Calgary

Highland Village Green
Design Guidelines

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Design Guidelines

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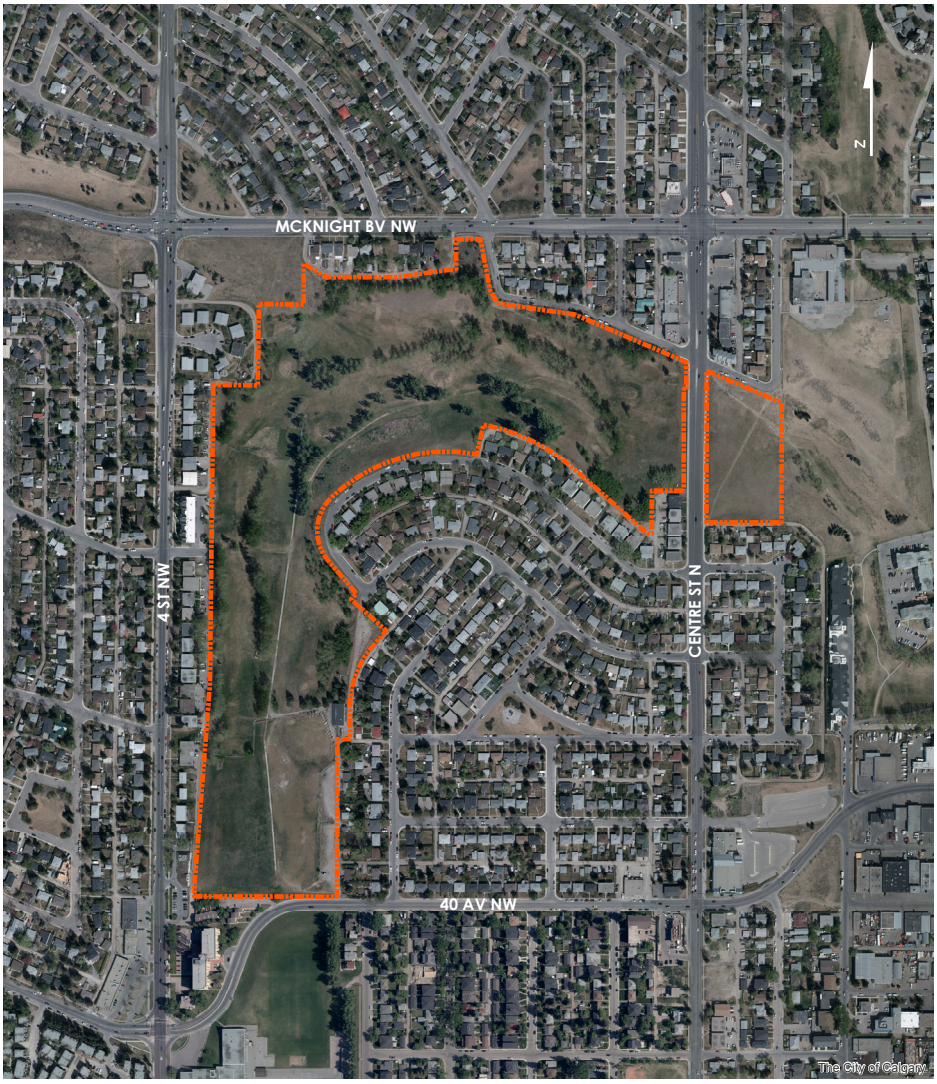
1.0 Introduction

Highland Village Green is a new mixed-use inner city development on the former Highland Golf Course site in the community of Highland Park. The current character surrounding the subject area is defined predominately by low density built-form developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Newer single and semi-detached infill development has been built in the area in recent years. The future Green Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) is planned to travel along the Centre Street corridor connecting to the downtown, and a station is expected to be located at 40th Avenue N and Centre Street N.

The Municipal Development Plan (MDP) gives general direction for the evolutionary intensification along Centre Street N and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) areas. These Highland Village Green Design Guidelines are intended to support the overall goals of the MDP. Specifically, the Guidelines promote the following MDP objectives and principles:

1. **Support an urban mixed-use development in a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) and Urban Corridor area;**
2. **Ensure that development in a TOD and Urban Corridor fits with the surrounding context;**
3. **Provide public transit connectivity for the community;**
4. **Ensure accessibility and walkability;**
5. **Encourage sustainable architecture;**
6. **Encourage design excellence in the public realm and built-form; and**
7. **Ensure the TOD area achieves a "sense of place".**

The Guidelines apply to the Highland Village Green development area as identified in Figure 1.



Legend

Site Boundary

The Guidelines provide clear direction for designers, developers, builders, property owners and community members for new development in Highland Village Green. Although the Guidelines are non-statutory, they are to be used by City staff and other decision makers in the review of new development proposals.

The purpose of the Highland Village Green Design Guidelines is to:

1. **Support the Land Use Districts in the absence of a local area plan for these lands.**
2. **Provide an appropriate interface and massing with the adjacent low-density residential areas of Highland Park.**
3. **Support quality new development on the Highland Village Green lands.**
4. **Support Highland Village Green as a Transit-Oriented Development and Urban Corridor.**

These Guidelines recognize that exceptions may sometimes be warranted and that at times a project that strives for excellence in design can demonstrate that a specific guideline is not appropriate in that instance. It is the responsibility of the designer / developer / builder to demonstrate to The City where such an exception may be justified, and it is The City's discretion to support or not support a justification.

2.0 Density

The Highland Village Green Design Guidelines are intended to supplement the rules and requirements of the land use districts. Among other things, these districts regulate minimum and maximum density for each development site, through dwelling unit density or floor area ratio. The following guideline sets a maximum number of dwelling units that can be built in Highland Village Green. The intent is for the dwelling unit density to be tracked through the Development Permit process such that it does not exceed this maximum.

1. **The maximum density in the Highland Village Green lands shall be 2070 dwelling units.**

3.0 Built Form

Built form is a key consideration for creating high quality, pedestrian friendly, urban environments. Buildings that are designed to consider the human scale, the relationship to adjacent development and the impact on streets and open spaces, greatly contributes to fostering a "sense of place" and ensuring contextually sensitive development.

The following guidelines address key design considerations for the built form, including massing and requirements for high rise buildings. For the purpose of these Guidelines, high rise buildings refer to buildings above 8 stories in height.

The intent of the Guidelines is to ensure that new buildings in Highland Village Green are designed to respect the interface with existing low-density residential development, mitigate negative impacts they have on shadowing and sunlight access, and are human scaled.

3.1 General Policies

a. Buildings should be designed and sited to minimize the impacts of massing, shadowing and negative wind conditions on Centre Street N, Highland Drive N.W., parks, urban open spaces, and existing low-density residential areas.

b. Building design should incorporate design elements, such as setbacks, step-backs, roof typologies and façade articulation, to integrate the building mass with surrounding lower-scaled built-form.

c. New development should locate the highest building heights and massing closest to the primary street frontage and away from adjacent low-density residential development.

d. Buildings should be designed and sited to provide the majority of the building frontage along the primary street frontage to create a continuous building wall.

e. For buildings with a frontage of over 60 metres in length along the street, the overall mass of the building should be broken up with changes in width, height, and finishing materials along the facade. Building facades should not exceed 15 metres in length without a change in plane or material.

f. Building design should consider interfaces with low-density residential development and employ design elements that mitigate potential negative impacts of massing and overlooking.

g. Balconies should be designed to minimize the physical and visual mass of buildings.

h. Buildings should incorporate step-backs to avoid the creation of monolithic building massing, facilitate a human-scale street wall, and when high rises are part of the development, to mitigate the visual and wind impact at the street level.

i. All proposals for buildings above 4 stories shall include a sun/shadow study and demonstrate how the building design mitigates negative impacts of shadowing on neighbouring streets, properties, and open space.

3.2 High Rise Buildings

a. High rise buildings should be sited away from adjacent low-density residential areas.

b. In order to reduce the massing impacts of high rise buildings, the maximum floorplate size of the portion of a building above eight stories shall be 850m^2.

   The Development Authority may consider relaxing the floorplate size restriction of a building above eight stories. When evaluating such requests, the Development Authority shall comprehensively consider:

   i. shadow casting impacts on the public realm and the need to provide adequate light penetration to adjacent buildings;

   ii. the ability to achieve a 24 metre tower separation from existing or future development on adjacent sites;

   iii. the ability to use building orientation, shape and massing to mitigate any negative impacts; and

   iv. the cumulative building mass impact given the potential "build out" of the block.

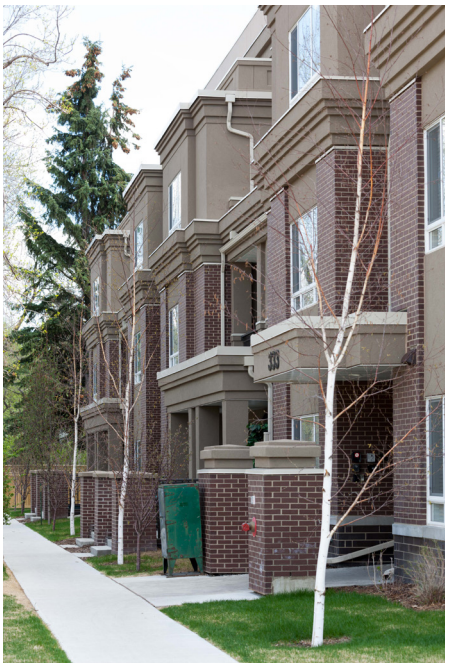
   v. the ability to demonstrate that floors above 8 stories have incorporated stepping of the building mass and/or the creation of distinctive architectural or structural elements as an alternative to the 850m2 floorplate.

c. Developments with more than one high rise building must provide a separation distance between each portion of the building above 8 stories on the same site of 24 metres or greater, measured from the exterior wall of the buildings, excluding balconies.

d. Building facades above 8 stories should be located a minimum of 9 metres from a property line shared with an adjacent parcel or lane unless it can be demonstrated as per 3.2.b.i-v appropriate building massing has been achieved in the building design.

4.0 Building Façades and Street Level Interfaces

In addition to overall building massing, architectural treatment of the street level interface of buildings is an important design element for creating pedestrian-scaled street environments. The following guidelines are intended to ensure the street-level interface of buildings encourage pedestrian-focused, active uses.



Residential interface

4.1 General Guidelines

a. Buildings should provide architectural expression and design elements, such as cornice lines, window bays, entrances, canopies, building materials, textures and fenestration, in a pattern, scale, colour and proportion that creates attractive buildings and engages pedestrians.

b. Buildings should be designed to provide, where possible, entrances and transparent windows on all façades facing streets, parks, and open space.

c. Residential balconies and other projecting building elements should creatively and visually complement the selected architectural style through form, material, texture or colour.

d. The width of individual entrance lobbies, whose only function is to provide access to upper or lower level uses, should be minimized so as not to create major gaps in activity.

e. New development should promote accessibility for all individuals, including people with disabilities by ensuring:

   i. the primary access to buildings is directly from the street at grade; and

   ii. new development is designed in accordance with The City's Access Design Guidelines.

f. On all residential/commercial mixed-use sites, buildings shall provide for a minimum first floor to ceiling height of 4.5 metres to accommodate commercial and retail uses at-grade or the possibility of changes to these uses over time.

g. Portions of publicly accessible private spaces should utilize canopies or similar architectural elements to mitigate the impact of inclement weather and should be a function of the adjacent uses.

h. Building design should provide for primary pedestrian gateways/building entrances that create a distinctive architectural look, and have a distinct shape and/or colour when compared with neighbouring buildings of the same type and scale.

i. The interface between the public sidewalk and buildings should clearly define public, semi-public and private open space and may include the following design measures: transparent fencing, layered landscaping, xeriscaping, hedges and raised stoops/terraces.

j. Pedestrian-scale lighting, signage, street numbering, should be incorporated into building design as appropriate.

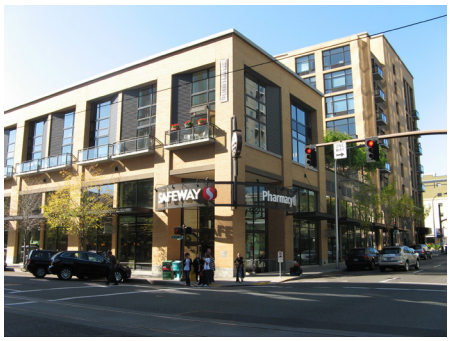
Residential interface

4.2 Residential Interface

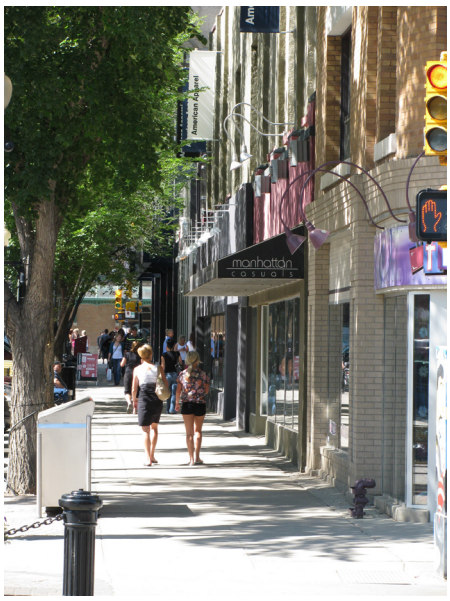
a. All ground level units along Highland Drive N.W. and Highland Green N.W. shall have a primary unit entrance and windows that face the street. Primary unit entrances may be required on other streets at the discretion of the Development Authority.

b. Residential uses at-grade should provide opportunities for usable amenity space between the building and the street. Design examples may include setbacks or raised stoop/terraces with vertically layered landscaping.

c. Building design should consider the interface with adjacent low-density residential areas and incorporate design strategies that mitigate negative impacts of shadowing, sunlight access and privacy. Design strategies may include stepping the building down and balconies that are oriented away from low-density residential, for example, on building faces that do not face directly onto existing homes.



Commercial mixed use



Retail mixed use

4.3 Retail and Mixed Use Interface

a. Location and design of commercial uses at-grade should carefully consider adjacent existing development, including low-density residential, to mitigate potential negative impacts.

b. Setback variation should be a function of the ground level uses to provide opportunities for appropriate landscape buffering/transition, restaurant patio spaces, public art, street furniture, additional trees or other elements that create visual interest and activate the building interface.

c. Building corners at Centre Street N and Highland Drive N.W. should be architecturally defined. Corners should provide the highest level of urban design and architectural treatment to create a vibrant pedestrian environment.

d. New development is encouraged to incorporate public spaces at the corner of Highland Drive N.W. and Centre Street N for seasonal activities such as patios or serve as a community meeting spaces. These corners present an opportunity to concentrate coffee shops, bakeries and other smaller neighbourhood retail venues that could serve the local population.

e. In mixed-use buildings, the entrances for residential and commercial uses should be differentiated.

f. Where signage is provided, it should be scaled and oriented to the pedestrian. Retail frontages are encouraged to employ blade signage. Signs that are scaled to automobile traffic are prohibited.

g. Large expanses of blank sidewalls should be avoided. For parts of the façade that are not activated, either provide architecturally articulated window transparency to provide visual access to interior activities and additionally contemplate special graphic displays, public art elements or new formats of digitized displays to mitigate impacts of blank walls.

h. The building faç ade of large businesses should be modulated in width such that the facade is designed to read as a series of articulated bays with a high percentage of transparency and a maximum width of 10-12 metres.

Retail mixed use interface

i. Large retail uses, such as supermarkets and pharmacies, are encouraged to incorporate the following urban design strategies to minimize their impact on the street-interface and create a fine grained retail environment:

   i. utilizing smaller floor plate sizes by locating on upper and lower floors;

   ii. designing faç ades to create smaller storefronts with multiple entry points;

   iii. utilizing smaller retail uses as street-adjacent liners, and;

   iv. integrating into mixed-use buildings.

j. For commercial ground floor development, street front elevations should be highly permeable and transparent along the majority of the facade by providing doorway entrances to the street and allowing for pedestrian views directly into each business.

Weather protection

4.4 Weather protection

a. Buildings should provide permanent pedestrian weather protection, such as overhangs or canopies, at building entrances and along commercial and mixed-use street frontages.

b. Weather protection should be located at the top of the first floor (maximum 6 metres) and provide a width of 3 metres.

c. Pedestrian weather protection should be coordinated with neighbouring buildings for continuous shelter and compatibility in design.

5.0 Access, Parking and Site Servicing

Site access, parking and site servicing while necessary for development, can have significant impacts on the quality of the streetscape as well as on neighbouring parcels. The following guidelines are intended to limit the negative impacts that these elements may have by ensuring access points, parking and servicing are located appropriately and design measures such as screening and landscaping are employed where necessary.

a. Pedestrian and vehicular access points to sites should be defined with landscape features and lighting. Publically accessible private open space adjacent to buildings should be landscaped in a way to provide opportunities for passive and active uses, including but not limited to, seasonal patios, sitting areas, water features and public art.

b. Commercial parking and drop-off areas should be located at the back of the building. When located at the rear, direct visual and physical pedestrian and bicycle access should be provided as a part of the building to the street frontage, either through a direct rear entrance or a safe, well-lit, accessible and convenient pedestrian passage.

c. Garage doors and service openings visible from public streets and public or private open space should be high quality and be recessed, screened and/or minimized in size.

d. A minimum of 50% of a site's parking requirement shall be provided underground or within the building mass. Where surface parking is provided, it must be adequately screened from the public realm and adjacent properties. Screening may include, but is not limited to, high-quality fencing, landscaping, and building placement.

e. Activities, such as loading, servicing, utilities, and vehicle parking, should be located and designed to limit negative impacts on the safety, comfort, and quality of the public realm and adjacent existing residential.

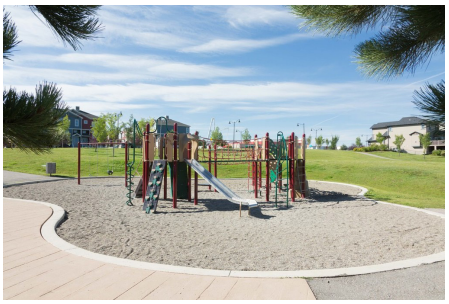
f. Access to site servicing and parking should be provided at the rear of the building, or from a shared driveway, if possible. There shall not be access to sites from the lanes in the existing community.

g. Where below-grade parking structures are permitted to encroach beyond the front face of the building, appropriate soil volume should be provided to support opportunities for tree planting and other soft landscaping along the building frontage.

h. Ventilation shafts, grates, and other above-ground mechanical or site servicing equipment should be located away from the public sidewalk (especially the pedestrian clearway), public or private open spaces, and adjacent existing residential development.

6.0 Amenity Space and the Public Realm

The quality and design of amenity spaces and the public realm are important considerations to creating livable, pedestrian-friendly environments. The following guidelines are intended to encourage high-quality design for amenity spaces located in private developments as well as the streets and open spaces that surround developments.



Amenity

Public realm

6.1 Amenity space

a. A range of universally accessible, high-quality, comfortable and safe private and shared outdoor amenity spaces should be provided. These may include picnic areas, children's playgrounds, specialized private gardens or active use amenities such as tennis and basketball courts or similar.

b. Shared private outdoor amenity space should be located and designed to maximize access to sunlight and minimize noise and air quality impacts from site servicing and mechanical equipment.

c. Private balconies should be large enough to provide for usable outdoor space, such as space for seating.

6.2 Public realm

a. Streetscape and landscape elements should be designed to support safe and comfortable pedestrian movement, highlight important building features, (e.g. parking access), add four season interest, colour, and texture, and provide shade, where appropriate.

b. Sustainable streetscape and landscape design should be incorporated by:

   i. providing sufficient soil depth and high-quality growing medium for new shade trees and plant material;

   ii. using permeable paving materials to manage the urban heat island effect and stormwater;

   iii. maximizing on-site stormwater infiltration, capture, and reuse; and,

   iv. installing energy efficient, pedestrian-scale lighting with shielded fixtures and automatic shut-off devices.

c. A high quality pedestrian environment should be provided on all streets including, but not limited to, sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, public art, safe crosswalks, functional and architecturally attractive transit stations with shelters, and corner spaces by following Complete Streets Guide and other relevant urban design policies and standards.

d. Open space should be designed to accommodate opportunities for year-round programming and use.

e. Adequate space should be provided between the front of the building and adjacent street curbs to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian movement, streetscape elements, and activities related to uses at grade.