SECTION 03:

SITE CONTEXT

3.1 CONTEXTUAL INTEGRATION

New developments should respond to, and extend, key elements of the public realm through the design of the site by creating strong relationships with adjacent streets, land uses, buildings, and public spaces.

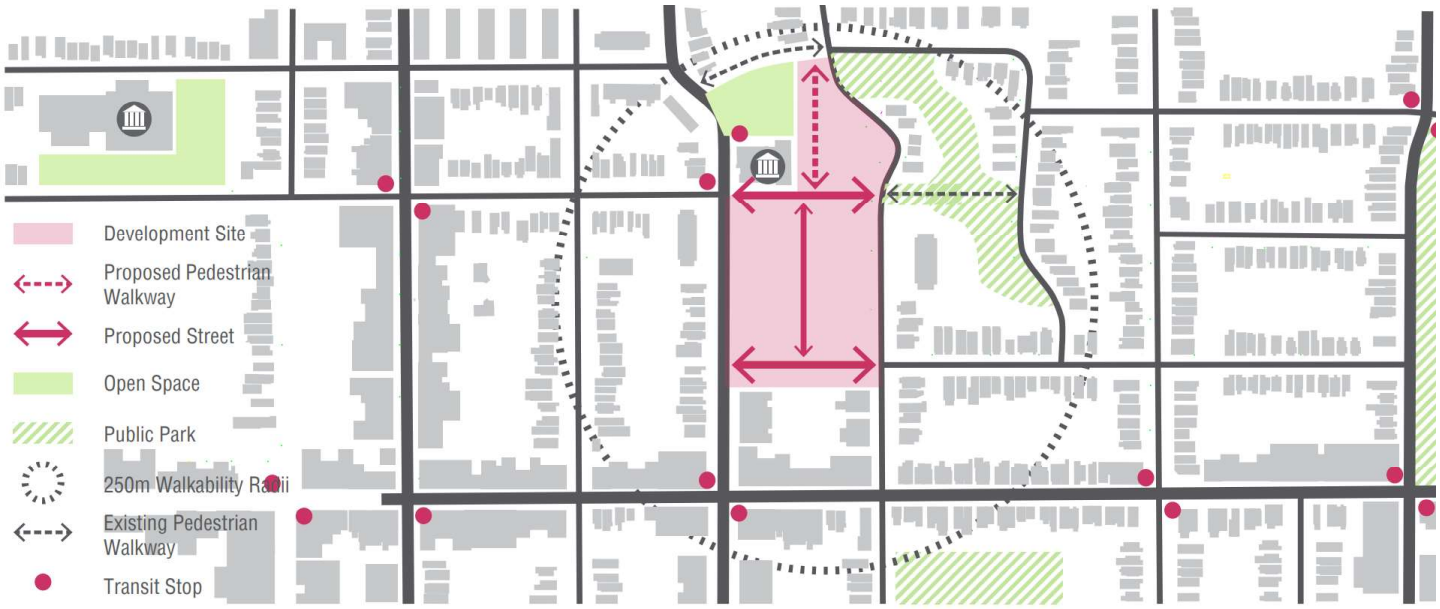
The guidelines contained in this section are intended to encourage new developments to consider and integrate with the adjacent context, connect urban and natural networks, enhance public access to services and amenities, and to create high quality neighbourhoods and communities.

Developments should provide a "walkable"context analysis, showing a development proposal in context, of a 250m and 450m "walkability" radii from the site, with considerations of:

- land use designations and zoning;
- major streets and blocks (patterns, size, location);
- Active transportation routes and connections;
- transit routes, stations, and stops (including distance to rapid transit nodes);
- open space networks (parks, open space, natural features);
- existing and planned built form types, footprints, setbacks, and building heights and massing;
- historic buildings and heritage properties, Heritage Conservation Districts;
- Area amenities and destinations (community centres,trails, libraries, schools, retail areas, etc.);
- topographical information (where significant).

Development proposals should illustrate through text and graphics how the design responds to context through the design of:

- size of blocks and arrangement of lots;
- location, size, and organization of streets,
- laneways, sidewalks, transit stops, and other pedestrian or cycling routes;
- location and size of open spaces;
- integration of heritage properties, important or identified views;
- existing and planned building footprints;
- ground floor uses, setback patterns, and general location of building entrances, street trees and site circulation/servicing on adjacent sites and blocks;
- existing and planned building heights, to demonstrate how the proposed development relates to surrounding buildings, particularly within the same block and across streets and open spaces.



Example Context Analysis. Credit: City of Toronto

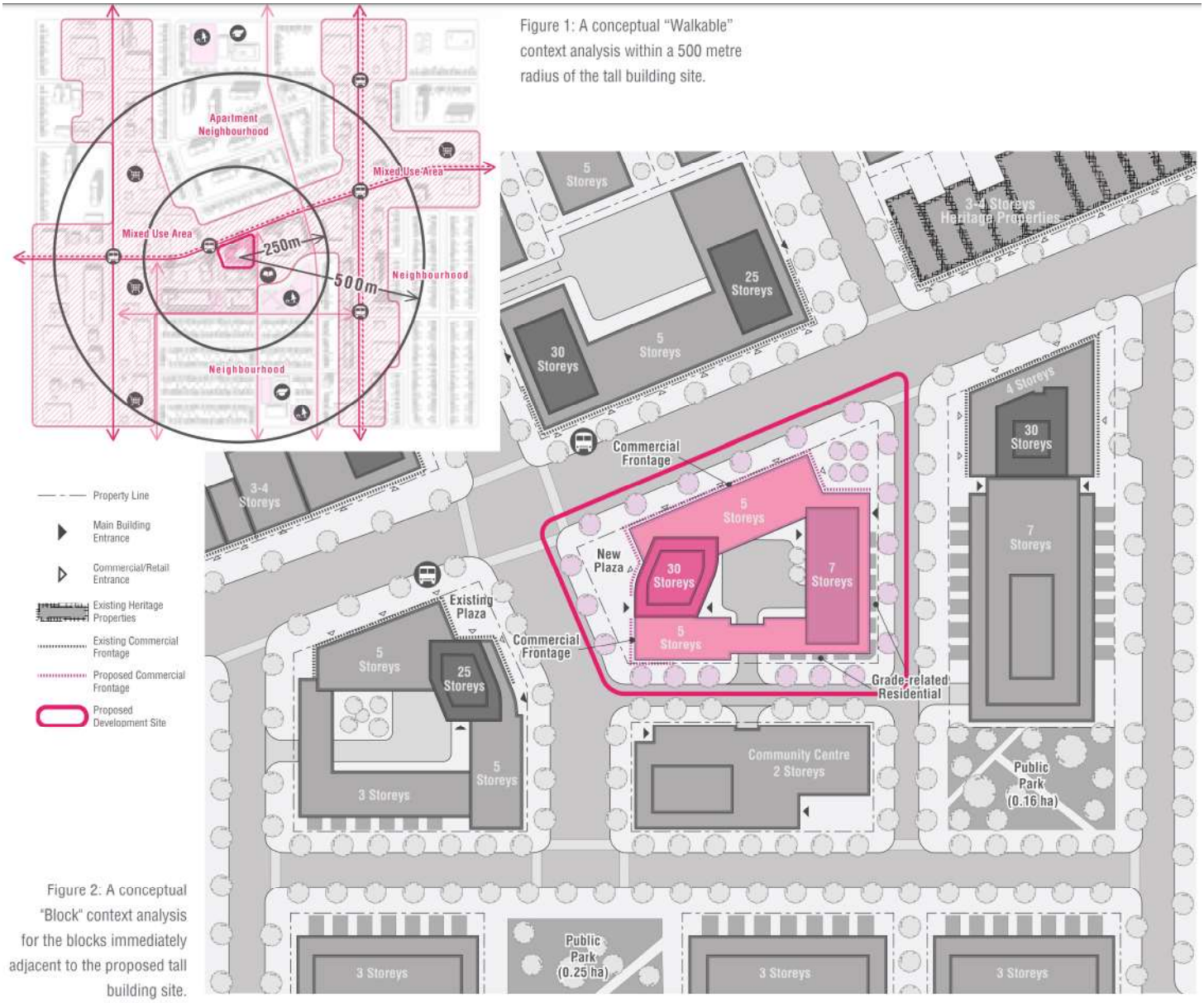
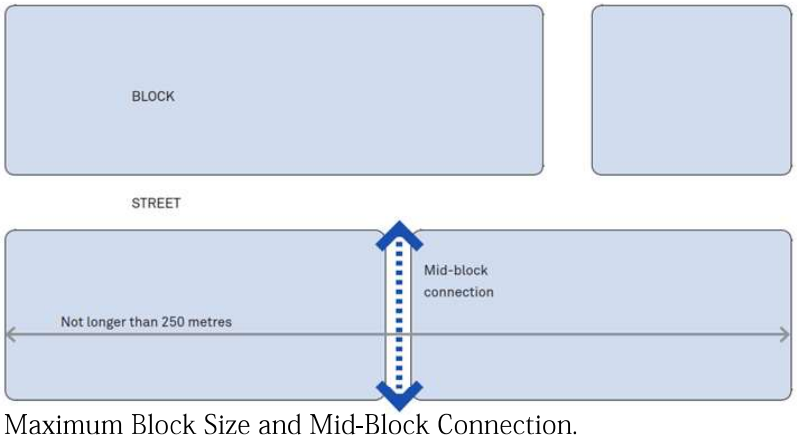


Figure 1: A conceptual "Walkable" context analysis within a 500 metre radius of the tall building site.

Figure 2: A conceptual "Block" context analysis for the blocks immediately adjacent to the proposed tall building site.

Example Context (inset) and "Block" Analysis. Credit: City of Toronto.



Maximum Block Size and Mid-Block Connection.


Pedestrian Mid-Block Connection with Public Art and Storm Water Management.
Credit: Vulcan Real Estate

3.1.1 Streets and Blocks

Design Intent: To provide a compact and walkable street and block network. The network should increase neighbourhood access, permeability and number of intersections to give more options for routes of travel to pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles through a connected and continuous grid-like street network.

Guidelines:

1. Design internal circulation patterns (streets, sidewalks, pathways) to be integrated with, and connected to, the existing and planned future public street, bicycle and/or pedestrian network.

2. Design block layouts to allow building fronts to face other building fronts (and backyards to face backyards).

4. Block lengths should generally not exceed 250 metres in length, or 100 metres in depth.

5. Where blocks exceed 150 metres in length, a mid-block pedestrian connection should be provided, which can take the form of a walkway, parkette, or other semi-public open space.

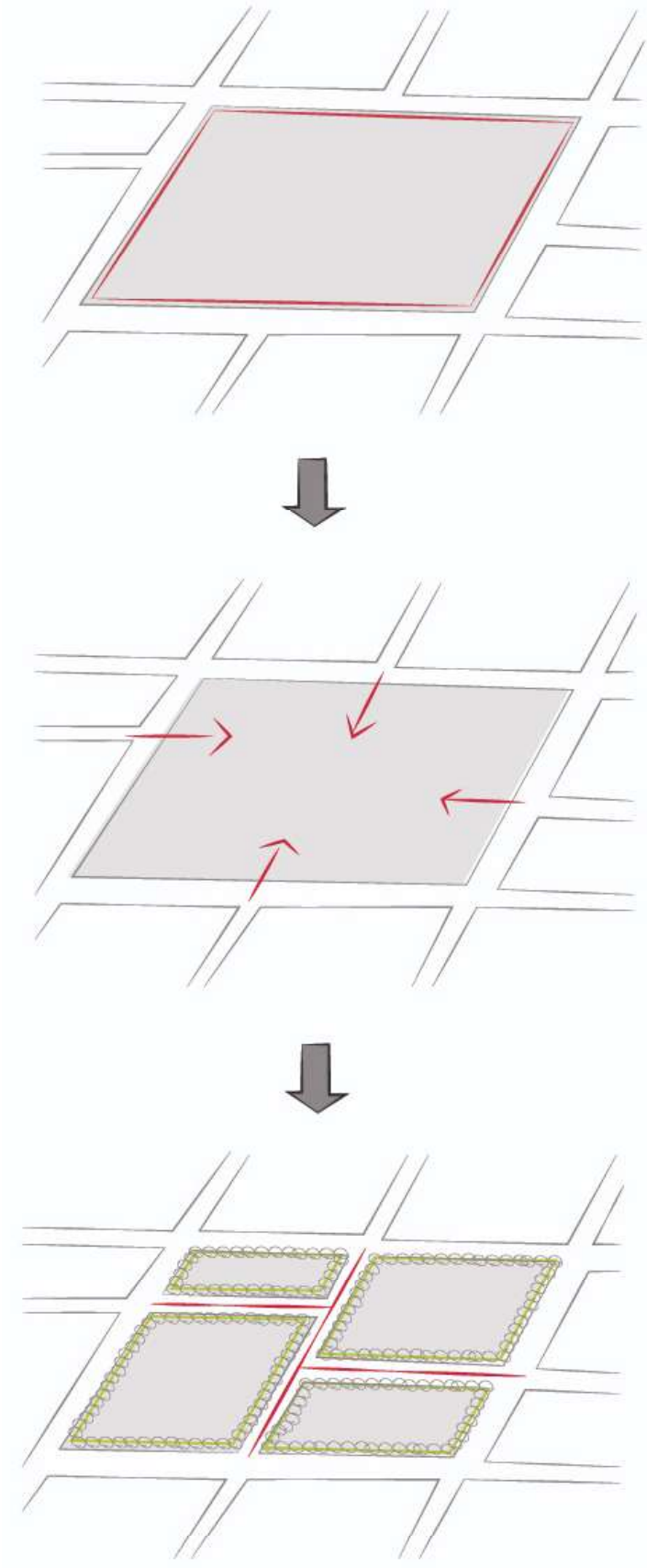
6. Mid-block connections should be a minimum of 15 metres when adjacent buildings have windows. When adjacent buildings have no windows facing a shared property line, mid-block connections should be a minimum of 6 metres wide. Smaller mid-block connections may be considered within infill developments, where it has been demonstrated that minimums cannot be met.

7. Facilitate the creation of new connections to existing and future development, mid-block spaces, and green linkages, particularly where larger block sizes are proposed.

8. Avoid cul-de-sacs. Where they are unavoidable, minimize their size and consider pedestrian and cyclist connections to the surrounding pedestrian and open space networks.

9. Private streets should be designed to similar standards as public streets by providing vegetated landscape zones, a sidewalk on one side of the road (at minimum), and on-street parking, where feasible.

10. Incorporate easy-to-maintain traffic calming features, such as narrower travel lanes, on-street parking bays and curb extensions, textured materials, crosswalks and street tree plantings.



Principles for breaking down a large block into compact and walkable development parcels that are integrated with existing contextual urban fabric. Credit: City of Kelowna



Credit: Image TBD

3.1.2 Lot Size and Variety

Design Intent: to encourage and provide a variety of building types within a neighbourhood on appropriately sized lots that respond to adjacent street types, planned land uses, and requisite zoning standards (i.e. setbacks, landscape and amenity areas, parking etc.). To encourage land consolidations for redevelopments, where appropriate.

Guidelines:

1. In plans of subdivision, lot shapes should be simple and regular, where possible, to maximize development efficiency. Exceptions may be considered in order to address issues of slope, existing property boundaries, or density requirements.

2. In plans of subdivision, protect the natural grading and topography of the site, to the greatest extent possible.

3. Where shallow lots exist, consider opportunities for consolidation and/or opportunities to share access and servicing infrastructure.

4. Ensure that lot sizes and orientations protect for natural light, frame key views and reinforce existing and future connections to the surrounding neighbourhood.

5. Where rear lots are unavoidable, plan lots to have shared vehicular access. Ensure that dedicated pedestrian access into the lots is provided and delineated using unique materials, colours, and/or textured pavers.



A well-framed view corridor to a significant building. Credit: TBD

3.1.3 Views and Landmarks

Design Intent: to retain key landmarks and views towards them, and enhance them with public access, and complementary high-quality building and landscape design.

Guidelines:

1. Retain or create views of important landmarks or features from public streets and spaces.

2. Views to adjacent natural features, public art, parks and open spaces or other amenities should be enhanced with public access and landscape design.

3. Where buildings frame view corridors, the frontages of buildings facing the corridor should be programmed with active uses to frame and enliven the street.

4. Sites that terminate key view corridors should be designed to incorporate signature art or architectural treatments or building elements.

5. Consider topography and elevation to identify locations for new view termini or locations from which views can be created.

6. Changes in grade over a lot should be used to maximize views to and from buildings and create landmarks that are uniquely integrated into the landscape and existing topography.

7. Consider appropriate transitions for buildings adjacent to heritage structures to allow for views of the building from the public realm.



A neighbourhood gateway. Credit: TBD

3.1.4 Gateways

Design Intent: to ensure that new development occuring at points of arrival into the City, and/or into specific neighbourhoods or districts, provide high-quality architecture and landscape design that clearly marks points of arrival and celebrates characteristics of those areas.

Guidelines:

1. Gateways should include enhanced landscaping in the streetscape and on private property, incorporate public art and enhanced building design to create recognizable “landmarks”.

2. Buildings with high quality design and active ground floor uses should support gateway identities by prominently addressing streets and open spaces including taller corner elements, double height entrance areas, and large expanses of glazing.

3. Commuter rail corridor entrances serve as potential gateway locations, and any development along the tracks should be designed to minimize their visual impacts.

4. On public roads, blank walls visible from parks and open spaces should be minimized as much as possible.



Credit: Hub Cycling

3.1.5 Transit-Supportive Design

Design Intent: to direct urban growth to areas that are well-served by transit and promote access to sustainable mobility options to more people. As a result of increased transit access, transit-supportive development can make transit projects more viable by increasing ridership. Transit-supportive communities provide destinations for riders from other areas, which also attracts more riders generally to the system promote greater modal splits by ensuring easy and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists to transit facilities.

Guidelines:

1. Trails and bicycle routes should link to existing and planned transit facilities.

2. Provide secure bicycle parking and storage, where appropriate.

3. Provide good pedestrian, cycling, and vehicular connections to transit facilities, existing and proposed community amenities and services, including local shops, community facilities, and open space.

4. Roundabouts in intensification areas are strongly discouraged; consider other intersection designs which prioritize safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists.

5. Design street layouts to be compact and easy to navigate.

6. Design the pedestrian network to be safe and accessible for everyone:
   - Apply the principles of CPTED and Universal Design when designing streets, mid-block connections, and off-road pathways;
   - Limit fences to 1.2 metres in height along pedestrian walkways and open spaces, for passive surveillance between the public realm and adjacent land uses;
   - Ensure proper visibility for all road users is maintained at intersections; and,
   - Ensure public spaces are sufficiently well-lit at a pedestrian scale.



Development adjacent to waterfront with public access to natural heritage features.

3.1.6 Development Adjacent to Natural Heritage

Design Intent: to protect, enhance and provide ecological resources to the city and region by considering the sensitivity of the natural area to inform appropriate transitions, vegetation protection zones and site organization and layout.

Guidelines:

1. Create public access and views to the Natural Heritage Network through the appropriate placement of roads, buildings and infrastructure, while ensuring minimal impact to the Natural Heritage Network.

2. Where possible, locate trails, public parks and open spaces with or adjacent to the Natural Heritage Network to create connections, public uses and support passive recreation. When amenity spaces are required, these must be provided in addition to passive recreation areas and buffer zones.

3. Locate single loaded roads along the edge of the Natural Heritage Network, where feasible.

4. Avoid rear yard back lotting of residential units onto the Natural Heritage Network.

5. Control private access to Natural Heritage Network by incorporating boundary fencing, where trails are not permitted.

6. Integrate active transportation networks to connect directly from public streets, bicycle lanes and sidewalks to trail networks in the Natural Heritage Network, where appropriate.

7. Organize site elements so that view corridors at ground level into natural heritage features are maintained or created. These view corridors may include pedestrian connections to provide access, if appropriate.

8. Building location, height and orientation should take advantage of views to the Natural Heritage Network for upper-level units.

9. Ensure that appropriate vegetation protection zones (in conformance with conservation authority requirements) are included between sensitive natural heritage features and buildings or other site elements.

10. Vegetation protection zones areas should extend the natural landscape character of adjacent features further into the site.

11. Integrate Low-Impact Development measures at site edges to filter and clean stormwater run-off before it enters natural heritage areas.

12. Consider the movements of wildlife between natural areas to provide corridors and connect natural areas.

13. Avoid fragmenting the Natural Heritage Network with roads and infrastructure, where possible.

14. Site organization should promote the creation of trails within the natural heritage feature vegetation protection zone and outside of the natural features where possible.

15. In most conditions, natural heritage areas should maintain a public frontage that is appropriately scaled to the size of the development and the opportunities for public access and amenities. A fully accessible natural heritage area should be a prominent feature at the street edge. However, protected non-accessible natural heritage areas should be buffered by vegetative protection zones.



Development adjacent to a Park. Credit: TBD

3.1.7 Development Adjacent to Parks

Design Intent: to create an effective transition between public and private space while prioritizing access to public spaces, providing eyes on public spaces, and protecting maximum sun exposure at key times of the day and year.

Guidelines:

1. Buildings should face parks with an active frontages and ground floor uses, ensuring public access to public parks is prioritized.

2. Buildings fronting onto parks should provide a clear transition between public and private space through signage and landscape, while ensuring that public access to park spaces is prioritized. This may include a public street or pathway, or design cues like a low wall, shrubs or tree planting.

3. Buildings fronting onto a park should be oriented to address and frame park spaces, with primary entrances, front yards and significant glazing on the park-facing facade. Rear yard back-lotting is discouraged.

4. On sites larger than one regular block, direct connections to parks that are visible from public streets should be provided.

5. Parking should not be located between a park and adjacent buildings.

6. Buildings should be massed to maintain maximum sun exposure onto active park spaces, like playing fields.

7. Retaining walls and/or any other structures such as planters, fences and seating walls located within the proposed development block should be designed with a minimum setback from the edge of the property line to protect from future maintenance and replacement and to consider requirements for routine maintenance and operations such as snow clearing and mowing.

8. Where multiple building access points are located along a park frontage, an active transportation pathway should be designed within a servicing access block (i.e. not considered parkland). The servicing access block shall address private access, lighting, landscaping, stormwater requirements, low

impact development, or any other servicing required for the development block and shall be designed in consultation with City staff. The minimum width of the servicing access block should be 6m. The pathway designed within this block shall be a minimum of 2m wide. The design of the pathway within the servicing access block may vary from site to site to adequately respond to the design context.

Bird Friendly Design

9. Building façades should be designed to be "bird-friendly" by:
   - Treat all exterior glazing (e.g., acid-etched glass, attractive bird-safe window decals) within the first 12 m of the building above grade or to the top of the existing mature tree canopy, whichever is greater.
   - Reducing the amount of glass in the building design.
   - Reducing the amount of exterior lighting.
   - Avoiding the creation of "fly-through" conditions in the building design (e.g. glass tunnels or walkways, outdoor railings and/or free-standing architectural elements etc.).
   - Incorporating recessed balconies, awnings, exterior screens, sunshades, and other building elements to give birds visual cues to avoid collisions.

Development Adjacent to Trails

The City of Barrie's multi-use trail system connects residents to the Natural Heritage Network and provides space for recreation and active lifestyles within a naturalized environment. Development adjacent to trails should provide appropriate connections to enhance the use and character of the trail.

10. Prioritize public access to existing trails that connect to the natural heritage system. Development bordering a trail network should provide clearly visible and accessible entrances to the trails.

11. Provide safe crossings wherever multi-use trails intersect with the road network with adequate signaling and changes in colour or materials to indicate priority crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.

12. Trailheads should have a strong presence in the proposed neighbourhood.

13. Where trails are proposed immediately adjacent to the proposed development, adequate buffers should be created with enough space to promote the growth of a mature tree canopy.

14. Development should provide key connections to community trails as identified in the Transportation Master Plan

15. Where required, private development should allow for public easements to ensure trail connectivity.

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