

8. Development Permit Area Guidelines

8.2 Commercial Development Permit Area

8.2.1 Category

The Commercial Development Permit Area is designated under the authority of Section [488\(1\)\(d\)](#) (revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted) and (f) (establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development) of the [Local Government Act](#).

8.2.2 Area

Unless exempted, the areas designated as the Commercial Development Permit Area are illustrated on Map Schedule E3.

8.2.3 Justification

Commercial areas in the City of Quesnel are important gathering places for the community for business and social activities. These areas also create a first impression to travelers when they arrive in the city. As a result, the appearance and character of these areas have a direct link to the community's sense of identity and promotes Quesnel as a tourist-friendly destination with positive and attractive stores and amenities for residents and visitors alike.

There are four key commercial areas included in this Development Permit Area:

- **Downtown.** The downtown core of Quesnel is the business, culture and service centre of the community. Because of the downtown's importance, most residents frequently visit downtown for business and social activities. Therefore, the appearance and character of the area are tied to the community's sense of identity and pride.
- **West Quesnel.** The West Quesnel commercial area consists of a variety of uses in an assortment of building types, layouts and architectural styles. As a result, the function of the area as a single entity remains unclear. Design guidelines are needed to facilitate the creation of a commercial area that respects the character of the community yet responds to the scale and uniqueness of the West Quesnel neighbourhood. Until more detailed design guidelines are prepared, the general guidelines in this Development Permit Area will ensure that a minimum level of good design is established in West Quesnel.
- **South Quesnel.** South Quesnel's commercial area consists of highway commercial uses located at the southern entrance to the city. Commercial development and redevelopment in this area creates a strong first impression of Quesnel to motorists arriving from the south. It is important to ensure that the area is developed in a way that creates a positive first impression, does not have negative impact on adjacent uses, and provides safe and convenient access.
- **Northern Gateway.** The Northern Gateway area primarily consists of highway and service commercial uses and light industrial uses located along highway frontage in the north

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entrance to the city. Due to its location, it is important for good design in this area to give a positive first impression to visitors and residents arriving from the north.

8.2.4 Objective

The objective for this area is to create a sense of place and vibrancy for the commercial areas of the City of Quesnel. Through encouraging continuity and improvements to the presentation of these areas, while also providing flexibility for original and inspired design, commercial spaces will be strengthened as exciting and vibrant places with an inviting and modern look and feel.

8.2.5 Application

A development permit is required prior to the following activities:

- a. Subdivision (as defined in section [455](#) of the [Local Government Act](#)).
- b. Construction of, addition to, or alteration of a building or other structure.
- c. Alteration of land, such as the removal, disruption, or destruction of vegetation.

8.2.6 Exemptions

A Commercial Development Permit will not be required for:

- a. An alteration to a building that does not require the issuance of a building permit.
- b. Replacement, alteration or addition to a building such as new siding, roofing, doors, building trim, awnings, and/or windows where it does not negatively impact the overall form and character of the building and would not impact the existing landscape or access provisions.
- c. Interior renovations.
- d. Replacement of a building that has been destroyed by natural causes, in cases where the replacement building is identical to the original in size, form, character and location (i.e. utilize existing foundations).

8.2.7 General Guidelines

Development permits issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines:

Public Realm and Relationship to the Street

1. Promote interesting, pedestrian friendly streetscape design and pedestrian linkages.
2. Locate buildings to provide an effective street edge while respecting the established, desired streetscape.
3. Provide weather protection along building frontages wherever possible, including ramps and stairs.

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4. Properties within close proximity to the Fraser River, Quesnel River, or Baker Creek are encouraged to integrate visual and physical connections to the Riverfront Trail System.
5. Design buildings with multiple street frontages to give equal emphasis to each frontage with respect to building massing, materials, details, and landscaping.
6. Design the spaces between buildings, street curbs and carriages as safe, convenient and interesting places for people.
7. Enliven the public realm with attractive amenities such as seating, plantings, lighting, transit shelters, public art and water features.
8. Consider integrating amenities, lighting and colour into carriages to create visual interest and pedestrian friendly spaces.
9. Connect pedestrian spaces with elements such as tree colonnades, awnings or canopies to moderate the impact of rain, snow, and wind, particularly where pedestrian traffic is present or desired.
10. Consider using colour and lighting on awnings to add interest and character on all types of buildings.
11. Integrate site and design with existing significant natural features, topography and vegetation.
12. Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to eliminate places of concealment and to reduce opportunities for crime.

Building and Structure Massing

13. The siting, scale and massing of buildings should be designed in a way that enhances the visual character of the commercial area while being consistent with adjacent development.
14. Where larger commercial developments meet low-density single detached residential developments, roof lines should slope down and building shapes should be stepped down to meet the height of the adjacent single detached development.
15. Incorporate mid-block breezeways in large commercial development projects, where appropriate.
16. Second and third storeys should be stepped back, especially when adjacent to single storey developments or low-density residential areas.

Building Materials and Character

17. Use materials in combination to create contrast, enhance human scale, and reduce the apparent bulk of a building.
18. Design should include varied and interesting facades, including a variety of roof lines, roof cover over entry points, balconies and porches.

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19. Monolithic structures and long expanses of straight walls using singular materials should be avoided.
20. Large buildings should be designed to create the impression of smaller units and less bulk by encouraging architectural treatments for roof systems, façade relief and variety between sections.
21. The building exterior may be complemented by additional trim or architectural details to avoid a plain box-like appearance.
22. The visual appearance of a building may also be improved through extensive landscaping that meets the intent of the FireSmart guidelines.
23. If cultured stone is to be used on exteriors, it should be utilized as accents only and not the primary exterior building material.
24. Buildings clad entirely in vinyl siding are discouraged.
25. Design sites with multiple buildings such that there is a sense of architectural unity or cohesiveness.

Building Operational Design

26. Buildings must all be universally accessible and buildings and access should be designed to address the functional needs of persons with disabilities including those who are mobility, visually and hearing impaired, and/or have reduced strength or dexterity.
27. Locate storage, garbage, composting and recycling areas to the rear of buildings and not between any building and abutting streets, and screen these areas with attractive, high-quality materials and architectural treatments that are complementary with the associated building(s).

Access, Circulation and Parking

28. New development must provide safe and efficient vehicle entrances, exits and site circulation.
29. Sites should be designed to accommodate alternative modes of transportation, with provisions made onsite for sidewalks, bicycle and walking paths or lanes, and bicycle parking racks.
30. Onsite transportation networks should connect to transportation networks off site.
31. Provide bicycle parking racks near a building entrance, in a highly visible location. For larger commercial developments consider secured, weather protected bike parking.
32. Large surface parking lots should be broken into smaller groups, with landscaping between the groups of parking.
33. Surface parking lots located at the side or rear of the principal building, rather than the front of the building, are encouraged.

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34. Surface parking lots and access routes should be provided with asphalt, concrete, interlocking bricks or other hard surfaces. Gravel parking lots and access routes will not be accepted.

Screening, Landscaping and Exterior Lighting

35. Provide landscaping in the following areas:
 - a. Along the property edge next to roadways.
 - b. Between buildings and parking areas.
 - c. Along onsite access roads.
 - d. Along the sides of buildings.
 - e. In other open space areas not required for parking, access roads or walkways.
36. Provide supplementary screening in the form of fencing, hedging, planting, other screening materials or a combination of materials in the following areas:
 - a. Around outdoor storage areas and loading bays.
 - b. Around waste containers.
 - c. Blank walls.
 - d. Around heating and cooling equipment and other service areas.
 - e. Between parking areas and the street.
 - f. Between the rear of commercial areas and any residential area.
37. Should chain link fencing be used for security purposes, landscaping features and finishing details must be provided to reduce the negative visual impact for that part of the fence visible from the surrounding roads and any residential properties.
38. Include onsite amenities that improve pedestrian enjoyment and accessibility and the quality of the public spaces, including courtyards, gardens, sitting areas, flower baskets and planters, and parklets.
39. Retain existing mature vegetation to enhance the urban environment and retain the existing character of the area.
40. Where appropriate, strategically plant native and drought tolerant trees, shrubs and other vegetation to protect from high winds and excessive heat.
41. Select plant species that offer attractive seasonal characteristics such as colour or flowering. Native or non-invasive species that will create interesting landscapes year-round, including tall ornamental grasses, hardy trees or shrubs that have colourful bark in the winter are encouraged.
42. Light flanking doors and entryways, especially where signs will also be lit.

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43. Design projects to ensure that they do not produce a strong glaring light or reflection of light beyond their lot lines.

Sequence and Timing

44. Phased developments will be considered to encourage orderly development, identify priorities, and facilitate completion of projects.
45. In general, the sequence and timing of initial phases should result in their completion before subsequent phases are started.

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8.2.8 Area-Specific Guidelines

Development permits issued in this area shall be in accordance with the following guidelines that apply to their location:

Downtown

Development permits issued in those commercial areas located in the downtown core, located on the peninsula between the Fraser and Quesnel Rivers and south of Gordon Avenue, shall be accordance to the following additional guidelines:

1. Design buildings that create pedestrian-friendly street frontages by incorporating design features that visually and physically connect building frontages to the street (i.e. windows, doorways, patios, paths to the street, landscaping along the street, etc.).
2. Exterior building materials should be selected for their functional and aesthetic quality, and exhibit qualities of workmanship, durability, longevity and ease of maintenance. This includes wood (e.g. clapboard, shingles, board and batten), concrete (e.g. hardieplank), and glass.
3. Exterior building colour palettes should be selected to create visual interest and support the vision of an exciting and welcoming downtown.
4. Building facade colour palettes should highlight pedestrian-scaled building massing and entrances to improve visual interest of streets.
5. Contrasting colours used to highlight architectural details (e.g. soffits, window and door trim) are encouraged.
6. Matte finishes on products are preferred rather than high gloss finishes, as they are more inviting and attractive at the pedestrian scale.
7. To continue to reflect the historical character of the Downtown Core area, new development should respond to the context of local architecture while avoiding artificial heritage looks (such as faux brick or wood) with respect to materials.
8. Other design features including dormers, bay windows, and sub-roofs are also encouraged to reflect the architectural character of the area.

West Quesnel

Development permits issued in those commercial areas located in West Quesnel, located on the west side of the Fraser River, shall be accordance to the following additional guidelines:

9. Design buildings that create pedestrian-friendly street frontages by incorporating design features that visually and physically connect building frontages to the street (i.e. windows, doorways, patios, paths to the street, landscaping along the street, etc.).

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10. Exterior building materials should be selected for their functional and aesthetic quality, and should exhibit qualities of workmanship, durability, longevity and ease of maintenance, such as concrete (e.g. hardieplank), metal and glass.
11. Exterior building colours should be bright and bold to create visual interest and support the vision of a vibrant and welcoming neighbourhood.
12. Building facade colour palettes should highlight pedestrian-scaled building massing and entrances, to improve visual interest of streets.
13. Contrasting colours used to highlight architectural details (e.g. soffits, window and door trim) are encouraged.
14. Matte finishes on products are preferred rather than high gloss finishes, as they are more inviting and attractive at the pedestrian scale.
15. The general character of signs should positively relate to the architectural character of the associated building.
16. Freestanding signs should have a landscaped base.

South Quesnel

Development permits issued in those commercial areas located in South Quesnel, located on the east side of the Quesnel and Fraser Rivers, shall be accordance to the following additional guidelines:

17. Infill development on existing developed sites will be encouraged to locate adjacent to the street edge and sidewalk(s) to create positive visual interest and buffer parking areas.
18. New commercial sites should incorporate smaller buildings wrapped around the adjacent street edge and sidewalk(s) to better integrate the site with the public realm and make them more compatible with a pedestrian friendly environment.
19. Exterior building materials should be selected for their functional and aesthetic quality, and should exhibit qualities of workmanship, durability, longevity and ease of maintenance. Examples such as wood, stone, brick, concrete (e.g. hardieplank) metal and glass are appropriate.
20. To celebrate the agricultural history of the region and to enhance the visual characteristics of the southern entrance to the city, natural wood building materials and accents are encouraged on the exterior of buildings. Other design features including sloping roofs, dormers, gables, cupolas, board and batten, and exposed brick or stone wainscotting are also encouraged.
21. Building materials that enhance the visual identity of the area are encouraged on building faces that can be seen from Highway 97.

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22. Exterior building colours should be warm and blend with the natural setting. Muted colours and earth tones are encouraged and bright colours are appropriate as accents on architectural features.
23. Matte finishes on products are preferred rather than high gloss finishes, as they are more inviting and attractive at the pedestrian scale.
24. Vehicle entrances and exits should be designed to function well with the Provincial Highway and municipal road network and, toward that end, should be designed in accordance with Transportation Association of Canada Geometric Design Guides and should consider the Ministry of Transportation Site Impact Analysis requirements.
25. Any new development should take into consideration the impact on existing roadways and future development of the area. Intersection improvements or roadway re-alignments should be considered to improve traffic circulation.
26. Freestanding signs should have a landscaped base.

Northern Gateway

Development permits issued in those commercial areas located in Northern Gateway, located on the north side of the City of Quesnel boundary along Highway 97, shall be accordance to the following additional guidelines:

27. Exterior building materials should be selected for their functional and aesthetic quality, and should exhibit qualities of workmanship, durability, longevity and ease of maintenance, such as wood, stone, concrete (e.g. hardieplank), metal and glass.
28. To celebrate the history and design traditions of Quesnel and to enhance the visual characteristics of the north entrance to the city, natural wood building materials and accents are encouraged on the exterior of buildings. Examples include horizontal or vertical wood siding, wood shakes and shingles, and wood timbers.
29. Building materials that enhance the visual identity of the area are also encouraged on building faces that can be seen from Highway 97.
30. New commercial developments building setbacks should be generally consistent with the building setbacks of adjacent properties.
31. Freestanding signs should have a landscaped base.