# DEVELOPMENT PERMIT AREA GUIDELINES

# DPA 6 COMMERCIAL

# General Regulations

## 12.6.1 Category

DPA 6 is designated under the following categories of Section 488 (1) of the *Local Government Act*:

(f) Establishment of objectives for the form and character of commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development;

(h) Establishment of objectives to promote energy conservation;

(i) Establishment of objectives to promote water conservation;

(j) Establishment of objectives to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

## 12.6.2 Area of Applicability

- DPA 6 guidelines apply to all Commercial development within the City of Merritt boundaries, except for parcels within DPAs 1, 2, or 3, as shown on Appendix K.
- Institutional developments on parcels not within DPAs 1, 2, or 3 are requested to apply under this Development Permit Area.
- In situations where guidelines from DPA 6 conflict with guidelines from DPA 5, the guidelines from DPA 5 take precedence.

## 12.6.3 Justification

As the city grows, new Commercial development will be encouraged to locate along arterial and collector roads, transit routes, and designated cycle routes. It will be important for this development to be compatible with the neighbourhoods they will serve, and to contribute to the livability and vibrancy of streets and public spaces.

## 12.6.4 Objectives

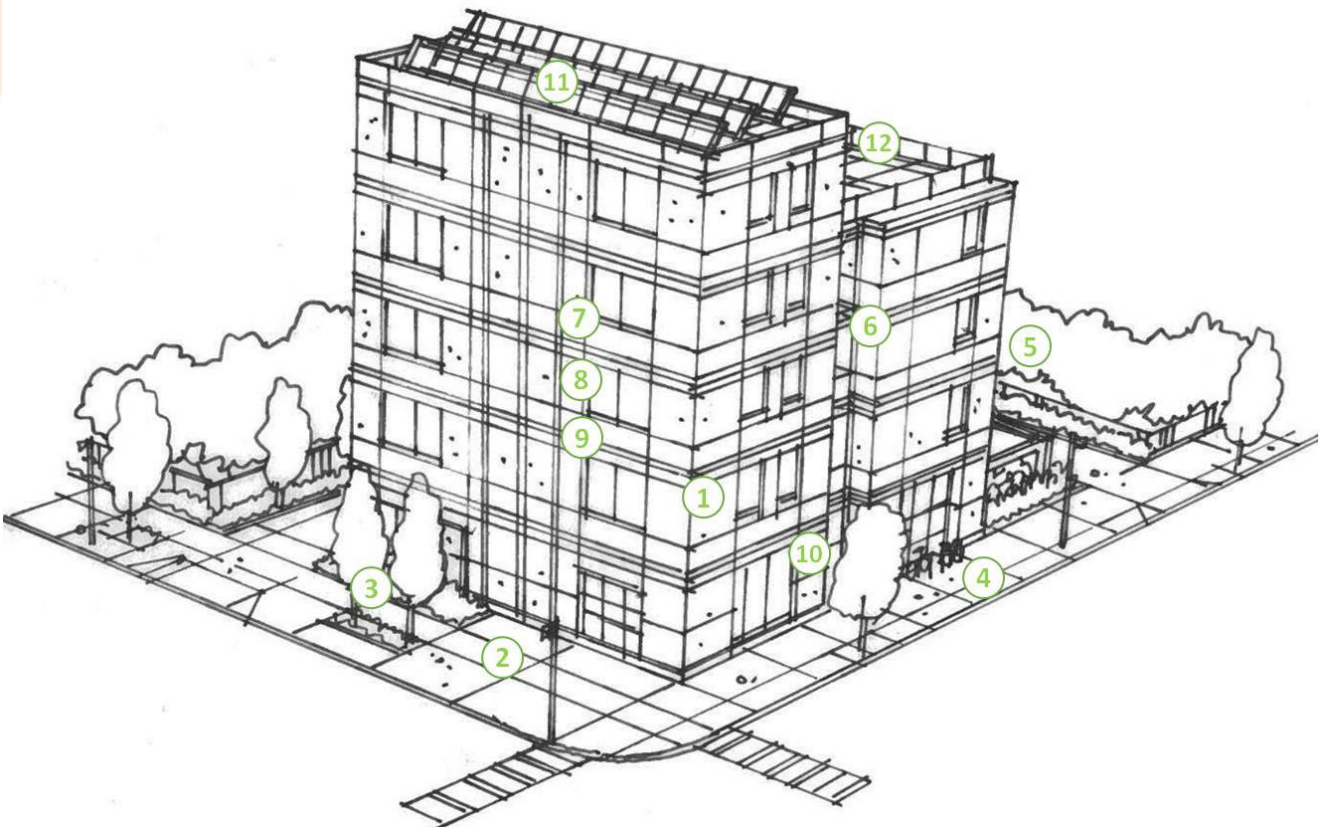
The following guidelines are intended to:

- Facilitate a high standard of building design, site compatibility, and attention to site context.
- Incorporate climate action strategies into development practices.
- Integrate commercial development into established neighbourhoods.
- Provide a mix of building forms and commercial spaces throughout the city.
- Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into developments, while ensuring that vulnerable people are respected.
- Enhance the public realm, provide ample opportunities for residents and visitors to gather and socialize, and create animated shopping streets.

## 12.6.5 Exemptions

The following exemptions to DPA 6 may be applied:

- Interior Renovations not resulting in any change to the exterior appearance of the building.
- Parcel consolidation.
- Signage copy change if no changes to the dimensions of the existing sign.
- Emergency circumstances to remove any immediate danger.
- Buildings that have been destroyed by fire and/or natural disaster less than 75%, as determined by the Building Official, provided the building's massing, siting and general appearance are as prior to destruction and the use conforms to the City's Zoning Bylaw No. 2284, as amended from time to time.
- Any servicing work undertaken by or on behalf of the City of Merritt.




## Key Elements

### 1 – Defined Streetscape

Site buildings so they front and frame public streets. For corner parcels, site buildings to front both streets.

### 2 – Public Realm

Enliven the public realm with attractive amenities such as seating, bike parking, plantings, water bottle filling stations, wayfinding, transit shelters, and public art.

### 3 – Xeriscaping

Use drought tolerant and native plant and tree species.

### 4 – Short-Term Bicycle Parking

Provide bike racks near the building entrance, in a highly visible location.

### 5 – Vehicle Parking Lots

Locate vehicle parking underneath or behind buildings. Visually deemphasize and screen parking lots with landscaping. Break up large surface parking lots into smaller clustered ones with the use of landscaped islands.

### 6 – Architectural Interest

Vary building materials, colours, rooflines, and other architectural elements. Establish a rhythm to the streetscape by integrating vertical elements and breaks in the façade of a building.

### 7 – Simplified Massing

Design buildings with simplified massing, including minimal articulation to minimize building envelope heat loss.

### 8 – Fire Smart Materials

Use non-combustible exterior façade and roofing materials to reduce the risks associated with wildfire.

### 9 – Exterior Colours

Use a light colour palette, which may include light earthtone colours. Avoid dark exterior colours to reduce energy use for cooling systems and the heat island effect. Use multiple colours to add interest.

### 10 – Window-to-Wall Ratio

Design buildings to have an overall window-to-wall ratio of 40% to reduce energy costs.

### 11 – Solar Energy

Design buildings to incorporate solar panels, where possible.

### 12 – Stepback

Design midrise buildings with a stepback configuration.

# Guidelines

The following guidelines may be applied when setting Development Permit conditions.

## SITE CONTEXT

To guide the design of development sites within the context of the greater neighbourhood.

### 12.6.6 Neighbourhood Connectivity

Design the site to enhance the pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections in the area.

### 12.6.7 Streetwall Continuity

Design building streetwalls to include architectural features and patterns that are aligned with adjacent buildings, where possible.

### 12.6.8 Shade and Sun Exposure

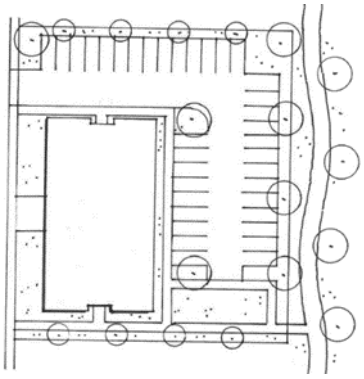
Position buildings to maximize summer shade and winter sun for nearby private and public open spaces, buildings, and residential dwellings. Provide a shade study for buildings over 10 metres in height.

## SITE PLANNING

To guide the design of development sites internally and in relation to interfaces with the public realm.

### 12.6.9 Fronting Streets

Site buildings to front and frame public streets. For corner parcels, site buildings to front both streets.



### 12.6.10 Building Access

Locate main entrances adjacent to the street. Utilize breezeways or pathways to provide access from rear parking lots to main entrances.

### 12.6.11 Corner Plazas

For corner parcels, corner plazas are encouraged. As a minimum, the plaza should be consistent with the sight triangle area as outlined in Zoning Bylaw No. 2284, as amended from time to time. Corner plazas should include amenities such as benches, bike racks, landscaping, public art, wayfinding, and other street furniture.

### 12.6.12 Accessible Site Design

Design outdoor space to address the functional needs of persons with disabilities, including those who are hearing, mobility, or visually impaired. Incorporate braille, acoustic techniques, and other universal design elements into site design. Ensure pathways are paved and slopes are minimized.

## 12.6.13 Walking Connections

Connect main entrances and unit entrances to public sidewalks, parking areas, adjacent residential and commercial sites (existing and future), and trails, with a sufficiently wide pathway.

## 12.6.14 Informational Displays

Install informational displays along pathways, focusing on local history and Indigenous culture, where possible.

## 12.6.15 Designated Cycle Routes

Provide additional bicycle parking in developments located along designated cycle routes, as identified in the Active Transportation Plan's Cycle Network Map.

## 12.6.16 Transit Access

Design buildings on designated transit routes to provide direct access and clear sightlines to bus stops.

## 12.6.17 Private and Public Open Spaces

Integrate usable private and public open spaces into the site, such as courtyards, parks, patios, playgrounds, plazas, or rooftop gardens. Locate these open spaces adjacent to active uses, such as cafes or retail stores.

## 12.6.18 Street Furniture

Provide benches, bicycle racks, wayfinding, and other street furniture near main entrances.

## 12.6.19 Site Grading

Step buildings along the length of a sloping street.

## 12.6.20 Retaining Walls

Avoid the use of retaining walls. Where retaining walls are required, use decorative block, limit their height, terrace them, and landscape them.

## 12.6.21 Drive-Through Facilities

Drive-through facilities are discouraged. If necessary, locate the drive-through internally within the site, and not between buildings and the street. Emissions offsets should be provided, such as electric vehicle charging stations, bike racks, planting of trees, no-idling signage, etc.

## 12.6.22 Composting, Garbage, Recycling, and Storage

Composting, garbage, recycling, and storage areas should be located behind buildings. Screen these areas with materials that are complementary with principal buildings on the site.

## LANDSCAPE AND STREETSCAPE

To guide the design of landscaping and streetscapes to create aesthetically pleasing, vibrant, safe, and environmentally sound spaces.

### 12.6.23 Public Realm

Enliven the public realm between buildings and street curbs with attractive amenities such as benches, bike parking, plantings, water bottle filling stations, wayfinding, transit shelters, and public art.

### 12.6.24 Pedestrian Areas

Define pedestrian areas with the use of landscaping elements.

### 12.6.25 Screening

Screen areas that are not aesthetically pleasing, such as blank walls, parking lots, and storage areas, with the use of landscaping.

### 12.6.26 Xeriscaping

Landscape with drought tolerant and native plant and tree species.

### 12.6.27 Fire Smart Planting

Use fire resistant plants, where possible. Deciduous trees are preferred. Avoid the use of highly flammable plants and trees, including coniferous trees with cones or needles. Cedars, junipers, spruce, pine other than Ponderosa, tall grasses, and mulch are prohibited.

### 12.6.28 Heat and Wind Mitigation

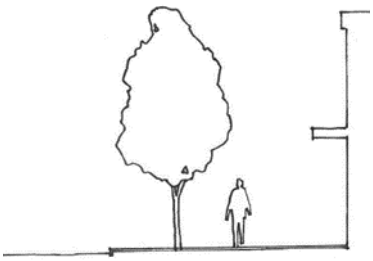
Strategically plant trees, shrubs, and other vegetation to protect from excessive heat and high winds.

### 12.6.29 Street Trees

Line street frontages with equally spaced, deciduous, drought tolerant, fire resistant trees.

### 12.6.30 Tree Canopies

Use trees with a high enough canopy that pedestrian sightlines are established or maintained.



### 12.6.31 Hedgerows and Hedges

Avoid tall hedgerows along public sidewalks and streets. Hedges are prohibited due to their water consumption and fire risk.

### 12.6.32 Fences

Along public sidewalks and streets, avoid tall fences and use quality fence materials which provide visibility, such as wrought iron. Chainlink fences are prohibited along public streets, except for Service Commercial developments.

### 12.6.33 Stormwater Infiltration

Consider the use of permeable pavers or pavement for parking lots and other paved surfaces, except for service commercial developments.

### 12.6.34 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques to ensure spaces are safe, while also considering any potential impacts of the CPTED design elements on vulnerable persons.

## LIGHTING

To guide the design of lighting to protect from light pollution, improve safety, and reduce energy use.

### 12.6.35 Pedestrian Oriented Lighting

Ensure lighting is pedestrian oriented in height and location. Light pathways that provide connections between buildings and other areas of the site and public realm. Lighting of areas not intended for night-time use should be avoided.

### 12.6.36 Lighting in Parking Areas

Ensure that lighting is installed in parking lots and structures, and along pathways that lead from parking areas to buildings.

### 12.6.37 Dark Sky

Avoid light pollution by directing lighting downwards.

### 12.6.38 Uplighting

Use uplighting sparingly, and only for accenting architectural or landscape features or in-ground pathway lighting to improve safety.

### 12.6.39 Lighting Distractions

Direct lighting fixtures away from adjacent residential properties and as not to create a distraction to vehicle drivers or cyclists. Lighting must not display distracting light patterns.

### 12.6.40 Solar Powered Lighting

Use solar powered lighting, where possible.

### 12.6.41 Sensor Activated Lighting

Use sensor activated lighting for security and energy conservation.

## PARKING AND LOADING

To guide the design and location of parking and loading facilities.

## 12.6.42 Long-Term Bicycle Parking

Provide secured long-term bicycle parking, preferably where bicycles can be fastened to a rack. Parking for alternative forms of active transportation, such as mobility scooters, may be substituted for bicycle parking spaces.

## 12.6.43 Short-Term Bicycle Parking

Provide bike racks near the building or unit main entrance(s).

## 12.6.44 Vehicle Parking Lots

Locate vehicle parking underneath or behind buildings. Screen parking lots with landscaping. Use landscaped islands to break up large surface parking lots into smaller clustered ones.

## 12.6.45 Underground Parking

Ensure the height of underground parking structures do not exceed grade level, where possible. If the underground parking is partially above grade, screen with landscaping or use aesthetically pleasing materials on the exposed structure.

## 12.6.46 Shared Access and Parking

Use shared vehicle access points and shared vehicle parking facilities to reduce the number of curb cuts. Provide access from lanes, where possible.

## 12.6.47 Loading Areas

Design loading areas to be accessible to service vehicles without interfering with pedestrian circulation.

## 12.6.48 Zero Emission Vehicles

Include zero emission charging, such as electric vehicle charging stations, on site.

# BUILDING DESIGN

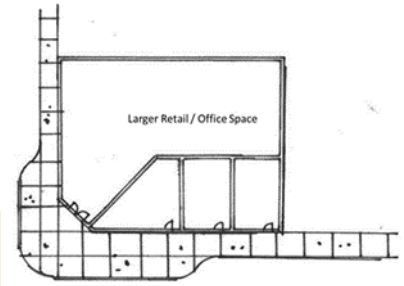
To guide the design of buildings to ensure people focused, attractive, and functional developments.

## 12.6.49 Active Ground Floors

Design buildings to include narrow storefronts. Larger retail or office spaces should be located to the rear or above the ground floor.

## 12.6.50 Building Entrances

Main entrances should be located adjacent to the street where the building is facing and easily identifiable.



### 12.6.51 Corner Buildings
Design corner buildings to front both streets with main entrances at the corner. Ensure massing of the building at the corner is architecturally prominent.

### 12.6.52 Transparent Fronts
Use transparent glazing for building foyers and ground level storefronts.

### 12.6.53 Architectural Interest
Vary building materials, colours, and other architectural elements, while being mindful of energy efficiency. Avoid blank walls and large expanses of singular materials.

### 12.6.54 Simplified Massing
Design buildings with simplified massing, including minimal articulation and limited complex junctions, to minimize building envelope heat loss.

### 12.6.55 Fire Smart Materials
Use non-combustible exterior façade and roofing materials to reduce the risks associated with wildfire. Brick, fibre cement board, or stucco is preferred. Poured concrete is acceptable. Metal products are recommended for vents and flashing. Vinyl is prohibited.

### 12.6.56 Exterior Colours
Use a light colour palette, which may include light earthtone colours. Avoid dark exterior colours to reduce energy use for cooling systems and minimize the heat island effect. Use multiple colours to add interest. Bright colours are acceptable as accents, such as trim or entrance areas.

### 12.6.57 Window-to-Wall Ratio
Design buildings to have an overall window-to-wall ratio of 40%. Ground floor commercial frontages should have a higher ratio while accommodating the 40% ratio in the building overall.

### 12.6.58 Window Placement
Ensure upper storey windows are offset with windows in adjacent residential or mixed use buildings to enhance privacy for residential units.

### 12.6.59 Roofing
Pitched or flat roofs are acceptable. Avoid steep pitches to reduce surface area. Shingles must be a lighter tone and not black. The surfaces of flat roofs must be painted or finished with a light colour to minimize the heat island effect.

## 12.6.60 Rooftop Equipment
Screen or enclose rooftop mechanical equipment.

## 12.6.61 Green Roofs and Walls
Design buildings to incorporate green roofs and green walls, where possible.

## 12.6.62 Solar Energy
Design buildings to incorporate solar panels, where possible.

## 12.6.63 Scale Transition
Use height transitions when adjacent to lower density residential buildings, where possible.

## 12.6.64 Accessible Buildings
Design buildings to address the functional needs of persons with disabilities including those who are hearing, mobility, and visually impaired.

## 12.6.65 Signage
Design signage to be consistent with the associated building and integrate it into the building façade. Under Canopy Signs (blade signs) that extend from buildings over sidewalks are encouraged. Backlit box signs are not permitted. Incorporate local Indigenous languages (Nłeʔkepmxcin and Nsyilxcən) into signage, if possible. Signs shall conform with Sign Regulation Bylaw No. 1900, as amended from time to time.

# MIDRISE BUILDINGS
To guide the specific design requirements for attractive midrise (5 to 12 storey) development.

## 12.6.66 Midrise Stepback
Design midrise buildings with a stepback configuration. Determine the height of the podium by reflecting adjacent buildings, where possible, to create a continual streetwall.

## 12.6.67 Rooftop Design and Access
Landscape midrise rooftops and make them accessible to residents as usable public outdoor space, such as gardens or café patios.

## 12.6.68 Fire Apparatus
For buildings taller than 5 storeys, include a room or closet on every sixth floor above grade for storage of firefighting equipment.

## SERVICE COMMERCIAL

To guide the specific design requirements for attractive service commercial development.

### 12.6.69 Appropriate Location

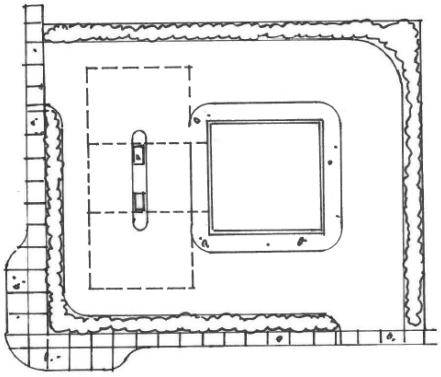
Vehicle services facilities, such as automobile service stations and car washes, drive-through businesses, and filling stations are discouraged on properties adjacent to residential parcels, except for DeWolf Way.

### 12.6.70 Facility Setback

Locate service commercial buildings and facilities, such as vehicle services bays, drive-through lanes, and filling station service areas away from all parcel lines.

### 12.6.71 Vehicle Access

Reduce the number of curb-cuts with single vehicle access points.



### 12.6.72 Paved Surface

Pave the customer service area of vehicle services, drive-through businesses, and filling stations with an impermeable surface such as asphalt or concrete.