City-wide Design and Development Guidelines

CITY OF VANCOUVER

Approved by Council on <PENDING>
Last amended

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Vancouver humbly acknowledges that the lands to which the City-wide Design and Development Guidelines apply are the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱ wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples. The local Nations have called this place home since time immemorial and have stewarded these lands and waterways to ensure prosperity for future generations.

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER OF PLANNING

Vancouver's built environment reflects a long-standing commitment to design excellence, livability, and sustainability. As the city grows and evolves, this commitment remains central to shaping complete, inclusive, and resilient communities.

The City-wide Design and Development Guidelines (CDDG) establish a clear and unified framework to guide that growth. By bringing together design guidance into a single, accessible document, the CDDG support consistent, high-quality outcomes while enabling a more efficient and transparent development process.

Grounded in the fundamentals of good urban design, the CDDG prioritize well-organized sites, thoughtfully designed buildings, and a vibrant public realm. They reinforce the elements that make Vancouver a great place to live, work, visit, and play while supporting broader city-building objectives, including housing choice and complete neighbourhoods.

We invite you to use the CDDG as a shared foundation for design excellence, and to contribute your expertise and creativity in shaping the next generation of great places across Vancouver.

Josh White

General Manager, Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability

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Preface

Introduction

Vancouver is shaped by deep cultural histories and an exceptional natural setting on lands that have been continuously inhabited for more than 9,000 years. These lands are the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Sḵwx̱ wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish Nation), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation). The region's coastal landscape, formed by glaciers, rivers, inlets, beaches, and forests, has long sustained and been carefully stewarded by the Local Nations. These lands and waters continue to hold profound cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance.

Vancouver's identity is inseparable from nature. Bordered by Burrard Inlet to the north, the Fraser River to the south, and False Creek defining the downtown peninsula, the city is structured by water. Its topography further shapes how the city is experienced. Slopes and ridgelines oriented toward the water create dynamic vantage points and view corridors to the North Shore Mountains. Together, water and terrain establish a strong sense of place and orientation, anchoring the urban fabric within a dramatic landscape.

Vancouver is a modern, cosmopolitan city. Its dense urban neighbourhoods, compact development patterns, and active public spaces exist in close and deliberate relationship with this natural setting.

Vancouver is home to diverse communities whose cultures, traditions, languages, and lived experiences contribute to its evolving identity. This cultural landscape is layered with the built environment. Vancouver's distinctive street grid, parcel patterns, and land use reflect successive periods of economic growth, construction practices, and architectural expression. Buildings, streets, and public spaces together tell the story of how Vancouver has grown and changed over time.

Design is a fundamental component of city-building in Vancouver. The quality of buildings and the public realm have a direct impact on how the city is experienced and how it functions over time. Thoughtful, well-resolved design is expected to respond to its physical, cultural, and historical context, contribute positively to its surroundings, support livability and neighbourliness, reinforce Vancouver's distinct identity, and foster positive relationships between people, buildings, and the public realm.

About

Vancouver's long-standing commitment to design excellence has resulted in a robust body of urban design guidelines developed over time. The City-wide Design and Development Guidelines, also known as the CDDG, consolidate and update this body of work into a single, cohesive document.

The CDDG set out expectations for how development is organized on a site, how buildings are designed, and how they relate to the public realm. They focus on achieving strong design outcomes rather than prescribing specific solutions, providing a clear and consistent framework for evaluating development while allowing flexibility to respond to different sites, contexts, and building types.

The CDDG work alongside the Zoning and Development By-law, area plans, rezoning policies, and other development-related policies. Whereas the Zoning and Development By-law establishes regulatory requirements, the CDDG provide guidance for how these requirements are interpreted, achieved, and, in some cases, varied. Neighbourhood-specific character and place-based values are typically captured in area plans and may also be reflected in character area descriptions or other policies.

Applicability

The City-wide Design and Development Guidelines provide the foundational design guidance for evaluating rezoning applications and conditional development permit applications. These Guidelines generally apply to all new residential developments, all mixed-use residential developments, and all non-residential developments unless otherwise specified by a district schedule or rezoning policy.

How to Use the CDDG

New developments seeking approval through a conditional development permit application should respond to the City-wide Design and Development Guidelines alongside the applicable district schedule of the Zoning and Development By-law. New developments seeking approval through a rezoning application should refer to the applicable rezoning policies as well as the CDDG. All new developments should further consider applicable area plans and other development-related policies including, but not limited to, character area descriptions, and guidelines pertaining to solar access in public spaces and protected public views in addition to the CDDG.

Additional design guidance may apply to specific development contexts, as set out in Chapter 4 - Targeted Design Topics. Where major projects result in new area- or site-specific CD-1 design guidelines, those guidelines should primarily reference the CDDG, with project-specific considerations incorporated as Targeted Design Topics in Chapter 4.

The CDDG are organized into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1 – Site Organization**, addressing how development is arranged on a site, including yards and open space, access, tower separation, and relationships to adjacent properties and streets.
- **Chapter 2 – Building Design**, addressing building form and massing, internal organization, architectural expression, and the integration of building systems and uses.
- **Chapter 3 – Urban Experience**, addressing how buildings and sites interface with the public realm at ground level, including streets, parks, and other publicly accessible open spaces.
- **Chapter 4 – Targeted Design Topics**, providing additional guidance for specific conditions, contexts, or design considerations that may apply, including Public Views and Solar Access.
- **Glossary**, providing explanations of selected terms used throughout the CDDG to support consistent interpretation and application of the guidelines.

A range of content types are used to support application of the CDDG:

- **Standards** establish measurable expectations and are generally expected to be achieved.
- **Guidelines** describe performance objectives and are applied with professional judgment. Both Standards and Guidelines may inform urban design or landscape Conditions of Approval.
- **Design Tips** provide additional direction and examples to support design development. They are advisory and are not used to establish Conditions of Approval.

The CDDG are supplemented with Development Playbooks, which are visual guides for common development types. The Playbooks do not create new policy or introduce new requirements; rather, they are intended as a tool for quick and easy wayfinding, summarizing form of development parameters and illustrating possible development scenarios.

Section **2.3**

Intent Statement

Balance height and density with access to light and sky while contributing to skyline variety

Standards
- Expected baseline
- Quantitative
- Measurable
- Narrower discretion
- May be conditioned

Standards

S2.3.1 In predominantly *residential contexts* limit *tower* dimensions to maximum 29.0 m (95 ft).

S2.3.2 In *mixed-use residential* and *non-residential contexts*, if *tower* dimensions exceed 29.0 m (95 ft), provide clear volumetric articulation.

S2.3.3 Limit *tower floorplates* to the maximums outlined in Table 2.3.

Guidelines
- Performance-based
- Qualitative
- Allow for multiple solutions
- May be conditioned

Guidelines

G2.3.1 Incorporate varied building heights on large or consolidated sites to avoid flat or repetitive skyline silhouettes.

G2.3.2 Design tower massing to maintain slender proportions.

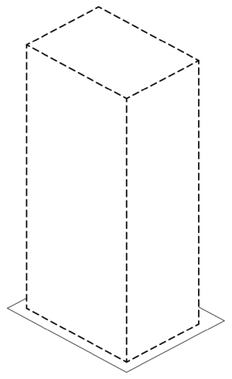
Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb to consider when shaping building massing:

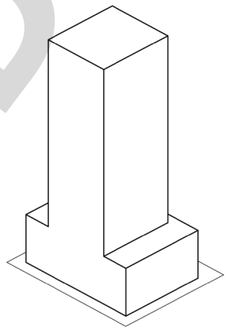
- On a typical east-west site, towers wider than roughly 60% of the site frontage often begin to read as broad slabs rather than slender towers.
- For *tall towers* and *very tall towers*, height-to-width ratios in the range of 6:1 to 8:1 or greater often produce more proportionate building forms. Lower ratios can benefit from additional shaping, articulation, or separation.
- Organizing buildings, especially *towers*, into recognizable components, such as base, middle, and top, can help break down scale and create a more legible and composed building form.

Design Tips
- Advisory
- Informational
- Rule-of-thumb
- Help to explain intent
- Will not be conditioned

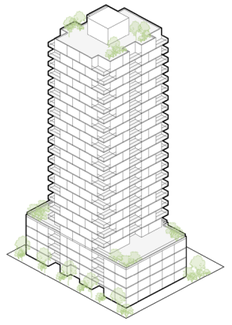
Note
Terms in italics have corresponding explanations in the Glossary.



Regulations



Standards

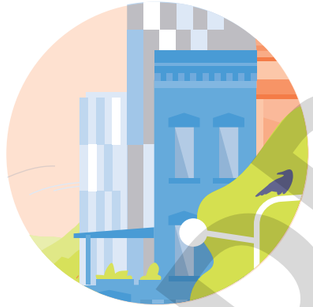


Guidelines

Design Objectives

The CDDG are informed by the Vancouver Official Development Plan (ODP), which is a statutory land use plan with the aspiration to build a more livable, affordable, economically vibrant, and sustainable city for everyone.

Applicants do not need to respond to these design objectives directly, but they provide a foundation for applying the Standards and Guidelines, and exercising professional judgement in the evaluation of development proposals.



Celebrate and strengthen local character, culture, and identity

Design with a human scale and timeless features that feel good now and last

Design spaces that support health and well-being

Shape and animate the public realm

Design spaces that connect people with nature while enhancing local biodiversity

1 Site Organization

Site Organization addresses how development is arranged on a site and how it relates to adjacent buildings, streets, open spaces, and the broader urban context. This chapter provides guidance related to site planning, building placement, access, open space, tower separation, and relationships to the public realm to support livable, context-responsive development patterns.

1.1

Select sites of sufficient size and configuration to accommodate the intended development type

Guidelines

G1.1.1 Avoid sites that are too constrained to reasonably accommodate the intended development type.

G1.1.2 Where a district schedule or policy permits discretionary consideration of more than one principal building on a site, ensure minimum site size requirements and building separations can be met. Refer to sections 1.4 and 1.5.

G1.1.3 For *tower* developments, discretionary consideration to vary the minimum site frontage and area requirements is limited to sites within the Broadway Plan area where:

a. sites have a minimum frontage of 30.2 m (99 ft); and

b. a *block study* is prepared that demonstrates that the development would not impose unreasonable limitations on adjacent sites.

G1.1.4 *Residential tower* developments on *large frontage sites* in *tower* zones outside of Downtown seeking relaxation to maximum site frontage requirements may be considered if *enhanced open space* is provided at grade. Refer to section 1.10.

Design Tips

When selecting a development site, consider land assembly patterns that avoid creating small, irregular, or residual parcels, as these can limit future redevelopment opportunities.

Narrow mid-block sites often present challenges for *tower* development, including achieving *tower separation*, underground setbacks, usable *open space*, and efficient building layouts. In many cases, *low-rise developments* may prove a more appropriate and desirable development outcome.

For *low-rise developments*, sites are recommended to meet the following minimum dimensions to support the intended building form:

Frontage:

- 15 m (49.5 ft) where minimum site area is 460 sq m (4,950 sq ft);
- 20.1 m (66 ft) where minimum site area is 613 sq m (6,600 sq ft); and
- 30.1 m (99 ft) where minimum site area is 920 sq m (9,900 sq ft).

Depth:

- 30.5 m (100 ft) for *low-rise apartments*
- 41.2 m (135 ft) for *low-rise apartments* with rear *townhouses*
- 61.0 m (200 ft) for a second *low-rise apartment* at the rear

1.2

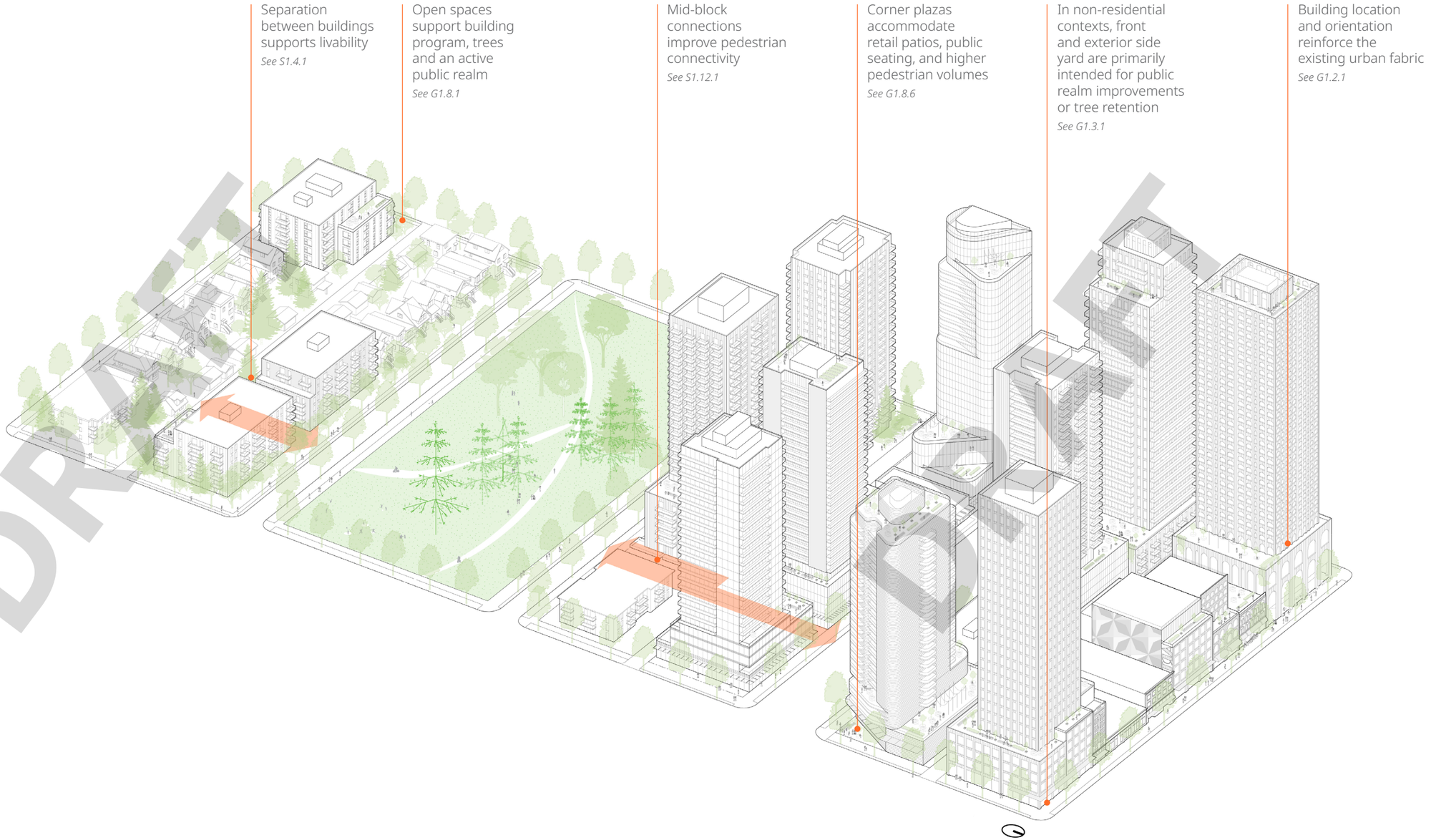
Locate and orient buildings to respond to context and reinforce the existing urban fabric

Guidelines

G1.2.1 Orient buildings to align with established street patterns.

G1.2.2 Position buildings to frame and spatially define streets and *open spaces*.

G1.2.3 Consider how building location and orientation can reveal and frame views of natural features and landmarks.



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1.3

Use yards to provide access to light, privacy, and usable open space for residents and neighbours

Standards

S1.3.1 Provide the minimum standard yard dimensions outlined in Table 1.3, measured from the *ultimate property line*.

Guidelines

G1.3.1 In *mixed-use residential developments*, with *non-residential active uses* at grade, minimum front and exterior side yard dimensions may be reduced to maintain a *continuous streetwall*, or where they are not required for sidewalk widening, *public realm* improvements, or tree retention.

G1.3.2 In *residential developments*, minimum yard dimensions may be reduced to accommodate irregularly shaped sites or high-value tree retention.

G1.3.3 In *residential developments* with choice-of-use at grade located adjacent to a site zoned for *mixed-use residential development*, the minimum front and side yards may be reduced to create a complimentary interface.

G1.3.4 In *residential developments* with structured above-grade parking, the rear yard may be reduced to a minimum of 1.5 m (5 ft) for the parkade structure.

G1.3.5 In the following cases, consider providing a larger front and exterior side yard:

- **a.** for features enhancing urban experience such as planting, seating, and retail patios;
- **b.** to accommodate high pedestrian volumes at busy intersections, near transit stations or bus stops, and at building entries;
- **c.** to accommodate building articulation and balconies; or
- **d.** as needed to respond to context.

G1.3.6 Consider providing a larger exterior side yard for corner sites where the flanking street is part of the *blue green network* or an *ecological corridor.*

Special Note

It may not always be possible to secure large retail patios within the street right-of-way due to size constraints. Consider whether larger yards, setbacks or operable glazing may be necessary to accommodate flexible patio layouts. Also refer to the City of Vancouver Storefront Seating Design Guidelines.

Table 1.3 Minimum yard dimension standards

Site Dimensions	Standard Minimum Dimensions			
	Front Yard	Rear Yard	Interior Side Yard	Exterior Side Yard
Residential Low-rise Developments				
Site frontage less than 30.1 m (99 ft)	Per district schedule	3.1 m (10 ft) if building height at the rear is 3 storeys 4.6 m (15 ft) if building height at the rear is 4 to 5 storeys 6.1 m (20 ft) if building height at the rear is 6 storeys	Per district schedule	Per district schedule
Site frontage 30.1 m (99 ft) or greater			3.1 m (10 ft)	3.1 m (10 ft)
Mixed-use Residential Low-rise and Non-Residential Low-rise Developments				
All	2.5 m (8 ft)	1.5 m (5 ft) for at-grade commercial uses At and above second storey: 4.6 m (15 ft) if building height is less than 6 storeys or 6.1 m (20 ft) if building height is 6 storeys	If the development site adjoins an R-zoned site that is not subject to a rezoning policy requiring at-grade commercial uses: 1.8 m (6 ft) up to the 4th storey and 3.7 m (12 ft) at and above the 4th storey	3.7 m (12 ft)
Residential Tower Podiums				
All	Per district schedule			
Mixed-use Residential and Non-Residential Tower Podiums				
All	2.5 m (8 ft)	1.5 m (5 ft) for at-grade commercial uses At and above second storey: 4.6 m (15 ft) if podium height is less than 6 storeys or 6.1 m (20 ft) if podium height is 6 storeys	If the development site adjoins an R-zoned site that is not subject to a rezoning policy requiring at-grade commercial uses: 3.7 m (12 ft) at and above the 4th storey	3.7 m (12 ft)

1.4

Locate buildings within low-rise residential developments to support livability

Standards

S1.4.1 Provide separation between *low-rise residential* buildings on the same development site based on the *type of interfacing façades*, as set out in Table 1.4.

S1.4.2 Where a district schedule or policy permits discretion to vary separation between two side-by-side *low-rise residential* buildings with facing non-primary façades, the minimum separation may be reduced from 7.3 m (24 ft) to 4.9 m (16 ft) to:

a. improve efficiency;
b. allow for more design flexibility;
c. accommodate various site conditions; or
d. enable high-value tree retention.

S1.4.3 For courtyard *apartment* buildings with *exterior passageways*, provide a minimum clear courtyard width of 7.3 m (24 ft).

Table 1.4 Standard minimum separations between *low-rise residential buildings* on the same site

		Up to 4 Storeys or stepped back above the 4th storey		**5 to 6 Storeys**	
	Interfacing Facade	**Primary**	**Non-primary**	**Primary**	**Non-primary**
Up to 4 Storeys or stepped back above the 4th storey	**Primary**	9.1 m (30 ft)	9.1 m (30 ft)	15.2 m (50 ft)	9.1 m (30 ft)
	Non-primary	9.1 m (30 ft)	7.3 m (24 ft)	9.1 m (30 ft)	7.3 m (24 ft)
5 to 6 Storeys	**Primary**	15.2 m (50 ft)	9.1 m (30 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)	12.2 m (40 ft)
	Non-primary	9.1 m (30 ft)	7.3 m (24 ft)	12.2 m (40 ft)	7.3 m (24 ft)

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

1.5

Maintain tower separation to ensure access to light, views, and comfort for surrounding areas

Standards

S1.5.1 Meet or exceed the minimum *tower separations* relative to existing or potential future *towers*, measured face-to-face, as set out in Table 1.5. *Tower separation* is intended to be accommodated equally between *tower sites*.

S1.5.2 The *tower separation* between a *residential tower* and a *hotel tower* may be reduced to 18.3 m (60 ft) if:

a. direct views from *hotel uses* into *dwelling units* are absolutely minimized; and

b. appropriate access to outlook, daylight, and sky views from within *dwelling units* is maintained.

S1.5.3 The minimum *tower separation* between *employment towers* or *hotel towers* may be reduced in the following cases if impacts to light penetration in the *public realm* are minimized:

a. the development sites are located in the Central Business District; or

b. the development sites are located in an *Industrial and Employment District* and have a frontage of 30.2 m (99 ft) or less.

S1.5.4 Where a *tower site* abuts a *non-tower site*, accommodations for *tower separation* may not be required; however, a *residential tower* should be set back from the shared property line a minimum of 6.1 m to 9.1 m (20 ft to 30 ft).

Guidelines

G1.5.1 Where *towers* exceed typical heights, consider increased *tower separation* beyond the minimums in Table 1.5.

G1.5.2 In limited and exceptional circumstances, where the minimum *tower separation* cannot reasonably be achieved, minor reductions of approximately 0.6 m to 1.0 m (2 ft to 3.3 ft) may be considered, provided comparable outcomes for light, privacy, and livability are demonstrated.

Table 1.5 Minimum *tower separation* standards

Adjacency	Residential	Hotel	Employment
Residential	24.4 m (80 ft)	24.4 m (80 ft)	18.3 m (60 ft)
Hotel	24.4 m (80 ft)	15.2 m (50 ft)	15.2 m (50 ft)
Employment	18.3 m (60 ft)	15.2 m (50 ft)	15.2 m (50 ft)

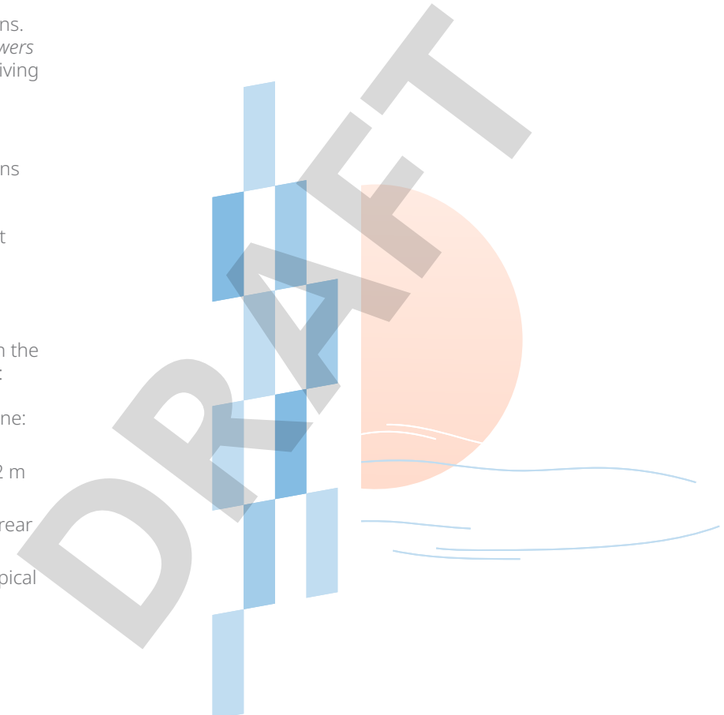
Design Tips

Here are some practical strategies to reinforce light, privacy, and legibility in tall buildings.

- Start with the *tower separation* table early. Establish tower spacing before refining *tower floorplates* or *dwelling unit* layouts to avoid downstream conflicts.
- Design for worst-case conditions. Test *tower separation* where *towers* are tallest and where primary living spaces most directly face one another.
- Use orientation and offset before reduction. Small rotations or staggering alignments can significantly improve privacy and perceived distance without changing overall height and density.

Tower separation requirements in *residential contexts* typically result in the following minimum tower setbacks:

- Front / exterior side property line: 3.7 m (12 ft)
- Interior side property line: 12.2 m (40 ft)
- Rear property line with typical rear lane: 9.1 m (30 ft)
- Rear property line without a typical rear lane: 12.2 m (40 ft)



1.6

Set back upper levels in high streetwall developments to maintain light and livability

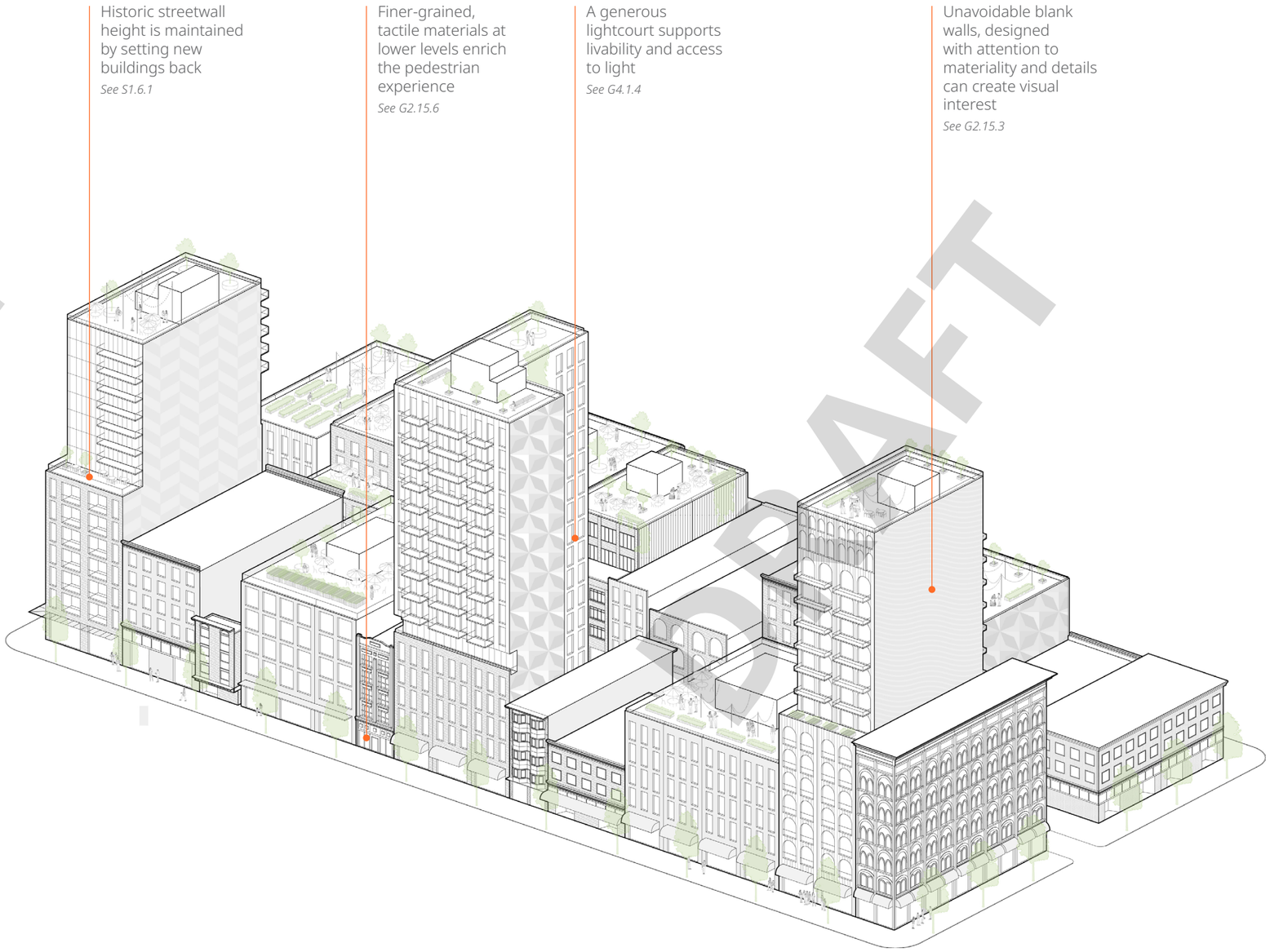
Standards

S1.6.1 Meet or exceed the minimum upper-level setbacks for *high streetwall* developments, as set out in Table 1.6. Also refer to section 4.1 - Lightwells and Lightcourts.

Table 1.6 *High streetwall* upper-level setback standards

Frontage Dimension & Location	Front Yard*	Rear Yard**	
		Baseline Standard	Relaxed Standard
15.2 m (50 ft) Corner site	4.6 m (15 ft)	9.1 m (30 ft)	3.0 m (10 ft)
15.2 m (50 ft) Mid-block site			6.1 m (20 ft)
22.9 m (75 ft) Any block location			3.0 m (10 ft) where a generous lightcourt is provided

* Applied to all portions above existing historic *streetwall* height, typically 21.3 m (70 ft)).
** Applied to all portions above the first storey.



1.7

Provide underground setbacks to support urban tree canopy growth and natural water systems

Standards

S1.7.1 Where permitted by a district schedule or policy, variations to underground setback requirements may be considered to balance parkade efficiency, tree retention, off-slab tree planting, and rainwater management where a minimum 0.9 m (3 ft) underground setback is provided along street and *park* frontages and:

a. roughly equivalent site area in any configuration is provided; or

b. the development demonstrates *exceptional support for urban tree canopy* and rainwater management.

Guidelines

G1.7.1 Where a *residential development* site includes an *enhanced open space,* consider aligning the underground setback with the *enhanced open space*. Refer to S1.10.1 to determine if an *enhanced open space* is anticipated.

G1.7.2 Additional underground setbacks are encouraged on *large sites* and deep sites, aligned with *public open spaces* and *parks*.

G1.7.3 Keep underground setbacks free of rainwater detention tanks. On constrained sites, detention tanks within underground setbacks may be considered provided that:

a. detention tanks do not encroach within 0.9 m (3 ft) of the property line; and

b. detention tanks do not interfere with tree planting.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

Special Note

- Contiguous parkade structures built to the property line can disrupt subsurface water flow, particularly in areas with high groundwater levels or other groundwater concerns.
- Setting underground structures back from the property line can also reduce the need to excavate in the street right-of-way and adjacent *parks* and *open spaces* to replace parkade waterproofing membranes, which can negatively impact publicly-owned trees including street trees.
- Aligning underground setbacks with surface planting improves growing conditions for trees and plants and can reduce runoff volumes on site.
- On-site rainwater management is often achieved using detention tanks; however, infiltration can provide greater sustainability and ecological value by recharging groundwater, filtering pollutants through soil, and reducing runoff to the storm system. Opportunities to incorporate infiltration may exist within the standard 3.7 m (12 ft) underground setback in *residential* areas using engineered solutions to reduce drywell distances from building foundations. Work with your project's engineers to confirm feasibility. An Alternative Solution under the Vancouver Building By-law may be required to reduce the standard 5.0 m (16.4 ft) infiltration offset from building foundations.
- Locate rainwater management systems early in the design process.
- If a rainwater detention tank is provided within underground setbacks, align with hardscaping above such as a patio or walkway to maximize underground setback benefits.

1.8

Locate and organize open spaces intentionally and early in the site design process

Guidelines

G1.8.1 Locate *open spaces* to:

- **a.** provide access to sunlight and sky views;
- **b.** minimize exposure to noise, pollution, and wind;
- **c.** support healthy tree retention;
- **d.** support ecology through protecting or enhancing existing habitat vegetation; and
- **e.** align with underground parkade setbacks and provide opportunities for planting trees in the ground and off slab.

G1.8.2 For *mid-sized sites* target a minimum of 10% of total site area as *public open space*.

G1.8.3 Locate *open spaces* to support the adjacent building program so that building activities are encouraged to spill outside creating active edges.

G1.8.4 Locate *public open spaces:*

- **a.** at grade and directly adjacent to streets or corners to maximize visibility and access from sidewalks. Prioritize locations that connect to, extend, or align with existing or planned *parks*, *plazas*, *greenways*, the *blue green network*, or *ecological corridors*; or
- **b.** where identified in an area plan, public realm plan, or other policy document.

G1.8.5 Organize *public open spaces* primarily as single contiguous areas. Where provided in multiple locations on a site, establish strong pedestrian links.

G1.8.6 Where a transit station entrance is incorporated in a development, provide a *transit plaza* to accommodate high pedestrian volumes and bus waiting areas. Also refer to section 4.4 - Transit Station Integration and Overbuild.

G1.8.7 Provide *small plazas* where additional space is desired to accommodate large retail patios, public seating, or higher pedestrian volumes, typically at street corners.

1.9

Deliver park dedications or public open space on large sites and unique sites

Standards

S1.9.1 Where the development parcel is a *large site* or a *unique site*, target a minimum of 20% of total site area as *public open space*. Where the site size and configuration allow, a *park dedication* will be considered.

Guidelines

G1.9.1 Where a new *park dedication* is provided, locate and design it to be:

- **a.** highly visible and accessible from the sidewalk;
- **b.** a regularized parcel that works with the topography, is not fragmented and is not organized around serving a primarily private function;
- **c.** located on a corner or adjacent to an existing *park*; and
- **d.** on *terra -firma* where the parcels are not encumbered by non-*park* related surface and underground structures or other encumbrances such as easements and statutory rights-of-way (SRWs).

Special Note

Through the rezoning process, the City, including staff and from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, will identify whether on-site *public open space* should be provided as a *park dedication* or *Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)*. Site factors that may indicate that delivery of a *park dedication* is warranted may include:

- *large sites* or proposals incorporating large *open space*
- areas of the city where there is a gap in neighbourhood access to park space
- development sites adjacent to an existing or planned *park*
- sites with potential for adjacent future road closure for *park* purposes

The following open spaces will not be considered for *park dedication*:

- Spaces servicing primarily public transit access (e.g. *transit plazas*)
- Spaces for rainwater capture or mobility functions without opportunities for public gathering, access to nature or recreation use
- Spaces associated with *residential* or retail / commercial uses or that could reasonably be perceived as semi-public

The final program and design of new *parks* to be will be determined by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

1.10

Provide generous open spaces on sites with long frontages to support densifying neighbourhoods

Standards

S1.10.1 On *residential tower* sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft), provide an at-grade *enhanced open space* with a minimum width equal to 20% of the frontage. The *enhanced open space* should extend the full depth of the site and be located to maximize visibility, access, and public use, as follows:

a. on corner sites, along the exterior side yard to ensure direct interface with the public sidewalk; or

b. on mid-block and two-tower sites, as a *mid-block connection*.

S1.10.2 On *mixed-use residential tower* and *non-residential tower* sites with a frontage exceeding 60.7 m (199 ft), provide a *Privately Owned Public Space (POPS)* equal to approximately 10% of the site area. Multiple *open spaces* may be appropriate where a *POPS* is provided that meets the expectations outlined in S1.12.1 and a *mid-block connection* is desired.

S1.10.3 On *residential low-rise* sites with a frontage exceeding 91.1 m (299 ft), provide *public open space* equal to at least 10% of the site frontage, extending the full depth of the site. This space may be located within an interior side yard, exterior side yard, or in between side-by-side buildings on the same site.

Guidelines

G1.10.1 Where a site is located next to an existing *park*, future *park*, or a potential future street reallocation, work with the City including Parks staff to determine if the on-site *open space* should be delivered as a *park*.

G1.10.1 For non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing, *open space* expectations in this section should be interpreted with flexibility to accommodate project needs.

1.11

Provide Privately Owned Public Spaces that function effectively as public spaces

Standards

S1.11.1 Provide *Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)* that are large enough to function as a public space for the immediate neighbourhood. *POPS* should:

a. be contiguous and generally have a proportion of 1:1 or 1:2;

b. have a minimum area of approximately 300 sq m (3,230 sq ft); and

c. be secured for public use with a statutory right-of-way (SRW) agreement.

1.12

Create mid-block connections to improve pedestrian connectivity

Standards

S1.12.1 Locate *mid-block connections*:

- **a.** where identified by an area plan or public realm plan;
- **b.** where a development site is adjacent to or includes an entrance to a transit station; or
- **c.** on other sites where site conditions support a safe, direct, and legible connection.

S1.12.2 Provide *mid-block connections* with the following minimum dimensions:

- **a.** 4.5 m (15 ft), measured from building face to shared property line, when the adjacent development site is expected to deliver the other half;
- **b.** 5.4 m (18 ft), measured from building face to building face, in *non-residential contexts*;
- **c.** 9.1 m (30 ft), measured from building face to building face, for *large sites* or sites identified in S1.12.1; and
- **d.** 7.3 m (24 ft), measured from building face to shared property line, when a *mid-block connection* is provided but not required.

S1.12.3 *Mid-block connections* should be secured for public use with a statutory right-of-way (SRW) agreement.

S1.12.4 Ensure *mid-block connections* are primarily open to the sky.

Guidelines

G1.12.1 Variations to the standards outlined in S1.12.2 may be considered on a case-by-case basis where other widths are acceptable or preferred, including *mid-block connections* where active connections are desired.

G1.12.2 Prioritize locating *mid-block connections* where they can directly link to key destinations and pedestrian routes such as *parks*, community centres, *village high streets*, other *mid-block connections*, and transit stations.

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2 Building Design

Building Design addresses the form, massing, organization, and architectural expression of buildings. This chapter provides guidance related to building scale and proportion, architectural character, residential livability, materiality, and the integration of building systems and uses to support high-quality, durable, and adaptable built form.

2.1

Shape building massing to reinforce pedestrian scale, visual variation, and legibility

Guidelines

G2.1.1 Assess *building massing* from pedestrian viewpoints in public spaces. Use distant or aerial perspectives to evaluate the cumulative impact on the context and skyline.

G2.1.2 Shape *building massing* to frame and anchor street-end terminations, *bridgeheads, monumental axes,* and key intersections, reinforcing these significant urban conditions.

G2.1.3 Enhance street-end mountain views by setting back *building massing* at north-south street corners.

G2.1.4 Consider shadow impacts on the surrounding context when shaping *building massing*. Also refer to section 4.9 - Solar Access in Public Spaces.

2.2

Articulate lower levels to relate to the pedestrian scale and mediate transitions with the surroundings

Standards

S2.2.1 To avoid long monolithic buildings, provide variation in building massing at intervals of approximately 25.0 m to 45.7 m (82 ft to 150 ft) depending on urban context.

S2.2.2 In *low-rise residential developments*, generally proportion building height to the width of the adjacent street right-of-way to achieve a 1:1 to 1:1.1 ratio. This typically corresponds with six storey buildings on a typical 20.0 m (65 ft) wide street.

S2.2.3 Where the ratio noted in S2.2.2 cannot be achieved, such as in areas with narrow street right-of-way, or where parts of a *low-rise residential development* front a *mid-block connection,* provide a setback of 2.4 m to 3.0 m (8 ft to 10 ft) above the fourth storey.

S2.2.4 In *low-rise residential developments* on a *single-fronting site* with two facing *apartment* buildings, limit the height of the rear building to approximately 13.7 m (45 ft). This typically corresponds with four storeys.

S2.2.5 In *low-rise mixed-use residential* or *low-rise non-residential developments*, provide a defined *streetwall* in proportion to the adjacent street right-of-way by stepping back *building massing* a minimum of 2.4 m to 3.0 m (8 ft to 10 ft) above the heights outlined in Table 2.2a.

S2.2.6 Where a *mixed-use residential* and *non-residential development* includes a *tower podium*, proportion podium height to the width of the adjacent street right-of-way, generally as outlined in Table 2.2b.

S2.2.7 Design *tower podiums* associated with *residential developments* according to their development context, as follows:

a. maximum 18.3 m (60 ft) in Downtown; and

b. maximum 15.2 m (50 ft) in areas outside of Downtown.

S2.2.8 The maximum *tower podium* heights outlined in S2.2.6 may be increased to 21.3 m (70 ft) for the following:

a. non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing; and

b. sites with a frontage greater than 60.7 m (199 ft) where *enhanced open space* is provided.

S2.2.9 Except for open balconies, do not extend *building massing* over *open spaces* unless it demonstrably enhances the *public realm* and:

a. *building massing* does not extend beyond the *ultimate property line*;

b. *building massing* does not extend over *POPS*;

c. a minimum vertical clearance in the range of 12.0 m to 18.0 m (40 ft to 60 ft), between grade and the underside of massing is provided; and

d. *building massing* does not interfere with a healthy tree canopy.

S2.2.7 *Breezeways* may be considered in limited circumstances where:

a. they have a minimum height-to-width ratio of 2:1;

b. they are lined with *active uses* to support animation and *eyes on the street*;

c. they provide a direct, legible, and publicly accessible pedestrian connection between streets, *open spaces*, or key destinations; and

d. they are open for public use during building operating hours.

Guidelines

G2.2.1 Where a *continuous streetwall* is desired, maintain continuity of *low-rise developments* and *tower podiums* along the building's street-oriented frontages.

G2.2.2 Generally, when a *tower podium* is provided, a massing setback should be incorporated above the *podium* level.

Table 2.2a Standard *low-rise mixed-use* and *low-rise non-residential streetwall* heights

Adjacent Street Right-of-Way Width*	Standard Streetwall Height	
	East - West Street	North - South Street
Up to 24.4 m (80 ft)	Up to 15.2 m (50 ft)	Up to 15.2 m (50 ft)
Up to 27.5 m (90 ft)		Up to 23.0 m (75.5 ft)
Up to 30.5 m (100 ft)	Up to 23.0 m (75.5 ft)	
Over 30.5 m 100 ft)		

* Includes sidewalks and existing building lines

Table 2.2b Standard *mixed-use* and *non-residential developments tower podium* heights

Adjacent Street Right-of-Way Width*	Standard Tower Podium Heights	
	Downtown and Broadway Plan Area	Other Contexts
Up to 24.4 m (80 ft)	Up to 15.2 m (50 ft)	Up to 15.2 m (50 ft)
Up to 27.5 m (90 ft)		
Up to 30.5 m (100 ft)	15.2 m to 18.3 m (50 ft to 60 ft)	
Over 30.5 m 100 ft)	18.3 m to 23.0 m (60 ft to 75.5 ft)	

* Includes sidewalks and existing building lines

Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb to support pedestrian-scaled design:

- Prioritize building proportions: Use height, width, and setbacks to establish scale, openness, and legibility before relying on finishes or materials.
- Test the design at pedestrian speed: Evaluate legibility, rhythm, and enclosure from typical sidewalk viewpoints rather than distant perspectives.
- Use the *podium* to resolve context: Concentrate scale transitions, grade change, and frontage complexity within the *lower levels*.
- Read the street wall as a continuous system: Assess continuity and breaks in relation to the full block face, not just the project frontage.
- Minimum planar change to read as a clear volumetric break: 1.5 m to 3.0 m (5 ft to 10 ft).

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

City-wide Design and Development Guidelines City of Vancouver

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2.3

Balance height and density with access to light and sky while contributing to skyline variety

Standards

S2.3.1 In predominantly *residential contexts* limit *tower* dimensions to maximum 29.0 m (95 ft).

S2.3.2 In *mixed-use residential* and *non-residential contexts*, if *tower* dimensions exceed 29.0 m (95 ft), provide clear volumetric articulation.

S2.3.3 Limit *tower floorplates* to the maximums outlined in Table 2.3.

Guidelines

G2.3.1 Incorporate varied building heights on large or consolidated sites to avoid flat or repetitive skyline silhouettes.

G2.3.2 Design *tower* massing to maintain slender proportions.

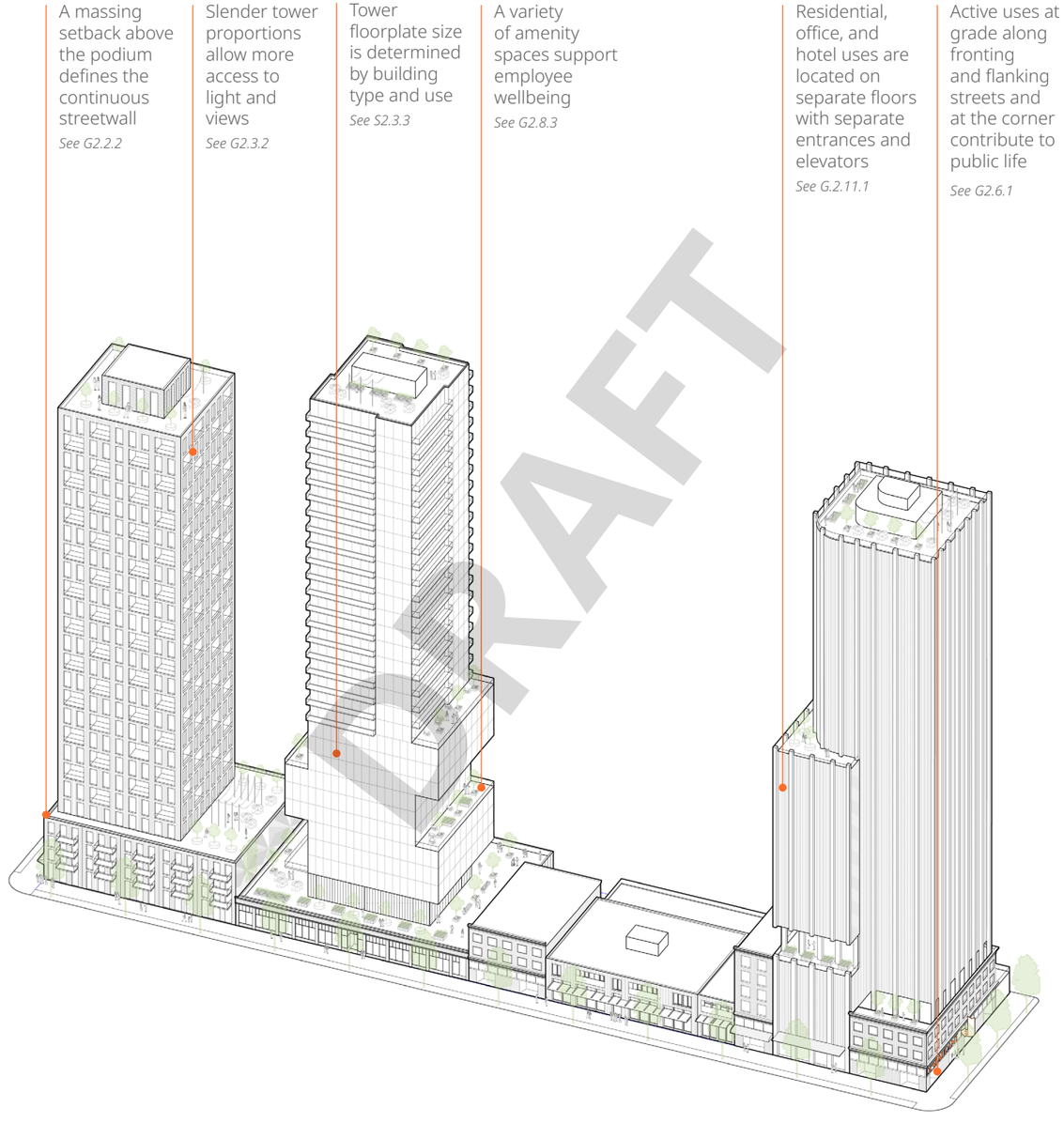
Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb to consider when shaping building massing:

- On a typical east-west site, *towers* wider than roughly 60% of the site frontage often begin to read as broad slabs rather than slender towers.
- For *tall towers* and *very tall towers*, height-to-width ratios in the range of 6:1 to 8:1 or greater often produce more proportionate building forms. Lower ratios can benefit from additional shaping, articulation, or separation.
- Organizing buildings, especially *towers*, into recognizable components, such as base, middle, and top, can help break down scale and create a more legible and composed building form.

Table 2.3 Average *tower floorplate* standards

Building Type	Approximate Tower Floorplate Maximum	Notes
Residential towers (baseline)	511 sq m to 670 sq m (5,500 sq ft to 7,200 sq ft)	
Mass timber residential towers	Up to 746 sq m (8,000 sq ft)	
Non-market residential towers	Up to 746 sq m (8,000 sq ft)	
Tall towers (residential)	Up to 746 sq m (8,000 sq ft)	Requires increased shaping, articulation, or spacing.
Very tall towers (residential)	930 sq m – 1,115 sq m (10,000 sq ft – 12,000 sq ft)	Requires increased shaping, articulation, or spacing. *Floorplates* above these maximums may be considered on a site-by-site basis where overall massing exceeds the intent of section 2.4
Employment and Hotel towers	930 sq m – 1,395 sq m (10,000 sq ft – 15,000 sq ft)	



2.4

Shape and articulate form to retain and reinforce the integrity of heritage buildings

Standards

S2.4.1 New additions should be recessed from the historic street façade by way of at least one of the following:

a. Horizontal setback: locate the façade of the contemporary building no less than 3 m (10 ft) from the heritage façade.

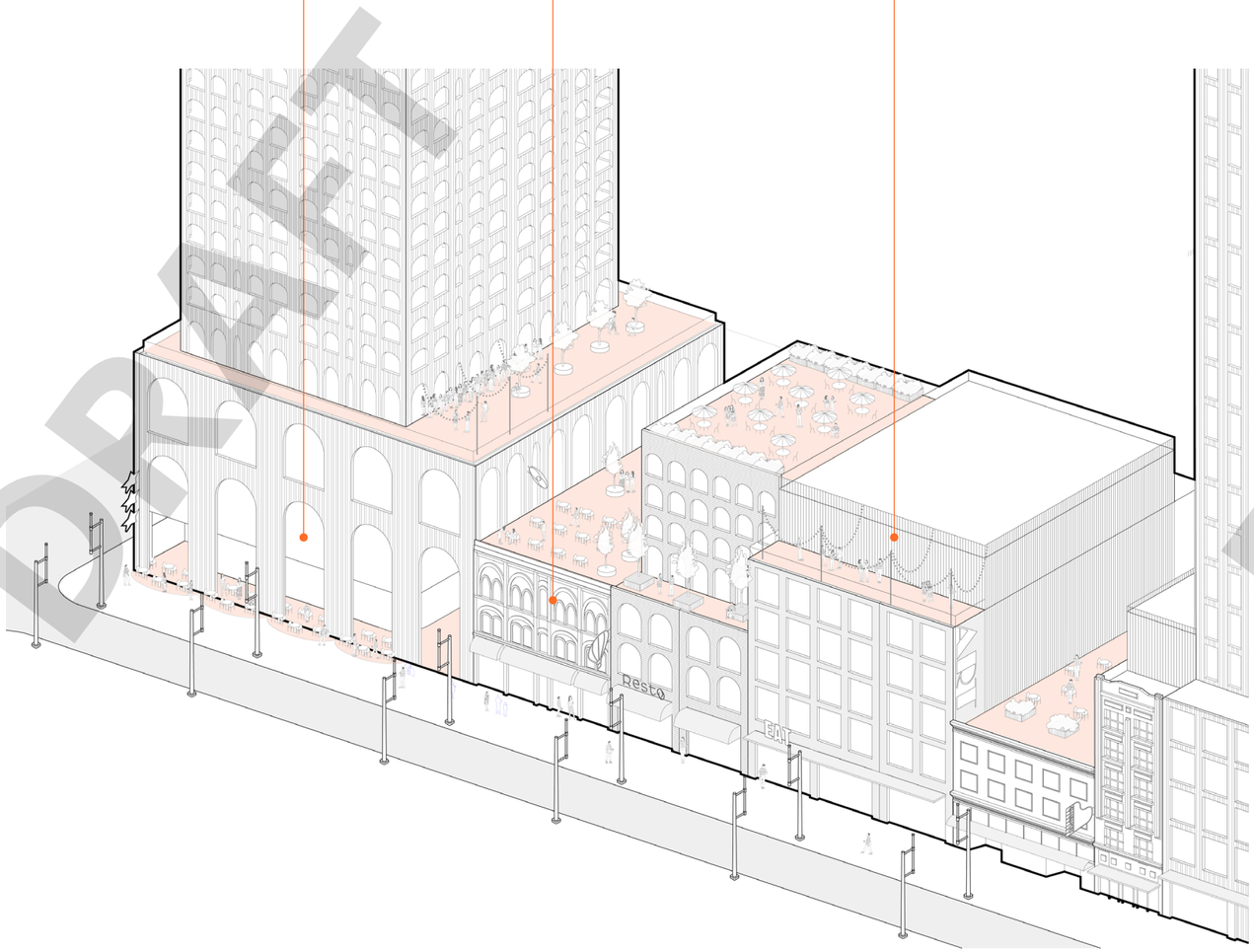
b. Vertical setback: locate the underside of the contemporary façade at least two storeys above the parapet of the heritage façade.

S2.4.2 Where development includes an addition above a *heritage building* within a historic area, the proposed massing above 21.3 m (70 ft) should include set backs from the front property line.

Guidelines

G2.4.1 Where development includes an addition to or is adjacent to a *heritage building*, retain and reinforce the integrity of the overall form, scale and massing of the heritage building.

G2.4.2 Contemporary buildings should be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the existing *heritage building.*



2.5

Maintain existing or compatible uses that support the conservation of heritage buildings

Design Tips

Where development includes an addition above a *heritage building*, articulate the building face into segments that reflect the historic pattern of development, typically in widths of about 15.2 m (50 ft).

Guidelines

G2.5.1 Where development includes a *heritage building*, rehabilitation should maintain existing use, or historic (original) use, or identify the most compatible use to avoid unsympathetic alterations to the structure and exterior of an existing *heritage building*.

2.6

Locate active uses where they contribute to pedestrian activity and a lively public realm

Guidelines

G2.6.1 Locate *active uses* at grade where they contribute to activity, visibility, and public life during different times of the day and days of the week such as:

- **a.** along fronting and flanking streets;
- **b.** at corners;
- **c.** facing *public open spaces* and *enhanced open space*; and
- **d.** along *mid-block connections* and other primary pedestrian routes.

G2.6.2 Where a site is located on a *village high street*, orient ground-level retail to the *village high street* frontage.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

2.7

Design active use spaces to support long-term functionality, viability, flexibility, and tenant diversity

Standards

S2.7.1 Design *active use* spaces, with floor-to-floor heights generally ranging from 4.6 m to 6.1 m (15 ft to 20 ft).

S2.7.2 Design ground-level *fine-grain active use* spaces with a maximum unit frontage generally around 7.6 m to 15.3 m (25 ft to 50 ft). Where *major active uses* are proposed at ground level, consider designing them to be demisable into smaller frontages in the future.

Guidelines

G2.7.1 Provide frequent, clear ground-level access directly from the sidewalk for each *active use* space.

G2.7.2 Where *major active use* spaces are included, locate and configure them to support the public realm by:

a. locating these spaces below grade or above grade where feasible;

b. providing secondary access from *breezeways*, *mid-block connections*, and lanes where applicable;

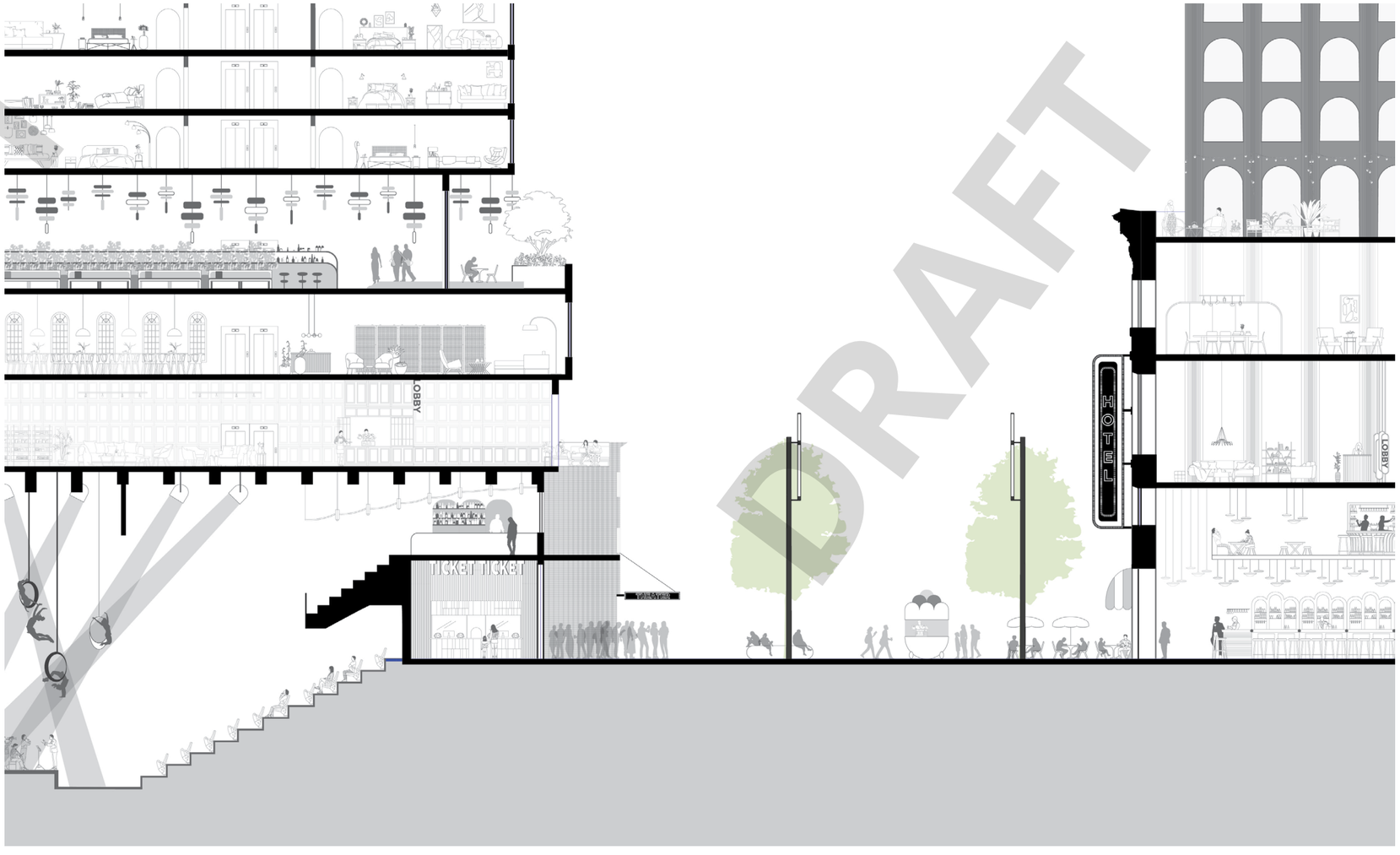
c. accommodating queuing away from the *public realm*, except for on-site *breezeways* or *mid-block connections*; and

d. maintaining pedestrian scale along the street through smaller retail bays, articulated frontage, or wrapping and layering of *fine-grain active uses*.

Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb for designing *active use spaces*:

- Design interior spaces to adapt to future tenant and changing economic times.
- Avoid narrow and deep commercial retail units. Storefronts with a depth-to-width ratio of 3:1 tend to work best for the broadest range of tenants. Corner locations tend to work best with a 1:1 ratio.
- Provide a variety of storefront sizes to support a mix of business types.



2.8

Design office use spaces to support long-term flexibility, adaptability, and employee well-being

Standards

S2.8.1 Ground-level *office use* spaces are generally discouraged where *active uses* are expected. Where provided, design these spaces with floor-to-floor heights generally ranging from 4.6 m to 6.1 m (15 ft to 20 ft) to support future conversion.

S2.8.2 Design *office use* spaces on upper levels with floor-to-floor heights generally ranging from 3.6 m to 4.6 m (12 ft to 15 ft).

Guidelines

G2.8.1 In *Business Districts* and *Industrial and Employment Districts*, building lobbies and public access spaces are encouraged to exceed typical floor-to-floor heights, including double-height or taller spaces, where appropriate.

G2.8.2 Where a development includes *office uses* and non-office uses, including *hotel*, provide separate entrances and elevators for each use.

G2.8.3 Provide a variety of indoor and outdoor *non-residential amenity* spaces that support employee wellbeing, such as shared gathering areas, outdoor terraces, and fitness facilities throughout the building.

2.9

Design industrial use spaces to support long-term operational efficiency, viability, and employee well-being

Standards

S2.9.1 Design *industrial use* spaces, with floor-to-floor heights generally around 6.1 m (20 ft) at ground level and 5.2 m (17 ft) above grade.

S2.9.2 Ensure shared corridors serving *industrial use* spaces are designed to support the movement of equipment and goods, with a minimum width generally around 2.1 m (7 ft) wide and at least one door with a minimum dimension of 2.4 m by 2.4 m (8 ft by 8 ft).

S2.9.3 Design mezzanines to be contiguous and functionally integrated with adjacent *industrial uses* and to not exceed approximately 40% of the total floor area of the associated *industrial use*.

Guidelines

G2.9.1 Provide *industrial use* spaces, including mezzanines, with easy access to loading and waste management areas.

G2.9.2 Ensure that mezzanines are functionally integrated with the associated production, manufacturing, or maker space.

G2.9.3 Where the development includes *industrial uses* and non-industrial uses, provide separate entrances for each use, as well as separate freight and passenger elevators.

G2.9.4 Consider providing a variety of indoor and outdoor *non-residential amenity* spaces that support employee wellbeing, such as shared gathering areas, outdoor terraces, and fitness facilities throughout the building.

2.10

Mitigate impacts of at- and above-grade structured parking and service areas on the surrounding context

Guidelines

G2.10.1 Plan for vehicle access from the lane and away from streets, *parks*, and areas intended for on-site *open spaces*.

G2.10.2 Above-grade parking structures are not supported except in *Groundwater Protection Areas* where:

a. up to two levels of above-grade parking, measured from the street, may be integrated at the rear of a building;

b. up to one storey of additional height may be considered to compensate for floor area displaced by above-grade structured parking;

c. *active uses*, with a minimum recommended depth of 9.1 m (30 ft), should be located on the ground floor facing the street;

d. multiple parkade access points along the lane may be considered where site slopes present challenges for ramping and efficiency; and

e. the rooftops of structured parking should be prioritized for uses that would otherwise have been provided at grade, such as private outdoor space, *outdoor residential amenity* space, and landscaping.

G2.10.3 Integrate building services, including mechanical and electrical equipment, vents, bicycle storage spaces, garbage and recycling areas in the building and site design, away from ground floor *residential uses*, streets, *open spaces*, and pedestrian routes, preferably underground.

G2.10.4 Where building services must be located adjacent to *parks* or the *public realm*, ensure they do not block access and minimize their impact through consolidation, screening, and visual integration. Venting of mechanical equipment, including commercial kitchen exhaust, onto the sidewalk or a *park* is not supported.

2.11

Design dwelling units for functional daily use and long-term comfort and livability

Standards

S2.11.1 Provide *residential* floor-to-floor heights generally in the range of 2.7 m to 3.4 m (9 ft to 11 ft).

S2.11.2 For *single-aspect dwelling units*, provide an overall depth in the range of 10.7 m to 12.2 m (35 ft to 40 ft).

S2.11.3 Where sunken *dwelling units* are unavoidable, ensure the finished floor is not lower than 1.2 m (4 ft) below adjacent finished grade.

Guidelines

G2.11.1 Where a development includes *residential uses* and *non-residential uses*, provide separate entrances and elevators for each use, and locate *dwelling units* on separate floors from other uses.

G2.11.2 Where included, below-market rental units should match market rental units in design quality, livability, and unit mix. Requirements for family-size units with two or more bedrooms should be met within both the market and below-market rental unit mixes.

G2.11.3 Orient *dwelling units* to streets, rear yards, or courtyards where minimum separation between *primary façades* can be met. Refer to section 1.4.

G2.11.4 Where permitted by the Zoning and Development By-law or a policy, variations to unit mix requirements may be considered in some instances where achieving the required housing mix would result in inefficient building design or compromised unit livability. Developments should still seek to provide 35% of the *dwelling units* with two or more bedrooms. Variations will be considered for:

a. *low-rise mixed-use residential developments* on mid-block sites or on corner sites with frontages less than 30.1 m (99 ft); and

b. proposals where Council determines that the development would contribute to conserving a building or site designated as protected *heritage property* or that is on the Heritage Register.

Also refer to Family Room: Housing Mix Policy for Rezoning Projects.

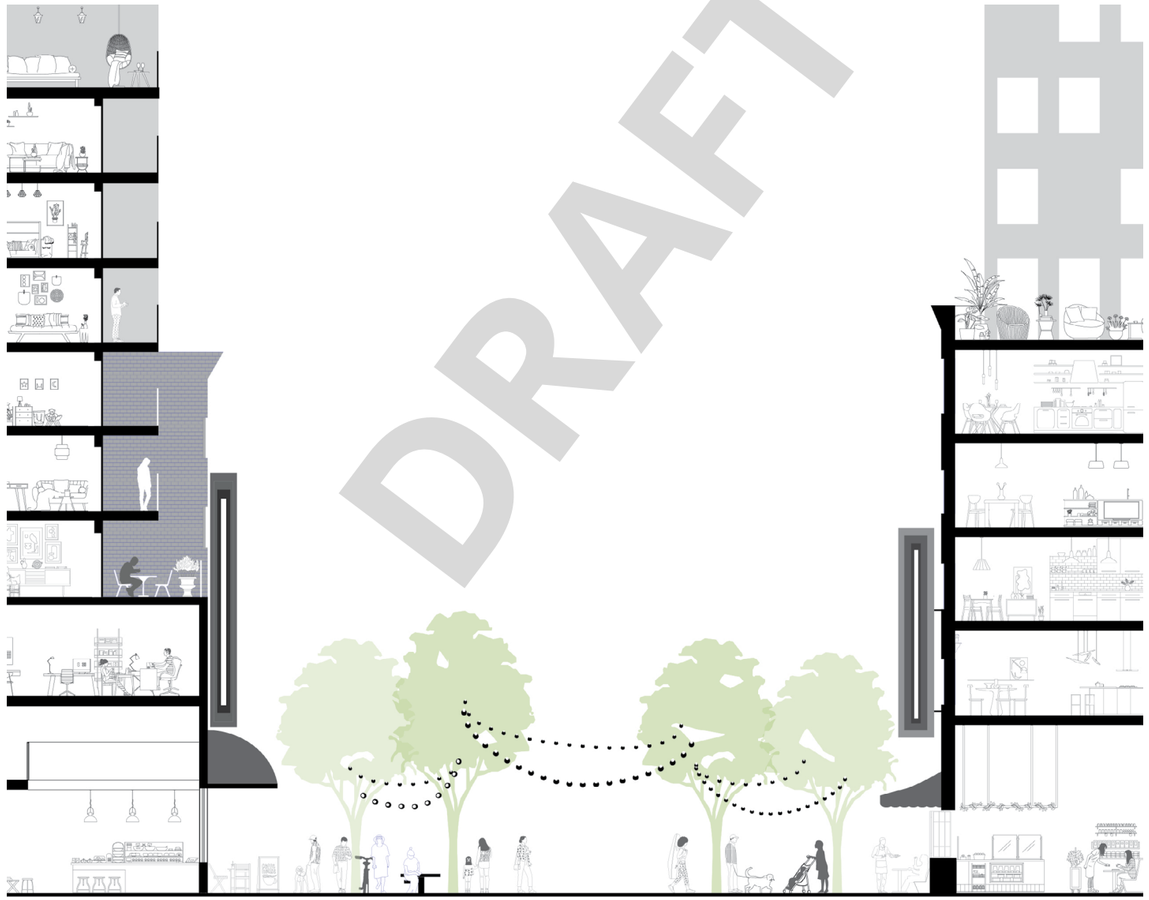
G2.11.5 *Single-aspect dwelling units* facing a side yard should be limited and are generally only appropriate where the side yard depth is at least 9.1 m (30 ft) or where units front a *mid-block connection* at least 9.1 m (30 ft) wide.

G2.11.6 *Living rooms* should not face directly into *lightwells* or *lightcourts.*

Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb to refer to when designing livable homes:

- Locate *living rooms*, and dining and kitchen areas closest to windows to maximize exposure to daylight.
- Test layouts with beds, sofas, dining tables, desks, and circulation to confirm rooms function comfortably.
- Even slight increases in unit width, ceiling height, or window size can do a lot to improve livability.
- Access to borrowed natural light and adequate proportions for furniture enhance the usability of *inboard rooms* which may be used for purposes other than *residential storage*.



2.12

Design convenient, accessible, and usable residential storage for everyday living needs

Standards

S2.12.1 Provide *residential storage* with a minimum clear width of 0.9 m (3 ft).

Guidelines

G2.12.1 In *dwelling units* where the only area for sleeping is in a space that may be considered an *inboard room*, *residential storage space* should be provided separately.

G2.12.2 Design *residential storage* space to be accessible for people of all abilities, avoiding steps or ledges and providing ample headroom. Stacked storage lockers are not supported.

G2.12.3 In-suite *residential storage space* should be enclosed or clearly defined as a dedicated storage area that is spatially separated from primary living spaces and accessed from a common area or hallway within the *dwelling unit*. *Residential storage* space should not be located within *living rooms* or bedrooms.

G2.12.4 Where *residential storage space* is provided in the same area as a major appliance (e.g., a washer and dryer, hot water heater, etc.), the storage area should be clearly separated so that appliances do not occupy the space intended for storage.

Design Tips

Make *residential storage space* do the heavy lifting: equip these areas with hooks, shelves, cabinets, etc., can go a long way to reduce clutter in other living spaces.

2.13

Design secured and versatile common residential amenity spaces that support a range of activities

Standards

S2.13.1 Where a development on a site with an area of 920 sq m (9,900 sq ft) or greater contains *residential uses*, provide a minimum ratio of 1.2 sq m (13 sq ft) of common *indoor residential amenity* space per *dwelling unit.*

S2.13.2 In all developments containing *residential uses*, provide a minimum ratio of 2.0 sq m (22 sq ft) of common *outdoor residential amenity* space per *dwelling unit*.

Guidelines

G2.13.1 The minimum standard for common *outdoor residential amenity* set out in S2.13.2 may be reduced for *low-rise developments* where all *outdoor residential amenity* space cannot reasonably be accommodated at grade. Providing *low-rise developments* with rooftop *outdoor residential amenity* space is supported but not required.

G2.13.2 Where publicly-accessible *enhanced open space* is provided on site, that space may count toward the minimum *outdoor residential amenity* space requirements, provided that the space remains free of fences, screens, gates, or other barriers to public use.

G2.13.3 Co-locate *indoor residential amenity* and *outdoor residential amenity* spaces with clear visual and physical connections between them, where possible.

G2.13.4 Design *outdoor residential amenity* spaces to support a range of activities such as social gathering, children's play, urban agriculture, and pet relief. Use trees and diverse planting, including edible planting, to shape spaces and provide amenities that support these activities.**G2.13.5** Equip at least one *indoor residential amenity* space with basic support functions, including a kitchen, accessible washroom, and storage. An accessible washroom should be located on the same level as rooftop *outdoor residential amenity* spaces.

G2.13.6 Guest suites may be counted as *indoor residential amenity* space, provided the development includes at least one indoor residential amenity space that meets the expectations of G2.13.4. Guest suites will be subject to covenants on title restricting their use.

2.14

Design balconies, patios, and roof decks as usable and comfortable private outdoor spaces

Standards

S2.14.1 Provide private outdoor space for all dwelling units, with a minimum depth of 1.8 m (6 ft) and a minimum area of 4.5 sq m (48 sq ft).

S2.14.2 Exceptions to S2.14.1 may be considered in the following cases, if a minimum of 4.5 sq m (48 sq ft) of additional common *outdoor residential amenity* space beyond the expectations outlined in section 2.12 is also provided for each *dwelling unit* that does not have private outdoor space:

- **a.** units with exposure to the *Major Road Network, truck route*, or *high traffic volume streets*;
- **b.** units in *mass timber buildings*;
- **c.** units directly adjacent a *rail facility*;
- **d.** units in non-profit or government-initiated projects with non-market housing; and
- **e.** units in a *heritage property*.

Guidelines

G2.14.1 Where a balcony or patio is not provided, equip *dwelling units* with an alternative form of private outdoor connection, such as a Juliet balcony or full-height operable glazing with integrated safety guards.

G2.14.2 Avoid balcony arrangements that significantly increase building mass and shadow impact.

G2.14.3 Consider insetting balconies to accommodate mature tree canopy or at higher storeys for year-round comfort.

G2.14.4 Enhance balcony usability and privacy through design strategies such as screens, fin walls, planters, opaque guardrails, or *retractable weather screening systems*.

G2.14.5 Where permitted by a district schedule, design *enclosed balconies* to maintain visual lightness and façade clarity, including using clear glazing, slender framing, and limited concentration at corners or along prominent façades.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

2.15

Compose façades to respond to the building scale, program, and the character of the public realm

Guidelines

G2.15.1 Coordinate façade composition and articulation with *building massing*, program, and structural expression.

G2.15.2 On corner sites, treat both street-facing façades as primary elevations.

G2.15.3 Avoid blank walls that are visible from the *public realm*. Where unavoidable, they should be designed as integral parts of the building elevation with attention to materiality and details.

G2.15.4 Avoid long, uninterrupted expanses of unarticulated glazing, particularly at the *lower levels*.

G2.15.5 Prioritize durable, sustainable, *high-quality materials* and finishes, and ensure careful composition, detailing, and execution.

G2.15.6 Emphasize finer-grained, tactile materials at *lower levels* where buildings are experienced at pedestrian scale.

G2.15.7 Design building projections, including brise-soleil, sunshades, balconies, *exterior passageways*, and patios, as integrated components of the *building massing* and architectural expression.

G2.15.8 Where *building massing* extends over *open spaces*, use bright, *high-quality materials* on soffits and wall surfaces.

Design Tips

Here are some things to consider to ground new buildings in their context while remaining contemporary:

- Look to the neighbourhood's underlying character and history, not its surface style. Take cues from building scale, form, openings, and patterns of solidity rather than replicating historic details.
- Use weight and texture to anchor buildings. More substantial materials often belong at the base, with lighter materials above.
- Echo local palettes without limitation. Familiar tones and *high-quality materials* can reinforce continuity while remaining contemporary.
- Choose durable materials that age well. Longevity and weathering matter more than novelty in shaping neighbourhood character over time.
- Give special attention to the finishing of balcony soffits.

2.16

Integrate architectural lighting to clarify form and contribute to a safe and engaging public realm

Guidelines

G2.16.1 Use architectural lighting to reinforce *building massing*, entrances, and primary architectural elements, particularly at the *lower levels*.

G2.16.2 Design lighting to minimize glare, light spill, and impacts on adjacent *residential uses* and *open spaces*. Also refer to the City of Vancouver's Outdoor Lighting Design Tips.

G2.16.3 Treat existing historic neon signs as character-defining elements. Rehabilitation or restoration of neon signage should be based on archival documentation.

G2.16.4 Where anticipated by an area plan or policy, integrate new neon signage to clearly identify cultural and entertainment venues.

2.17

Design roofs and tower crowns as integral elements that contribute to a coherent skyline

Guidelines

G2.17.1 For *towers* exceeding approximately 90 m (295 ft) in height, give special attention to the design of roofs and *tower crowns*, recognizing their visibility from multiple viewpoints across the city.

G2.17.2 Integrate mechanical equipment into roof and *tower crown* design to minimize visual clutter and avoid ad hoc screening solutions.

Design Tips

When designing roofs and *tower crowns*, consider the following:

- Differentiate the *tower crown*. Use changes in massing, setbacks, or materials to give the tops of towers a recognizable form.
- Design roofs with views from above in mind. Roofs are often visible from neighbouring *towers*, so organize rooftop surfaces and equipment accordingly.
- Avoid flat and uniform *tower* tops across *large site* developments. Variation in *tower crown* form can help create a more distinctive skyline.
- Incorporate green roofs where possible. Green roofs can improve building performance and contribute to urban ecology. Refer to the Rain City Green Roofs Best Practices Guide for design guidance.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

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2.18

Conserve and complement the character-defining elements of heritage buildings

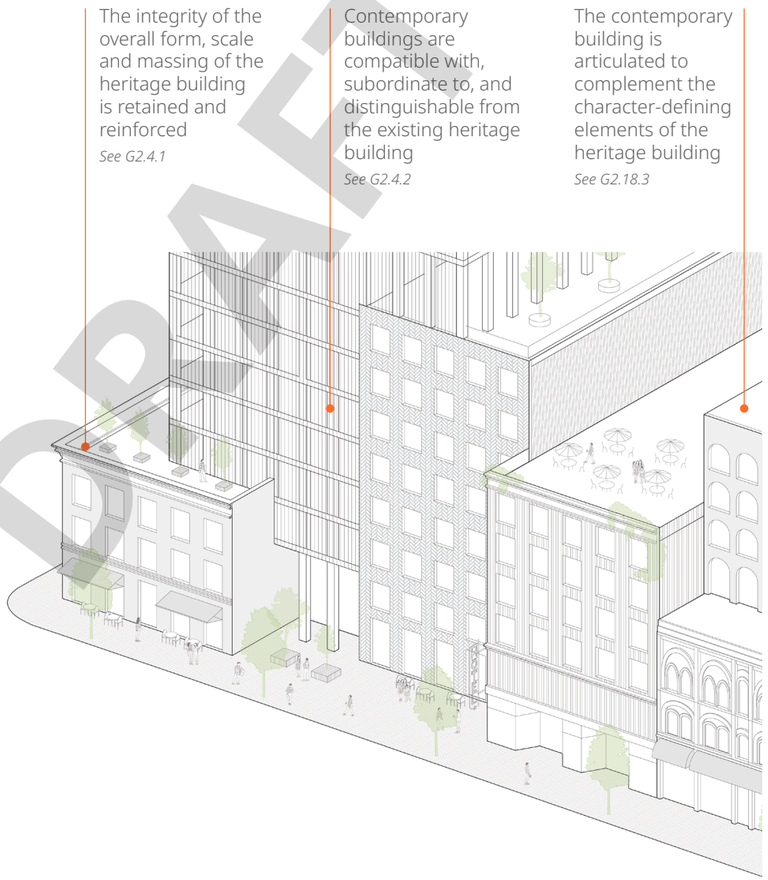
Guidelines

G2.18.1 Understand the historic construction, assemblies, and systems of a *heritage property* before intervening, recognizing their contribution to the area's cultural heritage. Use the Statement of Significance and Conservation Plan to inform design development.

G2.18.2 Use a minimal intervention approach to protect and maintain the *heritage property*.

G2.18.3 Where development includes addition to, or is adjacent to a *heritage building*, the contemporary building should be articulated to complement the character-defining elements of the *heritage building*. This includes, but is not limited to: vertical order, fenestration pattern, window, door and storefront assemblies, masonry detailing, cornices, and architectural metalwork.

G2.18.4 When replacing missing or heavily deteriorated character-defining elements of a *heritage property*, restore them based on documentary evidence. If no evidence exists, reconstruct or redesign them in a historically compatible manner.



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3 Urban Experience

Urban Experience addresses how buildings and sites contribute to the public realm and shape the everyday experience of the city at the pedestrian scale. This chapter provides guidance related to active frontages, weather protection, open spaces, parks, plazas, and other publicly accessible areas to support safe, welcoming, and vibrant urban environments.

3.1

Design active façades that provide visual permeability and easy access, enhancing the pedestrian experience

Standards

S3.1.1 Design *non-residential active façades* to activate the public realm by providing:

- **a.** frequent entrances typically spaced 8 m to 12 m (26 ft to 40 ft) apart; and
- **b.** visual permeability with transparent glazing across most of the ground-floor façades up to the underside of the second floor or the underside of *weather protection*, whichever is lower.

S3.1.2 Design ground-oriented *dwelling units* with *active façades* that engage the *public realm* while balancing privacy and accessibility, including providing individual entries that are:

- **a.** accessed directly from the *public realm*; and
- **b.** no more than 1.2 m (4 ft) from finished grade.

Guidelines

G3.1.1 Design safe and welcoming public-private interfaces by:

- **a.** encouraging *eyes on the street* through clear sightlines from both public and private spaces;
- **b.** providing well-integrated lighting along building frontages; and
- **c.** designing security measures, including grilles and gates, to be visually permeable at all hours.

G3.1.2 Limit blank walls, including grilles, secondary egress doors, and opaque glazing along streets or where visible from *parks*.

G3.1.3 Plan interior layouts that maintain visual permeability from the sidewalk, avoiding back-of-house functions, shelving, or window signage that obstruct views into the space.

G3.1.4 On sloped sites, integrate stairs and ramps within the building envelope wherever possible.

G3.1.5 Where flood construction levels, sloping sites, or other constraints require the ground floor to be elevated or set back from sidewalk grade, maintain direct visual and physical connection to the *public realm*.

Design Tips

- Passive security, achieved through lighting, transparency, and activity, supports both safety and street life more effectively than physical barriers alone.
- Solid roll-down grilles and opaque barriers facing the *public realm* are discouraged.

G3.1.6 Where inactive façades are unavoidable because of extreme slope or above grade parking structure, utilize public art and landscape features such as planters, trellises, climbing plants, seat walls, and seating.

G3.1.7 Showcase production and manufacturing space at grade by incorporating glazing where operational, safety, and acoustic requirements allow.

3.2

Provide weather protection that supports year-round pedestrian activity in the public realm

Standards

S3.2.1 Provide *weather protection* along frontages with *active uses*, near transit, along key pedestrian routes, over areas intended for outdoor dining or sidewalk patios, and at principal building entries, mounted at a height generally between 3.0 m to 4.5 m (10 ft to 15 ft) above grade.

S3.2.2 Design *weather protection* with sufficient depth to provide effective coverage, generally achieving a depth-to-mounting height ratio of approximately 0.4 to 0.7, and not less than 1.5 m (5 ft) in most *mixed-use residential* and *non-residential contexts*.

Guidelines

G3.2.1 Provide generally continuous *weather protection* along frontages with *non-residential active uses*, particularly in areas with high pedestrian activity.

G3.2.2 Coordinate *weather protection* with adjacent buildings to support continuity across property lines and maintain a consistent pedestrian experience.

G3.2.3 Coordinate *weather protection* with existing and proposed trees to avoid conflicts. Also refer to the Engineering Design Manual.

G3.2.4 Integrate *weather protection* as an intentional component of the building design, aligned with the architectural expression and rhythm of the frontage.

G3.2.5 Consider variations in proportion, material, and detailing to respond to different frontages, uses, and contexts, such as marquee-style projections in front of cultural venues.

Design Tips

Here are some rules-of-thumb to consider when designing *weather protection*:

- Use material to signal importance. Changes in material, thickness, or finish can be used to mark primary entrances without increasing size or depth.
- Lighter reads better at the street. Slim profiles, expressed structure, and transparent or translucent elements generally maintain daylight and visual connection better than heavy or opaque forms.
- Treat soffits as integral to the architecture. Soffits are experienced at walking speed; material quality, joints, and lighting integration make for inviting pedestrian environments.
- Provide bicycle spaces under *weather protection* where space permits.

3.3

Design inviting interior public spaces that are visible, accessible, and comfortable for everyday use

Standards

S3.3.1 Where the Zoning and Development By-law or other development policy permits floor space ratio exclusions for *interior public space*, provide:

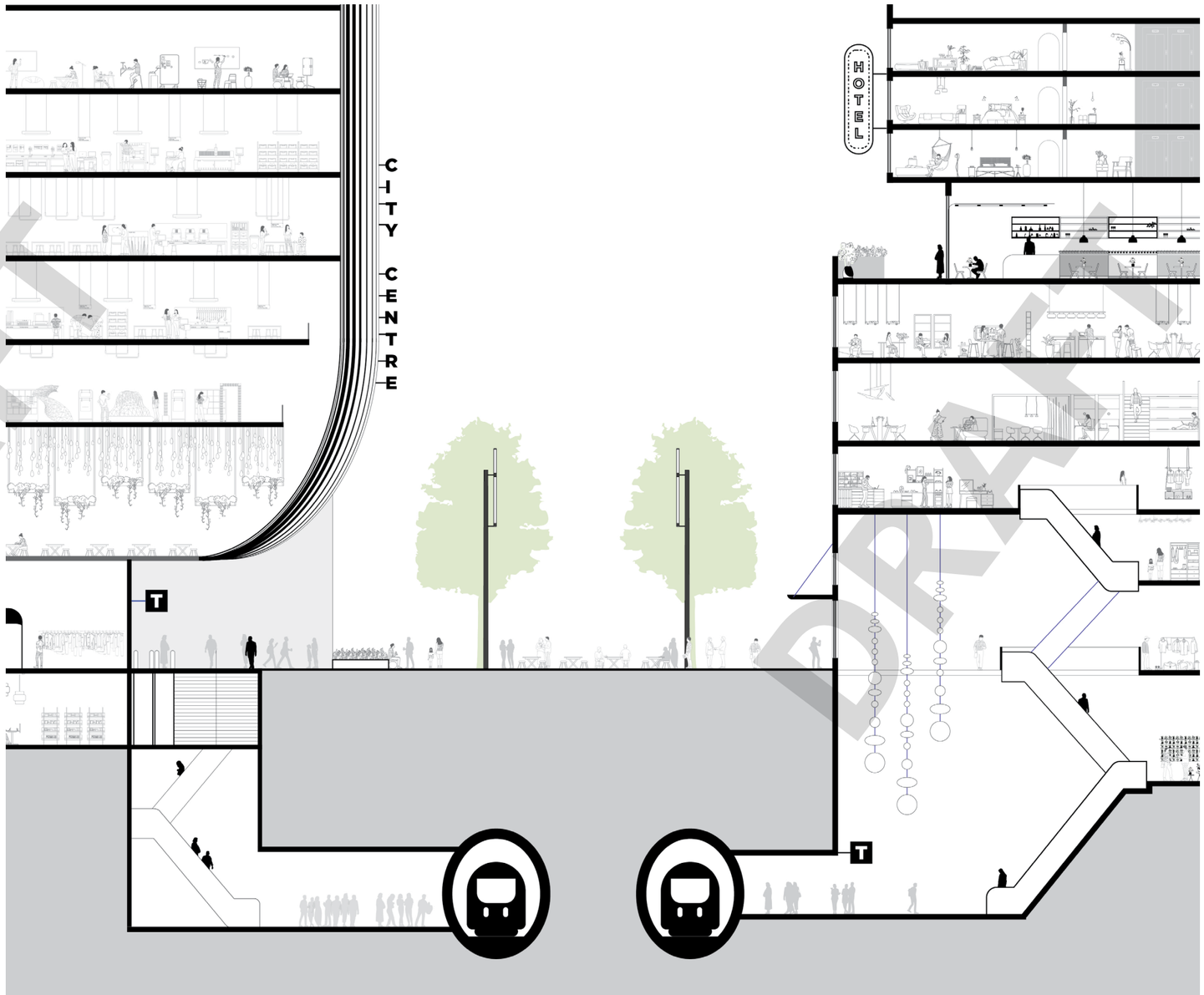
- **a.** a minimum height of approximately 9.1 m (30 ft); and
- **b.** a minimum area of approximately 93.0 sq m (1,000 sq ft).

Guidelines

G3.3.1 Consider providing *interior public space* in major *mixed-use residential* and *non-residential developments* located in *Business Districts* and *Industrial and Employment Districts* where the scale, use, or location of the space would enhance the *public realm*.

G3.3.2 Provide a variety of seating, tables, or other facilities for the enjoyment of the public.

G3.3.3 Provide direct visual and physical access from the sidewalk.



3.4

Design high-quality on-site open spaces that enhance the pedestrian experience along the sidewalk

Guidelines

G3.4.1 Break up monotonous frontages with design features that add visual interest, rhythm, and activity such as unique paving and wall treatments, seating, varied planting, and pedestrian-scaled lighting.

G3.4.2 Provide public seating at street corners and *mid-block connections* to improve accessibility and offer consistent places for people to rest.

G3.4.3 Soften and mitigate grade changes and the visual impact of blank walls and long fences using design features such as trellises, planting, unique wall treatments, stairs, seatwalls, and interactive elements of play. Reduce the height of landscape walls where possible.

G3.4.4 Where suitable, maintain clear visual connections and physical access between on-site *open space* and the sidewalk to encourage social interaction.

G3.4.5 Design with varied heights of plantings in front of privacy hedges, retaining walls, and fences.

3.5

Design public open spaces for a variety of activities to support diverse public life and urban ecology

Guidelines

G3.5.1 Design *public open spaces* with specific activities in mind and, provide the amenities needed to support them such as seating, planting, play features, drinking fountains, lighting, special paving and wayfinding.

G3.5.2 Use high-quality landscape materials to enhance visual interest and create inviting spaces.

G3.5.3 Design for universal accessibility where space and site grading allow. Minimize grade changes and provide highly visible, direct entries from adjacent sidewalks. Refer to the Vancouver Accessibility Strategy.

G3.5.4 Where *public open spaces* align with the *blue green network*, *greenways*, or *ecological corridors*, develop designs that support urban tree canopy, habitat, biodiversity planting or green rainwater infrastructure.

Design Tips

Consider targeted stakeholder engagement with equity-seeking groups to help determine what activities are missing in the neighbourhood.

3.6

Design Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) to function first and foremost as public places

Standards

S3.6.1 Limit retail patios to approximately 1/3 of a *POPS*.

S3.6.2 Provide signage clearly indicating that the *POPS* is intended for public use.

Design Tips

During the design phase, consider post-occupancy programming and stewardship to ensure the success of large *POPS*.

3.7

Design plazas to accommodate social interaction, enhance comfort and vibrancy in the public realm

Standards

S3.7.1 Secure *large plazas* and *transit plazas* that do not fall on TransLink-, City-, or provincially-owned property as *POPS*.

Guidelines

G3.7.1 Locate at least one primary building entry within a *plaza*, ensuring entries and circulation do not conflict with public space programming.

G3.7.2 Incorporate tree planting, particularly where contiguous planted areas, underground setbacks, or slab drops are provided.

G3.7.3 Design *large plazas* with adequate space for flexible programming and infrastructure for special events, such as lighting, electrical receptacles, *weather protection*, and food truck servicing.

G3.7.4 Provide shade trees, *weather protection*, and seating in *transit plazas* to improve waiting areas.

Design Tips

Movable seating is encouraged, especially if stewarded by building tenants or management. This may serve a commercial retail unit without requiring additional patio permits.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

3.8

Design mid-block connections for safe and comfortable public access and pedestrian movement

Standards

S3.8.1 Provide a pedestrian pathway with a minimum clear width of 2.4 m (8 ft) secured for public use by an SRW agreement.

Guidelines

G3.8.1 Provide signage clearly indicating the pedestrian path in the *mid-block connection* is intended for public use.

G3.8.2 Provide clear sightlines through a *mid-block connection* and mitigate grade changes in ways that best achieve end-to-end visibility.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

3.9

Design enhanced open spaces to support densifying residential neighbourhoods with greenspace

Standards

S3.9.1 Provide at least 50% of the *enhanced open space* as planted area with tree planting.

Guidelines

G3.9.1 Depending on context and location, portions of the *enhanced open space* may be secured for public use through an SRW agreement or may be subject to other legal agreements on title to ensure maintenance of ecological assets by the owner.

G3.9.2 Modest encroachments for private *open space active uses* are supportable, including:

- **a.** outdoor space for child daycare;
- **b.** *outdoor residential amenity* space, refer to G2.13.2;
- **c.** residential patios up to 3 m (10 ft);
- **d.** retail patios;
- **e.** other *open space* uses, if they support the intended use and function of the space.

G3.9.3 Design *enhanced open spaces* for activities that are compatible with the *residential context* such as play areas.

G3.9.4 Vehicle circulation and parking are not permitted within *enhanced open space*.

G3.9.5 Prioritize planting medium to large tree species in *enhanced open spaces* especially where they can be located off-slab. Also refer to G1.7.1.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

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3.10

Design attractive, pedestrian-friendly interfaces with lanes, vehicle access, and service areas

Guidelines

G3.10.1 Design to prioritize pedestrian movement in vehicle access and service areas with variations in paving materials and lighting.

G3.10.2 Provide an on-site pedestrian path to support access to lane-oriented *dwelling units* or to enhance pedestrian connectivity.

G3.10.3 Soften edges and screen walls with planting where site conditions allow.

G3.10.4 Use architectural features and planting to screen surface parking, loading, garbage areas, vents and other service areas.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

3.11

Design sensitive and legible interfaces with parks and clear public-private transitions

Guidelines

S3.11.1 Where a development site adjoins a *park*:

- **a.** provide a legible development edge that signals the transition from private to public ownership;
- **b.** design for no direct access from the development site to the adjacent *park*. Building entrances should be accessed from a pathway on private property; and
- **c.** maximize underground and at-grade setbacks from *park* edges to accommodate building and site maintenance work within the development parcel

S3.11.2 Ensure development and site services, including stormwater and groundwater management, do not impact parkland.

S3.11.3 Avoid encroaching on or obstructing parkland with utilities, vents, private parcel loading, or micromobility stations.

Diagram in progress - refer to sections 1.2, 1.6, 2.3, and 2.4 for example diagrams

4 Targeted Design Topics

Targeted Design Topics provides additional guidance for specific development conditions, contexts, and city-building considerations that may not apply universally across all project. This chapter addresses specialized topics such as public views, solar access, planting and biodiversity, and other focused design matters that require additional direction to support context-responsive and high-quality urban design outcomes.

4.1 Lightwells and Lightcourts

Guidelines

G4.1.1 Where new zero lot line development abuts or is adjacent to existing zero lot line development with *lightwells* or windows at the shared property line, ensure that the existing development has adequate access to light and ventilation.

G4.1.2 New *lightwells* may only be considered where:

a. the proposal is a *low-rise development*; and

b. the *lightwell* does not limit the development potential of adjacent sites.

G4.1.3 Avoid enclosed *lightwells* along the property line.

G4.1.4 Where provided, design *lightcourts* to:

a. face the rear, front, or exterior side yard; and

b. be generously sized, occupying at least 25% of the total site area.

G4.1.5 The size, layout, and design of *lightwells* and *lightcourts* should demonstrate effective strategies for light penetration, ventilation, and fire safety. Special attention should be given to the design of mechanical systems to ensure proper ventilation and fire safety.

4.2 Areas Designated as Flood Plains

For developments in areas designated as flood plains and subject to Flood Construction Level (FCL) requirements, refer to the Flood Plain Standards and Requirements along with the CDDG.

4.3 Bridgehead Areas

For developments on sites adjacent to selected *bridgeheads*, refer to the Bridgehead Guidelines along with the CDDG.

4.4

Transit Station Integration and Overbuild

Standards

S4.4.1 Provide *transit plazas* with minimum dimensions of approximately 6.1 m by 6.1 m (20 ft by 20 ft).

Guidelines

G4.4.1 Where a development includes a *station overbuild* and is connected to, or includes a primary *station headhouse*:

a. overbuild the full footprint of the station entrance when technically and economically feasible;

b. design a *continuous streetwall* while reserving adequate space for transit plazas.

c. design the building façade to be complementary to the station design when the station entrance remains visible;

d. provide paving treatment that complements the flooring selection within the enclosed station entrance and *transit plaza*;

e. provide high quality transit supportive site amenities, such as seating, cycling facilities, shade and extended *weather protection*;

f. integrate transit system infrastructure, such as fire and life safety equipment, ventilation grates, integrated exhausts, signage, lighting and bollards, into the building and site design;

g. where possible, provide multiple entrance doors for entering the station to enhance the permeability of the station access; and

h. provide underground parking spaces for vehicles supporting transit operations, with direct underground access to station concourse for transit staff where possible.

4.5

Planting and Biodiversity

Design Tips

Work with the project architect to explore how underground setbacks, slab drops or chamfers can improve the growing conditions for tree planting.

Standards

S4.5.1 Where trees or plantings are proposed, meet or exceed soil depths outlined in the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA) Canadian Landscape Standard.

Guidelines

G4.5.1 To support the City of Vancouver's Urban Forest Strategy:

a. demonstrate how the development can best support tree retention;

b. prioritize planting new trees and replacement trees on the ground and in the ground (off structure); and

c. provide trees and planting on *tower podium* and roof levels.

G4.5.2 Support biodiversity through vertically layered planting, diverse species selection, and habitat features that provide for pollinators and birds. Consider incorporating other habitat features where suitable.

G4.5.3 Avoid artificial turf except in a limited capacity for high-traffic areas like pet relief areas.

G4.5.4 Maximize contiguous planted areas to the extent possible through berming, limiting unnecessary landscape walls and paved areas, and aligning with adjacent planted areas in the street right-of-way.

G4.5.5 Where trees are planted in hardscape, using soil cells or structural soil is encouraged. Consider using structural soil on-site to support street tree growing conditions.

G4.5.6 Develop a maintenance plan appropriate for the proposed planting design for the establishment period, at minimum. Provide safe and practical access to all planted areas to support ongoing maintenance. Clearly define planted areas to minimize short-cutting and other physical disturbance.

G4.5.7 Where a development is adjacent to an *ecological corridor*, the *blue green network,* or an *Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA)*, landscape design should support biodiversity by incorporating:

a. diverse planting that replaces grass with native and non-invasive plants;

b. vertically layered plantings (e.g. ground, shrub and tree layers) that are located in close proximity;

c. features and maintenance approaches that allow for nutrient cycling and other natural functions to occur; and

d. other features that provide habitat value, refuge and shelter for various species, such as logs, boulders, and perches.

4.6

Water Wise Landscapes on Private Property

All new developments should refer to the Water Wise Landscapes on Private Property Guidelines, along with the CDDG.

4.7

Urban Agriculture on Private Property

For new developments proposing urban agriculture as part of the design of private *open space*, refer to the Urban Agriculture Guidelines for the Private Realm, along with the CDDG.

4.8

Bird Friendly Design

For new development seeking approval through a conditional development permit application, refer to the Bird Friendly Design Guidelines, along with the CDDG.

4.9

Solar Access in Public Spaces

For developments outside of downtown, refer to the Solar Access Guidelines for Areas Outside of Downtown, along with the CDDG.

For developments in the downtown peninsula, refer to the Solar Access Guidelines for the Downtown Peninsula, along with the CDDG.

4.10

Protected Public Views (View Cones)

For developments within the view cone boundaries of a Council-approved protected public view, refer to the Public Views Guidelines along with the CDDG.

4.11

Urban Noise

Standards

S4.11.1 Design high-density buildings containing commercial, *residential*, or other sensitive uses within identified *Noise Areas of Influence* to achieve established noise levels. Levels for various indoor and outdoor environments, expressed as 24-hour equivalent sound level or Leq(24), should not exceed the following:

a. 35 dBA in bedrooms or sleeping areas within a *dwelling unit* or a *hotel* room;

b. 40 dBA in *living rooms* and dining rooms within a *dwelling unit,* and *indoor residential amenity* spaces;

c. 45 dBA in kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, utility rooms, etc. within a *dwelling unit*; and

d. 55 dBA in *outdoor residential amenity* spaces.

Guidelines

G4.11.1 Where standard construction may be insufficient to achieve established noise standards, sites within identified *Noise Areas of Influence* should demonstrate compliance through either the use enhanced construction methods or a noise study to identify mitigating measures:

a. Provide a letter of assurance from a Qualified Professional confirming the interior and exterior noise standards have been met through standard or enhanced construction methods; or

b. Where enhanced construction measures are insufficient to meet the required noise levels, provide a Noise Study and incorporate any noise mitigation measures identified in a noise study into the final design.

Also refer to the Development in Proximity to Rail Facilities Bulletin and the Granville Street Plan.

G4.11.2 New *hotel* and *residential* buildings located within *Destination Venue Districts* should meet G4.11.1 and incorporate additional strategies to mitigate noise impacts from local events and entertainment activities, including:

a. Locating *office uses* on lower building floors; or

b. Locating *office*, *hotel*, or other *non-residential uses* directly above and next to live performance venues or cabarets to provide a 'noise barrier' for *residential uses*.

Design Tips

The following are some design mechanisms to meet or exceed acoustic performance standards:

- Triple glazed windows
- Balcony design strategies (e.g., enclosed balconies or balconies with *retractable weather screening systems*
- Air conditioning or other means to cool interior spaces that do not require window opening
- Increased noise insulation
- Other engineered solutions and innovative approaches to noise mitigation

Also refer to the City of Vancouver Noise Control Manual.

4.12

Rowhouse and Townhouse Developments in RM and FM zones

For rowhouse and townhouse developments in RM zones, only the following design standards and guidelines apply. The foregoing chapters of the CDDG do not apply.

Standards

S4.12.1 Where a district schedule or policy permits discretion to vary site requirements, minimum site frontage and area requirements may be reduced to accommodate irregularly shaped sites.

S4.12.2 Minimum yard dimensions may be reduced to accommodate site constraints, as outlined in Table 4.12a.

S4.12.3 Maximum building height may be varied as outlined in Table 4.12b. Further localized height increase may be considered on sloping sites.

S4.12.4 Limit building width to 27 m (90 ft). Wider buildings may be considered if variation in *building massing* is provided to break up building width.

S4.12.5 Limit building depth to 55% of the site depth. On a corner site, building depth may be increased to allow the front building to wrap the corner.

S4.12.6 On corner sites where the front building wraps the corner, it is not required to step down in height.

S4.12.7 In a courtyard configuration, provide a minimum courtyard width of 7.3 m (24 ft).

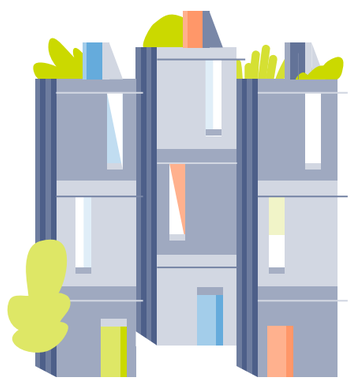
S4.12.8 Provide a minimum 3.1 m (10 ft.) separation between side-by-side buildings, except in RM-7 and RM-7A where a minimum 2.4 m (8 ft) separation is required.

S4.12.8 The area of impermeable materials can be increased to 75% of the site. Further increase is supported for *townhouse* developments with underground parking.

Guidelines

G4.12.1 Roof decks on *townhouses* fronting lanes are not supported.

G4.12.2 Where a *townhouse development* includes a courtyard, access to dwelling units may be provided through shared *exterior passageways*.



Design Tips

Providing balconies, patios and roof decks with a minimum depth of 1.8 m (6 ft) and a minimum area of 4.5 sq m (48 sq ft) enhances long-term livability for residents.

While permitted in some RM zones, *townhouses* that are taller than three storeys are subject to complex building code requirements.

Table 4.12a Standard *rowhouse* and *townhouse* minimum yard dimensions

Townhouse Zone	RM-1	RM-8, RM-8A, RM-11	RM-9, RM-9B
Front Yard	3.1 m (10 ft)	3.7 m (12 ft)	3.7 m (12 ft)
Exterior Side Yard	2.4 m (8 ft)	2.4 m (8 ft)	2.4 m (8 ft)
Side Yard	1.2 m (4 ft)	1.2 m (4 ft)	1.2 m (4 ft)
Rear Yard	0.6 m (2 ft)	1.8 m (6 ft)	1.2 m (4 ft)

Table 4.12b Standard *rowhouse* and *townhouse* maximum discretionary building heights

Townhouse Zone	RM-1, RM-4, RM-8, RM-8A, RM-11	RM-7, RM-7A	RM-9, RM-9B
Front Building Height	11.5 m (37.7 ft) and 3 storeys	11.5 m (37.7 ft) and 3 storeys	13.7 m (45 ft) and 4 storeys
Rear Building Height	10.1 m (33.1 ft) and 2.5 storeys	9.5 m (31.1 ft) and 2 storeys	12.2 m (40 ft) and 4 storeys

4.13

Micro Dwelling Units

Where *micro dwelling* units are permitted by the Zoning and Development By-law or applicable rezoning policies, developments should refer to the Micro Dwelling Policies and Guidelines, along with the CDDG.

4.14

Artist Studios

Where *Artist Studio – Class A* and *Artist Studio – Class B* are permitted by the Zoning and Development By-law or applicable rezoning policies, developments should refer to the Artist Studio Guidelines, along with the CDDG.

4.15

West Georgia Street Trees and Sidewalks

For new developments fronting West Georgia Street, refer to the West Georgia Street Tree and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, along with the CDDG.

4.16

False Creek Flats (FC-2, I-2, I-3, and IC-3)

For new developments on sites zoned FC-2, refer to the False Creek Flats Urban Design and Development Policies and Guidelines for FC-2 – the Innovation Hub, along with the CDDG.

For new developments on sites zoned I-2 and I-3, refer to the False Creek Flats Urban Design Policies and Guidelines for I-2 and I-3, along with the CDDG.

For new developments on sites zoned IC-3, refer to the False Creek Flats Urban Design Policies and Guidelines for IC-3, along with the CDDG.

4.17

Mount Pleasant Employment-Intensive Light Industrial (I-1C)

For new developments on sites which are permitted by policy to be rezoned from I-1 to I-1C, refer to the Mount Pleasant Employment-Intensive Light Industrial Rezoning Policy and Guidelines (I-1C) along with the CDDG.

4.18

Downtown Character Areas

For new developments in downtown, except in the Granville Street Plan area, Downtown South, and the West End, refer to the DD (Except Downtown South) C-5, C-6, HA-1 and HA-2 Character Area Descriptions along with the CDDG or applicable urban design policies and guidelines.

For new developments in the Granville Street Plan area, refer to the Granville Street Plan along with the CDDG.

4.19

Heather Lands (CD-1 (80) and CD-1 (881))

For new developments in Heather Lands (CD-1 (80) and CD-1 (881)), refer to the Heather Lands Design Guidelines along with the CDDG.

Glossary

This **glossary** provides explanations of selected terms used throughout the City-wide Design and Development Guidelines to support consistent interpretation and application of the guidelines. Where relevant, references to definitions or additional guidance in other City of Vancouver documents, including the Zoning and Development By-law and the Vancouver Official Development Plan, are identified.

A

Active façades Building frontages at ground level designed to support visual interest and direct engagement with the *public realm* through features such as transparent glazing, frequent entrances, and human-scaled articulation.

Active uses Uses that contribute to activity, visibility, and pedestrian engagement in the *public realm* through regular occupancy, direct access from streets or public spaces, and *active facades*. Active uses may include both *fine-grain active uses* and *major active uses*. Examples include cafés and restaurants, *hotel* lobbies, transit entrances, breweries, small and medium-sized retail units, personal services, galleries, and ground-oriented *dwelling units*.

Apartment Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Artist Studio – Class A Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Artist Studio – Class B Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

B

Block Study A planning and massing analysis that demonstrates how a proposed tower can be sited on a block without precluding the reasonable development of adjacent or nearby sites, including the ability for those sites to accommodate towers while maintaining required *tower separation* distances.

Blue green network As identified in applicable policies and area plans. Refer to the Glossary section of the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Breezeway A covered, open-air pedestrian passage that provides publicly accessible pedestrian connection between streets, open spaces, or key destinations.

Bridgeheads The areas at the landward ends of bridges where bridge structures meet the surrounding street network and development parcels, often characterised by grade changes, ramps, and large infrastructural elements that require careful urban design integration.

Building massing The configuration of a building's height, bulk, scale, and volumetric composition, including how its form is shaped to respond to the urban context.

Business District Refer to the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

C

Continuous streetwall A largely uninterrupted building frontage aligned at or near the front property line that frames and encloses the street, establishing a coherent public realm edge and consistent spatial definition.

D

Destination Venue District Refer to the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Dwelling unit Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

E

Ecological corridor Refer to the Glossary section of the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Enhanced open space At-grade *open space* that is primarily intended for public use, as a *mid-block connection*, *POPS*, or small retail *plaza*, with modest encroachment permitted for private uses. It must be free of buildings overhead, balconies excluded. It is also intended to provide nearby residents in densifying neighbourhoods to have better access to nature, gardens, and urban tree canopy.

Enclosed balcony Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas Refer to the Glossary section of the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Employment tower The portion of a tower containing employment-generating uses, such as *office*, mixed employment/ industrial, institutional, laboratory, or educational uses, but excluding *hotel uses*. An employment tower refers specifically to the employment components of a *tower* and may apply to the entirely of a *tower* or only the portions occupied by employment uses within a *mixed-use residential development*.

Exceptional support for urban tree canopy A development approach that exceeds minimum performance standards to maximize long-term urban tree health, canopy growth, and ecological performance. This may be demonstrated through:

a. enhanced growing conditions prioritizing tree planting at grade and maximizing planted areas and soil volume using techniques such as parkade notching, angled slab edges, structural soil and soil cells;
b. increasing the total number of trees proposed for the site beyond the requirements of the Protection of Trees By-law;
c. incorporating diverse tree and shrub species;
d. prioritizing the use of permeable and sustainable landscape materials throughout the project; and
e. exploring opportunities for both intensive and extensive green roof systems.

Exterior passageway Open-air circulation corridors providing access to *dwelling units*, supporting natural ventilation, daylight, and *residential* livability, and which may be excluded from FSR where permitted**.**

Eyes on the street Passive observation of public spaces by people in and around buildings, achieved through design that increases visibility.

F

Fine-grain active use *Active uses* that typically occupy smaller tenant spaces and contribute to a frequent rhythm of entrances and transparent frontages along streets and public spaces. Examples include cafés and restaurants, transit entrances, breweries, small and medium-sized retail units, personal services, galleries, and ground-oriented *dwelling units*.

G

Greenway Refer to the Glossary section of the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Groundwater protection areas Areas identified by the City of Vancouver where underground structures, including parkades and other below-grade construction, are restricted in order to protect groundwater movement, hydrological function, or related ecological conditions.

H

Heritage property Refer to the Definitions section of the Vancouver Heritage Policies.

High streetwall A building typology applicable within the Downtown Eastside/ Oppenheimer District and Thornton Park, characterized by taller buildings on small sites within areas of historic zero lot line development and continuous heritage *streetwall* conditions. The typology maintains the established narrow-frontage rhythm and pedestrian-scaled character of the neighbourhood through setbacks above the 21.3 m (70 ft) historic *streetwall* expression.

High traffic volume street A street carrying sustained high vehicular volume with an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) in excess of 15,000 but which is not identified as a *truck route* or as part of the *Major Road Network*, limited to:

a. West/East 12th Avenue;
b. West/East 49th Avenue;
c. West/East King Edward Avenue;
d. Victoria Drive; and
e. Rupert Street.

High-quality materials Materials selected for their durability, longevity, intrinsic value, and suitability to the development's context and function. High-quality materials include, but are not limited to, brick, stone, terracotta, architectural concrete, metal panels, mass timber, glass, etc.

Hotel tower The portion of a tower containing *hotel uses*. A hotel tower refers specifically to the *hotel* components of a *tower* and may apply to the entirely of a *tower* or only the portions occupied by *hotel uses* within a *mixed-use residential development*.

Hotel uses Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

I

Inboard room A room within a *dwelling unit* located away from an exterior wall that does not have direct access to daylight or natural ventilation. A sleeping area separated from other living spaces by a dividing wall or sliding glass partitions is considered an inboard room and will not be counted as a bedroom for the purposes of meeting applicable unit mix requirements for two- and three-bedroom units. *Living rooms* are not permitted to be *inboard rooms*.

Indoor residential amenity A shared indoor space within a development containing *dwelling units* designed, equipped, and secured for the common use and enjoyment of all building residents to support social, recreational, or functional activities. Indoor residential amenity spaces must be distinct from and not required for building circulation, building services, storage, or egress to qualify for floor space ratio (FSR) exclusions. Indoor residential amenity space should not be put to any other use, except as described in the approved application for the exclusion.

Industrial and Employment District Refer to the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Industrial uses Uses primarily associated with the production, processing, assembly, storage, distribution, repair, servicing, or movement of goods, materials, equipment, or vehicles. Industrial uses may include manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale, logistics, transportation, utility, and service-related activities, and may incorporate ancillary *office*, retail, or *non-residential amenity* spaces that support the principal industrial function.

Integrated station entrance Additional station entry points, including secondary entrances, access points, and emergency exits, that are incorporated within a private building envelope while remaining accessible to the public.

Interior public space Indoor floor area that is publicly accessible and intended to function as an extension of the *public realm*, providing space for gathering, waiting, seating, or cultural activity which, depending on the Zoning and Development By-law or other applicable development policies may be excluded from floor space ratio calculations. Interior public space must be secured through a legal agreement, such as a covenant, to ensure ongoing public access and use. It does not include floor area required for building circulation, access to private uses, lobbies serving as principal building entry functions, or other spaces primarily intended for tenant or operational purposes.

L

Large frontage site A development site with a frontage greater than 60.7 m (199 ft). Large frontage sites may require additional considerations of *open space*, *building massing*, and *public realm* design.

Large plazas Plazas with a minimum size of approximately 300 sq m (3,230 sq ft) and which are secured for public use with an SRW agreement.

Large sites Refer to the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Sites or other applicable policy documents.

Lightcourt A partially enclosed space at or above the first storey open to one side, allowing natural light and air into adjacent rooms. Unlike a *lightwell*, it is not fully surrounded by walls and opens to a street, yard, or exterior space.

Lightwell A narrow, vertical, open-to-sky shaft or recess within a building that provides daylight and ventilation to interior spaces that would otherwise lack direct access to the exterior. Lightwells are typically enclosed or tightly bounded by building walls and are not intended as usable *open space*.

Living room A primary shared living space within a *dwelling unit* intended for gathering, seating, social interaction, and everyday domestic activities. A living room is typically directly connected to principal *dwelling unit* circulation and should be designed to support comfortable occupancy, access to daylight, and functional furniture arrangement. Living rooms are not permitted to be *inboard rooms*.

Lower levels The portion of a building closest to the *public realm*, typically encompassing the first six storeys where the building relates most directly to streets, *open spaces*, and pedestrian activity. In *low-rise developments*, the lower levels may comprise the entire building height.

Low-rise development A building or multiple buildings of any combination of uses with a building height up to six storeys (approximately 23.0 m [75 ft]). Where 100% of *residential* floor area is secured as social housing, buildings up to eight storeys (approximately 27.5m [90 ft]) may be considered as a low-rise development. Where sites are located within a TOA and 100% of *residential* floor area is secured as rental tenure, buildings up to eight storeys (approximately 27.5 m [90 ft]) may be considered as a low-rise development.

M

Major active uses *Active uses* that typically occupy a larger floor area and generate sustained pedestrian activity. Examples include grocery stores and other large format retail units, recreation centres, libraries, *hotel* lobbies, cultural venues, and places of worship.

Major Road Network As designated by TransLink, an integrated system of highways throughout the Metro Vancouver region. Refer to the Traffic and Transportation layer of VanMap to identify if a street is considered part of the Major Road Network.

Mass timber building Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Micro Dwelling Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Mid-sized sites Refer to the Villages Plan.

Mid-block connection *Public open spaces* located mid-block with a pedestrian path secured for public use as a "movement" space through an SRW agreement. The remainder of the mid-block connection not including the path may no be subject to an SRW agreement.

Mixed-use residential context An area characterized predominantly by *mixed-use residential developments* and building forms, or *non-residential contexts* where *mixed-use residential developments* are permitted.

Mixed-use residential development Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Monumental axis A strong, linear organizing element within the urban structure that aligns and connects significant buildings, landmarks, streets, views, and public spaces, and is distinguished from typical streets or pedestrian routes by its civic, ceremonial, or symbolic importance. Examples include West Georgia Street and the Cambie Street axis.

N

Noise Area of Influence The geographic area surrounding a noise source where sound levels may impact building occupants without adequate mitigations measures. Noise Areas of Influence typically apply to areas near freight rail operations and *Destination Venue Districts*.

Non-residential amenity Shared indoor or outdoor space within a *non-residential development* that is designed, equipped, and secured for the common use of workers, employees, or occupants to support social interaction, recreation, and wellness in the workplace. Non-residential amenity does not include *hotel* recreation facilities, customer-serving spaces, or other areas primarily associated with business operations. Non-residential amenity spaces must be distinct from and not required for building circulation, building services, storage, or egress to qualify for floor space ratio (FSR) exclusions. Such spaces are intended to serve building occupants and should not be put to any other use, except as described in the approved application for the exclusion.

Non-residential context An area characterized predominantly by *non-residential developments* and building forms. Non-residential contexts do not include areas where *mixed-use* or *residential developments* form a significant component of the surrounding context.

Non-residential development Development containing uses other than *residential uses*.

Non-residential tower A *tower* development containing exclusively *non-residential uses*.

Non-residential uses Uses other than *residential uses*, including but not limited to *office, industrial,* and *hotel uses*.

Non-tower site A site that meets one of the following criteria:

a. a mid-block site with a frontage greater than 12.2 m (40 ft) and less than 45.7 m (150 ft) that cannot reasonably consolidate into an enabled frontage; or
b. a corner site with a frontage less than 39.6 m (130 ft).

O

Office uses Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Open space All on-site areas, at grade or on podium or roof levels, that are open to the sky. These spaces provide sky views and access to sunlight. They may be private open spaces that support the building program or *public open spaces* such as *POPS* and *mid-block connections.*

Outdoor residential amenity A shared *open space* within a development containing *dwelling units* that is designed, equipped, and secured for the common use and enjoyment of all building residents. Outdoor residential amenity space may be located at grade, on roof levels, or elsewhere within the development and is intended to support social, recreation, or functional activities. Outdoor residential amenity spaces must be distinct from and not required for building circulation, building services, storage, or egress. Portions of exterior passageways or other common outdoor areas may be considered amenity space where they are clearly delineated, intentionally designed, and furnished to support resident use beyond circulation. Outdoor residential amenity space is not intended to be converted to commercial use or occupied by *non-residential uses*.

Overbuild of station sites Development constructed above, around, or integrated with existing or future transit station infrastructure, including station entrances, platforms, ventilation structures, or other operational transit facilities, in a manner that maintains the safe and functional operation of the transit system.

P

Park Refer to the Glossary section of the Vancouver Official Development Plan.

Park dedication The provision of land to the City of Vancouver for *park* purposes as part of a development or subdivision process, intended to support *public open space*, recreation, ecological functions, and access to nature within growing neighbourhoods.

Plaza *Public open spaces* that generally have unrestricted access for gathering, movement, and social activity. They are primarily paved and located at grade.

Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) A *public open space* secured for public use through an SRW agreement. POPS are designed to support a range of activities, such as social gathering, play, and access to nature, and typically include features such as *plazas*, seating, trees and planting, and play elements. POPS are intended to complement but not replace *parks*. POPS area should be calculated based on contiguous *open space* that is free of overhead *building massing*. The following *open spaces* should not be included in the POPS area calculation:

a. areas within established building setbacks or spaces that primarily serve building circulation needs;
b. engineering SRWs or dedications for sidewalks, public bike share;
c. spaces located on podium or roof levels without clear public access points (stairs and elevators); or
d. space for vehicle circulation or parking.

Public open space Any on-site *open space* that has unrestricted public access. This includes any space secured for public use through SRW agreements, such as *Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)* and *mid-block connections*, as well as smaller *plazas* that are not formally secured for public use and contribute to public life, such as retail *plazas* or small seating areas. Public open space should generally be visible and accessible from the sidewalk and located at grade. *Open space* intended primarily for vehicles is not to be included in public open space area calculations.

Public realm Public realm has a broader meaning than "public space", as it also includes *Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)*, and the building façades, storefronts, displays, and patios that shape the experience of public spaces. It also incorporates streetscape elements such as street furniture, lighting, public art, and distinctive sidewalk treatments, or anything that can be seen and experienced at a pedestrian eye level. The sum of these parts contributes to the public realm and the overall experience and attractiveness of a public space.

For the purposes of these guidelines, *parks* are not included in the definition of public realm.

R

Rail facility Land or infrastructure used for rail operations, limited to freight and passenger rail, including rail lines, rail sidings, train stations, inter-modal facilities, rail yards, and associated uses, including designated lands for future rail facilities. Rail facility does not include TransLink infrastructure or other light rail under this definition.

Residential amenity Shared indoor or outdoor space within a development containing *residential uses* that is designed, equipped, and secured for the common use and enjoyment of all building residents to support social, recreational, or functional activities. Residential amenity space is not intended to be converted to commercial use or occupied by *non-residential uses*.

Residential context An area characterized predominantly by *residential developments* and building forms. A residential context may include supporting choice-of-use at grade, such as small local-serving retail units or child day care facilities. Residential contexts do not include areas where *mixed-use residential* or *non-residential developments* form a significant component of the surrounding context.

Residential development Development containing exclusively *residential uses* or with choice-of-use at grade, such as small local-serving retail units or child day care facilities.

Residential storage space Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Residential tower The portion of a *tower* containing *residential uses*. A residential tower refers specifically to the *residential* components of a *tower* and may apply to the entirety of a *tower* or only the portions occupied by *residential uses* within a *mixed-use residential development*.

Residential uses Refer to Dwelling Uses in Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Retractable weather screening systems A movable transparent glazing system installed on a balcony consisting of sliding, folding, or stacking glass panels supported by low-profile rails that can be fully opened to allow the balcony to function as outdoor space. Balconies equipped with retractable weather screening systems will not be considered *enclosed balconies* provided the system is fully operable, does not include permanent heating, and maintains the primary function of the balcony as outdoor space rather than interior living area.

Rowhouse Refer to Freehold Rowhouse in Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

S

Single-aspect dwelling unit A *dwelling unit* that receives natural light and ventilation from only one direction or façade.

Single-fronting site A site abutting one street only, typically with access provided from a lane at the rear.

Small plazas *Plazas* that are generally usable by the public but are not secured for public use with an SRW agreement.

Station headhouse A station entrance structure providing access to transit facilities, whether as a freestanding building or integrated within a *mixed-use residential* or *non-residential development*.

Station overbuild The development of structures above and around primary station headhouses.

Streetwall The plane of building façades along a street that establishes spatial enclosure and defines the *public realm* edge, typically expressed through a consistent height and setback in proportion to the adjacent right-of-way.

T

Tall tower A *tower* building typically greater than approximately 90 m (295 ft) in height, where the upper portion of the building becomes a prominent element of the skyline and requires careful consideration of tower massing, tower crown design, and skyline contribution.

Terra-firma Land that is free from physical and legal underground, at-grade, and above-grade encumbrances.

Tower Any portion of a building higher than the maximum *tower podium* heights defined in section 2.2, excluding rooftop amenities atop *low-rise buildings* or *tower podiums*.

Tower crown The uppermost portion of a *tower,* typically comprising the top two to four storeys, where the building terminates visually against the skyline.

Tower floorplates The total gross floor area of a single level of a *tower.* Tower floorplates includes elevator cores, storage, stairs, etc., but excludes open balconies, architectural projections, and similar appurtenances.

Tower podium The *lower levels* of a *tower* development that defines the *streetwall* and establishes street enclosure, typically with a height proportionate to the adjacent street right-of-way. The podium forms the primary interface with the *public realm* and supports one or more slender *tower* elements above.

Tower separation The horizontal distance between *towers*, measured between the closest enclosed building faces or enclosed building corners, excluding open balconies. Tower separation is intended to provide light, air, privacy, and sky views for building occupants and the *public realm*.

Tower site A development parcel or assembly of parcels which meets the minimum site frontage and / or site area set out in Council-approved policies or by-laws to be considered for a *tower* development without the need for a discretionary decrease.

Townhouse Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Transit plazas *Plazas* located adjacent to SkyTrain Station entrances intended to support transit uses with space for circulation and comfortable places to wait for transit.

Truck route As identified by Vancouver Engineering Services. Refer to the Traffic and Transportation layer of VanMap to identify if a street is considered a truck route.

Type of interfacing façades A primary façade is a building elevation that has *living room* windows. A non-primary façade is a building elevation without *living room* windows.

U

Ultimate property line Refer to Section 2 – Definitions of the Vancouver Zoning and Development By-law.

Unique sites Refer to the applicable area plan.

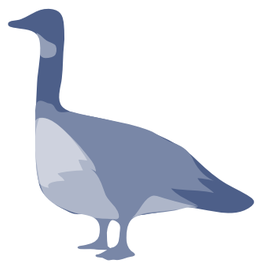
V

Very tall tower A *tower* typically greater than approximately 150 m (492 ft) in height. Buildings of this height have significant skyline presence and require careful design consideration of proportions, structural expression, *tower crowns*, and their relationship to surrounding buildings and *open spaces*.

Village high street As identified by the Villages Plan.

W

Weather protection Overhead elements, such as glass canopies, fabric awnings, or similar structures, provided along building frontages to provide shelter from rain and weather. Weather protection that extends beyond the *ultimate property line* into the public realm should be designed to be demountable. It is typical for weather protection to extend over sidewalk SRWs.



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