



City of Toronto

Toronto Retail Design and Development Best Practices Manual
Retail Design Manual 2019

City Planning Core Team

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Visit Retail Design Manual online:

Toronto Retail Design and Development Best Practices Background Report
<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/retail-design/>

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Introduction

This document is a collection of best practices and is intended to provide guidance on developing successful ground floor retail spaces. The intent is to provide aspirational retail design best practices to inform, guide, inspire and educate architects, retail designers, City staff and the development community.

The Manual is provided as a resource to a wide variety of stakeholders involved in the design and development of retail. Each of these user groups will refer to this document in a different way and at different stages in the planning, design and development process.

- **Developers:** to use in preparation of development applications for commercial or mixed-use buildings, with at-grade retail; and to use in establishing a retail program at the earliest stages of a development application.
- **Architects/Designers:** to inform the size, location, and layout of the building and retail space(s) at the earliest stages of developing the building program and design.
- **City Staff:** to provide retail design guidance and information to developers, applicants and designers on applications where there is a retail component; to identify best practices that would help support a retail program on the site.
- **Property Managers and Owners:** to inform the size, layout, location and configuration of retail space(s), including the tenant mix and leasing plan; to develop a retail program to support the retail uses on site.

The City of Toronto City Planning Division initiated the production of this document to help deliver on the objectives of complete communities and vibrant streets which are closely tied to the provision of successful, resilient and dynamic retail uses.

The Manual and supporting background documents apply a holistic approach to analyzing retail success, with consideration for the interplay between design and architecture, market conditions and accessibility for neighbourhoods as a whole, commercial blocks and individual buildings and retail units. Current retail trends and their implications for the design of retail spaces, international and Toronto case studies and similar manuals in use in other jurisdictions were analyzed. This research is summarized in a companion Background Report to provide the context for this Manual (<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/retail-design/>).

Incorporating best practices for retail design will benefit the developer and building owner by:

- Increasing leasing opportunities,
- Increasing rent potential,
- Improving the quality of the leased space, and
- Reducing the need for modifications to the building envelope to accommodate new retail tenants in the future.

By planning and designing great retail spaces, the quality and diversity of retail across the city will improve.

I. HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

The intent of the Manual is to encourage the integration of design considerations for retail space into the planning of new development at an early stage in the process. It should be read comprehensively and together with other City documents that provide direction on built form and public realm, including the City's Official Plan, city-wide and area-specific guidelines and other applicable regulations.

The best practices can be applied across Toronto's diverse retail contexts to development that includes ground floor retail uses along the street edge or public spaces. The Manual notes where a different approach to the usual best practice is needed to address a specific context or retail type.

The Manual provides guidance on architectural and design factors for the street frontage of buildings, public realm interface and retail units. It considers the design of the ground floor along the street edge and public spaces but does not address the layout of basement or second floor retail spaces, interior malls or the internal layout of shopping centre sites.

Throughout the Manual, the term “retail” applies to stores selling merchandise as well as to restaurants, personal services, entertainment venues, small medical, financial and professional offices and other uses that typically occupy ground floor space in commercial districts and buildings. Auto-oriented uses (e.g. car dealerships, service stations, gas stations) are not addressed. Some of the best practices apply to specific types of retail tenants only; where this is the case, the specificity is noted.

Some best practices are direct and provide guidance on quantitative measures (e.g. ground floor heights), while others are more qualitative or are intended to guide tenants at later stages of development (e.g. lighting). A number of the best practices, such as recommendations for MEP for example, are not subject to City Planning review or oversight. Again, these are included in this document as a resource for developers, architects, and retail designers to consider as they develop the retail program and space. Taken together, the best practices can be used and referenced by all those involved in the design and development of retail spaces to create productive, flexible and well-designed retail spaces that can evolve and be repurposed with different tenants over time and contribute positively to the public realm.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUAL

The general approach to the organization of the Manual has focused on the customers' experience of the retail street, encompassing the public realm, building façade and retail frontage. It begins with the overall building as seen from far away and then proceeds to consider the elements that customers become aware of as they move closer. The best practices have been organized into three sections to follow this logic – **The Building**, **The Street and Retail Frontage**, and **The Retail Space**. This structure proceeds from the macro scale (e.g. overall building massing, material differentiation) to the micro scale (e.g. entrances, display windows) to the functionality of retail operations from the customers' perspective (e.g. lighting, interior columns). Each of these considerations influences how retail can contribute to its context. Each section of the Manual discusses the best practices that apply the retail design principles to the associated design elements. The best practices constitute the main components of the retail experience from a design and development perspective.



Image of 526 King Street West Retail supporting the idea of how to create vibrant retail streets.

III. RETAIL & COMPLETE COMMUNITIES

The Provincial Growth Plan requires that development support the achievement of complete communities. Complete communities offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options and public service facilities.

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements Provincial Growth Plan Policies and helps to achieve complete communities by facilitating the development of vibrant retail streets and ensuring access to a range of products and services by transit and active transportation. In areas of the city where complete communities already exist, this is about sustaining, replacing and enhancing retail as part of growth and redevelopment. In other areas of the city that were designed in a more auto-oriented manner, it is about incrementally introducing new forms of retail that support transit and active transportation.

In a context of rising land values and intensification, much of the new retail space added in Toronto has been and likely will continue to be incorporated within the base of mixed-use buildings. In contrast to single-use retail buildings, retail in mixed-use buildings cannot be readily modified to reflect changing conditions. This increased permanence, combined with significant redevelopment pressures along Toronto's traditional and evolving main streets, necessitates increased diligence on design quality, resiliency, adaptability, and long-term viability of street-oriented retail uses.

IV. TORONTO'S DIVERSE RETAIL CONTEXTS

Streets are the primary public spaces in Toronto, where all forms of transportation come together, including pedestrians, transit users, cyclists and drivers. Toronto's arterial streets with transit have been the primary retail areas in the older parts of Toronto. These "street car neighbourhoods" maintain the tradition of vibrant, successful retail streets such as Bloor Street West, Danforth Avenue, and Queen Street West. These streets are an important part of urban life in these neighbourhoods, providing local stores along linear shopping areas that are easily accessible by transit and within an easy walk of many residents and workers. These streets have provided both successful retail and a community focus for generations. This is just one type of retail context in Toronto. Outside of the downtown and older parts of the city, there are many other types of retail streets and areas that have a different form and context and require a different approach to integrating new or redeveloping existing retail.

The following are planning and design objectives for responding to the diverse retail contexts and building programs across the city:

Linear Retail Main Streets

Growth on streets with existing main street retail needs to maintain and support the continuity of the retail street. The design of the new retail on these streets should respect the existing physical characteristics of the street, respond to changing markets, and promote community identity, heritage attributes and character as part of this growth by:

- Expanding, where possible, the pedestrian realm to provide additional pedestrian amenities, such as – wider pedestrian clearways, patios and retail spill out areas, as well as pedestrian weather protection in form of canopies, awnings and overhangs (see Sections 1.3 and 2.1 of the Manual for related best practices).
- Maintaining a fine grain of entrances and clear glazing along the street edge that reflects the character and rhythm of the street (see Sections 2.4 and 2.5 for related best practices).
- Limiting the size of office and residential lobbies on retail street frontages and providing drop off/pick up at the rear or flank side with a secondary door where appropriate (see Sections 1.0, 2.2 and 2.3 for related best practices).
- Providing servicing, loading and parking access from a rear public lane and/or shared driveways. (see Section 3.3 for related best practices).

A variety of retail uses and building types can create an interesting and successful retail street. Integrating different retail store sizes and programs into linear retail main streets can be done by:

- Locating larger floor plates above and or below grade with smaller storefronts at-grade along the street (see Section 1.4 for related best practices).
- Providing clear and accessible entrances to larger stores directly from the sidewalk, including ramps, elevators, or escalators to provide full access from the public sidewalk (see Section 2.4 for related best practices).



Image of LCBO, 491 College St., Toronto, illustrating linear retail main streets.

Retail Street Corners

Toronto is largely a street grid city and in a grid city, corner sites are the most visible. They are where the highest volumes of pedestrian traffic exist, where transit stops are located, and which therefore have the most potential for social interaction. Corner sites are where buildings and open space have the most potential to provide identity to the area. Retail at corner sites should reinforce the identity and amenity of these sites by:

- Considering building setbacks as a way of creating open spaces and incorporating pedestrian amenities, such as patios, transit stops, landscaped areas and street furniture (see Section 2.1 for related best practices).
- Locating office and residential lobbies on side streets (see Sections 1.0, 2.2 and 2.3 for related best practices).
- Locating retail uses with dynamic interiors and active outdoor uses to promote vibrant and memorable corners. Banks or similar commercial uses on corners do not promote social interaction and neighbourhood identity as well as other active retail uses (see Section 2.2 for related best practices).



Image of Loblaws, 585 Queen St W, Toronto, illustrating retail street corners.

New Retail Streets

There are many areas in Toronto where growth is happening as part of the redevelopment of large sites. These large sites are being planned with new public streets, parks and open spaces and multiple buildings, and will become new communities over time. Often these sites are part of planning frameworks that include new higher order transit, subways, LRT lines, etc. The location, design and phasing of retail on these large sites is integral to the creation of complete communities. Retail should be planned as part of these large sites by:

- Locating new retail along the streets that have existing retail along them (see Section 2.2 for related best practices).
- Locating new retail on streets which have high volumes of pedestrian traffic and are adjacent to new transit stops (see Section 2.2 for related best practices).
- Providing comprehensive servicing plans which will allow for off-street drop-off and pick-up, as well as servicing and loading (see Section 3.3 for related best practices).
- Providing a consistent alignment for new retail entrances and glazing and with adequate space between the curb edge and the front facade to provide generous pedestrian clearways, and other pedestrian amenities, including seating, transit stops, pedestrian weather protection, street trees and other landscaping (see Section 2 for related best practices).



Image of retail storefronts along Regent Park Blvd, Toronto, illustrating new retail streets.

Auto-Oriented Retail Streets

Many areas outside of the downtown and older parts of the city have auto-oriented retail streets. Strip malls and other forms of auto-oriented retail often locate the surface parking between the retail unit and the public sidewalk. While these retail spaces support their local communities, this form of retail is not conducive to a positive pedestrian experience. As the city grows, and these areas are redeveloped, these retail streets should be transformed to better serve pedestrians, and in particular, transit users. This can happen incrementally, block by block, or on large sites. Redevelopment in this context should consider:

- Moving new development towards the street edge and providing entrances and glazing along the street. Adequate space between the building and curb should support anticipated pedestrian volumes, active transit users, and amenities including transit stops, seating and street trees (see Section 2 for related best practices).
- Locating surface parking below grade, where possible, or behind or at the side of the building (see Section 3.3 for related best practices).
- Planning for long term redevelopment that anticipates the redevelopment of existing auto-oriented retail along the street as a more urban built form over time.
- Providing interim solutions which improve the pedestrian experience, for example, removing all or some of the surface parking in front of the building and replacing it with landscaped pedestrian areas including patios and outdoor sales areas or pedestrian gathering areas with seating.

Transitioning Retail Streets

Additional retail is needed to support both residential and office growth. Streets with limited or discontinuous retail such as Harbord Street, Bayview Avenue, or College Street, have segments with vital retail on a few short blocks, interspersed with other uses and building types. Where sufficient growth in the neighbourhood retail market is anticipated, these streets present opportunities to extend and create a continuous retail environment. Development in these areas should consider:

- Designing ground floors to create a continuous retail street that allows for retail in the immediate or short term (see Section 2.3 for related best practices).
- Designing the ground floor with alternative uses that can be easily converted into retail when the time is reached that the population will support additional retail uses.

Mall Redevelopments

In parts of Toronto laid out after 1960, retail increasingly was developed in formats not oriented to the street, with malls becoming a popular type of retail development. Malls organized the retail towards interior circulation networks, often at the expense of animating the street edge. Instead of providing for a traditional and animated street oriented retail frontage, the street edge of the mall often consisted of blank walls, stairs, ramps, surface parking and loading and service uses.

Many malls in Toronto are now of an age where redevelopment is being considered to capitalize on new retail concepts and land owner ambitions for increased density on these sites. The approach to redevelopment ranges from the addition of public spaces or new retail buildings on surface parking areas, while malls adjacent to high order transit are contemplating plans that include the addition of new residential or commercial-office towers on the surface parking areas and phased demolition of the mall with the intent of creating a more urban form. With redevelopment of these mall sites comes the opportunity to promote walkability and the creation of networks to make access to the retail easier.

The redevelopment of malls and/or design of new malls, should consider:

- A network of public and private streets and pedestrian connections;
- An expanded public realm that includes parks, open spaces and/or other publicly-accessible spaces;
- Development that appropriately addresses the public realm, including retail uses with entrances, glazing and other amenities (see Section 2 for related best practices);
- Servicing that is located and organized to limit impacts on the public realm (see Section 3.3 for related best practices); and,
- Phasing of the development that allows for the continuation of existing retail and services and other commercial uses.



Image of Yonge Sheppard Centre, 4841 Yonge St, North York, illustrating mall redevelopments.

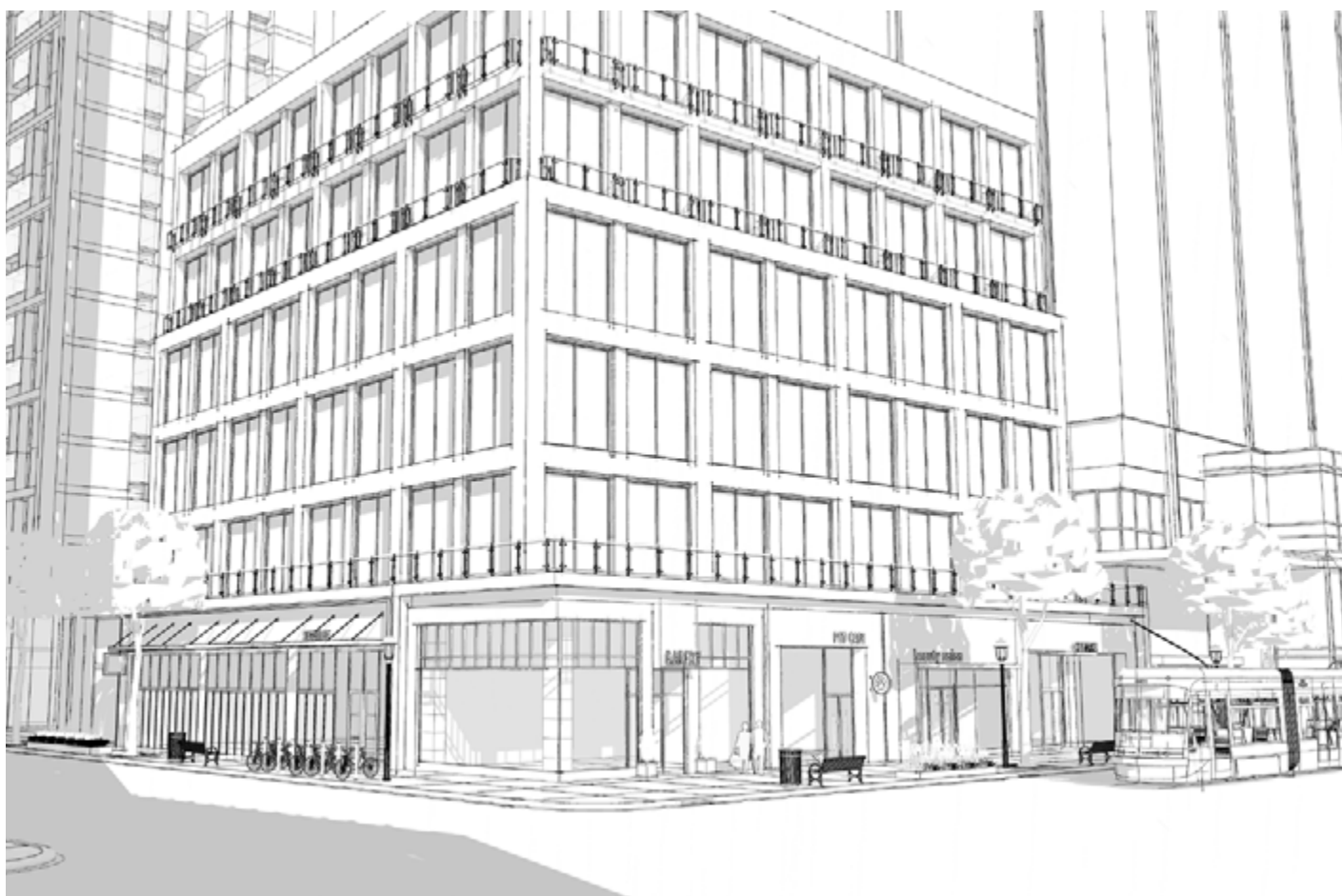
V. HOW THE MANUAL WAS DEVELOPED

The best practices were developed in collaboration with City staff and the consultant team. A holistic approach was taken that started with asking the question “What is successful retail development?”. The response came from analyzing current retail trends and their implications for the design of retail spaces, international and local retail development case studies and similar retail design manuals for other jurisdictions. This research is summarized in the Background Report.

It was concluded that as well as contributing to the city building objectives of complete communities and vibrant streets, successful retail spaces must meet the needs of the consumer and the retail businesses that will occupy the space. They must contribute to economic development objectives, environmental sustainability and the overall quality of the built environment and community life. They must enhance the character and amenity of surrounding commercial blocks and nearby residential neighbourhoods, be flexible to allow for the incorporation of new technologies and for a diversity of uses that may evolve over time. The interplay between these various factors is explored in the Background Report for three different geographic scales: (i) the neighbourhood, (ii) commercial area and (iii) individual buildings and retail units.

Retail design principles for individual buildings and retail units were identified by this analysis. They can be achieved by applying the best practices for each building design element described in the body of the Manual. Appendix 4.1 summarizes the retail design principles and cross-references them with the building design elements that support their achievement. In some cases, the impact on the principle is indirect (for example, job growth is supported by designing retail units that can be leased to successful businesses by providing appropriate store width to depth ratios and ceiling heights).

Design professionals, retail experts and other stakeholders who possess expertise in different aspects of retail function, design and development were consulted when the Manual was at a draft stage of development. The consultations were targeted at ensuring that the Manual becomes a practical and easy to read document and a valuable resource for a range of users, including those intimately involved in the design, development and leasing of retail spaces across the city and in different retail contexts, as well as by City Staff. Their feedback was incorporated in finalizing the Manual.



1.0 The Building

A well-designed building façade and ground floor is key to achieving complete communities and city building principles.

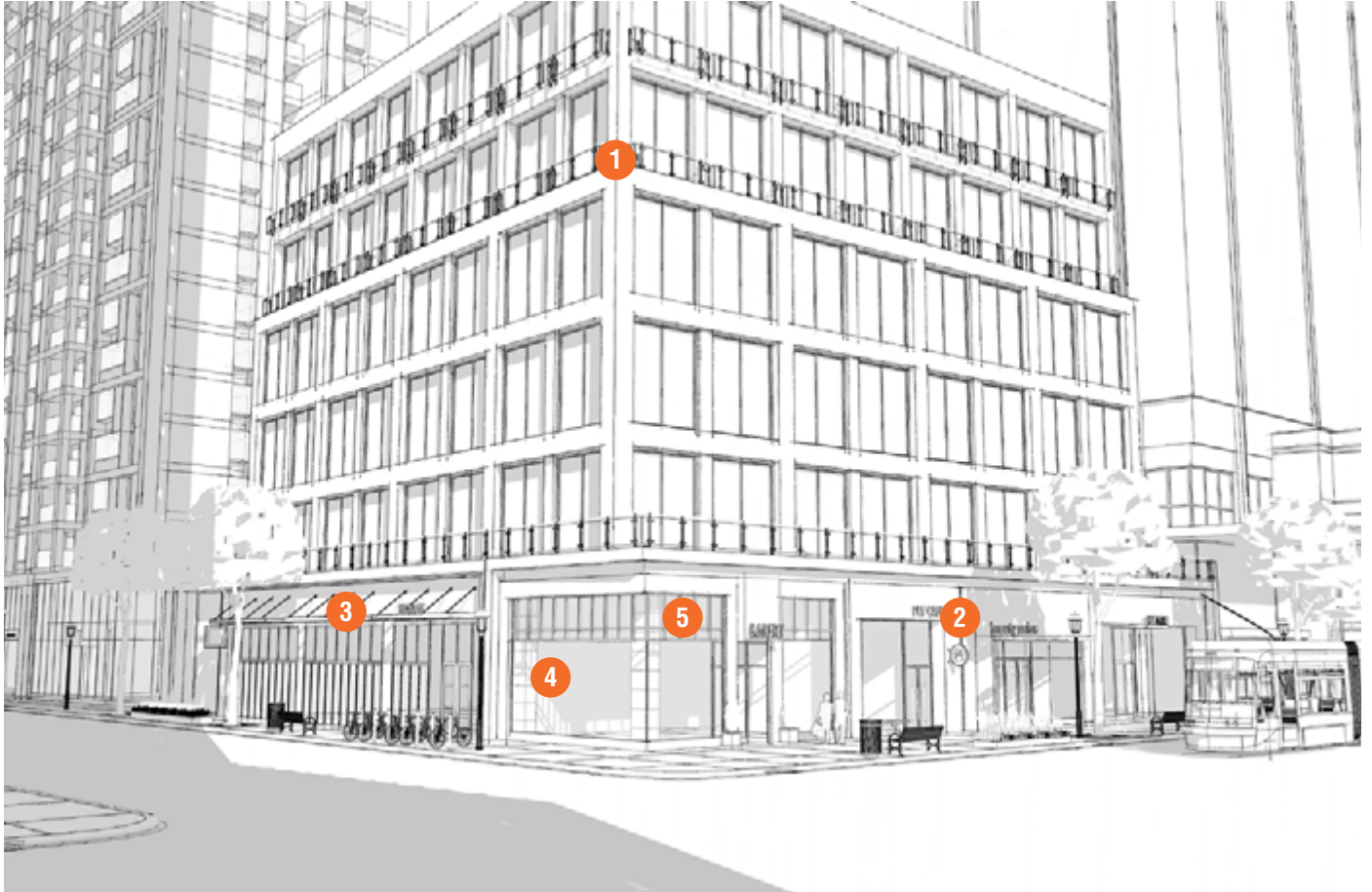
People approaching a building from as far away as 100 m (330 ft.) should be able to identify that it includes retail space that may be interesting to visit. They should be increasingly engaged as they come closer. In multi-storey mixed-use developments, this requires that the retail uses be designed for retail functions and differentiated from adjacent non-retail uses. Individual storefronts should also be easily identifiable from each other.

It is important that the scale of the retail space in the building be legible. People are more apt to approach and explore the retail space when they can see that there are a number of stores. This requires that the storefronts be organized to support a primary retail frontage.

If the building is on a corner, the retail frontage can also wrap around the corner to include the side street. Avoid inserting non-retail components such as residential and office lobbies or driveways in between the retail storefronts (see Section 2.3).

- 1.1 Building Massing and Geometry**
- 1.2 Material Differentiation**
- 1.3 Canopies, Overhangs and Awnings**
- 1.4 Storefront Width to Store Depth**
- 1.5 Ceiling Heights**

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE BUILDING



- 1 Building Massing and Geometry
- 2 Material Differentiation
- 3 Canopies, Overhangs and Awnings
- 4 Storefront Width to Store Depth
- 5 Ceiling Heights

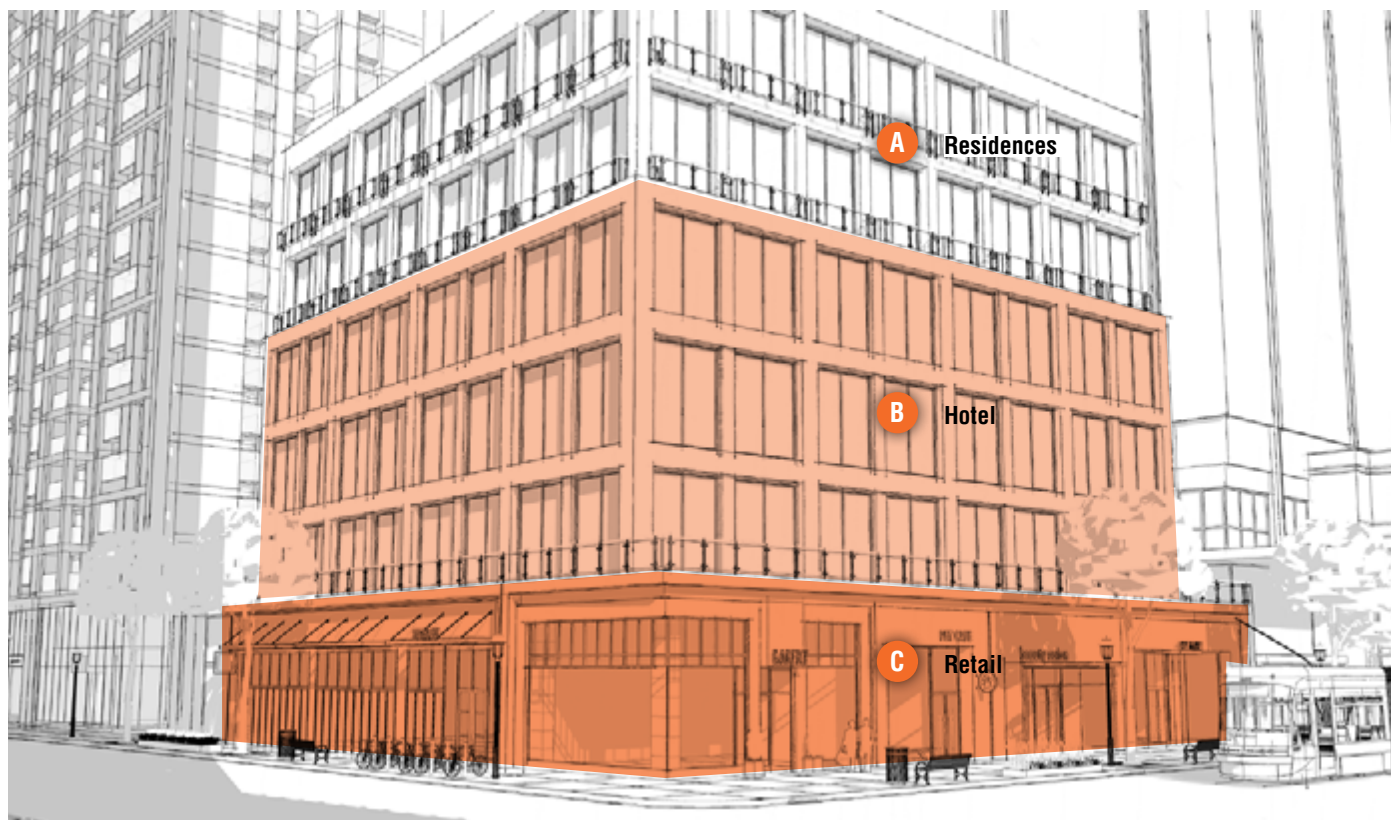
1.1 BUILDING MASSING AND GEOMETRY

Differentiate the building's various uses to ensure strong retail visibility.

If the retail portion of the façade has a strong visual identity, pedestrians are encouraged to keep walking further along the block or to cross the street to approach the retailers. Drivers, cyclists and transit users are also more likely to stop.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Use horizontal architectural details such as cornices, continuous balconies, frames, projections and step-backs to differentiate the retail floor(s) from upper storeys. Architectural projections as small as 300 mm (12 in.) can be effective.
2. Use vertical architectural details such as projections and step-backs on the façade of the retail floor(s) to differentiate the retail component of the building from adjacent non-retail uses and to visually separate each retail tenant from its neighbours (see also Section 2.3).
3. Emphasize the primary entrance to each retail tenant (e.g. by projecting or recessing entrances; see Section 2.4).



The massing is used to clearly separate building uses. Storefronts are projecting forward from the upper levels. The projection is used as a balcony space for the upper level use.

4. **Articulate storefront window treatments** (e.g. by using projecting glass boxes; see Section 2.5).
5. **Establish a consistent architectural style across the whole retail façade with arches, canopies, etc. where appropriate.** Each retail tenant will need to establish its own storefront identity within the retail façade (See Section 2.3).
6. **Make colonnades and overhangs inviting by designing them with proportions that are appropriate to the street context and avoid shadowing the storefronts.** Test storefront shadowing effects during the design process with an assessment of the depth of the overhang and height of the colonnades (See Section 3.1).
7. **Where appropriate, use canopies combined with other architectural elements, such as setbacks or projections, to reinforce the horizontal differentiation of functions to achieve a more effective massing distinction.**
8. **The proportions and design of any overhangs, including the height, depth, as well as location of the overhang, should be carefully considered alongside the streetscape design.** This is particularly important with regards to location of street trees to ensure there is adequate space for trees to grow to maturity and to ensure the building, including any projections will not interfere with this growth.



Colonnade / Overhang Conditions

Retail tenants are integrated into a colonnade or overhanging building. Consider the height and depth of overhangs to avoid casting shadows onto storefronts.



Podium Conditions

Retail protrudes from the building above. The building sits above and behind the retail. Individual storefronts are clearly identifiable and directly adjacent to the sidewalk, creating a more dynamic interface with the public realm (See Section 2).



Inline Conditions

The base building detailing extends to the sidewalk with no step-back. Storefront elements need to be distinct from one tenant to the next (e.g. with canopies or a sign band at different heights).

1.2 MATERIAL DIFFERENTIATION

Use building materials on the façade and detailing to accentuate the building's different uses, ensure strong retail visibility and integrate buildings into their context.

The use of materials and architectural details impacts how the building's architecture engages with the pedestrian's sightlines from afar as well as from close up. Materials and details should be used to emphasize the vertical and horizontal differentiation of uses. They also should respect the building's context in the surrounding commercial block, reinforcing the area's character.

Materials are key determinants of the building's first impression and contribute to the overall perception of quality. High quality materials and interesting detailing are particularly important on the primary retail façade.

When the pedestrian reaches the building, the materials and detailing used on the first 4.5 to 6 m (15 to 20 ft.) above the sidewalk are especially key to appreciating the building and storefronts. Materials at eye-level may be touched as well as seen, creating an additional level of appreciation.



Material differentiation is used to further accentuate the building's different uses, strengthening the retail identity.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Choose materials and detailing to accentuate the retail uses.**
2. **Good proportion as well as use of textures, colours and contrasts in materials create a variation of effects** as one views the building from a distance and then moves closer.
3. **Highlight the primary retail façade with high quality materials and detailing**, particularly at entrances and on the first 4.5 to 6 m (15 to 20 ft.) above the sidewalk.
4. **Create rhythm and interest on the backside or on blank walls with a combination of material and architectural details.** This technique can also reduce the visual impact of any necessary long walls on a pedestrian-oriented street.
5. **Use environmentally sustainable materials and architectural details.**
6. **Select materials and detailing that reinforce the building and neighbourhood character** (e.g. glass and metal for a high design contemporary setting versus brick and painted wood for a heritage area).



Ground level retail facades have the same materials as the other uses above, however the materiality is expressed differently so as to visually differentiate the retail storefronts.

1.3 CANOPIES, OVERHANGS AND AWNINGS

Canopies, overhangs and awnings provide three-dimensional articulation on storefronts. They can help accentuate storefront entrances, add colour, provide a pedestrian scale, and can also provide weather protection.

The use of overhangs, canopies and awnings to protect pedestrians from sun, snow, rain and wind are encouraged. For retail storefronts, these should be designed to avoid shadowing the storefront, giving the impression that the store is closed.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Consider retractable systems to allow adjustments when weather conditions change.
2. Consider using architectural detailing with a small shadow line that accentuates the windows and entrances.
3. Avoid overly long, continuous forms of weather protection along the full building façade. This diminishes the visibility of individual storefronts.
4. Test the impact of any fixed canopies, overhangs or awnings on storefront visibility under different lighting conditions, times of the day, seasons and from different distances and angles. Even glass canopies cast a shadow.

Open structure canopy to minimize casting shadows.

Shallow projection: awning used to add colour and brand expression.

Retractable awnings over the patio area to allow flexibility for different times of day and year.



A variety of overhang types incorporated into one retail façade.

1.4 STOREFRONT WIDTH TO STORE DEPTH

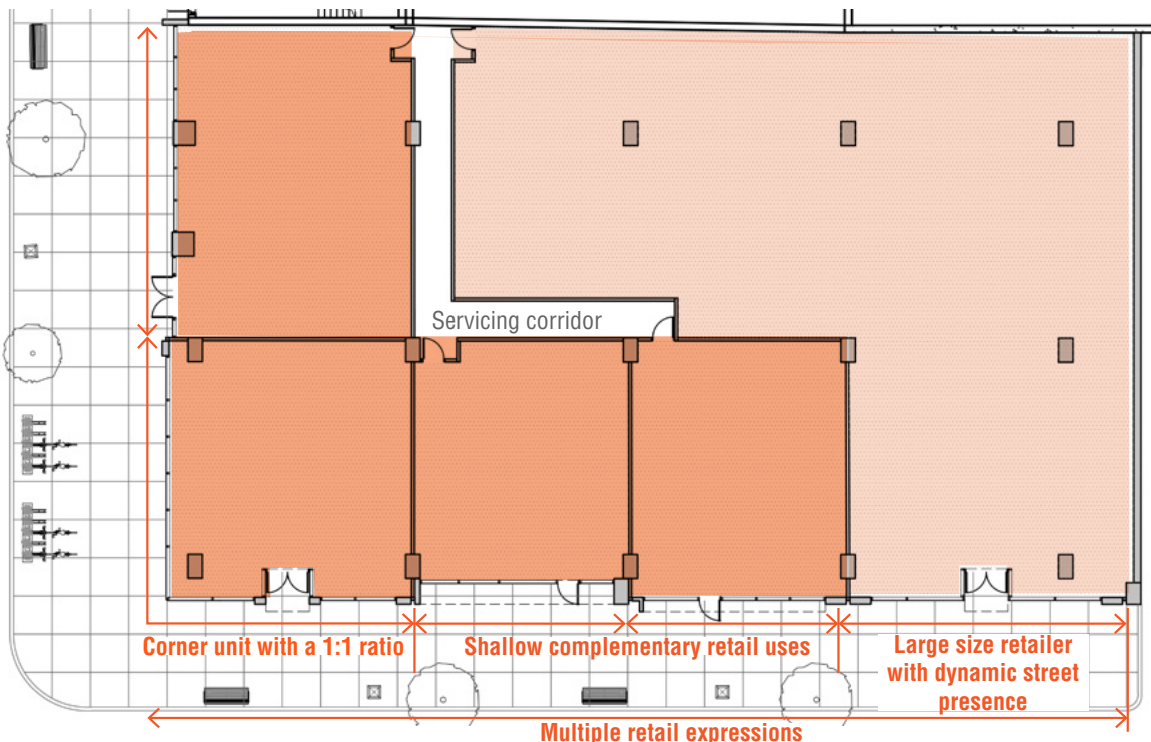
Design unit layouts to allow for adaptability to future change while meeting the functional needs of retail tenants.

Different retail tenants require different unit sizes and configurations. Therefore, it is important to assess market conditions and determine the desired tenant mix before designing the ground floor.

Ensure that the structural elements of the retail space enable future adaptability to changing tenant requirements and new technologies with minimal reconstruction. A variety of store widths should be envisaged and thought should be given to how the individual unit modules might be combined or subdivided to accommodate potential future changes to the retail tenant mix.

Store width significantly impacts how people experience the street. Walkability is supported by a diverse array of narrow storefronts with frequent entrances and strong connections between the building and sidewalk. For example, if there are at least 15 storefronts along a 100 m stretch of sidewalk, pedestrians will have something new to look at about every 5 seconds at a normal walking speed of 80 seconds per 100 m (Jan Gehl, *Cities for People*, p. 77).

The retail frontage along vehicle-dependent streets also needs to accommodate what people notice when travelling at higher speeds. For example at 50 km per hour people pass about 70 m of frontage in 5 seconds. One or two storefronts every 100 m provides a sufficiently interesting streetscape for them. Designing a retail frontage oriented to both pedestrians and vehicles is challenging. Related best practices are discussed in Sections 1.2, 2.2 and 2.3.



Multiple storefronts for a dynamic retail expression due to insertion of shallow retail units at large size store location.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Consider and plan for the desired retail tenant mix before establishing the storefront width and depth** so that the unit design can meet the functional needs of the chosen tenants and support the vitality of the street.
2. **Avoid designing irregular shaped units.** A rectangular space with good sightlines to the entrance is best for most tenants. This enables unobstructed visibility of the entire internal operation. However, as is noted below, large stores can be L-shaped to support walkability and create dynamic street presence.
3. **Design the majority of units with a storefront to depth ratio of 1:3 in a rectangular format.** This rhythm achieves good street animation for pedestrians and meets the functional requirements of most retail tenants.
4. **Design corner units with ample sidewalk or setback space for patios and outdoor merchandising.** The ideal ratio for the space is approximately 1:1.
5. **Accommodate large stores on pedestrian-oriented streets by using L-shaped floor plates.** Maintain a 6 to 9 m (20 to 30 ft.) storefront presence and wrap the rest of the frontage with small shallow boutique retail stores (ratio 1:1). Where feasible, portions of the upper floor(s) or basement levels of the building might also be used by large stores.
6. **Consider column spacing, as it may impact the sub-division of the various storefronts.** Refer to Section 3.4 on column spacing and the use of transfer structures for more detail.



Corner unit with a 1:1 ratio providing an animated storefront with transparency on both sides.

1.5 CEILING HEIGHTS

Meet the functional needs of retail tenants and enable adaptability over time by providing adequate ceiling heights for a wide range of retail uses.

Most retail uses require ceiling heights greater than typical residential uses to accommodate visual displays, lighting and mechanical requirements. Providing a taller ground floor also helps to differentiate the retail use from upper floor residential or office uses (see Section 1.1 for more detail).

BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Provide approximately 4.5 m (15 ft.) ceiling height from slab to slab for boutique type retail spaces (unit sizes less than 140 sq. m (1500 sq. ft)).** This will allow for an interesting storefront and good interior lighting.
- 2. Provide approximately 6 m (20 ft.) ceiling height from slab to slab for retail spaces larger than 200 sq. m (2150 sq. ft.).** This allows for any particular mechanical requirements to be properly integrated into the ceiling space. The storefront and window design should also be proportionally taller to highlight the larger store volume.
- 3. Avoid ceiling heights lower than 3.6 m (12 ft.)** (finished floor level to the underside of the slab), as this significantly constrains retail uses.
- 4. Consult with a specialty retail designer to tailor the structure to meet the needs of retail tenants when a building with lower ceiling heights is being retrofitted for retail uses.** This is especially important in heritage conditions.
- 5. Set any mezzanines back from the storefront by several metres to avoid visual clutter near the windows and entrance.** Use mezzanines for secondary or back-office purposes since they will have lower customer traffic than the ground floor. The ground floor can then be dedicated as a prime selling area.

Related Toronto Regulations and Guidelines

- Zoning By-law now requires at least a 4.5 m height on the ground floor in mixed commercial-residential areas (CR Districts)



2.0 The Street & Retail Frontage

Successful retail streets are streets that have a variety of retail, animated ground floors and allow for a vibrant public realm. The focus of this Manual is on the customer's experience of the retail street, how the retail interfaces with the public realm and how the building façade and street work together to create a welcoming retail environment. Particular attention should be paid to capturing people's attention as they approach the retail space and then enticing them to explore further.

Best practices in designing the retail frontage support business profitability and city building principles, as well as contributing to adaptability in the future.

- 2.1 Sidewalk Interface**
- 2.2 Hierarchy of Retail Frontages**
- 2.3 Contiguous Retail Frontage**
- 2.4 Entrances**
- 2.5 Display Windows**
- 2.6 Identity, Branding and Signage**

BEST PRACTICES FOR RETAIL FRONTAGE



- 1 Sidewalk Interface
- 2 Hierarchy of Retail Frontages
- 3 Contiguous Retail Frontage
- 4 Entrances
- 5 Display Windows
- 6 Identity, Branding and Signage

2.1 SIDEWALK INTERFACE

Design the interface between the building and sidewalk to support walkability, social interaction and strong retail visibility.

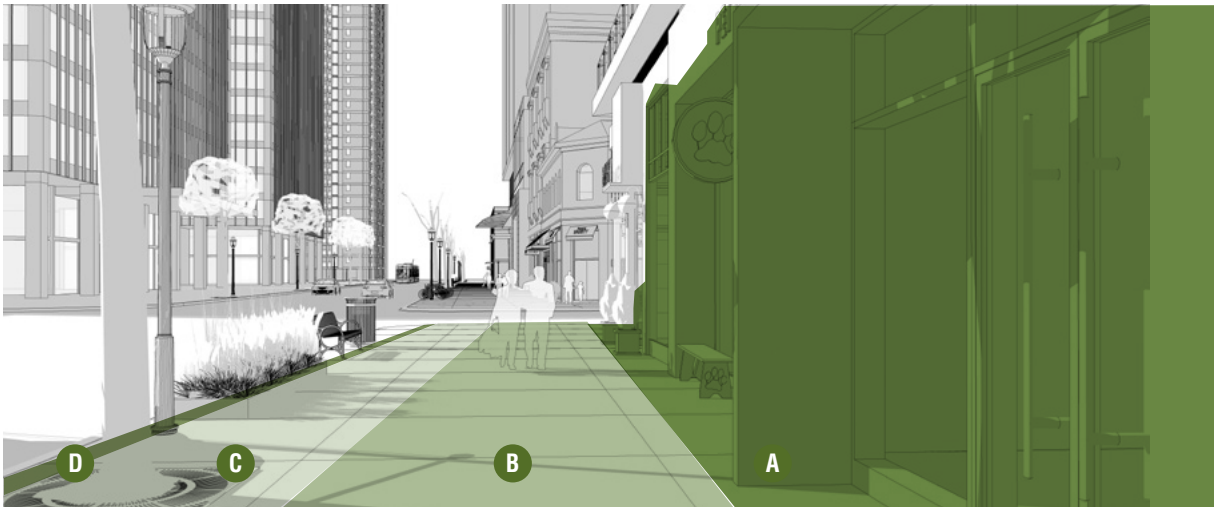
The relationship between the retail façade and the sidewalk is a key design element supporting how people experience the city. From Jan Gehl's *Cities for People*: "If ground floor façades are rich in variation and detail, our city walks will be equally rich in experience".

The building's interface with the public realm should be considered in the context of the entire boulevard. The base of buildings can be set back from the property line to allow for a wider zone for pedestrians to stroll, window shop and stop for a rest, snack or conversation. These areas should also accommodate amenities such as trees, furniture, transit stops, and may be appropriate for uses that support the retail function such as patios or merchandise display. This can improve walkability and opportunities for social interaction in dense urban areas.

Toronto's Vibrant Street Guidelines identifies four zones between the building facade and roadway:

- A The Frontage and Marketing Zone**, which is next to the building and may consist of any privately-owned building setback plus the public right of way.
- B Pedestrian Clearway**, which is the prime route for people moving along the sidewalk.
- C Furnishing and Planting Zone**, which provides space for landscaping, benches, traffic lights and signage, etc.
- D Edge Zone**, which buffers the sidewalk from parked cars and moving bicycles and vehicles.

The City of Toronto controls the use of the public right of way portions of the sidewalk. Businesses and organizations can apply for permits and licenses to use the right of way for a variety of purposes, including patios and merchandise display. This Manual does not provide direction in this regard.



Four zones between the building façade and roadway as identified by the Toronto Vibrant Streets Guide.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Ensure that the building's retail frontage complements and reinforces the desired character of the surrounding commercial district and neighbourhood.** Evaluate the area's retail character, market and site-specific considerations carefully. Evaluate the retail frontage's appearance from various distances and viewpoints.
2. **Consider the route(s) most people will take to reach the retail frontage and design the façade and public realm abutting it to support the anticipated pedestrian volumes, particularly in areas surrounding transit stops.** In more urban areas with retail along the main street, people will arrive by walking, transit or cycling. In less urban areas, most may arrive by car, park, and then walk to the stores. In general, it is best to locate store entrances along the primary pedestrian route (see Sections 2.2 and 2.4 for more detail). Avoid locating parking spaces and shipping and receiving areas along major pedestrian routes (see Section 3.3).
3. **Provide a generous sidewalk width and space for streetscape amenities.** Generous space for pedestrian movement offers people the opportunity to stroll, window shop and stop for a rest, a snack or a conversation.
4. **Ensure that people walking along the sidewalk can easily see into the storefront windows and appreciate the detail.** Generally, this requires that people be able to walk within about 8 m (26 ft.) of the retail façade.
5. **Provide additional open space through building setbacks such as forecourts or plazas that include high quality streetscape amenities including trees, seating, pedestrian scale lighting and public art to enhance the pedestrian experience along retail streets.**



Curated patio animates the façade and sidewalk in front of Her Majesty's Pleasure nail salon.



Diagram illustrating public and tenant amenities.

6. Use removable bollards within pedestrian shopping zones where control of vehicular access is required to better ensure pedestrian safety.
7. Where appropriate, use landscaping to create buffers and visual screening of parking access, surface parking, servicing and loading areas and other utilities.
8. Use landscaping such as trees, tree grates or planters on the sidewalks to guide pedestrians towards store entrances.
9. Provide gaps within the landscaping to enable opportunities for pedestrians to cross through and see over planters and landscaping.
10. Provide tree-lined sidewalks for a more comfortable pedestrian scale, weather protection and pleasant connections with nature. Use high-branching tree species to create a canopy high enough to maintain storefront visibility. Coordinate the spacing and location of street trees with retail entrances and signage to ensure good sightlines.
11. Design the façade and setback to enable retail tenants to use the area for elements such as retail brand-colour coordinated planters flanking the entrance, branded benches, merchandise display or standing counters or cafes.
12. Where full service patios are appropriate, these should have a minimum depth of 3.5 m (12 ft.) to allow for adequately sized tables and chairs and circulation. Where appropriate, buildings should be set back to allow for this. Side yards and

backyards also can be used for these purposes. Where a 3.5 m building setback is not feasible, consider using operable windows that completely open the storefront (e.g. accordion-style stackable windows) to integrate the interior dining space with the public sidewalk.

- 13. Design the transition from sidewalk to retail space without any visual or physical obstacles and meet all related accessibility requirements.** Where changes in grade cannot be avoided, try to keep the entrance to the store at the same level as the sidewalk and make any required grade transitions inside the unit. Use ramps instead of stairs whenever possible. If stairs are necessary, make them as wide as possible and align them to store entrances to facilitate and orient shoppers towards the store.



Customized decor at the public realm interface in front of the Original Grooming Experts barber shop.

Related Toronto Regulations and Guidelines

- Boulevard Café and Marketing Display Regulations: Chapter 441 of Toronto Municipal Code (minimum pedestrian clearways and requirements for cafes and displays in the public right of way)
- Complete Streets Guidelines (<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/streets-parking-transportation/enhancing-our-streets-and-public-realm/complete-streets/complete-streets-guidelines/>)
- Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program, updated July 2012 (https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/96e3-Vibrant_Streets-Document.pdf)

2.2 HIERARCHY OF RETAIL FRONTAGES

Design one frontage of the building as the primary retail frontage to support retail visibility and ease of access. Retail entrances should be located on the primary frontage.

Most retail operators require wall space for merchandise display and back-office functions, storage, kitchen areas, waste collection, etc. It is usually difficult for them to visually connect the store interior with the exterior on more than one side of the unit. Customers should be able to easily identify the primary retail façade and store entrances at a glance.

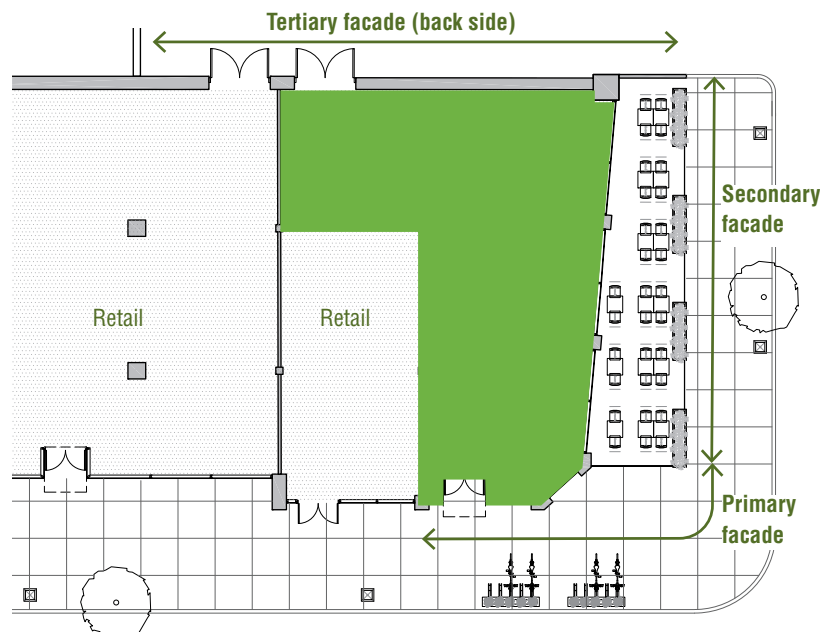
The design and hierarchy of retail frontages in more suburban areas of the city presents some challenges as these areas are anticipated to transition to more urban forms over time through redevelopment and investment in transit infrastructure. The current retail built form along the main streets or Avenues in Toronto's less urban areas is highly vehicle-oriented, with many shoppers arriving by car and accessing the stores from the parking lot. Retailers often prefer the primary retail frontage to reflect the prevailing pedestrian route from the parking lot, while the City encourages the primary retail frontage to be located along the public sidewalk and for any surface parking to be located behind the buildings that front on the main street, reflecting a more urban form. Some best practices are offered below to assist in these transitional situations.



The primary, secondary and tertiary façades should be clearly identifiable at a glance.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Create a visual hierarchy of façades that reflects the City's hierarchy by using different architectural treatments and materials such as projections, setbacks and graphics on each side.** The primary retail façade can be emphasized by using higher quality materials and interesting detailing as well as through the location of retail entrances and storefronts (see also Sections 1.1 and 1.2).
2. **At corners, wrap the primary retail façade of the storefront around the corner to also include the first 6 m (20 ft.) of the secondary façade.**
3. **Where there is a rear parking lot, reduce walking distances to the primary retail frontage and store entrances by providing well-lit walkways or mid-block connections between or through buildings approximately every 50 m (165 ft.).**
4. **Avoid fully glazed storefronts that are un-animated or which enable views of the back of interior shelves.**
5. **Wrap long store frontages with smaller retail storefronts on the primary retail façade to avoid long uninterrupted spans of unanimated façade and locate larger floor plates above or below grade** (see also Section 1.4).
6. **Avoid unanimated blank walls on all street frontages.** On secondary and other non-retail façades visible to the street or pedestrians, use architectural treatments and materials to create interesting rhythms. Landscaped areas in front of the façade can help to add interest. Branding and graphics can both animate the walls and increase retail visibility. Window displays at eye-level can make walking along the street more interesting. A pedestrian-friendly spacing and scale (e.g. a different display window every 6 to 7 m (about 20 ft.) can be used). Even walls facing laneways or smaller thoroughfares can be animated with windows and exterior lighting.
7. **The appearance of the backside of retail buildings can be mitigated with screens and landscaping around loading areas.**



The retailer's amenities, such as a patio, reinforce the hierarchy of retail façades.

2.3 CONTIGUOUS RETAIL FRONTAGE

Promote a continuity of retail frontages to support retail vitality while ensuring the legibility of individual storefronts.

Ensure that each individual storefront within the retail frontage can be easily identified by using vertical architectural articulation and/or through the use of materials, detailing, canopies, etc. (See also Sections 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Design the base building to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a variety of store design options.** A variety of storefront widths, depths, heights and transparency treatments should be possible so that the needs of different retail tenants can be met. Small scale projects may not be able to offer as many options as large developments but should still be as flexible as possible.
- 2. Allow variations such as slight projections, setbacks and the use of canopies between different storefronts.** Patrons should be able to easily identify the number of retailers in a building from a distance.
- 3. Separate retail units with at least 0.6 m to 1.2 m (2 to 4 ft.) of opaque facade to allow for wall display in the interior.** Architecturally, the exterior separation on a wall between two storefronts can be a simple U channel.
- 4. Ensure that store entrances in fully glazed façades can still be clearly identified from a 100 m (about 300 ft.) distance.** As noted above, the wall space separation between units should be at least 600 to 1200 mm (2 to 4 ft.). This cannot be achieved with only vertical window mullions or dividers.



Variations in the architectural expression of each storefront allows for a clear understanding of the number of retail units.

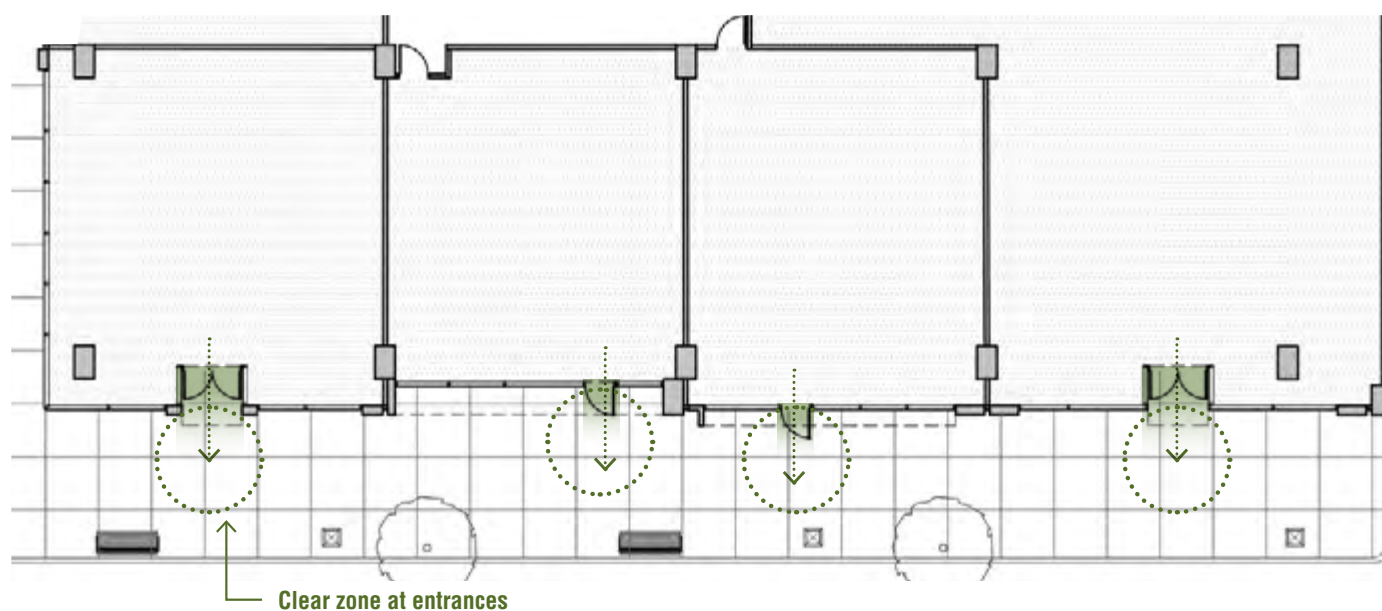
2.4 ENTRANCES

Ensure the transition from the sidewalk to the retail space is as seamless as possible to support access, visibility and the functional needs of tenants.

The entrance is the gateway to the retail space. It is an important transition between the public realm and the retail experience. It is the first contact with customers, and the opportunity to create a lasting memory.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Locate the entrance along the main pedestrian route to the store.** For smaller retailer units where it is important to maximize the window display area, locate the entrance to one side of the retail space.
2. **Design the entrance in proportion with the storefront, accentuating the height and creating an inviting setting.** The entrance should stand out and increase visibility. Doors of retail units should be taller than the standard minimum building code height, a good retail door height is approximately 2.4 m (8 ft.) in height.
3. **Visually emphasize the entrance by using architectural elements such as projected or recessed walls, signage and more prominent colours and finishes.** Create a welcoming impression.
4. **Enhance the entrance area by using high quality materials and detailing such as door handles, lighting, signage, framing, etc.**



Tenant and public realm amenities should not block access or sightlines to the retail entrances.

- 5. Consider recessing the entrance.** This offers the retailer the opportunity to integrate finishing and elements to support their brand identity (e.g. marquee over the entryway, their logo inserted into the floor, specialty lighting) and to increase the display window area.
- 6. Minimize the number of public entrances to individual retailers while balancing the need for a fine grain of entrances along the retail street.** Most retailers avoid leasing units with multiple entrances on different walls since this presents security challenges and increases the amount of floor space that must be dedicated to circulation versus selling.
- 7. Secondary entrances, if required by a retail tenant, should be located on the same internal store circulation path as the primary entrance. They should be visually distinguished from the primary entrance by choosing less prominent architectural elements, materials and signage.**
- 8. Minimize the prominence of back accesses and emergency exits by using the same finishes or colour as adjacent walls.**



The entrance at Cumbrae's butcher shop is recessed and defined by a change in materiality from glass windows to wood panels, and the placement of the primary sign. The bench in front of the facade also helps direct customers to the entrance.

2.5 DISPLAY WINDOWS

Use display windows to provide visual interest, help promote the retailers' brand and identity, and support the pedestrian experience.

Storefront windows are not only an opportunity for merchandise display, they also offer a peek inside the retailer's brand experience and represent a powerful design element of the storefront.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Use non-reflective, clear glass for optimum transparency.
2. Avoid fully glazed curtain walls with large areas of glass or multiple storefronts that are undifferentiated.
3. Use a 150 to 600 mm (6 to 24 in.) window base to protect the storefront and windows from snow removal equipment and other sidewalk activities. The base should not be taller than 760 mm (30 in.).
4. Design retail display windows to showcase merchandise and provide clear views into the retail space. For fashion retailer storefronts specifically, provide uninterrupted (no mullion) windows to create impressive window displays. As standard glass is often 1.5 m (5 ft.) in width, a retailer can achieve a 3 m (10 ft.) wide display window through two pieces of glass that are butt jointed.

Horizontal mullions are located above eye-level to provide uninterrupted views into the retail space.

Operable windows strengthen the connection between the retailer and the sidewalk.



Diagram indicating a variety of window types.

- 5. Design window mullions to reinforce the character of the area while balancing the needs of retail visibility.** For example, it may be possible to keep a heritage window character on the upper part of a storefront (e.g. above window or door transom), leaving a mullion-free zone for merchandise display. Consider the eye level of passing pedestrians as well as people in wheel-chairs. For restaurants, also consider the eye of level of people seated at tables or bars.
- 6. Consider the option of glass boxes projecting slightly in front of the façade finishes where compatible with the character of building and district.** This can create an interesting play of volumes at the storefront. Consider the type of merchandise to be displayed when determining the size of the glass box.
- 7. Use operational window systems (e.g. garage doors, accordion or sliding doors) whenever possible to make a stronger connection between the store interior and the sidewalk.**
- 8. Allow retail tenants to apply brand graphics on the glass provided that they maintain uninterrupted views into the interior.** Discourage cluttering the window display area with information and advertisements that are unrelated to the retail brand.
- 9. Refer to section 3.1 for display window lighting.**



The connection to the street at Bellwoods Brewery is enhanced with garage doors that open to a large patio with lighting and heaters.

2.6 IDENTITY, BRANDING AND SIGNAGE

Support retail visibility and the expression of the retailer's brand identity.

Retailers are more and more conscious that brand identity and recognition are powerful tools in establishing rapport with potential customers. Beyond the marketing aspect, the retailer's physical form is expressed through its store experience and interior design, enhanced by an attractive storefront that celebrates the brand's philosophy, values and personality.

Signage should also support the character of the surrounding commercial district. For example, heritage districts and Business Improvement Areas may differentiate their area from other shopping districts by encouraging businesses to use a consistent type of signage, colour palette, or other graphic elements.

BEST PRACTICES

1. **Design the base building to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate a variety of options for future retail tenants to use in expressing their brand identities.** Use the architectural framework to create a rhythm of glazing, entrances, and display areas.
2. **Use a combination of storefront materials, lighting, hardware, and signage to establish the brand.** Numerous design elements can be incorporated in a creative way to achieve this goal, including:
 - Three dimensional signs or sculptural icons,
 - Marquees, canopies or awnings,
 - Articulated architectural components that differ from, yet complement, the base building,
 - Custom designed doors and hardware, and
 - Surface or suspended light fixtures.
3. **Refer to further signage regulations as per the Toronto Sign By-Law.**

Related Toronto Regulations and Guidelines

- Toronto Sign By-law (Section 694 of the Toronto Municipal Code)

Understanding signage types

Primary Signage

The primary sign is typically associated with the entrance location, and includes the name or logo of the operator and visually directs the customers into the store. Bigger is not always better. However, the right positioning is key to orienting the customer.

Secondary Signage

Offers complementary information and orientation to customers. The use of tab signs is advantageous on long linear streets where the pedestrian sightlines are constrained with a continuous building edge alignment. Less is more with signage and visual clutter which can distract customers should be avoided. A well-organized hierarchy of signs from primary to secondary is key.

Podium Signage

When a signage band is dictated by the architecture, it limits the retailers' expression and usually allows for just the primary signage.



Two-level retailer with a primary and secondary façade. Both sides have primary signage, however the primary façade is accentuated with a well-lit canopy over the entrance, secondary banner signs and window decals.



3.0 The Retail Space

The ultimate success of any design is measured by its ability to effectively achieve its operational objectives while delivering a memorable experience. Well-designed retail spaces excel in maximizing sales areas and providing high quality customer experiences while meeting the functional and back-of-house requirements.

Retail best practices support profitability and adaptability principles as well as city building.

- 3.1 Lighting**
- 3.2 Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing**
- 3.3 Shipping, Receiving and Loading**
- 3.4 Columns**

BEST PRACTICES FOR RETAIL FRONTAGE



- 1 Lighting
- 2 Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing
- 3 Columns

3.1 LIGHTING

Use lighting to support retail visibility, walkability, social interaction and public safety.

Well-lit storefronts, both during the day and the night, contribute to the life of the streets and provide a sense of animation, public safety and identity.

BEST PRACTICES

1. Fully integrate the exterior lighting with the architectural detailing as part of the overall storefront design.
2. Ensure that retail entrances are well-lit, safe and inviting.
3. Locate internal lighting as close as possible to the glass (100 to 150 mm (4 to 6 in.)) to attract the eye to the display windows. Conceal the light tracks and fixtures from public view. Fixtures should be dimmable and on a timer to adjust lighting levels during different times of the day and seasons. They also should be adjustable / directional and typically located at the ceiling. In very tall windows, lighting fixtures might also be installed at the bottom and sides as well as at the ceiling to ensure effective illumination throughout the display area.



Stores along Yonge Street remain illuminated even after opening hours, providing animation to the street and a sense of security.

Related Toronto Regulations and Guidelines

- Toronto Sign By-law (Section 694 of the Toronto Municipal Code)
- Toronto Bird Friendly Development Guidelines – Best Practices for Effective Lighting 2017

4. **Support the night-time activation of retail streets and public safety by illuminating unit interiors and display windows at a reduced level of illumination on a night-lighting program after retailer operating hours.** (Refer to Sign By-law and Bird Friendly Development Guidelines for details on limitations).
5. **Use lighting sources that closely replicate natural daylight's rendition of colour.** The minimum Colour Rendering Index (CRI) should be 85. In a display window, the CRI should be at least 90.
6. **Review lighting levels based on the type of merchandise and overall design considerations.**



Well-illuminated storefront with a variety of architectural lighting, accentuating the store entrance.

3.2 MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL AND PLUMBING

Meet tenant back-of-house requirements without detracting from the retail brand experience.

While it is essential that operational requirements be met, the presence of mechanical, electrical and plumbing (MEP) elements should be visibly and audibly discrete to avoid distracting from the brand experience. They should be coordinated with the architectural design intent as well as any base building restrictions.

BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Locate gas lines, metres, louvers for ventilation, etc. away from main retail entrances at the storefront.** Choose a secondary or tertiary façade to locate such equipment. On a corner, avoid installing such devices on the first 6 m (20 ft.).
- 2. Consider a well-integrated texture that discretely integrates louvers with the storefront where it is absolutely necessary to install them on the primary retail frontage.**
- 3. Consider the placement of venting solutions for restaurants in the storefront design.** Whenever feasible, use ecologizer units rather than conventional venting. While conventional venting typically requires vertical shafts through the building roof, ecologizers can vent from the side of the building.
- 4. In the store interior, conceal equipment to the extent possible. For example, use recessed sprinkler heads.**



Venting and other base building services integrated into the base building frame around the façade.

3.3 SHIPPING, RECEIVING AND LOADING

Meet retail tenant back-of-house requirements while maintaining a good retail brand experience and supporting city building objectives such as walkability.

While many small scale and non-food retail operations have infrequent and relatively small shipping and receiving requirements that can be met through the front door, others require a fully operational loading dock to receive their merchandise and dispose of waste and recycling. It is important to understand both ends of the spectrum and to provide for either condition.

BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Avoid direct sightlines from the public street to the loading dock and servicing areas.** When these areas are at grade on a back street or laneway, provide ample lighting for public safety, landscaping for screening, and well-integrated back doors into the base building architecture. Install security systems in areas with low visibility.
- 2. Consider fully concealed “back-of-house” areas in larger scale and mixed-use projects whenever feasible.** These areas can sometimes be integrated on a lower level (below grade parking garage) or on the second floor of mixed-use buildings. Use a well-integrated garage door to screen access from the public eye.
- 3. Protect the residential units in mixed-use buildings from noise and odours associated with shipping and waste disposal.** Use soundproofing, sound-resistant windows and use other noise attenuation techniques as appropriate.



Screen and planters along the back side of the store both conceal mechanical elements and add visual interest to the long bare wall.

3.4 COLUMNS

Design ground floor column spacing to enable functional retail units, and allow for a diversity of retail tenants and adaptability to changing needs.

Column spacing at the retail storefront needs to be carefully considered since not all retail uses need the same frontage. In general, the column grid should be designed to enable options for locating demising walls. Inefficient space configurations imposed by the column grid can increase tenant costs per unit size and reduce the leasability of the space.

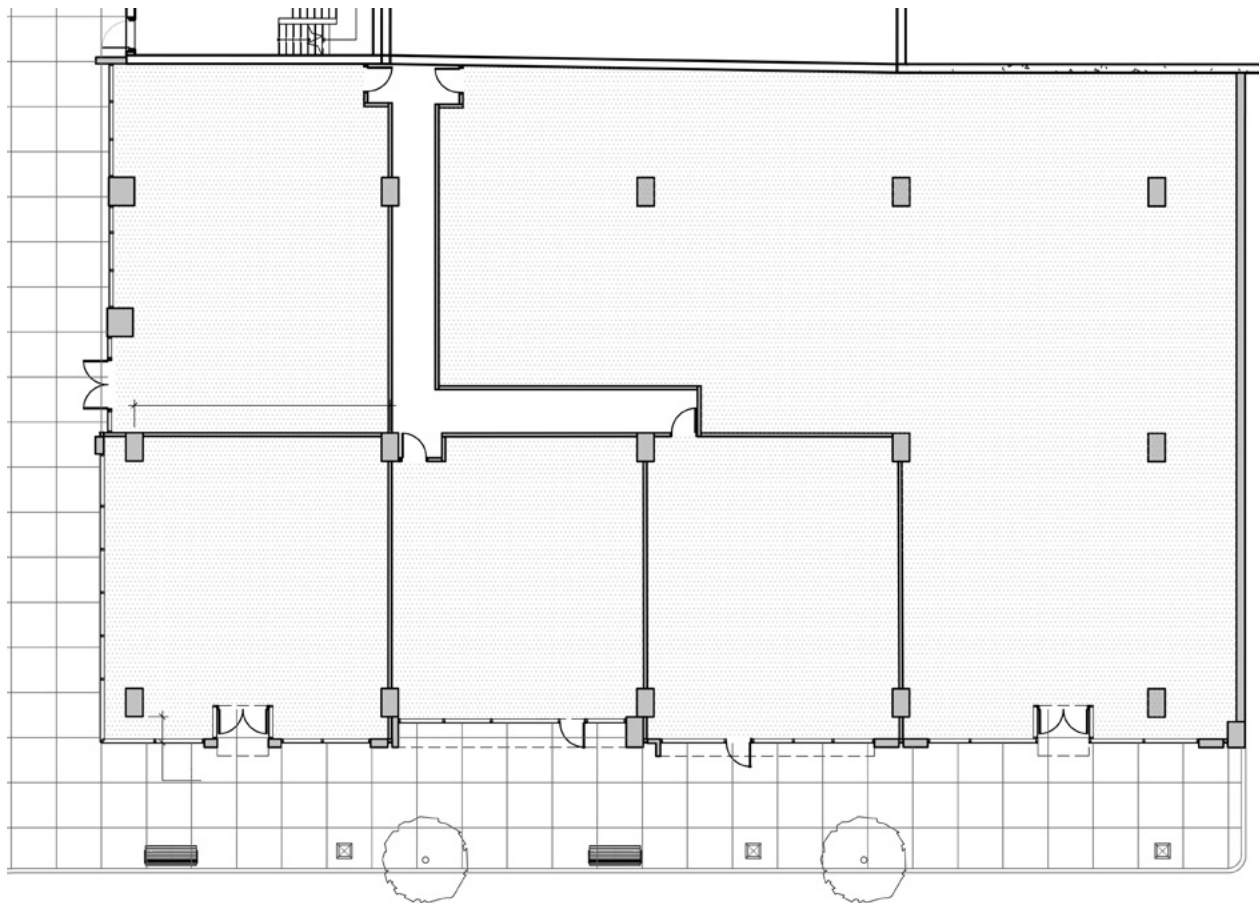
BEST PRACTICES

- 1. Minimize the number of columns at the storefront in large scale projects.** This allows flexibility for the subdivision of the retail space into appropriately sized units for a range of tenant types.
- 2. Set back columns in the retail podium from the storefront line whenever feasible** (e.g. by at least 1 m (3 ft.)). This minimizes the columns' visual impact on the storefront and maximizes flexibility in locating demising walls.
- 3. Design a column grid as wide as possible to offer the greatest flexibility.** A typical retail column grid is 9 m (30 ft.). Usually a column grid smaller than 7 m (23 ft.) hinders tenant flexibility.



Columns are set back from the retail facade, allowing greater tenant expression.

4. Use columns as a form of architectural articulation when possible. For example, this may be appropriate in heritage buildings.
5. Consider full or partial transfer structures when retail operations require a different grid than upper floor uses.





4.0 Appendices

- 4.1 Principles for Successful Retail Development
- 4.2 Retail Design Terms and Glossary
- 4.3 Images Cited

4.1 PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Good retail design is holistic and flexible to allow for a diversity of uses that may evolve over time. It should support the amenity of the surrounding commercial block and/or residential neighbourhood as well as contribute to the marketability of the space to tenants. Although incorporating the recommended best practices may involve additional up-front costs, the benefits to the building owner and developer include:

- Increased leasing opportunities,
- Increased rent potential,
- Improved quality of the leased space, and
- Reduced need for modifications to the building envelope to accommodate new retail tenants.

The quality and diversity of retail tenants in the area will improve. Residents will have local and convenient access to goods, services and job opportunities. Lively active streetscapes will be created that invite people to gather in the public realm and make walking a more enjoyable experience.

The core principles that underpin the Manual are:

A. Support Retail Business Functionality and Profitability

It is critical that the space created meet the functional needs of the retail businesses who will occupy it. This is a prerequisite for meeting the needs of the surrounding community, for creating animated and dynamic streets, for economic development and job growth and for generating an economic return for the developer and property manager. There are four key considerations:

1. Ensure strong retail visibility to attract customers.
2. Design unit layouts that meet the functional requirements of tenants.
3. Use energy-efficient lighting and building materials.
4. Meet retailer back-of-house requirements.

B. Support the Achievement of Complete Communities and City Building Objectives

The retail environment plays an important role in achieving the Official Plan's vision of creating an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging. Retail districts provide local communities with goods and services, act as community gathering places and help to define the character, appearance and walkability of its many arterial roads. There are eight key considerations in designing retail space that meets Toronto's city- building objectives:

1. Support walkability.
2. Support social interaction.
3. Enable a diversity of commercial uses.
4. Enable a high degree of access and connectivity for all people.
5. Support public safety.

6. Encourage high quality design to support attractive, durable and adaptable placemaking.
7. Have regard for the character and physical, social and economic contexts of the site.
8. Support environmental sustainability and responsibility.

C. Support Local Economic Development and Job Growth

Toronto's economic development and job growth objectives are supported indirectly by designing spaces that meet the functional needs of retail businesses both now and in the future and by supporting the development of complete communities and meeting city building objectives. There are four key considerations:

1. Support local job growth, by designing spaces that meet the functional needs of retailers.
2. Encourage local residents and employees to shop locally, by providing for diverse commercial uses that meet the community's needs and by providing access and connectivity.
3. Support the prosperity and growth of local independent businesses, by providing for diverse commercial uses including spaces that are affordable and accessible to local businesses.
4. Support tourism and efforts to attract customers from outside the local area, by encouraging a high quality of design, diverse commercial uses and unique and distinctive retail environments.

D. Design Adaptable Structures that can Accommodate the Evolution and Repurposing of Retail Space

As Toronto intensifies and increasingly accommodates retail space in mixed-use buildings, the importance of designing adaptable structures that can accommodate future changes also increases. There are three key considerations:

1. Enable a diversity of commercial uses.
2. Enable the incorporation of new technologies.
3. Accommodate future intensification.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN ELEMENTS

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN ELEMENTS

PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL RETAIL DEVELOPMENT	DESIGN ELEMENTS														
	THE BUILDING					THE STREET & RETAIL FRONTAGE					THE RETAIL SPACE				
	Massing & Geometry	Material Differentiation	Canopies, Overhangs & Awnings	Storefront Width to StoreDepth	Ceiling Heights	Sidewalk Interface	Hierarchy of Retail Frontages	Contiguous Retail Frontage	Entrances	Display Windows	Identity, Branding & Signage	Lighting	Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing	Shipping, Receiving & Loading	Columns
RETAIL BUSINESS FUNCTIONALITY & PROFITABILITY															
Retail Visibility															
Functional Unit Layouts															
Energy Efficient															
Meet Back of House Requirements															
CITY BUILDING															
Walkability															
Social Interaction															
Diverse Commercial Uses															
Access & Connectivity															
Public Safety															
High Quality Design															
Neighbourhood Context															
Environmental Sustainability															
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT															
Job Growth															
Serve local market															
Support Independent Businesses															
Support Tourism															
ADAPTABILITY															
Diverse Commercial Uses															
New Technologies															
Future Intensification															

4.2 RETAIL DESIGN TERMS AND GLOSSARY

Anchor: The tenant that serves as the predominant draw to a commercial property.

Back of house: Behind the scenes area the customer does not see.

Build-out: Space improvements put in place per the tenant's specifications. Takes into consideration the amount of tenant finish allowance provided for in the lease agreement.

Contiguous Space: Multiple spaces within the same building and on the same floor which can be combined and rented to a single tenant.

Cornices: The horizontal, exterior trim or feature of a building at the meeting of the roof and the building façade.

Colour Rendering Index (CRI): Quantitative measure on a scale from 0 to 100 percent indicating the ability of a light source to faithfully reveal the colours of various objects in comparison with a natural light source. The higher the CRI, the better the colour rendering ability. Light sources with a CRI of 85 to 90 are considered good at colour rendering.

Cross Shopping: consumers prefer to visit more than one store per trip, generating positive externalities for neighbouring stores.

Demising wall: Wall that separates two tenants or a tenant from an interior corridor or lobby area.

Display Window: Large area of transparent glass in the storefront that provides space for product and service display as well as visibility into the store.

Glazing: The glass surface of a window, door opening, or wall.

Gross Leasable Area: the area of a retail unit or shopping centre that is assigned to stores, excluding corridors, exits, open space.

HVAC: Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. An acronym used as shorthand for the air systems of a building.

Lease: An agreement whereby the owner of real property (e.g. landlord/lessor) gives the right of possession to another (e.g. tenant/lessee) for a specified period of time (e.g. term) and for a specified consideration (e.g. rent).

Lease Agreement: The formal legal document entered into between a Landlord and a Tenant to reflect the terms of the negotiations between them; that is, the lease terms have been negotiated and agreed upon, and the agreement has been reduced to writing. It constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and sets forth their basic legal rights.

Louvers: a screen composed of slats for admitting air often located in the signage zone of the bulkhead.

Marquee: A canopy projecting over the entrance.

MEP: Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing, an acronym used as shorthand for the working systems of the building.

Mezzanine: A low storey between two others in a building, typically between the ground and first floors.

Mullion: a vertical or horizontal bar between the panes in a window.

Niche: a small market, partially isolated from the competition by distance or degree of specialization.

Permeability: Ability to access or see into a space; connectivity.

Podium: Base building on which a residential or office tower may sit.

Stoa: Covered walkway or roofed colonnade.

Storefront: Retail or commercial face of building at street level, typically articulated and distinct from the rest of the building face.

Storefront Entrance: Entrances to individual retail and other commercial spaces.

Transfer Structure: Transfer structures are often times used in tall buildings, usually for transferring high forces and loads to other structures that can resist them. For example, a transfer beam can transfer loads from stories above to stories below.

U-Channel: A metal rail shaped as a 'U' that is used in building construction to assemble framework.

4.3 IMAGES CITED

Note: Images not listed here belong to the City of Toronto.

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109 Ossington Avenue, Toronto, AtaliasPhotos

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THE BUILDING

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P.29 The Original Grooming Experts OGX, 477 Richmond Street West, Toronto, AtaliasPhotos

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THE RETAIL SPACE

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P.44 Site Screen by Planterworx. Designed by Harrison Green. West 50th Street, New York City.

APPENDICES

P.47 LCBO Urban Concept Store, 1986 Queen Street East, Toronto, AtaliasPhotos

