

Placemaking

8



RELATED GOALS

- › 8 (A) Victoria is vibrant with a sense of place, urban design, and beauty.
- › 8 (B) Victoria's cultural and natural heritage resources are protected and celebrated.

OVERVIEW

Victoria is a special place. Its location on the southern tip of Vancouver Island provides geographic constraints that have resulted in a compact, dense urban form characteristic of larger cities, yet provides access to nature, open spaces and a quality of life often associated with smaller communities. Victoria has the best of both worlds.

Victoria's image is strongly derived from its role as the capital city of the province, symbolized by the Parliament Buildings and grounds of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The image of the city is also shaped by the Inner Harbour, a special place characterized by the presence of iconic architecture that includes the Parliament Buildings, the Empress Hotel and the Royal British Columbia Museum, all complemented by open space, a pedestrian-rich causeway and marine activity. In addition to the Inner Harbour, Downtown Victoria's Old Town is a special place of profound importance in Canadian history, is the largest single historic area in the province and includes three areas of distinct

character: the commercial district, the Chinatown National Historic District which is the oldest Chinatown in Canada, and the waterfront. Beyond Downtown, the neighbourhoods of Victoria offer idyllic settings for residents, each with their own [sense of place](#). Many neighbourhoods have urban villages providing local gathering places, with some attracting visitors from outside the neighbourhood due to their distinctive character and [human scale](#). Victoria's compact built form and the presence of large historic areas contribute to sustainability by providing efficient land use patterns, a built form that can be navigated on foot or by bicycle, and conservation of heritage and cultural resources with value for present and future generations.

The challenges that Victoria will continue to face are accommodating development that will create new memorable places that broaden Victoria's image beyond its identity as a provincial capital with an iconic harbour, contribute to the goals of sustainability, while retaining the character of Victoria's existing special places.

To address these challenges, the plan seeks to concentrate new development throughout the Downtown Core Area into new districts outside of Old Town, while continuing to support sensitive infill within the historic centre of the city. New districts will each have their own sense of place, as contemporary backdrops that will frame the old city. New development is also envisioned within and around Urban Villages and Town Centres to intensify neighbourhood meeting places with human scale building forms and streetscape designs. Victoria's special places are envisioned to be connected by streets and public spaces that are well-designed, beautified and animated by arts and culture, to entice people to walk, cycle, take transit and enjoy urban life. These will be the places that matter to people with a diversity of form, character, uses and activities throughout the community. The policies of this section are organized under the ten **placemaking** principles, applied in turn to seven related physical characteristics, or urban design elements in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Placemaking Principles and Urban Design Elements

Placemaking Principles:	Urban Design Elements:
1. Vision for City Image	1. Urban Morphology
2. Response to Context	2. Corridors
3. Human Scale	3. Neighbourhoods and Districts
4. Connectivity	4. Villages and Nodes
5. Beautification of the Public Realm	5. Streets and Squares
6. Animation of the Public Realm	6. Buildings and Sites
7. Heritage Values	7. Natural Features and Green Spaces
8. Heritage Rehabilitation	
9. Arts, Culture and Heritage	
10. Community Cultural Development	

BROAD OBJECTIVES:

The placemaking policies of this plan collectively address 12 broad objectives:

- 8 (a) That urban design at every scale from sites to local areas is responsive to Victoria's geographic context and existing pattern of development, achieves excellence, and creates memorable places.
- 8 (b) That the views from the **public realm** of existing **landmarks** are maintained, and new landmarks are introduced that enhance the visual identity and appearance of Victoria and that improve way finding around the city.
- 8 (c) That new buildings and features contribute to the sense of place in development permit and heritage conservation areas through innovative responses to existing form and character.
- 8 (d) That the social vibrancy is fostered and strengthened through human scale design of buildings, streetscapes and public spaces.
- 8 (e) That each neighbourhood is connected and integrated to adjacent city neighbourhoods, to the Downtown Core Area and to the region through urban design elements.
- 8 (f) That the built environment is beautified and softened through natural features in the public realm.
- 8 (g) That a sense of place is developed and enhanced through urban design features including art in public places.
- 8 (h) That the public realm is animated through pedestrian-oriented design, festivals, celebrations and special events.
- 8 (i) That land use development is managed to give priority to **heritage values** at every scale from site development to local area planning.
- 8 (j) That **heritage property** is protected and conserved as resources with value for present and future generations.
- 8 (k) That arts, culture and heritage are integrated in design features in public and private spaces where feasible.
- 8 (l) That heritage and cultural values are identified, celebrated, and retained through community engagement.

VISION FOR CITY IMAGE

Urban Design Element	Policies
Urban Form	<p>8.1. Acknowledge Victoria's geographic context through building forms that are low at the shoreline and gradually rise to correspond with the rise in topography, giving further emphasis to this principle throughout the Downtown Core Area as an urban amphitheatre, also representing historic growth patterns.</p> <p>8.2. Design tall buildings to make a positive contribution to the skyline.</p> <p>8.3. Consider designating a city-wide development permit area to guide the form and character of commercial, industrial, multi-unit residential and intensive residential development, and establish criteria under which a development permit would not be required.</p>
Villages and Nodes	<p>8.4. Encourage unique character and sense of place in the design of individual urban villages and town centres through the designation of development permit areas.</p>
Streets and Squares	<p>8.5. Enhance the design of the public realm to acknowledge the importance of streets and other public spaces as the social arena of the City.</p> <p>8.6. Seek opportunities to acknowledge and integrate the culture, values and heritage of First Peoples in the design and celebration of public space.</p>
Buildings and Sites	<p>8.7. Encourage high quality architecture, landscape and urban design to enhance the image of the City through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.7.1 The designation of development permit and heritage conservation areas; 8.7.2 Establishment of design guidelines; and, 8.7.3 Development and heritage alteration permit application processes. <p>8.8. Locate the City's tallest buildings in the area designated Urban Core Business on Map 1, to symbolize Downtown as the centre of the City and region and to emphasize the topographical high point of Downtown.</p> <p>8.9. Locate potential new landmarks at high geographic points, within Town Centres and Urban Villages, focal and inflection points in the street grid and at commercial nodes throughout the city.</p> <p>8.10. Maintain views of identified heritage landmarks from the public realm through careful consideration of new development within a 90 metre radius of heritage landmarks, as defined on Map 7.</p>
Natural Features and Green Spaces	<p>8.11. Protect views of distant vistas and cityscapes from public vantage points at the high geographic points of Summit Park, Gonzales Hill and Moss Rock, by ensuring that buildings on the immediate surrounding slopes are low in height as envisioned in the Traditional Residential designation, identifying the extent of low building heights through local area planning.</p>

Map 7: Heritage Landmarks (TO BE COMPLETED)

RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

Urban Design Element	Policies
Neighbourhoods and Districts	<p>8.12. Conserve and enhance the vitality of the Inner Harbour waterfront, and integrate its form and character with Old Town and Chinatown.</p> <p>8.13. Maintain the special characteristics of Old Town and Chinatown along the waterfront in the Historic Core designation through lower-scale building forms.</p>
Villages and Nodes	8.14. Consider the designation of new development permit and heritage conservation areas for Employment districts, Town Centres and Urban Villages as part of local area planning.
Buildings and Sites	8.15. Support new infill development and property additions that respond to the context of form and character in development permit areas and heritage conservation areas.

HUMAN SCALE

Urban Design Element	Policies
Corridors	8.16. Enhance the appearance of roadways where opportunities exist, through human scale streetscaping features that are compatible with the urban thoroughfare guidelines in Figure 10 and street function, such as landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, screening of unsightly elements where necessary and the management of visual clutter [SEE ALSO SECTION 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY].
Villages and Nodes	8.17. Require new development to build at-grade building frontages that are suitable for active uses on commercial streets in the Downtown Core Area, and, as appropriate, in Town Centres, Urban Villages and Employment and Industrial districts as shown in Map 1.
Streets and Squares	<p>8.18. Enclose public space with buildings, formally planted trees or a combination of both for definition, so its importance in the urban form is apparent, while allowing openings to encourage entry into the space.</p> <p>8.19. Define streets as public space by respecting building height ratios proportionate to street width as illustrated in Figure 12, framing streets with a combination of building forms and tree canopies as appropriate and as may be further detailed in local area plans.</p> <p>8.20. Encourage human scale in the design of streets, squares and other public spaces.</p> <p>8.21. Extend the Government Street mall northwards to Pembroke Street by enhancing it as a pedestrian priority street and include connections to nearby public spaces.</p>
Buildings and Sites	<p>8.22. Encourage human scale in all building designs and scales, including low, mid-rise and tall buildings, through consideration of form, proportion, pattern, detailing and texture, particularly at ground level.</p> <p>8.23. Design tall buildings that are ten storeys or greater in height to achieve human scale qualities by mitigating the perception of building mass at upper levels, maximizing sunlight penetration to the public realm and reflecting the scale of adjacent development.</p> <p>8.24. Integrate off-street vehicle parking in such a way that does not dominate development or streetscapes by locating parking underground, away from the public realm, or behind buildings.</p>

CONNECTIVITY

Urban Design Element	Policies
Corridors	<p>8.25. Enhance the quality of linkages for enjoyment of use by removing barriers to special places or blurring perceived edges that may discourage users; providing a variety of linkages that connect people to the City's special places.</p> <p>8.26. Identify and mark gateway locations along major access routes into the City, Downtown Core Area and neighbourhoods to enhance a sense of arrival and departure.</p> <p>8.27. Increase pedestrian safety and comfort in the pathway system through the removal of physical barriers and urban design considerations such as lighting, weather protection, way finding measures, amenities in visible areas and landscaping that does not compromise personal security.</p> <p>8.28. Coordinate the urban design and transportation and mobility benefits of public realm improvements on high-volume roads, such as:</p> <p>8.28.1 Street trees and planted boulevards;</p> <p>8.28.2 Street furniture;</p> <p>8.28.3 Street parking lanes; and,</p> <p>8.28.4 Separated bike lines within the cycling networks.</p> <p>8.29. Enhance the Harbour Pathway through the implementation of the Victoria Harbour Pathway Plan urban design components, including periodic updates.</p> <p>8.30. Distinguish greenways from other corridors to improve way finding for cyclists through design features that contribute to greenway identity.</p> <p>8.31. Examine the feasibility of establishing separated bike lanes within the cycling network [SEE ALSO SECTION 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY].</p>
Villages and Nodes	8.32. Enhance the image of Urban Villages spanning neighbourhood boundaries through unifying urban design features.
Natural Features and Green Spaces	8.33. Improve public access to the waterfront, public space and significant natural features through way finding measures.

Figure 12: Proportionate Street/Building Ratios (TO BE COMPLETED)

BEAUTIFICATION OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Urban Design Element	Policies
Corridors	8.34. Coordinate the urban design and green infrastructure benefits of public realm improvements on major roads, such as: 8.34.1 Urban design features that contribute to effective rainwater management; 8.34.2 Sustainable site design that is attractive.
Neighbourhood and Districts	8.35. Support the enhancement of neighbourhood distinctiveness through public realm landscaping, tree species, street furniture, human-scale street lighting, art, or other features to contribute to a sense of place. 8.36. Integrate trees and landscaping throughout the Downtown Core Area to provide greenery and soften the urban environment. 8.37. Maintain or increase tree planting and landscaping throughout neighbourhoods to sustain and improve livability, through the development of an Urban Forest Management Plan. [SEE ALSO SECTION 10 – ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT]
Streets and Squares	8.38. Undertake an on-going program of innovative, high-quality, temporary and permanent streetscape improvements in the Downtown Core Area that support public events and seasonal celebrations, where possible. 8.39. Support a wide range of opportunities for temporary and permanent art in public and public-private spaces. 8.40. Consider incorporating landscaping into street design standards to provide human scale elements and visually break up the extent of hard surface within right-of-ways [SEE ALSO SECTION 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY]. 8.42. Work with partners to maintain horticultural plantings such as flowers and shrubs as part of street design standards and roadway design, and at important public buildings.
Natural Features and Green Spaces	8.43. Maintain horticultural plantings in select parks, including Beacon Hill Park, and road rights-of-way, as possible within City resources.

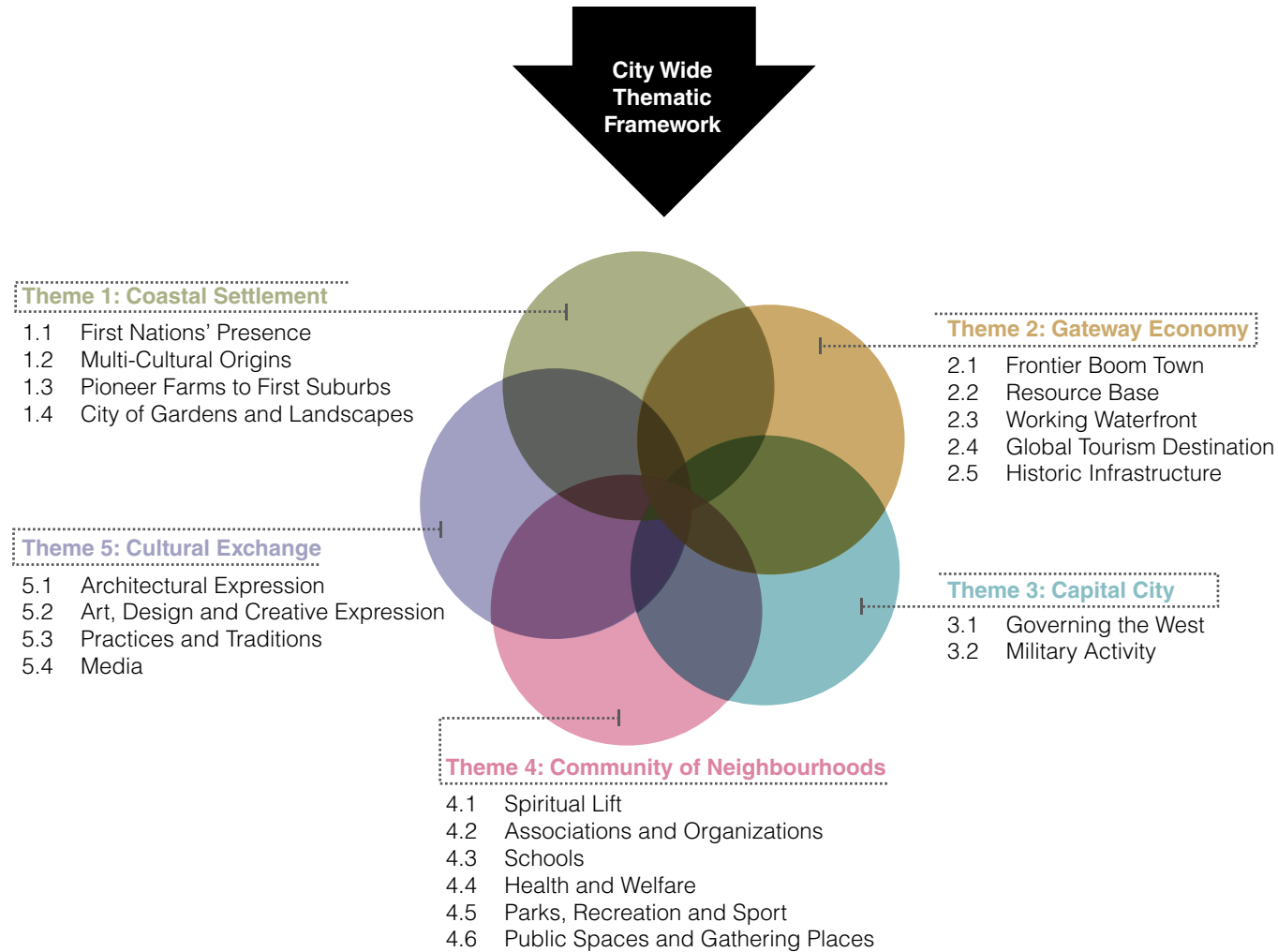
ANIMATION OF THE PUBLIC REALM

Urban Design Element	Policies
Corridors	8.44. Enhance and expand the through-block pedestrian passageways throughout the Downtown Core Area to break up long blocks with walkways that are open to the sky, located to allow unimpeded sight lines, fronted by active uses at grade for animation and surveillance, and include way finding measures.
Neighbourhoods and Districts	8.45. Support and enable outdoor festivals, celebrations and special events through partnerships, and the festival and special event permit process. 8.46. Maintain, develop and enhance grants and other support to local, non-profit groups to host festivals, celebrations and special events.
Villages and Nodes	8.47. Animate the pedestrian realm in town centres, the Downtown Core Area, urban villages and employment districts through urban design considerations, such as local gateways, sidewalk cafés, art in public places , street furniture and landscaping as generally consistent with guidelines for urban place designations in this plan.
Streets and Squares	8.48. Continue to support festivals, celebrations and special events at major public open spaces including Centennial Square (Spirit Square), along the waterfront, and in other existing and future locations.
Buildings and Sites	8.49. Encourage buildings adjacent to sidewalks and public plazas to maximize shop windows and entrances at ground level to support active land uses and provide interest for pedestrians throughout the Downtown Core Area, Town Centres, Urban Villages and Employment districts [SEE ALSO SECTION 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT].
Natural Features and Green Spaces	8.50. Encourage active land uses adjacent to parks, where appropriate, for animation, surveillance and to encourage park use. 8.51. Design park perimeters at street interfaces to be visually and physically penetrable to pedestrians with frequent occurrences of active park uses that do not impede sightlines into parks.

HERITAGE VALUES

Urban Design Element	Policies
Urban Form	<p>8.52. Use the Victoria Thematic Framework in Figure 13 as the conceptual framework for heritage value assessments and their application in tools and projects, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.52.1 Statements of significance; 8.52.2 Heritage register additions; 8.52.3 Urban design features and City projects with a heritage or historical theme; 8.52.4 Heritage policies in local area planning; and, 8.52.5 City publications. <p>8.53. Develop values-based evaluation criteria to determine the significance of heritage resources for the purpose of the selection of new additions to the heritage register.</p>
Neighbourhoods and Districts	<p>8.54. Include policy goals in local area plans that state and support the heritage values of the community, as appropriate.</p> <p>8.55. Consider statements of significance for historic neighbourhoods and districts, where available, to inform and shape heritage policies as part of local area planning.</p>
Buildings and Sites	<p>8.56. Identify, protect and conserve private and public property that is determined to be significant based on community heritage values.</p>

Figure 13: Victoria Thematic Framework



HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Urban Design Element	Policies
Urban Form	<p>8.57. Continue to provide direction for heritage conservation through the maintenance and regular update of the Heritage Strategic Plan.</p> <p>8.58. Continue to give consideration to tools available under legislation to protect or conserve heritage resources, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.58.1 Heritage designations; 8.58.2 Heritage register; 8.58.3 Temporary orders of protection; 8.58.4 Heritage alteration permits; 8.58.5 Heritage revitalization agreements; 8.58.6 Heritage conservation areas and design guidelines; 8.58.7 Development permit areas and design guidelines; and, 8.58.8 Protection of view corridors.
Neighbourhoods and Districts	<p>8.59. Maintain the heritage conservation areas in Appendix B, Map 30, and consider future designations of heritage conservation areas as part of local area planning in this plan.</p> <p>8.60. Heritage conservation areas should broadly consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.60.1 Objectives to conserve heritage values; and, 8.60.2 Criteria to conserve character-defining elements of the area as a whole; <p>8.61. Design guidelines for heritage conservation areas should broadly consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.61.1 Heritage values to conserve; 8.61.2 Character-defining elements; and, 8.61.3 Guidance for energy retrofits in heritage properties.

Urban Design Element	Policies
Buildings and Sites	<p>8.62. Continue to support site-specific development that conserves the heritage values of a heritage resource, or resources, as consistent with the National Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.</p> <p>8.63. Continue to refer to statements of significance, where available, to assess the impact of alterations on the heritage value of designated heritage property, and those on the heritage register.</p> <p>8.64. Encourage and require, as appropriate, heritage assessment studies and conservation plans to support:</p> <p>8.64.1 Heritage alteration permits;</p> <p>8.64.2 Heritage revitalization agreements; and,</p> <p>8.64.3 Rezoning involving a heritage resource(s).</p> <p>8.65. Continue incentives for heritage conservation such as but not limited to property tax relaxations, parking reductions and variances, and other zoning variances.</p> <p>8.66. Discourage facadism in new development, adaptive re-use, and heritage rehabilitation, where most or all of a façade(s) of a protected heritage property is demolished.</p> <p>8.67. Develop and maintain a policy to select and conserve heritage cultural landscapes on public and private lands, that:</p> <p>8.67.1 Determines the significance of sites with values-based evaluation criteria; and,</p> <p>8.67.2 Provides guidance for alterations to sites, while conserving their heritage values and character.</p> <p>8.68. Continue to work with government and institutional partners to identify, protect and conserve their heritage properties.</p>

ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Urban Design Element	Policies
Urban Form	<p>8.69. Provide direction for urban design features and City projects with a heritage or historical theme through the development and regular update of a Heritage Interpretation Strategy, that include:</p> <p>8.69.1 Permanent and temporary improvements on public lands, such as plaques;</p> <p>8.69.2 Permanent improvements with community benefit on private lands, such as plaques;</p> <p>8.69.3 Art in public places and murals; and,</p> <p>8.69.4 Public history projects.</p>
Buildings and Sites	<p>8.70. Consider options for urban design features with a heritage or historical theme, such as plaques, murals and art installations.</p>

COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Urban Design Element	Policies
Urban Form	<p>8.71. Engage community organizations, groups and individuals in land use and cultural planning that involve or impact the historic and built environment, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.71.1 Cultural and heritage resources mapping; 8.71.2 Identification of heritage values; 8.71.3 Selection of heritage resources for conservation; and, 8.71.4 Other community development projects. <p>8.72. Partner with the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations to acknowledge and integrate the culture, values and heritage of First Peoples.</p>
Neighbourhoods and Districts	8.73. Continue to foster community development through arts and cultural programs that are coordinated with local area planning.