

Planning & Development Services

Planned Group of Dwellings Design Guide

Introduction

This guide is intended to serve as a policy-aligned resource for designers involved in the planning and design of **Planned Group of Dwellings**, as defined in *Bylaw No. 2019-19 – The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019*. A Planned Group of Dwellings is a housing form comprising of two or more residential buildings located on a single lot. This type of housing offers diverse living arrangements, fosters a sense of micro-community and contributes to vibrancy within established neighbourhoods.

This guide serves as a supplement to the City of Regina's zoning regulations and the *Official Community Plan (OCP)* to provide practical, design-focused direction that promotes efficient land use, site design, community integration and sustainability. It streamlines the development process by clarifying expectations and encouraging high-quality outcomes that respect the character of surrounding areas while responding to market needs.

Designing for Community & Context

Effective urban design prioritizes creating quality-built environments that offer comfortable living spaces, ease of access, appropriate density and a strong connection to the existing context. Developments should be approached as **cohesive communal entities**, with careful consideration given to the placement of green spaces, outdoor activity areas like community gardens or pergolas, and functional spaces for social events.

Transitional Buffer

As part of a permitted use application, a transitional buffer must be placed when the proposed development building height is greater than 8.5m AND abuts a lot that is zoned:

• **RN – Residential Neighbourhood**

• **RU – Residential Urban**

• **R1 – Residential Detached**

A transitional buffer is a physical separation between a taller building and adjacent lower-density residentially zoned lots. Its purpose is to screen the taller building visually, soften the impact on neighbouring properties, and enhance aesthetics and privacy.

Buffer Design Requirements

Within the transitional buffer, there is required 3m strip dedicated to landscaping and aesthetic screening that should include mixed deciduous and coniferous trees with specific spacing as required in *The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019*.

Note: If the proposed planned group development **adjoins** a utility parcel, lane or land not intended for development, the width of such adjoining space may be counted towards meeting the transitional buffer requirement.

- It can be **included in the overall minimum setback distance** from the property line.
- Subject to the requirements of *The Zoning Bylaw*, if the transitional buffer is not provided, a discretionary use approval may be required.

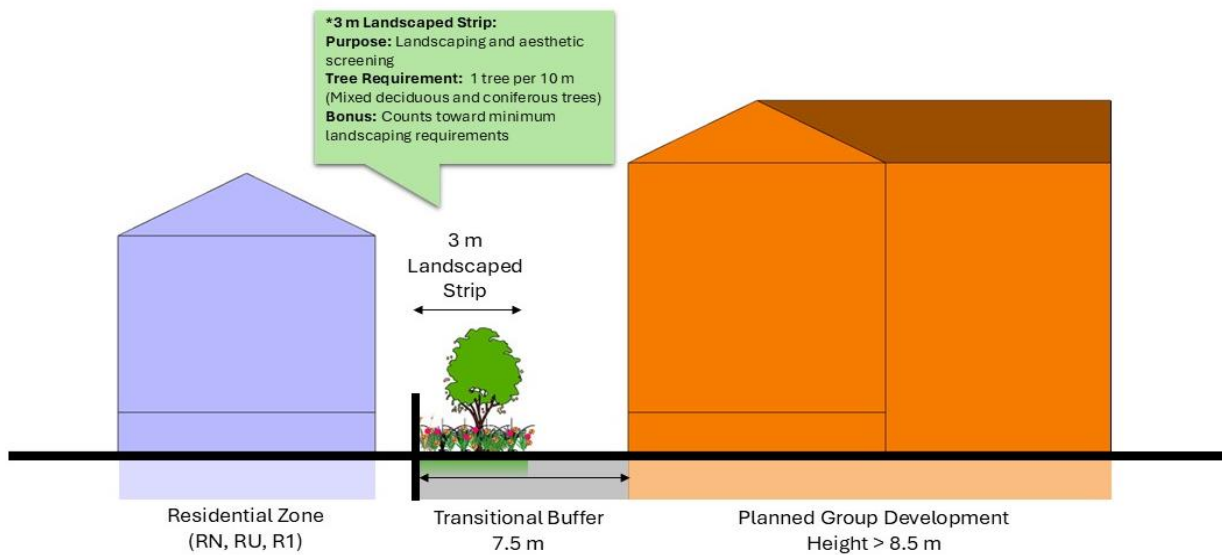


Figure 1: Illustration of Required Transitional Buffer between residential lot (zoned RN, RU, R1) and Planned Group Development higher than 8.5m.

Pedestrian Accessibility

To support active transportation and create complete, connected developments, sites should be designed with pedestrian infrastructure in mind. Within planned group developments, this includes:

- designing **pathways that follow natural desire lines** to key destinations,
- ensuring **barrier-free movement** between buildings and parking areas,
- creating **inclusive infrastructure** for all users.

Thoughtful design **should** also foster social interaction, comfort and safety through elements like lighting and landscaping buffers (e.g. planters and bollards) (*Section D5, Goal 1, Policy 7.1.7, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*).

The Zoning Bylaw requires internal sidewalks connect to external public sidewalks or pathways. This may include matching desire lines to directly connect to sidewalks with intersections, bus stops, parks or other surrounding features.

To further separate pedestrian and vehicle movement, internal sidewalk connections to adjacent public sidewalks or pathways are encouraged, especially in higher density developments with their own parking lots (Chapter 3, *The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019*). Lower density developments may not require these sidewalk connections at the site designer's discretion.

Other key considerations for pedestrian accessibility are to design a site that:

- uses **high-visibility markings and directional signage** at crossings.
- **avoids interruptions in pedestrian routes** caused by parking stalls or drive lanes.



Figure 2: Site layout demonstrating interconnection of buildings following natural desire lines to central park amenity.

Communal Amenity Area Planning

For developments with **20 or more dwelling units**, a minimum of **five percent of the total lot area** needs to be allocated to a communal amenity area (Chapter 3, *The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019*).

To ensure effective, well-integrated areas, designers **should** consider:

- Spaces that are designed as a community focal point, **centrally located, safe and accessible** to all residents.
- The **needs of diverse demographics**.
- **Clear sightlines** to support **passive surveillance**.
- **Adaptability for year-round use**, whenever possible.
- **Long-lasting infrastructure** designed for comfort and accessibility (ex.: ergonomic benches, concrete seating and planters, steel-framed shelters).
- **Privacy of adjacent neighbours**, by avoiding placement next to private backyards.

- Sustainability by **integrating natural systems** like stormwater features and native landscaping.

These considerations align with the City's broader planning initiatives such as making communal spaces that are optimally located and designed (*Appendix A, Policy 7.1.6, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*)

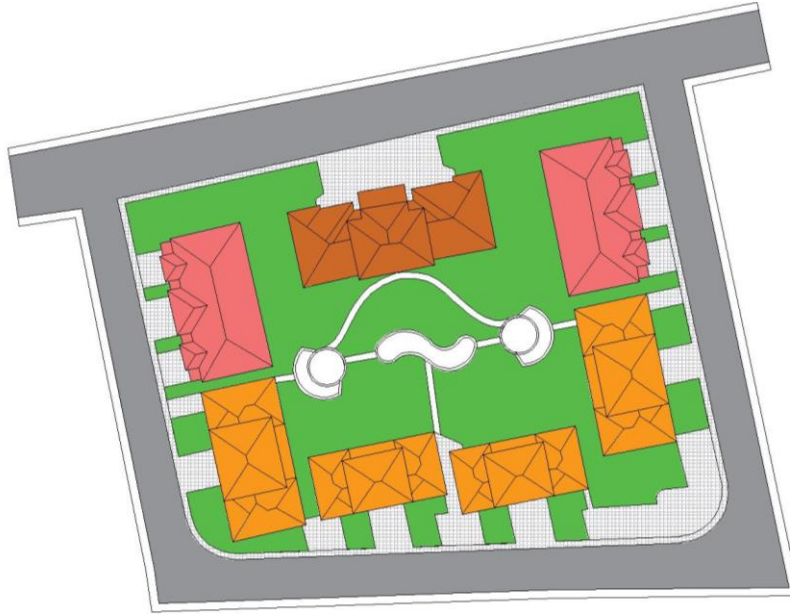


Figure 3: Example of centralized amenity space featuring some permanent and supportive features

Parking, Access and Mobility

The amount of parking on a site should consider surrounding land use and available transportation options. While adequate parking supports the viability of residential projects and can be used to reduce on-street parking congestion, excessive parking can discourage walking, cycling and transit use ([Transportation Master Plan, 2017](#)), or waste site space that could be used for more housing. **Parking should support the development – not dominate it** – and be complemented by pedestrian and cyclist-friendly infrastructure. Supportive infrastructure may include bike repair stations in common areas, rideshare pickup/drop-off zones or other multi-modal transportation supportive features.

Though the Zoning Bylaw does not require on-site motor vehicle parking stalls, based on current market demands, developments **should** consider providing:

- **A sufficient number of parking stalls** to meet residents' anticipated needs and reduce on-street parking congestion.
- **Centrally located parking areas** to visually screen vehicles from pedestrian viewpoints.

- **Integrated parking areas** with the rest of the site rather than standalone lots.

A good parking lot design should be safe for both motorists and pedestrians. For pedestrians and residents in a planned group setting, the lots should incorporate landscaping for screening and aesthetic purposes where possible and allow for safe movement from the parking spaces to buildings. For motorists, there should be clearly marked striping and signage (indicating types of stalls and directional flow).

Accessible parking stalls are required and should be located close to building entrances to ensure convenient access. Designers should consider where curb cuts or ramps should be used for added accessibility.

Based on the number of dwelling units, **short-term** and **long-term bicycle parking** and storage stalls must be located on-site to fulfill the diverse mobility requirements per *The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019*.

Site design will need to also comply with emergency access requirements per the [*Design Standards: Transportation, 2024*](#), including:

- No direct access to arterial roads.
- A maximum of one access point per frontage, unless otherwise approved.

Building Orientation

Regina's planning policies emphasize the importance of designing elements that contribute positively to the public realm and enhance the overall neighbourhood experience (*Section D5, Goal 1, Policy 7.1.9, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*). One of the most effective strategies to achieve this objective is through intentional and context-sensitive building orientation. To achieve this objective, designers should:

- **Consider surrounding context of roads and adjacent residential properties.**
- **Use step-backs and transitional buffers** to maintain privacy when reorientation is not possible.
- **Incorporate active front yards and pedestrian-friendly features** to foster social interaction and a vibrant streetscape.

Existing roads affect site access and orientation of the buildings. Taking location and types of roads into account can help designers determine which ways buildings should face and maximize the impact on the pedestrian experience.

Having rear yards or using fencing adjacent to the public streets does not contribute to active streets or neighbourhood enhancement and should be avoided when possible. To encourage a stronger relationship between the public realm and private development, encourage **passive surveillance** of the streets and invite greater social connections.

Where possible, designs should orient building fronts, porches, patios or living spaces to face public areas.

If the proposed site includes multiple buildings of different heights, taller buildings should be arranged in such a way that shadow impacts would create a **minimal or no impact** on the surrounding properties.

A **shadow impact study** may be required to analyze the sun shadow impacts outside the property. This graphical model should demonstrate the shadow cast by the proposed development at various times throughout the year.

The shadow-impacted area on-site can be used for parking stalls, recycling receptacle locations, landscaping, etc. Site designs should avoid inactive or underused spaces, like north-facing courtyards.

Sustainable Design

In support of the City's climate resiliency goals, designers **should** explore innovative design ideas, such as:

- maximizing natural solar energy through proper building orientations,
- passive building designs, building energy certifications,
- energy generation through solar roof panels, rainwater harvesting,
- gray water reuse, (Eg: *Section D2, Goal 4, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*).

Designers can use Regina's [Energy and Sustainability Framework](#) as a strategic guide to incorporate sustainability into all stages of building and site design.



Figure 5: PV solar panels on the roof of a stacked building

Planned Group of Dwellings – Infill & Intensification

The Regina Zoning Bylaw, 2019 allows for a range of densities within each zone, offering flexibility in development. This bylaw encourages intensification in strategically located areas such as near arterial roads, along main transit routes, downtown and city centre. These areas are prioritized to support sustainable growth, improve transit accessibility and take advantage of existing infrastructure.

Taking the site location and types of surrounding roads into account can help designers maximize the space and capitalize on the intensification of a site.

Other Relevant OCP Policies

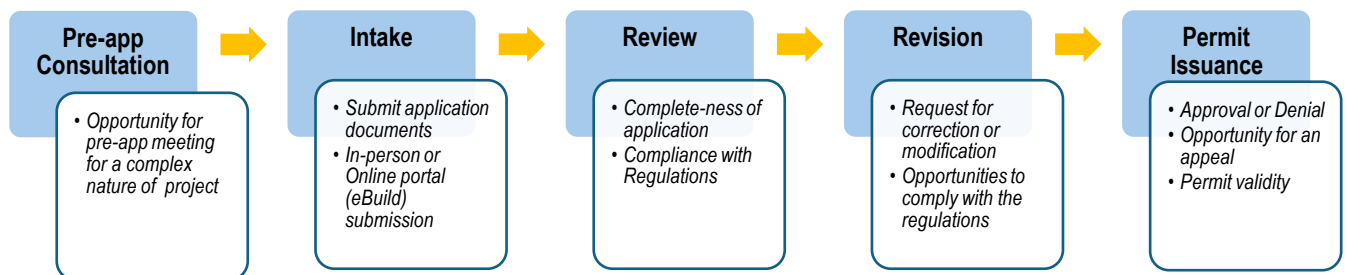
When designing a planned group or any development, it is important to consider a range of policies within the OCP that support the creation of well-integrated site designs. These include:

- Guidelines for Complete Communities (*Appendix A, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*).
- Special Policy Areas – Airport (*Section D9, Goal 3, Design Regina: The Official Community Plan, 2013*).

Application Process

The application for a Planned Group and further information can be found on [the commercial Housing Planned Group of Dwellings webpage](#).

The following process discusses the development and/or building permit application stage. Discretionary use proposals follow a [discretionary use application](#) process before the permitting stage. Once approved, the discretionary use process follows the same process as a permitted use.



APPENDICES

A. Definitions

1. Abut

Abut means either:

- (a) touching or sharing a common point, line or boundary; or
- (b) separated from any common point, line, or boundary measured from the two closest points on the property by only:
 - (i) an existing or planned lane;
 - (ii) an existing or planned easement less than 9 metres in width;
 - (iii) an undeveloped lot or portion of a lot less than 9 metres in width;
 - (iv) an existing or planned road right-of-way less than 9 metres in width. (see figure A1)

2. Adjoin

Adjoin means touching or sharing a common line or boundary. (see figure A2)

3. Long-term bicycle parking (stall)

Long-term bicycle parking (stall) means bicycle parking that is secured from theft and vandalism, either by being within:

- (a) A locked, fenced area;
- (b) A locked room within a building; or
- (c) An individual locker that is no less than 2.0 metres by 0.80 metres by 1.30 metres.

4. Natural desire lines

Informal pathways that are created, not by planners or traffic engineers, but by the continual, repetitive movement of people through them.

5. Passive Surveillance

Refers to the design of a physical space in a way that naturally increases visibility and oversight, without the need for active monitoring like security cameras or guards.

6. Short-term bicycle parking (stall)

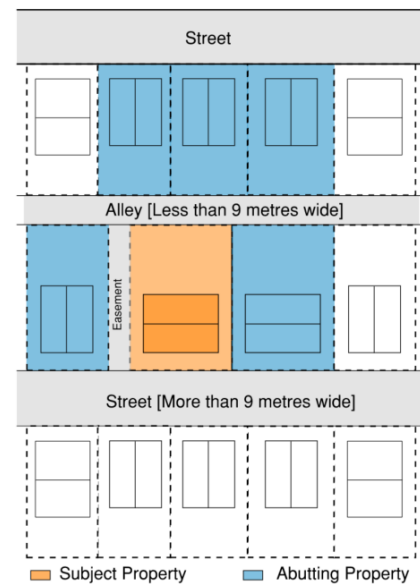


Figure A1: Abutting properties

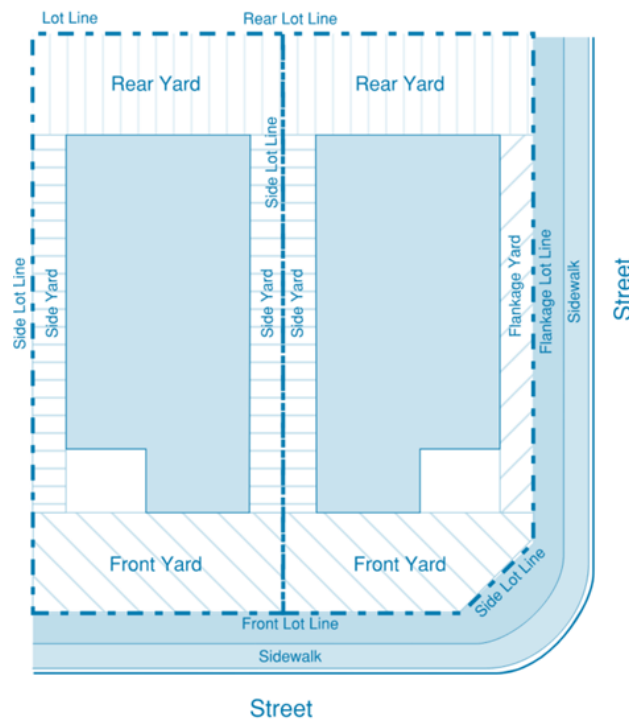


Figure A2: Adjoining properties

Short-term bicycle parking (stall) means a parking stall designated for a bicycle where the bicycle can be temporarily secured.

7. **Soft landscaping**

Soft landscaping means the use of living plant materials such as trees, shrubs, hedges, grass and other ground covers and the modification of the landform, such as by berming and terracing.



Street
Figure A3: Lot Terminologies