

STREET CORRIDORS

Streets do more than move traffic from point A to point B; they can fulfill a variety of functions for a diverse group of users. Streets provide places for people to meet, with sidewalk cafes and window shopping, a residential street for you and your neighbours, and they help move pedestrians, cyclists and transit.

Street Corridors make up close to one-third of the land area of a city, and 80-90 percent of its public realm. They are a key element in creating a sense of identity. Their role is not just to move vehicular traffic but to work with the adjacent buildings and the activities in them and along the street corridor, to shape the character, function and livability of areas. Development should relate to the street corridor, and together create a cohesive public realm.

TYPES OF STREET CORRIDORS

Currently Street Corridors are classified into three categories: arterials, collectors and locals. This classification is purely for purposes of assessing the capacity of each road for the amount of traffic that will flow through it. For form-based zoning, we look at the role of different street corridors beyond just moving traffic. For example, is it a residential street, or is it a pedestrian-oriented commercial street? Does transit go along this street? Does it connect different neighbourhoods? Move people across the city? Or just serve the people that along the street? What kinds of users and activities take place along this street? What design features are required?

All these factors are considered in determining a range of different street corridors that will continue to move vehicle traffic but also allow for a variety of other activities and modes of transportation to effectively work together. The development requirements along each street corridor would be appropriate to that street type.

A Local Street is narrower to discourage fast, through traffic with less intense development, like houses, along it.



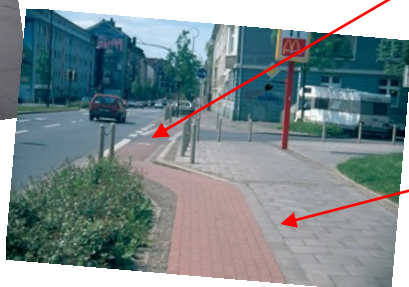
Treed boulevards separate pedestrians from moving traffic for increased safety.

A Community Connector moves traffic between areas of a city and has higher intensity development along it.



Two lanes in each direction are dedicated to moving traffic and transit efficiently.

A dedicated parking lane is a buffer to protect pedestrians from the moving traffic and enhances retail opportunities along the street.



Improved safety for cyclists and vehicles at intersections with bike paths shifting closer to the street to improve visibility.

Cyclists and pedestrians can safely share the sidewalk with clear lanes marked for each.

STREET CORRIDORS AND BUILDING TYPES

Depending on the purpose of a street corridor, different building types are more appropriate along that street. For instance, a single-family house is not appropriate along a pedestrian-oriented commercial street, or a street that needs to accommodate a higher volume of vehicle traffic. In turn, an office building does not fit along a residential street. By matching building types to appropriate streetscapes, it helps create a more logical and effective public realm.



Single-family houses, duplexes or townhouses are the most appropriate building types along a local residential street corridor.



Larger buildings with multiple uses are more appropriate along wider, busier street corridors. These buildings can buffer residential areas behind it from the busier street.

STREET CORRIDORS AND BUILDING HEIGHT

Building height is an important element in creating the sense of enclosure along a street corridor, and a sense of scale that is comfortable for the pedestrian.



A taller building is more appropriate along a wider, busier street. By stepping back the building at the second or third floor, it retains an appropriate sense of enclosure at street level, while still allowing higher buildings and not overwhelming the street.

A narrow residential street is more effective with lower building heights. A 12 storey tower in the middle of a residential block would not be appropriate.



STREET CORRIDORS AND BUILD-TO LINES

Build-to lines are critical elements in defining how a building and the street corridor inter-relate to each other. How far a building is set back from the street is important for creating the appropriate sense of enclosure and comfort along a street.



A build-to line that is farther from the front property line ensures some semi-private space in a front yard separates the public sidewalk from the private home, creating a comfortable residential street.

A build-to line close to, or right at, the front property line creates a more immediate connection between the sidewalk and the building, creating a streetscape more conducive for active pedestrian and commercial activity.



STREET CORRIDORS AND ZONING

Conventional zoning - what we do now

The current Land Use Bylaw does not address the type of Street Corridors in an area. There is little to prevent a single lot from being redistricted to a very different use, making it inconsistent with the streetscape and adjacent buildings.

The Land Use Bylaw only minimally regulates development in relation to an adjacent street. For instance, there are requirements of a larger setback if a building backs onto a larger street. Or in the Downtown area there are some regulations regarding building frontages being located at the front property line to create a specific type of relationship between the building and the street.

Form-based zoning - what we're proposing

The proposed Form-based zoning regulations would incorporate Street Corridor types as a key element in defining a neighbourhood, as well as in regulating the type of development permitted on the lots along that Street Corridor.

This helps ensure the development along a block is suitable for both the street type and compatible with other uses along that block. It also creates more certainty over time about what types of development will occur along a street. By linking the type of development to the street corridor will ensure consistency of development over time, as the street corridor is a permanent feature.