

# Shape Your Future Victoria



## Urban Design

### Definition and description

**Urban design** is the art of creating and shaping cities and towns. It involves the arrangement and design of buildings, public spaces, transport systems, services and amenities. Urban design is the process of giving form, shape and character to groups of buildings, to whole neighbourhoods, and the city. It is a framework that orders the elements into a network of streets, squares and blocks. Urban design blends architecture, landscape architecture and city planning together to make urban areas functional and attractive. [source:The Center for Design Excellence]

### Why is this topic important?

Urban design contributes to sustainability through policies to develop compact land use patterns. Urban design also shapes safe and attractive cities with distinctive architecture, streetscapes, landscaping features and character areas. Some elements of sustainable community design include: cultural landmarks, green buildings, built and natural heritage, parks, open spaces, public art, community facilities and a public realm encouraging pedestrian activity and social interaction and vitality.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

*Ideas and Options for the Future*

*June 25 and 26 - Topic Insert*



# Public Input on Urban Design

Proposed Goal 1 From Public Input <i>Transform the Urban Environment</i>	
Direction: <i>Sustainable Community Design</i>	Direction: <i>Green Buildings</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinary approach to city – across City departments.</li> <li>• Invest in actions that make real change (e.g.: mode-shifting transportation, create parks and greenways, do not waste resources on fads like green roofs).</li> <li>• City uses a sustainability checklist for development review that goes beyond just parking provision.</li> <li>• Consider expanding the use of development permit areas as a tool re: sustainability (energy, water use)</li> <li>• Expand use of environmental development permits for biodiversity corridors.</li> <li>• Design to incorporate wind and microclimates</li> <li>• Integrated waste recovery (heat, biomass, water, materials).</li> <li>• Smart grid; PV infrastructure.</li> <li>• Allow community owned energy systems (PV, wind, solar, thermal, etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish uniform rules to level the playing field among developers. e.g. LEED silver standard</li> <li>• Bylaws for green building</li> <li>• Living buildings (beyond LEED)</li> <li>• More greenery on downtown buildings</li> <li>• Rooftop food gardens (with collaboration/education for engineers and building inspectors)</li> <li>• Technical solutions for energy efficiency in older buildings are in place</li> <li>• Building retrofit program</li> <li>• Existing buildings have been rehabilitated to be more energy efficient</li> <li>• More intensively used heritage buildings with more upper storey residential, more energy intensive heritage buildings</li> <li>• Local government leads by example in building to last and uses a combination of incentives and regulations</li> <li>• City / Community Centres as leaders in green buildings (Burnside Gorge Community Centre)</li> </ul>

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
<b>Natural Diversity and Habitat:</b>	<i>Biodiversity thrives in Victoria's urban environment, including urban forests, and public and private greenspaces.</i>
<b>Materials:</b>	<i>Durable and sustainable materials, including those that are local, green and healthy are promoted and used</i>
<b>Building Energy &amp; Air</b>	<i>Buildings and their component systems are energy efficient, produce few greenhouse gases and have good air quality for occupants.</i>

# Public Input on Urban Design

Proposed Goal 2 From Public Input <i>Connect People to Places</i>	
Direction: <i>Form and Character</i>	Direction: <i>Public Space</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Harbour as the cultural hub of the City</li> <li>▪ Maintain physical/cultural heritage</li> <li>▪ Beautiful infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood gateways</li> <li>▪ Streetscape features unique to neighbourhoods that give them a “sense of place”</li> <li>▪ Planning based on small precincts</li> <li>▪ Development permit areas for the entire city</li> <li>▪ More street landscaping “parkways”</li> <li>▪ Downtown is well connected to neighbourhoods</li> <li>▪ Built form that respects “place”</li> <li>▪ Higher quality of design in buildings</li> <li>▪ Less straight lines, more curves, organic shapes</li> <li>▪ Architectural showpieces</li> <li>▪ Architecturally significant bus/train station</li> <li>▪ Architecturally significant year-round market</li> <li>▪ Enhanced pedestrian environment</li> <li>▪ More public art</li> <li>▪ Public art by a variety of artists</li> <li>▪ Public art that is innovative and attractive</li> <li>▪ Decent” / better public art</li> <li>▪ Graffiti is more embraced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build at a human scale</li> <li>• Question highrises: disconnected from the street</li> <li>• Built form that fosters interaction</li> <li>• Neighbourhood gathering places/spaces (e.g. Fernwood Square), hubs that can be shared.</li> <li>• Create more open/public spaces to gather and bump into your neighbours</li> <li>• A wealth of public open spaces downtown and in surrounding areas ranging in size and function</li> <li>• Private space = dead space</li> <li>• Courtyards (open, not like Leiser Building)</li> <li>• Make public spaces in the City where it is OK to be noisy and have fun</li> <li>• More mid-block walkways</li> <li>• Pedestrianize [no traffic permitted]</li> <li>• Public realm pedestrian improvements</li> <li>• Action program with prioritized actions for public realm with task form for implementation</li> <li>• Outdoor Café seating on sidewalk</li> <li>• More activity and cultural presence downtown</li> <li>• Strike a balance between CPTED and sterility</li> <li>• Community safety efforts are enhanced including eyes on the street</li> </ul>

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
<b>Heritage:</b>	<i>Victoria’s cultural and natural heritage resources are protected and celebrated.</i>
<b>Vibrancy:</b>	<i>Victoria is vibrant with a sense of place, urban design and beauty.</i>

## Existing Policies on Urban Design

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
<b>Natural Diversity and Habitat:</b>	<i>Biodiversity thrives in Victoria's urban environment, including urban forests, and public and private greenspaces.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New developments should respect natural surroundings such as the waterfront, skylines, distinctive trees, and vistas and topographical features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bolster the sustainability of the city core.</li> <li>Build on the natural setting of the city.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage private and public development and renovation projects to provide the maximum amount possible of green spaces, natural surfaces, plants and streetscaping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban Forest Management Plan (Draft) includes inventory and framework for action for trees on public and private lands</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage well-maintained private gardens and landscaped areas as a means of enhancing the City's character.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure parks and open spaces are well-designed, attractive, functional and integrated with the Pedestrian Network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks Master Plan under development to guide management of parks and natural spaces</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporate permeable surfaces in the design of open spaces to reduce storm water runoff.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acquire and develop additional public parks and open space in the Rock Bay District and the Residential Mixed-Use District.</li> </ul>	

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<b>Building Energy &amp; Air</b>	<i>Buildings and their component systems are energy efficient, produce few greenhouse gases and have good air quality for occupants.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage site design and development practices that maximize energy- and water-efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civic Green Building policy requires new civic buildings to be at least LEED silver.</li> <li>Green Buildings Policy for private new buildings under development.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage all new development to incorporate high levels of energy efficiency.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore the use of incentives to encourage private development that includes renewable district energy systems able to serve the Downtown Core Area.</li> </ul>	

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<b>Vibrancy:</b>	<i>Victoria is vibrant with a sense of place, urban design and beauty.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies to conserve and rehabilitate built heritage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heritage protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Town Design Guidelines</li> <li>• Heritage Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Heritage Registry</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain appropriate settings for architectural and historical landmarks and districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain lower-scale buildings throughout the Historic Commercial District and along the waterfront to respect the lower context of the area, and gradually transition to taller buildings in Central Business District.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the revitalization of Chinatown in a manner which maintains its distinctive identity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensitive infill that responds to the function, form and character of each district in the Downtown Core Area.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the use of detail, form, texture, colouring and scale for new development that is in keeping with the established surroundings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize fine architectural detailing and building finishes, and provide richly detailed and varied streetscaping.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design Guidelines (various)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New developments should contribute to the human scale of Victoria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using progressive setback requirements, upper storey floor space maximums, and base-level podiums for taller buildings, to maintain an engaging human-scaled experience at grade.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim Downtown Height and Livability Guidelines</li> </ul>