

Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Design Guidelines

1. OVERVIEW

*Provides document background,
purpose scope and application.*





Photo: Alex Preston

1.0 GOAL

The goal of the Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Design Guidelines is to provide a centralized document to guide staff, development, and design professionals towards a consistent and standardized streetscape design for a vibrant, active and inclusive Downtown public realm with safe and multi-modal movement for people and goods.



1.1 BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

Downtown Squamish underwent a series of visioning and concept planning in 2000 and 2005 creating some of the first streetscape guideline concepts for Downtown Squamish. Over a decade later, Squamish's Downtown began to see an increase in redevelopment applications. In 2015, Schedule H - Downtown Streetscape Standards were added to the District's Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw (S&DC Bylaw No. 2649, 2015) to provide more guidance on Downtown streetscape redevelopment, particularly for Cleveland Avenue.

In 2017 a new Officially Community Plan (OCP Bylaw No. 2500, 2017) was adopted, integrating existing policy and planning with the communities current and future values and priorities. This included land use policy and public realm guidelines for Downtown Squamish but excluded details such as streetscape cross-sections. Around the same time, the District also created a new Active Transportation Policy (2019), a new Downtown Parking Study (2017) and updated the Downtown Truck Route study (2017), shaping Downtown transportation values, needs and goals.

As Downtown Squamish's growth and development continued, development of streetscape review challenges were emerging resulting in lengthy servicing agreement reviews and approvals. With Schedule H primarily designed for Cleveland Avenue, and past concept plans lacking relevancy or regulation, staff and developers were left with minimal guidance on streetscape design and details for most streetscapes Downtown.

This Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Design Guidelines work was initiative by staff in 2019 to address this gap and create consistent streetscape redevelopment guidance amongst various development projects and consultants. The Downtown Streetscape work was endorsed by Council in the 2020 budget and was put on pause during pandemic responses. Revived in 2022 with added scope, the guidelines document has continued to be a staff led initiative along with the unwavering dedication and support from PWL Partnership for their streetscape design work and guidance.



1.1 BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW

OVERVIEW

The Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Design Guidelines provides a central document uniting current Downtown policy with detailed streetscape and public realm guidelines to provide the necessary details to achieve a quality and consistent streetscape and public realm design for Downtown Squamish.

These descriptive and illustrative guidelines are for design professionals, developers, consultants and District staff to utilize for streetscape or public realm redevelopment. They will primarily inform a wide range of development projects within the Downtown Squamish and can provide helpful direction for District-led capital projects or road-use permitting.

Photo: Nicole Gurney



1.2 PURPOSE & PROCESS

PURPOSE

As Downtown Squamish streetscapes evolve, primarily through development and frontage upgrades, it's important for the District to provide detailed streetscape guidance to collectively build quality and consistent streetscapes for each block, street and neighbourhood throughout Downtown.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS TO:

Have one centralized document where all current public realm and streetscape policy are concurrently considered.

Provide detailed guidance on how to apply public realm and streetscape policy guidelines and objectives.

Guide both District staff, developers and consultants to achieve a quality and consistent streetscape and public realm design approach.

Provide design direction on unique and/or District specific streetscape and intersection considerations.

Provide specific streetscape cross-sections and dimensions to provide the design guidance needed for landscape and civil drawings.

Provide supportable public realm furnishings to create a sustainable and unified Downtown public realm for community enjoyment and manageable public work maintenance.

Collectively consider design implications for Public Works, Parks, Sustainability and Emergency Service staff to reduce staff time involvement in development review.

Create clear deliverables for developers, reduce staff time to review streetscape design and increase Servicing Agreement execution timelines in Downtown Squamish.

Reduce design scope of District capital projects Downtown.

Downtown Squamish is redeveloping typically through individual development projects or properties with different developers and consultants. The details in this document will help to connect each development frontage together to form a quality and consistent streetscape over time.

1.2 PURPOSE & PROCESS

PROCESS

The Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Guidelines document was conceptualized in 2019 and underwent a series of internal and stakeholder meetings, reviews, site visits, scope additions and consultant guidance to provide the recommendations found in this guideline document. Below is a brief overview on how each section was established:

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Internal meetings with District departments.
- Contracted guidance from PWL Partnership and Accessibility consultants.
- External Stakeholder meetings (e.g. GFL, Squamish Art Council, Accessibility, and BCHydro).
- Development Consultant feedback and questions.
- Public feedback from various past projects and public surveys.

STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

- Streetscape guidelines prepared by PWL Partnership.
- Sightline guidance provided by McElhaney
- Details and guidance provided by internal Engineering, Planning, Public Works, and Transportation staff.
- Feedback from recent Downtown construction projects and development consultants.

PRODUCT LIST

- Internal meetings with relevant District Departments.
- Procurement Request for Information for Squamish Streetscape Furnishings (2021)
- Internal product review and selection of furnishing.
- Integration of District of Squamish Streetscape Lighting Design Criteria (Approved in 2021)

DOCUMENT FINALIZATION

- Internal District department and staff review
- Review by local and regular development consultants
- Council Endorsement

1.3 DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

Downtown Squamish is located on the unceded land of the Skwxwú7 mesh Nation people with Skwxwú7 mesh meaning “Mother of the Wind” and “people of the sacred water”.

True to its name, Downtown Squamish is hugged by water and mountains located at the tip of a windy fjord where the land and rivers meet the sea. In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, it is important to note that much of the land in Downtown Squamish that we see today was created through colonized and industrial destruction and infill of waterways and does not resemble the natural land orientation and home of the Skwxwú7 mesh people.

Downtown Squamish Streetscapes were first subdivided in 1912 and had anticipated road and development growth as far west as Eleventh Street, with two high streets at 80 ft (24.38 m) widths. One high street is a north-south street named Cleveland Avenue, and is still Squamish’s high street today. It was named after E.A. Cleveland, one of the BC land surveyors who drew up the original subdivision plan. The second high street, is an east-west street named Main Street, which is not considered a high street today. The survey established all other roads with width of 66 ft (20.11 m) and laneways with widths of 20 ft (6.09 m).

Downtown Squamish experienced a number of flooding events and were primarily dirt or gravel roads until the 1960s. Cleveland Avenue and Second Avenue have had curbs, sidewalk and beautification improvement over the years, but most streetscapes Downtown are without continuous sidewalks and primarily consist of paved roads, above ground hydro, and storm ditches, while some laneways are still gravel roads. As a result, Downtown Squamish needs significant streetscape improvements to meet current policy, development, commercial and community needs.

Downtown is the heart of Squamish and continues to serve as the primary shopping, tourist, cultural, institutional, entertainment and social centre of the community. How a streetscape is designed plays an impactful role in achieving desired Downtown values and vision. The Downtown Public Realm and Streetscape Guidelines are designed to continue making Downtown the heart of Squamish.



1.4 USE, SCOPE & APPLICATION

WHO USES THIS DOCUMENT

This document was created to inform District of Squamish staff, developers and consultants for development or District lead streetscape and/or public realm projects in Downtown Squamish.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is broken into three sections.

- **General Guidelines** provides maps and guideline direction on various topics related to Downtown Squamish streetscape design considerations.
- **Streetscape Standards** provides detailed cross-sections and plan views to provide streetscape design details for most Downtown streets.
- **Streetscape Product List** provides specifications and details for approved public realm products, furnishings and lighting.

APPLICATION

This is a policy guideline document, regulated by the Subdivision and Development Control Bylaw 2649.2018 (S&DC Bylaw). This guideline document can be updated from time to time and is intended to be followed as recommendations, instructions or general guidance to help achieve a standard and consistent design approach to streetscape development. These Guidelines can be amended at District staff discretion.

The guideline document does not replace regulations in the S&DC Bylaw or professional civil, landscape or electrical regulation standards, but rather is intended to supplement these documents to provide additional context and direction relevant to District of Squamish streetscape development. When in conflict the higher standard should apply at District staff discretion.

The streetscape standards section are guidelines only. Streetscape projects are expected to prepare the necessary standard detailed landscape and civil drawings to comply with these guidelines in accordance with the S&DC Bylaw.

1.4 USE, SCOPE & APPLICATION

SCOPE

For the purpose of these guidelines, Downtown Squamish is identified as the area in Figure 1.4. This document also includes maps that may provide guidance to areas outside and adjacent to the Downtown Squamish Map that should also be considered where applicable.

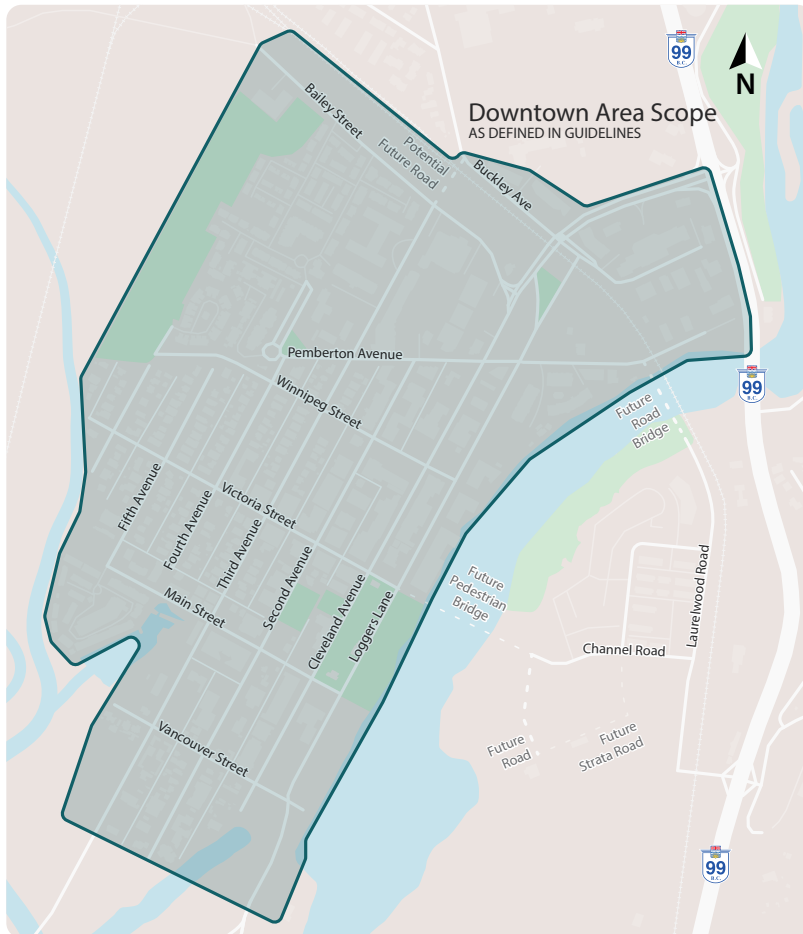


Figure 1.4) Downtown Squamish Map

LIMITATIONS

Streetscape Standards provide limited intersection guidance and will require further landscape and civil design and review. Logger Lane Streetscape Standards are not included in this document at this time.

1.5 POLICY FRAMEWORK

Below is a summary of key studies, policies, projects and operation plans that have provided background to this document.

