

27.0 Development Permit Area #1 (City Centre District)

Goals and Objectives

The Development Permit Guidelines for the City Centre District are designed to enhance and promote a pedestrian friendly, livable and vibrant City Centre with a stimulating commercial and cultural area, as well as foster development opportunities throughout the City Centre. A variety of opportunities will be available for mixed use development and high and medium density residential development, including apartments, stacked townhouses and small lot single and two family development. The City Centre Neighbourhood Plan provides more detailed policy direction to guide development in this district.

Context (Purpose and Justification)

As per Section 919.1 of the Local Government Act, the designation of lands in the City Centre District as a Development Permit Area serve the purpose of:

- a. Protection of the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity
- b. Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted
- c. Establishment of objectives for the form and character of intensive residential development
- d. Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multiple family residential development
- e. Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation
- f. Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation
- g. Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Bounded by 43 Avenue to the north, the east side of 27 Street to the east, 25 Avenue to the south, and generally 35 Street to the west, the City Centre District includes Downtown Vernon as well as a mix of offices, shops, hotels, restaurants, residential neighbourhoods and recreational amenities.

The City Centre District has been identified as the key redevelopment area in the city and is guided by the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan. A successful City Centre is one that attracts people to live, work, shop, be entertained and play. The area is intended to become an economic and social anchor for the entire city, providing a diverse community with significant commercial and residential opportunities. With improvements to park space, cultural facilities and other amenities, the City Centre will become a primary location for community interaction. The redevelopment of the downtown area is intended to attract local area residents to the downtown for their everyday needs, and to make the downtown an inviting environment for tourists. Key to the revitalization is to provide a pedestrian friendly environment with a streetscape that enhances the commercial vibrancy of the City Centre.

The Development Permit guidelines of the OCP and the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan work in tandem with the revitalization plan for the City Centre. Central to creating this type of district are strong development guidelines that can work with commercial and residential development towards creating this vibrancy. The City Centre Neighbourhood Plan identifies a series of eight character areas within the City Centre, each of which have a distinct vision for redevelopment and specific policies and design guidelines. These character areas are as follows:

- Historic Downtown
- Powerhouse Quarter
- Highway Corridor
- Polson Gateway
- 27 Street Corridor
- Centreville
- Creekside
- Macdonald Park



Guidelines

- 27.1 Lands identified on Map 14 as the City Centre District are designated as Development Permit Area 1.
- 27.2 In addition to the following policies, all development in Development Permit Area 1 is subject to the general Development Permit Area policies within the OCP.
- 27.3 Development in the City Centre District shall be consistent with the policies outlined in the City Centre Neighbourhood Plan.
- 27.4 All garbage and recycling bins are to be provided on site and fully screened with secure enclosures. Council supports the initiative of the downtown merchants to remove garbage and recycling bins from the City lands in the downtown. This will free up the laneways for partial commercial activity while allowing for improved security and loading opportunities.
- 27.5 Council shall facilitate movement in the City Centre District in the following order of priority: walking, cycling, public transit, trucks and automobiles.
- 27.6 There are not to be any commercial developments involving food preparation and liquor sales on the lands fronting the east side of 27 Street between 27 and 43 Avenues and along the west side of 27 Street between 39 and 41 Avenues No direct access off of 27 Street shall be permitted.

Design Guidelines

The following architectural design guidelines are intended to promote building designs that contribute to the overall aesthetic and functionality of the City Centre District as a dynamic, animated and inviting place.

When making an application for development in the City Centre, the proponent must illustrate how the proposal addresses the design guidelines through architecture relative to its location in the specific Character Area. It is recommended that proponents meet with City staff to discuss these design guidelines in detail prior to designing the development and making a formal application.

All Character Areas

- 27.7 Building entries should be oriented to the street frontage and directly accessible from the sidewalk. On corner sites, the building shall be oriented to both street frontages with both elevations presenting an attractive façade with access from the sidewalk.
- 27.8 Ground floor commercial is required and/or encouraged according to the Character Areas and may include retail uses, coffee shops, restaurants, music stores and other high traffic uses that attract people and generate activity. Commercial uses on the ground floor are not encouraged in all Character Areas.
- 27.9 To contribute to an active streetscape and pedestrian environment, locate small format commercial tenants at street level and large format commercial tenants above, where possible. Where both large and small format tenants must share the street level, the large format tenant should be located behind the smaller tenants, so that the entrances of smaller tenants can be directly accessed from the sidewalk. Front entrances for larger tenants are still preferred in this scenario.
- 27.10 Development proposals should incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into site design.
- 27.11 Protect and restore existing heritage buildings.
- 27.12 All buildings over four storeys should be sited and designed with consideration for shading on adjacent properties, buildings and roadways. A shadow analysis will be required at the Development Permit stage for proposals for buildings of this height.
- 27.13 The impact of new development on existing view corridors should be minimized and long views to natural landscape and significant buildings or focal points should be maintained.

- 27.14 Buildings in the City Centre are encouraged to provide rooftop garden space.
- 27.15 Ground floor residential, appropriate to the Character Areas, is encouraged to have individual entrances for each residential unit, and should maximize the built frontage facing public streets.
- 27.16 All resident parking must be accessed from a rear lane, where available, including garages, driveways or small parking lots. Garages are only permitted in the rear yard. Where street access is necessary, development is encouraged to pursue shared driveway access to reduce the number of vehicle access points to the street and parking is to be located at the rear of the property.
- 27.17 Proposed development should relate to adjacent buildings in terms of scale, height and general configuration. To create appropriate transitions, new buildings should consider several of the following features of adjacent buildings:
- Building height
 - Building orientation
 - Massing (projections, roof profile and proportion)
 - Setback (street level and above grade)
 - Datum lines (floor heights, vertical divisions, cornice line and building base)
 - Materials (colour, texture and pattern)
 - Entry treatment
 - Window treatment (placement, orientation and proportion)
 - Architectural style/period
- 27.18 The transition between different land uses and Character Areas should be respectful and make reference in scale, massing, and/or style, where appropriate, in order to minimize negative impacts of abrupt contrasts in neighbouring buildings.
- 27.19 Building designs should incorporate transition features, to respect the scale and character of adjacent areas which are of lower density. For example, an 8 storey building may fit its context better if sitting on a 2 storey podium that meets the sidewalk.
- 27.20 Buildings should provide multiple points of visual interaction through doorways, large display windows and other pedestrian oriented features that promote activity and transparency.
- 27.21 Commercial facades at grade facing public streets or open spaces should have 70-90% transparency with functioning doorways located every 15 metres or less, preferably accessing different units. Commercial facades above grade should generally have 50-90% transparency.
- 27.22 The building facade shall use architectural solutions to create varied and articulated building facades. Window placement and groupings, material palette and surface relief through massing or elements, among other techniques, may be explored to avoid a monolithic form.

- 27.23 Entrances should be emphasized with architectural forms such as height, massing, projection, shadow, punctuation and/or change in roofline or materials. Canopies, awnings, or recesses all help to define and distinguish an entrance. Blind spots should be avoided.
- 27.24 To encourage continuity in the streetscape and to ensure horizontal breaks in the facade, buildings must be designed to highlight the building's base, middle and top through the use of setbacks, extrusions, material changes and/or detailing.
- 27.25 Where blank walls are unavoidable, there should be architectural, landscaping and/or art treatment to avoid monotonous lengths. This treatment should complement neighbouring development.
- 27.26 Building materials should be chosen for their durability as well as their functional and aesthetic quality. Vinyl siding, plastic, darkly tinted or mirrored glass and textured stucco are discouraged unless used thoughtfully in combination with other materials. Materials should be compatible with adjacent buildings, either as primary or accent materials.
- 27.27 Materials used for the front facade must be carried around the building where any facades are within view of a public street.
- 27.28 Residential uses at street level should complement the street with covered entries, windows and appropriate front yard privacy measures such as setbacks, landscaping and grade shifts (raised entrances such as steps, stoops, and porches).
- 27.29 Stairways, elevators and parking entries should be located mid-block to promote more active uses, such as shops or cafes, on the higher profile corners of lots.
- 27.30 The use of colour will be encouraged. Historic practice has been to encourage earth tones in the City Centre. Colour must be thoughtfully introduced over time and complement surrounding colour choices.
- 27.31 Signs should only reflect the name and type of business on the property.
- 27.32 Signs with exposed fluorescent or incandescent bulbs are not recommended.
- 27.33 There should not be more than two signs per business on the property. Where multiple businesses are situated on the same property, signage should be combined where possible. Where the property is on a corner, up to four signs are permitted, with a maximum of two facing each street.
- 27.34 Sign design and colours should be consistent and compatible with the design and colours of the primary building or buildings on the property. Signs with white backgrounds are to be avoided.

- 27.35 Signs located on heritage buildings should reflect the heritage features of that building.
- 27.36 Signage associated with a corporate business is also recommended to comply with the signage objectives for the Character Area.
- 27.37 Commercial signage should be limited to the street level and add diversity and interest to retail streets but not comprise an area greater than 20% of the facade.
- 27.38 Signs should be integrated into the design of building facades but must not obscure windows, cornices or other architectural elements.
- 27.39 Large freestanding signs, signs on top of rooftops, inflatable and large scale advertising (i.e. billboards), LED signs and audible signs are not permitted.
- 27.40 Wherever possible, parking access, loading areas and utility zones shall be located at the rear of buildings, screened and accessed from laneways or secondary streets. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be incorporated.
- 27.41 For commercial and mixed use development, areas for deliveries and refuse pickup shall be located away from neighbouring residential uses and public streets and spaces.
- 27.42 Parking, loading and storage areas should be screened from public view using architectural features or landscaping.
- 27.43 Wherever possible, surface parking should be located internal to the development site and should include lighting, signage and minimal driveways.
- 27.44 Within surface parking lots, landscaping, trees and decorative paving should be used to break up the expansive hard surfaces.
- 27.45 To minimize the environmental impact of runoff from cars into the stormwater system, oil water separators combined with site appropriate mitigation techniques should be used to deter pollutants from entering waterways.
- 27.46 Ground floors of parking structures should be designed to accommodate commercial uses along the street frontages.
- 27.47 Reduce light pollution by directing light internally into the site, avoiding spilled light and eliminating upwardly pointing light.

Historic Downtown

- 27.48 Where possible, buildings should be located to allow for streetscaping, planting, and a generous sidewalk width to allow for the expansion of outdoor seating and seasonal inclusion of plants and furniture.
- 27.49 The building should generally be built to occupy 100% of a property's frontage along streets except in purely residential development or where courtyards and public amenity spaces are being created.
- 27.50 Above the established street wall, buildings shall be subject to above grade step backs to maintain a consistent street wall height. Development along 30 Avenue is generally subject to two storey street wall. Other areas are generally subject to a three storey street wall.
- 27.51 Parking will not be permitted between the sidewalk and the building edge. Parking should be accommodated in the rear yard or provided discreetly within the building envelope.
- 27.52 Restrict tower floor plate sizes of buildings and regulate the separation distances between towers in order to minimize shadow impacts and maintain the availability of views and sunlight.
- 27.53 Where commercial development is provided at street level, properly designed overhead weather protection on street is required. This protection can take the form of canopies, awnings and colonnades to improve the year round sidewalk shopping conditions and ensure pedestrians are protected from the elements.
- 27.54 Structured parking should be centrally located and designed to integrate with surrounding buildings using similar facade articulation and materials.
- 27.55 Fascia, projecting, awning and window signs are encouraged. Roof top, flashing, free standing and moving signs are discouraged.
- 27.56 Backlit signs are not permitted.

Powerhouse Quarter

- 27.57 Where possible, buildings should be located to allow for streetscaping, planting, and a generous sidewalk width to allow for the expansion of outdoor seating and seasonal inclusion of plants and furniture.

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Highway Corridor

- 27.66 Buildings should be located to allow for on site landscaping, private and/or public amenity spaces and a generous sidewalk width.
- 27.67 Where possible, buildings should be located parallel to the street or along the edge of an open space with a consistent front yard setback.
- 27.68 Parking will not be permitted between the sidewalk and the building edge. Parking should be accommodated in the rear yard, the side yard or provided discreetly within the building envelope.
- 27.69 Fascia, projecting, awning, free standing and window signs are encouraged. Roof top, flashing and moving signs are discouraged.

27.70 Back lit signs are permitted.

Polson Gateway

27.71 Buildings should be located to allow for on site landscaping, private and/or public amenity spaces and a generous sidewalk width.

27.72 Where possible, buildings should be located parallel to the street or along the edge of an open space with a consistent front yard setback.

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27.75 Back lit signs are permitted.

27 Street Corridor

27.76 Buildings should be located to allow for on site landscaping, private and/or public amenity spaces and a generous sidewalk width.

27.77 Where possible, buildings should be located parallel to the street or along the edge of an open space with a consistent front yard setback.

27.78 Parking will not be permitted between the sidewalk and the building edge. Parking should be accommodated in the rear yard, the side yard or provided discreetly within the building envelope.

27.79 Development will retain the pitched roof character of existing buildings in the area.

27.80 Fascia, projecting, awning, free standing and window signs are encouraged. Roof top, flashing and moving signs are discouraged.

27.81 Back lit signs are prohibited on the east side of 27 Street between 27 Ave and 43 Ave.

Centreville

- 27.82 Where possible, buildings should be located to allow for streetscaping, planting, and a generous sidewalk width to allow for the expansion of outdoor seating and seasonal inclusion of plants and furniture.
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Creekside

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Macdonald Park

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