The **Urban Design Streetscape Manual** is a reference tool developed to help implement City policy and guide the design, construction and maintenance of streetscape improvements in Toronto.
What is a streetscape?

A streetscape is made up of paving, lighting, trees, street furniture and sidewalks, framed by buildings and open spaces, that combine to form an overall aesthetic and identity for a place.
There are **three methods** of searching the Streetscape Manual online. A step-by-step overview is provided in **Training Session 2: Searching the Manual**.

“Search by Map” is the most common option and is normally used when planning, designing or maintaining a streetscape for a specific location.
Additional search options

2. **“Search by Street Name”** provides an alphabetical list of all streets found in the Manual and offers a text-based alternative to the map search.

3. **“Search by Streetscape Element”** is an inventory-based search normally used to inform maintenance or the design of new streetscapes.
The Manual provides design direction for 5 streetscape elements. The “Search by Streetscape Element” option provides access to an inventory of all design details referenced in the Streetscape Manual.
The Streetscape Manual is most often searched for design information about a particular street or location in the city.

The “search by map” or “search by street name” options should be used during the preparation of streetscape designs for development applications, capital work and any other street or sidewalk-related construction projects.
When searching a specific location, the Manual often identifies more than one design detail for a streetscape element.
After downloading the recommended options presented in the Manual, the selection of the most appropriate design treatment should **always** start with consultation and coordination with City staff and identified stakeholders.

For streetscape designs *related to development applications*, contact the assigned Community Planner or click on the “Planning District” link for general contact information.

For streetscape inquiries *not related to development applications*, email: streetscapemanual@toronto.ca
Selecting the most appropriate details and arriving at a final streetscape design relies on a comprehensive decision-making process.
Working with City staff and identified stakeholders, the development of a final streetscape design is generally dependent upon:

- the existing or planned context;
- available space in the sidewalk zone and setback;
- width and location of the pedestrian clearway;
- location of above- and below-grade utilities; and
- other sidewalk/boulevard activities
It is important to visit the street/site as early as possible in the design process to assess the current streetscape conditions and determine the following:

- is the existing streetscape consistent with the Manual classification (streetscape type) and design recommendations (standard/site-specific details)?
- what is the character of the sidewalk zone (Main/Green) and how is it organized?
- what elements and treatments are found on adjacent blocks/neighbouring sites?
- is there a good precedent to continue or does the streetscape require improvement or complete renewal?

Always coordinate the assessment of existing conditions with City staff.
Review the history, changing patterns and priorities for the street to establish the planned context. Coordinate the streetscape design with all applicable policies, plans, guidelines and initiatives. Contact City staff for verification and interpretation of referenced material and for any additional streetscape-related information.
Space in the Sidewalk Zone and Setback

After determining the existing or planned context for the streetscape, the quality and organization of the sidewalk zone and setback should be established. Identify existing or required easements, the location of mature trees, current sidewalk uses and activities, and any other installations that may affect the space available for pedestrians or placement of streetscape elements.
Review the layout of the sidewalk zone and allocate space to the various streetscape elements and identified functions. In constrained locations, work with City staff and stakeholders to secure additional space for pedestrians and streetscaping (e.g. reorganize/realign elements, relocate/underground utilities, extend roadway curbs, increase building setbacks, etc.).
When evaluating the sidewalk zone and setback always look for opportunities to **grow healthy street trees**.

- Refer to the Urban Forestry [Tree Planting Specifications](#) for soil and space requirements
- Identify suitable planting zones between the curb and building face
- Coordinate tree planting zone(s) with the location of the pedestrian clearway, utilities, street lighting and street furniture
- Identify opportunities to connect with existing soil volumes on public and/or private property

Note: access to at least 30m³ of good quality soil is recommended

- Review the Streetscape Type and existing context to select an appropriate planting option

Note: typically Green Streets have soft landscapes (T-sL series) and Main Streets have hard landscapes (T-series). The standard City treatment around a tree is turf and/or mulch. Enhanced plant material is encouraged, but must be secured appropriately with the City and is normally maintained by others (e.g. adjacent property owner, BIA, etc.)
The pedestrian clearway is a top priority in the streetscape design process. The **width of the clearway** should respond to accessibility requirements and the volume of pedestrian activity. The **location of the clearway** should generally match adjacent sites/blocks to maintain a continuous, unobstructed route.

When the clearway is under-sized, circuitous, or creates an undesirable condition (e.g. too close to a busy road), consider how it could be widened/realigned/repositioned to better serve pedestrian comfort, access and safety. Where appropriate, part of the setback may be secured to widen the clearway. Contact City staff for assistance.
Identify all above and below-grade utilities using mapping, surveys, and site inspections. Note any conflicts that may affect the installation of the recommended design details.

Work with City staff and identified utility stakeholders to coordinate the streetscape design with existing utilities. Where conflicts exist and scope of work permits, consider utility relocation or undergrounding.
The spacing and placement of the pedestrian clearway, street trees and other fixed streetscape elements should be mindful of opportunities for other permanent or temporary activities in the sidewalk zone.

Boulevard cafés, street vendors, signage, grocery stands, retail or marketing displays, etc., are normally regulated by City by-laws, municipal licensing and/or other legal agreements. Contact City staff for information about current or future activities that may affect the streetscape.
Beyond the key considerations just outlined, there are a few additional points to keep in mind when finalizing a streetscape design.
All arterial roads and a selection of collector and local roads have been evaluated, classified and indexed in the Streetscape Manual in a manner that reflects their urban design role in the city street network.

If a street is not listed in the Street Index, then no specific Streetscape Manual details apply. However, streets that are not part of the Manual should still be designed and built to achieve a high quality public realm, including good pedestrian infrastructure, proper lighting and healthy street trees.
Each Streetscape Type identified in the Manual has a standard palette of construction materials that reflect the urban design role of that street within the city as a whole.

In general, Main Streets apply more hard-surface materials and treatments than Green Streets and normally require a more generous streetscape budget.

Site-specific design details, which offer a unique palette of materials, are applied to certain streets regardless of their Streetscape Type to reinforce a unique identity, history, Business Improvement Area, or other special planning designation.
Whenever possible, the materials, spacing and type of streetscape elements applied should be consistent on both sides of a street.

When the streetscape type or treatment changes along a street, the change should generally occur at an intersection.
Training Session 3: Decision-Making is now complete.
To begin using the Manual, click the ONLINE link below.