



POLICY CONTEXT

TERMINAL/NICOL CORRIDOR STREETScape PROJECT (TNCSP)

Introduction

Developing an effective streetscape plan requires understanding the surrounding land use, both in terms of the current conditions and policy direction. The 'Complete Streets' approach uses a three-part formula to identify street types; two of the three components used relate to the land use and urban design.

Under this typology, streets are classified as either 'Street Oriented' (e.g. more oriented to pedestrians and cyclists than cars), or 'Non-Street Oriented' (e.g. primarily designed to serve vehicular traffic). For example, Terminal Avenue is Non-Street Oriented whereas Commercial Street is Street Oriented.

The second component in determining street type is the predominant adjacent land use under the current zoning; typical designations include 'Residential,' 'Industrial' or 'Institutional.' The third component is the functional road classification (e.g. 'Local Road' or 'Arterial'). Using this system, Terminal Avenue can be classified as 'Non-Street Oriented Commercial Highway' and Nicol Street can be classified as 'Non-Street Oriented Commercial/Residential Highway.'

Section 1 of this report provides a snapshot of the existing land use conditions in the Study Area and highlights potential site constraints. Section 2 focuses on the relevant land use plans and policies developed by the City of Nanaimo over the past fifteen years.



Figure 1: Study Area

Section 1 – Existing Conditions

Under [Zoning Bylaw No. 4500](#) (2011), the portion of Terminal Avenue located in the Study Area is zoned 'Terminal Avenue' (DT4). The purpose of the DT4 zone is to "provide for predominately mixed office and retail area with three to six storey street wall related buildings intended to support the unique role as a gateway into the downtown core" (Part 11, Page 1). All regulations relevant to the DT4 zone, including Permitted Uses, setbacks and height restrictions, can be found in [Part 11 of the Zoning Bylaw](#).

The portion of Nicol Street adjoining Terminal Avenue is zoned 'Gateway' (DT12); the intent of the DT12 zone is to provide for a mixture of uses and active street frontages which recognize the areas role as an entrance gateway into Nanaimo's downtown core. The regulations pertaining to the DT12 zone are also found in [Part 11 of the Zoning Bylaw](#).

The zoning along Nicol Street changes between Farquhar Street and Pine Street from Downtown to predominantly [Single Dwelling Residential](#) (R1). There are five parcels along Nicol in the Study Area zoned as Residential Corridor (COR1). The intent and regulations of the COR1 zone can be found in [Part 9 of the Zoning Bylaw](#). There is one parcel along Nicol zoned Community Service One (CS1), the Samaritan House located at 355 Nicol Street.

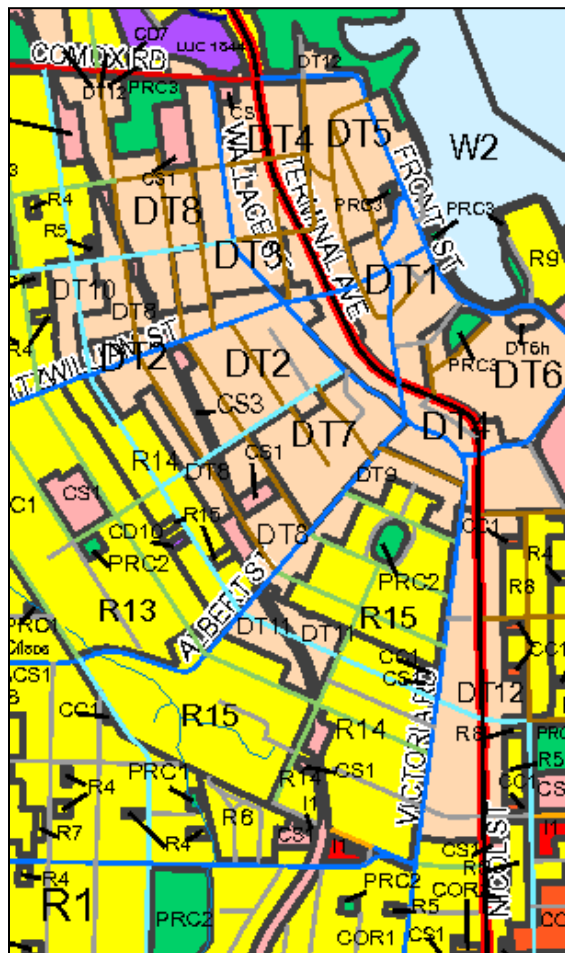


Figure 2: Current Zoning (Terminal/Nicol)

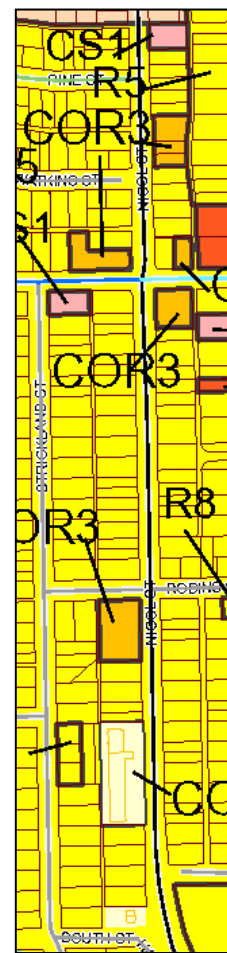


Figure 3: Current Zoning (Nicol)

Archeological Sites

The Province of British Columbia provides the City with information on sites of potential archeological significance based on historic land uses by First Nations. The precise location of these sites cannot be disclosed in public documents due to concerns about site security; however, it can be shared that there are three potential sites of archeological significance located near the intersection of Comox Road and Terminal Avenue, within the Study Area. City staff will ensure that any future streetscape plans are in full compliance with all provincial and federal regulations as they relate to such sites.

Coal Mines

A significant portion of Nicol Street has been built over shallow coal mines. According to the available information, the recorded undermining begins between Crace Street and Finlayson Street and continues past South Street. The presence of underground mines does have the potential to impact roadworks, as was the case several years ago when an open space resulting from subsidence was discovered under the road Pine Street and Victoria Road. The City and the Ministry of Energy and Mines are working together to better identify the areas of the City with the greatest potential for subsidence, which may include portions of Nicol Street within the Study Area.

Heritage Buildings and Structures

Two structures within the Study Area were identified in the City's 1998 Heritage Inventory, these are shown below in Figures 4 and 5. Buildings and structures listed in the Heritage Inventory require a Heritage Alteration Permit for renovation, subdivision or demolition. All buildings not in the Heritage Inventory but located within the Heritage Conservation Area (HCA1), as shown on the next page in Figure 6, are required to get a Development Permit prior to development or subdivision but do not need a Heritage Alteration Permit. The policies applicable to obtaining a Heritage Alteration Permit or Development Permit have been included in 'Attachment One – HCA1 Policies'.

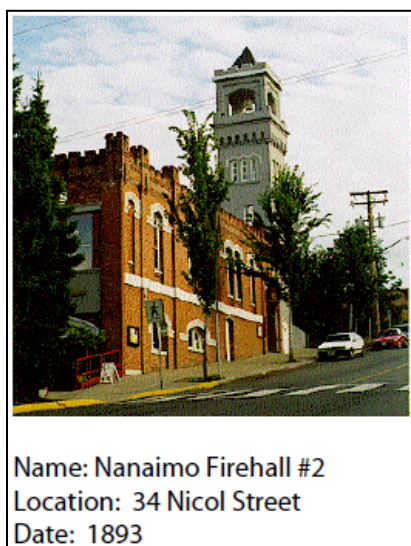


Figure 4: Heritage Building
(34 Nicol Street)

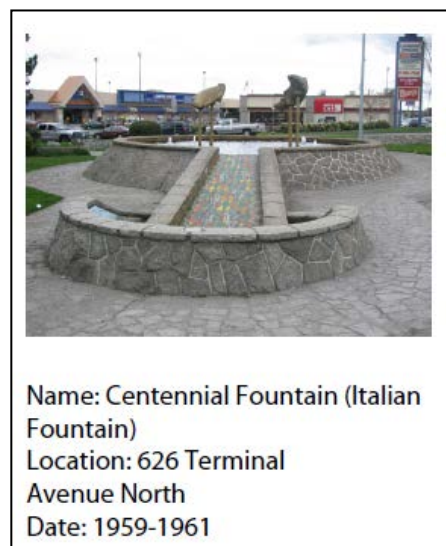


Figure 5: Heritage Structure
(Italian Fountain)

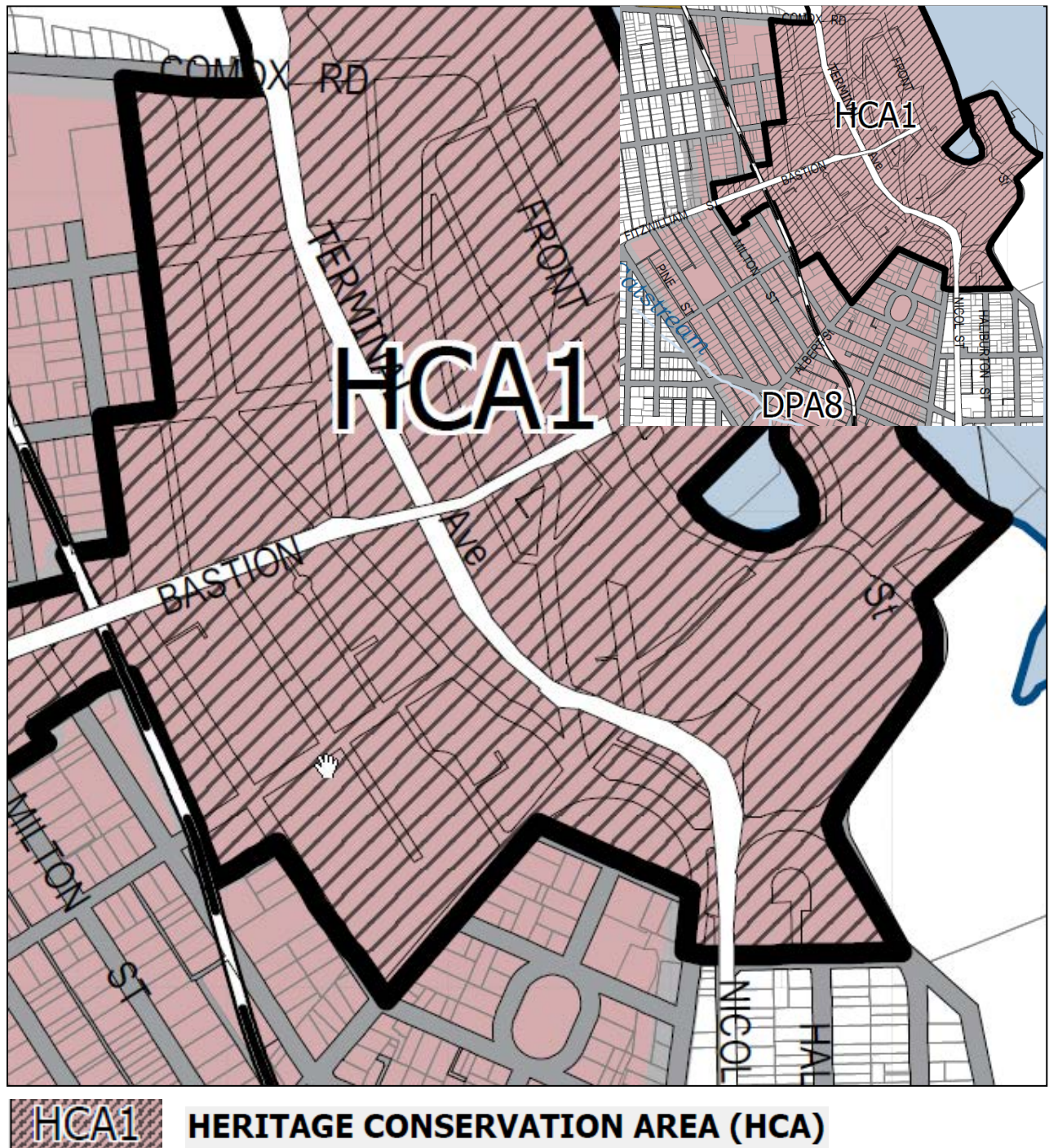


Figure 6: Heritage Conservation Area

Section 2 – Policy Framework

There are four planning documents relevant to the Study Area: Nanaimo's Official Community Plan, the South End Neighbourhood Plan, the Downtown Plan Reference Document and the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines.



1. [Official Community Plan](#) and [Future Land Use Map](#) (2008)

PlanNanaimo, the City's Official Community Plan (OCP), designates the Future Land Use in the Study area as "Urban Node" along Terminal Avenue and along Nicol Street until just past Farquhar Street.

The purpose of the Downtown Centre Urban Node is to "provide a city-wide regional centre for arts and culture, celebrations and festivals, commercial services, civic facilities, government and professional offices, and higher density residential uses" (OCP, Page 34). Policies applicable to the Downtown Centre Urban Node designation are included in 'Attachment 2 – Downtown Urban Node Policies'.

Between Farquhar Street and Pine Street, the Future Land Use designation of the properties located along Nicol Street changes to "Corridor." Development in Corridor areas is be characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, professional, and service uses with residential developed at medium to high densities. The policies applicable to the Corridor designation can be found in 'Attachment 3 – OCP Corridor Policies'.



2. South End Neighbourhood Plan (2010)

According to the South End Neighbourhood Plan (SENP), Nicol Street is to be developed as a “vibrant, urban, pedestrian friendly mixed use street” (SENP, Page 41). This vision is reflected in the Neighbourhood Plan designation for the street, which mirrors the Future Land Use designations in the OCP. Nicol Street is designated “Urban Node” up to south of Farquhar Street, after which the SENP designation changes to “Corridor – Mixed Use”, as shown in Figure 8. The Building Design Guidelines for the Urban Node and Mixed Use Corridor areas are included as ‘Attachment 4 – SENP Building Design’.

Details on the existing conditions along Nicol Street and guidelines for future streetscape initiatives, such as the cross-section shown in Figure 8, are included as ‘Attachment 5 – SENP Nicol Street Guidelines.’ A visual example of how the proposed guidelines might look as a cross-section is provided below in Figure 9.

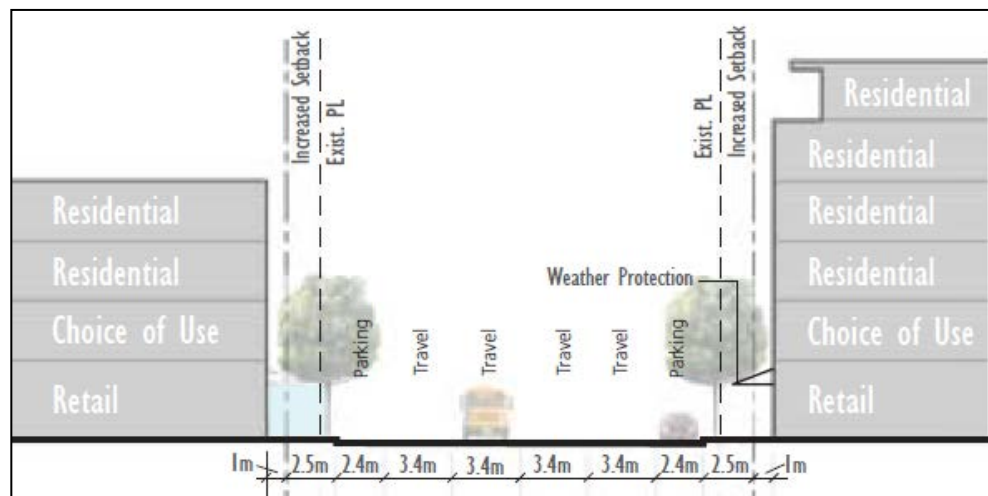


Figure 9: Nicol Street Proposed Section

Figure 8: Neighbourhood Plan Designations

4. Nanaimo Downtown Plan Reference Document (2002)

The Downtown Plan Reference Document (DPRD) aimed to set broad policy direction for the downtown core without providing specific detail on design. The DPRD singles out two districts within the Study Area, the Terminal Parkway (Figure 10) and the South Gate (Figure 11). The DPRD also provides policy direction on transportation priorities for the downtown, listed as 1) creating a quality pedestrian environment; 2) implementing neighbourhood-specific improvements to traffic and pedestrian flow; and 3) creating a bicycle friendly downtown. Details on the transportation priorities, Terminal Avenue and South Gate sections of the DPRD are included in 'Attachment 6 – Downtown Reference Documents.'

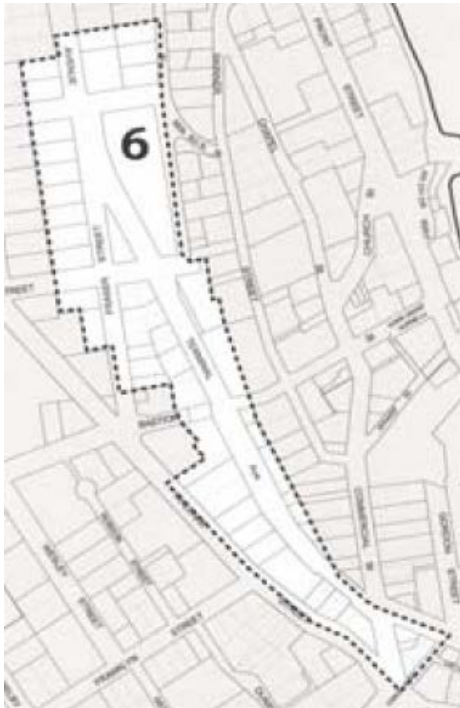


Figure 10: Terminal Parkway

The DPRD calls for the development of a “special Gateway experience” where Terminal Avenue intersects with Nicol Street, though the Plan leaves open how this might be accomplished (e.g. significant buildings, urban square, etc.)

The DPRD vision for Terminal Avenue included a major tree planting program that would turn the artery into a greenway. The Plan proposes preparing a design plan and implementation strategy that would convert Terminal Avenue into an attractive urban greenway environment and encourage medium rise, terraced and mixed use development along its edges.

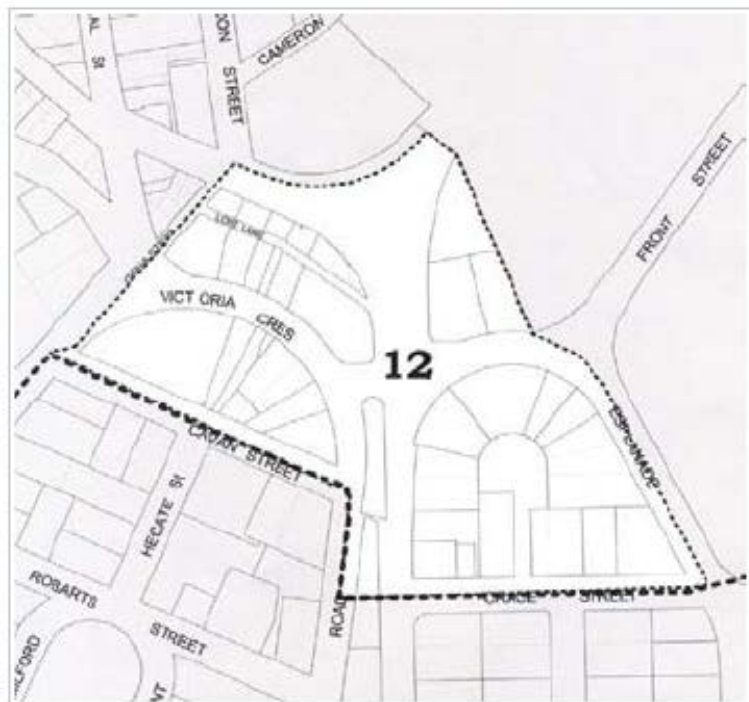


Figure 11: South Gate

4. Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines (2008)

The Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines (DUDP) offer a greater level of detail than the Downtown Plan Reference Document, but the two documents are consistent in tone and direction. Both call for the creation of a gateway at the Terminal/Nicol intersection, as shown below in Figure 12. The DPDP suggests that a water feature or sculpture might be placed at the intersection. More details on this are included in 'Attachment 7 – Downtown Design Guidelines.'

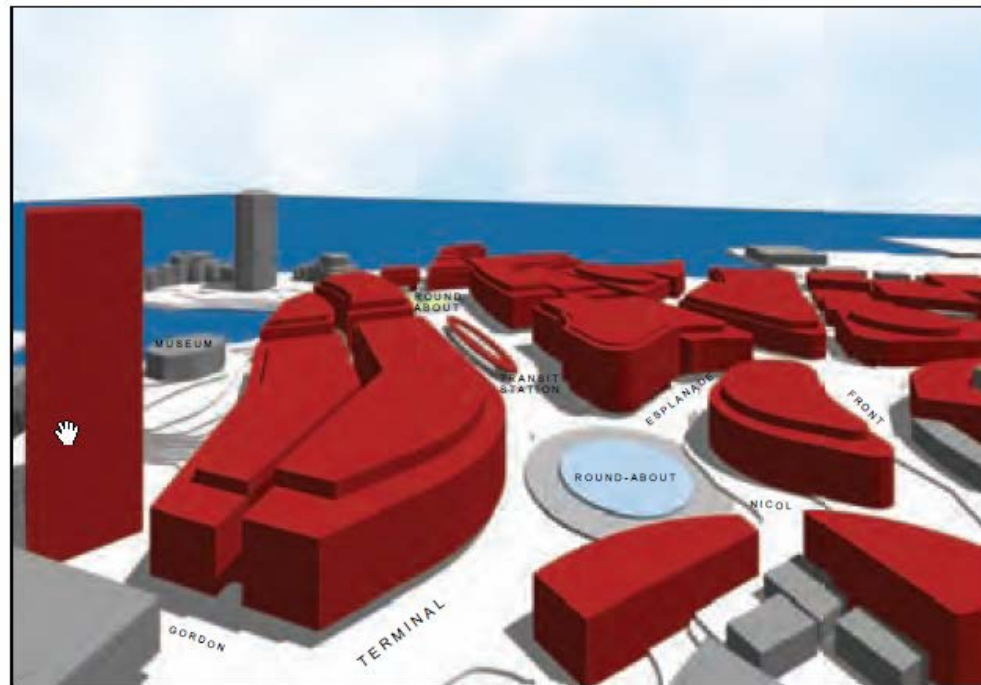
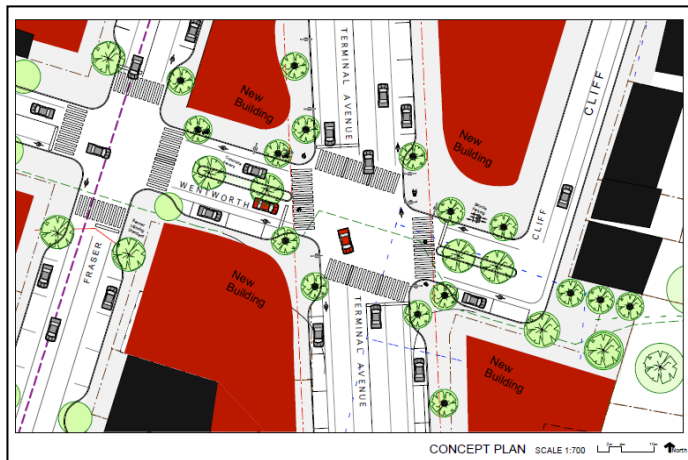


Figure 12: Proposed Gateway Feature

The DUDP offers a number of specific design guidelines for the South Gate and Terminal Avenue – Green Street, including landscape buffers, underground parking and a double lane roundabout at the intersection of Terminal Avenue and Nicol Street.



The relevant sections of the DUDP pertaining to these areas are also included in Attachment 7.

Figure 13: Concept Landscape Plan for Terminal Avenue

7.5 Heritage Conservation Areas



Under the authority granted by the Local Government Act, as an implementation tool to realize the goals and policies outlined in the Plan, the City of Nanaimo has established the Downtown/Fitzwilliam Street Corridor Heritage Conservation Area (HCA1).

Downtown / Fitzwilliam Street Corridor (HCA 1)

Category

Section 970.1 and s.971 of the Local Government Act.

Justification

Nanaimo's Downtown and the Fitzwilliam Street Corridor are the city's most significant concentrations of commercial historic resources. These areas reflect the historical development patterns of the city's growth and correspond to its earliest settled areas, centred on the harbour and the Old City Neighbourhood. Moreover, these areas reflect the prominent role played by the city's early merchant community in the economic, political and social growth of both the City of Nanaimo and the emerging province of British Columbia.

In addition to the significant building stock of the area, other characteristics combine to give Nanaimo's Downtown its unique flavour including its unusual radial street pattern, the distinctive small scale and proportions of the buildings, the relationship of the buildings to the street, the unbroken street facade of Commercial Street and Victoria Crescent, facade detailing and the use of materials, particularly brick and historically sensitive paint colours.

The benefits of the revitalization of Downtown and Fitzwilliam Street through the restoration of the area's heritage building stock in the 1980s, with assistance from the Heritage Area Revitalization Program (HARP) and Downtown Revitalization Program, continue to be realized today. Properly managed this legacy of historic buildings will continue to make a contribution to the overall image of the city as well as to the economic and tourism potential of the Downtown area.

7.5 Heritage Conservation Areas Cont.

The Downtown

One of the oldest cities in the province (the third to be incorporated), Nanaimo had its beginnings along the waterfront. In 1853, two French-Canadian labourers constructed the town's bastion. While it has moved twice over the years, the structure remains today as the city's oldest standing man-made landmark. The coal industry was the engine behind Nanaimo's early growth. Downtown developed through the late 1800s adjacent to the city's cluster of early mines strung along the waterfront.

Many historic buildings survive in the Downtown and stand as stylistic representatives of this area's historic pattern of development, including brick-faced commercial buildings from Nanaimo's Victorian era, the monumental Romanesque styling of the Court House at the turn of the century, a dramatic Greek revival building from the boom years preceding the First World War, traditional two-storey buildings of the Edwardian era typical of buildings built just after the First World War, a striking Art Deco structure unusual for its date of construction during the Second World War and the simple form of the International Style at its vogue in the 1950s.

Fitzwilliam Street Corridor

The arrival of the E & N Railway spawned a vital commercial area on Fitzwilliam and Selby Streets in the vicinity of the railway and down toward the historic city centre. It was natural that retail businesses would locate in this area to take advantage of the business opportunities proximity to the train station provided. The oldest remaining building in the area is the Occidental Hotel, opened in 1887. The typical building form along Fitzwilliam Street is small in scale and two storey with a commercial storefront and apartments above.

Heritage Alteration Permit Areas

To help streamline the development approval process, those buildings identified in the City's 1998 heritage inventory, The Heritage Resources of Nanaimo, that are located within the boundaries of HCA1 have been listed in Table 5. Owners of listed buildings are required to first obtain a Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) prior to the following conditions as specified in Section 971 of the Local Government Act:

- 1 Subdivision of land within the area;
- 2 Beginning the construction of a building or structure or an addition to an existing building or structure within the area;





- 3 Alteration of a building or structure or land within the area (including building demolition); and
- 4 Alteration of a feature that is a legally protected heritage property.

Buildings currently falling under the existing DPA9 and not listed as having heritage significance but also located within the boundaries of HCA1, while not required to obtain a heritage alteration permit prior to development or subdivision, are still required to obtain a development permit as application to redevelop these buildings remains subject to the requirements of DPA9.

Objectives

To ensure continuity and preservation of the heritage resources.

To achieve design control of alterations to existing buildings and new infill buildings to conserve heritage value.

To enhance and extend the historic transportation corridor of the Downtown HARP area.

To allow for the development of the Front Street and Fitzwilliam Street corridors as transportation “gateways” to the Downtown core.

Guidelines

Heritage alteration permits issued in HCA1 will follow *Nanaimo Heritage Building Design Guidelines*, 1984 and the *Heritage Gateway Design Guidelines*, 1988. Development Permits issued in this area for buildings not listed in the City’s HCA1 designation, will follow *City of Nanaimo Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines*, 2008, and which form a part of the Plan.

Policies

Downtown Centre Urban Node

- 1 The Downtown Centre Urban Node is the primary Urban Node in the city. The downtown shall remain the civic heart of Nanaimo, and be a welcoming place for residents to work, live, and visit.
- 2 A variety of housing forms shall be encouraged to meet changing demographics and a mix of income levels; variety shall also be encouraged in the forms of commercial and professional uses, and parkland and open space.
- 3 Residential densities of >150 units per hectare in high rise building forms shall be supported for the Downtown Centre Urban Node. Medium density residential development within a 50 to 150 units per hectare range is also supported.
- 4 Municipal, provincial and federal governments are encouraged to maintain a strong presence Downtown.
- 5 The Downtown's role in tourism shall be strengthened through cooperation with local businesses and associations and the development of services that support tourism.
- 6 The identity of Downtown Nanaimo will continue to develop around a strong "arts and culture" theme that encourages activities that showcase Nanaimo's evolution as a cultural capital. The Nanaimo Cultural Strategy provides further policy for cultural development in the Downtown.
- 7 The continued development of unique and interesting commercial and service uses Downtown shall be supported by this Plan.
- 8 Public gathering places shall be provided in a diversity of plazas and open spaces, welcoming residents and visitors alike.
- 9 Transit, bike routes, and pedestrian friendly routes will be developed to reduce automobile dependency Downtown.
- 10 Public safety will be promoted through sensible design and community based policing methods.
- 11 Future social and community services will be distributed among the Urban Nodes and Corridors identified in this Plan to best meet the needs of residents and the target populations, and will not necessarily be concentrated in Downtown.



2.1 Urban Nodes Cont.



- 12 Ecological features, such as steep slopes, watercourses, riparian areas, significant trees, and environmentally sensitive lands are recognized as attributes and development shall proceed only where the impacts on these features are minimized and can be mitigated.
- 13 Energy efficient building design and practice will be promoted. Green Building strategies will be encouraged for all commercial, professional, or institutional facilities to reduce the use and waste of water and energy resources and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 14 The Nanaimo Downtown Plan is the Area Plan for Downtown and will be used as the guiding document for the Downtown. In addition, planNanaimo supports the implementation of the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines.

Woodgrove Urban Node

- 15 Development form will support the function of the Woodgrove Urban Node as the northern regional centre for commercial and personal service facilities.
- 16 Residential densities of >150 units per hectare in high rise building forms shall be supported for the Woodgrove Urban Node. Medium density residential development within a 50 to 150 units per hectare range is also supported.
- 17 Higher density residential housing that meets changing demographics and a variety of income levels shall be encouraged within the Woodgrove Urban Node; the relationship of new higher density housing developments with surrounding land uses shall be carefully reviewed to ensure that the mix and intensity of land uses remains compatible.
- 18 Free standing retail warehouses or large box retailers will be permitted in the Woodgrove Urban Node. Large box retailers are retail stores that have a gross floor area of approximately 50,000 ft² (4645 m²) or more, generate high volumes of shopping traffic, require extensive parking and service a regional market.
- 19 New development or redevelopment that mixes land uses is encouraged for the Woodgrove Urban Node.
- 20 New development or redevelopment of the lands within the Woodgrove Urban Node shall provide for the safe, efficient, and effective travel for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers through the development of a transit exchange and clearly defined paths and trails for bikes and walkers.

2.2 Corridors and Commercial Centres



Corridors are the urban arterials and major collector roads that bisect Nanaimo, and are the linear focal areas for higher levels of residential densities, services, and amenities. While these corridors were originally intended to expedite vehicle travel through the city, planNanaimo supports a broader approach where the Corridors evolve with new multiple uses.

Commercial services in mixed use developments will be encouraged to concentrate along Corridors, together with new multi-unit residential developments and public amenities. The overall design of corridors will support the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit with aesthetic characteristics that contribute to a vibrant economy and street life. The development of the Corridors will benefit the city by linking Urban Nodes with energetic and human scale connectors to other Urban Nodes and Neighbourhoods. It is intended that each Corridor will build on the unique characteristics of the surrounding Urban Nodes and Neighbourhoods, and will contain an individualized mix of uses and services.

Within Corridors, Commercial Centres are existing concentrations of commercial uses distributed across the city. These Commercial Centres are generally characterized by the provision of retail services as a stand alone format, but may also contain a significant component of surrounding residential, amenity, and public uses.

Uses within the Commercial Centres include small scale local shopping providing for the day to day needs of local residents (Commercial Centres - Neighbourhood) and city-wide shopping that meets the needs of a larger trade area (Commercial Centres - City). Concentrations of higher density residential development often accompany these centres. Future residential development surrounding Commercial Centres is encouraged. Ultimately, it is the objective of this Plan that these Commercial Centres will more fully develop with a range of commercial, recreational, residential, community, and transportation services.

Objectives

To support higher intensity land uses in Corridors.
planNanaimo supports the focus of medium to high density residential, mixed use commercial / residential, and office land uses in Corridors.

To increase residential densities and the mix of land uses.
Opportunities to increase the mix and intensity of uses along Corridors will be supported through development and redevelopment opportunities.

To encourage sensitivity in the form of residential densities.
Corridors shall be the future focus of mid to high residential densities that recognize a human scale and pedestrian oriented form of development.

To provide public places and spaces. Each Corridor shall contain or provide access to public places and spaces appropriate to the mix of uses and range of services available in each Corridor.

To encourage sustainability in transit and other alternative modes of transportation. The primary role of Corridors for automobiles shall be expanded to recognize Corridors as the linkage between Urban Nodes and Neighbourhoods for transit routes and as opportunities for walking and cycling.

To protect the environment. Environmental features such as watercourses or habitat areas within these medium density, medium intensity land use centres shall be protected through the development of policies that respect the environment and the integration of land uses, and new uses shall be considered against their impact on air, water, and land quality.

To reduce consumption. Whenever possible, new and existing development will implement measures to reduce consumption through increased recycling, decreased water use, the use of alternative energy sources, or other innovative techniques and practices.

Policies

- 1 Development in Corridors will be characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, professional, and service uses, with residential developed at medium to high level densities. Residential densities of 50 to 150 units per hectare in two to six storey building forms shall be supported for Corridors.
- 2 Uses in Commercial Centres will include community services and facilities, and personal service, commercial and retail facilities. Local service, institutional (including schools) and higher density residential uses shall also be supported in the Commercial Centres designation.
- 3 For Commercial Centres – City, residential densities of >150 units per hectare in high rise building forms is permitted. For Commercial Centres – Neighbourhood, residential densities of 50 to 150 units per hectare in two to six storey building forms is permitted.
- 4 Stand alone commercial services shall be supported in the Commercial Centres designations. Higher density stand alone residential uses shall be supported in both Corridors and Commercial Centres.



2.2 Corridors and Commercial Centres Cont.



- 5 Commercial services within mixed use developments shall be supported in the Corridors designation. In mixed use developments, ground floor uses will be retail, office, or community uses that invite public activity. Residential and/or professional uses will be encouraged in upper storeys.
- 6 Public parks and open spaces in the form of urban plazas, community gardens, and landscaped boulevards and open spaces are encouraged in Corridors.
- 7 The importance of Corridors as connectors between Urban Nodes and Neighbourhoods is recognized in this Plan. The development of these connections for the safe movement of pedestrians, cyclists and transit shall be a priority in any new development proposal.
- 8 The redevelopment of any Corridors to improve automobile travel shall also consider improvements that add to the human scale of the corridor, increase the proportion of landscaping and green space, and improve safety for non-motorized travelers. Sidewalk and landscaping design will enhance pedestrian and vehicle separation.
- 9 The development of primary parking areas between the front face of the buildings and the street in Corridors is not permitted.
- 10 Development in the Corridor designation will address the interface between Corridors and Neighbourhoods. Design elements of building siting, height and massing (including stepped back upper floors) will be used to ensure a transition from the Corridor to the adjacent Neighbourhood scale.
- 11 Ecological features, such as steep slopes, watercourses, riparian areas, significant trees, and environmentally sensitive lands are recognized as attributes and development shall proceed only where the impacts on these features are minimized and can be mitigated.
- 12 Energy efficient building design and practice will be promoted. Green Building strategies will be encouraged for all commercial, professional, or institutional facilities to reduce the use and waste of water and energy resources and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 13 Future social and community services appropriate to the mix of land uses and demographics both within and surrounding the node shall be encouraged to locate within Corridors. This Plan supports the development of Corridors with a broad social mix and access to adequate housing at all income levels.
- 14 Area Plans, including urban design guidelines, shall be developed for Stewart Avenue and Third Street Corridors within the timeframe of this Plan. The Bowen Corridor, the Northfield Corridor, and other corridor designations will likely require Area Plans beyond the timeframe of this Plan.

6.2.2 Building Design Guidelines

a. Urban Node (Mixed Use up to 6 Storeys)

The form and character of well-designed, mixed-use streets contribute to a cohesive neighbourhood identity and provides a rich and varied pedestrian environment. These Design Guidelines consider mixed-use buildings with commercial use on the ground floor and commercial and residential use above.

Building Massing

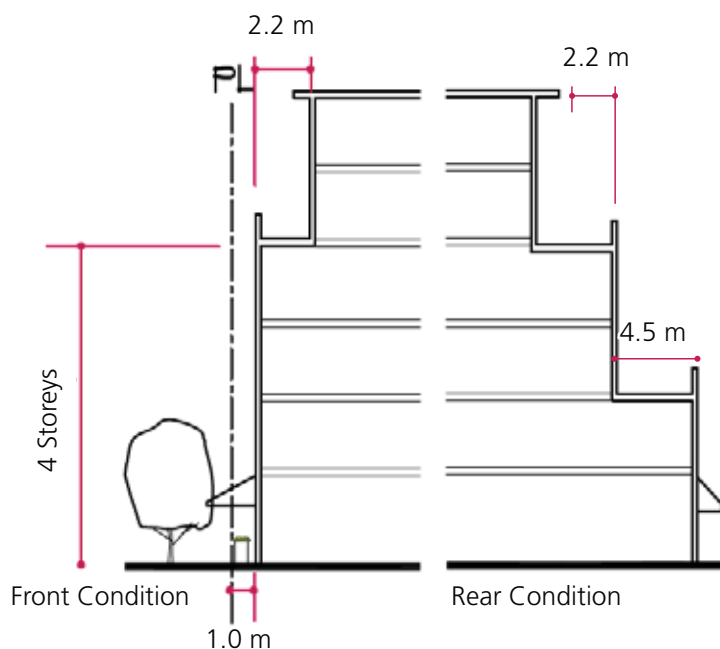
- Maintaining a minimum 1.0 m front setback provides opportunities for landscaping, awnings, canopies, street furniture, merchandise display and other street side accessories.
- In addition to the minimum setback, an increased setback of 2.2 m above 4 storeys is preferred to provide variety along the street wall, provides opportunities for outdoor spaces and landscaping and to modulate shadowing to the street. Structural limitations may allow only the 5th floor to be setback.
- Stepped building forms provide a transition between contrasting building forms and mass and respect access to light and privacy. Minimum 2.2 m is recommended for building steps that provide outdoor space.
- A floor to floor height of 4.0 m is recommended for the ground floor.



Successful mixed use buildings combine a strong unifying base with an expression of individual shops.



Successful Corridor mixed use buildings step down in scale, incorporate planting and residential forms on elevations facing adjacent Neighbourhood areas.



Form and Character

- Simple combinations of materials and architectural forms is recommended.
- Architectural elements and detailing should contribute to and complement the overall building massing.
- Provide visual breaks between shopfronts to create a rhythm and provide differentiation.
- Provide weather protection, landscaping and architectural detail at the street level to maintain a pedestrian scale and interest for taller building forms.
- Consider the use of repeating elements including balconies, awnings, signage and architectural embellishments as opportunities to create texture, rhythm and visual interest on building elevations.



Increased areas of glazing on the top floor reinforces the overall horizontal building proportions.

Corner balconies provide depth and interest to the elevation.

Large areas of glazing complement the brick facade, creating a balance between solid and transparent.



Architectural elements should provide visual interest and complement the overall building design.

The curved stair form (adjacent) continues the building's window alignment and external finish while providing visual interest using a contrasting form and height.



Using a variety of materials, including green walls, and changes in plane on the facade reduces the overall scale and contributes to a varied streetscape.

Increased setbacks for portions of the ground floor provide places for merchandize display and/or seating.



This 3 storey streetwall incorporates large areas of floor to ceiling glazing divided by brick pilasters, recalling historic warehouse proportions. The canopy at the second floor line provides weather protection and a pedestrian scale.

Shopfronts

Materials and Proportions

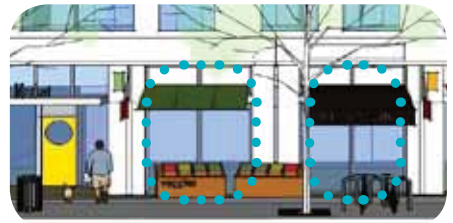
- Tall, narrow shop fronts recall heritage building proportions and streets.
- Generous areas of shop front glazing provide views into and out of shop interiors.
- Well-defined ground floors that provide an obvious base to the buildings are recommended to frame glazed shopfronts and provide street continuity.
- Shopfront windows should comprise no less than 75% of the total shopfront area.
- 4.0 m minimum dimension for ground level floor to floor heights is recommended.
- Ground floor elevations recognizable as building bases provide continuity along the streetscape and anchor taller building forms.
- Shopfront exteriors should be constructed of high quality materials that are durable, resistant to graffiti, complement the overall appearance of the building and are compatible with adjacent shopfronts.
- The use of vinyl or aluminum siding discouraged.

Signage

- Pedestrian oriented signage treatments are preferred and include: overhead hanging signs perpendicular to the shopfront, painted window signs, signage incorporated into awnings or canopies and other methods of creating individual identities.
- Signs should complement the style, composition, materials, colors and details of the building
- Overhead signs should not extend above the first storey or conflict with design details, windows or cornices.
- Window signage should be limited to 15% of the available window space.
- Backlit acrylic signs are not acceptable..



High quality materials, transparent shopfronts, attractive and individual signage and landscape treatments all support a good business and a walkable community.



Tall, narrow shopfronts help to break up larger building forms and create a visually interesting rhythm along the street.



Well designed commercial signs complement the overall building design and contributing to a vibrant streetscape.



Corner buildings that address the principal and flanking streets help make corners into places.



The design of awnings and canopies impact the quality and character of the street.



Well designed exterior lighting improves the streetscape.

Entrances

- Shopfront entrances should be clearly marked and provide a visual focus for the commercial exterior.
- Side entrances should be located as close to the front street as possible.
- Buildings that wrap around street corners are encouraged, marking corners as activity nodes and introducing variety along the street.
- Shop entrances set into the building face maximize opportunities for glazing and signage and reflect local heritage precedents.

Awnings and Canopies

- Awnings and canopies provide opportunities for signage, color and weather protection.
- High quality materials including canvas and fire-resistant acrylic are preferred awning materials.
- Awnings on a multiple-storefront building should be consistent in character, scale and location but need not be identical.
- Canopies or overhangs should emphasize individual shopfronts thereby helping to break down large building masses and reducing the impact of larger development forms.

Landscaping / Street Furniture

- Planters, window boxes and / or seating integrated into commercial exteriors softens building forms, creates a connection between the ground plane and upper storey, supports neighbourhood walkability and looks good.

Exterior Lighting

- Exterior lighting on mixed use streets should illuminate facades, entrances and signage and provide an adequate level of personal safety.
- Exterior lighting should highlight building elements, signs or other distinctive features.
- Exterior lights should not produce glare onto streets, public ways or adjacent properties.
- The lighting fixture should complement the building facade.

Residential

Materials and Proportion

- Residential elements in mixed use buildings should be distinguishable from and complementary to adjacent commercial uses.
- High quality materials that complement the overall building design and contribute to the streetscape are expected.
- Setting back residential storeys above the ground floor buffers units from the street, minimize overlook and shadowing onto adjacent residences and provide private outdoor spaces.
- Landscaping incorporated into upper floor setbacks screens overlook into adjacent property, softens the building edge and creates visual interest above the street level.



Stepped residential building forms help moderate the transition from one building form to another.

Entrances

- Residential entrances in mixed-use buildings should complement adjacent shopfront proportions but be clearly identified as residential.
- Entrances recessed into the building face provide weather protection and privacy.
- Incorporating planting and seating into the building entrance contributes to a residential identity and variety along the street.



Signage

- Residential signage, including addresses, should be clear and obvious and consistent in quality with adjacent shopfronts.

Exterior Lighting

- Exterior lighting should clearly illuminate the residential entrances, address and exterior lobby.
- Exterior lights should not produce glare onto streets, public ways or adjacent properties.
- The lighting fixture should complement the building facade and be distinguished from adjacent commercial lights.



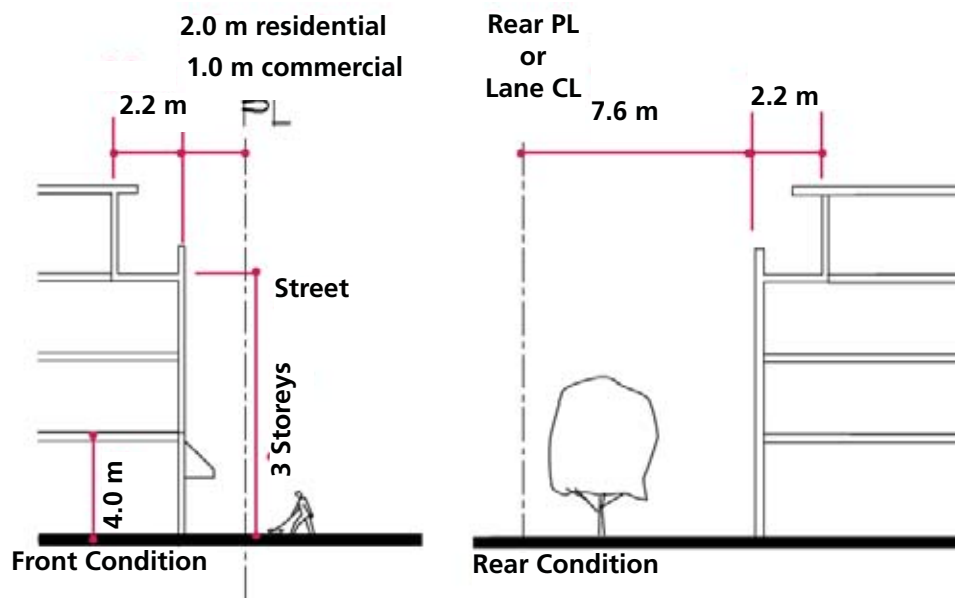
Residential entrances provide variety along the street.

b. Mixed Use Corridor / Neighbourhood Commercial Centre (Mixed Use up to 4 Storeys)

Mixed Use buildings in Corridor designations allow commercial uses on the first storey with commercial and residential use above. This typeology supports neighbourhood development by providing flexibility of use and opportunities for design innovation.

Building Massing

- A 1.0 m setback from the front property line is recommended for developments with ground floor commercial use.
- A 7.5 m setback is recommended from the rear property line or 5.5 m where the property line abuts a lane.
- An increased setback of 2.2 m from the front property line above 3 storeys is recommended
- A floor to floor height of 4.0 m is recommended for the ground floor.



Form and Character

- Commercial office space and live / work uses are appropriate for Mixed Use on the first two storeys.
- Simple combinations of materials and forms are recommended.
- Long lasting, durable building materials are recommended to establish a high quality streetscape for as long as possible.
- A balance between solid and transparent materials is recommended to create visual interest and balance on building elevations.



Commercial use at building corners can transform street intersections into neighbourhood meeting places.

Increased areas of glazing, weather protection, signage that complements the overall building design and landscaping are recommended to animate corners.



Emphasize building proportions by alternating solid and transparent materials. Vertical proportions are expressed here.

Materials and/or colors should transition where there is a change in plane to avoid a “pasted on” appearance.

Create a building base, middle and top to be expressed. Continuous ground floor commercial, separated by weather protection provides a visual base. The increased setback on the top floor clearly contrasts with the middle section.

b. Nicol Street

Existing Conditions

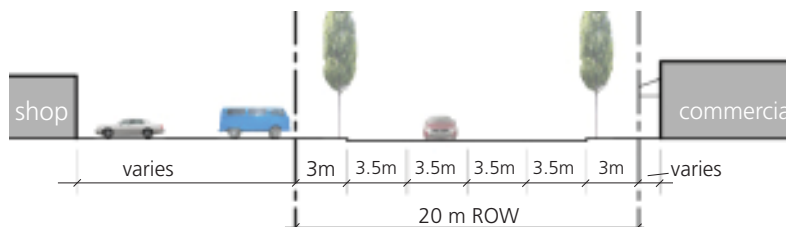


Photo of existing conditions along Nicol Street.

Nicol Street has a 20 m right-of-way. It currently consists of two driving lanes in each direction, with no on-street parking. It is the primary transportation corridor through the South End, a major route in and out of Nanaimo, and is designated as a provincial highway. As such, its primary function is to move significant quantities of traffic (both goods vehicles and personal vehicles) efficiently. This has meant that vehicle access from side streets has been restricted and a very limited number of pedestrian crossings have been developed. The street is designed to minimize disruptions to traffic flow and consequently is not a comfortable pedestrian environment. Sidewalks are minimal in width and lack public realm amenities. Street trees are separated by large gaps along significant portions of the street.



Aerial photo of existing conditions along Nicol Street

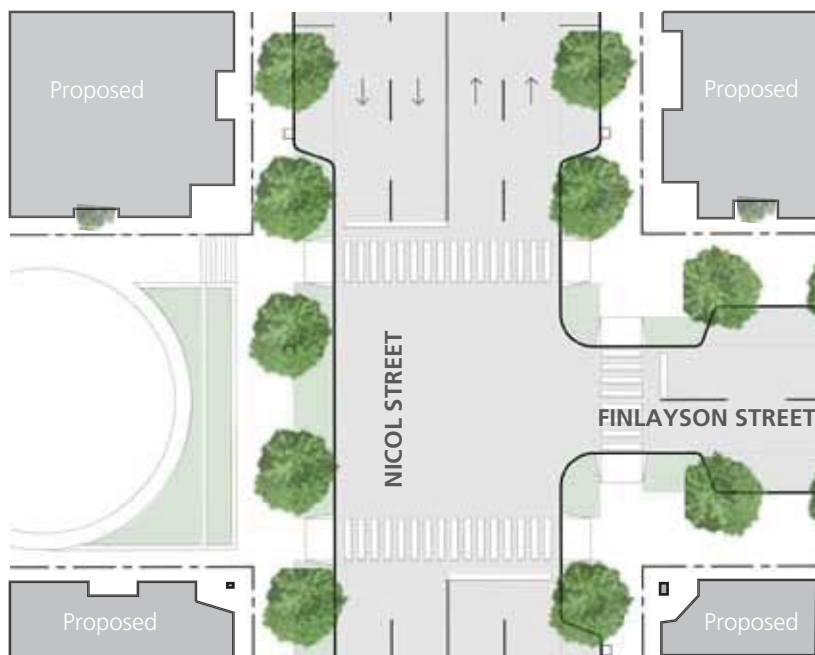


Section of typical existing conditions along Nicol Street

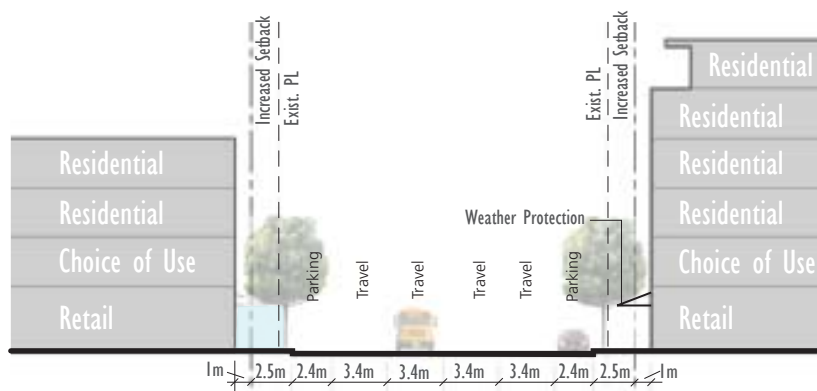
Intent

It is intended that Nicol Street become the South End Neighbourhood High Street, with mixed-use development up to four storeys, and up to six storeys along the northern section of the street. Typically the ground floor will be retail or commercial service use, with commercial and residential above. These guidelines propose to increase the available street width by 1.7 m on both sides of the street, to be implemented over time in accordance with the city's road widening protocol and in cooperation with the Provincial Government.

These design guidelines are intended to rebalance the environment along Nicol Street (in particular, the northern portion designated Urban Node), to improve the pedestrian experience and to help create a more animated, commercially active high street.



Nicol Street Proposed Plan



Nicol Street Proposed Section



A continuous canopy of street trees and a variety of permeable landscaping materials contributes to a high quality public realm.

Guidelines

Parking

- It is recommended that on street parking be considered on both sides of Nicol Street for the portion between the intersection with Farquhar Street and Victoria Crescent/Esplanade.
- Unless future developments have no access to a rear mid-block lane, off-street parking entries should be prohibited.

Cycle Lanes

- Dedicated cycle lanes are not recommended for Nicol Street. Haliburton Street is the closest recommended dedicated cycle route through the South End.

Sidewalks

- Encourage wider sidewalks with redevelopment, through building setbacks, including articulation of building faces and at corners.
- Sidewalks should have a minimum clear width of 2.5 m.

Landscaping

- Landscaping should be urban in scale and form, and focus on street trees and hardscape.
- Pockets of ground cover / landscaping could be introduced at corner bulges and mid-block bulges between parking bays.
- Hardscaping could include patterned paving material, corner bulges, seating structures, etc.

4.4 Transportation Systems

The central theme in the future development of the transportation system is to reduce the reliance on the private automobile and maximize the attractiveness of pedestrian, cycle and public transit alternatives. This still means that Downtown has to be conveniently accessible to commercial servicing vehicles and have good access and parking areas for the private automobile. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the road network has the capacity to serve Downtown Nanaimo as a regional centre for people, goods and services.

The potential for business and tourism growth through linkages by ferries, float planes and cruise ships is also vital to the future of Downtown.

Objective

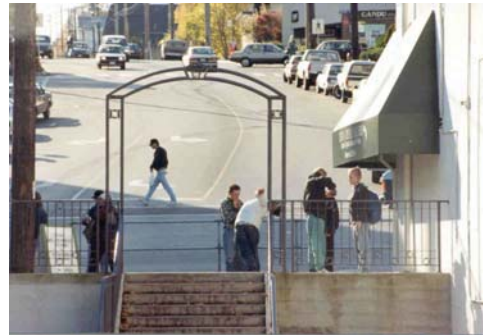
To provide a safe, balanced, efficient and integrated transportation system in the Downtown that serves the needs of existing and future development and accommodates each mode of transportation – pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, ferry, air and rail services, and commercial and private vehicles.

Policies and Actions

Policy 1 Provide a safe, efficient and pleasant environment for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit users and commercial and private vehicle drivers.

Action 1 Develop a Downtown Transportation Plan that identifies improvements to the present system to implement this policy as more specifically described in the remainder of this section of the Plan.

4.4.1 Pedestrian Emphasis



Emphasis is on making the Downtown attractive to the pedestrian. This means making it comfortable and convenient to walk from place to place Downtown.

Policies and Actions

A Quality Pedestrian Environment

Policy 1 Create an attractive, high quality pedestrian environment.

Action 1 Provide amenities for pedestrians throughout the Downtown, by implementing streetscape plans and design guidelines for special pedestrian routes and by encouraging active use of sidewalk space.

Action 2 Establish a policy and procedures whereby improvements to the pedestrian environment are incorporated as a significant component in funding and implementing roadway improvements in the Downtown.

Action 3 Encourage continuous weather protection on main pedestrian routes, especially on shopping streets.

Action 4 Improve and expand the pedestrian circulation network to link important destinations within the Downtown as part of significant redevelopment projects.

Action 5 Strengthen connections between the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods by identifying missing links in the circulation network.

Action 6 Establish a pedestrian signage/mapping system for Downtown streets, sidewalks and open spaces to direct and orient pedestrians and to promote Downtown attractions.

Transportation Management Measures

Policy 2 Improve traffic and pedestrian movements in the Downtown by implementing transportation management measures that address the specific needs of each particular neighbourhood, as required.

Action 1 Review the operation of the transportation management system.

Action 2 Consider the importance of pedestrian mobility in the Downtown.

Safety, Maintenance and Accessibility

Policy 3 Ensure that pedestrian routes and pedways are safe, secure, comfortable, well maintained and accessible to all persons.

Action 1 Explore options for improving intersection design and traffic calming and permitting mid-block crossings in selected locations to give more priority to pedestrians.

4.4.2 Bicycle Routes



Emphasis is on encouraging cycling by providing safe, attractive and convenient bike routes connecting to and throughout Downtown.

Policies and Actions

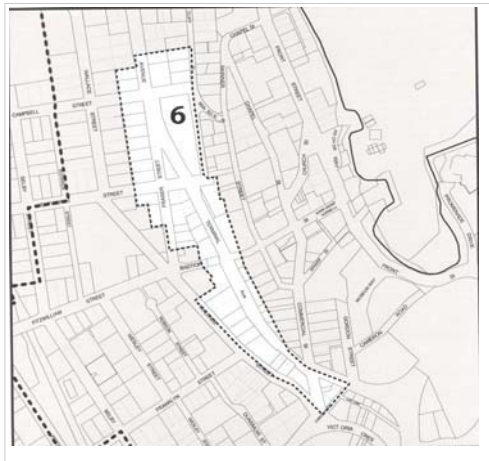
A Bicycle Friendly Downtown

Policy 1 Ensure the bike route system is continuous and well connected to major destination points within the Downtown and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Action 1 Continue to develop integrated on-road and off-road cycle routes to and within Downtown.

Action 2 Provide and encourage development of end-of-trip facilities such as, change rooms, showers, storage lockers and safe and secure bicycle parking.

4.9.6 Terminal Parkway

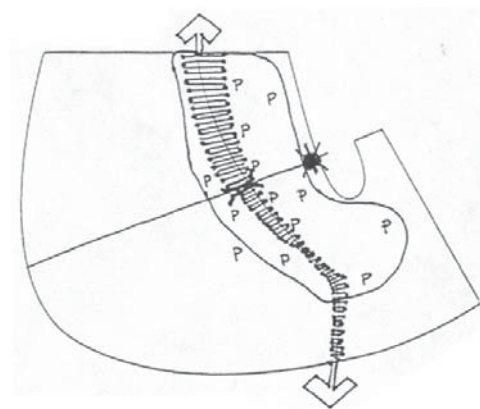


Terminal Avenue once functioned as the main north-south Vancouver Island Highway. Today it is still primarily a traffic artery lined with auto oriented uses. It is not an attractive environment despite its interesting ravine-like form. However, there is considerable potential to convert the area into an attractive place given strong direction to minimize the impact of traffic, greatly improve the physical and visual environment, and encourage new mixed use developments. This requires a bold step. A major tree planting program on public and private properties would go a long way to creating this new environment. New uses could then be encouraged along with sidewalk improvements for the benefit of pedestrians, as well as helping to manage traffic movements and access to individual properties. Integrated into the new design would be the walkways and bridges linking the Old City with Downtown. This requires the development of a design plan and an implementation strategy.

Action

Terminal as Greenway

Action 1 Prepare a design plan and implementation strategy to convert Terminal Avenue into an attractive urban greenway environment and encourage medium rise, terraced and mixed use developments along its edges.



4.9.11 Study Area #2 Southern Waterfront

In the longer term, it is likely that the present ferry, port and industrial uses will change over time. Before that occurs, it will be important to have a plan and implementation strategy prepared for the area. The determination of desirable uses and development forms is best left until the area becomes available for redevelopment so that current conditions in the Downtown and the development market can be assessed.

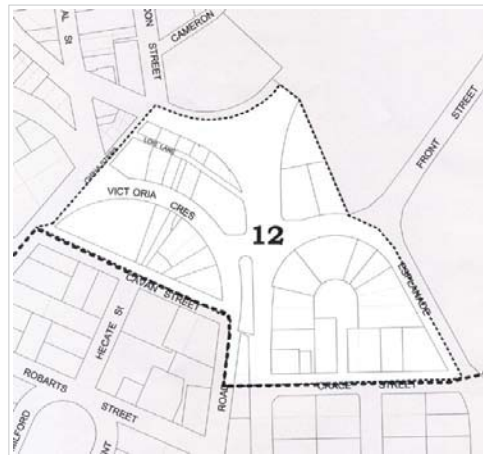
Action

Planning Study

Action 1 Prepare a concept plan and implementation strategy for this area when it is apparent that it will undergo change.



4.9.12 South Gate



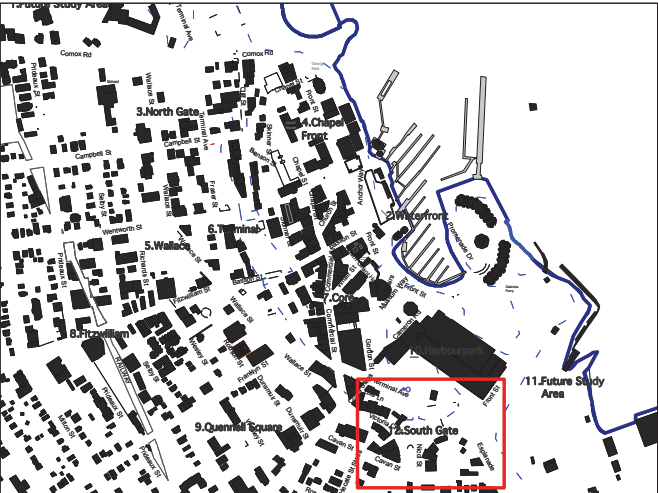
As the main entrance route from the south approaches Downtown it takes a sharp turn to the west before proceeding along Terminal Avenue ravine. Here is another Gateway opportunity to add to the enjoyment and recognition of Downtown. This could be expressed by locating significant Gateway buildings on either side of the entry and by creating a new major public urban square framed by a new Harbour Park and the street walls of the new Gateway buildings and the crescent of Terminal Avenue.

Action

Gateway to Downtown

Action 1 Develop Design Guidelines, zoning and implementation strategies to encourage the creation of a special Gateway experience at this location.

K. SOUTH GATE



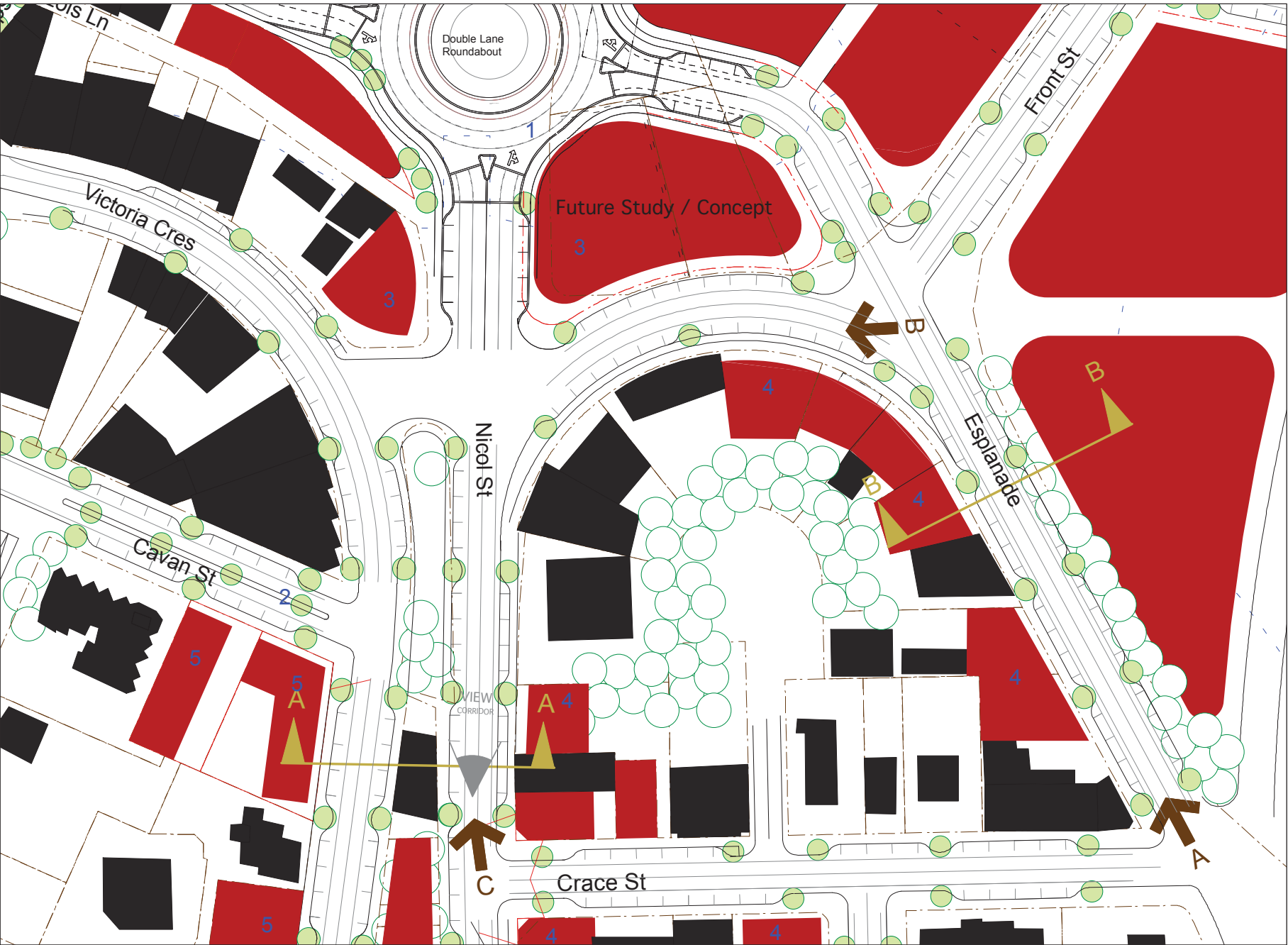
CONTEXT PLAN SCALE 1:16000

This study area makes up the east portion of the South Gate precinct. The intersection of Nicol Street, Victoria Crescent, Esplanade and Terminal Avenue, is poorly defined. Cavan Street is dominated by surface parking.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

Allow 3 m front setback along Nicol Street, Esplanade and Crace Street with a height of 4 storeys. Parking to be underground.

- 1. Single lane or double lane (shown) roundabout at Terminal Avenue, Nicol Street and Harbour Park Plaza. (Further study required, including input from Ministry of Transportation.) New connection with Esplanade.
- 2. New streetscape along Cavan Street with centre landscaped boulevard, parallel parking with pedestrian/tree bulges at corners and mid-block, and single drive lane with bike lane in each direction (see concept plan).
- 3. Redevelop corners of Victoria Crescent at Nicol Street and Esplanade at Nicol Street with gateway / landmark buildings to form a foreground focal point of South Gate.
- 4. Infill along Esplanade, recommend an increase in allowable height to 4 storeys (13.7 m) and a 3 m front setback to prevent on-site parking in front of buildings.
- 5. Infill along Victoria Crescent with a recommended increase in allowable height to 4 storeys. This will allow better harmonization with the 6 storeys permitted on Cavan Street and the opposite side of Victoria Crescent.

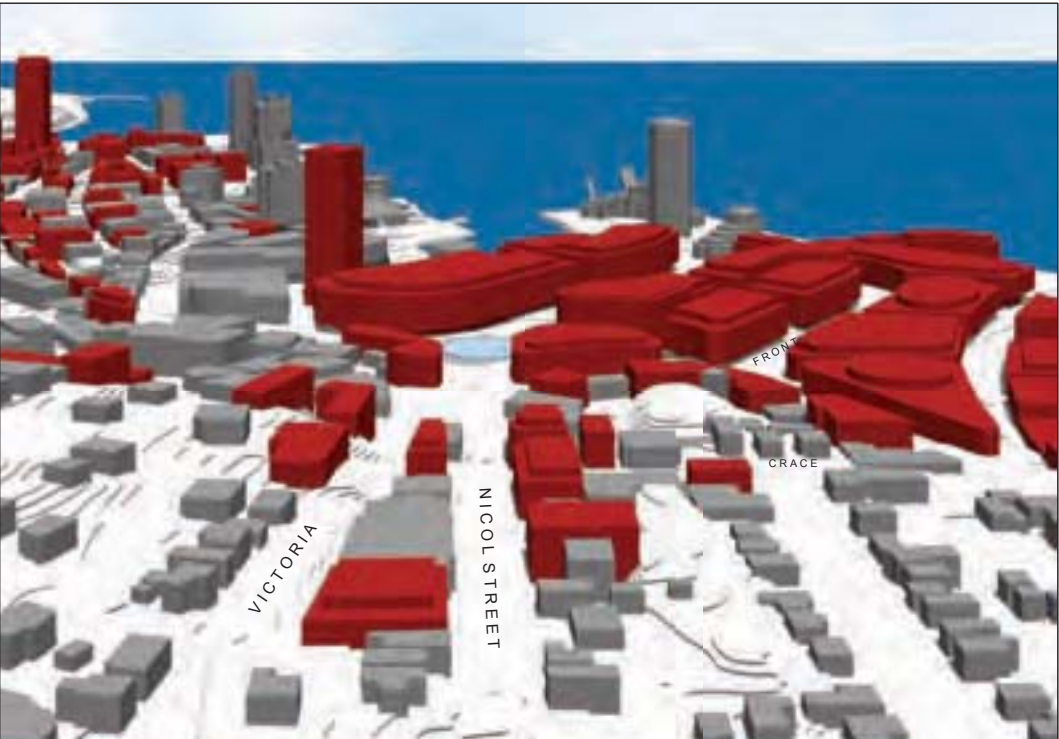


URBAN DESIGN PLAN SCALE 1:1400

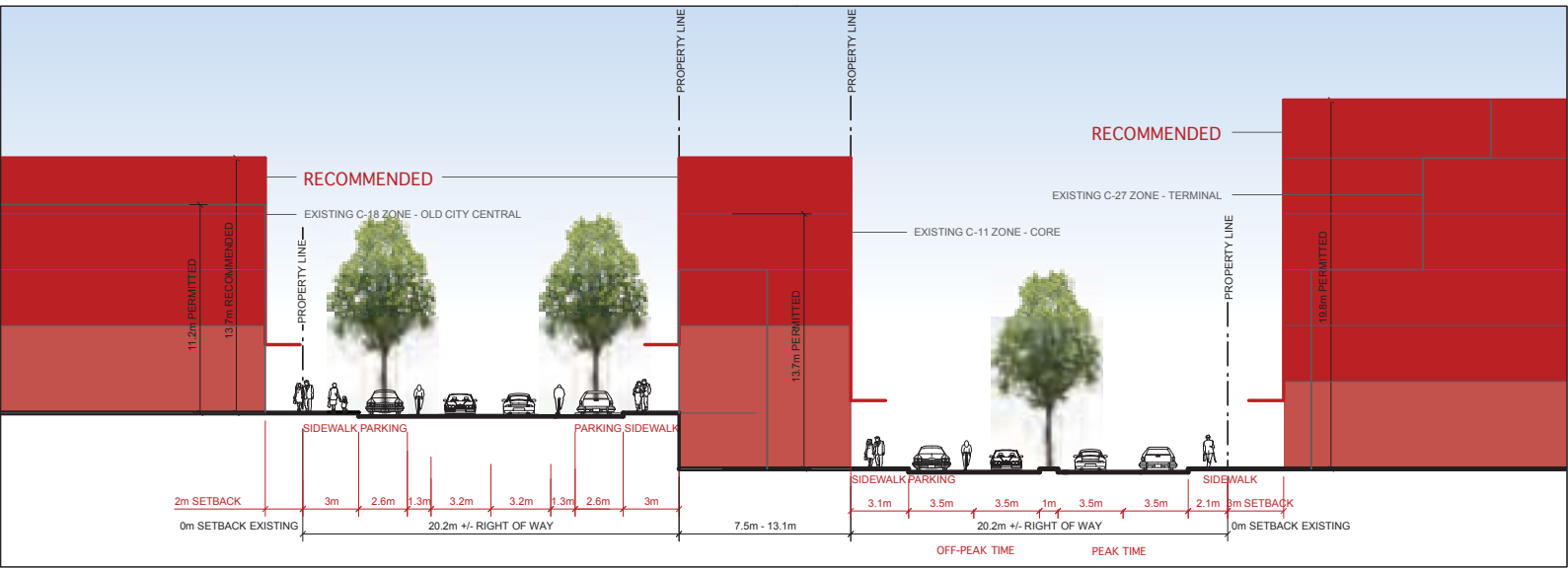
- LEGEND
- Parks - City Owned
 - Existing Buildings
 - Future Buildings
 - Street Trees - proposed
 - Street Section Location
 - Photo/Rendering Location
 - Urban Design Strategy



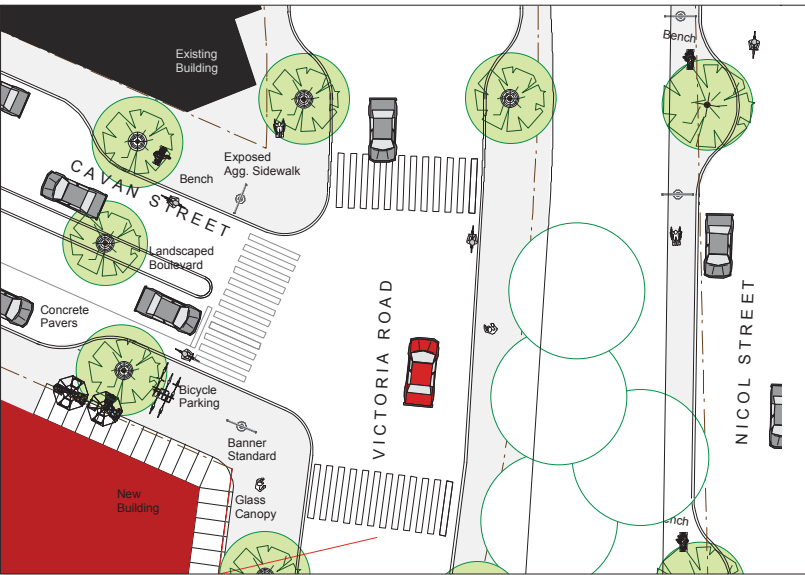
AERIAL PHOTO SCALE 1:3500



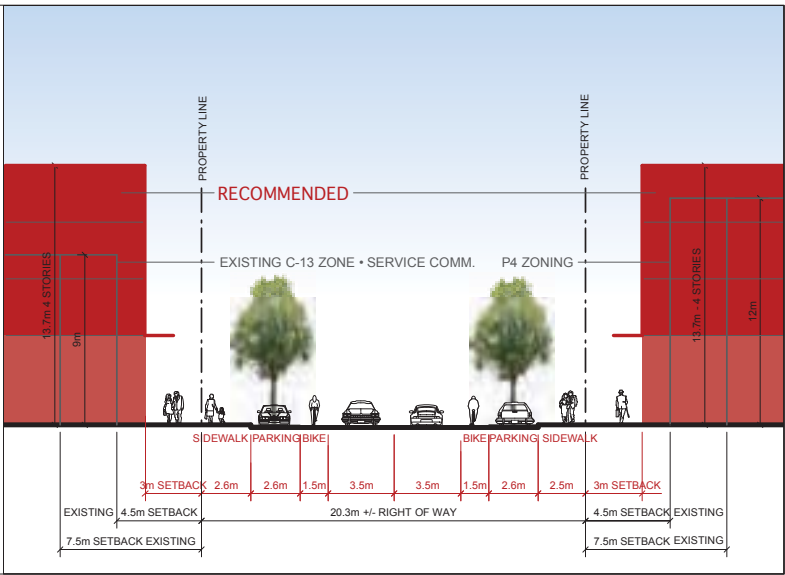
URBAN DESIGN 3D PLAN



A-A VICTORIA & NICOL STREET SECTION SCALE 1:400



CONCEPT PLAN SCALE 1:500



B-B ESPLANADE STREET SECTION SCALE 1:400



A. ESPLANADE NORTH FROM CRACE



FUTURE



B. ESPLANADE WEST TO NICOL



FUTURE



C. NICOL NORTH TO TERMINAL



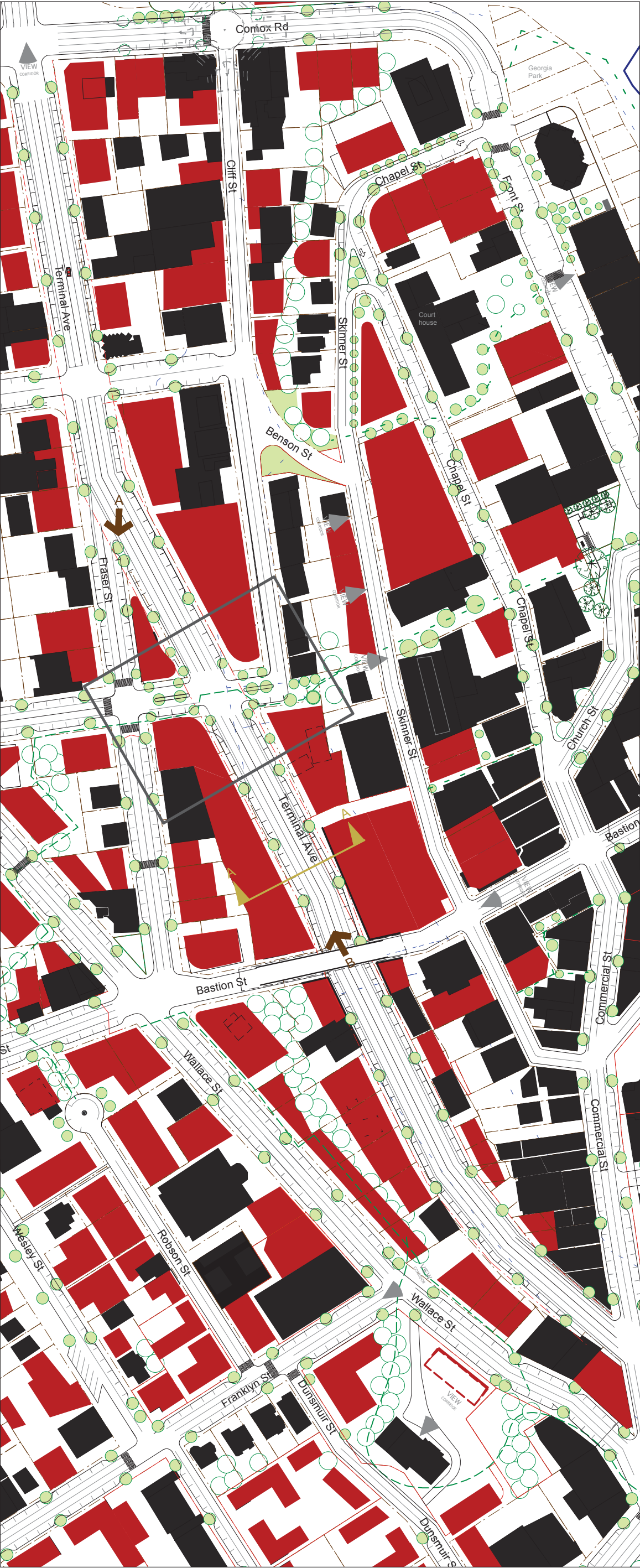
FUTURE

URBAN DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS FOR THIS STUDY AREA

The Old Island Highway meets the downtown curvilinear street-grid here. The semi-circular shaped blocks, with their narrow lanes and scattering of small heritage buildings, creates a human-scaled fabric. It is important that future infill development be designed to maintain the street-defining building alignment. This will repair the 'missing teeth' along the streets and contribute to the restoration of the 19th century-scaled formal character of this southern approach to Downtown. There are significant rock bluffs east of Nicol Street that represent a visible connection to Nanaimo's mining history. Densification with a variety of unit types is encouraged, as well as making strong links between the future re-development of the south waterfront and downtown.

Also see general Urban Design Guidelines.

TERMINAL AVENUE - GREEN STREET



Originally a tidal ravine along its southern extent, Terminal Avenue became the main route through downtown Nanaimo and part of the Trans Canada Highway in the 1960s. With the construction of the Nanaimo Parkway, the role of Terminal Avenue is changing.

The design of Terminal Avenue with its unique curving geometry, continues to act as a barrier that disconnects the Old City from the downtown core and the waterfront. However, any proposed design changes to the streetscape will require extensive consultation with the road's current authority, the Ministry of Transportation.

CONTEXT AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Future land use in this district will most likely be commercial on the ground level and at the corners, and residential uses in mid-block locations. As a result, the most important design consideration for this area is at the base of the buildings where considerable effort is required to de-emphasize the isolating impact of traffic by expanding and improving the pedestrian realm.

Mechanisms such as landscaped buffers, short cuts and pathways through properties to connect streets and buildings, as well as street-level activity such as outdoor café spaces and covered retail displays, will draw people, animate the street and revitalize the precinct. If the transportation network is remediated and traffic is calmed, this area could emerge as a new and vibrant part of downtown Nanaimo.

Also see general Urban Design Guidelines.

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

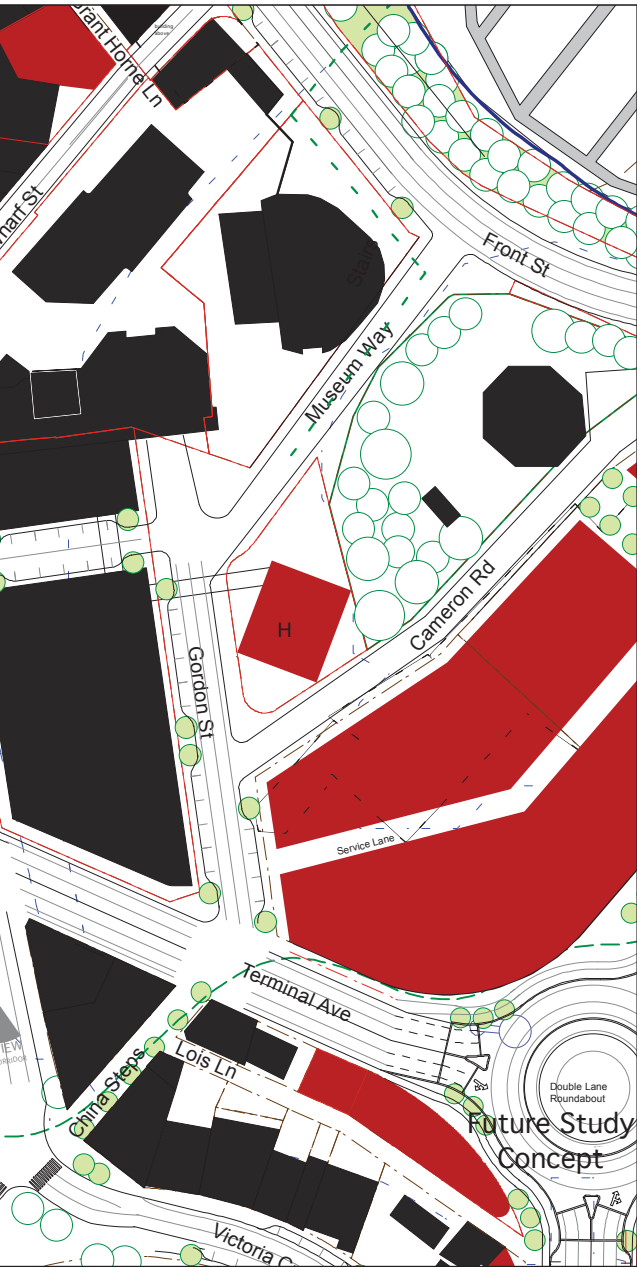
Terminal Avenue is a major gateway to downtown Nanaimo, both from the north and south approaches. As such, development should provide a positive impression to the travelling public.

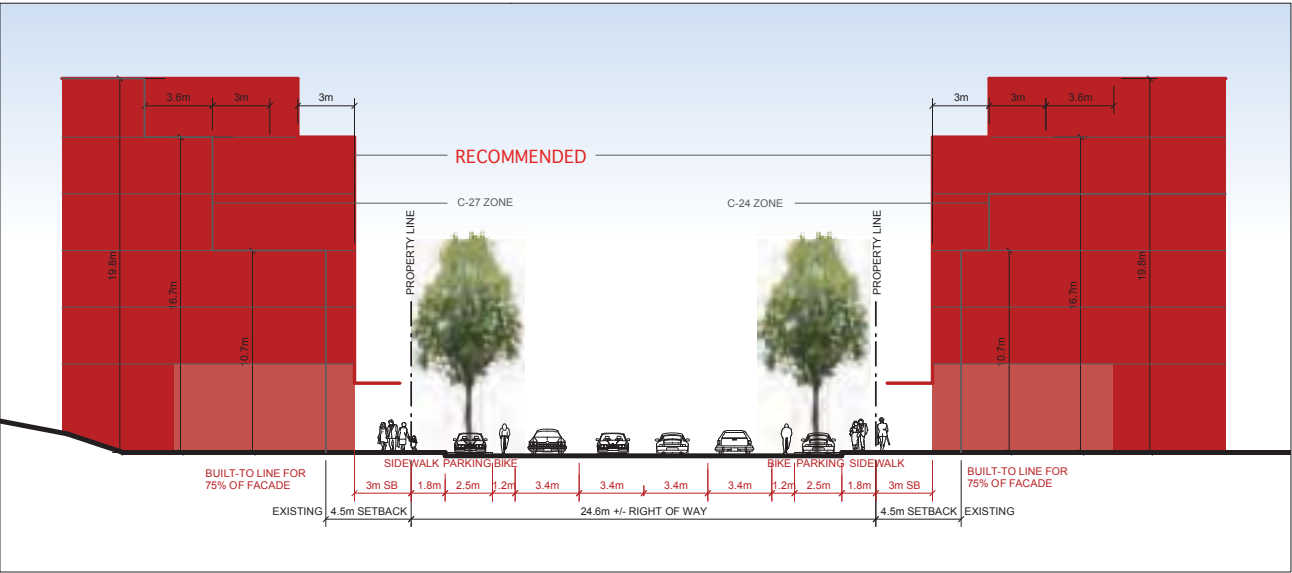
Emphasize on-street parking, which is required to ensure viability of ground-floor commercial.

Recommend traffic-calming road design for 50 km/hr.

This recommendation to revitalize Terminal Avenue entails a street section that includes parallel parking and cycling lanes in each direction while maintaining two lanes of vehicle traffic in each direction. Street trees are to be located between every 4 on-street parking stalls. Sidewalks should be increased to 1.8 m width. Traffic patterns would be maintained but calmed by the proximity of trees and buildings at the setback/build-to line. Traffic bulges at intersections would be employed to reduce crossing length and further calm traffic. (A treed boulevard in the centre of the right-of-way would preclude on-street parking.)

A double lane roundabout is designed for the intersection of Terminal Avenue and Nicol Street at the entrance to the proposed Port Place Plaza. Nicol Street would retain two lanes of traffic in each direction. In principle, this concept appears to support current traffic volumes but confirmation by a transportation study and consultation with the Ministry of Transportation is required. A roundabout at the Wentworth Street, Cliff Street and Terminal Avenue intersection may be a viable future option.





A-A TERMINAL AVENUE STREET SECTION SCALE 1:400



CONCEPT PLAN SCALE 1:700



TRAFFIC CALMING TECHNIQUES



MODERN ROUND ABOUT



A. TERMINAL SOUTH AT FRASER



B. TERMINAL NORTH AT BASTION



FUTURE

- LEGEND**
- Parks - City Owned
 - Existing Buildings
 - Future Buildings
 - Street Trees - proposed
 - Street Section Location
 - Photo/Rendering Location
 - Urban Design Strategy