Livable by Design

URBAN DESIGN MANUAL

Urban Design Direction for

Bronte Village Growth Area

OAKVILLE

Contents

1   Introduction

BRONTE VILLAGE is a unique traditional commercial area in Oakville that offers a variety of retail, eateries and services to local residents living within the district and in surrounding neighbourhoods. The district is well positioned as a vibrant commercial and cultural destination only steps away from Bronte Creek and Lake Ontario.

Bronte Village is a designated mixed-use Growth Area (*Livable Oakville Plan*) and an active business improvement area (BIA).

A key defining and unifying element of this district is the traditional commercial corridor along Lakeshore Road West – a functional and attractive 'main street'.

'Main Street' typically means a primary retail street or 'high street' of a village or town. It is usually a focal point for shops, eateries and services, and is most often used in reference to a place for retailing, socializing and hosting events. In many communities, the main street is utilized and celebrated as the 'living room of the community'.

This urban design document sets the expectations for preferred design outcomes in Bronte Village by providing design direction for finding design solutions that are firmly based on our policy direction, by continually scanning best practices, and by achieving an appropriate fit with the context and character of the district.

Bronte Village 1877

1   Introduction

A. the policy context

The design direction contained in this document implements the policy goals, objectives and urban design policies as set out in the Bronte Village (S. 24) and Urban Design (S.6) sections of the *Livable Oakville Plan*, as amended.

B. the urban design context

This design document builds upon the broad urban design direction contained within the *Livable by Design Manual (Part A) – Urban Design Direction for Oakville*. This document provides clear design direction that is specific to the Bronte Village context.

Official Plan Schedule P2
Bronte Village
Urban Design

- GROWTH AREA BOUNDARY
- PRIMARY STREET
- SECONDARY STREET
- ENHANCED STREETSCAPE AREA
- URBAN SQUARE
- GATEWAY
- VIEW CORRIDOR
- PEDESTRIAN CONNECTION
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY

1   Introduction

C. the guiding design principles

New and infill development, along with public realm improvements, are expected to be designed and executed in accordance with these six guiding design principles:

sense of identity	creating distinct and vibrant communities
compatibility	fostering compatibility and context-specific design
connectivity	enhancing connectivity and accessibility
sustainability	integrating sustainability and resiliency
legacy	preserving built heritage and cultural and natural resources
creativity	inspiring creativity and innovation

[Refer to the *Livable by Design Manual* for detailed descriptions]

D. the urban design focus

The urban design direction contained within this document focuses on public realm enhancements and property redevelopment activities that reinforce the context and character of this traditional commercial area and illustrates how revitalization efforts can achieve the expectations of a vibrant economic and cultural district.

This urban design direction expands upon the broad-based and fundamental design direction and guiding design principles contained in the endorsed Part A document.

While this design direction is specifically tailored to reinforcing and enhancing the Bronte Village context and character, it is not intended to limit design options. Rather, this document should foster creativity in design though clear directives that outline expectations while providing design flexibility that will allow for creative and innovative public realm and site/building design that ultimately contributes to the character of the whole district.

E. key reference materials

Livable Oakville Plan (Official Plan) (2009 to present)

Livable by Design – Urban Design Manual (2013 to present)

Town of Oakville Streetscape Strategy (2014)

2   Bronte Village Context

Bronte Village is located in southwest Oakville where Bronte Creek meets Lake Ontario. The mixed-use village has a unique main street character in Oakville that is reflected in the many shops, eateries and services that operate along Lakeshore Road West and Bronte Road.

From its early beginnings as a shipping depot for wheat and lumber, to its importance as a fishing village and present role as a regional recreational marina, Bronte is a community defined by its strong ties to the Lake Ontario waterfront.

The pedestrian-oriented commercial area, as well as the stable neighbourhoods and waterfront amenities which surround it, create an established year-round district with its unique heritage and sense of place. This district draws in patrons and residents from across the town and entices visitors from the GTA and beyond.

Bronte Village is comprised of two districts; the **Bronte Village Main Street District** and **lands outside of this district**, as described in the *Livable Oakville Plan*. These two districts are structured to provide appropriate transitions in land use and in built form between the existing residential areas and future redevelopment.

3   Urban Design Direction for Bronte Village

Design is a key component of the continuing revitalization of Bronte Village as a vibrant business district and a recreational and cultural destination.

Business and culture thrive with people. Accessible, interesting and comfortable public areas encourage people to return. To maintain the vibrancy of the district, the design of the built environment must support people as they make their way to and throughout the village.

This design document addresses these important considerations under the following themes:

A.   distinguish the district
- create a sense of arrival
- incorporate unifying elements
- incorporate expressive elements

B.   foster activity at street level
- create active spaces on the boulevard
- incorporate active uses on the ground floor

C.   frame the street
- define the corridor through built form

D.   be compatible with surroundings
- incorporate transitions to surroundings

E.   create links to and throughout the district
- prioritize pedestrian access and movement

The design direction is intended to highlight the broader design intent and it should not be construed as a set of prescriptive standards. If deviating from this direction, the alternative design approach must meet or exceed the intent of the stated direction and complement the context and character of the Bronte Village district.
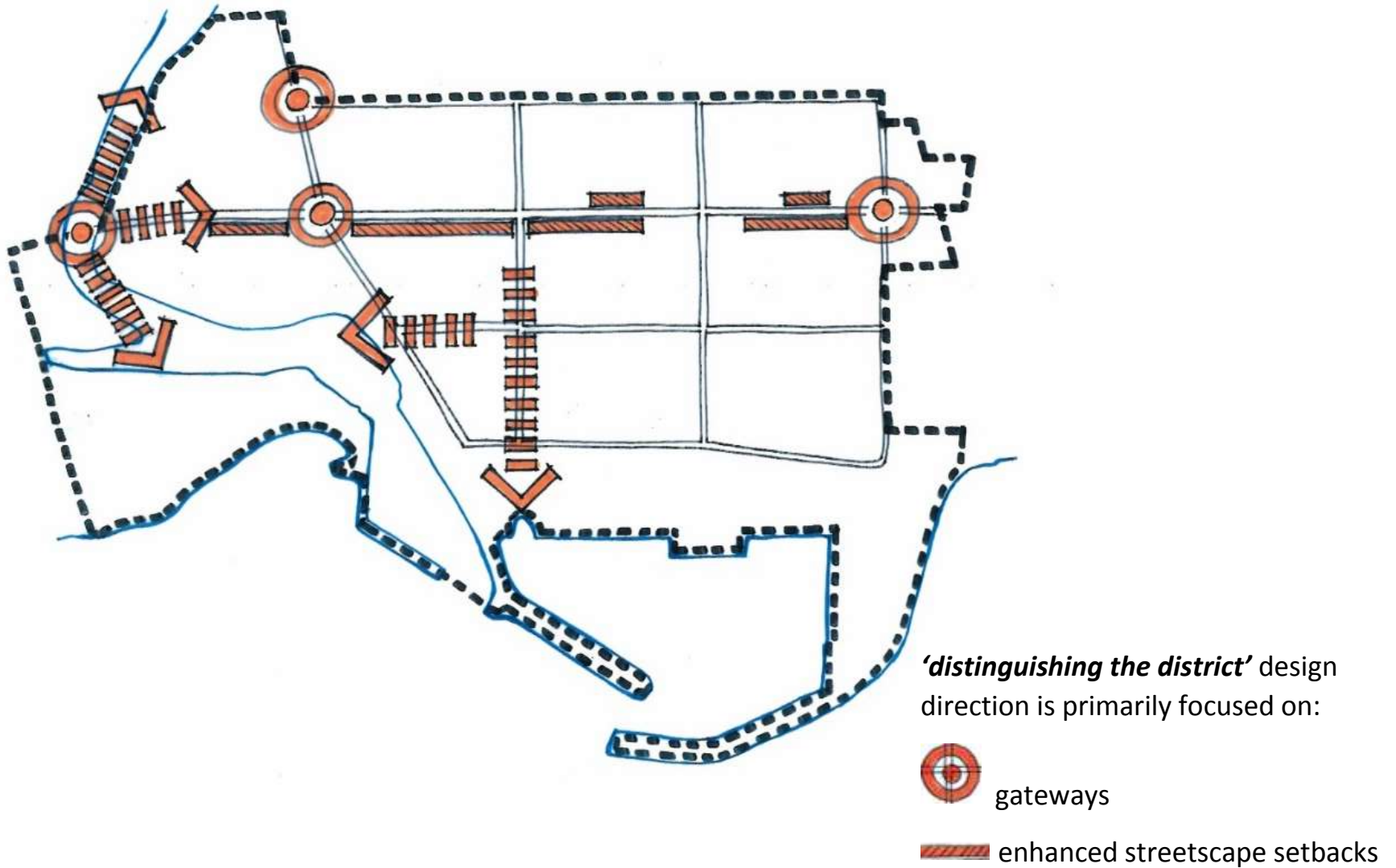
3A distinguish the district

Accentuating Bronte Village from its surroundings will require improvements to the public realm; including gateway elements that signify arrival to the district, streetscapes and public places with unifying elements, contextual public art and linkages to waterfront amenities.

These improvements can strengthen the district's identity and further enhance its cultural vibrancy.

3A distinguish the district

'distinguishing the district' design direction is primarily focused on:

🎯 gateways

▨ enhanced streetscape setbacks

3A distinguish the district

create a sense of arrival

1. **incorporating gateway elements**
    Gateways are located at key entry points to the district and at prominent intersections. These gateway locations can be effectively expressed through the combination of high quality built form, distinctive landscaping and open space treatments, and place-making elements, such as public art and streetscape features.

    Bronte Village gateway locations, as identified on schedule P2 of *Livable Oakville*, include:
    - Bridge over Bronte Creek
    - Bronte Road and Sovereign Street
    - Lakeshore Road West and Bronte Road
    - Lakeshore Road West and East Street

    design direction

    In gateway locations, design buildings and install public realm enhancements that create a distinct sense of arrival and incorporate significant identifying features that reflect the district character.

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3A distinguish the district

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. creating gateway treatments that incorporate buildings and structures that express a high standard of architectural quality

b. orienting the building massing and main entrances directly towards the street and, where applicable, towards the intersection

c. incorporating distinctive streetscape surface treatments and furnishings, landscape designs and public art installations at these entry points and throughout to unify the district

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3A distinguish the district

incorporate unifying elements

2. designing context-sensitive development

Bronte Village is well known for its unique main street corridor and lakeside village character. It is this context – the assembly of natural areas, economic activities, heritage resources, cultural expressions, and surrounding residential neighbourhoods – that creates this identifiable sense of identity and that influences the design of new development.

> ### design direction
>
> *Design new development to enhance the main street environment and embody the qualities that make Bronte Village a distinctive district within Oakville.*

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. reinforcing the significance of Lake Ontario by focusing and articulating pedestrian places and routes that emphasize the unique surroundings

b. developing projects that reinforce and celebrate the district's proximity to the waterfront

c. incorporating water features or visual cues in building design that express the connections to the lake and the creek

3A distinguish the district

3. coordinating the 'look and feel' of public spaces

Bronte Village has a variety of open spaces that create places for people to gather and enjoy the district. Of particular note are the generous landscaped areas with mature trees abutting the sidewalk along the south side of Lakeshore Road.

> **design direction**
> *Design and enhance public open spaces with specific recurring elements that will establish visual cues and connections for place-recognition and create a greater sense of cohesiveness that reinforces district unity.*

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. retaining the existing mature trees and landscaping abutting Lakeshore Road and achieving a balance of soft scape with hardscape materials

b. identifying other places along the streetscape to extend the planting treatment and create a wider pedestrian zone

c. visually connecting the landscaped areas abutting Lakeshore Road through the repetition of hard and soft materials and other unifying streetscape elements

d. creating seamless transitions and compatible interfaces between public and private realms

3A distinguish the district

4. coordinating the streetscape elements

Establishing a consistent and recognizable streetscape design within the municipal right of way will greatly assist in unifying the district, create places for social interactions, and frame local community life, all which will strengthen Bronte's identity.

> **design direction**
> *Enhance the streetscape and visually distinguish the district by selecting and installing consistent and repetitive paving treatments, lighting fixtures, furnishings, plantings, banners, and other elements.*

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. developing a streetscape concept plan demonstrating the streetscape treatment that will be installed on the primary, secondary and local streets within the Bronte Village district

b. where appropriate, extending the streetscape treatment onto abutting public open spaces and publicly-accessible privately-owned open space

c. increasing the number and quality of plantings within the identified enhanced streetscape areas and into other softscape areas located adjacent to the streetscape

3A distinguish the district

5. enhancing visual connections

Views to the lake, creek and harbour from public streets creates a strong sense of identity for Bronte Village. Visual connections throughout the community also serve as reference points and when designed well, can add to the distinctive character of the area.

> **design direction**
>
> *Enhance and maintain views and visual connections to the lake, the creek, the harbour and along the main street corridor to strengthen and reinforce the waterfront context of Bronte Village.*

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. designing built form, public realm elements and landscaping to frame and enhance views to the lake, the creek, the harbour and along the primary street corridors

3A distinguish the district

incorporate expressive elements

6. installing public art

Public art has a unique relationship with the place where it is located. It can express local identity and character, foster creativity, transform the landscape and instill a sense of civic pride.

Public art should be thoughtfully incorporated throughout the district. Public art should be always considered when designing gateway locations, market square and newly created midblock open spaces.

design direction

Incorporate public art installations into the streetscape, public open spaces, and publically-accessible portions of private development.

This design direction can be accomplished by:

a. sourcing, designing, and installing sculptures, friezes, murals, luminal installations, metal works, fountains, customized furnishings, etc.

b.   incorporating public art into spaces that are created where portions of buildings are setback from the street (forecourts) or where publicly-accessible open spaces are created internal to a development (courtyards)
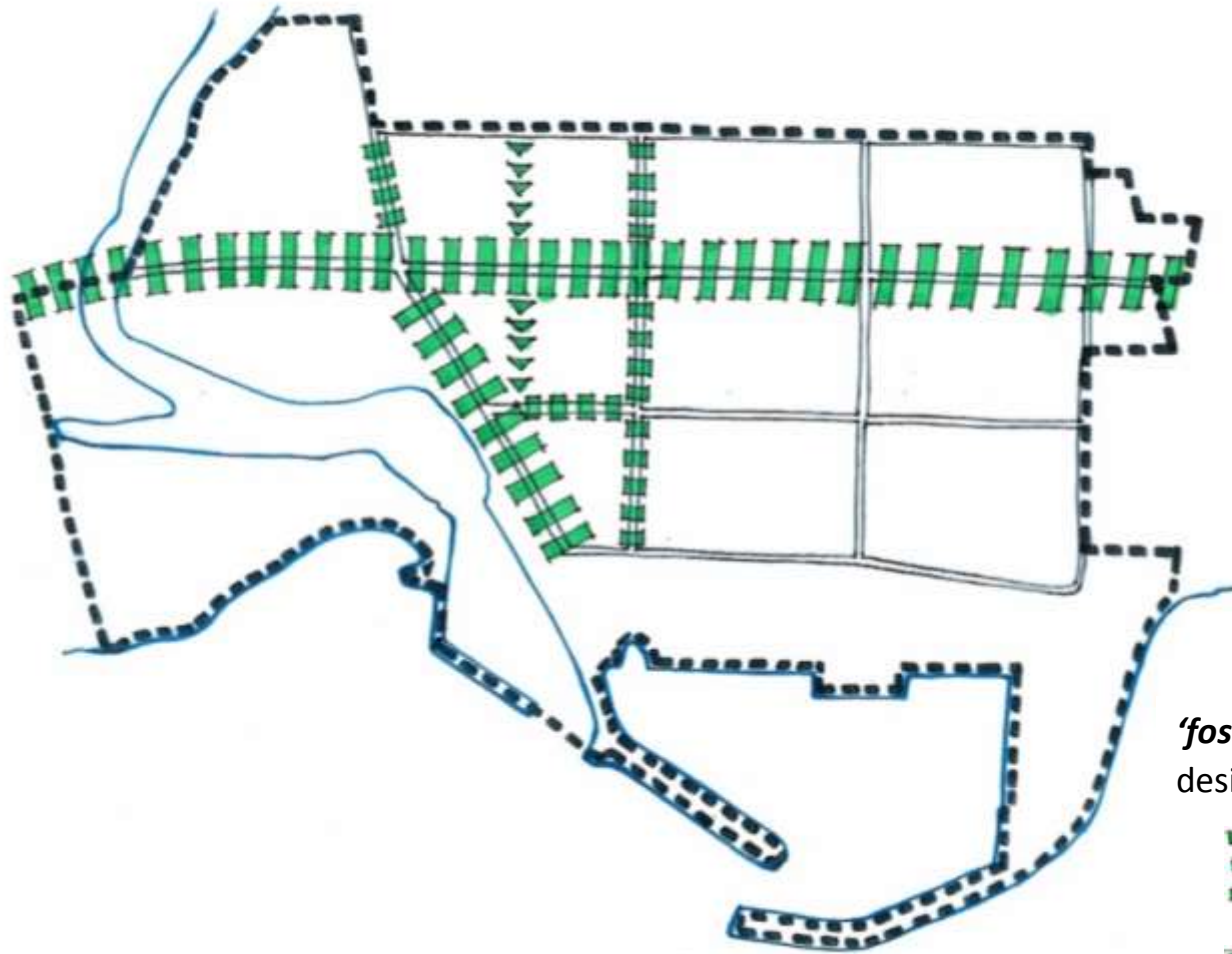
3B foster activity at the street level

A vibrant main street is created through accessible and comfortable pedestrian and cycling amenities, well-designed gathering and sitting areas, tree plantings and furnishings, and human-scaled built form lining the street. These bustling commercial districts can provide a street-life that draws patrons from near and far.

3B foster activity at the street level

'fostering activity at the street level'
design direction is primarily focused on:

- primary streets
- secondary streets
- mid-block connections

3B foster activity at the street level

create active spaces on the boulevard

1. **establish activity zones along the pedestrian routes of travel**

   Inviting and comfortable spaces for pedestrians within the boulevard is a key ingredient of a successful main street.

   To foster activity at street level, the pedestrian realm along primary and secondary streets should consist of a building interface zone; pedestrian path zone; planting and furnishing zone; and curb zone.

   ### design direction
   Foster activity at street level by creating high quality pedestrian environments within the boulevard along primary and secondary streets.

   The design direction can be accomplished by:

   … within the building interface zone …

   a. where space permits, providing space for retail displays, entrance features and patio seating

   b. ensuring building entrances and display windows are oriented towards and open onto the street

   c. incorporating weather protection elements, such as awnings and canopies

3B foster activity at the street level

… within the pedestrian path zone …

d. maintaining an unobstructed, barrier-free and predictable pedestrian path of travel

e. incorporating surface treatments that differentiate between path of travel (ie. concrete) and other activities (ie. unit paving and patterns)

… within the planting and furnishing zone …

f. incorporating new street trees with adequate spacing and soil volume, through the use of soil cell systems

g. installing coordinated street furnishings and surface treatments; such as benches, light poles, waste receptacles, bike racks, transit stops/shelters, etc.

h. along primary and secondary streets, incorporating a hardscape surface treatment to expand activities

i. where space permits, incorporating additional places for seating and gathering

j. incorporating wayfinding elements and public art

… within the curb zone …

k. locating infrastructure and utilities within this zone

l. creatively integrating above-ground utility features within the streetscape design

3B foster activity at the street level

2. create places for gathering and pausing

Generous landscape setbacks and enhanced streetscape areas in Bronte Village (as per Schedule P2, *Livable Oakville*) provide opportunities to further enhance the public realm. The transformation of these areas should strike a balance between multi-purpose hard paved surfaces and soft landscape planting spaces where gathering can naturally occur.

> **design direction**
>
> *Enhance existing and create new well-connected and comfortable gathering places and sitting areas in strategic locations along the primary streets with a balance of multi-purpose paved and soft planting areas.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. creating innovative and multi-purpose spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities, provide user comfort, and reinforce the district identity

b. providing a mix of hard and soft surfaces, which is compatible with the immediate surroundings

c. incorporating fixed and moveable seating

d. maintaining healthy existing trees, where feasible, and incorporating new plantings for shade and buffering

e. incorporating building setbacks to expand gathering spaces if there is insufficient room in the right-of-way

3B foster activity at the street level

3. create a comfortable pedestrian environment

To mitigate potential negative effects of the elements, the overall building design, positioning and massing should result in creating comfortable walking and sitting spaces at ground level that have good sun exposure and provide protection from the elements.

> **design direction**
>
> *Design a comfortable pedestrian environment that maximizes positive micro-climate conditions and mitigates potential impacts on the use and enjoyment of the boulevard.*

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The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. ensuring building height, massing, setbacks and stepbacks will maximize sun exposure and minimize a wind tunnel effect on the boulevard

b. incorporating building setbacks and recesses at main entrances and gathering spaces that will provide shelter from winds

c. incorporating canopies and/or awnings at building entrances and gathering spaces to provide protection from the elements

© Google Maps

3B foster activity at the street level

4. minimize the impacts of vehicle access points

While the property fabric along Lakeshore Road West has variety in lot widths, the consistency in lot depth creates the potential for a rear lane system accessible from the side streets (Jones Street, Nelson Street and East Street).

Pedestrian circulation can be significantly enhanced along primary streets by directing vehicle access to a side street or rear lane and by encouraging shared access driveways.

design direction
Along primary streets, create a safe and comfortable environment that encourages pedestrian circulation by minimizing potential conflicts with vehicles entering and exiting sites.

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. locating vehicular access from side streets and/or from rear lanes, wherever possible

b. where side street or rear lane vehicle access is not possible, incorporating mid-block driveways that can provide vehicular shared access to abutting properties

c. limiting the width of driveway accesses points

d. extending the upper floors of the building over the driveway access to maintain the consistent streetwall and maximize the usability of the site

3B foster activity at the street level

5. provide ample bicycle parking

To encourage more cyclists to visit, eat and shop in Bronte Village, ample bicycle parking should be provided within the public realm and private developments.

> **design direction**
> *Incorporate bicycle parking facilities throughout the entire district.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. locating bicycle racks and storage:
    i. within the boulevard spaced at regular intervals
    ii. within vehicle parking areas, including surface and underground parking lots
    iii. at major activity centers, such as the future market square, strategic locations along the waterfront and harbor
    iv. near building entrances of larger developments, that are clustered and provide protection from the elements

3B foster activity at the street level

incorporate active uses at the ground floor

6. maintain a fine-grain pattern

Traditional main streets are lined with narrow buildings that are positioned towards the front property line, with ground-floor entrances and large windows oriented to the pedestrian realm.

> **design direction**
>
> *Design buildings along Lakeshore Road West and Bronte Road that will reinforce and enhance the local commercial main street character.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. creating a continuous streetwall with architecturally detailed facades that provide visual interest and a backdrop for on-street activities

b. articulating facades into narrower segments, through projections and/or recesses, that reflect the rhythm and scale of the surrounding built form

c. wrapping the façade rhythm of openings around corners to draw pedestrians and maintain a backdrop

d. incorporating human-scaled buildings and features

e. providing weather protection elements that provide coverage at entrances and over outdoor displays

3C frame the street

The traditional commercial main street corridor defines Bronte Village.

To frame this corridor, new development should reflect the existing context and patterns by incorporating minor variations in setbacks, variation in building heights and step-backs, projections and recesses of the façade, large window openings, defined building entrances and high quality architectural design.

3C frame the street

define the corridor through built form

1. creating a dynamic street wall

The street walls in Bronte Village are fragmented, interrupted by significant building setbacks, varying building heights, empty lots, surface parking lots and driveways.

Framing these streets with appropriate building heights and stepbacks will greatly improve pedestrian comfort and support retail along the street.

> **design direction**
>
> *Design and position buildings and structures that establish a continuous street wall with a strong and active interface with the pedestrian realm.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. positioning buildings along all primary streets within the required front and flankage yards

b. establishing the building base height to be no greater than 80 percent of the street width. Above this height, step back the remaining building at a 45 degree angle from the main wall, in order to provide access to sky views and sunlight

c. spanning building floors above access driveways on primary streets for continuity of the street wall
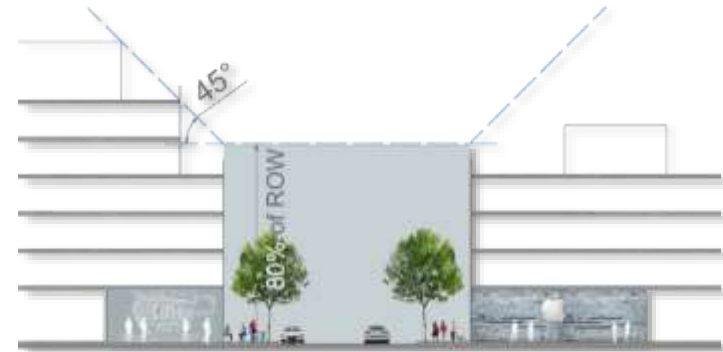
3C frame the street

2. creating strategic breaks in the street wall

Breaks or setbacks should be incorporated into the street wall to create places for gathering, create visual cues for navigation within the streetscape, provide access to internal courtyards and pedestrian connections, and prevent monotony.

> **design direction**
>
> *At mid-block and other strategic locations, incorporate building setbacks to create forecourt and amenity spaces that will enhance the building design, the continuous street wall, and the public realm.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. creating more visually interesting street walls through projections and recesses of building facades, which can result in desirable outdoor amenity spaces, especially where the boulevard may be narrow or constrained

b. incorporating significant breaks in building facades longer than 55.0 m

c. where new development is proposed, dividing the facades into smaller segments to reflect the rhythm and scale of a traditional, main street and village built form

3C frame the street

Redevelopment Concept
This conceptual illustration depicts desirable built form and pedestrian realm components that reinforce traditional main street development by addressing the street and transitioning to the surroundings.
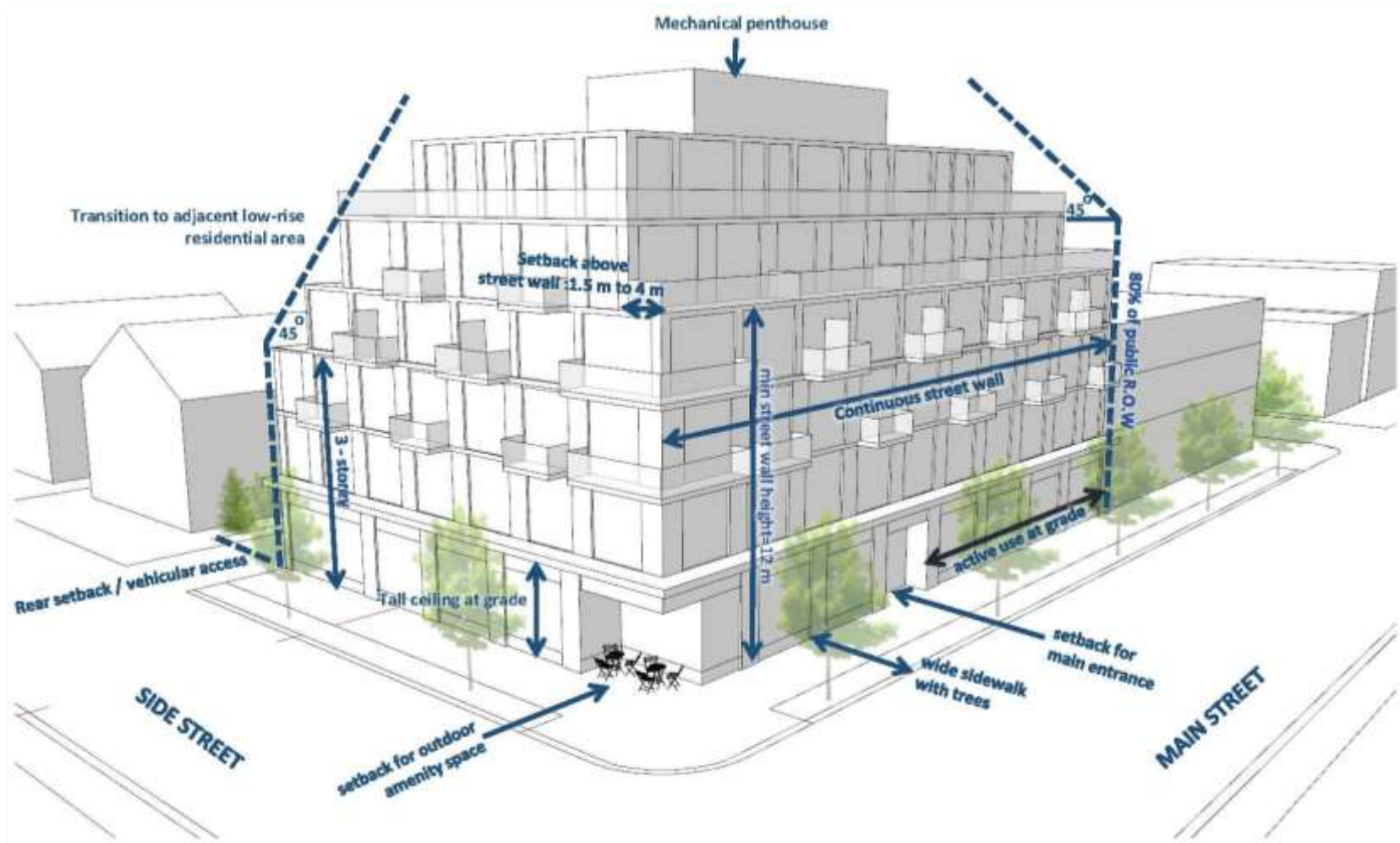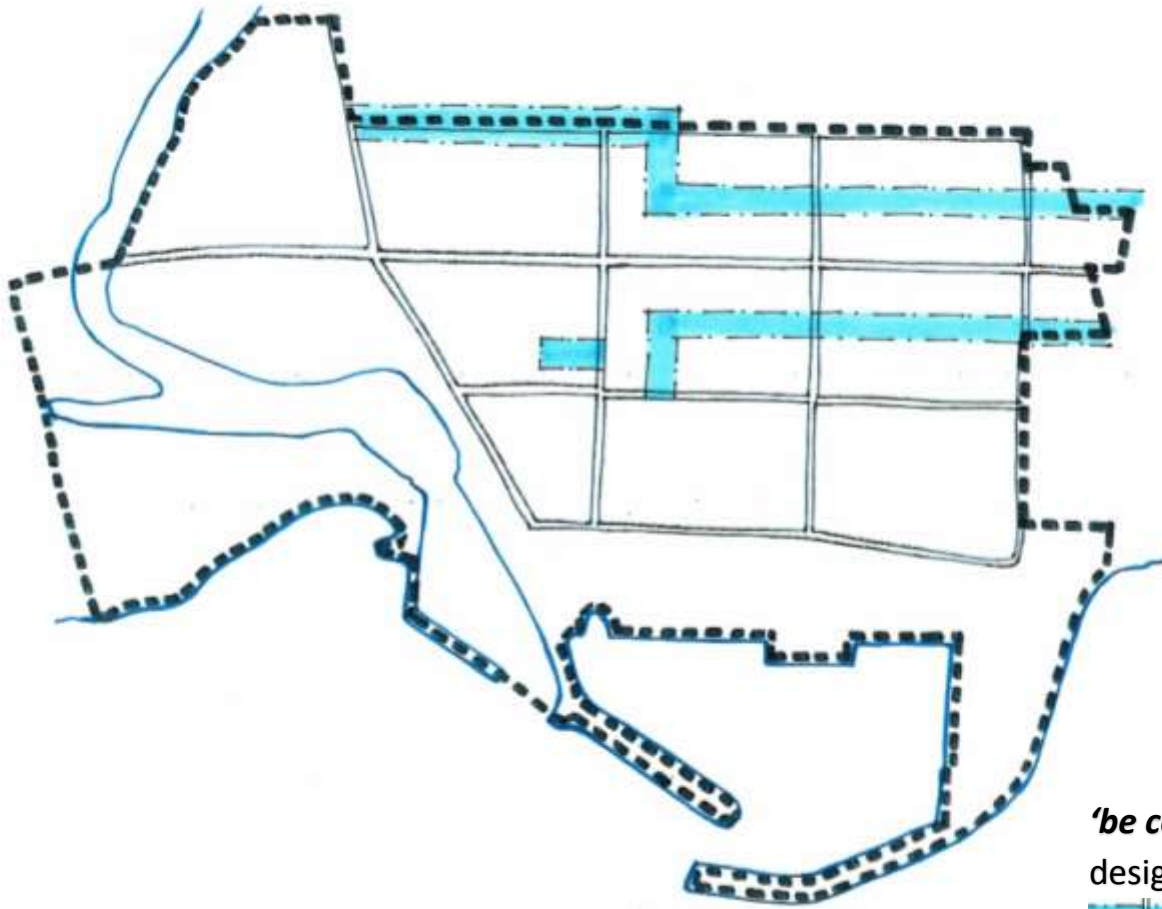
3D be compatible with surroundings

Bronte Village has a mix of low- to mid- to high-rise buildings. To maintain compatibility and respond to the character within the district, transitions from buildings greater than three storeys in height must be made with buildings along the shared streetscape, with adjacent low-rise residential areas, and with open spaces and urban squares.

3D be compatible with surroundings

'be compatible with surroundings'
design direction is primarily focused on:
the interface of tall and mid-rise
buildings abutting low-rise dwellings
and open spaces

3D be compatible with surroundings

incorporate transitions to surroundings

1. **transitioning buildings along the street wall**
   With each new development, it is crucial that appropriate transitioning to adjacent buildings is achieved along the shared streetwall.

   > **design direction**
   >
   > *Design and position buildings to create appropriate transitions along the adjacent street wall that will reinforce the overall main street and district character.*

   The design direction can be accomplished by:

   a. positioning mid-and high-rise buildings to the minimum side lot line and incorporating façade stepback(s) starting at 10.5 m above grade

   b. positioning buildings along the front lot line and incorporating street wall setbacks to transition to adjacent buildings with greater setbacks

   c. between residential buildings, incorporating a 15.0 m minimum separation between primary windows and a 7.5 m minimum separation between all other windows

   d. incorporating visually interesting end wall treatments on the exposed portions of facades of mid- and high-rise buildings, including a combination of window openings, balconies and architectural treatments
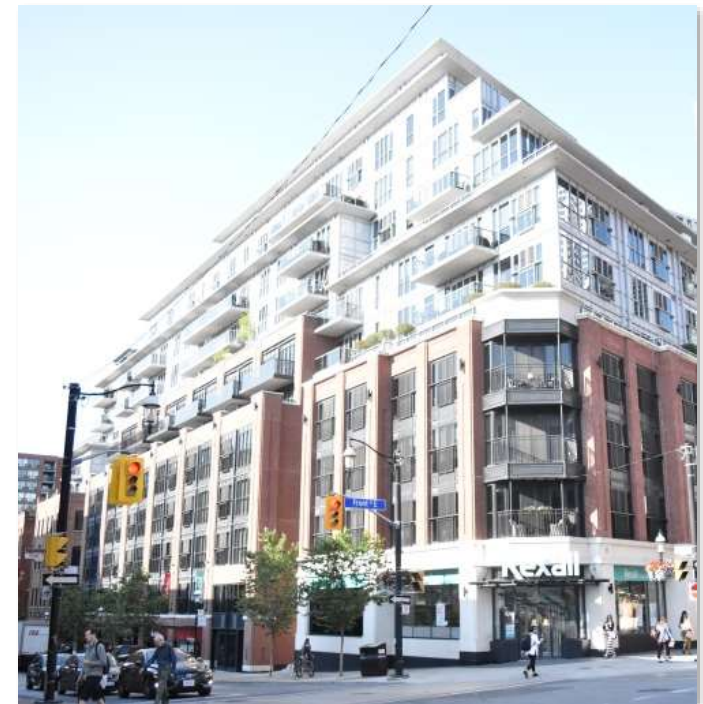
3D be compatible with surroundings

2. transitioning buildings to abutting public spaces

With each new development, incorporating appropriate transitioning to abutting public squares, parks and open spaces can effectively frame these spaces and increase their usability both at grade and from above.

> **design direction**
>
> *Design and position buildings to create appropriate transitions towards abutting public open places that can support and benefit from these amenity spaces.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. setting the building back a minimum of 3.0 m from a public open space so that commercial activities, such as patios and sales areas, extend into the open space

b. incorporating hardscaping, plantings and furnishings that reflect the streetscape and architectural features that can provide weather protection

c. for residential uses at grade, elevating individual residential unit entrances to 0.6 m to 0.9 m above grade for greater privacy

d. ensuring abutting buildings incorporate ample window openings and private amenity areas overlooking the open space to provide "eyes on street" for monitoring and animating the abutting open space

3D be compatible with surroundings

**3. transitioning buildings to low-rise residential areas**

With each new development incorporating increased building heights and massing, providing appropriate transitioning to and buffering between adjacent low-rise residential areas can assist in mitigating potential impacts.

> ## design direction
> *Design and position buildings to create appropriate transitions towards abutting residential neighbourhoods to minimize the potential impact of overlook and shadowing.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. positioning buildings at a minimum setback of 7.5m from a shared property line abutting low-rise residential properties

b. incorporating stepbacks on the rear and/or side façades at a 45 degree angular plane starting from a height of 10.5 m above grade

c. positioning principal windows at a minimum of 10m back from shared property lines

d. locating rooftop terraces and balconies at a minimum of 10.5 m above grade
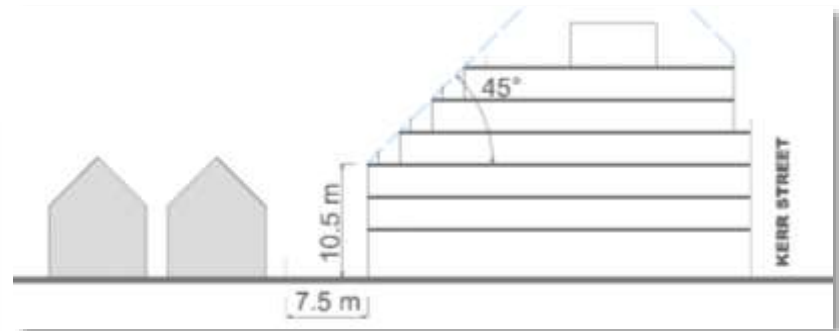
3E create links to and throughout the district
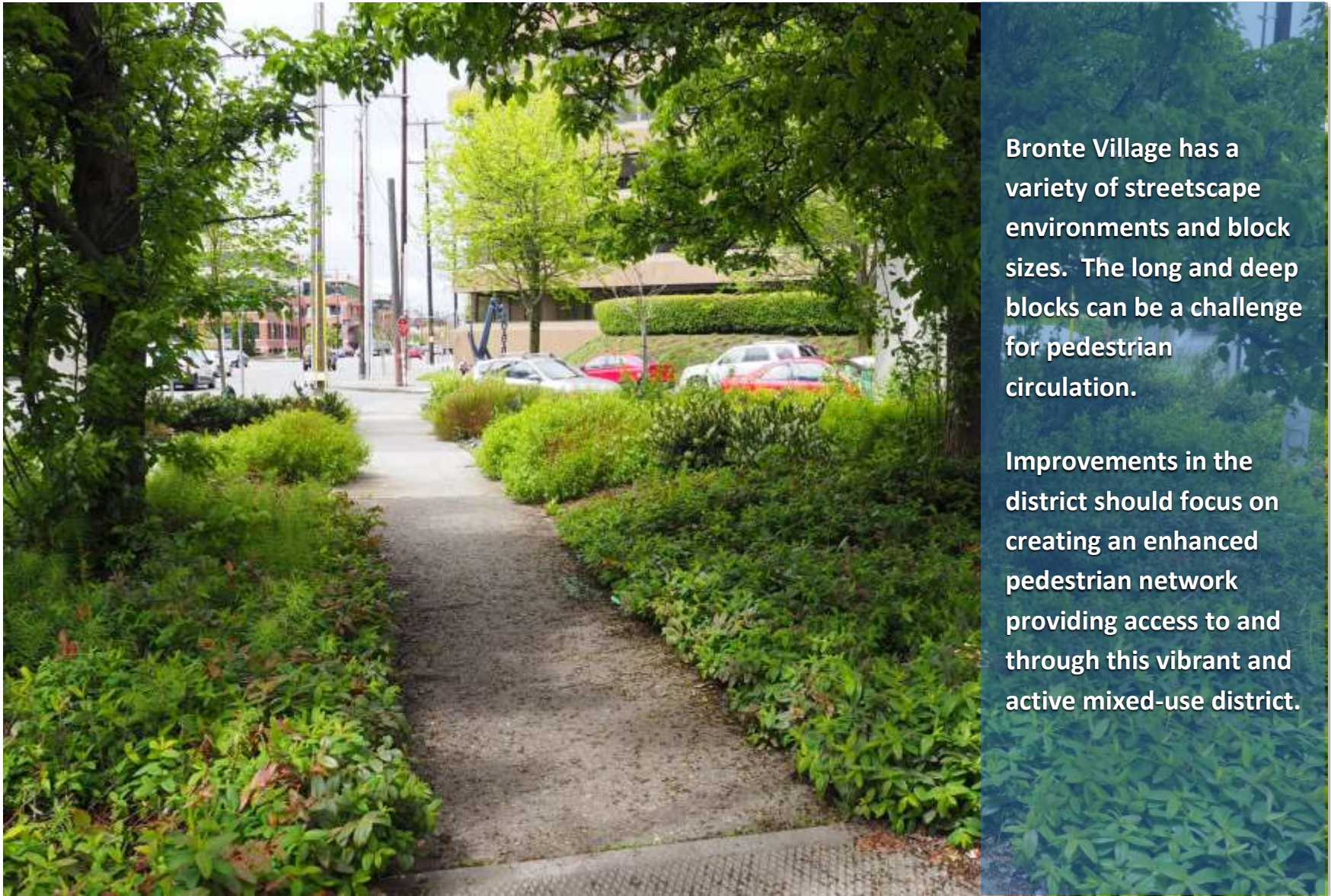
Bronte Village has a variety of streetscape environments and block sizes. The long and deep blocks can be a challenge for pedestrian circulation.

Improvements in the district should focus on creating an enhanced pedestrian network providing access to and through this vibrant and active mixed-use district.

3E create links to and throughout the district

prioritize pedestrian access and movement

1. creating connections throughout the district

There are significant opportunities to improve upon the existing pedestrian network, as well as, to create new linkages to/from nearby waterfront amenities and neighbourhoods.

> ### design direction
> *Enhance the existing pedestrian realm and, where possible, create new linkages to the district that improve access and connectivity.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. designing development along primary and secondary streets with a strong focus on enhancing the pedestrian realm, with built form framing the street and ample entrances along the ground level facades

b. incorporating visual cues along the streets and public realm, such as new streetscape and wayfinding elements, that create interest and navigation tools for visitors and residents to explore the village and its surroundings

3E create links to and throughout the district

2. establishing mid-block connections

An interconnected pedestrian network is a key component of a well-functioning main street district. While a typical 'main street block' length is 100.0 m, within the Bronte Village district, block lengths exceed 200.0 m. Where new development occurs in the middle of longer blocks, pedestrian connections must be incorporated to improve upon the pedestrian network.

> **design direction**
>
> *Within blocks longer than 100m in length, create mid-block pedestrian connections between the village district and nearby neighbourhoods and amenities.*

The design direction can be accomplished by:

a. incorporating well-defined pedestrian connections to and throughout the site for new development

b. creating connections that are predictable, comfortable and barrier-free

c. incorporating ample space between the building faces and incorporating pedestrian-oriented uses and openings along these connections

d. incorporating a variety of elements that can animate the space; such as lighting, landscaping, furnishings, public art and weather protection features