



Downtown and Main Street Urban Design Handbook

Town of Slave Lake



ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd.

October 10th, 2017

Acknowledgments

The Downtown and Main Street Area Plan was prepared through the collaborative works of the following individuals.

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Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Importance of Urban Design

Communities that offer active and vibrant Downtown and Main Street areas possess built environments that work in unison with the public realm. Urban design can help influence, shape, and mold built form aspects such as massing, setbacks, entrances, facades, and materials in order to merge public realm aspects, such as sidewalks and streets, with the built environment. The fusion of private and public realms creates third spaces in which the pedestrian experience is influenced by a combination of aspects from both realms.

Third spaces are crucial for supporting formal and informal social interactions that activate the liveliness of Downtown and Main Street areas. Typical third spaces may consist of restaurant patios that spill out onto public sidewalks or streets, or building entrance courtyards with seating and gathering areas. Urban design plays a key role in building third spaces in order to provide opportunities for community interaction.

Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Slave Lake Downtown and Main Street Urban Design Handbook (UDH) is to foster the creation of a built environment and public realm that supports engaging pedestrian experiences, social community events, and local commerce through providing urban design direction for new developments and modifications to existing developments. The UDH establishes a standard of design for Slave Lake that will reflect the Town's identity through high quality built forms and open spaces within the Downtown and Main Street areas.

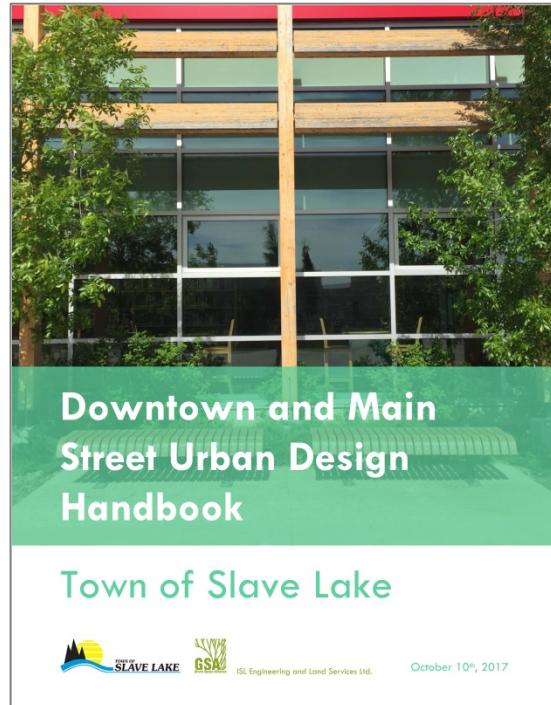
Urban design guidelines within the UDH serve as a user-friendly resource for Town staff, planners, business owners, and developers when reviewing/submitting development applications. The utilization of UDH guidelines will implement various policies of the Town of Slave Lake Downtown and Main Street Area Plan as well as the vision realization.

Relation to other Town Documents

The Downtown and Main Street Urban Design Handbook was developed in conjunction with the Downtown and Main Street Area Plan (AP). Intensive public involvement helped guide the direction of both Downtown and Main Street documents. Community pride and ownership of the two documents will help implement and achieve the community vision for Slave Lake established in the AP.

This document shall be consulted in conjunction with the following Town of Slave Lake planning policy and regulation documents:

- Town of Slave Lake Municipal Development Plan;
- Town of Slave Lake Land Use Bylaw; and
- Town of Slave Lake Downtown and Main Street Area Plan.

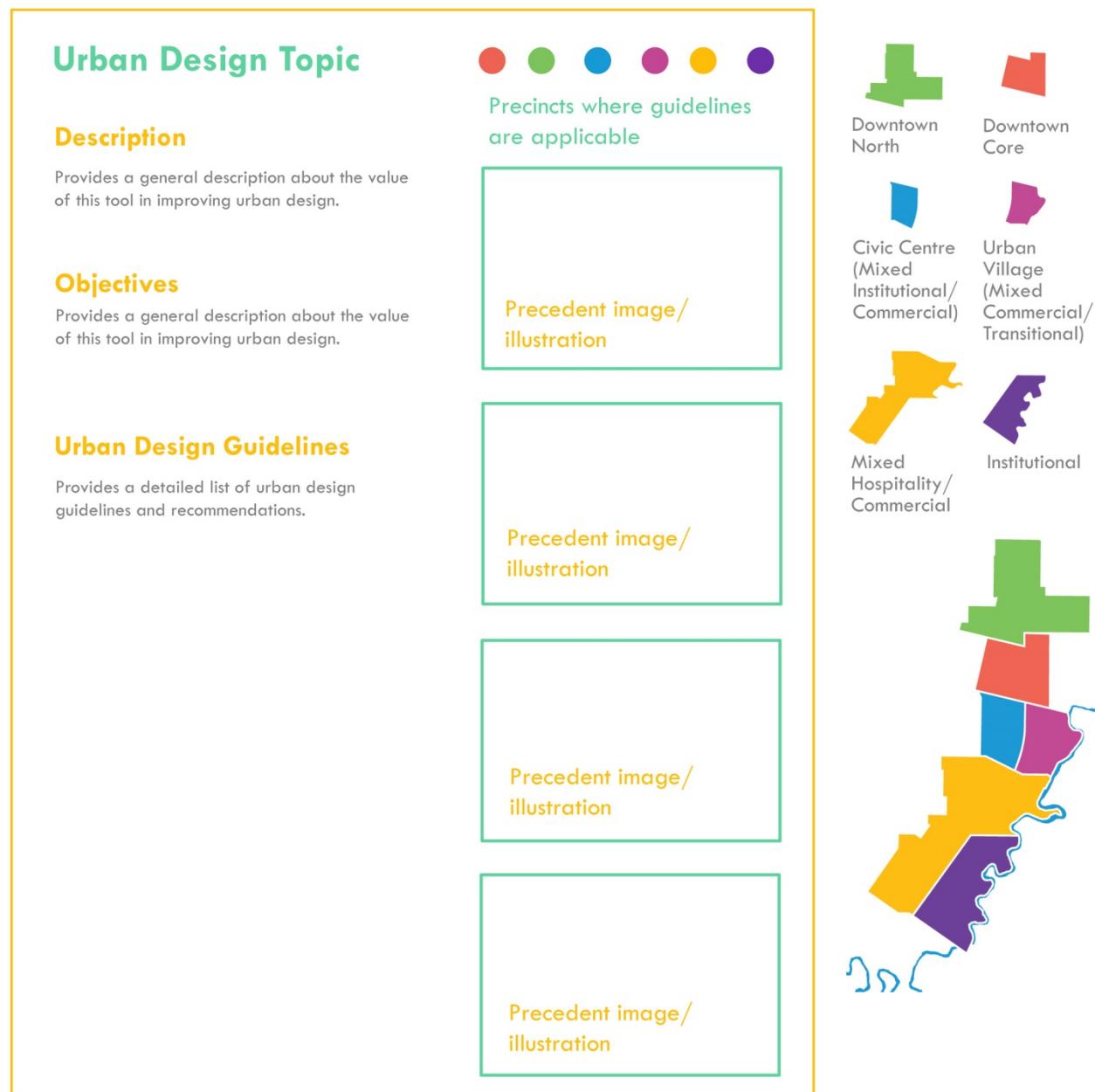


1.2 How to use the Urban Design Handbook

The Urban Design Handbook (UHD) shall be used to direct and assess the urban design quality of developments within the Downtown and Main Street Area Plan boundary. Guidelines within the UDH shall be reviewed and considered by Town administration along with development regulations within the Town of Slave Lake Land Use Bylaw (LUB) when making decisions on development applications. Development regulation variances, in accordance with the LUB variance process, may be granted where development conformity to UDH guidelines is provided.

Business owners and developers may consult the UDH and incorporate guidelines into development applications prior to application submission. Development applications should have regard for UDH guidelines and the urban design principles. The UDH may also be used to help inspire renovations to existing development that would contribute towards creating an active and engaging Downtown and Main Street.

The UDH has been designed in a user-friendly layout and structure in order to effectively convey urban design principles and guidelines. The following illustration summarizes the structure of Section 4 that details guidelines for specific urban design aspects.



1.3 Sense of Place and Placemaking Tools

What is 'Sense of Place'?

Sense of place is an individual's perception of how enjoyable and memorable a place is. Areas with a positive sense of place attract individuals because of their experiences within that place are enjoyable.

Successful downtowns and main streets possess strong senses of place that positively contribute to pedestrian experiences. Businesses within areas containing strong senses of place often benefit from higher frequencies of visitor traffic and activity within the area.

How is sense of place created?

Collaborative efforts between the public and private realm that support active and engaging pedestrian experiences help to establish a sense of place. The attention to architectural details and public realm elements makes an area unique. When an individual's senses are activated they become engaged and enjoy their experience within that space.

What are placemaking tools?

The objective of placemaking tools is to influence aspects of the built environment and public realm in order to establish a unique sense of place. Guidelines of the UDH support the combination of various placemaking tools to stimulate different human senses. The following is a list of examples of how the five human senses can be activated through placemaking tools in order to contribute to establishing a sense of place.

Sight

- Distinctive architectural features and styles;
- Unique building materials that reflect the identity of an area;
- Evening lighting features; and
- Public art that conveys unique messages.

Hearing

- Water fountains damper noise pollution from surrounding areas and streets and provide soothing background noise;
- Speakers can be used for public events or provide ambiance noise on patios; and
- Buildings and landscape elements can be strategically positioned to block noise associated with adjacent or nearby uses.

Taste

- Picnic tables and drinking fountains in public parks;
- Fire pits for cooking;
- Enabling temporary food vendors and farmer markets to locate within a park;
- Restaurant patios facing or extending into public areas; and
- Encouraging a mix of restaurants to locate within a concentrated area helps to provide culinary options.

Smell

- Planting of vegetation; and
- Outdoor food vendors.

Touch

- Provision of seating;
- Public art and sculptures also provide informal play structures for children; and
- Textured materials for surfaces such as interlock brick walkways, gravel paths, grassed lawns, and hard surfaced plazas.

Quality Places

Urban spaces that have a unique sense of place consist of the following elements:

- Walkability;
- Mix-use development;
- Sidewalk amenities;
- Open green spaces; and
- Various purposes.

Types of Placemaking

Placemaking refers to actions necessary to transform an urban space into a vibrant 'place' for enjoyment of all age groups to where people are attracted, where they feel safe and feel comfortable. Good placemaking can be achieved in a variety of ways to address site-specific issues/challenges. Typical placemaking types include:

- Strategic placemaking;
- Creative placemaking; and
- Tactical placemaking.

The combination of different placemaking types that share and use different urban design aspects is essential to creating quality places. The relationship between the three types of placemaking, described within Michigan State University's *Placemaking Guidebook – Placemaking as an Economic Development Tool*, is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Types of Placemaking

Strategic Placemaking

Strategic placemaking is a targeted process that utilizes both changes to physical forms and land uses through projects within urban nodes, corridors, and centres in order to create areas that are attractive to talented knowledge workers. Characteristics of areas that utilize strategic placemaking are:

- Pedestrian-friendly;
- Mixed-use;
- Accessible via multiple modes of transit;
- Parks and pathways;
- Gathering spaces; and
- Seating areas.

Creative Placemaking

Creative placemaking involves the partnership between multiple community stakeholders such as citizens, civic managers, civil society and civic developers that influence the physical form and social opportunities of a space in order to promote culture and arts. Examples of creative placemaking may include:

- Permanent or temporary public art installations;
- Music instruments in public squares; and
- Interactive activities and events.

Tactical Placemaking

Tactical placemaking uses small changes in land uses or activation of spaces to showcase cultural expressions through low cost and quick projects. Examples of tactical placemaking may include:

- Adding a sidewalk patio to a restaurant frontage to increase street level activity in order to activate the public realm;
- Changing the use of a building to mixed-use to provide commercial and residential activity; and
- Adding moveable tables and chairs to a public square to allow people to gather.

Strategic Placemaking



- Physical form
- Land uses
- Policy direction

Tactical Placemaking



- Low cost
- Space activation
- Sidewalk patios
- Transferring parking area



- Creative initiatives
- Public art
- Cultural events
- Interactive activities

Creative Placemaking



2



The Spirit of Slave Lake

2.1 Defining the Spirit of Slave Lake

A customised downtown-specific theme represents and promotes the town as a whole and can be reflected through architectural details, materials, colours and public art. Expressing a downtown theme through elements of the built environment and public realm establishes a sense of community pride.

Portraying a downtown theme helps to brand and market a town from a tourism perspective. Visitors may be attracted to the area for a specific reason or through curiosity. Many towns throughout Alberta have successfully created themes for their downtowns that express their unique identities. Such themes have been endorsed by local businesses and citizens and articulated through business types, architectural styles, and public art.

Community ownership of a downtown theme is essential for ensuring authenticity and active promotion. Extensive community brainstorming and consultation is required in order to develop a downtown theme.

Town of Slave Lake

A multi-stakeholder workshop was held during the development process of the Downtown and Main Street Area Plan and Urban Design Handbook with a variety of community invested stakeholders representing local citizens, civic managers, civil society and civic developers.

During the multi-stakeholder workshop, four groups of participants engaged in a brainstorming exercise to identify a downtown theme for Slave Lake that could be communicated through guidelines within the Urban Design Handbook. While all four derived themes, shown below, were unique and creative, common assets of Slave Lake were incorporated and shared across all identified themes.

Cottage, Waterfront and Lake



- Cottage style architecture
- Peak roofs
- Stone, wood and brick materials
- Soft architectural controls
- Sculptures and public art

Boreal Forest



- Timber and natural materials
- Warm colours and lights
- Emphasize forest industry
- Boreal forest retreat
- Fishing lodge

Fishing Capital of Alberta



- Year round activity (boat and ice fishing)
- Fishing derby with cooking festival
- 12 species of fish
- Fishing fact signs
- Cottage feel

The Outdoors



- Summer and winter outdoor activities
- Outdoor experiences
- Beach, camping, boating, ATVs, trails, hiking, hunting, fishing, ice fishing, windsurfing, kayaking, paddle boarding, cross-country skiing, sledding, bird watching

2.2 Key Design Principles for 'Nature Unlimited' Theme

The four themes identified by participants of the multi-stakeholder workshop shared the main overarching common asset of Slave Lake being the connection to nature. A 'Nature Unlimited' theme for the Town of Slave Lake was developed, which can be expressed through architectural elements, colour and material pallets, and personal contribution from various property owners.

Architectural Elements

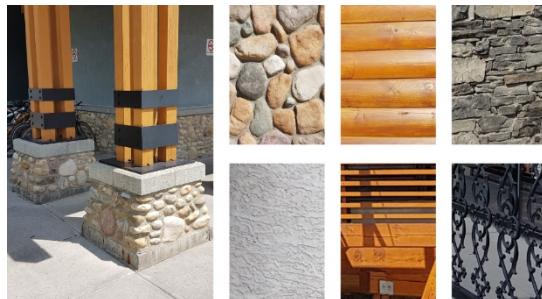
Various architectural elements can be used to express the Nature Unlimited theme through:

- Sloping roofs;
- Natural material (stone and wood); and
- Exposed structural architectural elements such as wooden columns, timber trusses, brackets, arches, masonry lintels and sills, and exposed cross-bracing etc.



Colour and Material Pallets

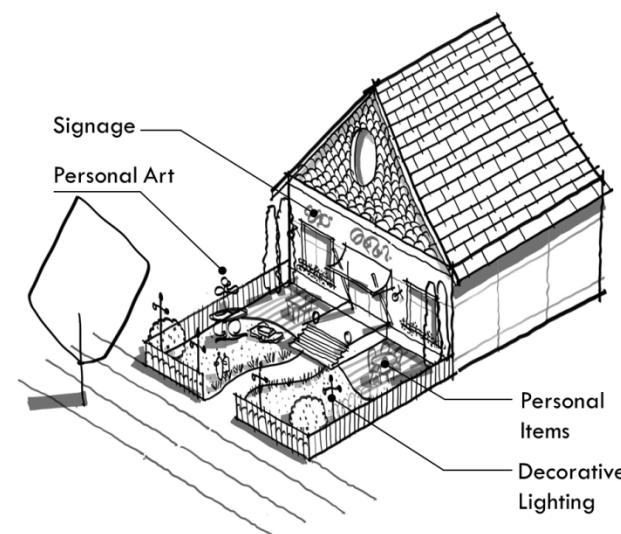
Aspects of the built environment and public realm can use a custom-designed pallet of colours and materials that express nature inspired elements.



Personal Property Touches

Small modifications to personal properties can create a visually interesting and diverse yet cohesive experience for pedestrians. Examples of small property interventions to express the Nature Unlimited theme may include:

- Unique signage;
- Natural colours/textures;
- Planting of local species;
- Art elements; and
- Personal items.







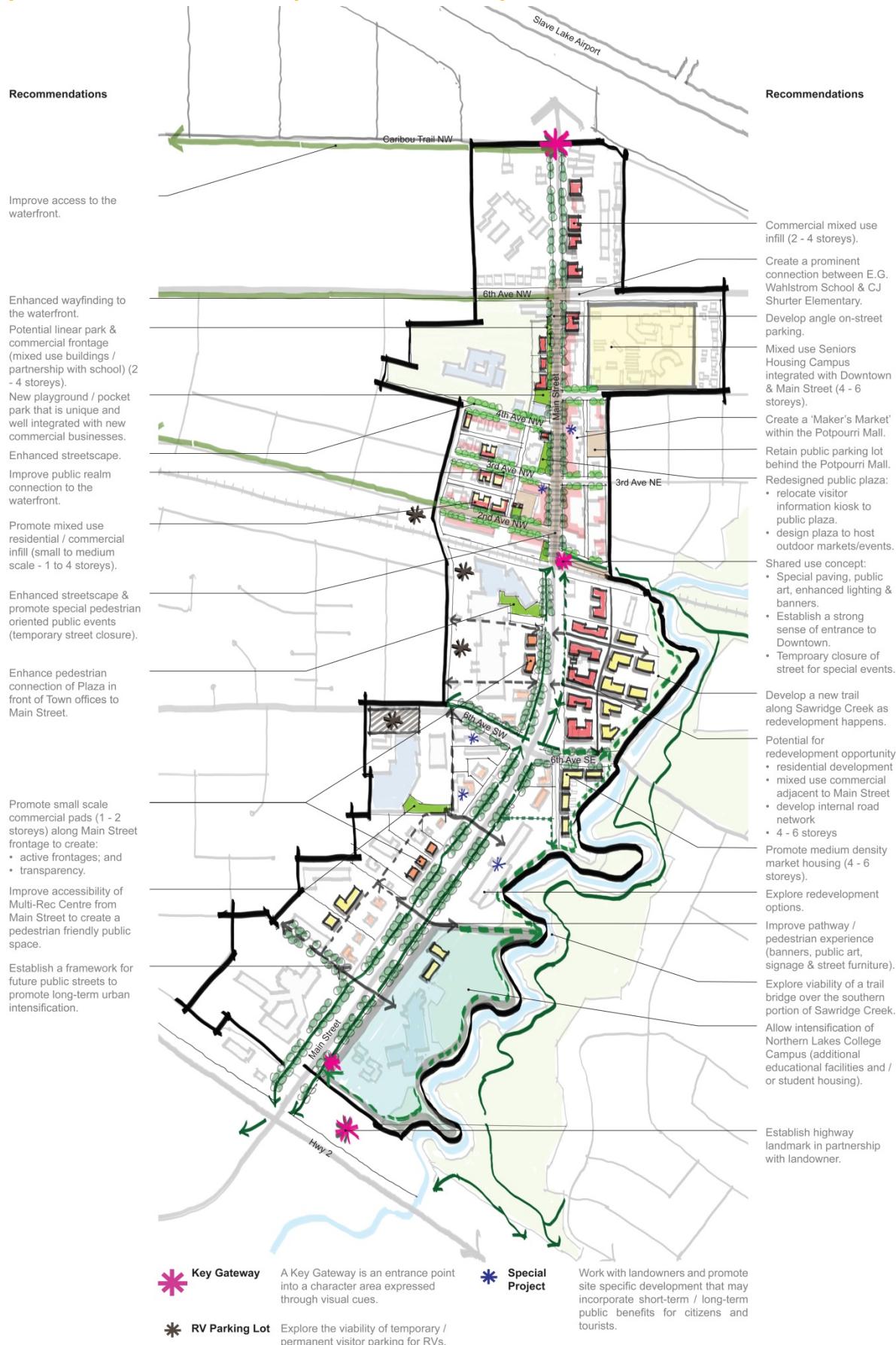
Urban Design Plan

3.1 Future Development Concept from the Downtown and Main Street Area Plan

The Future Development Concept from the Downtown and Main Street Area Plan, as shown in Map 1, will serve as an urban design plan for the Urban Design Handbook. Guidelines of the Urban Design Handbook shall implement the built form and public realm design objectives and policies established within the AP.

The urban design plan will act as an overall vision for how the Downtown and Main Street areas of Slave Lake should develop over the next 15 years. It is important that urban design guidelines strive towards accomplishing the cohesive development concept through different aspects of the built environment and public realm. Specific objectives and policies relating to the urban design plan are detailed within the AP.

Map 1 Future Development Concept



3.2 Defining Role of Public Realm, Private Realm and Interface for good Placemaking

A cohesive vision for Downtown and Main Street of Slave Lake has been established within the AP for the next 15 years. The urban fabric of Downtown and Main Street is comprised of the private and public realms. The vision for Downtown and Main Street will be realized through successful implementation of various aspects of both the private and public realms.

Role of the Public Sector

The public sector has a role of investing into aspects of the public realm in order to help create a sense of place. When a municipality invests into the public realm it sends a positive message to adjacent business owners and citizens that placemaking efforts are being pursued.

Public sector investments in the public realm may include:

- Maintenance of existing public realm elements;
- Wide sidewalks with distinctive surface materials;
- Street lamps and banners;
- Street furniture such as benches and garbage receptacles;
- On-street parking and bicycle parking;
- Street trees and continuous maintenance of decorative vegetation;
- Sidewalk crossings;
- Public plazas/parks/open spaces; and
- Public trails/pathways;

Role of the Private Sector

When the public realm represents a high quality of design, often adjacent businesses may invest in their own private realm. Private sector investments in the private realm may include:

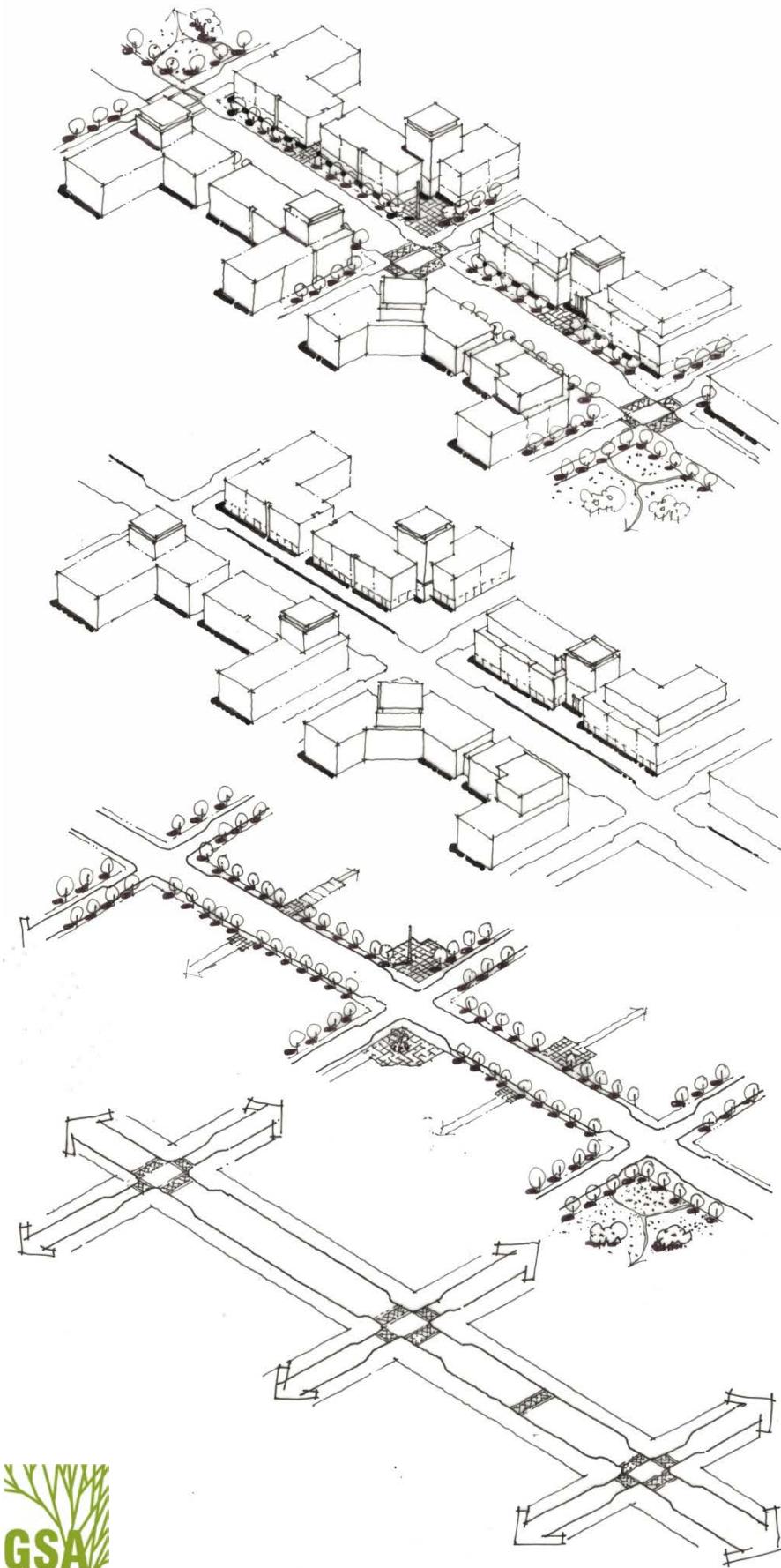
- Aesthetically pleasing/functional buildings/landmarks;
- Architectural features and expressions;
- Themed/unique building materials;
- Attractive and engaging facades and display windows;
- Vertical articulation of building facades through the use of building materials, pillars, or columns;
- Setbacks of higher building heights; and
- Weather canopies.

Public Private Interface

The public private interface involves lands along property lines. A successful public private realm is created when the defining line between the two land ownerships, public and private properties, is blurred. The melding of these two realms creates shared spaces in which individual aspects of each realm have an impact on the cohesiveness of the public private interface.

Interface aspects that work together may include:

- Store display windows and sidewalk locations;
- Building entrances relative to sidewalk access;
- Temporary merchandise displays or patios on sidewalks or within on-street parking;
- Signage and lighting extruding from building over sidewalks; and
- Edges of parks, plazas and/or public streets/alleys.



Public Private Interface

Cohesive urban form with integrated public and private realm

Private Realm

Buildings

Public Realm

Streetscape, trees, parks, plazas and connections

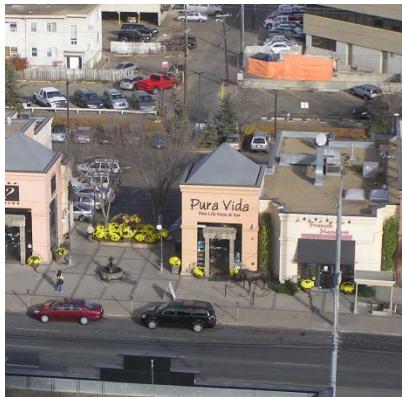
Public Realm

Public roadway/intersection design with focus on various modes of transportation

3.3 Private Realm Aspects

Detailed urban design guidelines are established for the following three key aspects of private realm that play a key role in creating an engaging and active pedestrian environment.

- Site Planning
- Building Design
- Façade Characteristics



Site Planning

Refers to parcel layout including orientation of buildings, location of parking, site access and on-site amenities

Building Orientation

Access

Parking



Building Design

Refers to building massing, land uses, and response to surrounding context/urban form

Main Street Commercial

Commercial

Residential

Mixed-use



Facade Characteristics

Refers to character of public frontage with focus on windows, entrances, lighting, colours, materials and other architectural details

Colours and Materials

Cornices

Entrances

Porches

Signs

Vertical Articulation

Windows

Lighting

3.4 Public Realm Aspects

Detailed urban design guidelines are established for the following three key aspects of public realm that play a key role in creating an engaging and active pedestrian environment.

- Landscaping
- Streetscaping
- Open Spaces



Landscaping

Refers to landscape design within private properties

Planting

Landscaping within the Public-Private Realm



Streetscaping

Refers to public realm character within public road right-of-way including street pavement, sidewalks, trees, street furniture elements and lighting

Pedestrian Through Zone

Furnishing Zone

Parking Zone

Surface Parking Lots

Vehicle Zone



Open Spaces

Refers to parks, plazas, pocket parks, trails, pathways and key connections

Urban Plazas

Pocket Parks

Linear Park

Trails and Key Connections

Lighting of Streetscapes and Open Spaces

Furniture





Architectural Controls and Urban Design Guidelines

4.1 Site Planning

The layout of an individual site has an impact on how adjacent properties and the public realm interact with a private site. In order to create a functional Downtown and Main Street it is important that site planning has regard for the public private interface.

Aspects of site planning that can be influenced by urban design guidelines in order to complement the public realm include:

- Building Orientation;
- Access; and
- Parking.

Urban Design Objective

Ensure building orientation, access and parking on private properties is designed to seamlessly integrate with the public realm in order to foster an engaging and active pedestrian experience.



4.1.1 Building Orientation

Building orientation during site planning determines how the adjacent public street will be framed and what activities will be able to occur along the public street.

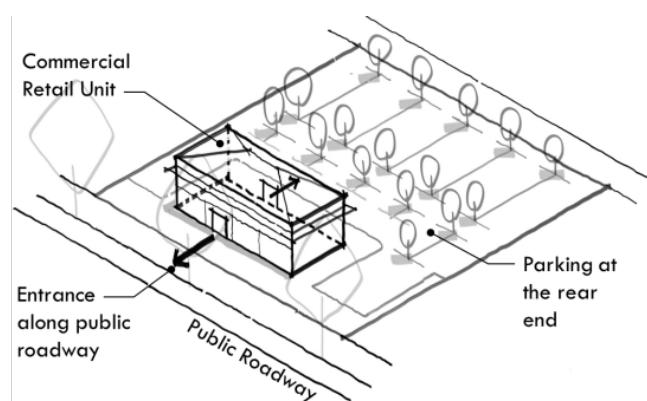
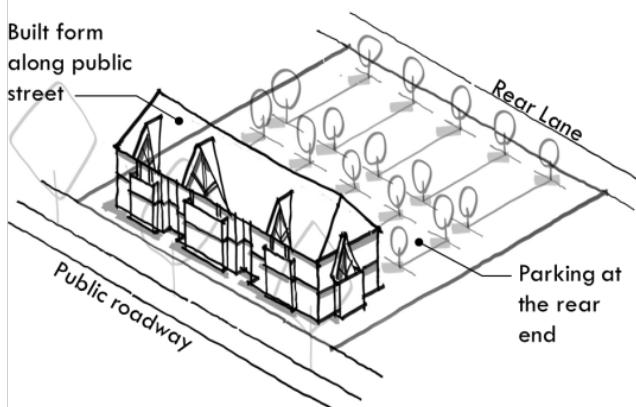
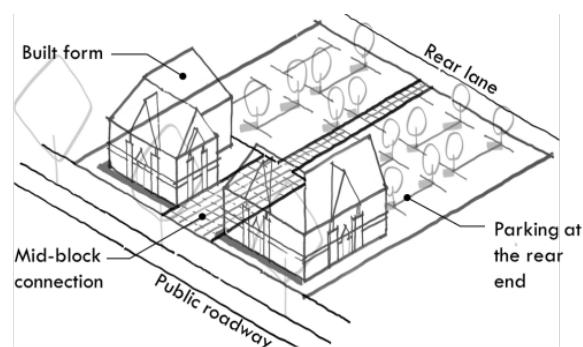
Objective

Ensure building orientation throughout Downtown and Main Street is conducive to activating sidewalks and creating an enjoyable pedestrian experience.



Guidelines

- 4.1.1.1 Position buildings directly adjacent to Main Street or public streets in order to activate the sidewalk.
- 4.1.1.2 Front yard building setbacks should be minimized.
- 4.1.1.3 Buildings on corner lots should be positioned and designed to showcase frontages on both adjacent public streets.
- 4.1.1.4 Buildings should be positioned in order to preserve, enhance, or create a view corridor towards a landmark or point of interest.
- 4.1.1.5 Buildings fronting a narrow public sidewalk may be setback an appropriate distance in order to expand the width of the public sidewalk and provide opportunities for outdoor amenities or seating areas.
- 4.1.1.6 If the front setback of the principal building is significantly more than the minimum required setback, enhanced landscaping should be provided along front property line to provide visual interest to pedestrians.
- 4.1.1.7 Siting of buildings within a parcel of land should ensure future opportunities for mid-block pedestrian connections are not negatively impacted.



4.1.2 Access

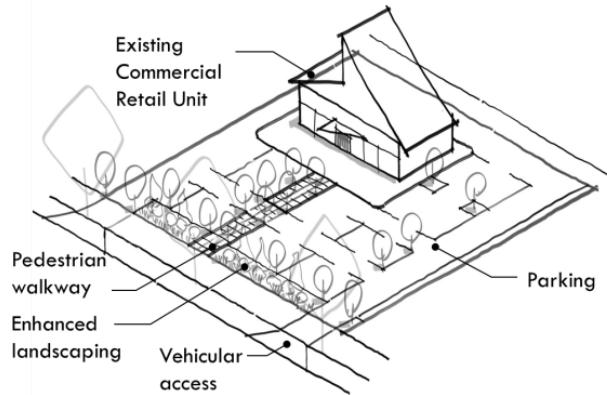
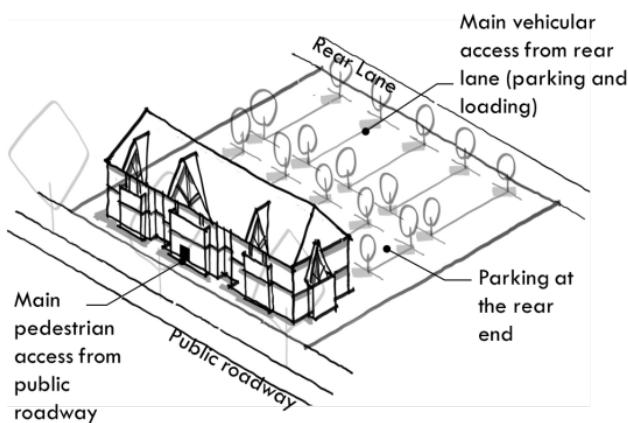
Location and design of pedestrian as well as vehicular access points to buildings and sites from public sidewalks and streets plays an important role in the quality of pedestrian experience. Facades with multiple pedestrian entrances onto public sidewalks and limited vehicle accesses offer an appealing pedestrian experience.

Objective

Provide ease of pedestrian and vehicle access to developments, from public sidewalks and streets while prioritizing pedestrian convenience and safety.

Guidelines

- 4.1.2.1 Properties backing onto a rear alley should have vehicular access via a rear alley.
- 4.1.2.2 Building design should include multiple pedestrian entrances along public sidewalk.
- 4.1.2.3 If a property has a vehicle access from a public street, enhanced landscaping along the vehicle access should be provided.
- 4.1.2.4 If a property has a vehicle access from a public street, the building frontage onto adjacent streets should be maximized and sidewalk treatments should be continued in order to provide an uninterrupted pedestrian experience.
- 4.1.2.5 Building entrances on corner lots should be prominently positioned towards the intersection of the two adjacent public streets.
- 4.1.2.6 Where an existing building is located a distance away from a public street, a direct pedestrian walkway should connect the public sidewalk to the building entrance through the use of distinctive walkway surfaces and vegetation plantings.
- 4.1.2.7 Pedestrian entrances to buildings should be clearly defined by architectural features, special materials, lighting features and or canopies.



4.1.3 Parking and Loading

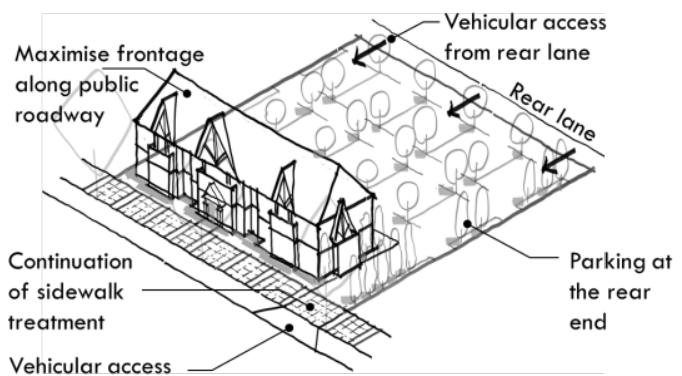
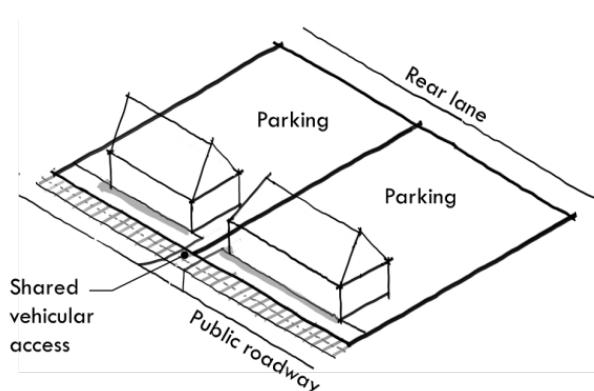
Parking facilities within the Downtown and Main Street areas of Slave Lake are essential for attracting business patrons and visitors. The location of vehicle parking facilities can help to maximize street activity while providing convenience.

Objective

Provide direction for the preferred location of private off-street vehicle parking within Downtown and Main Street areas in configurations that promote active building frontages and minimize negative impact of parking.

Guidelines

- 4.1.3.1 Vehicle parking should be positioned behind buildings at the rear of a property.
- 4.1.3.2 Vehicle parking located within a front yard should be screened by landscaping and architectural features.
- 4.1.3.3 Larger parking lots on commercial and institutional sites within the Mixed Hospitality/Commercial and Civic Centre (Mixed Institutional/Commercial) precincts should be encouraged to provide enhanced landscaping within parking islands and incorporate pedestrian walkways at regular intervals.
- 4.1.3.4 Low impact surface materials such as permeable pavers and other alternative materials should be encouraged.
- 4.1.3.5 Property owners should be encouraged to explore opportunities for shared parking design and or access points in order to minimize number of vehicular access points along Main Street frontage.
- 4.1.3.6 Design of parking islands, internal circulation lanes and selection of landscape elements within large-scale parking lots should take into consideration the viability of converting the space for occasional summer/winter public events.
- 4.1.3.7 Use of colours and textures in the pavement design of parking lots should be encouraged.
- 4.1.3.8 Loading areas and garbage receptacles should be located along rear property line and appropriately screened from public view.



4.2 Building Design

Buildings can be designed and modified to accommodate a sole use or a mix of uses. The architectural character and materials can enhance identity of a building.

The Downtown and Main Street areas are envisioned to include the following building typologies:

- Main Street Commercial;
- Commercial;
- Residential; and
- Mixed-use.

Urban Design Objective

Establish a distinct architectural character for each building type and at the same time build a common architectural language throughout the Downtown and Main Street areas.



4.2.1 Main Street Commercial

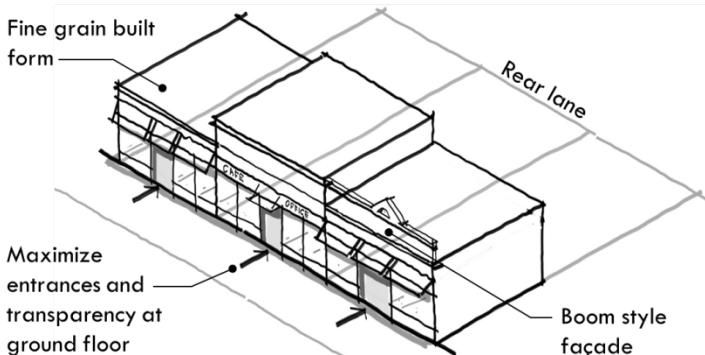
Successful main street commercial buildings provide essential architectural assets and bare structural components necessary for various commercial uses to operate across the lifespan of the building. Main street commercial buildings generally include a variety of retail commercial uses including personal shops, boutique shops, cafes, restaurants, health services and similar pedestrian oriented businesses.

Objective

Support commercial buildings along Main Street that are individually distinct, architecturally unified, flexible and responsive to changing market demands.

Guidelines

- 4.2.1.1 The massing of new commercial buildings fronting Main Street should complement the massing of adjacent existing buildings and vary no more than two storeys in difference.
- 4.2.1.2 The internal design and facade of commercial buildings along Main Street should provide flexible opportunities for multiple units and sizes by careful positioning of windows and entrances.
- 4.2.1.3 Architectural features of commercial buildings along Main Street should create a sense of visual harmony with adjacent buildings through careful placement of horizontal architectural elements such as cornice lines, projections, material bands and other similar elements. Continuity in window heights and sign placement is encouraged to achieve visual rhythm.
- 4.2.1.4 Any facade improvement project for main street commercial buildings should take inspiration from boomtown building style including facade massing, scale and proportions. Special emphasis should be placed on continuity of architectural features within existing adjacent buildings.
- 4.2.1.5 For redevelopment projects, street wall continuity should be strengthened and physical gaps between buildings be avoided.
- 4.2.1.6 Fine grain character of buildings and facades should be maintained. Larger buildings that occupy entire block with minimal entrances at the ground floor should be discouraged.
- 4.2.1.7 Any new buildings along Main Street should be built to the front property line. Front setbacks for new commercial buildings along Main Street located between 1st Avenue and 6th Avenue should be discouraged.



GSA



4.2.2 Commercial

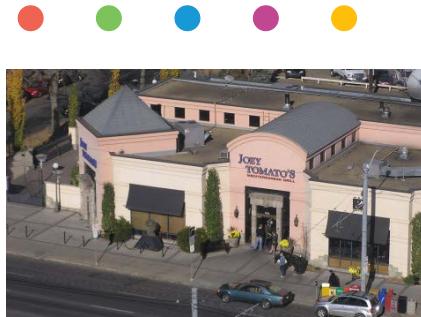
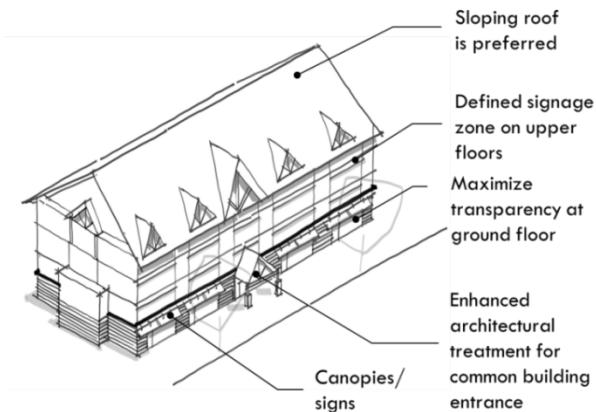
Stand-alone commercial buildings can provide for a variety of commercial uses including retail commercial, cafes and restaurants, and offices. Typical building character for stand-alone commercial buildings include low-rise commercial retail units/pads and 2-4 storey mid-rise buildings.

Objective

Ensure the design of sole use commercial buildings is supportive of creating an attractive private-public realm through providing massing and architectural details sensitive to the pedestrian scale.

Guidelines

- 4.2.2.1 The ground floor of sole use commercial buildings should be delineated with horizontal architectural features and different materials than above floors.
- 4.2.2.2 Main building entrance should provide enhanced architectural features such as larger canopy or other architectural treatments to differentiate itself from other retail commercial entrances at ground floor level.
- 4.2.2.3 Sloping rooflines should be encouraged for new multi-storey commercial buildings.
- 4.2.2.4
- 4.2.2.5 Franchise business commercial buildings should be encouraged to include elements of 'nature unlimited' theme and use creative ways to incorporate corporate logo and image in their facade design and building massing.
- 4.2.2.6 Professional office uses that occupy larger building footprint including banks should be discouraged along ground floor of Main Street located between 1st Avenue and 6th Avenue NW. Such uses should be incorporated along upper storeys of a mid-rise commercial building.
- 4.2.2.7 Larger commercial retail unit buildings in the Mixed Hospitality/Commercial and Civic Centre (Mixed Institutional/Commercial) precincts should be encouraged to provide a minimum 3.0m to 5.0m wide pedestrian sidewalk between internal parking zone and building facade. Landscaping, outdoor seating and other amenities should be encouraged in such pedestrian zone.



4.2.3 Residential

As a downtown develops, residential buildings are often converted into or incorporate commercial uses. The operation of a commercial use within a residentially designed building can create a unique character. Attracting new multi-family mid-rise residential infill is critical to long-term viability and sustenance of a vibrant downtown. Typical residential building typologies envisioned for Downtown and Main Street areas include mid-rise stand-alone multi-family residential buildings and conversion of low-rise rise residential homes to retail commercial uses.

Objective

Ensure new mid-rise residential buildings or existing low-rise residential buildings provide a human scale character; eyes on the street; and express Slave Lake's Nature Unlimited theme.

Guidelines

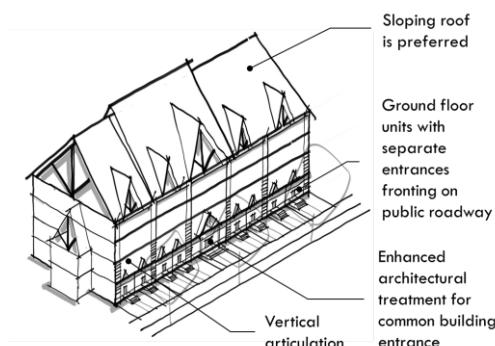
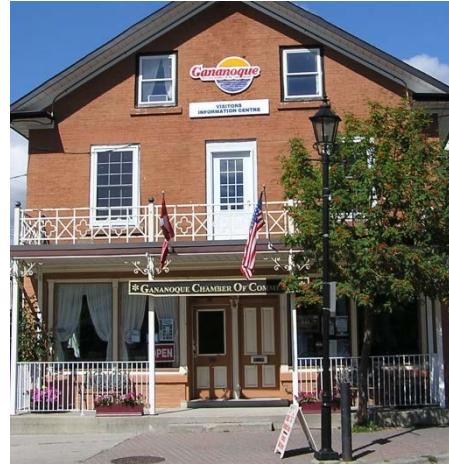
4.2.3.1 Existing residential buildings, if used for commercial purposes, should enhance the ground level transparency and provide commercial facade treatment through minor modifications. Use of murals, vibrant/natural colours/textures in residential facades should be encouraged.

4.2.3.2 A residential building that includes an associated commercial use should be encouraged to provide the following within a front yard:

- Unique street furniture;
- Art elements;
- Porches;
- Signage;
- Seating areas; and
- Landscaping.

4.2.3.3 Mid-rise multi-family residential buildings should provide individual entrances and porches for ground floor units fronting public street.

- Live-work units should be encouraged along ground floor. Live-work units should be developed at public sidewalk grade level.
- Residential only ground floor units should be raised at minimum 1.0 above public sidewalk grade
- Use of sloping roofs should be encouraged for multi-family mid-rise buildings.
- Architectural treatment such as a stepback or variation in building materials should be considered above 1st storey level.
- Architectural elements such as cascade roofs, dormer windows, cross gables should be encouraged to provide visual interest.



4.2.4 Mixed-use

Vibrant downtowns and main streets have variety of activities and presence of people throughout the day, during evening hours and a safe atmosphere during night hours. Mixed-use buildings provide opportunities for commercial and residential uses to coexist and in turn contribute to 24-7 activities within the public realm.

Objective

Support the development of mixed-use buildings within Downtown and Main Street areas in order to enhance the sense of vibrancy, safety and improve the overall quality of life.

Guidelines

- 4.2.4.1 Ground floor frontages of mixed-use buildings should include multiple active commercial uses.
- 4.2.4.2 Common main entrance for residential uses should be provide enhanced architectural articulation distinctly different than commercial entrances along ground floor level.
- 4.2.4.3 Development of live-work units should be encouraged along ground floors within the Downtown Core precinct. Commercial retail uses should also be encouraged within Downtown Core, Downtown North and Urban Village (Mixed Commercial/Transitional) precincts.
- 4.2.4.4 A stepback above first storey or upper storeys is encouraged to provide additional privacy and or terrace for residential uses located above retail commercial uses.
- 4.2.4.5 Building design and orientation of mixed-use commercial buildings should provide outdoor amenity areas for commercial and residential uses along public street frontages and contribute to public realm character.
- 4.2.4.6 Building designs should incorporate architectural differentiation between base, middle and top zones of building elevation.



4.3 Facade Characteristics

The quality and characteristics of building facades impacts the overall image of an area perceived by a visitor. Small modifications and attention to details relating to facade characteristics can result in a consistent visual language across a built environment.

Facade characteristics that can be influenced by urban design guidelines in order to create a visually interesting experience for pedestrians include:

- Colours and Materials;
- Cornices;
- Entrances;
- Porches;
- Signs;
- Vertical Articulation; and
- Windows.

Urban Design Objective

Establish urban design guidelines that achieve intricate and expressive building facades within Downtown and Main Street to create an appealing private realm



4.3.1 Colours and Materials

Application of unique and harmonized material and colour pallet can establish a distinct image and identity for an area. When each building within a district incorporates such custom-designed theme, it helps in contributing a cohesive sense of place for the whole community.

Objective

Create visual unity in the built environment within the Downtown and Main Street by expressing the 'Nature Unlimited' theme of Slave Lake through a custom-designed colours and materials pallet.

Guidelines

- 4.3.1.1 New buildings should take inspiration from the following custom-designed colours and materials palette that represents the 'Nature Unlimited' theme. Minor variations and modifications to the preferred pallet should be acceptable as long as the applicant submits a project specific colour and material palette and demonstrates how their proposal reflects the 'Nature Unlimited' theme.
- 4.3.1.2 In general, any combination of minimum two natural materials such as stone, wood, brick etc. should be incorporated in the facade design. Use of stucco should be limited to a maximum 50% area of the building facade.
- 4.3.1.3 Building materials should be carefully chosen to create shadow lines and contrast between various finishes.
- 4.3.1.4 The ground floor of buildings in Downtown Core, Downtown North precincts should be encouraged to use river or rundle stone cladding.
- 4.3.1.5 Use of vinyl siding should be prohibited in Downtown and Main Street areas.
- 4.3.1.6 Use of fire resistant roofing material should be encouraged in accordance with the FireSmart Guidelines.
- 4.3.1.7 Adjacent buildings should be encouraged to use variations in colours and materials in order to create visual diversity.





4.3.2 Cornices

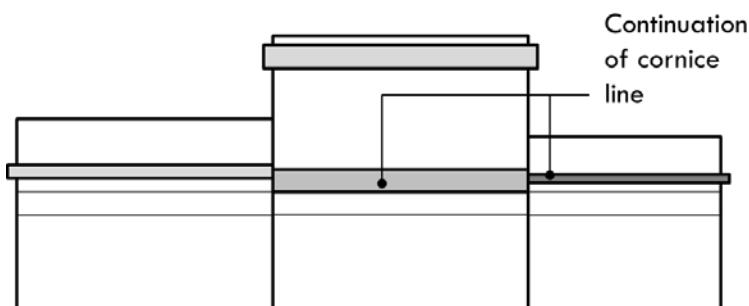
A cornice is a horizontal decorative molding that crowns top storey of a building or differentiates various building floors. In boomtown architectural style enhanced cornices were generally incorporated at the top of the second story of building facade. Some existing commercial buildings along Main Street in Downtown Core and Downtown North precincts of Slave Lake include contemporary versions of cornices along first storey level.

Objective

Create a pedestrian scaled ground floor within Downtown Core and Downtown North precincts through the use of cornices and or architectural projections on buildings.

Guidelines

- 4.3.2.1 Ground floors of buildings should be encouraged to include a prominent cornice that delineates the top of the first floor.
- 4.3.2.2 The top floor of buildings should be encouraged to have a prominent cornice.
- 4.3.2.3 New buildings should respect existing cornices or horizontal projections on adjacent buildings and provide continuation of such horizontal features in their facade design.



4.3.3 Entrances

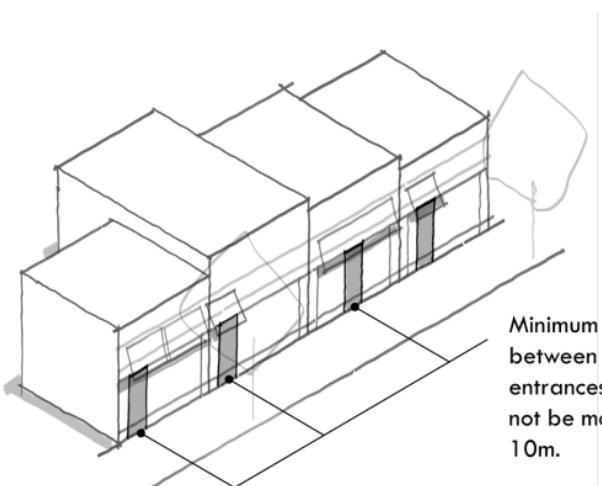
Building entrances influence pedestrian activity and flow on public sidewalks. Active streets have buildings with multiple entrances for different uses as well as architectural features that identify prominent entrances.

Objective

Ensure building entrances within Downtown and Main Street provide convenient pedestrian access from public sidewalks and enhance permeability of building facades at ground level.

Guidelines

- 4.3.3.1 If multiple entrances are provided, the recommended distance between two adjacent entrances should not be more than 10.0m.
- 4.3.3.2 A main building entrance should be positioned in a prominent location and enhanced with architectural features.
- 4.3.3.3 Canopies may be used to distinguish entrances and provide pedestrian shelter from elements.
- 4.3.3.4 Enhanced landscaping, materials, and colours may be used to differentiate building entrances.
- 4.3.3.5 Buildings adjacent to public parks should include additional entrances facing onto public parks and provide eyes on the street.
- 4.3.3.6 Commercial building entrances should be at grade for ease of access. Entrances to residential units fronting public roadway should be raised by a minimum of 1.0m to provide visual privacy for residential units.
- 4.3.3.7 Commercial retail units or pads within the Mixed Hospitality/Commercial and Civic Centre (Mixed Institutional/Commercial) precincts should provide additional entrances along Main Street frontage.
- 4.3.3.8 Depth of recessed entrances along Main Street within Downtown Core precinct should not be more than the width of the doorway.





4.3.4 Porches

Porches within residential areas help to activate streets by having the presence of people looking onto the street. Such porches within residential buildings converted for commercial uses may also provide opportunities for covered patios and merchandise displays that contribute towards creating an engaging pedestrian experience.

Objective

Promote variety of porches that enhance unique identity of each building.

Guidelines

- 4.3.4.1 Existing and new low-rise and mid-rise residential developments should be encouraged to provide custom designed porches that enhance visual appeal at the pedestrian level.
- 4.3.4.2 The design of the porch including the column design, roofing style and choice of materials/colours should complement the building design.
- 4.3.4.3 The projections should be in accordance with the Land Use Bylaw and should not project more than half the required setback.
- 4.3.4.4 Enhanced lighting should be incorporated into the porch design.



4.3.5 Signs

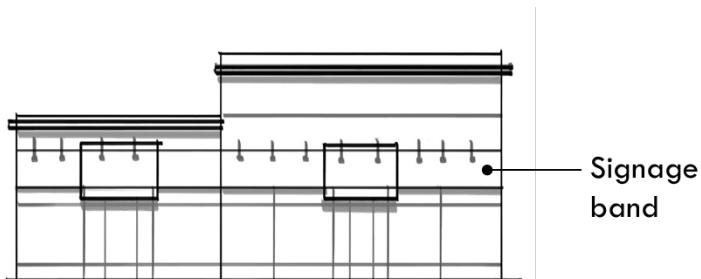
The size, design and scale of signage should be appropriate to their location and be able to convey the message to their intended audience. Large highway billboard signs are designed to catch the attention of passing by vehicle traffic. Signs within pedestrian friendly environments, such as downtowns, should be designed to a scale and text legibility appropriate for individuals walking along sidewalks.

Objective

Provide direction for preferred scale and location of signs within Downtown and Main Street that are attractive, visually interesting, and effective.

Guidelines

- 4.3.5.1 Symbol signs are encouraged. Symbols add interest to the street, are quickly read, and are remembered better than written words.
- 4.3.5.2 Simple sign designs are preferred. Typefaces that are in keeping with those seen in the adjacent areas are encouraged.
- 4.3.5.3 Building facade design should include a distinct 'signage' band within the first storey. All facia signs, projecting signs, Canopy signs, and channel letter signs should be located in such designated signage band to provide visual continuity.
- 4.3.5.4 Use of signs that use creative designs by incorporating colours and materials established in the Nature Unlimited theme should be encouraged.
- 4.3.5.5 The use of projecting signs from building facades should be promoted within Downtown Core and Downtown North precincts.
- 4.3.5.6 A-Board signs may be placed on public sidewalks.
- 4.3.5.7 Back-lit signs should be discouraged.
- 4.3.5.8 If electronic signage is used, their impact should be minimized by providing a frame of natural materials and by limiting the size of electronic display.
- 4.3.5.9 Freestanding signs in Mixed Hospitality/Commercial, Urban Village (Mixed Commercial/Transitional) and Civic Centre (Mixed Institutional/Commercial) precincts should be encouraged to incorporate a heavy stone base and/or framed with heavy timber. Decorative landscaping should generally surround freestanding signs.



4.3.6 Vertical Articulation

Lengthy and continuous blank facades create an unpleasant pedestrian experience along public sidewalks. When a continuous facade is divided into multiple sections through the use of vertical articulation in architectural features, the pedestrian experience is enhanced through an increase in visual activity.

Objective

Ensure facades within Downtown and Main Street are engaging and avoid visual monotony.

Guidelines

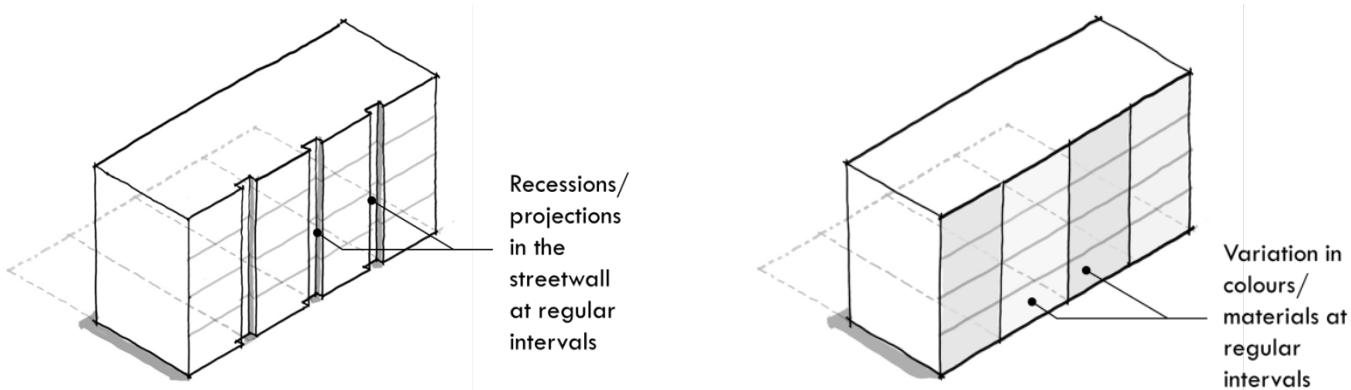
4.3.6.1 Building facades that extend a large portion of a block should be divided into distinct vertical divisions of the overall facade. In Downtown Core and Downtown North precincts, the width of such vertical articulation should follow the typical width of commercial units or typical lot widths of non-consolidated original commercial lots.

4.3.6.2 The width of vertical articulation of building facade in Civic Centre (Mixed Institutional/Commercial), Mixed Hospitality/Commercial, Institutional and Urban Village (Mixed Commercial/Transitional) precincts should be proportionate to overall building scale and massing.

4.3.6.3 Vertical articulation of a building facade may include:

- The placement of large windows separated by narrow columns or walls that utilize brick, stone, or wood materials;
- Projections and recessions at regular intervals along the building frontage;
- Colour variations; and
- Material variations.

4.3.6.4 Average width of the recession or projection should be proportionate to other architectural features of the building and abide by CPTED design principles.



4.3.7 Windows

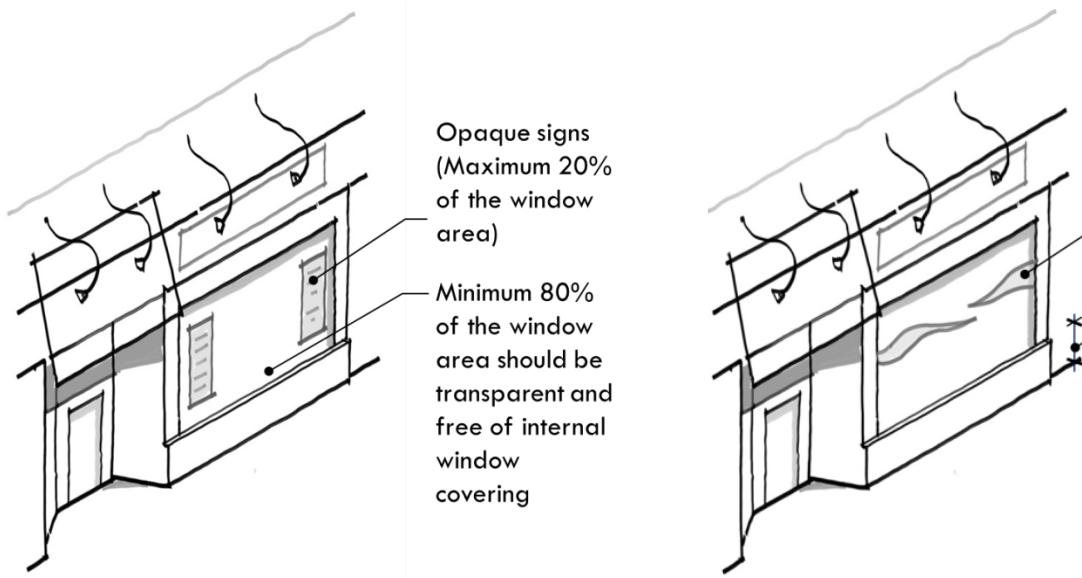
Storefront windows and displays are conducive to developing an active and engaging pedestrian experience along sidewalks. Buildings with transparent windows extend a welcoming invitation to individuals passing by to further explore what is inside the building.

Objective

Create a visually interesting and transparent street wall along the sidewalks of Downtown and Main Street areas.

Guidelines

- 4.3.7.1 The transparency of storefront windows should be maximized.
- 4.3.7.2 Windows facing a public street may be frosted/glazed a maximum of 20% of the total window surface area.
- 4.3.7.3 Storefront windows should not contain large signage/advertisements or internal window coverings that prevent the views of pedestrians from sidewalks into the building. Maximum allowable area for any opaque signage added on the transparent window should not be more than 20% of the window area.
- 4.3.7.4 Opportunities for windows and transparent facades should be maximised. Blank walls should be minimized along public street frontages.
- 4.3.7.5 The surface area of a ground floor facade should provide maximise window coverage.
- 4.3.7.6 Use of reflective/mirror glass should be prohibited along the ground floor frontages throughout Downtown and Main Street areas.
- 4.3.7.7 Use of creative signs, glass art and other methods may be considered provided they do not negatively impact transparency at the ground floor level.
- 4.3.7.8 Sill height for windows in commercial areas should not be more than 2 feet. The sill distance should be measured from average grade level of the public sidewalk.



4.3.8 Lighting

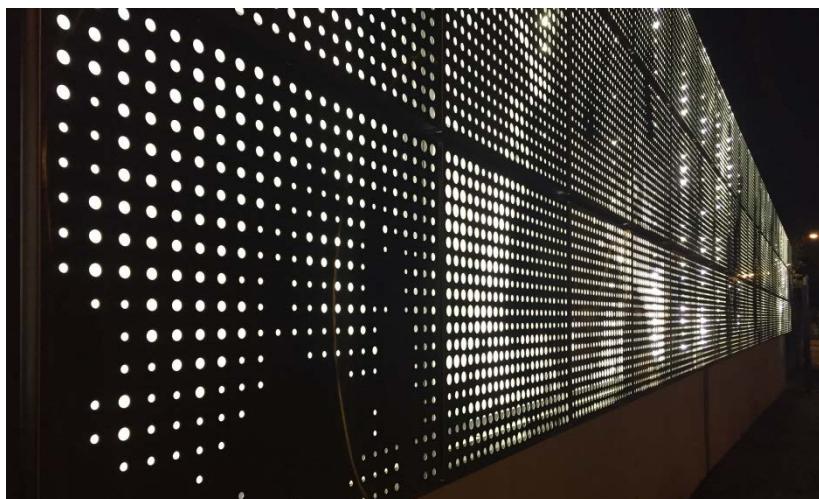
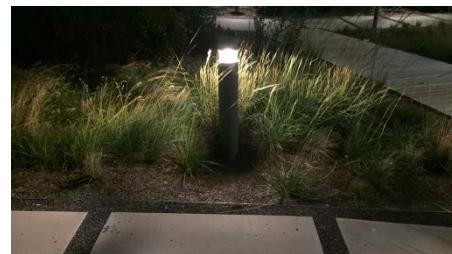
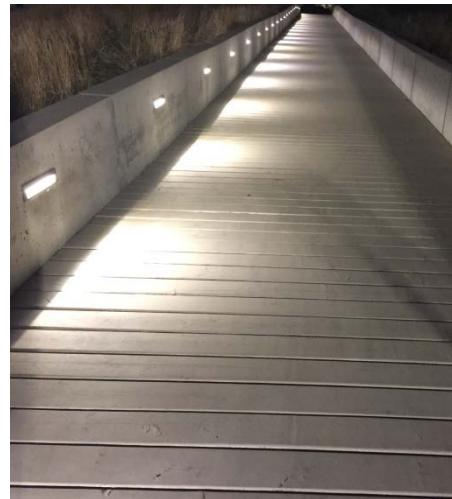
A variety of lighting elements of buildings can be utilized to create different ambiances within the public realm.

Objective

Create a vibrant, safe, and well lit pedestrian realm through the use of various targeted lighting features on building facades, signs, and architectural features.

Guidelines

- 4.3.8.1 Use of gooseneck lighting fixtures should be encouraged to light fascia signs throughout Downtown and Main Street areas.
- 4.3.8.2 The use of string lights on street trees and lamps should be encouraged as well as the spanning of string lights across the width of Main Street and connecting to street lamps.
- 4.3.8.3 Architectural features such as pillars, ingressions, and cornices should be accentuated by directional lights.
- 4.3.8.4 Coloured lights may be used to light facades and buildings.
- 4.3.8.5 Use of wall-mounted lights (sconces) should be encouraged. The design of such wall mounted lights should complement building style and public realm character.
- 4.3.8.6 Post-mounted or wall-mounted light fixtures must be kept to the minimum possible height so as not to cause glare or light trespass onto adjacent streets or properties.
- 4.3.8.7 Where practical, the use of energy efficient lighting installations should be encouraged.
- 4.3.8.8 Use of concealed lighting fixtures should be encouraged for public realm features such as benches, seating areas and bollards.



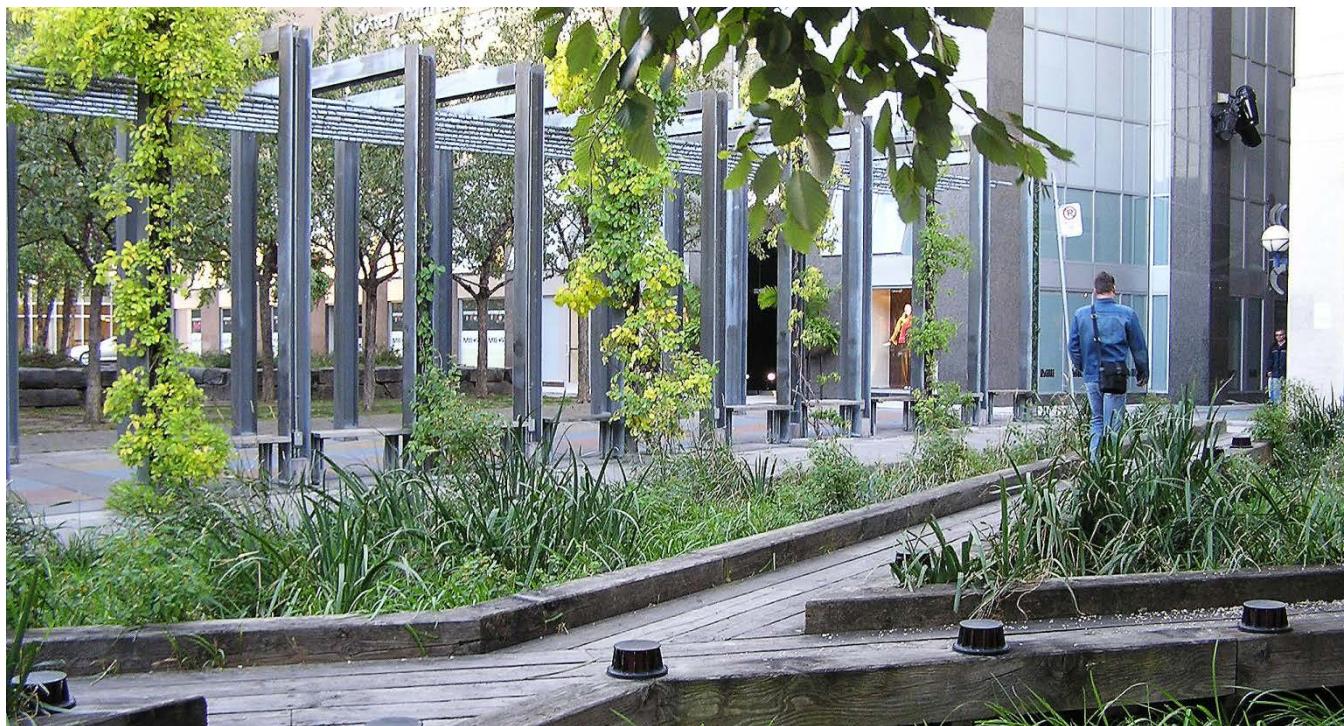
4.4 Landscaping

Landscaping can be used to enhance the visual appeal of an open space, provide weather protection to pedestrians, and absorb water runoff. Additionally, similar landscape features used throughout an area can create a cohesive image and character.

In order to create desirable Downtown and Main Street areas, it is important that landscaping features and designs have both aesthetic and functional purposes.

Urban Design Objective

Develop cohesive planting patterns and design schemes within the Downtown and Main Street areas that provide adequate conditions for the longevity of planting features while enhancing aesthetics, screening of undesirable views, and visual separation of uses.



4.4.1 Planting

The physical design, species selection, and maintenance of landscape features can have an impact on the functionality and aesthetics of an outdoor space. Various aspects need to be taken into consideration when selecting plant species such as soil provision and conditions, weather tolerance, and maintenance requirements.

Objective

Ensure planting of landscape features within the Downtown and Main Street areas utilize weather resilient plants, provide appropriate soil and drainage conditions, and are maintained regularly.

Guidelines

Maintenance

- 4.4.1.1 Protect planting soil areas from compaction and erosion.
- 4.4.1.2 Protect exposed tree soils from compaction through the use of tree grates with sufficient room to accommodate expanding tree trunks.
- 4.4.1.3 Include a means of supplying water, nutrients and oxygen to tree root areas.
- 4.4.1.4 Provide trees with protection against snow clearing and de-icing activities.

Technical Design Aspects

- 4.4.1.5 Install root barriers and deflectors to encourage root growth away from infrastructure.

Weather Considerations

- 4.4.1.6 Balance summer and winter consideration for climatic conditions, i.e. sun exposure, summer breezes, urban heat island effects, shade and westerly sun exposure.
- 4.4.1.7 Use trees and shrubs as living snow fences to protect seating areas from winter snow drift and wind. Carefully consider locations of plantings as snow drift may impact adjacent uses.
- 4.4.1.8 Select plant species that offer attractive or useful winter characteristics such as colour, fruit or tolerance to salt. Consider native or non-invasive species that create four season interest, including tall grasses. Trees that have colourful bark or retain their fruit in winter will attract winter birds and add additional colour and texture.
- 4.4.1.9 Consider snow-storage in landscape areas. Grassed or landscaped areas that are used for snow storage are subject to damage and poor growth due to compaction and pollutants, and possibly poor drainage. Select the use of non-toxic (no salt) de-icing agents.
- 4.4.1.10 Monitor changes in plant communities due to changing climate conditions.



Street Trees

4.4.1.11 Select the right tree for the right location. Select trees to minimize the root flares that affect surrounding walkways over time.



4.4.1.12 Street trees should be planted in continuous soil trenches wherever possible.

Soil and Drainage Conditions

4.4.1.13 Soil depths for turf, shrub and perennial plantings should meet or exceed the soil volumes listed in the Town of Slave Lake Development Standards and Procedures.



4.4.1.14 Use structural soil cells in hardscape areas in order to provide sufficient soil volumes.



4.4.1.15 Provide sub-drainage systems in areas where planting beds and trees may become over saturated due to poor soil infiltration.

4.4.1.16 Provide capped vertical flush ports (watering port) and vertical vents allowing for air to circulate to the root zone and tree watering.

4.4.2 Landscaping within the Public-Private Realm

Landscaping on private properties is a critical part of downtown initiatives. Landscaping can be used to express the character of individual property owners that cultivate a unique character for the downtown core, to buffer visually unappealing environments, to provide shelter from sun and the rain, and to create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

Objective

Establish a high standard and expectation of landscaping features within the public-private realm of the Downtown and Main Street areas that enhance the aesthetics and pedestrian experience.

Guidelines

Landscaping Plans

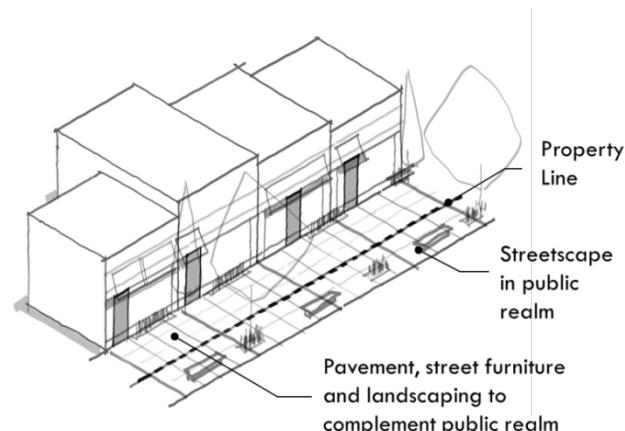
- 4.4.2.1 All new development applications should include details of existing and proposed landscape plans for the site.
- 4.4.2.2 Landscape elements should consider integration of vegetation, fencing, planters, retaining walls and small scale signage.
- 4.4.2.3 Create landscape designs that provide interest and colour through the use of vegetation. Bark, seeds, flowers, fruit, and foliage should be considered as important considerations in palette selection.
- 4.4.2.4 Use a mix of deciduous and coniferous plant material within planting designs.
- 4.4.2.5 The landscaping plan should include at least one location for the potential storage of snow along the street front.

Vacant Lots

- 4.4.2.6 Landscaping of vacant spaces is encouraged with the use of vegetation, benches, bicycle racks, advertisement boards, etc. can enhance the street atmosphere by creating a meeting or a rest area for shoppers.

Plant Selection

- 4.4.2.7 Encourage xeriscaping (drought resistant); use native plant, tree and shrub species.



4.5 Streetscaping

Downtown Streets are significant public open spaces that serve pedestrians and vehicles, provide space for public utilities and services, trees and landscaping, building access, amenities such as view corridors, visual access to the sky and sunlight and are public gathering places. Streetscapes are designed to perform their diverse roles, balancing the spatial needs of existing and future users within the right-of-way. This includes prioritizing pedestrians with all ability levels, bicycles, automobiles, utilities and landscaping.

Streetscapes should adhere to a consistent aesthetic standard throughout a downtown area. Standardized lighting fixtures, street furniture, and paving materials are key to achieving this. Examples of suitable components of the pedestrian realm include:

- Pedestrian Through Zone;
- Furnishing Zone;
- Street Parking Zone;
- Surface Parking Lots; and
- Vehicular Zone.

Urban Design Objective

Establish a vibrant and interactive streetscape with the Downtown and Main Street area. Create visual interest and appeal through influencing facades, store signage, wayfinding signage, sidewalk patios, street furnishings, pedestrian amenities, on-street parking, and parking lots.



4.5.1 Pedestrian Through Zone

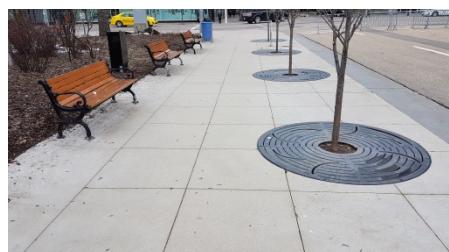
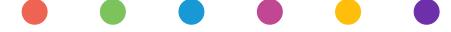
The Pedestrian Through Zone provides people with access to local business and private property, where people socialize and primarily where people walk. This zone encourages business success, and is crucial to creating a Main Street that is a place for people.

Objective

Support the development of Pedestrian Through Zones within Downtown and Main Street areas that enable the ease of pedestrian movement.

Guidelines

- 4.5.1.1 All Pedestrian Through Zones should have a typical width of 2.5-3m. A minimum width should be 1.8m for short sections.
- 4.5.1.2 Pedestrian Through Zone clear of signs, furnishings, and impediments permit easy access for business patrons and pedestrian traffic and permit easy snow clearing throughout the winter.
- 4.5.1.3 Cross walks should generally align with Pedestrian Through Zones. Accessible pedestrian curb ramps should transition between the pedestrian through zone and crosswalks and be provided at every Main Street intersection.
- 4.5.1.4 Use materials that compliment or match adjacent sections providing continuity of the streetscape. Avoid the development of patchwork materials along the streetscape.
- 4.5.1.5 Updates to sidewalks should be aligned with planned works of the Town's Sidewalk Renewal program.
- 4.5.1.6 Redevelopment should maximize opportunities to create, define and enhance pedestrian areas through the consistent use of materials and other cues for safe, continuous and comfortable pedestrian movement.
- 4.5.1.7 Pedestrian lighting used to clearly define pedestrian areas (sidewalks and walkways) and clearly identify areas where pedestrians may encounter vehicles along their route (at drive aisles, crosswalks and intersections).
- 4.5.1.8 Overhead utility wires shall be located underground.



4.5.2 Furnishing Zone

Street furniture includes both functional and decorative elements that support use of the street and support places for people. Street furnishings include poles for traffic signals, benches, bicycle parking, flower pots, waste receptacles, bollards, banners, tables and chairs, advertising boards (sandwich boards), fire hydrants, wayfinding, sign poles, and public art. They may also include pay parking stations, newspaper boxes and signal boxes/traffic controllers.

Objective

Provide high quality, low maintenance street furnishings that provide pedestrian amenities, support the use of the street, and unify the streetscape through the consistent and complimentary use of materials and design.

Guidelines

- 4.5.2.1 All street furnishings shall be located within the furnishing zone of the streetscape, alternate locations may include curb bulbs or in a protected parking area.
- 4.5.2.2 Street furnishings are not permitted in the pedestrian through zone unless an alternate pedestrian through zone is provided in a directly adjacent area (i.e. outdoor café, restraint extensions or temporary outdoor shopping).
- 4.5.2.3 Encourage the use of temporary commercial sandwich boards, with a maximum size of 600mm (24") wide x 1000mm (30") height, within the furnishing zone to animate the streetscape.
- 4.5.2.4 Provide bicycle parking that is oriented to minimize parked bikes extending into the pedestrian through zone.
- 4.5.2.5 To increase capacity of sidewalks consider replacing periodic parallel parking stalls with temporary or permanent bike parking.
- 4.5.2.6 Provide a minimum of 4 waste receptacles per block. Waste receptacles should be located in high traffic areas (i.e. curb extensions or in front of high traffic commercial establishments)
- 4.5.2.7 Integrate art along the streetscape in the furnishing zones or curb bulbs.
- 4.5.2.8 Where utility cabinets are required along the streetscape, collaborate with service providers to consider wrapping utility cabinets with art or imagery (i.e. vinyl wraps or custom painting that express the spirit of Slave Lake).
- 4.5.2.9 Minimize signage and elements that visually clutter the streetscape.



4.5.3 Parking Zone

Providing parking is essential to the success of downtown cores. However, visually, vehicles create barriers that divide streets as places for people. Special consideration should be given when implementing parking in the downtown that focus on safety, minimization of visual impact of vehicles and maximization of the opportunity for places for people.

Objective

Where possible, parallel on-street parking should be provided within the Downtown and Main Street area with periodic “bump-outs or curb extensions”. Such bump-outs or curb extensions refer to designs where the sidewalk protrudes into the parking lane in order to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, improve pedestrian safety, and provide extra space for trees as well as pedestrian amenities.

Guidelines

- 4.5.3.1 Avoid designs with parking at the front of the building as it would have a negative impact on the pedestrian ambiance of the street.
- 4.5.3.2 Parking lots or vacant lots should be framed by decorative architectural elements or screening vegetation (i.e. trees or shrubs).
- 4.5.3.3 Prioritize parallel parking along main streets encouraging wide pedestrian facilities.
- 4.5.3.4 Provide accessible parking zones on public property in close proximity of residences and businesses. Provide a minimum of one stall per block. Parking zones are typically 7.5-10m long, which accommodates one vehicle.
- 4.5.3.5 Avoid tree/furnishing/sign placements in close proximity to parking areas (less than 700mm from expected cars) to minimize damage from car door swings.
- 4.5.3.6 Consider additional, temporary, event specific drop off points for persons with disabilities along Main Street that offer decreased travel distance to the event.



4.5.4 Surface Parking Lots

Surface parking lots within close walking distance of the Downtown and Main Street areas provide visitor access to local businesses. However, surface parking lots should not dominate or negatively impact the aesthetics of the Downtown and Main Street areas.

Objective

Surface parking should be located in areas that offer access to the streetscape, while having a minimal visual impact on the pedestrian environment.

Guidelines

- 4.5.4.1 Upgrades are strongly encouraged where surface parking areas currently exist fronting on to retail streets.
- 4.5.4.2 Additional surface level parking areas should be located at, and accessed from, the rear of the development lots.
- 4.5.4.3 Large areas of uninterrupted parking should be avoided.
- 4.5.4.4 The amount of landscaping should be proportionate to the overall parking lot size. Generally, 1 tree for every 8 parking spaces is recommended.
- 4.5.4.5 Planting strips, landscaped traffic islands and/or paving articulation should be used to define vehicle routes and smaller parking courts that provide pedestrian walkways, improve edge conditions and minimize the negative visual impact of surface parking.
- 4.5.4.6 Along the street/parking lot interface, parking lots should include low walls, ornamental screens or landscaping elements to visually buffer parking areas.
- 4.5.4.7 The position of landscaped elements should highlight the location of through block connections between the parking area and the frontage on retail streets.
- 4.5.4.8 Consider using off street parking areas as temporary shared/mixed use spaces (e.g. farmer's market venue).
- 4.5.4.9 Explore viability of temporary/permanent visitor parking for RVs within 400m of the downtown core and at locations identified in the AP.
- 4.5.4.10 Provide adequate wayfinding signage to existing public surface parking lots within the downtown core.



4.5.5 Vehicle Zone

Streets are designed for various users such as pedestrians, vehicles, and bicycles. It is important that the Vehicle Zone of streets and traffic lanes are designed in a manner that does not negatively impact the safety of non-vehicle users.

Objective

Permit vehicle circulation throughout the Downtown and Main Street areas that requires minimal maintenance and disturbances to pedestrian traffic.

Guidelines

- 4.5.5.1 Minimize roadway widths while permitting safe vehicular circulation throughout the corridor.
- 4.5.5.2 In vehicle and pedestrian mixing areas (shared streets) consider alternate roadway paving materials to clearly identify a change in use.
- 4.5.5.3 Provide mid-block crossings, with bump outs and marked cross walks, to improve safety and reduce the potential walking across busy downtown streets.
- 4.5.5.4 Consider temporary closure of streets, as identified in Map 16 of the AP, for local events.



4.6 Open Spaces

Open spaces within an urban area have various functions and contributions to surrounding residents and businesses. The design of open spaces can enable passive uses (seating areas, relaxation spaces, and walking trails) and active uses (organized/informal sports, jogging, bicycling, and festivals). Public art installations and physical design features, such as landscaping and hardscaping, can express the culture and community character of an area. It is important that a balance of passive and active open spaces is provided throughout a downtown area in order to support a diverse public realm.

Urban Design Objective

Provide a variety of high quality open spaces within the Downtown and Main Street areas that enable the hosting of public events, informal gatherings of people, provide quite leisurely relaxation spaces, and are connected through a broader network of trails and sidewalks.



4.6.1 Urban Plazas

Urban plazas provide opportunities for robust programming. Therefore, careful thought should be given to a plaza's principal functions and to its relationship with the adjacent public realm (i.e. streetscapes, pedestrian connections, and other open spaces), activities and architecture. Urban plazas should also allow for flexibility of use and scale of events. While some plazas may act primarily as pedestrian nodes, others function best as important viewpoints or enhance the setting for a building. A plaza should also reflect and reinforce the character of its location.

Objective

Develop a central area within the Downtown and Main Street areas to host public events and functions that is designed to be fully accessible, multifunctional, expanded onto adjacent streets and parking areas, and provide pedestrian amenities.

Guidelines

- 4.6.1.1 Key intersecting locations should fulfill a community function or use within a portion of the building or site.
- 4.6.1.2 Emphasis should be placed on creating animated spaces that are usable year-round.
- 4.6.1.3 Focus on barrier-free access to all areas of the plaza, prioritize multiuse flexibility of space over specific event focused elements (built in stage areas). Accommodation of event specific areas should be temporary and removable in nature.
- 4.6.1.4 Consider limiting the use of straight face curbs in favor of low profile roll curbs and headers to increase flexibility of use between the roadway, the plaza and adjacent parking areas.
- 4.6.1.5 Define the edges of the urban plaza area and encourage year round use of the space.
- 4.6.1.6 Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in order to create strong street to plaza views, announcing activities taking place and fostering a feeling of safety.



4.6.2 Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small oasis in the downtown setting that are the size of only one or two lots. These small spaces meet a wide variety of needs in a community and usually need to be designed with many activities in mind. They can be used as play areas, for taking lunch breaks, or even for small events. Most importantly, they should be a place of quiet refuge and escape from the busy urban life surrounding them.

Objective

Provide small informal public outdoor areas designed to draw people outside and provide spaces to relax and foster social connections within the Downtown and Main Street areas.

Guidelines

- 4.6.2.1 Provide increased programing of pocket parks. Encourage public and stakeholder participation in programming of the space.
- 4.6.2.2 Include benches with raised mid arms.
- 4.6.2.3 Design spaces to be flexible, meeting the needs of multiple user types.
- 4.6.2.4 Use Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and enforcement to discourage unintended uses.
- 4.6.2.5 Spur economic activity along the streetscape by encouraging people to congregate and linger.
- 4.6.2.6 Balance landscape separation from the street with clear sightlines into the park.
- 4.6.2.7 Redevelop Citizens Park to include elements that can improve the overall function of the park for multiple user groups. Consider adding an art mural on the building façade or street art to the north side of the adjacent building. Consider adding benches with mid arms, games tables, and a multi-functional open space for programmed activities. In addition, work with the building owner and encourage them to redesign the building along the park frontage to provide active uses.



4.6.3 Linear Parks

Linear parks provide an opportunity for the provision of physical and visual connections to the Downtown and Main Street areas from surrounding residential neighbourhoods. These parks offer passive recreational opportunities and pedestrian retreats from busy streetscapes. Linear parks often function as prominent connections between destination areas. They can include areas such as linear green spaces that provide seating and resting amenities, public art, drinking fountains, and water features.

Objective

Provide small scale recreational opportunities, points of interest, and art features within a linear park that draws visitors from the Highway corridor through the Main Street area and connecting to the Downtown area while creating an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

Guidelines

- 4.6.3.1 Improve the pedestrian experience and provide visual cue improvements to the Main Street Corridor, between Hwy 2 and downtown, to draw visitors to the downtown core. Include improved wayfinding signage, banners, art, rest areas (including furnishings) along a continuous trails system.
- 4.6.3.2 Signage should identify the distance to downtown through distance and average speed walking time markers.
- 4.6.3.3 Integrate art along the trail into seating areas or as interactive elements. Consider using art to express the unique heritage of Slave Lake.



4.6.4 Trails, Key Connections and Gateways



Trails can fill in the gaps within an active transportation network in order to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle movement as well as other forms of active movement. It is important that an extensive and functional trail network connects open spaces and destinations within and surrounding the Downtown and Main Street area.

Objective

Enhancing the existing pedestrian network will achieve greater connectivity throughout the downtown area. Public pedestrian routes should be provided through interconnecting sidewalks, walkway connectors, multiuse trails and plaza spaces.

Guidelines

- 4.6.4.1 Provide key wayfinding and connections to the waterfront, including pedestrian and cyclist access to Big Fish Bay.
- 4.6.4.2 Provide a prominent connection between E.G. Wahlstrom School & CJ Shurter Elementary.
- 4.6.4.3 Improve the pedestrian connectivity from Main Street SE to the existing pedestrian bridge over the Sawridge Creek.
- 4.6.4.4 Improve accessibility to the Multi-Rec Centre from Main Street including two way vehicle access, signage, and improved pedestrian friendly connections.
- 4.6.4.5 Establish a highway land mark that expresses the spirit of Slave Lake, is clearly visible from the highway, continuous trail connections to the downtown core, strong wayfinding signage and has a parking lot or roadway pull off.



4.6.5 Lighting of Streetscapes and Open Spaces

Lighting promotes feelings of safety and can animate and create a unique sense of place. The use of lighting can encourage four season activities in the Downtown and Main Street area and associated parks.

Objective

Design streetscapes, surrounding properties and park spaces within the Downtown and Main Street areas with attractive light fixtures that provides safe lighting levels on site and avoid impacts to surrounding properties and public view.

Guidelines

- 4.6.5.1 Encourage use of lighting fixtures that may help reduce glare and minimize light pollution.
- 4.6.5.2 Design all lighting to avoid glare onto adjacent properties and in public view including streets, sidewalks and walkways through the use of full cut-off light fixtures. Minimize the use of semi cut-off light fixtures including wall pack fixtures and globe fixtures which cast significant glare.
- 4.6.5.3 Provide uniform lighting without sudden light-to-dark transitions. Coordinate spacing and height of luminaires with landscaping to ensure lighting coverage is not interrupted by tree canopies.
- 4.6.5.4 Provide for some overlap of light distribution and ensure lighting does not spill over onto adjacent properties.
- 4.6.5.5 Encourage white (or natural) lighting colour to improve visibility and discourage lights which provide colour distortion. Lighting ranges should typically be in the range of 3,000-4,000 Kelvin.
- 4.6.5.6 Encourage pedestrian scale lighting, primarily along primary pedestrian routes and activity areas, to promote pedestrian friendly streets and human-scale dimensions.
- 4.6.5.7 Encourage decorative light fixtures on site redevelopment. Consider opportunities for directional upward and downward lighting to accent building design provided there is no glare to surrounding properties, public spaces, and the night sky. Avoid over illumination.
- 4.6.5.8 Consider adding festive lighting with in the downtown core via string lights over the street, temporary seasonal lighting or permanent accent lighting. Use lighting to create interest and encourage visitation of the Downtown core from the highway corridor.



4.6.6 Furniture

Parks and open space furnishings include both functional and decorative elements that support use of the recreation and linear connection networks. These furnishings include benches, bicycle parking, waste receptacles, bollards, wayfinding and may also include public art.

Objective

Provide high quality, simple, low maintenance furnishings that provide social gathering areas in urban parks and along the town trail network.

Guidelines

- 4.6.6.1 Provide an area with a bench and waste receptacle every +/- 500m along providing resting points, improving walkability to the downtown core.
- 4.6.6.2 Improve wayfinding signage guiding visitors and local residents to major attractions and the downtown core.
- 4.6.6.3 Furnishing types should be from a matching furnishing family or complimentary in style.



5

Glossary

Definitions of terminology used throughout the Area Plan are provided below for clarity.

Area Plan (AP) means a statutory planning document that establishes a policy framework to implement a desired future development vision of a specified area. An Area Plan is also commonly referred to as an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP).

Barrier-free Access or Accessibility is a design characteristic that ensures the built environment is accessible to all individuals with physical or cognitive difficulties.

Bollards are short posts used to delineate a pedestrian area from an adjacent street or roadway and prevent the access of vehicles.

Creative Placemaking involves the partnership between multiple community stakeholders such as citizens, civic managers, civil society and civic developers that influence the physical form and social opportunities of a space in order to promote culture and arts. Examples of creative placemaking may include:

- Permanent or temporary public art installations;
- PA pianos in public squares; and
- Interactive activities and events.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through environmental design. CPTED strategies rely upon the ability of the design approaches to influence offender decisions that precede criminal acts.

Fine Grain refers to small scale built form typically found in historic Main Street areas where building frontages have narrow widths and have a pedestrian-friendly expression.

Kelvin (K) is the measurement of colour temperature. Lights with colour temperatures under 5,000K are considered warmer and are more similar to light from standard incandescent bulbs.

Mixed-use means a development or building designed for more than one type of land use on the same parcel of land, such as residential and retail development, residential, and office and retail development, or office development.

Placemaking refers to actions necessary to transform an urban space into a vibrant 'place' for enjoyment of all age groups to where people are attracted, where they feel safe and feel comfortable. Good placemaking can be achieved in a variety of ways to address site-specific issues and challenges.

Pocket Park is a small public park within an urban setting that can be used for a variety of uses such as a playground, leisure resting spot, lunch breaks, and small events.

Private Realm means lands within private ownership.

Public Realm means the public environment involving all public lands, sidewalks, park, and streets.

Right-of-way means the publically owned land, used for the provision of public infrastructure and services, adjacent to private property frontages.

Rolled Curb provides a gradual slope of a few inches from the street to the sidewalk.

Setback means the distance that a development or a specified portion of it must be set back from a property line. A setback shall be measured perpendicularly from the applicable front, rear or side property line to the closest portion of the building facade.

Stepback means the setback of the upper storeys of a building from the edge of the building frontage that meets the ground.

Strategic Placemaking is a targeted process that utilizes both changes to physical forms and land uses through projects within urban nodes, corridors, and centres in order to create areas that are attractive to talented knowledge workers. Characteristics of areas that utilize strategic placemaking are:

- Pedestrian-friendly;
- Mixed-use;
- Accessible via multiple modes of transit;
- Parks and pathways; and
- Gathering spaces and seating.

Tactical Placemaking uses small changes in land uses or activation of spaces to increase social opportunities through low cost and quick projects. Examples of tactical placemaking may include:

- Adding a sidewalk patio to a restaurant frontage to increase street level activity in order to activate the public realm;
- Changing the use of a building to mixed-use to provide commercial and residential activity; and
- Adding moveable tables and chairs to a public square to allow people to gather.

Urban Design is the organization and strategic design of the both the public and private realm in a manner that creates an attractive and functional environment for the users.

Urban Design Guidelines are recommendations used to implement urban design best practices within developments.

Visual Harmony refers to the organization of various visual components and elements that complement each other in order to achieve a cohesive appearance.

Visual Rhythm refers to repetition of similar or complementary visual components and elements.

Walkability means the degree to which the built environment enables individuals to go about daily activities through walking to destinations for work, recreation, shopping, and education. Aspects of the built environment that affect walkability include street networks, sidewalks, trails, and land uses.



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