

8.1 Downtown Development Permit Area

1. Category

The Downtown Development Permit Area is designated pursuant to Sections 9.19.1(i) and (f) of the *Local Government Act* for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-residential development.

2. Justification

The Downtown Area is an integral part of the City's identity and economy. The objective of this designation is to ensure an innovative and creative design and attractive street appearance. All designs will be assessed to compare the submitted design with these guidelines.

3. Guidelines

Development permits will be considered in accordance with the following:

A. Form and Character

1. The design of buildings shall reflect the heritage of the City of Courtenay and the use of materials such as stone, brick, ornamental work and wood with varied details and columns is required.
2. The scale, form, height, setback, materials and character of new development should compliment neighbouring developments.
3. The perimeter of buildings shall relate to a pedestrian scale. This may be expressed by detailing of the façade, window size, awnings and roof canopies. Visual interest will be created by providing variations in height and massing. Awnings, lighting fixtures and other structures shall be architecturally integrated with the design of the buildings. Large expanses of any one material are not acceptable without architectural detailing to create visual interest.
4. To support the pedestrian environment, continuous weather protection should be provided over pedestrian areas at all exterior building walls.
5. Buildings shall maintain and enhance existing views. Buildings located on corner lots, lots adjacent to a residential property, and lots next to public open spaces should be stepped down toward the flanking street, adjacent building, or public open space.
6. Stepped or varied building massing, articulated building walls and roof lines and sloped roofs shall be incorporated to develop building form and character where residential space is proposed over commercial, the fourth floor shall be stepped back to enhance light penetration to the street, views and appearance of building.
7. The architectural design and building materials shall be of a high standard that indicates quality, stability and permanence.
8. Any wall of a building which is visible from the street shall be finished to the same standard as the front of the building to provide an attractive appearance.
9. Commercial ground level business premises should be provided continuously along pedestrian oriented shopping areas within the downtown core.
10. Buildings should be designed so that their form does not restrict sun penetrations to public and pedestrian areas. A building height impact assessment to identify impacts and suggest possible mitigation measures may be required.

11. Where a development is to be constructed in several phases, the proposed phasing plan indicating the sequence and timing of construction shall be included as part of the development permit application.

B. Signage

1. All signs shall conform to the City of Courtenay Sign Bylaw No. 2042, 1998 and all amendments thereto.
2. The size, colours, design and placement of signs and their supporting structures and surrounding framework shall be carefully coordinated with architectural elements of the building face, other signs on the parcel and landscaping.
3. Exposed wood and flat stone are strongly encouraged as sign materials and raised or recessed letters or symbols are strongly encouraged to give relief to signs.
4. Multi-tenant buildings shall provide combined tenant signage.
5. The use of indirect lighting methods to illuminate signage is required.
6. The illumination of all signs shall conform to the City of Courtenay Dark Skies Policy.
7. All freestanding signs on 29th Street, Cliffe Avenue, Crown Isle Boulevard, Island Highway, Kilpatrick Street, Lerwick and Ryan Road shall be ground oriented and no freestanding signs adjacent to any City street shall be supported by a single support.

C. Siting, Landscaping and Screening

1. A Landscape Architect or registered professional shall prepare a plan which will incorporate plant species, quantities and installation suitable for the project.
2. A detailed landscaping and screening plan, drawn to scale and showing the type, size and location of proposed landscaping, shall be submitted with the development permit application.
3. A continuous perimeter landscaping buffer area of at least 4.5 metres shall be provided along the inside of all property lines adjacent to Cumberland Road, 17th Street, Fitzgerald Avenue, Anderton Avenue and Cliffe Avenue, south of 8th Street and adjacent to a residential or institutional zoned property and 3.0 metres on all other roads
4. Parking and outdoor storage shall not be permitted in the required landscape setback.
5. Garbage and recycling containers shall be screened with landscaping and fencing and gated to a minimum height of 2 metres. Similarly, utilities, service kiosks, meters, elevator housing, exhaust elements, satellite dishes, etc. shall be screened with landscaping and fencing.
6. Chain link fencing shall be used only when screened by landscaping. Decorative fences are encouraged matching the materials used for the principle building.
7. Developments shall include installation of street trees and sidewalks along all adjacent streets as well as foundation landscaping around any building face where applicable. Boulevards of adjacent streets shall be landscaped, irrigated and maintained by adjacent developments. Distinct paved surfaces, benches and ornamental street lights are encouraged throughout the site. Outdoor patios or amenity areas for employees are encouraged.

8. Undeveloped areas of the site shall be left in its natural state if there is substantial existing native vegetation. Otherwise, the owner will undertake vegetation control within 6 months of building occupancy satisfactory to the City.
9. The City will require the following minimum depth of topsoil or amended organic soils on all landscaped areas of a property.
 - (a) shrubs – 450 mm
 - (b) groundcover & grass – 300 mm
 - (c) trees – 300 mm around and below the root ball
10. Street furniture such as benches, lamps and refuse containers shall be incorporated in the landscape design. These shall be required to be consistent, similar, or identical in character to the architectural character of the development and identified by type and source in the application.
11. Open spaces acting as sites of public assembly shall incorporate special landscape features such as fountains, landscaping or monuments as focal elements.
12. All landscaped areas shall be serviced by an underground irrigation system.

D. Lighting

1. Lighting should be designated for security and safety. However, there should not be glare on neighbouring properties, adjacent roads or the sky.
2. All new, replacement and upgraded exterior lighting in existing and proposed developments will be Full-Cut Off/Flat Lens (FCO/FL) luminaries to light roads, parking, loading and pedestrian areas. Exterior building lighting will also be required to have FCO lighting fixtures.

E. Parking

1. Parking areas shall be screened from adjacent properties and from direct views of parked vehicles from the street. The screening should consist of landscaping and fencing. Parking areas shall include landscaped areas, defined by concrete curbs, to provide visual breaks between clusters of approximately ten stalls.
2. To separate parking, service or storage areas, and internal roadways from adjacent properties, a landscaped buffer area of at least 2.0 metres in width and 2.0 metres in height shall be provided along the inside of all affected property lines.
3. Vehicular and truck movement patterns shall be illustrated to ensure adequate circulation.
4. Underground parking is encouraged. The exterior façade of parking structures should be architecturally integrated and provide continuity of commercial uses at street level.
5. Pedestrian sidewalks connecting building entrances to and through parking areas and sidewalks of the adjacent streets shall be provided.
6. Bicycle parking facilities shall be provided at grade near the primary building entrances.