

4.2 Plazas and Character Streets

A **plaza** is a large, usually hardscaped* public open space that is framed, activated and defined by adjacent buildings, streets, green spaces or other urban elements.

Plazas often function as a focal point or gathering place for the community and may accommodate various activities depending on their size, location and function. Generally, plazas are reserved for pedestrians or other active transportation users.

A **character street** can be thought of as a plaza in linear form. While these streets may still accommodate vehicle traffic, their design prioritizes the pedestrian experience, both in terms of safety and accessibility, but also from the general experience of the streetscape not only as a place to travel through, but also as a unique place to gather, shop, relax, eat or recreate in.



Brentwood Plaza, Burnaby



Water Street, Gastown, Vancouver



Main Street, Vancouver during car-free day festival



Albee Square, Brooklyn, NY



Greene Street, Soho, NY

Both plazas and character streets are defined not only by the land uses that surround and activate them (e.g. ground-level storefronts, café and restaurant patio seating areas), but also by other urban design elements such as unique landscaping, hardscaping features and materiality, street furniture and lighting, and public art.

Historically, plazas and character streets have both played a crucial role in shaping excellent urban design in neighbourhoods and cities throughout the world and in creating unique places that residents and visitors alike can enjoy, identify with and feel welcome in.

As part of the overall public space and mobility strategy, the Edmonds Plan identifies strategic locations where plazas and character streets may be developed in the future (see *Figure 12* below). These spaces provide unique placemaking opportunities that will establish Edmonds as a special destination with lots to see, do and enjoy for both residents and visitors. Additional opportunities for character streets and plazas can and should be explored through future redevelopment opportunities, particularly on large development sites.



Figure 12. Edmonds Plazas and Character Streets Map

Plazas and Character Streets

1

Edmonds Community Centre Plaza: The Edmonds Community Centre Plaza is intended to be a new centrally located hardscaped space along Edmonds Street, serving as both an important community gathering and cultural space, and as a gateway to Edmonds Park and Edmonds Community Centre. High quality materials, public art, flexible seating, tables and performance spaces are envisioned for the space, with high branched shade trees for cooling during the summer. The eastern edge of the plaza will be activated with retail opportunities and café seating, provided as part of a future expansion to the community centre, or as a separate building. The surface parking area to the north of the plaza will be reconfigured to allow for more seamless integration with Edmonds Park.



Concept sketch of the future Edmonds Community Centre Plaza (1) and Edmonds Character Street (4)

2

Kingsway and Edmonds Plaza: Proposed as part of the Hall Towers Master Plan, the Kingsway and Edmonds Plaza provides a fitting terminus to the Highland Parkline Trail, with significant landscaping and open space, lined with retail, public services and community amenities. It will be a place for people to gather, linger and meet, with public art installations that recall the unique, multifaceted history of the site. A pavilion will support programming and provide a space for displays and events. Changes in grade will help create a diversity of spaces and seating opportunities, with universal accessibility addressed through grade sensitive ramps and linkages.



Concept sketch of the Kingsway and Edmonds Plaza

3

Station Lawn Plaza: The existing Station Lawn to the south of the bus exchange will be improved and integrated with development around the Edmonds SkyTrain station, transitioning from a green space along Station Hill Drive, to a more hardscaped plaza expression east of the station. The plaza will play an important role as a gateway and destination, serving as a meeting space and connection to transit and various trails where both passive and active zones will be explored, as well as additional opportunities to cover the train tracks for acoustic and open space benefits.

4

Edmonds Character Street: Edmonds Street as it exists today, between Kingsway and Canada Way, offers a diversity of services and commercial opportunities. The Edmonds Plan envisions this street as a future pedestrian oriented high street*. It will include wider sidewalks and space for patio seating, retail product displays and other elements to activate the streetscape for pedestrians. A minimum of 2m will be provided between the building edge and the sidewalk to accommodate these outdoor uses.

Dedicated cycling facilities will be provided away from this character street and along parallel streets, and street parking will be limited to maximize available space for pedestrians. A hardscaped front boulevard with unique street lighting and furniture is envisioned to increase the useable public realm, with street trees offering shade during the summer. Parkade entrances to developments fronting the character street will be restricted to allow for future street closures for festivals and markets, with public transit temporarily re-routed along 18th Avenue. Consideration for reduced curb heights, high quality paving materials and pedestrian crossings at Fulton Avenue and New Vista Place should be explored to enhance the pedestrian experience.

5

Edmonds SkyTrain Station character street: The Edmonds Plan envisions a new publicly accessible character street adjacent to the Edmonds SkyTrain Station that contributes to a sense of arrival into Edmonds from the SkyTrain and replaces the existing bus exchange with on-street bus service. The plan envisions a primarily hardscaped street with high quality materials and street trees. Street parking and dedicated cycling facilities will be limited to maximize space for bus stops, while ensuring generous space for pedestrians. The street is envisioned to be lined with active retail and commercial uses. A minimum of 2m should be provided between the building edge and the sidewalk to accommodate outdoor product displays or patio seating.

Examples of street closures for festivals, markets and other organized pedestrian activities:



Yaletown, Vancouver



Kitsilano Farmer's Market, Vancouver

6

Southgate Boulevard: Southgate Boulevard is the commercial heart of the Southgate City master planned neighbourhood. This character street will provide a gateway and a sense of arrival into Southgate City, with shops lining the north side of the street and a new park bounding the southern side. The street will prioritize pedestrian movements, while still facilitating cycling in a dedicated lane as well as street parking. Large setbacks between the building edge and the sidewalk will be provided to accommodate patios and other seating and gathering spaces. More details about the design for the street are outlined further in the Southgate City Master Plan.



Rendering of Southgate Boulevard

Where plazas and character streets are being developed as part of a site-specific development, applicants will be required to carefully consider, at a minimum, the following aspects for the new public space:



Purpose, character and flexibility of use

Burnaby, BC



Adjacent land uses and activation

Seattle, WA



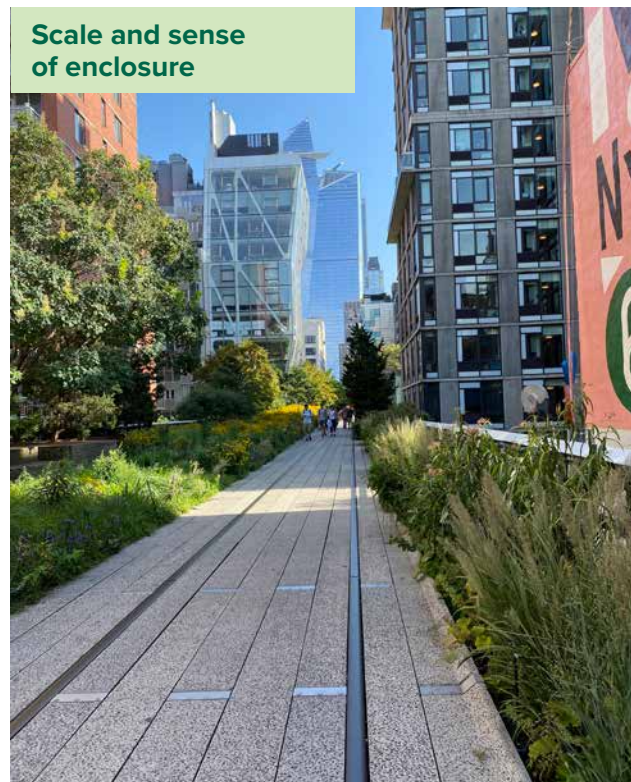
Street furniture and lighting

New York City, NY



Placemaking* (naming, public art, etc.)

Burnaby, BC



Scale and sense of enclosure

New York City, NY



Landscaping and water features

Wesbrook Mall, UBC

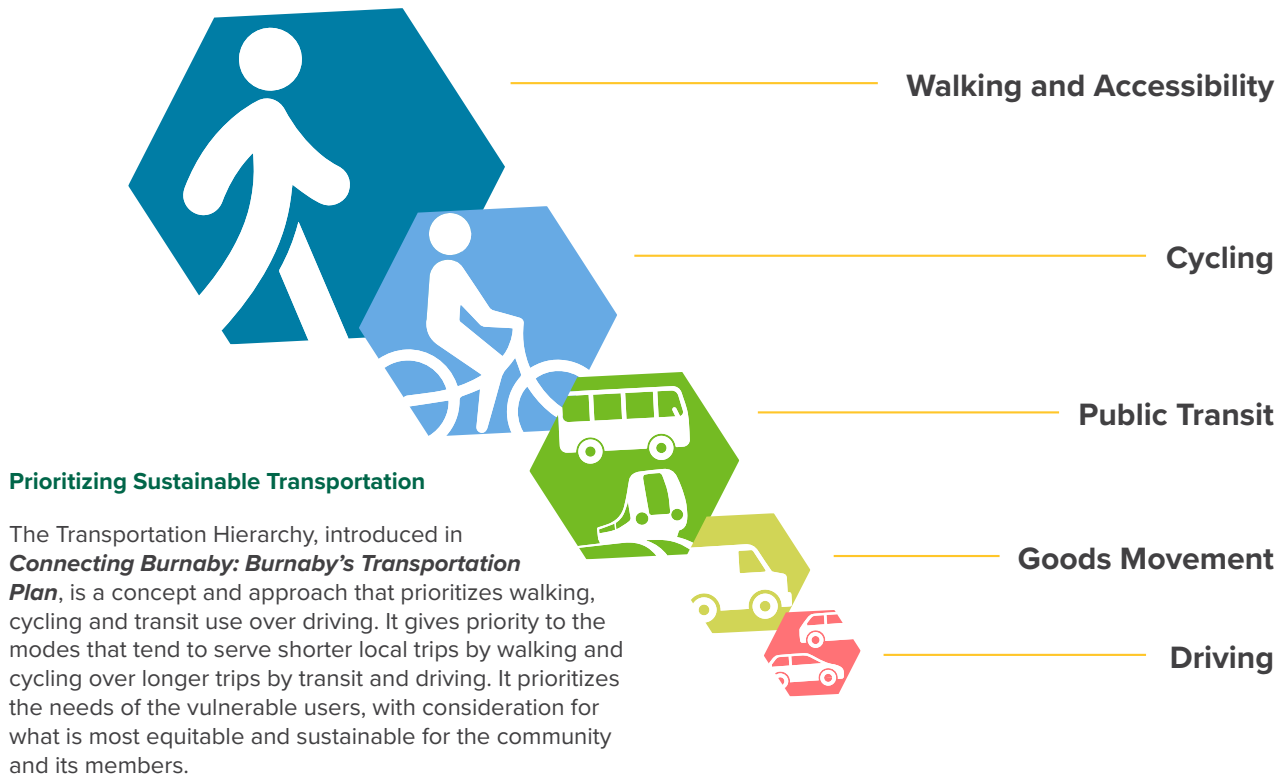
The blue-green space network, in combination with plazas and character streets, work together to form a comprehensive public realm vision for the long-term future of the Edmonds community, in which a complete, interconnected network of public spaces is available for the public to enjoy (see *Figure 13* below).



Figure 13. Edmonds Comprehensive Public Realm Vision

4.3 Transportation Mobility Networks

All proposed future transportation mobility networks in Edmonds build off of the **Connecting Burnaby: Burnaby Transportation Plan** to prioritize sustainable transportation and are aligned with the City's **Climate Action Framework** as well as other strategies and policies aimed at providing safer, more convenient and accessible mobility options for all (see *Figures 14, 15, 16, 17*).



Pedestrian Network

In coordination with the blue-green space* network, the proposed pedestrian network for Edmonds will create new, more personal linkages that encourage walkability, create an enhanced pedestrian experience and enable all parts of Edmonds to be reached comfortably on foot. The future pedestrian network will also improve key connections to natural spaces and key public transit destinations.

All street designs within Edmonds will follow or be informed by the adopted Burnaby Town Centre Street Standards, which require wide, separated sidewalks, with clearly marked crossing on both sides of every street.

The plan places a priority on making it easier for people to walk around. This includes creating clear and easy-to-follow paths for pedestrians, using greenways in the middle of blocks. These greenways will help people move between important places and through areas without cars, making a calmer environment for walking.

New street connections and intersections with traffic signals along Kingsway help bridge the divide created by Kingsway between north and south Edmonds. This will help create smoother connections to and from the Edmonds SkyTrain Station.