in building façades should be provided approximately every 12 to 24 metres, including a change in façade material.</p> <p>3.3.1.7 Avoid the use of mirrored glazing or excessive amounts of opaque glazing.</p> |
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3.3.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>3.3.2.1 Activate street frontages with outdoor displays, accessible patios, and outdoor seating to engage with the public realm.</p> <p>3.3.2.2 Orient primary building façades and entries to the fronting street(s) to create a defined street.</p> | <p>3.3.2.3 Create well-defined and universally accessible primary building entrances along streets and at street corners using design elements such as weather protection, architectural features, high quality material finishes and detailing, signage, and lighting.</p> <p>3.3.2.4 On commercial frontages incorporate generous amounts of windows, glazing, and frequent entrances to create visual interest, punctuation, and rhythm along the street.</p> |
|--|--|

- 3.3.2.5 Weather protection should extend over public sidewalks to provide sufficient coverage.
- 3.3.2.6 Residential entrances should be separated from ground floor commercial uses in mixed-use developments. On corner lots, residential entries on the secondary street are supported.

- 3.3.2.7 Provide a transition from the sidewalk to dwelling unit and building entrances using design elements such as porches, raised entries, bay windows, roof extensions, patios, low decorative fences, gates, and landscaping.
- 3.3.2.8 Above-grade parking structures should be concealed by building floor area or other strategies to effectively screen the parking structure (see Figure 10).

3.3.3 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

- 3.3.3.1 Increase opportunities for social connection and pedestrian connectivity through the provision of pedestrian links, plazas, and other common amenity areas (private and public).
- 3.3.3.2 Create opportunities for entry courts, attractive corner plazas, mid-block pedestrian links, and other additions to the public realm.
- 3.3.3.3 Integrate inspirational landscapes, art, cultural expressions, historic elements, and destination amenities to generate community interest and attract surrounding neighbourhoods to commercial services.
- 3.3.3.4 Create a unique identity for the development through the cohesive application of building and landscape elements that add interest day and night and create a welcoming site.
- 3.3.3.5 Consider ways to mitigate potential noise conflicts between residential and non-residential uses.
- 3.3.3.6 At-grade surface parking is discouraged, except for short-term parking needs such as loading, valet station, and delivery services.

3.4

NEIGHBOURHOOD & SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD



Neighbourhood



Suburban Neighbourhood

Rationale: The Neighbourhood designation includes areas that are closer to Urban Centres, Corridors, and/or key transit routes. Modest growth in these areas is encouraged through residential infill, keeping in mind the scale and character of the existing neighbourhood. A greater diversity of housing options is supported ranging from detached housing units up to four-storey apartment buildings.

The Suburban Neighbourhood designation includes areas that are further away from services and transit. These areas are intended to primarily include ground-oriented housing up to three storeys in height ranging from detached and duplex forms to clustered townhouse and rowhouse forms. See also Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations' of *City Plan*. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to development within the Neighbourhood and Suburban Neighbourhood land use designations.



3.4.1 Building Design

Guidelines

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| <p>3.4.1.1 The design of new buildings should carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings, to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale and complement existing neighbourhood character.</p> <p>3.4.1.2 Where new development is larger in vertical or horizontal scale than the existing neighbourhood, the design should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Visually reduce the building mass into smaller volumes with contrasting colours and materials, architectural features, articulated elevations, or other effective strategies. ii. Mitigate shadowing and overlook into adjacent properties to preserve access to sunlight and privacy. iii. Vary the rooflines to provide visual interest, and use architectural details to identify individual units. <p>3.4.1.3 Roof forms and vertical massing should consider views (for onsite residents), consider and be sympathetic to views from adjacent buildings, and contribute to a diversity of building forms.</p> <p>3.4.1.4 When choosing the siting and height of a building, consider and minimize the impact on existing public <u>view corridors</u>.</p> | <p>3.4.1.5 Peaked or sloped roof forms are encouraged for ground-oriented housing developments. Where flat roofs are proposed, horizontal overhangs should be provided in varying depths to add visual interest and express individual units.</p> <p>3.4.1.6 Building design that respects and celebrates the heritage of the neighbourhood is encouraged, including the preservation and rehabilitation of character homes and heritage features.</p> <p>3.4.1.7 In developments with more than one building consider ways to distinguish the buildings in materiality or colour for wayfinding.</p> <p>3.4.1.8 The overall choice of materials and colour should create a cohesive visual composition suitable for a residential neighbourhood and create a unique sense of place.</p> |
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3.4.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

- 3.4.2.1 Provide direct connections from the street and sidewalk to ground floor units and primary building entrances. Gated community designs are not supported.
- 3.4.2.2 Primary building and dwelling unit entrances should be visible from the public street and defined by architectural features such as a roof, canopy, columns, or trellis.
- 3.4.2.3 Provide a transition from the sidewalk to dwelling unit and building entrances using design elements such as porches, raised entries, bay windows, roof extensions, patios, low decorative fences, gates, and landscaping.
- 3.4.2.4 Dwelling unit and building entrances should have lighting to illuminate addresses and create a welcoming entry.

3.4.3 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

- 3.4.3.1 New development should incorporate building setbacks that are sympathetic to existing buildings and setbacks along the street.
- 3.4.3.2 Continue neighbourhood patterns such as green front yards with landscaping to enhance the street frontage.
- 3.4.3.3 Front, rear, or side yards, when directly facing a street or other public space, shall have landscape buffers that allow visual connection to the street.
- 3.4.3.4 In developments with family-friendly housing units, provide adequately sized and well-designed play areas for children.
- 3.4.3.5 Rooftop patios should face the fronting street and be setback from the building edge to minimize overlook onto neighbouring properties.
- 3.4.3.6 Parking areas are to be screened from view with low decorative walls, plantings, hedges, or screens to minimize their visual impact and prevent glare from headlights onto residential buildings.
- 3.4.3.7 Vehicle accesses that cross sidewalks and pedestrian routes are to be demarcated by concrete paving or other highly textured paving that is visually separate from the asphalt.
- 3.4.3.8 Fencing should be durable, high quality, and complementary to the surrounding residential context.

3.5

OLD CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD



Old City Neighbourhood

Rationale: The Old City is a distinct neighbourhood in Nanaimo that is recognized for its historic charm and unique heritage values. These values warrant special attention and promote the preservation and rehabilitation of architecturally and historically significant buildings and heritage features. The Old City Neighbourhood supports small-scale commercial uses and low to medium density residential uses, typically up to three storeys in height, including the conversion of character homes to multi-unit residential and/or business and professional offices. Site and building design must celebrate the Old City Neighbourhood heritage, while also supporting sensitive infill development. See also Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations' of *City Plan*. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to development within the Old City Neighbourhood land use designation.



3.5.1 Building Design

Guidelines

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| <p>3.5.1.1 Building design that respects and celebrates the heritage of the neighbourhood is encouraged, including the preservation and rehabilitation of character homes and heritage features.</p> <p>3.5.1.2 The design of new buildings should carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings, to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale and complement existing neighbourhood character.</p> <p>3.5.1.3 Where building heights greater than three storeys occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A stepped transition should be provided to adjacent buildings. ii. Minimize height impacts by using natural or built features such as siting the building in the slope of land or along a transportation corridor. <p>3.5.1.4 Roof forms and vertical massing should consider views (for onsite residents), consider and be sympathetic to views from adjacent buildings, and contribute to a diversity of building forms.</p> <p>3.5.1.5 When choosing the siting and height of a building, consider and minimize the impact on existing public <u>view corridors</u>.</p> <p>3.5.1.6 Pitched roofs with substantial roof overhangs, and roofing materials such as wood shingles, wood shakes or other durable material in shake profile are encouraged.</p> | <p>3.5.1.7 Provide each dwelling unit and building with an inviting and easily identifiable ground floor entry that is visible from the street with lighting that illuminates the address.</p> <p>3.5.1.8 Incorporate porches, verandas, and balconies as traditional socializing spaces and important elements in building massing to create open space at the base of a building that balances the building mass above.</p> <p>3.5.1.9 Projections and recesses are encouraged, with consideration to energy performance needs, to create visual interest with features such as bays, dormers, turrets, room projections, porches, and recessed balconies.</p> <p>3.5.1.10 The use of traditional wall cladding and materials is encouraged, such as horizontal wood siding (either shiplap or clapboard), wood shingles, and smooth troweled stucco combined with wide wood trim and railings.</p> <p>3.5.1.11 Contemporary building finishes may be incorporated where they achieve a level of detailing and layering that is complementary to the neighbourhood context.</p> <p>3.5.1.12 Concrete block, plain concrete or painted finishes as a façade for exterior walls is strongly discouraged.</p> |
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| <p>3.5.1.13 The overall choice of materials and colour should create a cohesive visual composition reflective of the Old City neighbourhood. Colour schemes with two or more contrasting or complementary hues should be used, emphasizing architectural details such as window trim, doors, and fascia boards.</p> <p>3.5.1.14 The use of the following window types are encouraged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Rectangular windows with wide wood trim and casings. ii. Traditional bays and corner windows. iii. Bay windows, turrets, box windows and dormer windows. | <p>3.5.1.15 The amount of window to wall area should be limited to give a traditional appearance.</p> <p>3.5.1.16 Window arrangement from floor to floor should demonstrate a balance of order, if not a geometric symmetry.</p> <p>3.5.1.17 Feature windows with wooden grilles or stained-glass panels are encouraged.</p> |
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3.5.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

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| <p>3.5.2.1 Provide direct connections from the street and sidewalk to ground floor units and primary building entrances. Gated community designs are not supported.</p> <p>3.5.2.2 Primary building and dwelling unit entrances should be visible from the public street and defined by architectural features such as a roof, canopy, columns, or trellis.</p> | <p>3.5.2.3 Provide a transition from the sidewalk to dwelling unit and building entrances using design elements such as porches, raised entries, bay windows, roof extensions, patios, low decorative walls or fences, and landscaping.</p> <p>3.5.2.4 Design street frontages that break up large buildings into smaller frontage units</p> <p>3.5.2.5 Dwelling unit and building entrances should have lighting to illuminate addresses and create a welcoming entry.</p> |
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3.5.3 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

- 3.5.3.1 New development should incorporate building setbacks that are sympathetic to existing buildings and setbacks along the street (see Figure 11).

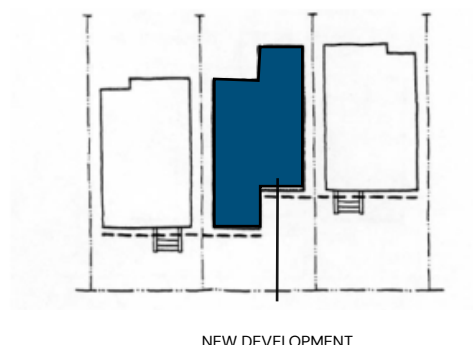


Figure 11: Building Setbacks | New development should incorporate building setbacks that are sympathetic to existing buildings and setbacks along the street.

- 3.5.3.2 Continue neighbourhood patterns such as green front yards with trees and landscaping to enhance the street and lane frontages.
- 3.5.3.3 Front, rear, or side yards, when directly facing a street or other public space, shall have landscape buffers that allow visual connection to the street.
- 3.5.3.4 Incorporate design features at pedestrian and vehicle entrances to the site, such as gates, canopies, pilasters, arbours, accent plantings and lighting.
- 3.5.3.5 Window boxes, planters and other formal planting designs are encouraged.
- 3.5.3.6 Fence design should be in keeping with traditional residential character, such as a picket fence, or a decorative wood fence with lattice. Plain board or chain-link fencing is discouraged.
- 3.5.3.7 Provide adequately sized and well-designed play areas for children in developments with family-friendly housing units.
- 3.5.3.8 Formalized landscape designs are encouraged along street edges such as low hedges.
- 3.5.3.9 Rooftop patios should face the fronting street and be set back from the building edge to minimize overlook onto neighbouring properties.
- 3.5.3.10 Parking areas are to be screened from view with low decorative walls, plantings, hedges or screens to minimize their visual impact and prevent glare from headlights onto residential buildings.
- 3.5.3.11 Vehicle access areas that cross sidewalks and pedestrian routes are to be demarcated by concrete paving or other highly textured paving that is visually separate from the asphalt.



3.6

INDUSTRIAL LANDS



Industrial



Light Industrial

Rationale: Productive industrial land supports ongoing business and employment. It is within the industrial areas that we can strategically activate economic opportunities and sustain Nanaimo over the long term. See also Part D4 'Future Land Use Designations' of *City Plan*. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to development within the Industrial land use designations. While good design is important, it is acknowledged that industrial development may apply a more simplistic design aesthetic and treatment than would be found in more urban and residential areas.



3.6.1 Building Design

Guidelines

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| <p>3.6.1.1 Infill industrial development that is adjacent to non-industrial uses should respect adjacent building forms by considering design elements such as building siting, height, and massing to ensure an appropriate transition in form and scale.</p> | <p>3.6.1.4 Building entrances should provide transparency, weather protection, lighting, and accessible pedestrian access.</p> |
| <p>3.6.1.2 Use simple, durable, high quality finishes on building elevations that reflect industrial character such as corrugated metal combined with natural materials that provide texture and warmth, such as heavy timbers.</p> | <p>3.6.1.5 In developments with more than one building, or multi-tenant buildings, consider ways to distinguish the buildings or units with façade materials, address markers, defined entries, and colour variations for wayfinding.</p> |
| <p>3.6.1.3 Avoid large blank walls where visible to the public realm, or add visual interest using strategies such as architectural features, façade treatments, colour variation, windows, and landscaping.</p> | |

3.6.2 Street Interface

Guidelines

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| <p>3.6.2.1 The main building entrance should face the street and incorporate a canopy, awning or other architectural feature for wayfinding as well as support accessibility.</p> | <p>3.6.2.4 New development that is adjacent to or visible from Provincial Highways should be designed to provide an attractive façade or natural buffer facing the highway. Storage yards and outdoor industrial activity along the highway corridors should be screened from view.</p> |
| <p>3.6.2.2 Incorporate windows to allow natural light inside the building, and where appropriate to allow visibility of industrial processes inside the building.</p> | |
| <p>3.6.2.3 Where windows are not suitable, use design strategies to create visual interest facing the street.</p> | |

3.6.3 Site & Landscape Design

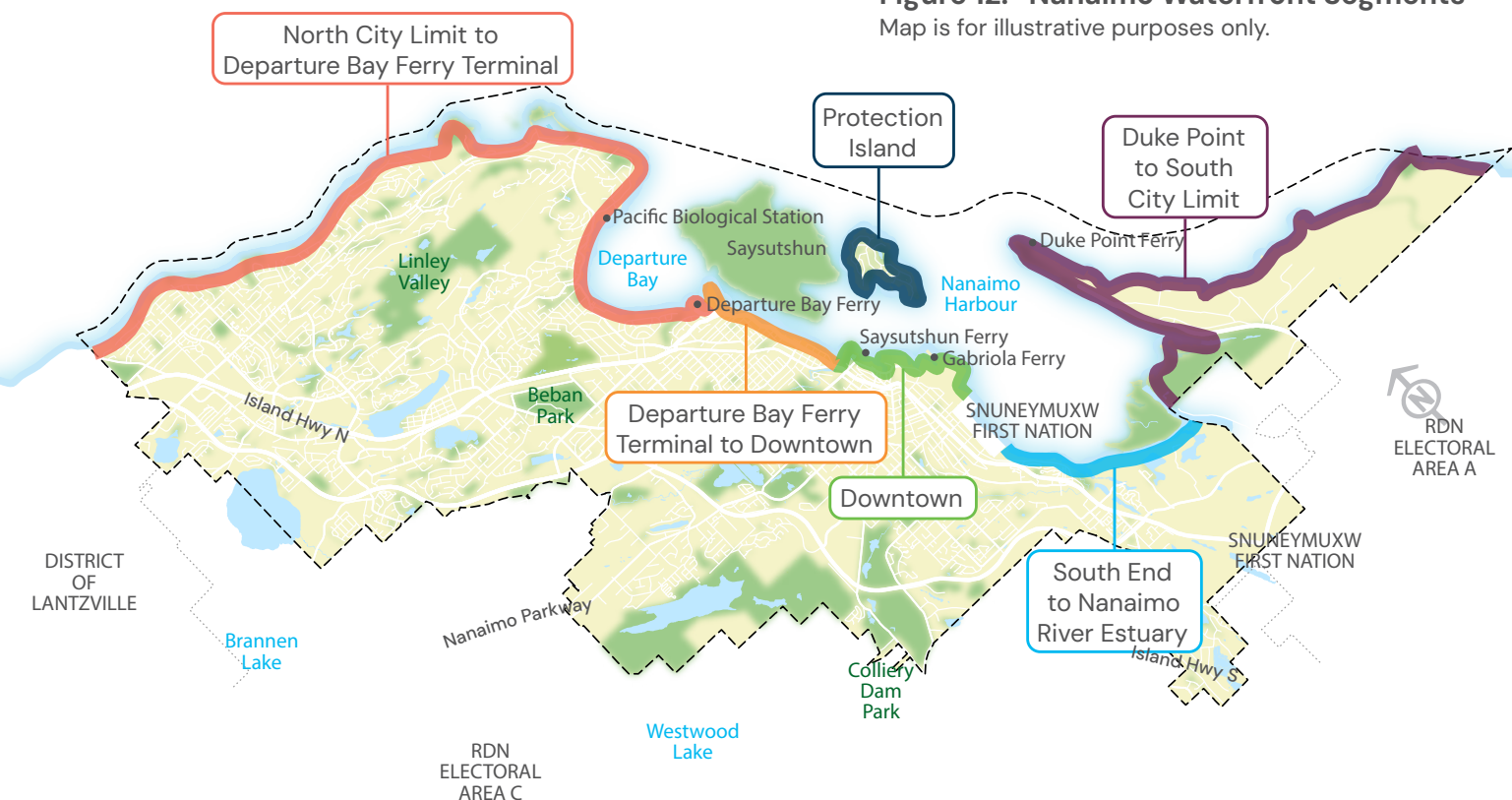
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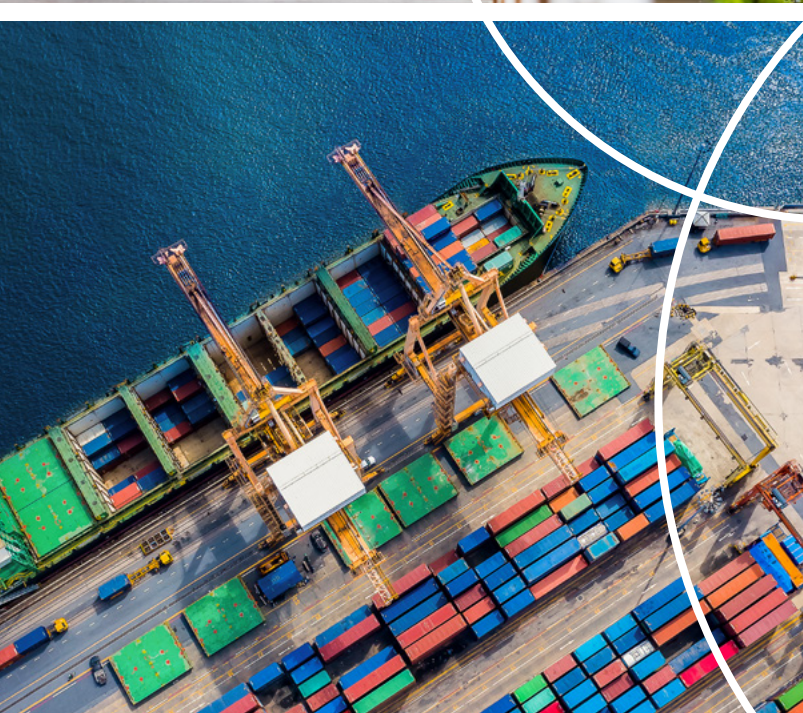
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| 3.6.3.1 | Landscaping in industrial areas should be low maintenance, and can apply a more simple and hardy treatment where needed to accommodate on-site operations. | 3.6.3.5 | Provide accessible pedestrian linkages and pathways on-site to connect sidewalks, parking areas, building entrances, and outdoor amenity areas. |
| 3.6.3.2 | Consider opportunities to enhance the public realm while providing functional landscaping. | 3.6.3.6 | Provide outdoor amenity space for employees. |
| 3.6.3.3 | Where industrial development is adjacent to a non-industrial use, design strategies should be utilized to reduce visual and noise impacts, including the use of landscaping and fencing. | 3.6.3.7 | Outdoor storage and waste management areas and lighting for light industrial uses should be screened from the public realm and adjacent residential uses. |
| 3.6.3.4 | Position loading docks and service areas away from non-industrial uses to mitigate impacts from truck movements and heavy vehicles on the surrounding neighbourhood. | | |

3.7 WATERFRONT

Rationale: The Waterfront land use designation is applied to ocean and foreshore areas allowing for a wide variety of uses that interface with the ocean environment (see Figure 12). The design guidelines in this section focus on celebrating Nanaimo as a harbour city, ensuring strong physical and visual public connection to the waterfront, and protecting waterfront lands that support marine development. See also Part D4 ‘Future Land Use Designations’ of *City Plan*. In addition to the General Design Guidelines, the following guidelines apply to development within the Waterfront land use designation.

Figure 12: Nanaimo Waterfront Segments
Map is for illustrative purposes only.





3.7.1 Building Design

Guidelines

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| <p>3.7.1.1 The design of new buildings must carefully consider the siting, height, and massing of adjacent buildings to ensure a transition in form and scale and preserve access to sunlight.</p> <p>3.7.1.2 Building siting and height should consider opportunities to preserve the character of and access to existing public <u>view corridors</u>, including the inner harbour, Departure Bay, Newcastle Channel, and Saysutshun Island.</p> <p>3.7.1.3 Roof forms and vertical massing should consider views (for onsite residents), consider and be sympathetic to views from adjacent buildings, and contribute to a diversity of building forms.</p> <p>3.7.1.4 Peaked or sloped roof forms are encouraged to maximize views.</p> | <p>3.7.1.5 Ensure buildings provide active frontages, and promote commercial activity (e.g. storefronts and restaurant patios) along the waterfront and towards public streets.</p> <p>3.7.1.6 Use building and façade materials and textures that reflect a west coast marine identity such as cedar siding, corrugated metal and timber accents.</p> <p>3.7.1.7 Design buildings that can accommodate multiple businesses, and allow for flexibility to adapt to changing tenant and business needs (e.g. incorporate roll-up doors in areas that face the waterfront walkway to facilitate temporary or seasonal businesses).</p> |
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3.7.2 Site & Landscape Design

Guidelines

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| <p>3.7.2.1 Site design and building orientation should be compatible with adjacent uses, including transitions and buffering between residential and commercial or industrial uses.</p> <p>3.7.2.2 Provide a continuous uninterrupted public walkway along the waterfront that meets universally design principles.</p> <p>3.7.2.3 Consider the design and landscaping on the edges of the site, ensuring an attractive, human scaled interface with public streets and the waterfront.</p> | <p>3.7.2.4 Incorporate accessible public plazas, view points, seating areas, and park spaces to encourage gathering and leisure activities that enhance the community's connection to the waterfront.</p> <p>3.7.2.5 Provide visible and accessible pedestrian access routes through developments to the waterfront.</p> <p>3.7.2.6 Consider including access to small watercraft launches (ramp, dock or pier structure) where appropriate.</p> |
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- 3.7.2.7 Incorporate site infrastructure, loading and parking areas into the site and building design such that they are screened from view.
- 3.7.2.8 Incorporate art that celebrates the history of the area and the marine environment.
- 3.7.2.9 Site and landscape furnishings should be robust and resistant to salt corrosion, and should reflect the character of the marine environment.



4

GLOSSARY

Acid-Etch: Acid-etch is the process of cutting a hard surface, such as glass or metal, using a specially formulated acid for etching (etchant) in order to create a design.

Blue-Green Roof System: A blue-green roof system combines blue and green roof technologies. Conventional green roofs use a drainage layer to provide lateral drainage and irrigation. Blue roof technology, aims to increase both the volume of water stored and control the amount of water released to ease the burden on the overall stormwater system. When a blue and green roof system is combined they maximize rooftop stormwater management capability.

Brise-Soleils: Bris-soleils are an architectural feature of a building that reduces heat gain within the building by deflecting sunlight.

Dark Sky Lighting Principles: The dark sky principles for responsible outdoor lighting are to: i) only use light if it is needed; ii) direct light so it falls only where it is needed; iii) light should be no brighter than necessary; and iv) use warmer light where possible.

Deciduous Tree: Deciduous trees shed their leaves seasonally, while also providing shade and block heat from the sun during the hotter months.

Evergreen Tree: Evergreen trees do not shed their leaves in the winter, instead, they stay green all year. They also provide food and shelter for birds, small mammals, and other wildlife year-round.

Greenway: A greenway is a linear corridor of open space, with natural features such as trees and trails that is designed to connect parks, neighbourhoods, and other community destinations. A greenway is primarily for pedestrian and bicycle use, while also providing environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat connections.

Permeable: A permeable surface is a surface that allows water to pass through it and into the ground. The benefits of permeable surfaces include stormwater management, pollutant filtration and water conservation.

Placemaking: A collaborative process that involves designing and developing public spaces to enhance the quality, identity, and functionality of a location. It aims to create spaces that are attractive, accessible, and meaningful to the community, fostering a sense of belonging and improving social, cultural, and economic vitality. Placemaking typically integrates local culture, environmental features, and community needs that encourage interaction, creativity, and a stronger connection between people and their surroundings.

Pollinator Habitat: Pollinator habitat can be created with pollinator friendly plantings that include specific nectar and pollen producing plants to attract pollinator insects. Pollinator habitat provides food, shelter, and protection for pollinator insects such as bees, butterflies, and birds.

Streetwall: A streetwall refers to the continuous line of building façades that align along the edge of a street, creating a defined boundary between the public space of the street and the private space of buildings.

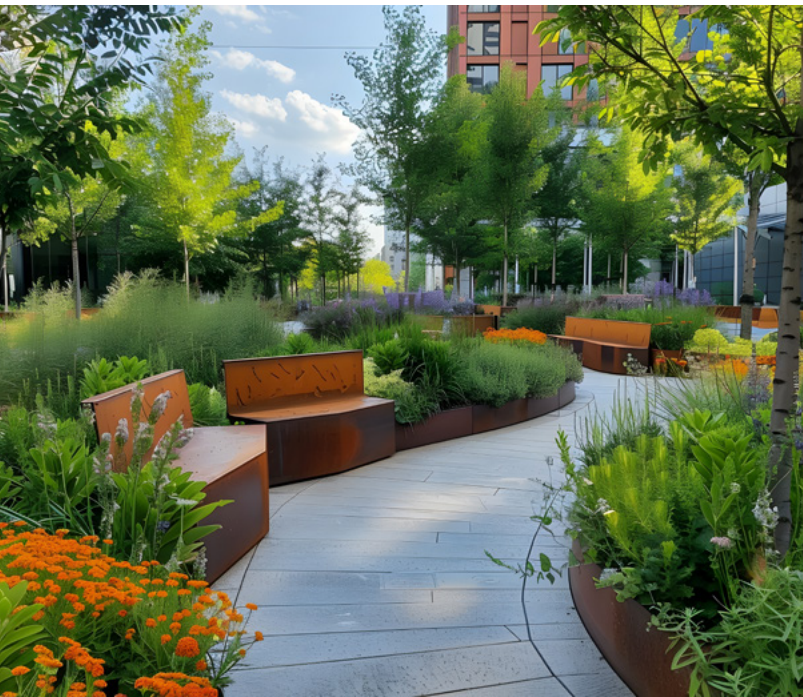
Thermal Bridging: A thermal bridge, also called a cold bridge, heat bridge, or thermal bypass, is an area or component of an object which has higher thermal conductivity than the surrounding materials, creating a path of least resistance for heat transfer. As we insulate buildings to a higher level, thermal bridges can become a significant source of heat loss.

Tree Canopy: A tree canopy is created through a series of trees where the layered branches, leaves, and stems of the trees cover the ground. Tree canopies provide shade, air quality, stormwater run off, help control temperature, and can increase human health.

Universal Design: Universal design is the practice of designing environments and buildings to be accessible to people of all ages, sizes, abilities, and disabilities.

View Corridors: An area that is essential to maintaining a scenic or other visually significant public view.





CITY OF NANAIMO

BYLAW NO. 4500.235

A BYLAW TO AMEND THE "CITY OF NANAIMO ZONING BYLAW 2011 NO. 4500"

WHEREAS the Council may zone land, by bylaw, pursuant to the *Local Government Act*;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Municipal Council of the City of Nanaimo, in open meeting assembled, ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. This Bylaw may be cited as the "Zoning Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2025 No. 4500.235".

2. The "City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500" is hereby amended as follows:

(1) "Part 5 – Definitions" is amended by deleting the definition of 'Buffer Area'.

(2) "Part 5 – Definitions" is amended by adding the following definition after 'Laboratory':

LANDSCAPE BUFFER - means an area with landscaping that provides functional and aesthetic enhancement along streets and lot lines that contains any combination of trees, bushes, shrubs, plants, flowers, natural vegetation other than noxious weeds and invasive species, decorative rocks, planters, ornamental fences, and the like.

(3) "Part 5 – Definitions" is amended by adding the following definition after 'Public Market':

PUBLIC PLAZA – means an area that is exclusively pedestrian and is visible from the street, backed by a highly detailed building facade, and contains elements such as decorative paving surface, site furniture, trees, decorative lighting and the like.

(4) "Part 5 – Definitions" is amended by adding the following definition after 'Warehouse':

WASTE MANAGEMENT ENCLOSURE – means a structure with or without a roof where solid waste collection containers are stored and screened from view.

(5) "Section 6.10 Fence Height" is amended by replacing Subsection 6.10.7 with the following:

6.10.7 Trellis, gate, arbor, or similar ornamental structures within a required yard setback area may be excluded from the calculation of fence height provided that such a feature:

- a) demarcates a pedestrian access;
- b) does not exceed 2.4m in height;
- c) does not exceed 2.0m in width; and
- d) complies with Section 6.9 (visibility at intersections) of this Bylaw.

(6) "Section 6.10 Fence Height" is amended by adding the following after Subsection 6.10.7:

6.10.8 Notwithstanding Subsection 6.10.2, the maximum height of a fence adjacent to a park shall not exceed 1.2m.

- (7) “Part 17 – Landscaping” is amended by replacing Sections 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4, 17.5, 17.6, 17.7, 17.8 17.9, 17.10, 17.11, and 17.12, with the following:

17.1 REQUIRED LANDSCAPING

17.1.1 A landscape buffer:

- a) shall be required on a lot where a DPA8: Form and Character development permit is required as outlined in Section 18.8 of this Bylaw;
- b) shall comply with Subsection 6.9 ‘Visibility at Intersections’ of this Bylaw; and
- c) must be continuous, broken only by walkways and driveways.

17.1.2 The following table specifies the minimum landscape buffer widths to be provided on a lot:

Use	All lot lines	Lot lines abutting a residential use*
Multiple Family Dwelling Use	1.5m	--
Mixed Use	1.5m	--
Commercial Use	1.5m	3.0m
Industrial Use	3.0m	7.5m

**Abutting a lot zoned to allow residential use as a principal use*

17.1.4 Notwithstanding Subsection 17.1.2, a landscape buffer shall not be required where:

- a) the minimum setback for a principal building is 0m from a street or a lot line;
- b) a lot line abuts the same zone;
- c) a lot line where an industrial zone abuts another industrial zone.

17.1.3 Notwithstanding Subsection 17.1.2, where a lot line abuts a park:

- a) a landscape buffer shall not be required; and
- b) fencing shall be provided in accordance with Subsection 6.10.8 of this Bylaw.

17.1.5 A landscape buffer abutting a street may be substituted with a public plaza where public access to the plaza is secured by legal means.

17.1.6 Waste management enclosures must be set back a minimum of 3.0m from:

- a) any lot line abutting a lot zoned for residential use; and
- b) a principal building.

17.1.7 All planted areas (trees, shrubs, plants) required by this Bylaw shall be serviced by an underground irrigation system and shall be maintained in good condition.

- (8) Part 18, Section 18.8 DPA8: Form and Character Guidelines is amended by replacing Subsections 18.8.2 with the following:

18.8.2 A development permit is required for any proposed commercial, industrial, multi-family, or mixed-use development in DPA8: Form and Character.

- (9) Part 18, Section 18.8 DPA8: Form and Character Guidelines is amended by replacing Subsections 18.8.3 and 18.8.4 with the following:

Guidelines

- 18.8.3 The *Form and Character Design Guidelines* (2025) form part of the DPA8 guidelines, and shall apply to all proposed commercial, industrial, multi-family, or mixed-use development in DPA8: Form and Character.
- 18.8.4 In addition to 18.8.3, the design guidelines in the following documents, which form part of the DPA8 guidelines, shall also apply to any proposed commercial, industrial, multi-family, or mixed-use development in the corresponding areas shown on Schedule E of this Bylaw:
- a) *Nanaimo Downtown Plan* (2002)
 - b) *Port Drive Waterfront Master Plan* (2018)
 - c) *Hospital Area Plan* (2018)
 - d) *Bowers District Master Plan* (2022)
 - e) *Sandstone Master Plan* (2022)
- (10) Schedule 'E' is amended by replacing "Schedule E – Neighbourhood and Area Plan Form and Character Design Guidelines" with "Schedule E – Form and Character Design Guidelines – Area Plans" as shown in Schedule A of this Bylaw.

PASSED FIRST READING: _____
PASSED SECOND READING: _____
PUBLIC HEARING HELD: _____
PASSED THIRD READING: _____
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT: _____
ADOPTED: _____

MAYOR

CORPORATE OFFICER

SCHEDULE A

