CITY OF BURNABY - MID-BLOCK CONNECTION POLICY

Policy Type: Council

Effective Date: July 1, 2026

Policy #:

Policy Subject: Planning and Development

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the provision of Mid-block and Thruway Connections through rezoning applications.

Mid-Block Connections are active transportation corridors that dissect a lot to facilitate movement for pedestrians of all ages and abilities, cyclists, and/or people on micro mobility devices. Mid-Block Connections are typically required on larger blocks to improve connectivity for these modes of transportation and to implement connections anticipated in City plans, policies, guidelines, or bylaws. Thruway Connections are similar but are covered and go through a building. Mid-Block and Thruway Connections are a form of open space.

The goal of providing Mid-Block and Thruway Connections is to enhance intersection density, connectivity, walkability, and convenience. These factors contribute to a built environment where people are more likely to choose active modes of transportation because they can easily reach more potential destinations without taking circuitous, indirect routes.

Improving walkability supports the City's transportation mode shift, emissions reduction, and vision zero targets as described in the Burnaby Transportation Plan. It also supports the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP) Goal 4 to "Create and maintain efficient and well-connected transportation and infrastructure networks" (page 101).

Mid-Block and Thruway connections support the creation of a "modified grid" which is described in TransLink's Transport 2050 Regional Transportation Plan as "the most convenient and safest street network for people walking, biking, or rolling" (page 170). A modified grid restricts vehicular traffic at key locations within a neighbourhood while maintaining through movements for active modes.

Often a Mid-Block or Thruway Connection will support the implementation of the network vision defined in a community plan or the OCP. It may also support the completion of active transportation networks envisioned by the City.

Additional design guidance for Mid-Block and Thruway Connections can be found in the Burnaby Form and Character Development Permit Area Guidelines (Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, Schedule I).

B. DEFINITIONS

Mid-Block Connection: Publicly accessible active transportation connection that connect users into and across a private lot providing an alternative route from the street, provided as an outdoor pathway, and includes a Thruway Connection where permitted by section F.1.11.

Thruway Connection: Mid-Block Connection that passes through a building to connect the building front and internal courtyards or rear of the building.

Block Length: The length of a block based on the distance between the exterior corners of the corner lots of a block.

C. APPLICABILITY

1. Mid-Block Connections should be provided:

    1.1. Within all areas of the City with a Commercial or Residential Land use designation (or overlay) in the OCP, except for lots designated as Small-Scale Multi-unit Housing; and

    1.2. Any other area within the Town Centre and Urban Village Service Areas shown on Schedule C of the Works and Services Bylaw.

D. LOCATION ON A BLOCK

1. A Mid-Block Connection should be provided:

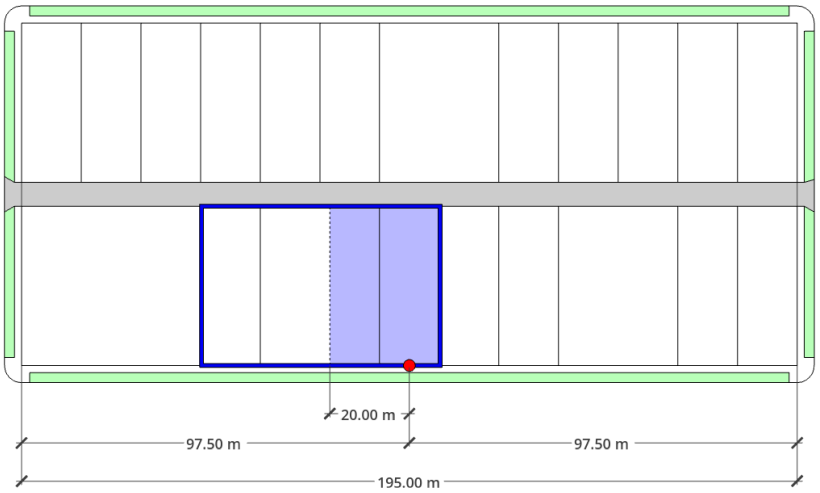
    1.1. Where identified in the OCP, a Community Plan, or an approved master plan;

    1.2. Where a Mid-Block Connection on an adjacent lot terminates at a lot line, requiring a logical continuation through the lot; or

    1.3. On a block with a Block Length greater than 170m one midblock connection must be provided, and one additional Mid-Block Connection must be provided for every additional 100 m of Block Length. New Mid-Block Connections shall be located to evenly divide the block.

        - See Figure 1 for an example.

Figure 1: Example Midblock Connection location as per section D.1.3

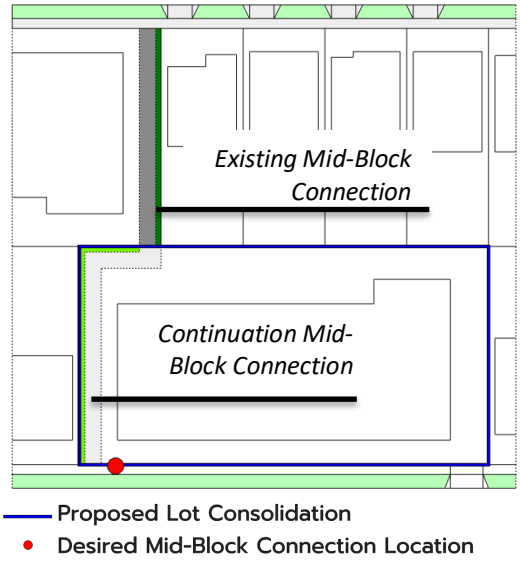


- *One midblock connection is needed as the block is more than 170m but less than 270m long.*
- *To achieve an equal spacing the desired location is 97.5 m from the lot corners.*
- *The midblock connection should be within 20m of the desired location as per section D.2.2.*

2. The exact alignment of a Mid-Block Connection on a lot should be coordinated with Planning staff through the initial application process to ensure alignment with applicable Community Plans and transportation strategies as well as to account for any relevant topographical or safety considerations.

   2.1. Where the need for a Mid-Block Connection is derived from OCP map 6a Community Plan or other policy documents, the alignment should allow for a logical continuation of the connection anticipated in these documents.

Figure 2: Example Continuation Midblock Connection location as per section D.2.3



   2.2. The Mid-Block Connection should be located within 20 meters from the desired location as described in section D.1.3.

   2.3. Where a Mid-Block Connection is present to the rear of a lot, the Mid-Block Connection should be continued through the lot to complete this Mid-Block Connection (see Figure 2 for an example).

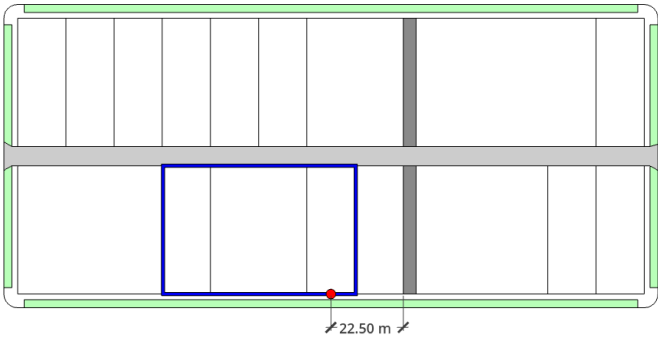
E. SITUATIONS WHERE THE REQUIREMENT MAY BE WAIVED

1. The requirement to provide a Mid-Block Connection may be waived where:

   1.1. There is no street, pathway, or public park or plaza on the opposite side of the block to connect to and none is planned;

1.2. Within 50 m of the desired location of a mid-block as per section 1.3 of this policy another Mid-Block Connection is provided or anticipated in the, OCP, a Community Plan, an approved master plan, or a rezoning, and the required Mid-Block Connection on the lot would not contribute meaningful value to the active transportation network (see Figure 3 for an example);

Figure 3: Example where requirements for a midblock connection may be waved as per section E 1.2



the existing or proposed midblock connection is less than 50m away from the desired location of a Mid-Block as per section 1.3

1.3 A connection through a lot is technically infeasible or impractical due to slope, environmental constraints, or adjacency to impassable infrastructure such as railways, provincial highways or oil and hydro infrastructure; or

1.4 Adding a Mid-Block connection would create a safety hazard for active transportation users.

F. GENERAL CRITERIA

1. Where a Mid-Block Connection is required, the following criteria have been established to ensure Mid-Block Connections are functional for various modes of transportation and are comfortable for all ages and abilities:

1.1. All Mid-Block Connections should be designed according to the City-wide Form and Character Development Permit Guidelines (Burnaby Zoning Bylaw, Schedule I).

1.2. The owner grants a Statutory Right-of-Way (SRW) for public access along the Mid-Block Connection and a Section 219 Covenant to ensure the maintenance, repair and replacement of the Mid-block Connection by the owner to the satisfaction of the City.

1.3. The SRW Area should be at least 4 m wide at any point.

1.4. Within the SRW Area, a pathway must be accommodated that should be at least 3 m wide.

1.5. In specific circumstances the width may be reduced

- where the developability of the site were to be severely constrained by the width of the Mid-block connection.
- If situated alongside a lot line and it is anticipated that and additional SRW will eventually be obtained trough the development of the neighbouring lot.

1.6. Where a cycling connection is anticipated, the cycling pathway should be designed to comfortably accommodate both pedestrian and Cyclists. This may affect grading and overall configuration and could require a wider pathway and/or SRW Area.

1.7. Within the SRW Area, landscaping and street furniture should be provided for public use.

1.8. A Mid-Block Connection may be provided as a Thruway Connection if:

- the need for the Mid-Block Connection is derived through section D.1.3 of this policy and the site is constrained; or
- the connection is co-located with commercial uses.

Approved By:	Council	Amendment Dates:	
Approval Date:	May 26, 2026	Review Date:	