

6. For Us

6.1 Introduction

People use streets for many activities, such as walking, sitting, cycling, moving goods, doing business or providing city services. These various activities that streets can accommodate aid to enhance the city's liveability. The types of users and volume of people in streets are dependent on many factors such as, time of day, size of street, the surrounding environs and local weather. Apart from a thoroughfare providing easy access, a street should also provide a safe and comfortable environment to its users. Although each user moves at a different speed and occupies a different amount of space over a time span for different purposes, the human comfort factor is common to all these users to foster a pedestrian-friendly environment.

6.2 Liveable City

Streets make up of a predominant part of urban landscape in Hong Kong. Streets are the most important element of the public domain in the city, and are fundamental to the appearance and function of the urban environment. In addition to moving vehicular and pedestrian traffic, streets provide the "Place" for social interaction, business activities and portray the image of the city.

Quality streets together with well-designed public spaces are integral to the social, economic and environmental sustainability of Hong Kong and to make a more liveable city for all. Apart from selecting the right trees for the right place, selection should therefore also aim for the users, i.e. the people that drive, walk and work in the streets every day. Tree selection and the associated landscape and planting design shall aim to improve the walkability or comfort of our street environment, encourage outdoor activities and social interaction to support the planning objective of a "liveable high-density city" and "smart, green and resilient Hong Kong" promoted under Hong Kong 2030+.

Some key factors to be considered are listed below as reference. The list is not meant to be exhaustive and should be reviewed / expanded depending on the prevailing street environment.

- Provide shade and moderate microclimate for pedestrian, drivers and buildings
- Contribute to a safer road through calming traffic, slowing speeds and providing buffer between pedestrians and cars
- Helps unify the road corridor environment
- Improve amenity and provide visual interest
- Screen undesirable views and helps filter air pollutants
- Foster sense of place
- Provide human scale within the urban setting with tall buildings and high-rises.

6.3 Site Specific Criteria

The roadside planting environment for each street, even with the same typology could be very different due to the site-specific criteria. Professional advice, such as from Landscape Architects should be sought during the planning and design stage to ensure that all site-specific criteria unique to that street are being considered during the street tree selection process.

Site-specific criteria may exist within a certain part or entirety of that street. Examples of some site-specific criteria are listed in **Table 6-1** as a reference. It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and may not be applicable to all streets. Also, tree selection criteria should not be limited to those stated in this Guide.

Professional advice to ensure that associated supporting elements such as planter details, drainage and irrigation requirements, CVC, etc. are properly designed/provided in providing suitable growing conditions for the trees. Further study to formulate a street urban forest precinct or master plan taking into consideration the ageing tree replacement can aid to further consolidate a holistic guide in the design, implementation, life-cycle planning and management of the urban forest.

Site-Specific Criteria	Design Considerations
Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consists of the understanding of regulatory, administrative and legal aspects dealing with Hong Kong urban streets. In Hong Kong, different street elements/furniture could be maintained by different government departments/parties. Relevant standards and guidelines related to planting on urban streets should be followed.
Stakeholders' feedbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific tree species may be chosen for the location based on stakeholders' opinion or feedback.
Local historical and socio-cultural association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Species should be carefully considered when planting new trees near to existing tree(s) with historical or socio-cultural associated valuable Planting at locations with significant historical, heritage and socio-cultural values to the neighbourhood, consultation with the community may be needed.
Interfacing with GMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant species should reference to the GMP themes of plant species palette if the roadside planting works forms part of the district based GMP.
Planting scheme in the neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing plant palette and planting scheme in the neighbourhood would influence the choice of species for specific purposes, such as planting alignment and ecological corridor preservation.
Land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planting areas located in areas with higher degree of air pollution should consider species that are rated high in pollution tolerance selection criteria. Planting areas located in formal streets within a main commercial and retail district or in streets with a design theme, due consideration should be given in the number of species variety in the streetscape to maintain the identity and character of the streetscape. Proposed tree species should match with the existing design theme. Consider whether the tree species could fulfil functions of the street, e.g. trees with excessive litter drop should be avoided at footpaths with large pedestrian flows or within on-street parking lots.
Precinct topography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider sloping gradient conditions for the given tree planting area. In general, it is not recommended to plant tree at street with steep sloping gradient (particularly streets in some hilly regions of the Hong Kong Island). Specialist advice should be sought.
Cycle tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In areas, especially new towns or new development areas, where there are cycle

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Site-Specific Criteria	Design Considerations
	tracks parallel to carriageways, considerations should be given for tree species which should have overhang of minimum 2.5m on the cycle track to maintain a vertical clearance for the cyclists (5.6.3.1(vii) Vol2 Ch.5 TPDM).
Physical form of planting areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tree pit, flush planter and/or kerb planter is more susceptible to soil compaction problem in urban areas than raised planter. Soil compaction is mainly due to pedestrian traffic and activities. If the planting area of a typical street is a tree pit, flush planter and/or kerb planter, the soil compaction criterion should be considered carefully. ● In urban areas, topsoil pH in flush planter and tree pit is more susceptible to change than in kerb planter or raised planter because these planting areas are subject to direct storm water and surface runoff which contains high content of calcareous materials from construction debris. Therefore, creating more alkaline soil conditions (pH >7.0). Planting species which can perform well in slightly alkaline topsoil condition is required in addition to the general soil pH requirement range (pH 5.5 – 7.0)
Types of surface paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For tree pit planting, special care should be given for paver blocks or concreted surfaces surrounding the tree pit where tree root growth will affect the adjacent paving condition as this can cause tripping hazards to pedestrians and increase maintenance required.
Sunlight preference versus planting location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Trees require sunlight to grow. However, the quality and duration of sunlight that each tree is receiving varies depending on its planting location. For example, for planting areas regularly under shade such as carriageway with heavy shade casted by adjacent high-rise buildings, consideration should be given to species that can perform well under shady conditions. It is suggested that the “Sunlight Preference” listed in Appendix B for each species be verified against its planting location to ensure suitability.
Other micro-climate considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Other micro-climate conditions specific to the location, such as wind tunnel effect, proximity to seaside, etc. should be duly considered.
Existing Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To enhance biodiversity, planting / re-planting shall make reference to the 10-20-30 rule. Surrounding existing tree species will need be examined and reviewed. ● The urban ULE of existing trees need to be considered to avoid sudden mass tree replacement due to new pests, diseases or the end of their life-cycle.

Table 6-1 – Examples of Site-specific Criteria and Design Considerations