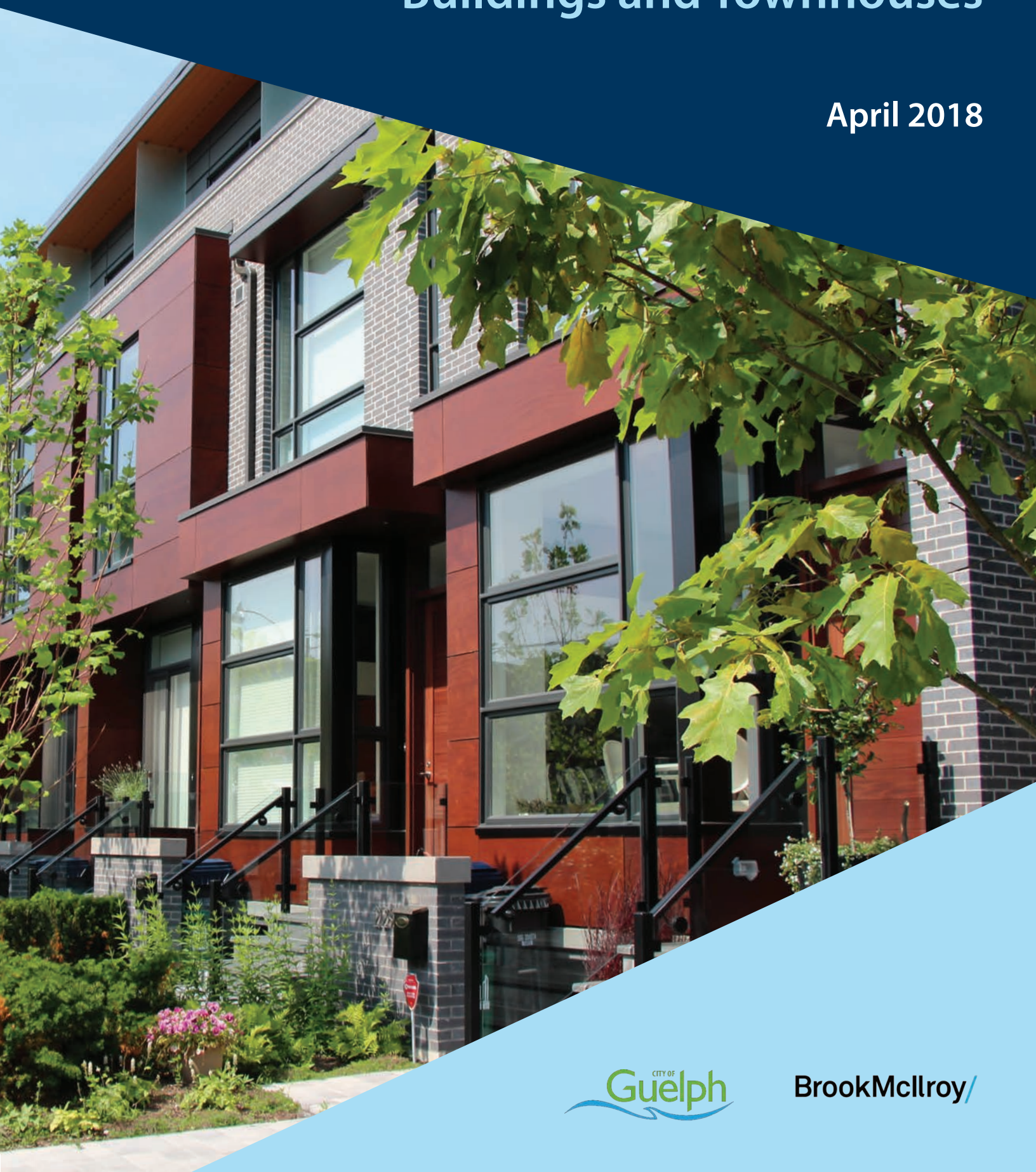
# Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses

April 2018



CITY OF Guelph

BrookMcIlroy/

# Contents

## Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses:

# 1.0 Introduction

These Built Form Standards have been developed to guide the design of Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouse forms in the City of Guelph. The Standards apply to the entire City of Guelph, with the exception of the downtown, which is subject to separate guideline documents.

The City of Guelph is within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, a growing region with an anticipated increase of 4.5 million people and 1.8 million jobs between 2011 and 2041. The Built Form Standards acknowledge this forecasted growth and aim to address it by introducing a framework for the design of townhouse and mid-rise built form. The Standards are informed by policy direction from the City's Official Plan, and support compact future growth, while achieving high quality, sustainable development, and a strong pedestrian realm. The Standards will also provide guidance that will protect natural heritage and contribute to and complement the City's significant tree canopy.

## Key Drivers

A number of drivers have resulted in the need for the Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses in the City of Guelph. These include urban intensification, market influences, policy shifts and the need for clear design expectations for these building types.

### Intensification

Like other municipalities in southern Ontario, the City of Guelph is experiencing additional pressure to intensify within its existing built-up areas. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe requires municipalities to meet intensification targets. The City's Official Plan and Urban Design Action Plan have identified locations where additional development should occur in the future to meet these targets.

### Market Influences

Changes within the housing and construction markets are resulting in an evolution in the types and variety of units and building forms being built in Guelph. There is additional demand for diverse housing types, at a range of price points. Increasing townhouse and mid-rise building construction has been influenced by many factors, including an increase in housing prices throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe, decreasing average household sizes, the desire to age in place and demand for rental housing. Architectural trends and increasing affordability of new materials has also changed the character and look of new buildings, resulting in more contemporary building styles.

### Policy and Technology Shifts

Provincial and municipal policies and emerging technologies are also affecting site planning and building design for townhouses and mid-rise building sites. For example:

- Requirements for managing stormwater on site within private developments have evolved;
- Increasing attention is being paid to transportation demand management and encouraging alternative modes of movement, including electric cars, car share, consideration of reductions to parking requirements and new technology like parking stackers;
- Desire to create healthy, sustainable, and walkable communities;
- Provincial secondary suite policies permit secondary suites within townhouses, which will have associated impacts on site and building design.

### Clear Design Expectations

As mid-rise and townhouse development increases in Guelph, there is a need for a general public understanding of the design expectations for these building types. The creation of Built Form Standards for these housing types will help to provide guidance and set shared expectations for City staff, the public, designers and developers.

## Examples from Guelph

Existing landscaping treatment near Speedvale Ave W & Kathleen St

Existing townhouse development at Gordon St & Arkell Rd

Rear yard transition to natural features

Townhouse development with surface parking lot

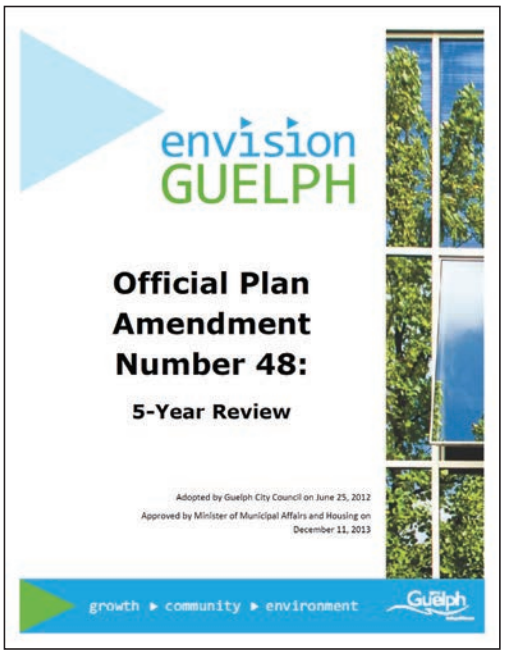
# 2.0 Background Review

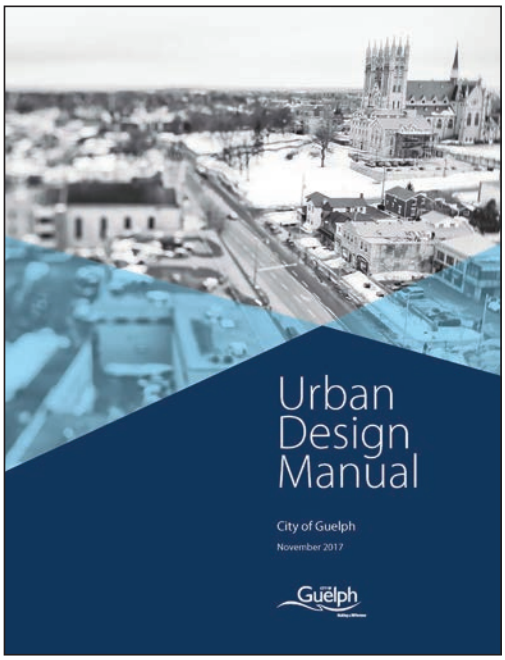
## Official Plan

The Official Plan provides direction on urban design objectives, permitted land uses, building heights and development densities. The Urban Design section (Section 8) identifies key principles and objectives specific to the design of townhouses and mid-rise buildings, as well as direction on related issues like parking, access, circulation, landscaping, land use transitions and the public realm.

The Plan promotes the creation of compact, complete, multi-modal communities that have iconic spaces and encourage social, economic, and cultural interaction. The design of new built form should complement existing neighbourhood character with regards to architectural style, massing, facade articulation, material use and signage, while promoting diversity in urban form and architectural design. Buildings should address the street, and where relevant, must provide direct access to commercial, office and mixed uses. The public realm should be clearly articulated through an interconnected network of streets, parks, trails, and open spaces and should integrate street setbacks and landscaping to create a well-defined street edge.

Both low rise and mid-rise buildings should address the street and provide principal entrances from the public realm. Mid-rise buildings should also provide access to sunlight and views for adjacent properties. All design interventions should conserve and enhance the City's cultural heritage resources and natural heritage features.




## Urban Design Action Plan (2017)

The Urban Design Action Plan forms volume two of the City's Urban Design Manual and establishes a framework for urban design excellence throughout the City. The document is one tool used to implement the City's land use vision articulated within the Official Plan.

The document also provides urban design policy guidance to strengthen the existing municipal legislative framework and inform future updates to the City's zoning by-law, including city-wide directions; and those for residential, commercial, employment and mixed-use areas. Directions relate to a wide range of issues that include built form, urban design, parking, and the pedestrian realm.

### Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864

The City's Zoning By-Law identifies specific development permissions for each zone, such as maximum building heights, setbacks, lot coverage, parking, amenity space and landscaped open space requirements. Recommendations from the Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses will inform the City's comprehensive zoning by-law review.

### Related Plans, Guidelines and Standards

In addition to the Official Plan, these Built Form Standards will reflect the recommendations and requirements of related plans, guidelines and standards in place in Guelph, including:

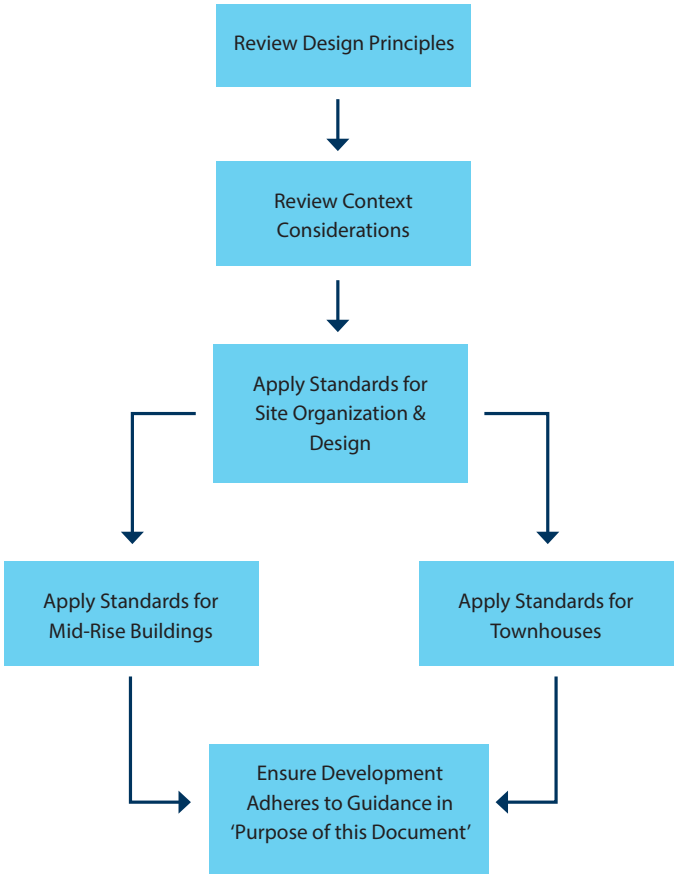
- Active Transportation Network Study (2017);
- Development Engineering Manual (2016);
- Guelph Facility Accessibility Design Manual (2015);
- Water Supply Master Plan Update (2013);
- Urban Forest Management Plan (2012);
- Stormwater Management Master Plan (2012);
- Water Efficiency Strategy (2009); and
- Community Energy Plan (2007).

# 3.0 Purpose of this Document

The Built Form Standards will ensure that the future development and design of mid-rise and townhouse forms is appropriate for the City based on existing context and contemporary urban design practices.

The Official Plan contains policies for urban design, including design policies for residential properties. These standards provide guidance and interpretation to assist in implementing the Official Plan policies as well as recommendations for the future comprehensive zoning by-law update. The document summarizes existing Official Plan policies to provide connections to the relevant Official Plan section.

The Standards will provide clear directions for architects, landscape architects and developers, City staff and the public, and will help in the evaluation of urban design briefs and planning applications such as site-specific Zoning By-law amendments and site plans.



## Examples from Other Municipalities

Mid-rise building with articulated massing


Townhouses development with articulated massing and landscaping

Stacked townhouse building addressing the street

Front yard landscaping creating transition to public realm

# 4.0 Context Considerations

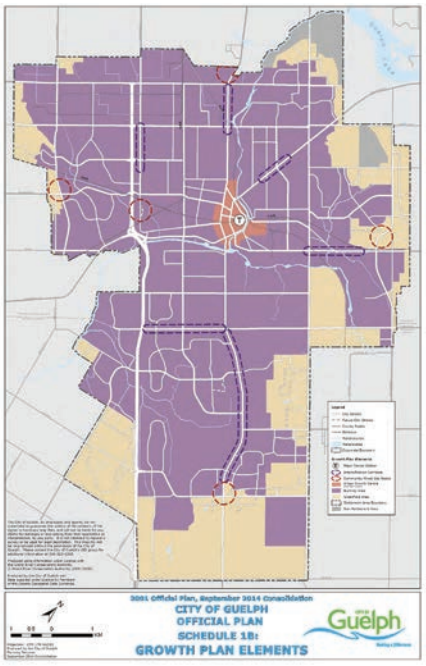
## 4.1 Nodes and Corridors

The City of Guelph Official Plan has identified Nodes and Corridors as key locations for intensification. Nodes are defined as urban villages that include a mix of uses in a compact urban form, whereas Corridors are identified as intensification areas along major roads, arterials or higher order transit corridors that can support high density mixed use areas. For these areas, increased density can support additional multi-modal movement including transit services, walkability and cycling infrastructure. These areas have been identified in areas where the lot fabric can typically accommodate intensification and where land uses may be mixed to create a fabric of more compact mixed-use areas to minimize encroachment into stable residential areas.

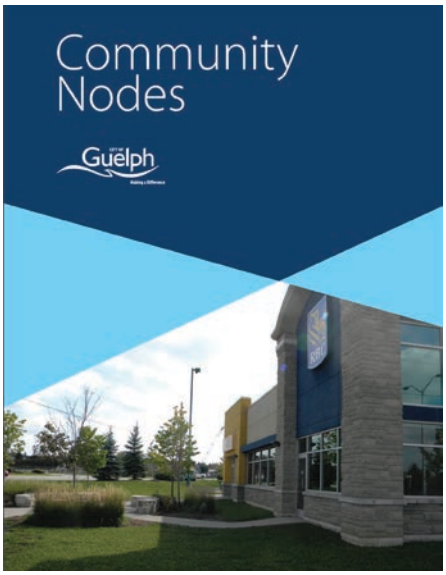
The City has identified several nodes and corridors within Guelph appropriate for higher density mixed-use development, and has created urban design concept plans for the following areas:

- The Woodlawn/ Woolwich mixed-use node and the Woolwich intensification corridor;
- The Gordon/Clair mixed-use node;
- The Paisley/Imperial mixed-use node; and
- The Watson/Starwood mixed-use node.

These documents articulate clear long-term visions and development policies to guide the urban design of each area, and will be used to inform the suitability of future development applications.




Growth Plan Elements Schedule from the Official Plan, which identifies Community Mixed Use Nodes and Intensification Corridors




Urban Design Concept Plans Community Nodes Document Cover

## 4.2 Infill and Greenfield Sites

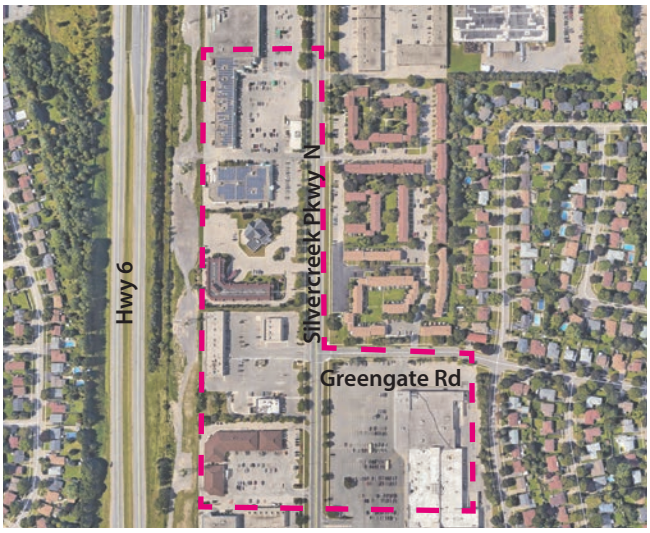
Mid-rise and townhouse development will occur on both infill and greenfield sites within the City of Guelph. The development of both infill and greenfield sites should contribute to compact and efficient growth and a vibrant public realm, which includes an established street network with pedestrian connections addressed by buildings and public spaces, as identified within the Official Plan.

Infill sites are located in established areas of the City. Infill can include the redevelopment of vacant or underdeveloped sites through more intensive development forms. Considerations for redevelopment on infill sites include:

- Appropriate site organization, including setbacks between buildings on adjacent properties, and consequent overlook, privacy and shadow impacts; and
- Existing trees, vegetation and grades.

Infill properties are typically located in areas with existing amenities, such as public parks and open spaces. Proposed land uses should be appropriate for the area and complement existing uses, to ensure the development of meaningful built form and public spaces.

Greenfield sites are those that are undeveloped, vacant or rural type lands outside of the built-up area of the City. The development of greenfield sites will need to give considerable thought to site organization, including how to best establish connections to streets and parks, and determining the ideal locations for new buildings, parks and open spaces, landscaping, servicing and utilities.



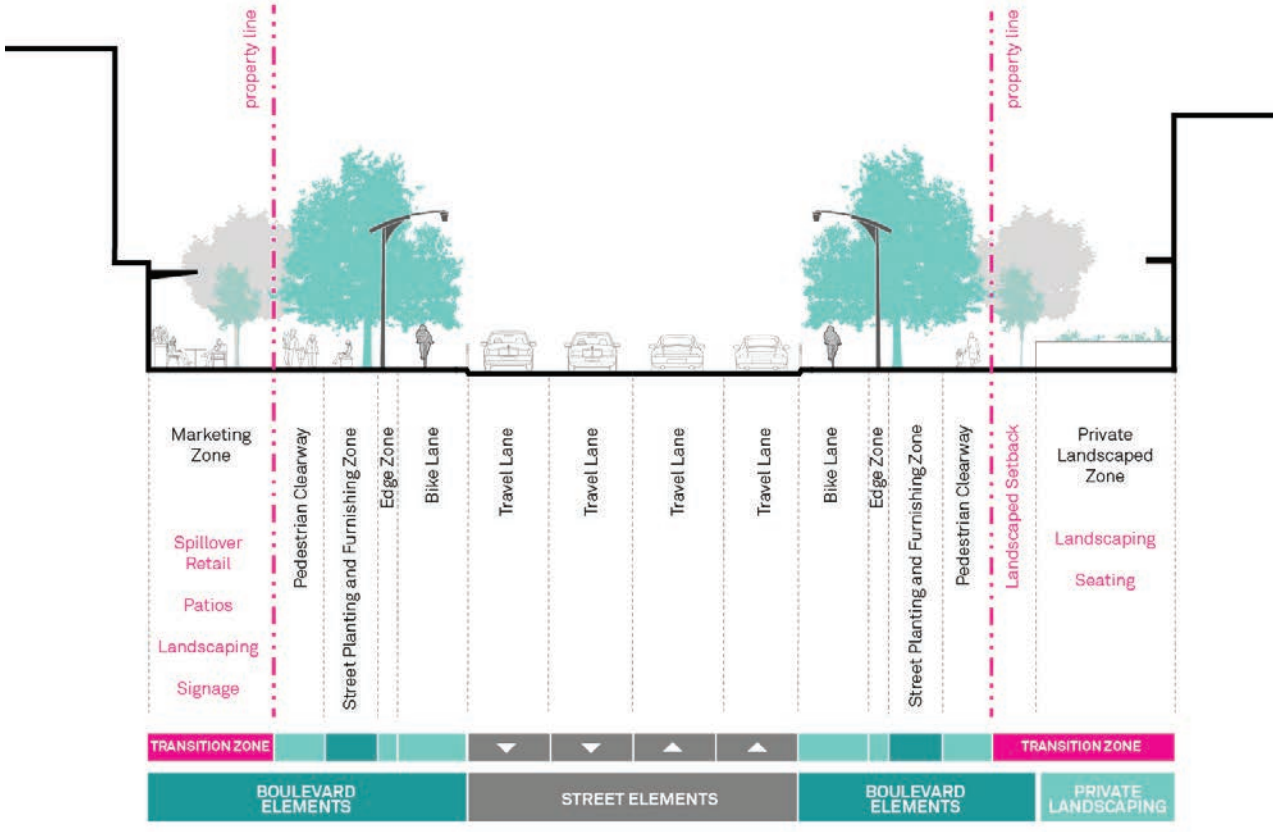

Existing mixed use area in an Intensification Corridor within Guelph, located around Greengate Rd and Silvercreek Parkway. This area is one location where infill development could occur.


A recently developed greenfield site within Guelph

### 4.3 Planned Street Function and Design

The street hierarchy within the City of Guelph is intrinsically linked to the designs of its streets and buildings. Considering the critical role of a street's character and its impacts on building and site design is emphasized throughout these Built Form Standards. The planned and existing character of Guelph's streets already inform the appropriate massing, built form typology, and public realm design of both infill and greenfield projects throughout the City.

To formalize this context into the design process this document introduces a transition zone to recognize and articulate the relationship between buildings and streets. The transition zone is defined by the area within the front yard, and on corner sites, side yard setback area (as shown in the demonstration section). The design of the transition zone will be an important consideration when reviewing development applications for townhouse and mid-rise development.




Demonstration Street Section for Typical Arterial Road

When designed through a context based approach, the transition zone (space between future buildings and the street right-of-way) can unify a street's overall character by appropriately framing the street, responding to a planned building type (mid-rise or townhouse), and reflecting the at-grade uses of a building. Ultimately the transition zone should reflect a street hierarchy and contribute to a high-quality pedestrian realm.

The consideration of a transition zone supports a context based approach that unifies a proposed land-use / building design with its associated street character and function. Development proposals will need to consider both the existing and long-term character of the adjacent streets. More detail on the treatment of the transition zone is interwoven throughout this document.

In Guelph, the Official Plan identifies the following street hierarchy:

- **Expressway:** Expressways are high-speed, multi-lane provincial highways that accommodate large volumes of traffic. In Guelph this means the Hanlon Expressway.
- **Arterial Roads:** Arterial roads should accommodate medium speed traffic, with capacity for 2 to 6 lanes, and should support the integration of higher order transit. They should feature a right-of-way width between 26 and 36 metres. Key arterial roads within the City of Guelph include Gordon Street, Victoria Road, Kortright Road West, and Arkell Road. Access points along Arterial roads should be consolidated where possible and limited to avoid interference with the primary function of the roadway.
- **Collector Roads:** Collector roads should accommodate moderate speed, with capacity for 2 to 4 lanes. They should feature a right-of-way width between 23 and 26 metres. Key collector roads within the City of Guelph include Harvard Road and Clairfields Drive. Access points along Collector roads should be consolidated where possible.
- **Local Roads:** Local roads should accommodate low speed and low volumes of traffic.

# 5.0 Meeting the Standards

Development in Guelph will occur in a variety of types including single lot design, consolidated lot design and large site development. These projects will occur in both infill and greenfield conditions. Each development type has varying approvals, circulations and reviews by the City and relevant agencies. It is essential that the Built Form Standards are met or that their ability to be met at the next stage of design or approval is demonstrated through an Urban Design Brief which is to include a physical context plan.

The purpose of an Urban Design Brief is to allow for the urban design elements of development to be evaluated and respond to a site's opportunities and constraints, to ensure that design solutions are context sensitive, and reflect the urban design policy framework. The content of the Urban Design Brief should reflect whether a project is in the high level visioning stage or the detailed design stage. Further information on Urban Design Briefs can be found on the City's website.

### Physical Context Plan

All new development must be informed by existing site attributes and adjacent context. As part of the Urban Design Brief, all development applications must submit a summary map that identifies the site within a 400 to 800 metre radius (a 5 to 10 minute walk), to include:

- Site boundary for the proposed development;
- Land uses and zoning permissions;
- Public views and vistas;
- Pedestrian, vehicular and cycling connections;
- Key landmarks and amenities;
- Cultural and natural heritage features; and
- Built form on the site and adjacent properties.

The level of corresponding detail is required as appropriate in the Urban Design Brief. Each stage of the development will require increasing detailed resolution of the design parameters. The high level visioning stages will respond primarily to the Site Design Performance Standards and will clearly identify the relevant built form objectives that will be addressed at the detailed stage. The relevant standards should be confirmed through a pre-consultation meeting.

## 5.1 Approval Processes and Submission Considerations

### Approval Process

Adherence to these Standards will be integrated into the approval process as follows:

**Official Plan Amendment**

If you are applying for an Official Plan Amendment (OPA), a mandatory pre-consultation meeting with the Development Review Committee is required to identify applicable Built Form Objectives and Urban Design Brief requirements. The following applies to the Official Plan Amendment:

- Physical Context Plan, as part of the urban design brief, is required to demonstrate understanding of existing site context.
- An Urban Design Brief is required for OPAs containing an overall Site Plan or Master Plan to demonstrate the vision and an ability to meet the stated objectives.
- Deviations from the Standards are to be summarized with justification within the Urban Design Brief. Acceptance of these deviations is at the discretion of the City.

### Zoning By-Law Amendment

If you are applying for a Zoning By-Law Amendment (ZBA), a mandatory pre-consultation meeting with the Development Review Committee is required to identify applicable Built Form Standards and urban design brief requirements. The following applies to the Zoning By-Law Amendment:

- Physical Context Plan, as part of the urban design brief, is required to demonstrate understanding of existing site context.
- An Urban Design Brief is required for ZBAs including an overall Site Plan or Master Plan to outline conformance to the Standards.
- Deviations from the Standards are to be summarized with justification in the Urban Design Brief. Acceptance of these deviations is at the discretion of the City.

### Draft Plan of Subdivision

If you are applying for a Draft Plan of Subdivision, a mandatory pre-consultation meeting with the Development Review Committee is required. The following applies to the Draft Plan of Subdivision:

- Physical Context Plan, as part of the urban design brief, is required to demonstrate understanding of existing site context.
- An Urban Design Brief is required with an overall Site Master Plan to demonstrate an ability to achieve standards.
- Deviations from the Standards are to be summarized with justification in the Urban Design Brief. Acceptance of these deviations is at the discretion of the City.

### Site Plan Approval

The development of a single zoned site is subject to the site plan and building permit approval processes (see City's website for detailed process). The design proposed will be reviewed for conformity to the design standards outlined in this document and any applicable urban design brief approved through a previous planning process.

City staff will be reviewing the Site Plan application based on the previously approved Urban Design Brief. If one has not been prepared it may be requested at the pre-consultation meeting.

## 5.2 Large Site Development

Larger sites typically contain common element roads, a mix of uses, and shared amenities. A development application for a large site must include a concept plan to demonstrate how these sites will be informed by its context, how they contribute to the character of the area, and how they support the City's vision for the area. A master plan may be required for sites that:

- Involve lot consolidation or sub-division;
- Have shared common amenities;
- A mix of building types and uses with shared parking or other facilities;
- Require multiple phases for development;
- Create new public or private streets and public parks or open spaces;
- Have a significant interface with the Natural Heritage System; or
- Have other complex site conditions.

Where a Master Plan is required as part of a development application, it should demonstrate, through diagrams and accompanying text, how the proposed development will meet the guidelines or objectives (depending if the submission is at the high or detailed level of design) contained in this document. The Detailed Master Plan should also illustrate the following elements:

- Location of public and/or private streets, intersections and laneways, and connections to streets in the surrounding community;
- Pedestrian and cycling connections through the site and connecting to the surrounding community;
- Location, size and configuration of parkland and open space;
- Location, uses and massing of buildings and their relationship to adjacent streets, natural heritage features and open spaces;
- Built form transitions to the surrounding community;
- Shadow impacts (specifically on adjacent public spaces, parks or school yards);
- Conceptual streetscape designs for internal streets and adjacent public streets to be improved;
- General location and layout of parking;
- Location and size of stormwater management elements and utilities;
- General landscape and tree planting plan;
- Environmental features and elements that support the community energy plan and the sustainability policies of the official plan;
- Cultural heritage attributes to be rehabilitated, conserved and retained in the proposed development, if applicable; and
- Locations for heritage interpretation, environmental information and/or public art, if applicable.

The development application package must also include an urban design rationale that outlines how the proposed development is appropriate for the site given its specific conditions and context, to be reviewed by the City of Guelph.

# 6.0 Site Organization & Design

Site design should be carefully considered and respond to site characteristics and adjacent land uses. Site components should be organized efficiently and should consider the location and orientation of buildings, parking, access, and circulation, landscaped space, outdoor amenity space and trees, while considering impacts on the environment and stormwater systems.

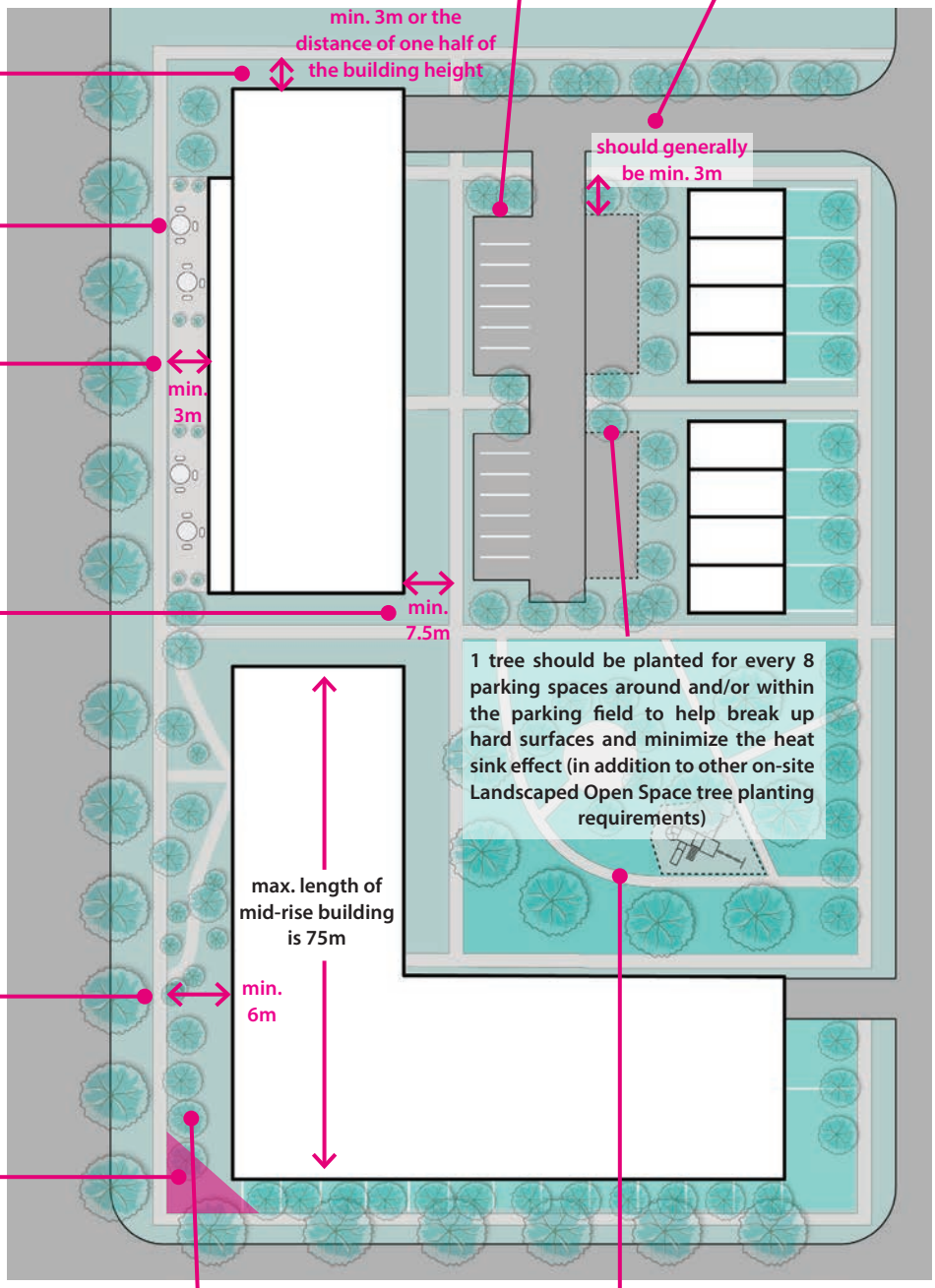
Efficient sites should achieve the following:

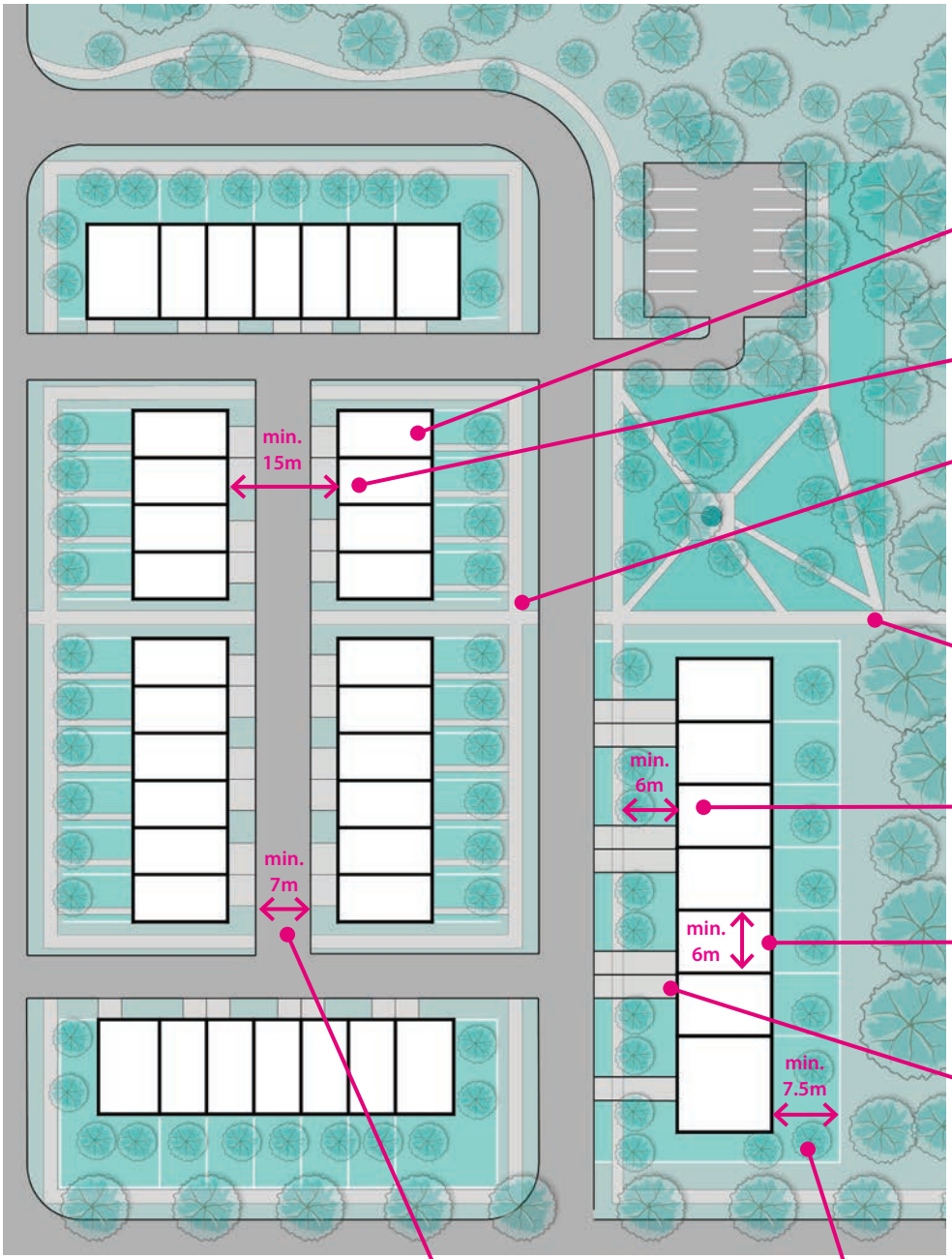
- Establish a good relationship between buildings and the street;
- Provide a context based transition zone between the building and the street right of way;
- Create a balance between built form and open space;
- Reduce the visual impact of parking;
- Encourage healthy lifestyle choices, such as active modes of travel;
- Contribute to greening streets and development sites;
- Where permitted, create connections to adjacent streets, trails, natural heritage systems and open spaces; and
- Respect site constraints such as existing trees and grading, engineering requirements, utilities, and noise, and integrate into the final design.

## Private Road Street Section


Private roads should have an asphalt road and should include pedestrian sidewalks and tree planting. Off-peak on-street parking can be accommodated on either side of the road. Private road design should be informed by engineering and emergency service standards.

## Key Recommendations for Mid-Rise Buildings & Townhouses






Townhouse blocks adjacent to the street should not exceed 8 units. Back-to-back or stacked townhouse blocks should not exceed 48m.

The rear separation distance between any two townhouse blocks should be a min. of 15m.

Min. sidewalk width: 2.0m

Mid-block connections should have a min. pedestrian clearway of 2.0m and a min. width of 5m. They should connect sites to public right-of-ways

New on-street townhouses with attached garages should have a min. front yard setback of 6m

On-street townhouse units with an integrated garage shall be a min. of 6m wide

Group driveways to maximize soft surface and provide more soil volumes for trees

Private roads should be a min. width of 7m, and should be informed by engineering, Ontario Building Code and emergency service requirements

On-street and off-street townhouses should have a min. rear yard setback of 7.5m

## 6.1 Sustainable Site Design

**Objective:** As outlined in the Official Plan (8.1), site design and building development should support energy efficiency and water conservation. Furthermore, sustainable site design can assist in planning for resilience in extreme weather events. All designs must be in accordance with the City of Guelph's sustainability objectives, including those outlined in the following documents: Stormwater Management Master Plan (2012); and Community Energy Plan (2007). Some site designs may qualify for a reduction in the stormwater service fee. Visit guelph.ca/stormwater for more details.

### Standards:

1. Sustainable site and building design is encouraged that reduces energy and water consumption, improves air quality, water quality, and waste management (OP Policy 8.1.1).
2. Site design should promote alternative modes of transportation including walking, cycling and public transit.
3. Building location and orientation should maximize exposure to natural light and consider microclimate effects.
4. Encourage the use of green roofs and white roofs to reduce energy consumption. Green roofs are strongly encouraged on mid-rise buildings.
5. Low Impact Development (LID) measures should be incorporated as part of site landscaping (in areas determined to be appropriated by City Staff) (OP Policy 8.1.1).
6. Permeable paving is encouraged for patios and passive use areas, but should only be used where a regular maintenance plan can be implemented.
7. Indigenous plant species that are drought and salt resistant are recommended and should be the predominant type of landscaping used. The establishment of pollinator habitat is also encouraged (OP Policy 8.1.1).
8. A focus on consolidated landscaped areas that support a mature tree canopy is required.

Green Roof Feature

BLUE BUILT HOME

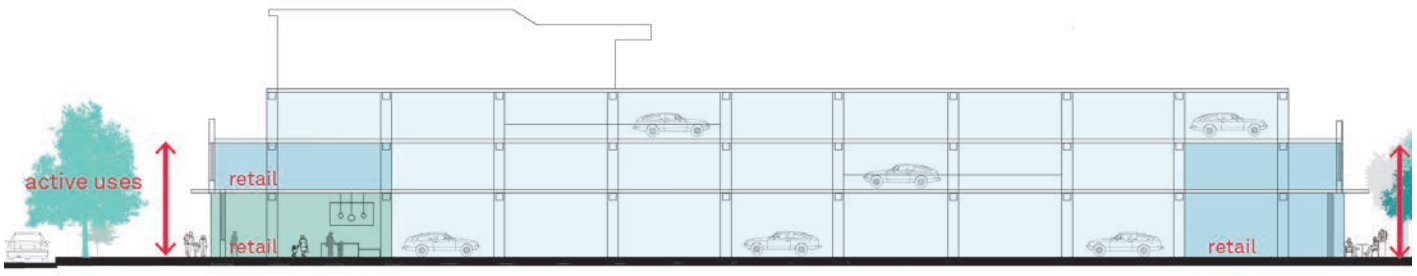
For more information on water conservation, refer to the City's Blue Built Home program.

## 6.2 Parking, Access, Circulation and Loading

**Objective:** As outlined in the Official Plan, parking (Section 8.12), access, circulation and loading (Section 8.13) are important to ensure that the organization and siting of parking is considered in relationship to buildings and other site components. Site organization should create efficient circulation for pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists, and appropriate transitions between the public and private realm. The appearance of parking should not dominate the visible edges of a site.

### General Standards:

1. Where a building is located in a Node or Corridor, the residential parking requirement may be reduced (if deemed appropriate by City Staff) in order to meet landscaped open space requirements.
2. Underground or structured parking is encouraged to reduce or eliminate the need for surface parking. Underground parking does not require a street setback although it should not impede soil volumes required for tree planting (i.e. medium trees). Where parking cannot be located underground due to watertable constraints and surface parking is required, parking must be set back from the street and screened by building placement and/or extensive landscaping features (OP Policy 8.12.1 & 8.12.2).
3. Surface parking areas should generally be located at the rear or side of buildings and within the required setback. Surface parking areas shall not be permitted immediately adjacent to the corners of an intersection (OP Policy 8.12.1 & 8.12.3).




Street-related uses should be provided on at least the first level of a structured parking lot where appropriate and feasible to contribute to an active pedestrian realm and to screen the parking structure.

4. The reduction of vehicle parking spaces may be considered where buildings are located in a Node or Corridor, or within proximity to higher order transportation.
5. Side yard parking should not exceed more than 50% of the street line, to ensure that surface parking does not dominate the street.
6. Residential visitor parking should be provided through below grade structures or small surface lots, depending on site size and unit count.
7. Shared driveways are encouraged to reduce access points and reduce conflicts with pedestrians. Opportunities to consolidate driveway access points should be investigated and all curb cuts should be kept at a minimum size.
8. Loading and servicing areas should be functional and easily accessible while also not becoming a primary visual element. Loading bays, waste service areas and building utilities/ mechanical equipment should be located within a building. If permitted outside a building, they shall not be located immediately adjacent to an intersection, will be directed away from a public street, park, river, public open space or residential area, or adequately screened if this is not possible (OP Policy 8.13.6).

### Additional Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings:

9. In a mid-rise building, barrier free access should be provided from municipal sidewalks and parking areas to the building (OP Policy 8.12.4).

Surface parking lot with hardscaped pedestrian walkway

### Additional Standards for Townhouses:

10. To ensure that garages do not dominate the streetscape and to promote "eyes on the street", integrated front garages may be no wider than 50% of the width of the unit frontage (OP Policy 8.5.1).
11. Limit garage door projections so that garage doors are mostly recessed and do not project ahead of the front wall of the house.
12. Front driveways should have a minimum depth of 6 metres, to ensure that parked vehicles do not impact adjacent sidewalks.
13. Front driveways should have a maximum width of 3 metres.
14. Reverse grade driveways should not be included for townhouse units.
15. Front yard paths should provide direct access to each unit from the sidewalk (OP Policy 8.12.4).
16. Rear lane development or underground parking is generally encouraged. On narrow lots and particularly along arterials and within mixed-use areas, residential developments shall generally incorporate rear lanes to help create attractive streetscapes and minimize the impact of driveways on the pedestrian realm (OP Policy 8.5.4).
17. Rear garages may extend the width of the unit.
18. Surface parking areas adjacent to ground-related residential uses should be separated by a landscaped buffer strip incorporating combinations of landscaping and/or decorative fencing or walls (OP Policy 8.12.9).
19. Service areas should be separated from pedestrian amenity areas, open spaces, and walkways.
20. When occupied, loading areas should not impede on-site vehicular, pedestrian and cyclist circulation.

## Structured Parking

### General Standards:

21. Structured parking or parking integrated under the first floor of the building envelope is encouraged to reduce or eliminate the need for surface parking (OP Policy 8.12.2).
22. Entrances to structured parking should be contained within the building mass or in an enclosed pavilion, and should include garage doors.
23. Driveway access and ramp locations shall be located to reduce conflicts with pedestrians and minimize negative impacts on the streetscape.
24. Above-ground parking structures shall be designed to provide well-articulated facades facing streets. Street-related uses on the ground level of the parking structure should be provided where appropriate and feasible to contribute to an active pedestrian realm and to screen the parking structure (OP Policy 8.12.8).
25. Above the second floor, parking structures should be shielded from exterior view through architectural screening or other methods.

### Standards for Townhouses:

26. Parking for stacked townhomes and back-to-back townhomes should be provided underground, or in the rear yard with access through a shared driveway.

## Surface Parking

### Standards:

27. Building placement in combination with landscaping should be used to screen surface parking areas. Surface parking should be contained within the block unless it is intended to serve an at-grade retail function of a mid-rise building in that case it may be considered appropriate in a side or rear yard. However, when adjacent to the public realm, surface parking areas shall be designed in a manner that contributes to an attractive public realm by providing screening and landscaping.
28. Entrances to surface parking areas should align with other street intersections and parking entrances, where possible.
29. Where larger surface parking areas are required, they should be divided into smaller and defined sections through the use of appropriately-sized landscape strips, islands and/or pedestrian walkways to minimize their visual impacts (OP Policy 8.12.5).
30. Articulated, safe, accessible and integrated dedicated pedestrian walkways should be incorporated through surface parking areas through differentiated paving materials and landscaping, and should be a minimum of 2.0 metres wide.
31. A minimum 3 metre setback should be provided between building walls and a parking space to allow for landscaping and public realm elements.
32. Walkways should be provided directly from parking areas and municipal sidewalks to the main entrance(s) of the building(s) (OP Policy 8.12.4).
33. See additional standards in "Trees in Surface Parking Areas" in Section 6.5.

Surface parking lot with landscaping

## Bicycle Parking

**Objective:** Make cycling infrastructure highly visible within the site design to encourage a cycle friendly environment.

### Standards:

34. Bicycle parking shall be provided and conveniently located. Visitor bicycle parking spaces should be located in visible and accessible locations: at grade, within right-of-ways, and near building entrances and pedestrian walkways (OP Policy 8.12.7).
35. Provide permanent bicycle storage on site that is protected from the weather and is secure. Sheltered bicycle parking should be integrated into built form (OP Policy 8.12.7).
36. The location of bicycle racks should not impede pedestrian movement, accessibility or snow clearing.

Dedicated exterior or short-term bicycle parking area

## 6.3 Common Amenity Area

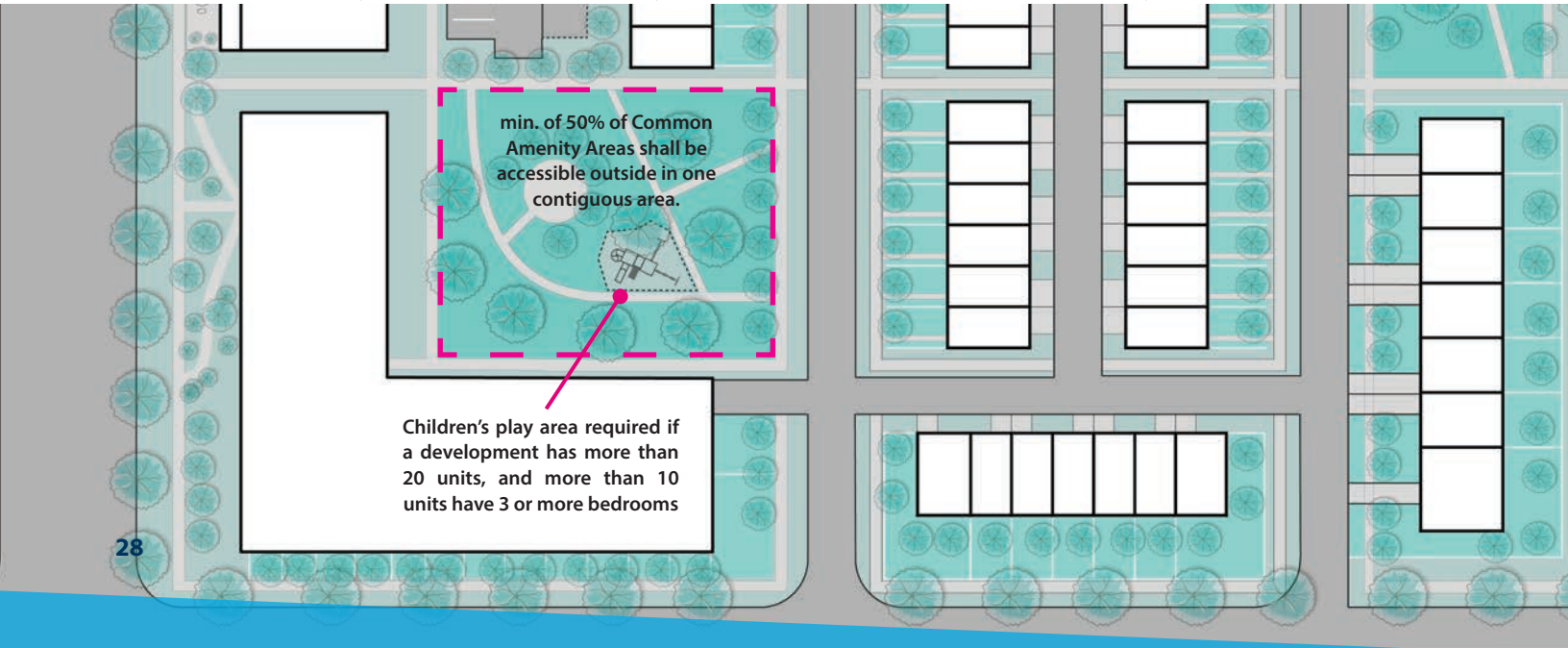
**Objective:** Common Outdoor Amenity Area is part of the overall Common Amenity Area requirements of the zoning by-law. The location, size and design of Common Outdoor Amenity Areas should be appropriate given the building type, unit mix, and adjacent land uses and amenities. Common Outdoor Amenity Areas should provide comfortable, universally inclusive, and safe spaces for pedestrians with a range of active and passive programming.

### General Standards:

### Size Requirements

1. If a development has more than 20 units, and more than 10 units have 3 or more bedrooms, a children's play area should be provided.
2. A minimum of 50% of the required Common Amenity Area shall be accessible at-grade outside, in one contiguous area. To ensure spaces are usable and appropriately scaled, the width to depth proportion of a Common Outdoor Amenity Area should not exceed 4:1. For example a 600 square metre amenity space would have an approximate width of 49 metres and a depth of 12 metres.
3. Where a development is located within a Node or Corridor, the common amenity space requirement may be reduced by up to 50% where a park with a minimum size of 1 hectare with equivalent amenities is located within a 500 metre walking distance from the site. Common Amenity Area reduction should be evaluated on a case by case basis in consultation with City staff.

Common Outdoor Amenity Areas should provide a diversity of programming and reflect a development's density, unit mix and lot size



## Use and Design Requirements

4. Common Outdoor Amenity Areas must include multiple functions or activities that encourage meeting, gathering or play (i.e. play area, seating, community garden, shade structure, barbecues, water features).
5. Cluster complementary common elements like a common mailbox or bicycle parking near Common Outdoor Amenity Areas.
6. Common Outdoor Amenity Areas may include structures that directly support the amenity space uses (i.e. storage shed, shade structure), but may not include other accessory buildings or structures, mechanical equipment or above-ground utility boxes.
7. Common Outdoor Amenity Areas must be directly connected to a local street; a park, natural heritage or open space; or the building. They shall not be surrounded by parking.
8. Common Outdoor Amenity Spaces should be located away from building servicing, parking and loading functions. If this is not possible, servicing areas should be heavily screened with a landscaped buffer and a fence.
9. Where amenity areas have direct visual connection with the interior of the building, these spaces should preferably be interior amenity space or shared common areas.
10. Consider microclimate effects through the orientation, location and landscaping of Common Outdoor Amenity Areas; provide a balance of sun, shade and protection from wind.

Common Amenity Area incorporating a walkway, seating and landscaping

11. Incorporate site lighting, but ensure that it does not trespass into individual units or encourage use beyond acceptable daytime hours.
12. All common outdoor amenity spaces should have barrier free connections to the building and public right of way and host site furnishings that meet AODA standards.
13. The location and orientation of amenity areas should be designed to reduce the noise level due to transportation and other noise sources.

### Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings:

14. Where a mid-rise apartment development has less than 20 units, a minimum of 30m$^2$ per unit must be provided as Common Outdoor Amenity Area. For each additional unit, an additional 20m$^2$ should be provided per unit.
15. Rooftop Common Amenity Areas are permitted. Consider location and placement to ensure compatibility with adjacent properties. Rooftop amenity spaces should have a minimum setback of 2 metres from the roof edge.

### Standards for Townhouses:

- Where a cluster townhouse development has more than 20 units, a minimum of 5m$^2$ per unit must be provided as Common Amenity Area.
- Where a stacked or back-to back townhouse development has more than 20 units, a minimum of 10m$^2$ per unit must be provided as Common Amenity Area.

Children's play area

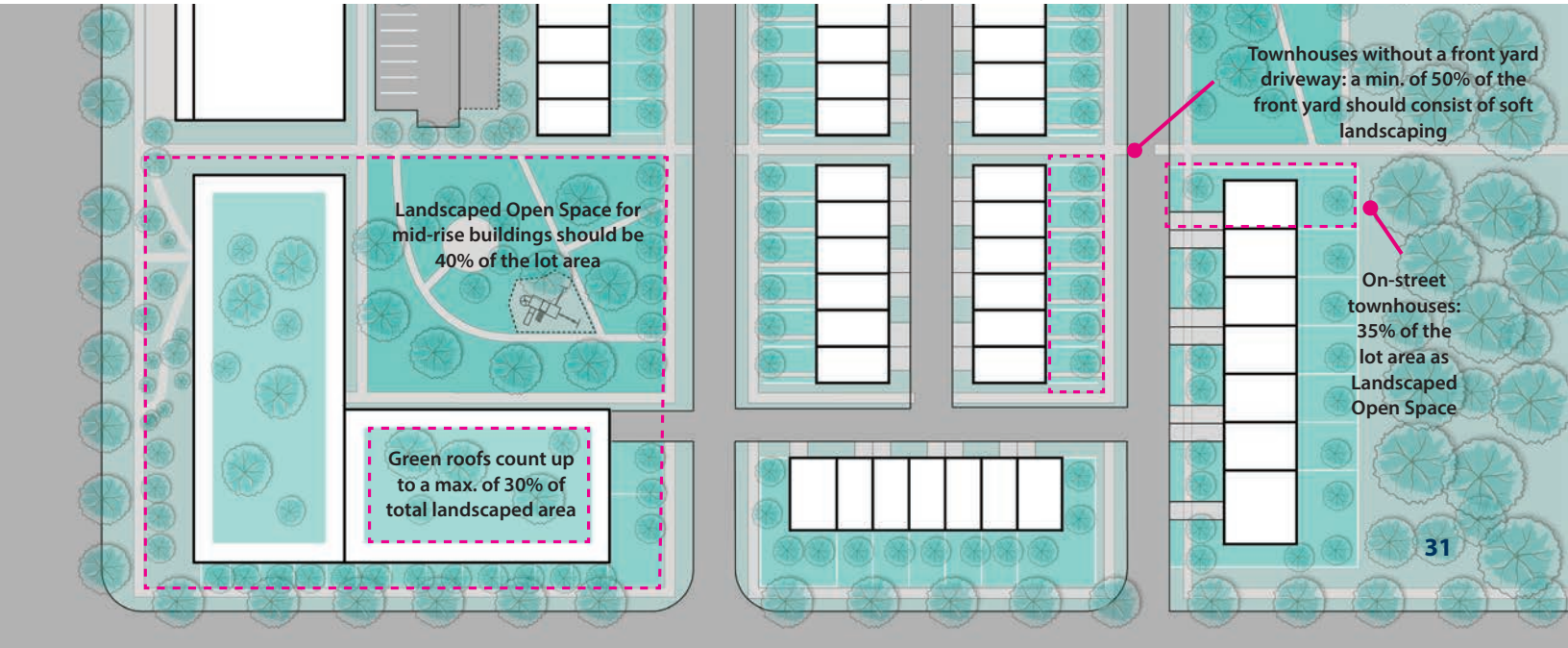
## 6.4 Landscaped Open Space

**Objective:** In accordance with the Official Plan (8.17) landscape open space includes a range of hard and soft landscaping treatments that provide a diversity of colour, texture and plant materials, and to create visual interest, pedestrian comfort and a sense of enclosure at street level.

### General Standards:

1. A minimum of 50% of the total landscaped area requirement must be covered by soft landscaping, excluding on-street townhouses, in order to provide a comfortable pedestrian space that accommodates tree and shrub growth, and to provide clear transitions between the public and private realm.
2. Permeable paving does not count towards soft landscaping requirements.
3. Soft landscaping areas must consist of an open area that supports the growth of vegetation. This may include green roofs, green walls, gardens, grass and raised planters.
4. Soft landscaping should feature a diversity of plant materials that are low maintenance, drought resistant, native stock (OP Policy 8.17.2).
5. Soft landscaping should include a mix of trees, gardens, grasses, perennials and shrubs.
6. A minimum of 1 tree and 5 shrubs must be planted for every 45m$^2$ of required landscaped area to ensure sufficient vegetative cover for pedestrian comfort and stormwater management.

Landscaped Open Spaces can include a range of hardscaping and softscaping, and may include green roofs and landscaped strips



7. High standards for planting density, quality and variety at main building façades on public street frontages and in landscape buffers shall be applied.
8. Landscaping treatments should provide visual interest at all times of the year through a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees, and plantings that flower, change colour or lose leaves at different times.
9. Inclusive, barrier free designed community gardens are encouraged on residential development sites.
10. Landscaping treatments should contribute towards stormwater management (OP Policy 8.1.1).
11. Where Landscaped Open Space is located above a parking structure, adequate soil volumes will be provided to ensure healthy tree growth (to accommodate sufficient depth for soil cells and paving).
12. Green roofs are strongly encouraged. A green roof may count towards a maximum of 30% of the total landscaped area requirement. A green roof allows vegetation to grow on top of a structure and may act as a Common Amenity Space while also providing a stormwater function and other environmental benefits.

Some site designs that can demonstrate proper stormwater management may be eligible for a credit towards the stormwater service fee. Credit categories include: peak flow reduction, runoff volume reduction, water quality treatment, and operations/ activities. Visit guelph.ca/stormwater for more information.

Front yards feature a variety of trees, shrubs and soft landscaping, and create a transition between public and private space

## Landscaped Buffer Strips

13. Landscaped buffer strips shall consist of plant material that, at maturity, will form a visual barrier, in combination with other strategies such as fencing (OP Policy 8.17.5).
14. Landscaped buffer strips should consist of soft landscaping and 1 tree planted for every 12 metres of frontage to increase the overall tree canopy of the property and reduce the heat island effect.
15. Landscaped buffer strips around surface parking lots should be a minimum of 3 metres in width where there is a transition of land uses
16. Bio-swales are encouraged as part of landscape strips but must meet engineering and technical requirements.
17. Landscaped buffer strips must meet both requirements for tree growth and engineering functions.
18. Landscaped buffer strips should not be encumbered by severe grade changes, etc.
19. Landscaped buffer strips should be used to match existing grades with adjacent properties, where possible.

## Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings:

20. Landscaped Open Space should consist of 40% of the lot area for mid-rise building sites.
21. Where townhouse units wrap the base of mid-rise buildings, 50% of the front yard should consist of soft landscaping, in order to provide a comfortable pedestrian space that accommodates tree and shrub growth, and to provide clear transitions between the public and private realm.
22. Where a commercial unit, amenity space or lobby is provided at-grade, 15% of the front yard area should consist of soft landscaping and/or urban tree plantings in tree trenches or soil cells.
23. Areas covered by permitted encroachments into setback areas are excluded from the calculation of front yard soft landscaping.

## Standards for Townhouses:

24. For cluster and stacked townhouses, Landscaped Open Space should consist of 40% of the lot area.
25. For on-street townhouses, Landscaped Open Space should consist of 35% of the lot area.
26. For townhouses without a front yard driveway, a minimum of 50% of the front yard should consist of soft landscaping.
27. Areas covered by permitted encroachments into setback areas are excluded from the calculation of front yard soft landscaping.
28. Where front driveways are provided in townhouse developments, they should be paired to consolidate landscaped areas between driveways.

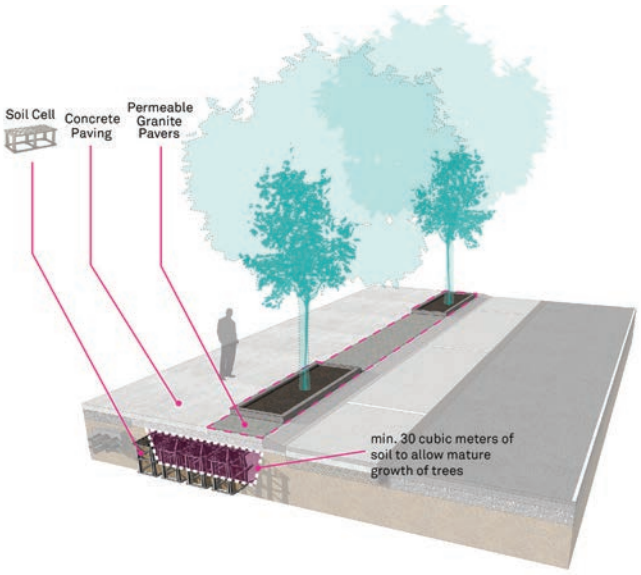
## 6.5 Tree Planting

**Objective:** To ensure that trees are planted with a sufficient soil volume and in appropriate locations that support healthy tree growth to maturity, which contribute to maintaining and increasing Guelph's tree canopy cover.

### General Standards:

1. All sites should maximize tree canopy cover through a combination of existing and new trees. Canopy cover should be calculated at 75% maturity.
2. First consideration of site design should strive to preserve existing trees on site.
3. Where existing trees are not retained, they should be replaced as required by the tree compensation policy.
4. Medium stature trees should have access to a minimum soil volume of 18m$^3$, or less when shared. Larger stature trees may require soil volumes up to 50m$^3$ per tree. Best practices for securing long term tree health should be applied and adhered to.
5. Tree planting within continuous soil trenches is preferred. Soil cells or other technologies may be required to meet soil volume requirements.
6. Strategically locate shade trees in key areas, such as near play areas, walkways, within Common Outdoor Amenity Spaces and amongst surface parking areas.

Typical cross section of a linear tree trench with 30 cubic metres of soil for mature tree growth




### Minimum and Optimal Soil Volumes by Tree Size and Maturity

The table below provides the minimum and optimum soil volumes for different-sized trees (at maturity). If minimum allowable soil volume is unavailable for the expected or desired tree size at maturity, smaller-sized trees should be established.

| Expected Tree Size at Maturity (Max. DBH of size class) | Min. Allowable Soil Volume (m$^3$) | Optimal Soil Volume (m$^3$) |
|---|---|---|
| **Small (10 cm)** | 6 | 12 |
| **Medium (30 cm)** | 18 | 22 |
| **Large (50 cm)** | 26 | 34 |
| **Very Large (60+cm)** | 38 | 50 |

### Trees in Surface Parking Areas

7. 1 60mm caliper tree should be planted for every 8 parking spaces within the parking field or within 5 metres of the vehicle use area to help break up hard surfaces and minimize the heat sink effect (in addition to other on-site Landscaped Open Space tree planting requirements).
8. Trees may be grouped or evenly spaced throughout surface parking areas; however, groupings are preferred to ensure adequate soil volumes and irrigation, with a minimum soil depth of 750mm, and a maximum soil depth of 900mm.
9. Trees should be planted within large landscaped islands, which may include continuous soil trenches, bio-swales, and rain gardens.
10. Trees may be planted as part of the bio-swale design if they do not interfere with engineering requirements.

### Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings:

11. For front yard tree planting on sites containing mid-rise buildings, 1 medium or large stature front yard tree is required for every 10 metres of property frontage.

### Standards for Townhouses:

12. For front yard tree planting, 1 medium or large stature tree should be planted for every two townhouse units facing the street.

Street trees along commercial frontage

## 6.6 Mid-Block Connections

**Objective:** To ensure that mid-block connections are created within sites to support connected and comfortable pedestrian mobility.

### Standards:

1. To allow for a pedestrian clearway and planting on both sides, mid-block connections should have a minimum width of 5.0 metres within low rise development, and up to 11.0 metres in mid rise development, measured building face to building face (or as required by the Ontario Building Code).
2. For all mid-block connections, a pedestrian clearway with a minimum width of 2.0 metres is required.
3. Mid-block connections should feature hard and soft landscaping, with a mix of low plantings and trees where possible, to ensure visibility and to create a clear transition between public and private spaces.
4. Mid-block connections should connect sites with public right-of-ways.
5. Mid-block connections should include lighting features, seating and signage, where appropriate, to promote pedestrian safety and comfort.
6. Preferred locations for mid-block connections will be identified in consultation with the City and through the required area context plan.
7. Provide a mid-block connection after every second block to support pedestrian connectivity.

Mid-block connection adjacent to residential side yards

## 6.7 Lighting

**Objective:** In accordance with the Official Plan (8.16), lighting is to be provided at levels sufficient for building identification and safety.

### Standards:

1. All building and site lighting shall be oriented and shielded to minimize the infringement of light and creation of glare on adjacent properties or public roads. Lighting should also be designed to minimize hot spots (OP Policy 8.16.2).
2. Use lighting that features warmer, yellow tones. The use of bright, blue tone lights is discouraged.
3. Accent lighting to emphasize built forms and landscape elements is encouraged.
4. Adequate pedestrian-scaled lighting to accent walkways, steps, ramps, transit stops and other features should be provided. Pedestrian-scaled lighting can be located within the boulevard or transition zone if they are attached directly to buildings (OP Policy 8.16.3).
5. Street and pedestrian-scaled lighting systems should incorporate energy efficiencies such as LED technology to reduce maintenance demand as well as to direct light away from the night sky.

Stand-alone pedestrian lighting fixtures

## 6.8 Rooftop Mechanical and Mechanical Systems

**Objective:** To ensure that rooftop mechanical equipment is incorporated appropriately into building design and should fit within the required angular plane.

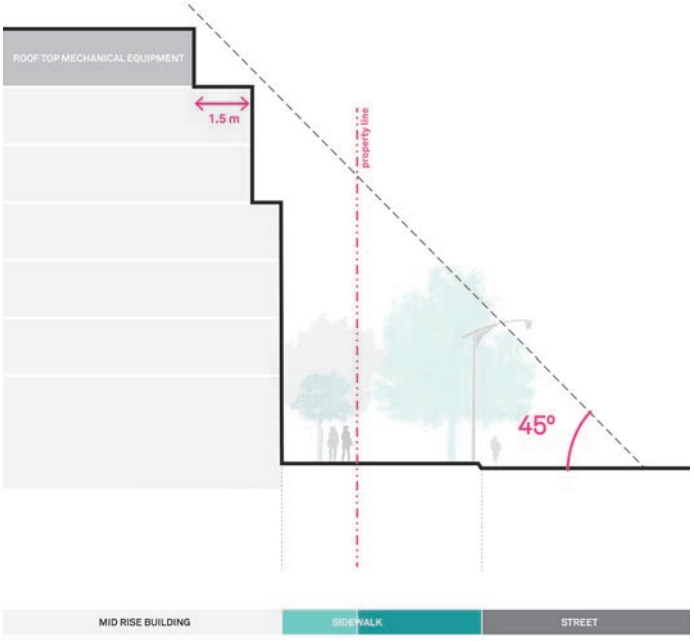
### Standards:

1. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be architecturally screened from public view (OP Policy 8.6.7). Screening shall be compatible with building design in form, material and colour.
2. Rooftop mechanical equipment should be setback a minimum of 1.5 metres from the building mass and should fit within established angular planes for the property.
3. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how rooftop mechanical equipment will be screened from surrounding public streets.
4. Mechanical systems for individual units, such as air conditioners, should not be placed on porches and balconies where it will impact the usability of these spaces.

### Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings:

5. Telecommunication and cell phone towers on mid-rise buildings are strongly discouraged given their aesthetic impact on building design and visibility from the public realm. Should they be provided, the antenna systems should not be visible from the public view using strategies such as setbacks and screening.

Rooftop mechanical equipment should fit within established angular planes for the property



## 6.9 Utilities and Solid Waste

**Objective:** To locate utilities efficiently and minimize their impact on the aesthetic quality and function of their sites.

### Standards:

1. Coordinate the placement of utilities with servicing, parking, loading and trees.
2. Cluster and screen utilities including gas meters and hydro. The appearance of utilities should be minimized but should be accessible.
3. Utility meters should be placed on the side of buildings, out of view from the street level to avoid front-facility utility meters. Recessed meters into exterior walls are encouraged.
4. Select a preferred non-visible location for utilities during the early design phases to ensure that their location is well considered, to eliminate the need for costly screens and plantings.
5. Contact Guelph Hydro early to determine the location of transformers. Transformers must be shown on Site Plans.
6. A Waste Management Plan shall be submitted through the Site Plan process. Consider waste management requirements early in the site design process.
7. Ensure site design includes adequate space for waste vehicles and containers, including set out locations. Set out locations shall not block sidewalks, fire routes, or accessible parking.
8. In townhouses, provide a minimum of $2m^2$ of floor space for three-stream waste carts in the garage, beyond any vehicular space requirements. Where garages are not provided, consolidated waste pick up areas are required.
9. Where garages are not provided, consolidated and screened or ground waste storage areas are required. This should be sized based on one week of waste storage.

Screening utilities at grade to improve aesthetic quality of site

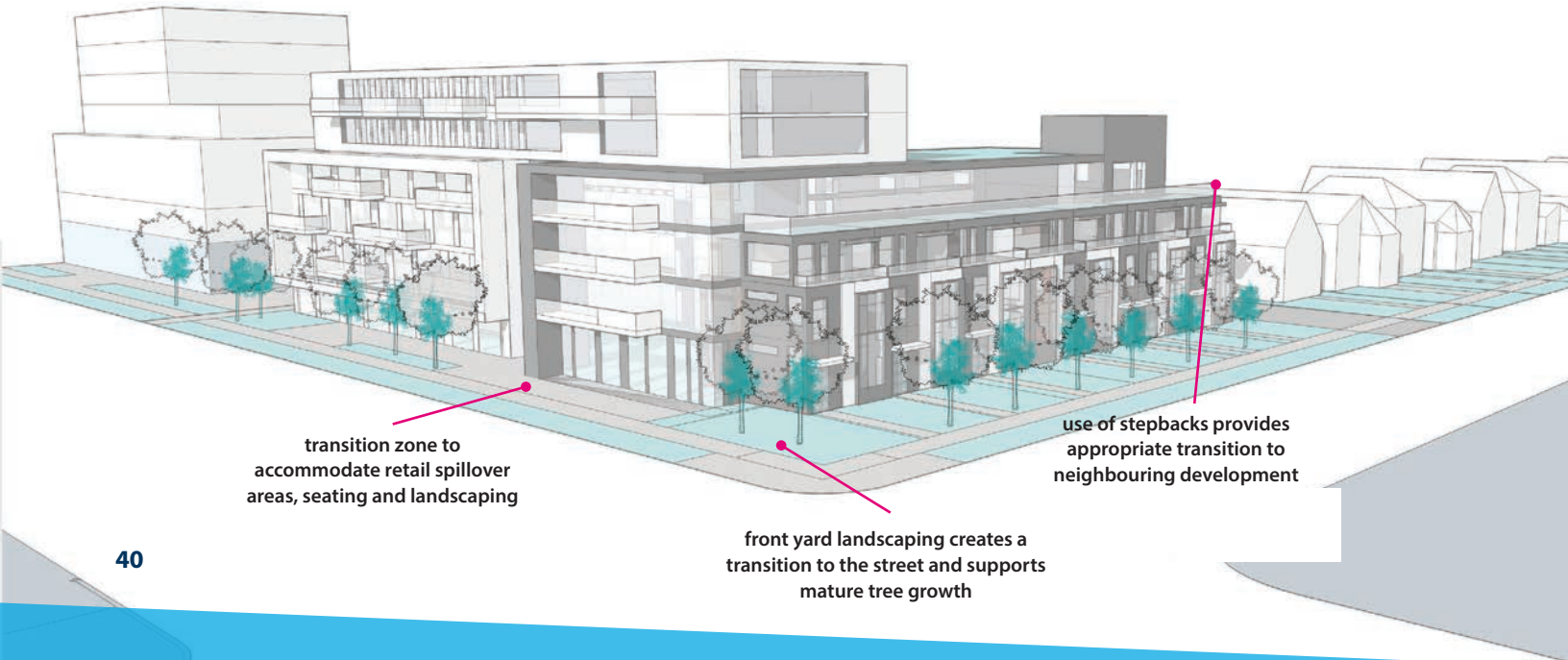

For additional technical information regarding preparing Waste Management Plans and a copy of the City's Waste Management Guidelines, please contact Waste Services.

# 7.0 Mid-Rise Buildings

The following Design Principles relate specifically to the vision for mid-rise buildings.

Mid-Rise Buildings should:

- Create consistent intensification along key corridors and mixed-use nodes through built form that frames streets and wide landscaped boulevards;
- Offer variety within the building envelope, through materials, massing and facade articulation;
- Be designed to mitigate the impacts of built form as it relates to access to sunlight and proximity to neighbouring properties;
- Create an effective transition between low-rise neighbourhoods and existing or future tall buildings;
- Offer a flexible building form to allow for adaptation over time and within the building;
- Create comfortable, green, accessible and usable outdoor spaces;
- Provide animated streetscapes through at-grade use and design;
- Be located in areas serviced by public transit; and
- Look at opportunities to provide accessible units.



## 7.1 Building Massing, Scale and Transitions

**Objective:** Building massing and scale refers to the size, shape and form of a building. Transition refers to how a building responds to the adjacent land uses or built form to mitigate negative impacts such as excessive shadowing, wind and lack of privacy. In accordance with section 8.8 of the Official Plan, mid-rise buildings shall be designed to frame the street they are fronting while allowing access to sunlight to adjacent properties. This may be done through considerations given to building orientation, setbacks, stepbacks, angular plane, relationship to grade, and land uses.

### Standards:

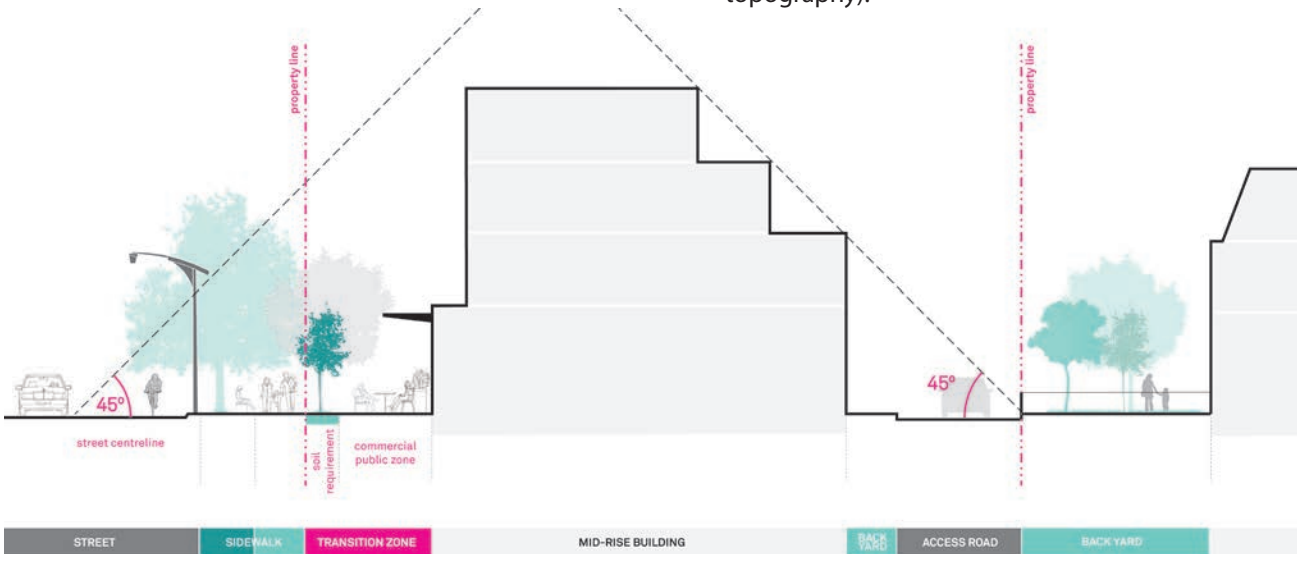
1. The front yard of a mid-rise building that has residential uses at-grade should generally be built 6 metres from the front property line.
2. The front yard of a mid-rise building that contains commercial uses at-grade may be built a minimum of 3 metres from the front property line.
3. The side yard setback for a mid-rise building should be a minimum of 3 metres to encourage a porous connection between the front and rear yards of new development.
4. The exterior side yard setback for a mid-rise building should be a minimum of 3 or 6 metres to match the front yard setback of residential or commercial uses to create a unified street treatment that wraps the corner of the site.
5. The rear yard setback for a mid-rise building should be a minimum of 7.5 metres to protect for

Mid-rise buildings should incorporate stepbacks to reduce overall massing

Required angular plane for mid-rise buildings along rear property line, transitioning development to stable neighbourhood

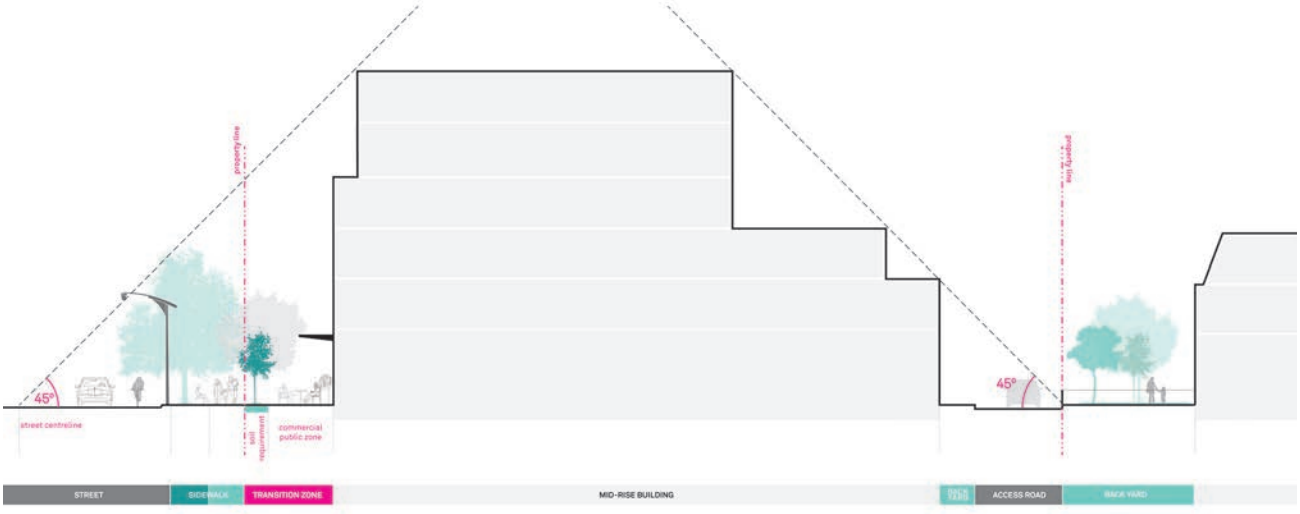
appropriate rear yard transition or access roads where appropriate.

6. Mid-rise buildings should incorporate a stepback of a minimum of 1.5 metres between the fourth and fifth floors to ensure the appropriate scale and massing of the building and to secure usable patio space. Stepbacks must relate to the existing context, planned use of adjacent properties, and consider transitioning uses.
7. Where buildings are taller than four storeys, the length of mid-rise buildings should not exceed 75 metres to reduce impacts such as shadowing (OP Policy 8.8.1 v).
8. Inform building design by existing and planned neighbourhood context, including significant architectural datum lines or cornices.
9. Mid-rise buildings should define street edges and face onto public parks or accessible open spaces.
10. Buildings should use the existing natural grade and be designed to complement adjacent developments where possible.
11. Where grade transitions must occur they should be integrated into the landscape design of the site.
12. Where identified, all building frontages that face a main street should be designed as active frontages with significant windows and building entrances.
13. Where buildings are located on a site with variable topography, stair and/or ramp access should be provided at the established street grade where required. Landscaped landings are required after a run of 5 stairs. The overall height from the sidewalk to building entrance or door sill should not exceed 1.5 metres (to ensure that development appropriately responds to and integrates site topography).




Mid-rise developments should have sensitive transitions between the public and private realm, including landscaping, seating elements, commercial spillover areas, and 45 degree angular planes where appropriate.

14. Balconies should be included within the building envelope and should not project over sidewalks to reduce building massing and shadowing and overlook on the pedestrian realm.
15. In areas where built form will abut natural areas, ensure that development applies appropriate transitions to these areas that minimize the impact of development.
16. Where a mid-rise building is proposed to exceed the height of adjacent buildings, the City may require the new building to be stepped back, terraced or set back to reduce adverse impacts on adjacent properties and/or the streetscape.
17. When a mid-rise building site is transitioning to adjacent low density residential designations at the rear or side lot line (such as a low density residential designation, parks or natural areas) a 45 degree angular plane between uses should be used to ensure that the impacts of height, overlook and shadow are mitigated.
18. Mid-rise buildings located on a street corner may be subject to sight line triangles, which may impact building placement.
19. Mid-rise building footprints are to consider existing conditions, such as trees and grades. Such features should be embraced on the site as assets.




Mid-rise developments should have sensitive transitions between the public and private realm, including landscaping, seating elements, commercial spillover areas, and 45 degree angular planes where appropriate.

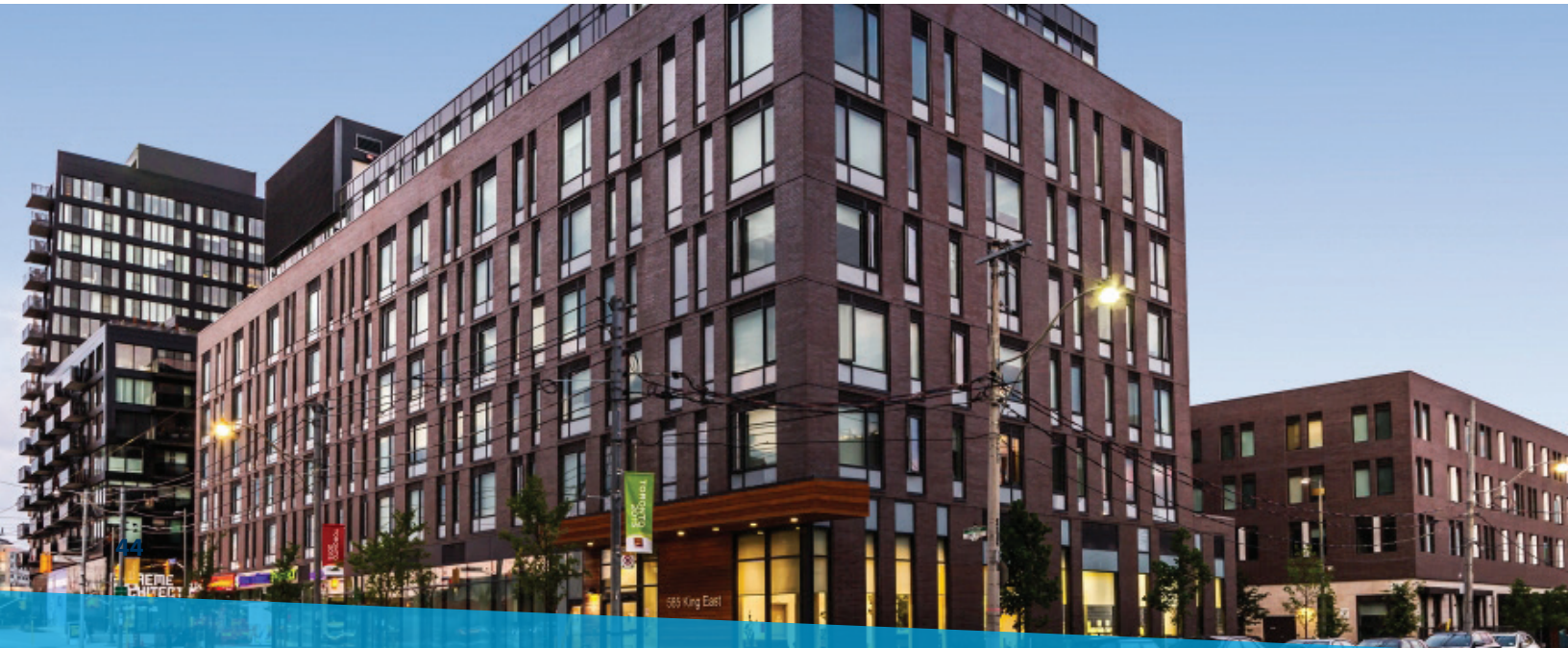
## 7.2 Ground Floor and Street Edge Design

**Objective:** To establish appropriate interfaces between mid-rise buildings and the public right-of-way, and complement the character and the role of the adjacent street. This area includes the transition zone, which can be either public or private property and provides a setback from the road right-of-way to the face of the building. The transition zone should be programmed according to land use, and can contain spillover retail spaces, signage and landscaping.

### Standards:

1. The base of mid-rise buildings should be articulated through design elements such as front doors, front yards, canopies, overhangs, patios, and a rhythm of shop fronts (OP Policy 8.6.1).
2. Where appropriate, a building's first storey shall generally be taller in height to encourage flexibility of use over time. A minimum ground floor height of 4.5 metres is recommended where there is not an existing established street wall. Where an existing street wall has a positive overall character, the ground floor height of the new development should aim to complement the existing conditions (OP Policy 8.6.10).
3. Where a mid-rise building features retail at grade, the base should feature significant glazing, landscaping features, appropriate signage and retail spillover spaces for patios, seating or shop displays.
4. Where a mid-rise building features residential uses at grade, the base should feature significant semi private front yards which include, steps, landscaping, and seating where appropriate.

Example of Mixed-Use Mid-Rise Building



5. Primary entrances to the base of mid-rise buildings must be barrier free and provide sufficient clearance for pedestrian walkways.
6. Where mid-rise buildings include townhouse units at grade, they shall follow the relevant guidelines for Townhouse units in Section 8.0.
7. Pedestrian access shall be provided to the principal entrance from the public realm (i.e. a municipal sidewalk or public park) (OP Policy 8.8.1 (iii).
8. Where buildings front onto a public street and are greater than 30 metres in length, building entrances should be located at regular intervals (OP Policy 8.8.1 (iv).
9. Mid-rise buildings should employ 'bird-friendly' design. Designs should avoid the use of untreated reflective glass and reduce light pollution in the night sky. The use of visual markers on design surfaces (i.e. fritted glass, fenestration patterns) is strongly encouraged.

Brick, stone and glass create visual diversity on the primary building elevation

### 7.3 Articulation, Façade Design and Materials

**Objective:** To encourage architectural diversity in building design through material use and horizontal and vertical articulation of the façade (OP Policy 8.5.1).

#### Standards:

1. A range of materials for façade design are encouraged to promote visual diversity in texture and colour, reflecting varied built form materials used within Guelph, including brick and stone.
2. Architectural variation within development blocks is encouraged to reduce sameness in design. Design components should be complementary within the development as a whole.
3. Façades should feature designs that emphasize both horizontal and vertical elements including windows, projections, recesses and canopies (OP Policy 8.6.1).
4. All buildings should be finished with prominently natural and durable materials such as stone and brick. Generally, replica materials such as pre-cast concrete panels made to look like stone or brick are not recommended within the first 3 storeys of a building within signature areas, i.e. along Gordon Street and within the older built-up area.
5. Primary building elevations (those that interact with a main street frontage) should feature a high-quality of design, and may include canopy structures and arcades.
6. Secondary building elevations (those that do not face a public street) should complement the primary building façade through a similar level of design.
7. Recessed or partially recessed balconies should be required to be integrated into the building design and massing to create a cohesive, high quality design.

Articulation of the facade through varied materials and window treatment

# 8.0 Townhouses

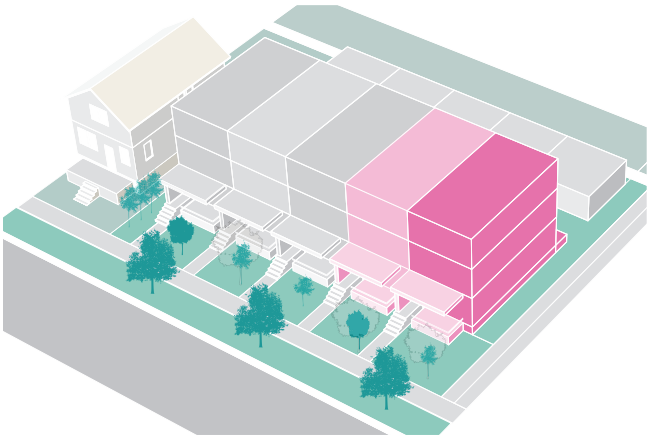
The following Design Principles relate specifically to the vision for townhouses.

Townhouses should:

- Contribute to creating visual interest and diversity in the built environment. However, new buildings within older, established areas of the City are encouraged to be designed to complement the visual character and architectural design elements found in these areas;
- Offer direct access to outdoor spaces and amenities;
- Site buildings with a consistent setback to provide human-scaled streets, including the provision of appropriate setbacks to streets and separation distances between townhouse groupings;
- Establish clear requirements within landscaped setbacks that promote the conditions for mature tree growth;
- Consist of frontages lined with street trees and connected sidewalks; and
- Locate and design garages and parking to minimize visual impacts on the streetscape through parking below-grade or along rear lanes, wider townhouse units and well-considered at-grade parking areas.
- Look at opportunities to provide accessible townhouse units.

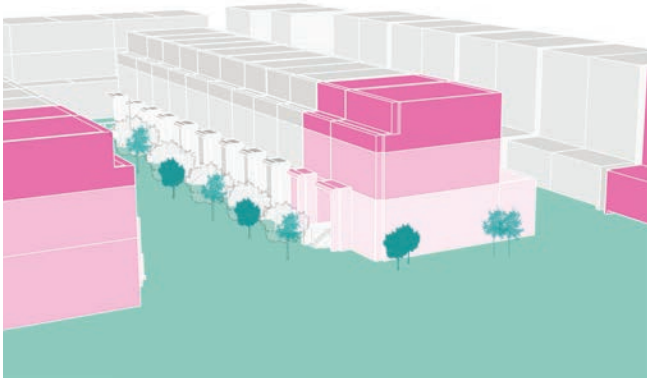
The townhouse typologies within this document include the following:

### STANDARD TOWNHOUSE



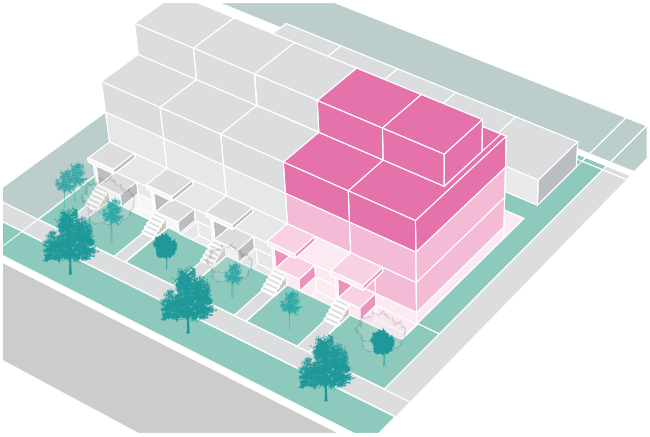
A building that is divided vertically into 3 or more separate dwelling units and includes a row house.

### CLUSTER TOWNHOUSE



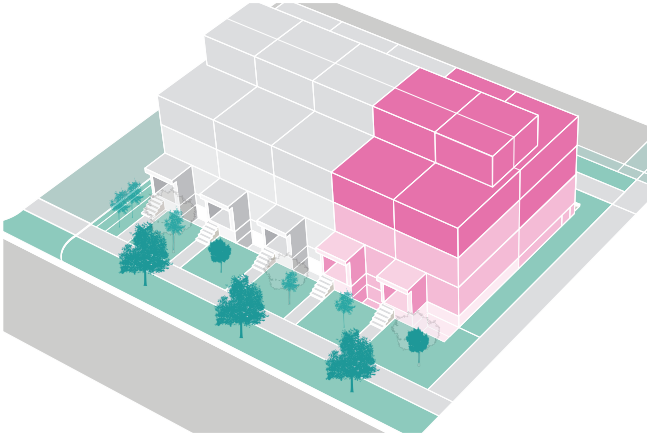
A townhouse situated on a lot where at least 1 dwelling unit does not have legal frontage on a public street.

### STACKED TOWNHOUSE



A building where townhouses share a side wall and have vertically stacked dwelling units.

### STACKED BACK-TO-BACK TOWNHOUSE



A building containing 2 or more townhouses that share a rear wall and side wall and have vertically stacked dwelling units. Units can feature various organizational structures. Each unit typically features their own at-grade entrance.

## 8.1 Building Massing, Scale and Transitions

**Objective:** Building massing and scale refers to the size, shape and form of a building. Transition refers to how a building responds to the adjacent land uses or built form to mitigate negative impacts such as excessive shadowing, wind and lack of privacy. Townhouses should provide appropriate transitions to other buildings, low-rise neighbourhoods, cultural and natural heritage, parks and open spaces, and other sensitive uses. This may be done through considerations given to building orientation, setbacks, stepbacks, angular plane, relationship to grade, and land uses.

### Standards:

1. New on-street townhouse developments with attached garages should have a minimum front yard setback of 6 metres (to ensure adequate driveway depth for one visitor car parking space). Developments with rear yard garages should have a minimum front yard setback of 5 metres.
2. Stacked townhouse developments with attached garages should have a minimum front yard setback of 6 metres.
3. Back-to-back townhouse developments with attached garages should have a minimum front yard setback of 6 metres to ensure that there is sufficient space at the front of the building to accommodate exterior stairs for unit access.
4. Front yard setbacks on infill sites should match the existing residential front yard setbacks.
5. On-street and off-street townhouses should have a minimum side yard setback of 1.5 metres to provide residents with access between the front and rear yard.
6. On-street and off-street townhouses should have a minimum exterior side yard setback of 4.5 metres to allow for mature tree planting along the sides of the building to frame the street.


Townhouse developments should have sensitive transitions between the public and private realm, including landscaping features and seating where appropriate

7. On-street and off-street townhouses should have a minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres to ensure adequate rear yard space.
8. Townhouse blocks adjacent to the street should not exceed 8 units to encourage permeability throughout the community. Back-to-back and stacked townhouse blocks should not exceed 48 metres in length.
9. Townhouses should have a minimum separation distance of 9 metres where a rear yard of one townhouse is adjacent to a side yard of another.
10. The rear separation distance between any two cluster, stacked, or back-to-back townhouse blocks, should be a minimum of 15 metres to allow for walkways, landscaping, and services, and to allow for sunlight access and privacy for individual units.
11. Townhouses should use the existing natural grade and be designed to complement adjacent developments where possible.
12. Where townhouse blocks are located on a site with variable topography, after a run of 5 stairs, landscaped landings are should be integrated into the front yard design. The overall height from the sidewalk to building entrance or door sill should not exceed 1.5 metres (to ensure that development appropriately responds to and integrates site topography).
13. Where grade transitions must occur they should be integrated into the landscape design of the site.
14. In areas where built form will abut natural areas, ensure that development applies appropriate transitions to these areas that minimize the impact of development.
15. Retaining walls should be limited to a maximum of 0.6 metres to avoid railing requirements.
16. Townhouse blocks are to consider existing trees and grades. Such features should be embraced on the site as assets.

Designing built form and stairs on sites with variable topography

## 8.2 Ground Floor and Street Edge Design

**Objective:** To establish appropriate interfaces between townhouses and the public right-of-way or adjacent uses, and complement the character and the role of the adjacent street. This area includes the transition zone, which can be either public or private property and provides a setback from the road right-of-way to the face of the building. The transition zone should be programmed according to land use, and can contain landscaping and seating. As outlined in the Official Plan, this area should also incorporate features such as prominent entrances and front porches to encourage social interaction and allow for views along the street.

### General Standards:

1. On-street townhouse units with an integrated front garage should be a minimum of 6 metres wide to ensure that 50% of the front facade contains windows and doors are facing the street.
2. Townhouses without an integrated garage (detached garage, rear yard) may be reduced to a minimum of 5.5 metres in width.
3. Back-to-back townhouses with integrated front garages should be a minimum of 7 metres wide to accommodate for potential access stairs, garage doors, space for utilities, and space for venting. 50% of the facade should contain windows and doors facing the street.
4. Where it can be demonstrated that soft landscaping and tree planting requirements can be met with a narrower townhouse unit frontage, this can be considered.

Cluster townhouse development with internal landscaped walkway

5. Main building entrances should face the street. On corner units, the main building entrances should face the higher order street. Corner units should also address both streets with a side elevation that includes windows and details consist with the front elevation.
6. Main dwelling unit doors should be on the same level or storey (a maximum of 1.2 metres) as the garage level to avoid long runs of stairs.
7. Garages should not project further than the main building.
8. To promote a positive relationship between buildings and the street it is recommended that the sill of the grade related front door be no higher than 1.2 metres above the height of the sidewalk, unless there are topographical changes on the site. In such cases, an average of 1.2 metres to a maximum of 1.5 metres is appropriate.
9. Lower level units that are accessed from the front of buildings should not overly impact the character of the street or have an overwhelming appearance of stairs to lower level terraces.
10. Porches and stairs are permitted to encroach up to 2.5 metres into the front setback.
11. Ensure that the at-grade frontage is articulated through material use, landscaping and other design elements.

Example of On-Street Townhouses

### 8.3 Articulation, Façade Design and Materials

**Objective:** To encourage architectural diversity in building design through material use and horizontal and vertical articulation of the façade.

Standards:

1. A range of high-quality materials for façade design are encouraged to promote visual diversity in texture and colour, reflecting varied built form materials used within Guelph, including brick and stone. The use of large areas of vinyl and EIFS are strongly discouraged.
2. Architectural variation within development blocks is encouraged to reduce sameness in design. Design components should be complementary within the development as a whole.
3. Diversity between individual townhouse units is recommended to promote variety and visual interest.
4. Façades should feature designs that emphasize a variety between units and highlight the building elements including windows, projections, recesses and canopies.
5. Primary building elevations (those that contain the principal building entrance) should feature a high level of façade articulation.
6. Secondary building elevations (those that do not feature the principal building entrance) should complement the primary building façade through a similar level of design.
7. Townhouses located on corner sites should be designed to have 2 primary facades with an equal level of articulation on each street oriented façade.
8. Mechanical equipment such as air conditioner units are strongly discouraged within balconies.

Brick (Left) and Smooth Ashlar (Right)

# 9.0 Implementation

This section outlines strategies that the City of Guelph should consider in order to ensure the successful implementation of the Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses, including updates to the zoning by-law, urban design brief requirements, and appropriate review processes for this document.

## 9.1 Zoning By-Law Updates

The City of Guelph will undertake updates to the existing Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864 as part of the comprehensive zoning by-law review. Recommendations within this document will inform changes to existing zoning, but may be implemented incrementally after further studies or after modifications to the review and approvals process.

The standards identified in this document do not supersede the regulations of the existing or future Zoning By-law.

### Definition Updates

The following definitions reflect terminology used to inform the recommendations within the Built Form Standards. The introduction of new terminology and updates to existing terminology should be incorporated into the zoning by-law update.

#### 1. Common Amenity Area:

***Current Definition for Common Amenity Area (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** "Common Amenity Area" means an Amenity Area which is located inside or outside a Structure including open landscaped areas, Building rooftops, patios, terraces, above ground decks, swimming pools, tennis courts and the like.

***Proposed Definition:*** "Common Amenity Area" means an indoor or outdoor recreational or social space that is designed for the use of all residents or users of a development. Common Amenity Area must provide multiple functions, and must, at minimum, provide a meeting, gathering or play function. Common Outdoor Amenity Areas should provide comfortable, universally inclusive, and safe spaces for pedestrians with a range of active and passive programming.

### 2. Landscaped Open Space:

***Current Definition for Landscaped Open Space (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** *"Landscaped Open Space"* means the area of a *Lot* which is at grade and *Used* for the growth and maintenance of grass, flowers, trees, shrubbery, natural vegetation and indigenous species and other landscaping and includes any buffer strip, surfaced walk, surface patio, swimming pool or similar area, but does not include any access *Driveway*, ramp, *Parking Area* or any open space beneath, above or within any *Building* or *Structure*.

***Proposed Definition:*** *"Landscaped Open Space"* means the area of a *Lot Used* for the growth and maintenance of grass, flowers, trees, shrubbery, natural vegetation and native species and other landscaping and includes any buffer strip, surfaced walk, surface patio, green roof, swimming pool or similar area, but does not include any access *Driveway*, ramp, *Parking Area* or any open space beneath or within any *Building* or *Structure*. *"Landscaped Open Space"* must contribute towards stormwater management, tree canopy cover, and biodiversity.

### 3. Green Roof

***Current definition for Green Roof (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** There is not currently a definition for a Green Roof within Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864.

***Proposed Definition:*** A *"Green Roof"* means an extension of an above grade roof on top of a building structure, which allows vegetation to grow on top. Green Roofs may act as a Common Amenity Area while also providing a stormwater function and other environmental benefits.

### 4. Townhouse:

***Current definition for Townhouse (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** *"Townhouse"* means a *Building* that is divided vertically into 3 or more separate *Dwelling Units* and includes a row house.

***Proposed Definition:*** No change is proposed at this time.

### 5. Cluster Townhouse

***Current definition for Cluster Townhouse (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** *"Cluster Townhouse"* means a *Townhouse* situated on a *Lot* in such a way that at least 1 *Dwelling Unit* does not have legal frontage on a public *Street*.

***Proposed Definition:*** No change is proposed at this time.

### 5. Stacked Townhouse:

***Current Definition of Stacked Townhouse (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** *"Stacked Townhouse"* means 1 *Building* or *Structure* containing 2 *Townhouses* divided horizontally: one atop the other.

***Proposed Definition:*** *"Stacked Townhouse"* means a *Building* where *Townhouses* share a side wall and have vertically stacked *Dwelling Units*.

### 6. Stacked Back-to-Back Townhouse:

***Current Definition of Stacked Back-to-Back Townhouse (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** There is not currently a definition for Stacked Back-to-Back Townhouse within Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864.

***Proposed Definition:*** *"Stacked Back-to-Back Townhouse"* means a *Building* containing 2 or more *Townhouses* that share a rear wall and side wall and have vertically stacked *Dwelling Units*. Units can feature various organizational structures. Each unit typically features their own at-grade entrance.

### 7. Mixed Use Zone:

***Current Definition of Mixed Use Zone (Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864):*** There is not currently a definition for a Mixed Use Zone within Zoning By-Law (1995)-14864. A Mixed Use Zone should be established in the zoning by-law to help address the challenges presented by the City's Nodes and Corridors, and to help reinforce the stratification of uses, such as shared parking and amenities across properties.

***Proposed Definition:*** *"Mixed Use Zone"* means a zone that is composed of a range of commercial, residential and institutional uses. *"Mixed Use Zones"* may be implemented to support areas with higher-order or rapid transit.

## Policy Updates

The following tables outline key standards within the Guelph Built Form Standards for Mid-Rise Buildings and Townhouses. These recommendations should be evaluated against existing policies within the zoning by-law regulations where required.

| **BUILDING DESIGN** | | |
|---|---|---|
| CATEGORY | MID-RISE BUILDING STANDARDS | TOWNHOUSE STANDARDS |
| **Min. Front Yard Setback** | *With Residential Uses At-Grade*: 6m<br><br>*With Commercial Uses At-Grade:* 3m | *With Attached Garage:* 6m<br><br>With Rear Yard Garage: 5m |
| **Min. Side Yard Setback** | min. of 3 metres or the distance of one half of the building height. | *Standard:* 1.5m<br><br>*Cluster, Stacked or Back-To-Back:* 3m or a distance of one-half the building height |
| **Min. Exterior Side Yard Setback (Public and Private Street)** | 6m | 4.5m |
| **Min. Rear Yard Setback** | 7.5m | 7.5m<br><br>Back-to-backs: N/A |
| **Min. Stepback** | 1.5m between the fourth and fifth floors | N/A |
| **Max. Length** | 75m | *Adjacent to Street:* 8 units<br><br>Back-to-back or Stacked: 48m |
| **Min. Separation Distance** | N/A | *Where Rear Yard of One Townhouse is Adjacent to the Side Yard of Another:* 9m<br><br>*Rear Separation Distance for Cluster, Stacked or Back-to-Back:* 15m |
| **Angular Plane** | *When transitioning to adjacent low density residential designations at the rear or side lot line:* 45 degrees | N/A |
| **Min. Unit Width** | N/A | With Integrated Garage: 6m<br><br>Without Integrated Garage (Detached Garage, Rear Yard): 5.5m<br><br>Back-to-Backs with Integrated Front Garages: 7m |
| **Max. Porch/ Stair Encroachment** | N/A | Up to 2.5m into the front setback for townhouses and secondary suites |
| **Rooftop Mechanical Equipment Setback** | Rooftop mechanical equipment should be setback a minimum of 1.5 metres from the building mass and should fit within established angular planes for the property. | |

| SITE ACCESS & CIRCULATION | |
|---|---|
| CATEGORY | STANDARDS |
| **Min. Private Road Width** | 7m asphalt road plus pedestrian sidewalks, tree planting and on-street parking on either side, as required by municipality and informed by engineering and emergency service standards |
| **Max. Side Yard Parking Width** | 50% |
| **Townhouse Integrated Front Garage Width** | No wider than 50% of the width of the unit frontage |
| **Townhouse Max. Front Driveway Width** | 3m |
| **Townhouse Min. Front Driveway Depth** | 6m |

| PARKING | |
|---|---|
| CATEGORY | STANDARDS |
| **Setback for underground parking structures** | 0m |
| **Min. Vehicle Parking Requirements** | The reduction of vehicle parking spaces may be considered where buildings are located in a Node or Corridor, or within proximity to higher order transportation. |
| **Bicycle Parking Requirements** | Long term and short term bicycle parking should be provided for all developments. |

| COMMON AMENITY AREA | |
|---|---|
| CATEGORY | STANDARDS |
| **Min. Required Common Amenity Area** | Min. of 50% of the required Common Amenity Area shall be accessible at grade outside in one contiguous area. The width to depth proportion should not exceed 4:1. |
| **Required Common Amenity Area for Mid-Rise Buildings** | Where a mid-rise development has less than 20 units, a min. of 30m$^2$ per unit must be provided. For each additional unit, an additional 20m$^2$ should be provided per unit. |
| **Required Common Amenity Area for Cluster Townhouses** | Where a cluster townhouse development has more than 20 units, a min. of 5m$^2$ per unit must be provided as Common Amenity Area. |
| **Required Common Amenity Area for Stacked/ Back-to-Back Townhouses** | Where a stacked or back-to-back townhouse development has more than 20 units, a minimum of 10m$^2$ per unit must be provided as Common Amenity Area. |
| **Setback for Rooftop Common Amenity Area for Mid-Rise Buildings** | Rooftop Common Amenity Areas are permitted. Consider location and placement to ensure compatibility with adjacent properties. Rooftop amenity areas should have a minimum setback of 2 metres from the roof edge. |

| **LANDSCAPED OPEN SPACE** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CATEGORY | GENERAL STANDARDS | MID-RISE BUILDING STANDARDS | TOWNHOUSE STANDARDS |
| **Min. Total Landscaped Area (% Of Lot Area)** | N/A | 40% of the lot area | *For On-Street Townhouses*: 35% of the lot area<br><br>*For Cluster and Stacked Townhouses:* 40% of the lot area |
| **Min. Soft Landscaping Requirement** | 50% of total landscaped space must be covered by soft landscaping | *Where Townhouse Units Wrap Base Of Mid-Rise Buildings:* 50% of front yards should be soft landscaping<br><br>*Where Front Yard Area Contains Commercial Unit, Amenity Space, or Lobby At-Grade:* 15% of the front yard should consist of soft landscaping or urban tree plantings in tree trenches or soil cells | *For Townhouses Without a Front Yard Driveway:* min. 50% of the front yard should consist of soft landscaping. |
| **Green Roofs** | | May count up to a max. of 30% of total landscaped area requirement | |
| **Landscaped Buffer Strips, Required Components** | | Should consist of soft landscaping and 1 tree planted for every 12m of frontage | |
| **Landscaped Strip, Min Width** | Min. 3m wide around surface parking lots where there is a transition of land uses | N/A | N/A |

## 9.2 Urban Design Briefs

The Built Form Standards recommends the requirement for context plans as part of Urban Design Briefs for proposed developments. Context plans should accurately reflect the scale of design for the level of approval that is being sought after, i.e. Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-Law Amendment, Draft Plan of Subdivision, or Site Plan Approval. Context plans should be required as part of the Urban Design Brief for each of these stages within the development approvals process, and can be used by City staff to evaluate the compatibility of proposed municipal developments.

## 9.3 Next Steps

### Review and Consultation

This document should be reviewed every 5 years and updated in coordination with the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-Law. During this time, updates to the Built Form Standards should be informed by meaningful public consultation occurring throughout several points in the review process.

The document should be subject to City review, and staff should maintain an ongoing file recording deviations from the Built Form Standards and zoning by-law for proposed and approved developments. This information should be used to inform the quinquennial review.

In addition to the 5 year review, the City should provide regular community updates (i.e. set at a three year interval) to discuss the status of the Built Form Standards, including successes and challenges experienced since their implementation.

### Urban Design Awards

As recommended in the City's Urban Design Action Plan, the City should consider implementing city-wide urban design awards that specifically recognize successful mid-rise and townhouse projects that uphold the key recommendations of the Guelph Built Form Standards and Official Plan policy. This will allow for increased public awareness about the importance of the City's policy framework, and provide clear examples of how the standards should be implemented.