
COMMERCIAL + MIXED USE INTERFACES

These guidelines provide general direction, at the concept or schematic design stage, on commercial and mixed use interfaces – ground floor frontages and adjacent frontage zones abutting the public right-of-way.

These guidelines should be applied to all commercial and mixed use development with ground floor uses accessed from the street.

These guidelines identify planning and design considerations in addition to *Zoning Bylaw* regulations related to front yard setbacks, glazing, main floor ceiling heights and bay widths.

As mixed use developments may also incorporate ground oriented residential units, these guidelines should be read in conjunction with *PR3 Multi-Unit Housing Interfaces*.

These guidelines do not address the detailed design of buildings, lighting, signage, or streetscaping.

Ground floor commercial and mixed-use building facades and frontage zones interfacing with the public realm create active edges that attract people and contribute to vibrant, walkable and inclusive streetscapes and civic spaces.

GROUND FLOOR ACCESS AND FRONTAGE ZONES

- Front yard setbacks should be considered to create frontage zones for landscaping, patios, sandwich boards, storefront displays and similar uses to improve walkability and vibrancy (Figures 1–4).
 - The depth of a frontage zone should reflect:
 - The existing street wall. It may be more appropriate to create an extended frontage zone on a corner site or where a strong street wall does not exist (Figure 1).
 - The intended use – which can range from 1.0m to 3.0m or more.
 - Frontage zones should be hard surfaced, and seamlessly integrated with the adjacent sidewalk though pavement material and pattern that minimizes the visual separation between public and private areas (Figure 5).
 - Grade changes from sidewalks to ground floor uses should be avoided to allow for a convenient and barrier-free universal access. If necessary, small ramps can be integrated into the frontage zone (Figure 6) or within the building interior.
 - Informal seating can include seating walls and window ledges (Figures 7,8).
- Outdoor patios within frontage zones or within the road right-of-way can animate the streetscape and support local business (Figure 9). Outdoor patios should:
 - Protect street trees and other street furniture (e.g. signs, fire hydrants, light poles);
 - Ensure a clear path of travel for pedestrians of a minimum of 2.0m;
 - Be universally accessible to both patrons and pedestrians through the provision of ramps and other devices (Refer to *Edmonton Access Design*

Guide and *Alberta Barrier-Free Design Guide* for more information);

- Be located and/or configured for maximum sun exposure; and
- Be built with high-quality materials of a robust design in order to positively contribute to the street character and city image.
- Temporary patios within the road right-of-way should be developed in accordance with the *City of Edmonton Patio Program Guide*.

GROUND FLOOR CEILING HEIGHT

- High ground floor ceiling heights should be considered to provide additional functionality and increase streetscape animation (Figures 10, 11).
 - High ground floor ceiling heights (e.g. 4.5m, measured from floor to floor) permit additional glazing (e.g. transom windows) for increased daylight and ventilation for ground floor uses.
 - Double floor heights (e.g. 7.5m – 9.0m) allow for mezzanine space while accommodating service and loading functions elsewhere within the building.

GROUND FLOOR AND STREET ANIMATION

- Small commercial bays, multiple entries, take-out windows, roll-up doors and other techniques should be considered to enhance access, visibility and interactions between the sidewalk and ground floor uses (Figures 12–15).
 - Small commercial bays, each with their own entrance, are preferred over bays which occupy large ground floor areas. A maximum bay width of 11.0m is recommended.
 - Ground floor uses that require visual separation / privacy, or otherwise do not positively contribute to an active frontage (e.g. waiting areas, mechanical rooms), should not face the street but instead be located within the building interior.
 - Large format retail uses should be moved to interior or second floor locations to allow small commercial bays on the ground floor (Figure 16).
 - For take-out windows, the height and design of window sills / counters must take into account persons in wheelchairs.
- Shared entries and lobbies (commercial or residential) are acceptable if designed in an appropriate manner.

- Shared commercial entries may be appropriate where internal units cannot be provided with their own exterior access. Shared entries should include seating and other amenities for the use and enjoyment of visitors.
- Shared entries should minimize their street frontage.
- Shared entries should be clearly differentiated from other ground floor uses for wayfinding and ease of identification (Figure 17).
- Commercial and mixed-use building interfaces should consider the proximity of transit stops and stations (Figure 18).
 - Building entries and adjacent areas should be designed to provide sufficient pedestrian throughway widths and not interfere with the transit stop waiting area.
 - Where feasible, closer integration of transit stops and stations into building design should be explored, in ways that create a strong identity for transit and enhance building architecture and the public realm.
- Glazing along the ground floor should be maximized to create a strong inside-outside connection and accommodate store window displays.
 - Continuous storefront glazing is preferred over punched windows.
 - Tinted, frosted, fritted and mirrored glass, as well as large window signs, are strongly discouraged. See *S4 Signage Guidelines* for more information.

PEDESTRIAN COMFORT, WALKABILITY AND HUMAN SCALE

- Architectural elements and details should be considered which contribute to a walkable, human scaled streetscape, regardless of architectural style.
 - Columns, pilasters or similar repetitive vertical architectural elements can reinforce the pattern of commercial bays and create a sense of rhythm along the streetscape.
- Canopies, awnings, and inset entries should be considered as a means to articulate building entrances and provide practical weather protection (Figure 19).
 - Inset entries can maximize accessibility and wayfinding – particularly for persons with visual impairments – but must be carefully designed to minimize entrapment areas.

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Key considerations for the design of commercial + mixed use interfaces

Setback (A) creates a usable frontage zone while generally respecting the existing streetwall.

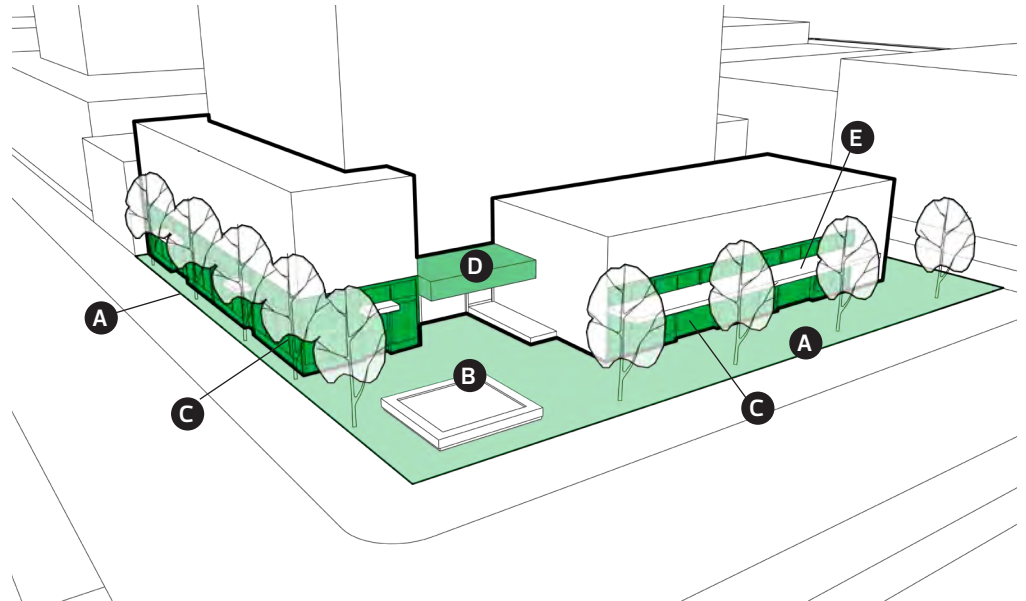
Opportunities for increased frontage zone; e.g. corner site, solar orientation (B).

High ground floor height, generous glazing and multiple, well articulated unit entries (C).

Well articulated shared entry (D).

Opportunity for continuous canopy for weather protection, human scale (E).

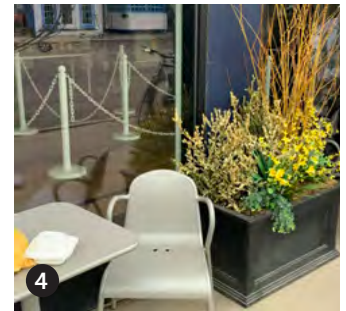
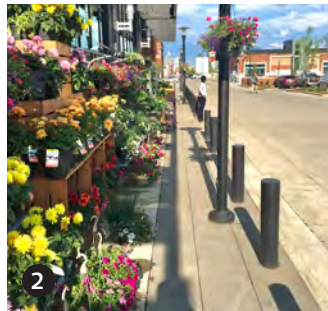
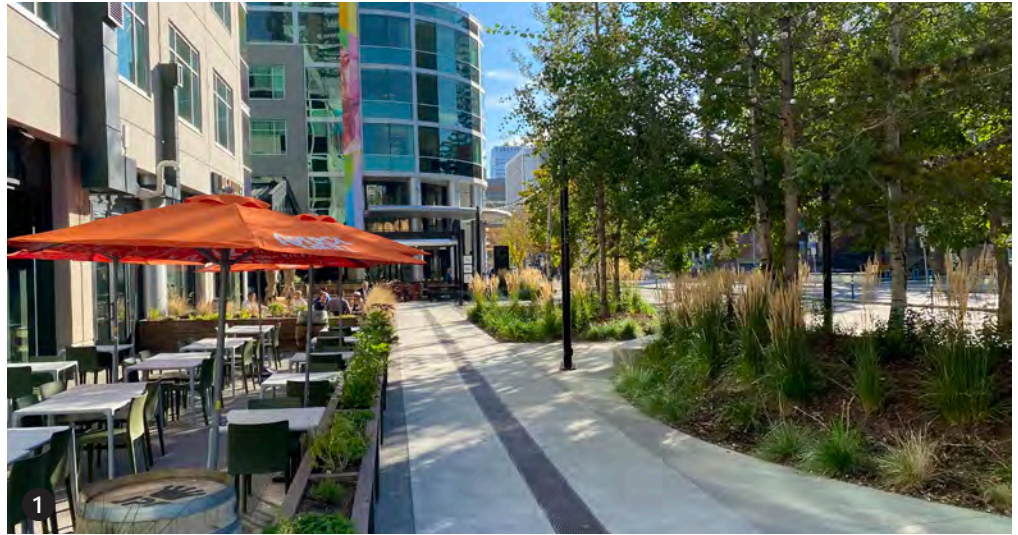
- Canopies, awnings and arcades (Figure 20) can also be incorporated along the entire length of a building facade to provide additional weather protection and contribute to a human scaled streetscape.
- The minimum requirements for canopy heights and depths are regulated in the Zoning Bylaw. In addition, canopies should not encroach on the public right of way. The ultimate location, height and depth of a canopy should maximize pedestrian comfort and weather protection.
- Canopies and awnings can also incorporate signage in an architecturally integrated manner.
- Canopies and awnings must be carefully detailed to mitigate snow melt and ice buildup on sidewalks.



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- 1 On a corner site a generous frontage zone incorporates a patio, pedestrian space and extensive landscaping, Calgary.
- 2-4 Even a small frontage zone can accommodate merchandising, signage, seating and seasonal displays.
- 5 Frontage zone seamlessly integrated with the sidewalk, Vancouver.
- 6 Ramped entrance provides universal access to ground floor uses.
- 7 A window sill provides an informal seating opportunity.
- 8 Bench seating incorporated into a building frontage for year-round amenity, Oslo.
- 9 A simple yet robust patio design ntegrated with existing street furniture.



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- 10 Double-height glazing enlivens the winter cityscape, Copenhagen.
- 11 Human scaled storefront with high ground floor ceiling heights, small commercial bays and pilasters.
- 12,13 An effective commercial interface can be created regardless of architectural style.
- 14 Roll-up door, Calgary.
- 15 Take-out window.
- 16 Second level big box retailer allowing for small bays at ground level, Calgary.
- 17 Common residential entrance differentiated from ground floor commercial (Street View)
- 18 Transit shelter incorporated into commercial development, Ottawa (Street View).
- 19 Canopy with integrated building signage.
- 20 Pedestrian arcade, Hudson's Bay building, Calgary.

