GC 3.9 GENERAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (GC)

A. Overview

General Description: The Primary intent is to provide employment opportunities through various commercial and office Buildings with provisions for higher density residential opportunities as either a town-wide destination or neighbourhood destination.

Mix of Uses: Activities include a blend of office, commercial and residential in a variety of configurations.

Site and Building Form: Lots shall be a variety of sizes and configurations oriented cohesively either to the external and internal grid-like street network with multiple vehicular and pedestrian Accesses. Multi-unit residential forms should be integrated on-Site or adjacent to promote walkability and enhance business opportunities.

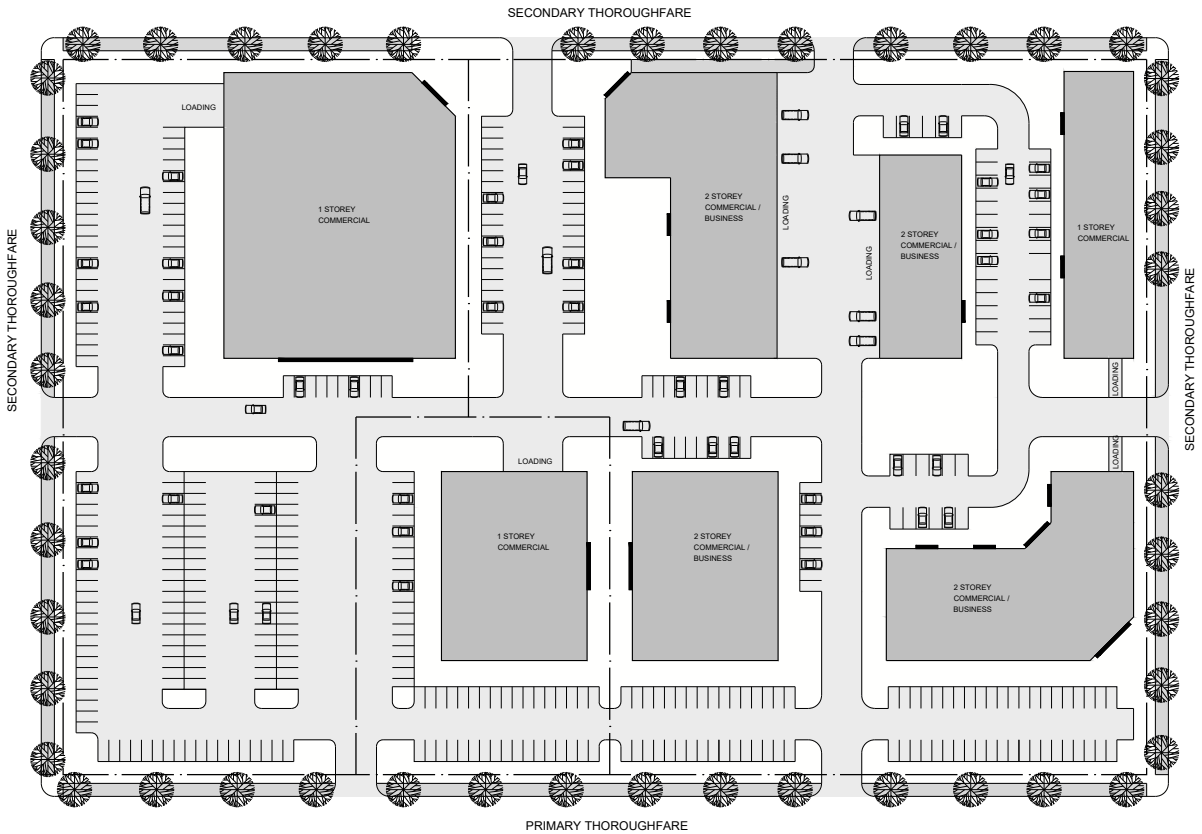


Figure 3.7: Illustrative example of Buildings and Site arrangement in the General Commercial District

B. Examples



Buildings should be arranged as continuous series of units with street parking and wide sidewalks



Buildings should be multiple Storeys with retail at Grade and commercial opportunities above, where possible.



Parking Parcels should include landscaping with an integrated pedestrian network



Residential Development may be incorporated with retail at Grade



Larger stores should be integrated architecturally with the neighbourhood and be easily Accessible for pedestrians



Alternative Building forms can add vibrancy and alternative options for business owners

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C. Uses

The following Uses are identified either as Permitted Uses, Discretionary Uses or Prohibited Uses within each Use category. Definitions for each Use are found in Part 6: Definitions.

KEY

Permitted Use	P
Discretionary Use	D
Prohibited Use	

RESIDENTIAL

Dwelling Unit(s)	D
Temporary Dwelling Unit(s)	D

LODGING

Short Term Lodging - General	D
Campground	
Short Term Lodging - Large	P

BUSINESS

Arts & Crafts	P
Home Occupation - Major	P
Home Occupation - Minor	P
Office	P

COMMERCIAL

Entertainment Establishment	P
Golf Course	
Animal Boarding & Breeding	P
Restaurant / Café	P
Cannabis Retail	D
Retail & Service - General	P
Retail & Service - Large	D
Service Station	D
Show Home	D
Pop-Up	P

INDUSTRIAL

Aerodrome	
Industrial - Medium	
Industrial - Light	D
Outdoor Storage	
Wash Station	D

INSTITUTIONAL

Death Care	P
Culture	P
Education	P
Government	P
Human Services	D
Recreation - Active	P
Recreation - Passive	P
Parking Lot - Independent	D
Special Events	P

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture - General	
Agriculture - Intensive	
Agriculture - Urban	P
Equestrian Facility	

OTHER

Accessory Building or Structure	D
Public Utility	P
Excavation, Stripping & Grading	P
Private Utility	P

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D. Use Standards

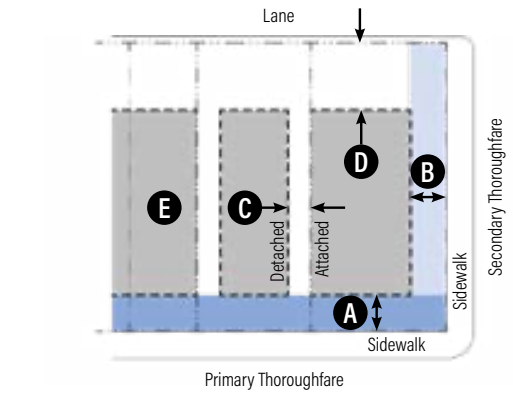
The following standards are required for the identified Uses:

1. **Dwelling Unit(s)** are limited to second Storey or higher.
2. **Temporary Dwelling Unit(s)** must be greater than 10 square metres.
3. **Short Term Lodging - General** must:
   - **A.** Be contained within a Dwelling Unit(s);
   - **B.** Not change the external appearance or character of the Building and not include Structural Alterations except Minor Structural Alterations which are required for the Use; and
   - **C.** Minimize nuisances such as parking, noise or traffic generation, to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
4. **Home Occupation - Major** must:
   - **A.** Have no more than 1 non-resident employee;
   - **B.** Have no more than 1 non-illuminated Sign up to 0.2 square metres;
   - **C.** Not cause nuisances by way of noise, vibration, smoke, dust, fumes, odours, heat, light, electrical or radio disturbance detectable beyond the boundary of the Site;
   - **D.** Have a maximum of 10 client visits per day; and
   - **E.** Not include Outdoor Storage, or vehicle and equipment repairs or servicing.
5. **Home Occupation - Minor** must:
   - **A.** Be located wholly in the Primary Building;
   - **B.** Be operated by a resident of the Dwelling Unit;
   - **C.** Have no more than 1 non-illuminated Sign up to 0.2 square metres;
   - **D.** Have a maximum of 3 client visits per day; and
   - **E.** Not include any non-resident employees.
6. **Animal Boarding & Breeding** may be restricted on the number of animals, the size or number of Buildings or Structures, the number of non-residential trips per day, manure management requirements, noise or other nuisance abatement measures, or any other matter the Development Authority deems necessary. **(27-21)**
7. **Cannabis Retail** must comply with all Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis requirements for operations and locations.
8. **Service Station** must be in a Building adjacent to a Primary Thoroughfare.
9. **Industrial - Light** is limited to breweries, wineries, or distilleries which must have all mechanical systems and processes wholly enclosed or contained in a Building and must include a Restaurant / Café.
10. **Wash Station** must demonstrate water usage and water conservation methods to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.
11. **Human Services**:
    - **A.** Must be located on a Primary Thoroughfare;
    - **B.** Must be located on a Corner Site or have Access to a Lane;
    - **C.** Must have Access to parks or open space through a direct pedestrian connection; and
    - **D.** May require additional Setbacks or Buffering from adjacent Uses.
12. **Excavation, Stripping & Grading** must have approved engineered drawings that meet all technical requirements of the Municipality.
13. **Pop-Ups** must:
    - **A.** Be limited to 2 per Site; and
    - **B.** Have no more than 1 non-illuminated Sign per Pop-Up up to 0.2 square metres. **(14-22)**

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E. Building and Placement Standards

All Buildings must be located on a Site and designed in accordance with the following standards:

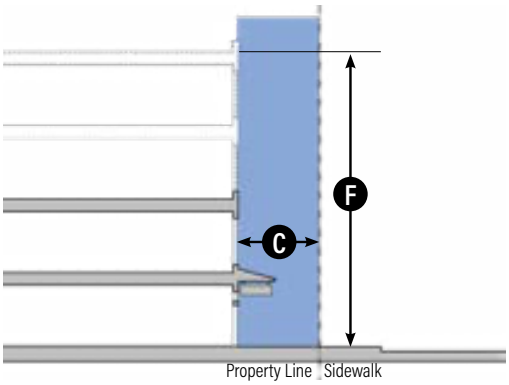


Key

Building Area
Primary Frontage
Secondary Frontage
Property Line
Setback Line

a. Building Setbacks		
Primary Frontage	A	4.0 - 14.0 metres
Secondary Frontage	B	4.0 - 14.0 metres
Detached Interior Side Yard	C	3.0 - 7.5 metres
Attached Interior Side Yard	D	0.0 metres
Rear Yard	E	Minimum 7.5 metres

b. Miscellaneous (27-21)	
Site Coverage	Maximum 70 per cent
Optional Courtyard	Where applied, the minimum width is 5.0 metres with 2 Accesses
Natural Assets	Variances to Building placement and design standards may be considered to preserve existing mature trees or Natural Assets at the discretion of the Development Authority



Key

Building
Primary Frontage
Property Line
Setback Line

c. Residential Density	
Number of Dwelling Unit(s) per hectare	Maximum 250 units

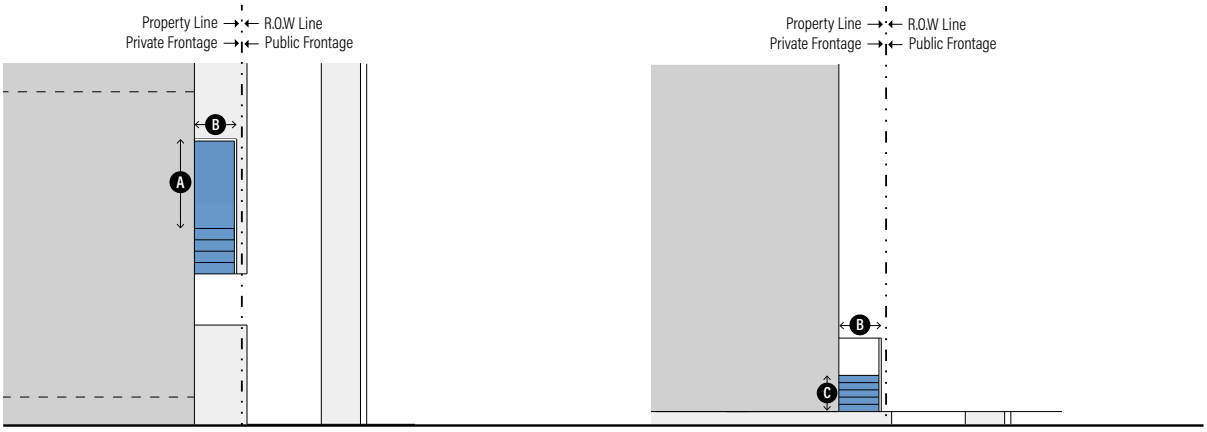
d. Building Height		
Primary Buildings	F	1 - 4 Storeys
Accessory Buildings		Maximum 1 Storey

e. Building Design (14-22)	
Allowable Projections into Setbacks	As specified under Section 5.20
Architecture	Buildings shall have consistent architectural features, Building materials and colours on all sides. Exterior building finish materials must be permanent and of a durable material. The materials and design must be compatible with other buildings on the site and in the vicinity.
Utilities & Mechanical Equipment	Must be Buffered or incorporated into the Building design, where appropriate

F. Frontage Standards

To ensure Buildings are scaled and oriented to enhance pedestrian Access and visibility of entrances, all Buildings must include one of the following Frontage Types for the Primary Entrance of all Primary Buildings:

1. Stoop



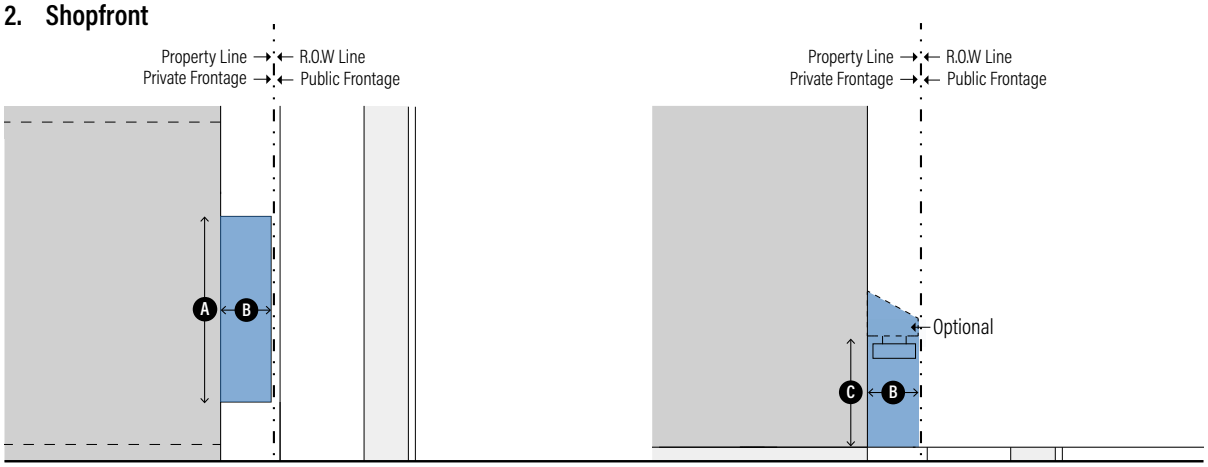
a. Description		
A Frontage where the Façade may be aligned close to the property line with the first Storey elevated from Grade sufficiently to ensure privacy for the windows. The Entrance is usually an exterior stair and landing that incorporates the appropriate Accessibility Features.		
b. Entrance Size		
Width	Minimum 3.0 metres not including stairs or Accessibility Features	A
Depth	Maximum 1.5 metres	B
Height	Aligned with floor height	C
c. Miscellaneous		
Landscaping	Hard landscaping should be limited to the Entrance, stairs, Accessibility Features, and / or walkway(s) to and from the Entrance	
Optional Projections over Entrance (i.e. awnings)	Maximum 4.0 metres from floor height	





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2. Shopfront

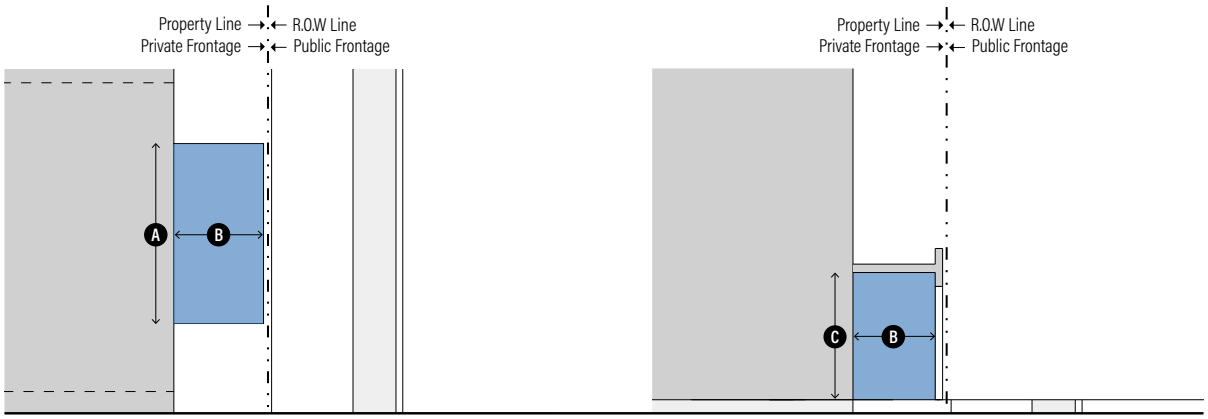


a. Description		
A Frontage where the Entrance is at sidewalk Grade and where the Façade has several windows on the ground floor with an awning or similar Structure projecting over the Entrance.		
b. Entrance Size		
Width	Minimum 50 per cent of Lot	A
Depth	Minimum 3.0 metres	B
Height	Maximum 3.05 metres	C
c. Miscellaneous		
Landscaping	Minimum 2.0 metres of hard landscaping from the Building Façade seamlessly integrated with Public Realm	
Corner Sites	Entrance should be extended to the Secondary Frontage	
Signs	Must include a Projection Sign integrated with the Entrance	





3. Gallery / Veranda



a. Description		
A Frontage where the Entrance is an attached cantilevered Eave or lightweight colonnade overhanging the Entrance.		
b. Entrance Size		
Width	Minimum 50 per cent of Lot	A
Depth	Minimum 3.0 metres	B
Height	Minimum 3.05 metres	C
c. Miscellaneous		
Landscaping	Hard landscaping must be contiguous and seamlessly integrated with the public sidewalk with no Grade adjustments Trees are encouraged where possible	
Integration with Adjacent Buildings	The width of the Entrance should be seamlessly continued to adjacent Buildings	





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G. Landscaping & Buffering Standards

Permeable surfaces and a healthy tree canopy are important for the Municipality. Only native plants should be used and placed in groups where possible. The following standards apply to all Sites, but may be varied for institutional Uses or Sites designated as Reserve Land, at the discretion of the Development Authority:

1. Site Coverage	
Any portion of a Site not occupied by a Structure, Parking Lot, patio, walkway, or storage area shall be landscaped.	
2. Trees	
Minimum number on Sites greater than 2,500 square metres	1 tree per 35.0 square metres based on either a minimum of 10 per cent of the Site or overall Landscaped Area, whichever is greater, where 40 per cent of those trees are coniferous
Minimum number on Sites less than 2,500 square metres	3 trees
Location	The Primary and / or Secondary Frontages
Minimum size at time of planting	Half of the coniferous trees must be at least 2.0 metres in height with the other half being at least 3.0 metres in height
	Half of the deciduous trees must have a Caliper of at least 50 millimetres with the other half a minimum of 70 millimetres

3. Shrubs	
Minimum number on Sites greater than 2,500 square metres	1 shrub per 35.0 square metres based on either a minimum of 10 per cent of the Site or overall Landscaped Area, whichever is greater
Minimum number on Sites less than 2,500 square metres	5 shrubs
Minimum size at time of planting	600 millimetres height or spread
4. Miscellaneous	
Minimum Soil Requirements	30 centimetres of High Quality Soil and growing material is required for all Landscaped Areas
Fencing & Buffering	Maximum 2.4 metres high and cannot be in a Primary Frontage
	Additional Buffering may be required for non-residential Sites adjacent to residential Sites

H. Active Transportation & Vehicular Circulation Standards

Each Site should be effectively connected to the Municipality's vehicle and Active Transportation Networks. This connectivity should be carried through a Site to further the effectiveness of these networks and to provide multiple ways of moving throughout a space, regardless of the mode of transportation.

1. Active Transportation Networks

a. General	
Active Transportation Networks should enhance the Municipality's existing Active Transportation Network and consider various modes of transportation including walking, cycling, rolling, and transit accessibility throughout all areas of the Municipality, including Parking Lots.	
b. Miscellaneous	
Width	Minimum 1.5 metres Minimum 3.0 metres for regional pathways
Surface	Hard landscaped, but may be permeable
Grade	Primary Entrances must be designed to integrate Accessibility Features including minimal Grade changes where site conditions allow

2. Vehicular Circulation

a. General	
Vehicular circulation should maximize pedestrian safety with minimal curb cuts and shared Accesses.	
b. Site Access	
Number	1 per Dwelling Unit to a maximum of 2 per Parcel for Parcels with multiple Dwelling Units or non-residential Uses
Location	From a Lane first then a Secondary Thoroughfare. Where this is not possible, Access from the Primary Thoroughfare may be considered
Shared Access	Encouraged between 2 or more adjacent Sites
c. Private Roads	
Carriageway width	7.0 - 9.0 metres
Design Standards	Surfaces must be paved and constructed to acceptable engineering standards and designed to accommodate emergency vehicles with adequate signage or design features to ensure roads are not blocked or impeded

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I. Bicycle & Vehicle Parking Standards

Both bicycle and vehicle parking are important Site design characteristics and support multiple modes of connection with the broader community. Bicycle Parking standards and maximum vehicle parking standards are identified for different sizes of Buildings or Sites. Design and Access standards also inform where each can be located on a Site and inform connectivity to the Thoroughfares.

1. Bicycle Parking

a. General	
Bicycle Parking Structures must be highly visible and include a permanent rack or hook-up system.	
b. Minimum Number of Stalls	
For Buildings less than 4.600 square metres	6 stalls per Building
For Buildings more than 4.600 square metres	6 stalls per public Entrance
c. Miscellaneous	
Location	Within 10.0 metres of a public entrance, but must not impede pedestrian circulation or Access to a Building
Access	Bicycle Parking must be physically connected to an active transportation network
Bicycle requirements for stairs	Where stairs or curbs are located in the Bicycle Parking network, ramps or similar Structures must be used to Access all Bicycle Parking Structures

2. Vehicle Parking

a. General	
Vehicle parking is to be designed for pedestrian safety by reducing the number of stalls located together and ensuring they are broken up.	
b. Size	
Maximum total area of Site	50 per cent
Parking stall size	Minimum 2.6 metres by 6.0 metres
c. Parking Lot Design	
Major drive aisles	Wherever possible, combine circulation routes requiring wider widths (i.e. fire Lanes, services areas)
Parking aisles	Where possible, orient aisles perpendicular to Primary Entrances
Parking Rows	Maximum 20 continuous spaces divided into parking courts by pedestrian or vehicular circulation or landscaping
Pedestrian Walkway Location	Parallel to parking rows: maximum of every 4 rows Perpendicular to parking rows: maximum of every 20 stalls

Pedestrian Walkway Design	Minimum width 1.5 metres and raised in accordance with the Town of Okotoks General Design and Construction Specifications Clear delineation with contrasting colour, pavement pattern or Grade where path crosses a vehicular Lane
Buffer from Primary Thoroughfare	All parking stalls adjacent to the Primary Thoroughfare will be Buffered with landscaping
Landscaping	Located a minimum of every 4 rows Minimum 3 metres wide with shade trees and opportunities for bio-retention
d. Miscellaneous	
Location	To the side or rear of the Primary Building

J. Loading Standards

Non-residential Uses require dedicated space for the loading and / or unloading of goods to support the business or commercial activities. These Sites will consider the following standards to integrate this space with the other Site design considerations.

a. General	
All non-residential Uses shall provide sufficient space and Access for loading vehicles to the satisfaction of the Development Authority.	
b. Size	
Minimum Loading Space	3.1 metres by 9.2 metres
Vertical clearance from Grade	Minimum 4.3 metres
c. Miscellaneous	
Location	To the side or rear of the Primary Building
Access & Circulation	From a public road, a Lane, or a clearly defined traffic aisle, and shall not obstruct patron or emergency vehicle circulation
Buffering	Loading areas will be Buffered as per (G) Landscaping & Buffering Standards

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K. Outdoor Lighting Standards

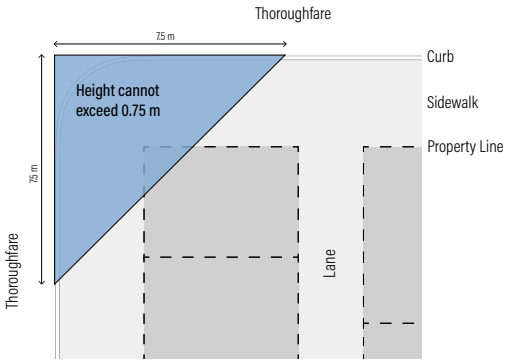
a. General	
All permanently installed lighting shall be Dark Sky Compliant.	
b. Lighting	
Light Fixtures	Must be Fully Shielded Not produce direct glare visible to an observer at ground level at the Property Line of any property within 100 metres of the Site.
Site Illumination	Maximum of 53.8 lux at any location within the Site.
Illumination beyond the Site	Not produce more than 5.4 lux beyond 8.0 metres of the Property Line, excluding any lighting outside of the Site.

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L. Additional Standards

The following standards apply to all Development in the General Commercial District unless otherwise specified.

1. **Corner Sight Triangle:** No Building, Structure, Fence, or landscaping will obstruct vision above 0.75 metres in height within a 7.5 metre corner cut area.



2. **Prohibited Objects:** Commercial Vehicles are prohibited from parking in a Frontage. Razor wire is prohibited in this District.
3. **Waste & Recycling:** All Uses must provide a solid waste storage area suitable for 3- or 4-stream waste diversion for the intended Use and designed to the satisfaction of the Development Authority. All waste and recycling areas must be:
   A. Located at the side or rear of a Site and Buffered from view;
   B. Accessed from a public roadway or Lane; and
   C. Placed in a location easily Accessible for users and pickups.
4. **Sidewalk Patios & Outdoor Eating Areas:** May be considered where they do not impede pedestrian movement, at the discretion of the Development Authority.

5. **Drive-thru Facilities:** Any Development with a Drive-thru must include drive aisles that:
   - **A.** Have a minimum of 6 queuing spaces on Site;
   - **B.** Are not located in a Frontage Area or Setback Area;
   - **C.** Are not Accessed from a Lane; and
   - **D.** Are Buffered to the satisfaction of the Development Authority when adjacent to a residential area.

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