What Are Nodes & Corridors?

Kitchener’s Nodes & Corridors are key intensification areas which help provide transit supportive development throughout the city. They can become community focal points of activity by providing concentrated opportunities for social interaction in addition to being places where one does their daily shopping. When integrated well with existing or planned neighbourhoods, the pedestrian public realm, cycling infrastructure, and the parks and open space network, Nodes & Corridors can become an indispensable resource for all users.

Nodes are categorized as City Nodes, Community Nodes and Neighbourhood Nodes. They are generally located at major intersections, provide a significant commercial function, and are often complemented with residential or institutional uses.

Corridors are categorized as Urban Corridors and Arterial Corridors. They are generally linear and are located along transit corridors (urban corridors) and major streets (arterial corridors), providing a significant retail and service industry function with compatible residential or employment uses.

Objectives

To create interesting, high quality buildings and open spaces within Kitchener’s Nodes & Corridors that help create liveable, walkable, healthy, sustainable and desireable neighbourhoods.

To enhance the quality of the outdoor environment through quality landscaping, thoughtful public open spaces, and sustainable design practices.

To create safe, comfortable and attractive streetscapes and pedestrian environments that emphasize walking, cycling and transit.

To reinforce and enhance the character and quality of the districts and neighbourhoods where nodes & corridors are located; and

To promote development patterns that allow for high-quality future intensification.

Vision

Nodes & corridors present a unique opportunity to bring a variety of high-quality urban spaces and a broad mix of uses to all corners of the City at various concentrations. Properly planned, designed, and activated, they can become hubs of activity while providing a hierarchy of experiences at the neighbourhood, community and city scale. Properly coordinated and connected by transit, they can ensure a mix of great experiences for all who live, work, play and shop in Kitchener.
### COMMUNITY DESIGN

**All projects are expected to meet the objectives of the City-Wide Design section of this manual.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universal Design</th>
<th>All projects are expected to meet the objectives of the City-Wide Design section of this manual.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Design for high levels of natural surveillance and optimal pedestrian visibility. Pedestrians should have clear, unobstructed vision along all publicly accessible routes, allowing for advanced detection of potentially unsafe situations. This includes visibility for a full range of eye levels including children and users of mobility aides. Avoid dead-ends or entrapment areas. All spaces that can be accessed by pedestrians are to have multiple routes of escape, including areas on private sites such as loading/service areas. Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to design all spaces to a high standard for safety. A CPTED Report may be required for any development. Prioritize pedestrian safety when designing lighting, landscaping and site function elements such as parking, access and servicing areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age &amp; Family Friendly Design</td>
<td>Provide public and private amenity spaces that are suitable for families, children, and older adults. Design these spaces to be shared amongst different age groups by making them large and flexible enough to accommodate more than one user type and activity simultaneously. Where residential units are proposed, provide the greatest possible mix and variety of housing and unit, types, sizes and tenures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Infrastructure</td>
<td>Nodes &amp; corridors can act as community hubs for commercial and institutional spaces that can lend themselves well to social services and other social infrastructure. All nodes &amp; corridors should have the potential to accommodate social infrastructure objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Culture</td>
<td>Identify potential opportunities for public art installations and arts and culture spaces.</td>
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</table>
**Design for Sustainability**

**Health & Well Being**

Provide a continuous pedestrian network to encourage active walking and cycling between uses and throughout larger sites.

Connect building occupants to the outdoors through the generous passive daylighting of buildings, frequent and generous permeability between indoor and outdoor spaces, and direct pedestrian connectivity to trails, parks and open spaces.

**Design for Climate Change**

Integrate and enhance existing natural systems and introduce new green infrastructure.

Techniques may include natural system restoration, improved trail connections to parks/urban spaces, substantial tree planting and protections for local wildlife habitats, migration patterns and bird friendly design practices.

Integrate sustainable technologies and design approaches wherever possible, focusing on adaptability and resilience, energy efficiency and generation and waste management.

Mitigate urban heat island effects by providing lighter, more permeable material treatments for parking areas and increasing tree canopy coverage to the greatest extent possible.

**Design for Outdoor Comfort**

**Microclimates**

Design pro-actively for microclimatic impacts through site design and architecture. Consider building placement, orientation, height, base design, stepbacks, projections, materials, landscaping and lighting as opportunities to improve overall microclimatic performance.

These impacts are to be determined through Wind and Shadow Studies, with mitigation recommendations from these studies implemented on the relevant plans.

**Four Season & Winter City Design**

Design pathways, transit waiting areas and public and private open spaces for winter activity and program that they are useable, comfortable, safe and attractive year-round.

Use vibrant colours, human-scaled lighting, public art, four-season landscaping and other techniques to bring warmth and visual interest to nodes & corridors.

**Street Design**

**Blocks & Streets**

It is critical that planning for future intensification includes an understanding of where future high-density buildings may be placed, scaled and oriented such that they satisfy the Design for Mid-Rise and Design for Tall Buildings sections of this manual.

From the master planning stage, create street, block and circulation patterns able to naturally accommodate a variety of potential future uses as a node or corridor intensifies.

Create land parcels and development blocks that are compatible with their surroundings. Seamlessly integrate development with finer-grained surrounding neighbourhood contexts.

Create a continuous pedestrian network both on-site and to off-site sidewalks, and trails.

Provide a coordinated streetscape (both within the public and private realm) that seamlessly incorporates the following interwoven elements:

- Seating and gathering spaces, shade structures, human-scaled lighting, public art and wayfinding.
- Trees, planters and hard and soft landscaping features using resilient species.
- Thoughtfully designed infrastructure such as utility poles, bus shelters, garbage/recycling, fire hydrants, LID infrastructure and stormwater management.
- Unique surface materials and patterns, unobstructed and continuous connections, and wider areas to accommodate high pedestrian traffic.

Provide architectural and landscape enhancements at the corners of sites.

During streetscape reconstruction or as part of redevelopment, coordinate utilities in the right-of-way to ensure ample opportunity exists for street trees and other urban design elements.
Pedestrians & Cyclists

Provide direct, safe, continuous and clearly defined pedestrian and cyclist access from public sidewalks, parking areas and transit stops to building entrances, between buildings and to adjacent properties to facilitate circulation between sites. Where cyclists are to share driveways with motorists, clearly mark those driveways as sharrows.

Provide a minimum 1.8m wide unobstructed pedestrian walkway along any façade adjacent to a parking area or with a customer entrance, and connect to the public sidewalk. Provide additional width where doors swing out or where parked vehicles can potentially interfere with pedestrians.

Distinguish walkways from driving surfaces by using contrasting surface treatments across drive aisles and vehicle entries/exits and by raising walkways to curb level.

Provide weather protection at building entrances, close to transit stops, and in shared spaces.

Provide sheltered bicycle parking in visible locations near building entrances and pedestrian walkways. Ensure that these locations do not conflict with pedestrian circulation.

Provide site furnishings such as seating, bike racks and pedestrian refuge elements at building entrances, along core pedestrian routes and in amenity areas.

Provide a range of short and long term bicycle parking at appropriate locations along sidewalks, at building entrances, in public spaces and at transit stops. Maintain bicycle parking year round and explore opportunities for covered or indoor parking, particularly for employees.

Focal Points & Gateways

Provide gateway features at entrances of nodes and corridors. Gateway features should be coordinated with landscape design, public art, signage, lighting and streetscape elements.

Development should face gateway features and provide architecturally enhanced, articulated building elevations that contribute to a sense of place.

Wayfinding

Integrate wayfinding strategies into the overall design of an area. Wayfinding systems should focus on connecting people to destination points, including to and from transit stops, community spaces, retail areas, civic institutions, and parks and open spaces.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Access & Location

Locate parks and open spaces as focal points for new development and as central features in nodes and corridors.

Locate parks and open spaces at, adjacent to, or immediately, conveniently and equitably accessible from transit stops.

On large sites or consolidated blocks where multi-phase development occurs, include new public open spaces as part of the first phase of development.

Connectivity

Link nodes and corridors with parks, open spaces and natural areas via trails, complete streets, and other pedestrian and cycling connections to create a continuous network of public space.

Where existing parks, open spaces or trails have minimal connection points to the greater node or corridor, integrate these features with new sidewalks, trails, multi-use pathways and enhanced wayfinding, both through redevelopment opportunities and capital projects.

When designing new parks in existing nodes and corridors, comprehensively consider the active transportation network, including local, regional and commuter rail and bus lines, cycling grids and all pedestrian connections including sidewalks, trails and multi-use pathways.
COMPATIBILITY

Scale & Transition

Conserve low-rise neighbourhoods by focusing development within nodes & corridors.
High & medium density development adjacent to low-rise neighbourhood areas is to provide a suitable transition in scale, massing, building height, building length and intensity.
Preserve for the privacy and access to sunlight of adjacent and surrounding areas.
Provide a mix of building types and sizes. Concentrate height and density closest to transit stops. Pursue opportunities to provide affordable housing and access to retail and personal services which address the needs of lower or fixed income users.
For large sites or consolidated blocks with multiple tall buildings, provide the greatest building height either at the most prominent intersection or internal to the site where it will create the fewest negative impacts (see Design for Tall Buildings).

CULTURAL & NATURAL HERITAGE

Heritage Resources

Conserving cultural and natural heritage resources within Nodes & Corridors is of critical importance, as doing so promotes diversity, gives variety to the urban fabric, enhances the cultural history of neighbourhoods and encourages urban exploration and sustainability. Incorporating cultural and natural heritage assets as featured design elements within nodes & corridors creates desirable destinations and focal points for communities.

This conceptual rendering demonstrates many of the design objectives for nodes & corridors and shows how a carefully planned and thoughtfully designed master plan can seamlessly accommodate intensification over time.
Site Design

Utilize high-quality, durable and sustainable materials. A building's material palette is to contain a variety of complementary, contemporary materials and finishes. No single material should form the overwhelming majority of a building's facade design. Avoid materials which appear monolithic, flat, or unresolved. Where a palette contains such materials, it is expected that options for colour, texture, patterns, finish and details will be explored through a collaborative design process.

Materials and architectural details are only appropriate for achieving a 'traditional' or historical architectural style if they are demonstrated to be a significant, existing part of the historical neighbourhood character. Where this relationship is not established, it is expected that the building design be revised to more closely respond to these existing characteristics, or that a more contemporary design approach be utilized.

Employ colours, creative architectural details, and enhanced articulation to create unique, engaging and visually interesting environments for users.

Massing

Locate new buildings close to the street and at street corners.

Reinforce the street edge with subtle variations in setback to create an engaging public realm. Provide a consistent building setback for similarly scaled buildings. Increased setbacks may be considered for unique site opportunities and constraints, to preserve or create prominent views or vistas, or to provide pedestrian amenity and public spaces.

Buildings are to be setback an appropriate distance from the front and exterior side property lines to define the street edge and to provide space for pedestrian activity and landscaping, including street trees.

Locate greater heights and massing along primary streets, at intersections and internal to larger development sites to provide good transition to lower-rise surrounding areas.

Design buildings for pedestrian comfort and compatibility with surrounding buildings in size, massing, height and scale. Avoid single storey buildings (or fake upper storeys), particularly in City and Community Nodes and Urban Corridors. A low to mid-rise form (2-8 storeys) is encouraged in all intensification areas subject to appropriate transitional measures and massing. High-rise forms (9 storeys and above) should be located on larger redevelopment sites, at significant intersections, on major streets or near transit stations.

New buildings are to respect and complement surrounding building forms, and maintain compatibility through various design techniques such as building setbacks, stepbacks, articulation and architectural rhythm/detailing.

Locate active uses at grade. Provide a high-level of articulation along street facing elevations, including a high percentage of glazing, high quality materials, and an architectural expression that is engaging and visually appealing.

Design buildings to locate interior uses such as seating areas, employee rooms, offices, waiting areas and lobbies, which benefit from glazing, along street-facing walls.

Avoid blank walls. Where unavoidable, screen from public view with landscaping, including a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees along the full extent of the blank facade. Use art, projections, recesses, canopies, colour and texture to reduce the impact of unglazed walls.

Enhanced urban design approaches will be expected of new buildings located at gateway intersections, in proximity to heritage buildings and within views and vistas.

Views and vistas are significant compositions of the built and natural environment that enliven the overall physical character of an area.

All buildings are to be designed such that they satisfy related built form sections of the urban design manual, including Low Rise Multi-Residential Buildings, Low Rise Commercial and Mixed Use Buildings, Mid-Rise Buildings and Tall Buildings.

DYK?

A high quality built form and thoughtful building placement can encourage greater levels of interaction between people and places, increasing the public's desire to spend time and money on goods and services and identify positively with a place.

Materials & Articulation

Utilize high-quality, durable and sustainable materials. A building's material palette is to contain a variety of complementary, contemporary materials and finishes. No single material should form the overwhelming majority of a building's facade design. Avoid materials which appear monolithic, flat, or unresolved. Where a palette contains such materials, it is expected that options for colour, texture, patterns, finish and details will be explored through a collaborative design process.

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### Shared Spaces

**Outdoor Amenity**

Provide a range of public urban spaces along major transit corridors, near station stops, and within large developments. These can include urban gardens, parkettes, squares and plazas.

Place new public spaces at grade, incorporate four-season design objectives, and design to be multi-functional and flexible to accommodate a range of users, programs and activities.

Locate shared spaces near major building entrances and buffer from parking and drive aisles.

Include hard and soft landscape elements, pedestrian-scaled light fixtures, interactive elements, public art, wayfinding and formal and informal seating options.

Locate all shared spaces to maximize accessibility to pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. This includes direct access from public sidewalks that minimizes points of conflict with motorists and limits the need to cross drive aisles and parking areas.

**Landscaping**

Plant street trees along public streets and along the full length of internal pedestrian walkways. Plant trees in permeable surface areas, with an adequate amount of structural soil that allows for trees to reach their full mature canopies.

Select trees, shrubs and other vegetation considering their tolerance to urban conditions, such as road salt and heat. Give preference to native species of the region that are of equal suitability.

Provide a minimum 3.0 metre wide landscaped area along the edge of a site.

Plant trees in landscaped islands in parking areas, with at least two trees together, and provide adequate soil volumes for the trees to thrive.

Landscape any area between the building and the public sidewalk with foundation plantings, trees, and street furniture.

Define pedestrian walkways within parking areas with continuous planting areas.

Use sodded areas, grasses and shrub beds within parking areas to collect, store and filter stormwater in order to improve groundwater recharge.

Plant trees, shrubs, ground cover etc. on any unbuilt portions of the site. Where future phases are contemplated, temporary landscaping may be permissible, provided it is compatible with the permanent landscape site design.

Landscaped areas should anticipate the requirements for winter snow storage, and reduce/eliminate conflicts between landscape plantings and snow storage.

**Public Art**

Pursue opportunities to integrate public art into Nodes & Corridors, prioritizing pedestrian areas.

**Signs**

Integrate all signage into the landscape design and architecture of the site.

Signage on a site should be consistent in scale and character, but not identical.

Signage should not dominate other site elements, particularly the public realm and on site shared spaces.

**Lighting**

Provide site lighting that is human-scaled and promotes pedestrian comfort and safety.

Provide energy efficient lighting.

Provide lighting which respects and enhances the character of the site and neighbourhood, including compatibility with the architectural and landscape design of the area.
SITE FUNCTION

**Vehicular Access & Parking**

- Locate surface parking to the side or rear of buildings.
- Design site circulation to minimize potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Pedestrian circulation throughout and between sites is to be prioritized, and interrupted by vehicular traffic as infrequently as possible.
- Divide large parking areas into smaller, well-defined sections using soft and hard landscaped areas featuring LID (low-impact development) and stormwater management practices. Provide shade trees (with appropriate soil volumes) within these landscaped areas to reduce heat-island effect and contribute toward the City’s tree canopy objectives.
- Screen parking areas from public view through building placement and design. Where parking is still visible, create low landscaped buffers and/or low architectural screening to minimize the visual impact of parking.
- Provide a minimum 3.0 metre wide landscape area along the site’s side and rear yards in order to provide tree screening and enhance site environmental benefits.
- Consider on-street parking opportunities during the design of road reconstruction projects. Curb extensions should be considered, and may contain landscape features or streetscape elements.
- Parking lot design should anticipate and accommodate safe pedestrian movement between parked vehicles and building entrances. Pedestrian walkways should be prioritized, minimizing conflict with drainage structures and parking stalls. Provide planned primary walkways between parking aisles (perpendicular to vehicle parking spaces), and provide secondary walkways between parking areas that connect to primary walkways.

**Driveways**

- Share vehicular access to parking areas between adjacent properties in order to reduce the extent of interruption along the sidewalk and the streetscape, and to allow for vehicular circulation between sites.
- Limit the number of driveway access points into a site to the minimum required for site functionality.

**Parking Structures**

- Underground parking is preferred for large, intensive development projects. Structured parking is to be designed with consideration for how it will accommodate future intensification while remaining functional, accessible and without negatively impacting the long term design of buildings, shared spaces or the public realm.

**Servicing & Utilities**

- All private, on-site servicing and utility elements, such as loading areas and mechanical equipment, are not to be visible from the public realm. This should first be accomplished through building placement and orientation, then through screening measures where impacts persist.
- Regardless of their actual or perceived visibility, design servicing and utility elements as integrated parts of the architectural and landscape design of the project.
- Coordinate and consolidate servicing and utility functions to limit their impacts, while considering access for maintenance.

**Waste & Recycling**

- Outdoor storage locations are not to be visible from the public realm.
- Public-use receptacles should be conveniently located for pedestrian users and attractively integrated into the site design.

**Snow Storage**

- Prioritize pedestrian access and movement when designing and locating snow storage areas.
- Provide for snow storage and clearing at transit stops for transit passengers.
This map illustrates the locations of all nodes & corridors within Kitchener. Broadly, this section of the manual applies to properties that fall within any of the nodes & corridors seen below. For more detailed or site specific information, please contact city planning staff.
CITY NODES

What Is A City Node?

City nodes are located at prominent intersections along existing or planned transit corridors. City nodes are the largest, highest order nodes providing commercial and institutional uses that attract people and activity at a city-wide or regional scale. City Nodes may include compatible residential uses. City Nodes are intended to intensify, be transit supportive and pedestrian friendly.

Guidelines

Buildings are to address an existing pedestrian oriented public street and/or create an internal pedestrian-only thoroughfare to focus building frontages onto.

All design within City Nodes-- street and building placement, block size, parking layouts, public and amenity space size and location-- is to consider the impact on future intensification so as not to limit the Node’s ultimate potential or frustrate future projects.

Prioritize pedestrian and cyclist circulation and demonstrate this through a pedestrian circulation plan that outlines pedestrian movement, pathways, connections and crossings.

Provide a high-percentage of glazing on street facing elevations.

Provide internal crosswalks that are easily identifiable, incorporate traffic calming techniques, and utilize colours and paving patterns which contrast with vehicular travel lanes.

Provide pedestrian-oriented landscaping. Illustrate the relationship between landscaping and the pedestrian experience on the pedestrian circulation plan.

Services and loading should not be located facing public streets. They are to be designed in a way that provides minimal interference with pedestrian circulation routes.

Provide one or more central amenity spaces of sufficient size to accommodate a range of public activities, from cafe seating and patio spaces to casual social spaces, public art, water features and other attributes which create a pedestrian oasis. The amenity space is to be appropriately removed from vehicular traffic and placed such that it best facilitates recreational and leisure activities.

Diagram: A pedestrian circulation plan might look something like this. Many large commercial and mixed-use sites are designed around the needs and dimensions of motorists. Prioritizing pedestrian and cyclist movement helps ensure that City Nodes are appropriately designed for the needs of people.
COMMUNITY NODES

What Is A Community Node?

Community nodes are located at prominent intersections along existing or planned transit corridors. They are centres of activity for surrounding neighbourhoods, providing commercial uses with a mix of residential and institutional uses. Community nodes are intended to intensify, be transit-supportive and pedestrian friendly.

Guidelines

Buildings are to address an existing public street.

Provide pedestrian oriented entrances from public sidewalks.

Provide generous glazing on street facing elevations.

Ensure continuous, generous, uninterrupted pedestrian circulation internal to the site and connect seamlessly with public sidewalks, trails and surrounding sites.

Internal crosswalks should be easily identifiable, incorporate traffic calming techniques, and utilize contrasting colours and surface patterns.

Connect pedestrian site circulation to transit stops as directly as possible such that transit users have direct, convenient, safe and equitable access to buildings and are not inconvenienced in favour of motorists.

Provide landscaping complementary to the pedestrian experience.

Servicing, mechanical and loading areas should not be located facing public streets or be visible from internal pedestrian circulation routes.

In cases where it is impractical to provide high levels of transparency, explore options such as clerestory glazing.

This will help maximize connectivity to the existing pedestrian and cycling network to encourage nearby users to walk or cycle rather than drive.

NEIGHBOURHOOD NODES

What Is A Neighbourhood Node?

The planned function of Neighbourhood Nodes is to serve the day to day commercial needs of surrounding residential areas.

Provide landscaping complementary to the pedestrian experience.

Services and loading should not be located facing public streets.

Ensure continuous, generous, uninterrupted pedestrian circulation internal to the site and connect seamlessly with public sidewalks, trails and surrounding sites.

Carefully establish compatibility with surrounding areas.

Consider ways to establish and enhance the identity of neighbourhood nodes as community gathering points, including unique public art and wayfinding elements, community-oriented meeting and event spaces, and features such as community notice boards.

Diagram: Transit users should not have to circumnavigate community nodes to access shops, services or other uses. Left, the transit stop location and parking layout requires a large travel distance for transit users to access buildings. Right, a pedestrian boulevard creates direct access. Ideally, transit stops are located much closer to building entrances, but situations such as this can occur.
### URBAN CORRIDORS

#### What Is An Urban Corridor?
Urban Corridors are generally linear and located along existing or planned transit corridors. They are to be pedestrian oriented and integrated with neighbouring uses. Urban Corridors are to provide for a range of retail and commercial uses as well as transit supportive intensification opportunities.

#### Guidelines
- Buildings are to address streets and intersections in placement, design and orientation. Provide active uses with generous glazing and pedestrian entrances along the street.
- Create compatible built forms and contribute toward a continuous public realm, reinforced through building massing and a high quality, uninterrupted pedestrian network.
- Strengthen pedestrian and cycling connections to trails and sidewalks, improving and enhancing the network, connecting sites to one another and the broader network.
- Provide parking primarily underground and in structured parking. Any surface parking (where appropriate) is to be located to the rear of buildings and away from pedestrian circulation routes. Design surface parking areas to support future intensification over time.
- Provide public amenity spaces at strategic locations along the corridor to provide areas of rest, refuge and activity.
- Limit vehicle access from the corridor. Provide access points primarily off of side streets and lanes. Allow only the minimum number of vehicular access points required for site function.
- Focus intensification nearest to major transit stops or prominent intersections.
- Provide landscaping that contributes positively to the public realm and services sustainability objectives such as Kitchener’s stormwater or tree canopy objectives.

### ARTERIAL CORRIDORS

#### What Is An Arterial Corridor?
Arterial Corridors are generally linear and located along arterial streets, in locations that have historically developed with a range of auto-oriented, service commercial uses. They are intended to accommodate extensive retail uses.

#### Guidelines
- Buildings are to address the primary, most pedestrian-oriented public street, with building mass located close to street corners where applicable.
- Provide pedestrian-oriented access to the building and through the site, connecting all entrances to the public streetscape and transit stops in an equitable, safe, attractive manner.
- Provide significant variations in massing, articulation and materials for buildings longer than 35m.
- Locate outdoor storage to the rear or least visible interior side yard of the building. Screen with high quality, attractive materials wherever it might be visible from the public realm.
- Integrate all signage with the building and landscape design.
- Locate services and loading away from public streets and any internal pedestrian circulation routes.
- Locate surface parking to the side or rear of the building and away from pedestrian routes where possible, with the exception of barrier free spaces.
- Landscaping is to address stormwater impacts, heat island effect, and other objectives.
- Provide weather protection and pedestrian refuge for users.
- Provide separated cycling facilities for all ages and abilities, with extensive connections to the broader cycling network.
- Locate bicycle parking near building entrances, where it is easily visible and accessible to cyclists.