URBAN DESIGN ACTION PLAN

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
CONTENTS

Introduction 01
Good urban design makes a difference
What other places are doing
The City’s role in achieving good urban design
How the Action Plan is organized
Basic principles of good urban design

Part 1: Opportunity Areas 12
Downtown 13
Community Nodes 21
Intensification Corridors 27
New Communities 33
Employment Areas & Guelph Innovation District 39
The University Campus 45
City-wide Opportunities 49
Infill Development
Natural Heritage and Trees
Utilities and Lighting
Public Art
The Hanlon Expressway
Trails

Part 2: Institutional Strengthening 58
Project Review 59
Promotion and Education 65

Summary of Priority Actions 67

Appendix: Urban Design Policy Directions
Guelph is at a pivotal point in its evolution as a city. Like many North American cities, it experienced unconstrained outward growth over the 20th century, annexing rural land in the process. Within the next 10-15 years, it will be built out to the municipal boundary, yet will continue to grow. In fact, urged on by the Province’s Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Guelph expects to add 54,000 more residents and 31,000 more jobs by 2031, according to the Local Growth Management Strategy (LGMS). To conform to the Growth Plan, by 2015 at least 40% of residential growth must be occurring within the city’s built boundary, through redevelopment and intensification. A significant portion of this growth will occur in the downtown, designated by the Province as an Urban Growth Centre. The growth that occurs on greenfield sites outside the built boundary must be denser and have a broader mix of uses than typical post-war suburban development, with an average of at least 50 people and jobs per hectare. Behind this fundamental policy shift is the concept of sustainability, a term Guelph citizens have long embraced, which also led to the City’s landmark Community Energy Plan.

How successfully Guelph responds to these new challenges while striving to maintain the city’s high quality of life and competitiveness will depend in large part on good urban design. The purpose of this Urban Design Action Plan (UDAP) is to highlight the importance of urban design in all matters related to the planning and development of the city and to set out a course of action aimed at achieving good urban design on a broad and consistent basis. It also establishes general urban design objectives for strategic areas of the city expected to undergo the most change in the coming decades. Through the actions identified in the plan, the intent is to clarify a vision for how Guelph should physically evolve, develop and implement policies to guide growth and change, and nurture a strong culture of urban design within City Hall and the broader community.

This plan was prepared in consultation with Consultations with City staff, City councillors, representatives of the local development industry, other community
leaders and the general public. Recent development projects in Guelph and the approval processes behind them were reviewed to understand potential barriers to better urban design. The plan also has been informed by policies, practices and programs used by other Canadian municipalities to achieve their urban design objectives.

The Action Plan is grounded in a realistic understanding of the specific local context, current initiatives and existing policies. It responds to the unique conditions, opportunities and challenges in Guelph and builds on the momentum that has been established by recent City initiatives, including the Community Energy Plan, the LGMS, the Downtown Visioning Charrette, and the City Hall and Civic Square projects. It fills in missing pieces and augments existing plans and documents to create a comprehensive framework for achieving improved urban design. Many of the urban design objectives set out in the action plan are consistent with those stated or implied in the Official Plan, the LGMS and previous planning studies. The focus of this document is on how to achieve the objectives. In many cases, this involves replacing current policies and guidelines with stronger and clearer ones; these are balanced with changes to institutional processes and physical projects the City can initiate or facilitate. In some cases, new focused studies are needed for areas lacking an urban design vision and policies; the action plan identifies which of these should be priorities.

GOOD URBAN DESIGN MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Guelph is a historic city, originally planned by John Galt in 1827. Surrounded by countryside and shaped by natural features and socioeconomic forces, the city has evolved in different ways over the past two centuries. Slow and orderly growth over the second half of the 19th century and early part of the 20th century resulted in diverse neighbourhoods surrounding a vibrant downtown, all structured to facilitate walking. The pattern of rapid growth after World War II reflected the impact of cars and trucks — wide arterials were designed to move both, parking lots dominated shopping centres, and neighbourhoods made plenty of room for vehicles while street patterns discouraged traffic. Land use policy promoted the separation of uses, the result being large tracts of single-purpose development. Today the city exhibits a complex development pattern with distinctive urban, suburban and rural qualities.
Most of Guelph’s assets from an urban design perspective are found in and near the core of the city, which was largely built out before the Second World War. These include the walkable Downtown with its many historic and beautiful buildings, the older neighbourhoods surrounding Downtown, the major rivers and adjacent parkland, and the university campus. Compared to the newer parts of Guelph, the pre-war city is more compact and complex—the mix of housing and integration of uses creates generally “complete” communities. The larger open space and natural heritage system and the surrounding countryside is also an asset that figures prominently in the city’s structure and character.

Beyond the core, land uses are highly segregated. Apartment buildings and townhouse complexes stand apart from neighbourhoods of detached houses. Shopping plazas are separated from neighbourhoods and generally are not distinctive in their architecture and sense of place. Other than parks, there are few civic gathering places. As in so many cities, few of Guelph’s post-war communities have a memorable “sense of place” due to the prevalence of the car and lack of architectural diversity. There is also broad recognition, as evidenced by the Province’s Growth Plan, that the city’s suburban pattern isn’t sustainable. Farmland and natural heritage need to be protected. The reliance on the automobile places an increasingly heavy toll on the environment and necessitates costly infrastructure. And low-density communities that discourage walking contribute to public health issues, such as obesity and social isolation.

The LGMS and Community Energy Plan (CEP) are important steps to creating a more sustainable city, and both documents recognize the role of urban design in implementing their recommendations. The directions in the LGMS will create many opportunities to enhance existing communities and places. Increasing population and employment densities in strategic locations, in fact, will be critical to achieving many of the objectives set out in this plan. The map of “opportunity areas” on page 11, identifies areas where both intensification and urban design improvements should be focused and coordinated.

The Community Energy Plan (CEP) also supports “densification” because it provides more options for energy supply and efficiencies. The CEP’s overarching goals have other implications for the design of existing and new places.
Among the targets in the CEP directly related to urban design are those calling for a reduction in transportation energy use by 25% (partly by reducing vehicle journeys) and the development of district heating networks for higher density areas of the city. Large-scale projects or places are intended to accelerate implementation of the CEP by creating early successes; these could be high density “urban villages”, business parks, new greenfield communities or the university campus.

Because sustainability is fundamental to good urban design, the UDAP’s objectives and actions have been aligned with the LGMS and the CEP, and the implementation of all three should be closely coordinated.

Guelph’s location within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, its historic character, natural features and diverse economy, and its focus on community and the environment all position the city for great things in the decades ahead. As a unique and “green” place with strong urban and rural qualities, it will attract more people and businesses and could become a major tourist destination. The balancing of town and country aspects, while distinguishing the city, will continue to create urban design opportunities and constraints. Intensification should encourage walking and bring more street life to parts of the city. The already excellent transit system will improve and become a more attractive travel option, though most residents will continue to rely on a car for daily trips. Parking lots will remain a necessity, and it will be difficult to calm traffic everywhere. Downtown can be enhanced in ways that respect and celebrate its historic fabric. In newer parts of the city, the marketplace will continue to have a strong influence on architecture, and the vision of mixed-use, village-like community nodes will need to incorporate the stores, services and amenities Guelph citizens seek. The renewed focus on local food production and growing interest in urban agriculture will generate new attitudes and ideas about the ingredients of a healthy community.

The stage is being set for exciting and profound changes to Guelph’s physical environment, from Downtown to its outer edges. The Urban Design Action Plan, by guiding upcoming policy documents and refinements to City processes, will help ensure each change contributes to a more healthy, sustainable, prosperous, beautiful and enjoyable city.
WHAT OTHER PLACES ARE DOING

Many municipalities across Ontario have begun putting more emphasis on urban design in their planning departments, documents and processes. Many of the successful initiatives mentioned below have informed this plan.

The Town of Markham has a “Town Architect”, who manages a team of urban designers and liaises directly with project architects. Development applications are reviewed by multi-disciplinary “area teams” that meet frequently to discuss projects. Developers prepare, and must comply with, architectural control guidelines for large-scale greenfield projects. “Tertiary” plans are used to sort out urban design details not contained in the Official Plan.

The City of Mississauga also has Development Area Teams and an Urban Design Team that together take an interdisciplinary approach to the review of development applications. The annual urban design awards programs was expanded in 2008 to include Favourite Public Spaces.

The City of Hamilton established a Downtown Renewal Division to promote reinvestment in the city’s downtown districts, streamline project approvals and implement the Downtown Secondary Plan. Based on a Downtown Design Strategy, the Secondary Plan, and the one for the adjacent West Harbour area, emphasize the qualities of the public realm and buildings. Streetscape Master Plans have been prepared and are being implemented for several Downtown streets, and Heritage Character Zone Design Guidelines were adopted in 2006.

The City of Ottawa adopted a Downtown Urban Design Strategy in 2004 and has prepared more than a dozen community design plans as well as a comprehensive set of Design and Planning Guidelines for the entire city. A design review panel was established in 2006 to review all development applications in Downtown. Where pre-consultation with the community has not taken place prior to submission of a development application, the ward councillor and community groups are given a “heads up” before the application is circulated. Urban Design and Architectural Conservation awards are given biennially, and a Reference Guide to Creating Great Places and Great Spaces educates the public about urban design.

The City of Kitchener has established financial incentives for heritage conservation, upper-storey renovations and facade improvements. The City is currently working with a developer to realize redevelopment of the City-owned Centre Block, intended to “set a new standard of architecture and urban design.”

In 2004, the City of Windsor adopted an Urban Design Agenda that identifies 35 activities, from developing design guidelines and manuals to installing public realm improvements and educating children.
The City of Kingston has designated its Market Square area as a Heritage Conservation District and has prepared Architectural Guidelines for the Downtown and Harbour Area.

As a pilot project, the City of Toronto has established advisory Design Review Panels for defined precincts in the city. Such a panel was also established by Waterfront Toronto to review proposed developments and public realm improvements on the waterfront. A series of design-based “Avenues Studies” is being prepared to guide the intensification and revitalization of selected arterials and main streets in the city.

Prompted in part by the Province’s Growth Plan, a number of municipalities large and small, including Vaughan, Caledon and Niagara-on-the-Lake, are embracing sustainable community design. Taking a multi-faceted approach, they are beginning to strengthen policies, offer incentives and work with developers to protect heritage and create true mixed-use places in their communities. Generally, municipalities paying more attention to urban design are recognizing a need for focused studies and design-based policies in areas of change, an interdisciplinary approach to project review and strong promotion of good urban design—central themes to this Urban Design Action Plan.

It is not just municipalities that are acting to elevate the design quality of their cities. Developers too, such as FRAM and Tribute, have found that communities which offer housing diversity, a mix of uses, employment opportunities and a high-quality public realm, are realizing a greater return than projected.
THE CITY’S ROLE IN ACHIEVING GOOD URBAN DESIGN

Good urban design requires conscious and coordinated efforts on the part of the public and private sectors, and involves collaboration between the two to maximize the public and private benefits of development. Good urban design adds significant value to a project, a community and the city as a whole; it is in everyone’s interest to work cooperatively. The City’s role must go beyond regulating development and providing infrastructure and community facilities. The UDAP focuses on five responsibilities of the City:

1. Adopting and updating general urban design **policies, standards and guidelines** to guide the preparation and review of plans of subdivision, rezonings, site plans and public infrastructure projects. Official Plan policies are developed, reviewed and refined through the mandatory OP review process; area plans and studies may result in amendments or secondary plans to the OP. Development standards for roads and other public infrastructure, currently being reviewed, are a critical complement to urban design policies and guidelines.

2. Preparing and updating detailed land use and urban design **plans and studies** for significant areas of change to establish a clear vision, urban design policies and guidelines, demonstration projects and implementation strategies.

3. Identifying and implementing strategic public realm and infrastructure **projects**, including road reconstructions, transit terminals, park and open space improvements, cultural and recreation facilities, streetscapes and trails.

4. Conducting transparent and effective review and approval **processes** for development applications and capital projects, integrating disciplines, engaging affected communities and focusing on urban design objectives. The rezoning and site plan review processes, which are often concurrent, provide opportunities to address design issues, and the Ontario Planning Act now permits municipalities to enlarge the scope of site plan control to include a structure’s “exterior character, scale, appearance and sustainable design.”

5. **Promoting** urban design excellence with public projects, graphic communication tools, educational initiatives and incentive programs.
HOW THE ACTION PLAN IS ORGANIZED

The Urban Design Action Plan is divided into two main parts:

**Part 1: Opportunity Areas** focuses on each of the distinct areas in the city with the potential for significant change and also considers city-wide opportunities. The recommended actions in Part 1 address the first three aspects of the City’s role identified on the previous page—the plans, policies and projects that should be developed and implemented. Each section in Part 1 briefly describes the area and the challenges it presents and states the overall urban design opportunity or vision. The recommended objectives and actions for each Opportunity Area are contained in a table. Each table also identifies “Prior Actions”, i.e., those that need to be completed before the listed action should be initiated, as well as the expected outcomes of the action, the general timeframe for implementation, and whether or not the action requires a new allocation in the City’s budget. To assist the City in deciding where to start, the tables highlight “Priority Actions”. It is recommended the City initiate Priority Actions within the next 2 years and, in the case of plans, studies, guidelines and projects, complete them generally within the next 3-5 years.

**Part 2: Institutional Strengthening** focuses on the processes and programs the City should improve or initiate to ensure projects achieve urban design objectives, and generally to build awareness about good urban design. A section on Project Review describes general strategies related to consultation, communication and staff resources, and identifies specific actions that support them. A section on Promotion and Education outlines initiatives the City should pursue to ensure City staff and Guelph citizens are informed about urban design and its importance.

The Action Plan concludes with a table that synthesizes and summarizes the Priority Actions. Appended to the plan are policy directions that support its objectives and should guide recommended amendments to the Official Plan and other planning documents. Until the adoption of such amendments, the policy directions should guide the preparation and review of development proposals in the areas to which they apply.

The Action Plan recommends amendments to Guelph’s Official Plan. In the meantime, the policy directions appended to this document should guide planning in the areas to which they apply.
BASIC PRINCIPLES OF GOOD URBAN DESIGN

Good urban design is fundamental to the creation of enduring, attractive and high-value environments. Such environments are memorable, flexible and can evolve to accommodate changes in use over time. Adaptable and well-designed infrastructure networks, buildings and open spaces result in communities and places that remain viable and well-loved for many generations, supporting civic and economic activity and a high quality of life.

Every city is different, and rules of good urban design should respond to the characteristics, history and culture of the place to which they are applied. There are, however, fundamental principles, demonstrated by the most admired and livable cities around the world, that should guide the design of all urban places and communities. The general principles on the next page, rooted in sustainability, will provide a common point of reference as the City pursues the actions in this plan and should underlie the policies, programs and initiatives that flow from those actions, including the City’s Official Plan.
PRINCIPLES

1. Create communities where there are diverse opportunities for living, working, learning and playing.

2. Build compact communities that use land, energy, water and infrastructure efficiently and encourage walking.

3. Showcase natural attributes as defining features of the city’s character by making them highly visible and accessible.

4. Focus on “place-making”--developing infrastructure, spaces and buildings that are permanent and enduring, memorable and beautiful, adaptable and flexible, and ultimately valued.

5. Conserve and celebrate the city’s cultural and architectural heritage and reuse heritage assets.

6. Create a diversity of inviting and accessible gathering places that promote civic engagement and a full range of social, cultural and economic interaction.

7. Provide and balance choices for mobility--walking, driving, cycling and taking transit.

8. Establish a pattern of interconnected streets and pedestrian networks in which buildings frame and address public spaces.

9. Allow for a range of architectural styles and expressions that bring interest and diversity while responding appropriately to the scale and materiality of the local context.

10. Provide a setting for a variety of lifestyles and rich experiences.
O P P O R T U N I T Y  A R E A S

D R A F T

CITY OF GUELPH
PART 1: OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The map on the facing page illustrates Guelph’s urban structure and identifies “Opportunity Areas”. These areas are expected to see further development and redevelopment in the coming decades as the city grows, in the process realizing important urban design objectives. Other parts of the city, including established industrial areas, “Neighbourhood Nodes” and neighbourhoods themselves will continue to evolve, but the changes will be less significant than in the larger Opportunity Areas.

Part 1 focuses on the following areas: Downtown, Community Nodes, Intensification Corridors, New Communities, Employment Areas, the Guelph Innovation District and the University Campus. The objectives and actions in one or more of these areas will apply in some measure to unplanned greenfield areas and vacant or aging industrial lands, where future land uses are not yet entirely known. In addition to area-specific opportunities, there are a number of city-wide opportunities addressed in the final section of Part 1, including infill development, natural heritage, utilities, public art and trails.
The attractiveness and success of Guelph as a place to live, work and visit depends in large part on the health and vitality of Downtown. While it has seen major improvements recently, such as the River Run Theatre, the Sleeman Centre and New City Hall, parts of Downtown have lost vitality in recent decades as suburban residential and commercial development continued. Yet due to the resilience of John Galt’s original plan for the city, the rich legacy of heritage buildings and a strong business community, Downtown remains one of the city's greatest assets. Because it provides amenities to all Guelph citizens and, as an Urban Growth Centre in the Province’s Growth Plan, is the target for significant population and employment growth, it should be the focus of public and private investments aimed at making it an attractive place to live and work. Downtown’s proximity to the University of Guelph also creates the opportunity for it to become a place for learning, and additional urban design improvements that capitalize on its natural, cultural and architectural assets could spur significant growth in tourism.

Challenges

- Low-density, auto-oriented commercial uses along the southern edge of Downtown
- Several large vacant sites and surface parking lots
- Large industrial and brownfield sites close to the core
- Limited housing options (mostly rental stock)
- Discontinuous riverfront access
- Barrier-effect of the elevated rail corridor
- Heritage buildings in need of reinvestment
- Patchwork pattern of retail areas
- Undistinguished pedestrian realm
- Wide “main streets” (Wyndham, Macdonell) that divide retail strips
- Real and perceived lack of municipal parking facilities
THE OPPORTUNITY

Building upon its many physical assets, create a distinct and complete Downtown that contains thriving commercial streets, a strong employment base, dense and diverse neighbourhoods, a lively 24/7 arts and culture scene, landmark buildings, an accessible riverfront and high-quality open spaces.

The Armoury could house other uses and become a major destination. The Wyndham underpass needs to be improved for pedestrians and cyclists.

Redevelopment and the creation of open spaces in the south end of Downtown would accommodate significant growth and enhance the riverfront.

The architecture Downtown will continue to be eclectic, but tighter controls are needed to ensure the character of heritage buildings is respected.

New built form controls are needed for tall buildings Downtown.
Precedents for Downtown Guelph

Mid-rise housing with ground-floor retail

Sensitive infill development

Intimate open spaces

High-quality sidewalk treatments

Public art
High-quality contemporary architecture

Playful public art

Riverfront path

Shopping for all needs in mixed-use buildings

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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| 1 Significantly increase the population of residents and workers Downtown with thousands of new housing units and new office space | 1 Prepare a Downtown Design Strategy and Secondary Plan that:  
- describes the vision for each distinct character area  
- establishes a public realm framework to guide improvements to open space, streetscapes and transportation infrastructure  
- identifies important catalyzing initiatives and key development sites for residential and employment intensification  
- involves discussions with the University of Guelph and/or other interested institutions toward a plan for establishing an academic and/or administrative presence Downtown  
- potentially includes a strategy for creating a mixed-use cultural destination on the Armoury site  
- establishes a policy framework and detailed guidelines for built form and the public realm  
- a plan and implementation strategy for a mid-block pedestrian link” between the Civic Square and the Baker Street site  
- includes streetscape guidelines for key streets  
- considers bonusing and other policies to promote redevelopment and public space creation  
- includes affordable housing policies  
| 2 Ensure a significant proportion of Downtown housing is affordable to moderate and low income families |  
| 3 Establish additional employment and institutional anchors, including potentially a permanent university presence | 2 Prepare and execute an implementation strategy for redevelopment of the Baker Street site as a demonstration and catalyst project |
| 4 Reinforce retail streets with Wyndham as the spine | 3 Complete Phase 2 of the Downtown Community Improvement Plan that includes such items as:  
- financial incentives for façade improvements, building rehabilitation and redevelopment  
- policies permitting the City to acquire vacant or underused properties for redevelopment |
| 5 Conserve, use and celebrate all significant heritage structures and interpret cultural heritage | 4 Design and build a new Downtown Library |
| 6 Maintain historic neighbourhoods Downtown, including the Neeve Street neighbourhood | 5 Working with landowners and/or developers, prepare master plans for key brownfield and other large redevelopment sites at the edge of Downtown |
| **Heritage** | **LAND USE** |
| **Action currently underway** | **Priority Action**

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<td>7  Provide enhanced outdoor and indoor spaces for cultural, educational and recreational activities</td>
<td>8  Complete the Civic Square in accordance with the approved concept plan, incorporating public art</td>
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<td>8  Develop beautiful and distinctive tree-lined streets</td>
<td>9  Expand and complete the phased program of infrastructure and streetscape improvements, including Wyndham, Norfolk, Wilson and Macdonell and potentially Wellington/Woowich</td>
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<td>9  Reclaim and reconnect the riverfront for public access and enjoyment by Downtown residents and workers and all Guelph citizens</td>
<td>10  Coordinated with plans for upper Wyndham, develop a design concept and budget for improvements to St. George’s Square to create a new identity for this major civic space</td>
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<td>10  Increase public art Downtown</td>
<td>11  Prepare a Riverfront Public Realm Master Plan that addresses access, amenities and public art, and considers the opportunity to establish new permanent or seasonal cultural attractions on the riverfront. The plan should include both sides of the Speed River and the Wellington-Woolwich corridor.</td>
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<td>11  Minimize the presence of surface parking lots while ensuring businesses and institutions have convenient access to parking</td>
<td>12  Taking a team-based, multi-disciplinary approach, build a high-quality, adaptable parking structure on the Wilson Street parking lot</td>
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<td>12  Establish a multi-modal transit hub that includes a commuter rail station</td>
<td>13  Working with the Province and the various transit providers, initiate planning for a “mobility hub” and permanent inter-modal transit station</td>
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<td>13  Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Downtown and to adjoining neighbourhoods</td>
<td>14  Establish and sign a cultural route through Downtown that links to the city’s larger trail system</td>
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Provide enhanced outdoor and indoor spaces for cultural, educational and recreational activities

Develop beautiful and distinctive tree-lined streets

Reclaim and reconnect the riverfront for public access and enjoyment by Downtown residents and workers and all Guelph citizens

Increase public art Downtown

Complete the Civic Square in accordance with the approved concept plan, incorporating public art

Expand and complete the phased program of infrastructure and streetscape improvements, including Wyndham, Norfolk, Wilson and Macdonell and potentially Wellington/Woowich

Coordinated with plans for upper Wyndham, develop a design concept and budget for improvements to St. George's Square to create a new identity for this major civic space

Prepare a Riverfront Public Realm Master Plan that addresses access, amenities and public art, and considers the opportunity to establish new permanent or seasonal cultural attractions on the riverfront. The plan should include both sides of the Speed River and the Wellington-Woolwich corridor.

Minimize the presence of surface parking lots while ensuring businesses and institutions have convenient access to parking

Establish a multi-modal transit hub that includes a commuter rail station

Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout Downtown and to adjoining neighbourhoods

Taking a team-based, multi-disciplinary approach, build a high-quality, adaptable parking structure on the Wilson Street parking lot

Working with the Province and the various transit providers, initiate planning for a “mobility hub” and permanent inter-modal transit station

Establish and sign a cultural route through Downtown that links to the city’s larger trail system

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
The four Community Nodes at the periphery of the city were each intended to contain a range of commercial and residential uses, but to date, following market trends, they have been developed as typical single-storey retail plazas served by large parking lots. While some of them have attractive design elements, overall they are oriented to cars, lack enduring architecture and do not provide a distinctive sense of place nor support the concept of a sustainable mix of uses. Changing the nature of the Community Nodes will require strong urban design and land use policies and a development industry willing to take an alternative approach. It may also require public investments in the form of civic open spaces, institutions or community facilities to complement other uses and attract residential and employment uses. As the nodes evolve into places, they should each acquire a localized name to reinforce their identities.

**Challenges**

- Bulk of available lands currently used for low-density, single-storey retail uses and surface parking.
- Function and design of primary roads generally not conducive to walking and pedestrian-oriented development—no on-street parking to calm or buffer traffic.
- Existing development generally not structured to accommodate intensification due to the large land parcels.
- Active public uses (e.g., parks, community and recreation centres, libraries) generally not integral or well-connected to existing development.
- Currently very little or no apparent demand for higher-density housing and offices in existing nodes.
- Consumer demand and the nature of the development market in Guelph makes achieving design excellence and getting developments to adopt alternative standards a challenge in new development areas.
THE OPPORTUNITY

Transform, over time, the city’s four major Community Nodes into distinct “urban villages”—mixed-use, transit and pedestrian oriented places that provide focal points for civic life, higher-density housing, office and retail employment, and live-work opportunities.

There are basic amenities for pedestrians and cyclists in the emerging South Community Node, but it’s not easy to walk or cycle there from nearby neighbourhoods.

Large community centres on peripheral sites in Community Nodes should have strong pedestrian connections to the hub of retail activity and transit. Smaller community centres can be integrated with other uses in a more central location.
Precedents and Principles for Community Nodes

Pedestrian-oriented retail with parking lots at the rear or side of buildings

Housing above or behind stores

Generous sidewalks for walking, seating, displays and trees

Mixed-use buildings and transit-supportive density
Plaza framed by active uses

Main street shopping experience and on-street parking

Distinctive architecture and high-quality materials

Civic space for passive enjoyment and beauty

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
<table>
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<tr>
<td>1 Include residential and office uses as well as live-work opportunities in the remaining phases of development in the four Community Nodes</td>
<td>1 Guided by the policy directions appended to this document, amend the Official Plan to clarify the intended function and form of Community Nodes within the city’s urban structure and include general urban design policies for the nodes consistent with the goal of creating urban villages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2 Develop, where possible, a grid-like network of streets, built to municipal standards, that provide a framework for intensification and encourage walking and cycling to and from the Community Nodes | 2 Working with landowners and residents, prepare and adopt a new Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines for the East Community Node that results in:  
  • a structure plan  
  • policies and guidelines regarding density, built form and the public realm  
  • demonstration plans illustrating the vision  
  • a traffic calming plan |
<p>| 3 Establish an attractive, usable central open space and other public spaces in each community node | 3 Establish convenient transit hubs in the South and West Community Nodes that includes shelter, seating, transit information, signage, bicycle parking and appropriate lighting |
| 4 Link Community Nodes to nearby green spaces with visible trails | 4 Working with landowners and residents, prepare and adopt a new Secondary Plan and Urban Design Guidelines for the South Community Node, in the process developing a concept and implementation plan for a major civic open space, recreation facility and transit hub |
| 5 Define a distinct character for each node through architecture and the design of streetscapes and open spaces | 5 In conjunction with future development, implement a major civic space and other public improvements in the South Node. |
| 6 Integrate transit infrastructure with other development in convenient locations within each node | 6 Revise the urban design guidelines that apply to the North and West Community Nodes, reflecting and augmenting the recommended policies appended to this document |</p>
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<th>PRIOR ACTIONS REQUIRED</th>
<th>URBAN DESIGN PLAN</th>
<th>POLICIES</th>
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As Guelph grew in the latter half of the 20th century, commercial development naturally located itself along primary roads. Six of these corridors—Gordon Street, Woolwich Street, Eramosa Road, Silvercreek Parkway, Stone Road and York Road—have a variety of low-density commercial uses serving surrounding communities. Functionally, these are not unlike the existing Community Nodes, but generally they are older and therefore have the potential for redevelopment or infill development in the not-too-distant future. Being a regional shopping destination that has seen growth and reinvestment recently, the Stone Road corridor is unique among the five; the mall and the proximity of the university campus and research park have the potential to attract significant residential infill development. Gordon Street, the historic “highway into town” from the south, is different again; while retaining some of its natural and cultural heritage, it is gradually being urbanized and can accommodate significantly more intensification.

To further encourage “reurbanization” in these six Intensification Corridors and ensure it occurs in the context of a holistic vision for each corridor, it will be necessary to review them and develop new land use and urban design policies. In addition to describing the appropriate character for each corridor, the new policies should also prescribe how the roads will be made safer and attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. These are also important “mobility corridors” that will continue to see significant car and truck traffic but need to be designed to encourage transit use, walking and cycling. In the case of Gordon and Woolwich, in particular, the image of Intensification Corridors to Guelph visitors must also be an important consideration.
THE OPPORTUNITY

Accommodate growth, contribute to more efficient and complete communities, enhance mobility and improve the visitor experience through intensification, placemaking and streetscape improvements along main transit corridors and important approach routes to the core of the city.

Challenges

- The primary approach corridors into the city contain a range of land uses and each has varied character with some combination of rural, natural, industrial, suburban residential, strip commercial, urban residential and campus
- Reverse lot frontage conditions along some corridors makes it very difficult to intensify and create transit and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes
- Currently, most arterial and collector roads are designed primarily to facilitate automobile traffic and do not encourage walking and cycling
- Lot sizes and land ownership patterns may make consolidation and coordinated intensification difficult

Guelph’s main arterial corridors hold tremendous potential for intensification that promotes walking, cycling and transit use.
Precedents and Principles for Intensification Corridors

Live-work opportunities

Distinctive, articulated buildings addressing the street

Housing diversity, including townhouses

Wide sidewalks and green street edges
Transit-supportive densities achievable through different forms of housing

Pedestrian-oriented retail with parking at the rear

Active uses framing small open spaces

Mid-rise mixed-use buildings on central sites

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
<table>
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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Add medium and higher density housing, and pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development, in appropriate locations in Intensification Corridors</td>
<td>1 Guided by the policy directions appended to this document, amend the Official Plan to clarify the intended function and characteristics of Intensification Corridors within the city’s urban structure and include general urban design policies. Intensification Corridors should be designated Community Improvement Project Areas to enable the development of a Community Improvement Plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Reinforce and revitalize established neighbourhood commercial centres or nodes</td>
<td>2 Prepare a corridor plan and guidelines for York Road to guide redevelopment and intensification in the corridor and detailed design of streetscape improvements. The plan should augment the recent environmental assessment for the corridor and integrate with the future secondary plan for the Guelph Innovation District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Provide enhanced sidewalks and cycling facilities for comfort and safety along Intensification Corridors and other primary mobility corridors</td>
<td>3 Prepare a corridor plan and guidelines for Gordon Street to guide redevelopment and intensification in the corridor and improvements in the right-of-way. The plan should acknowledge and seek to maintain the varying character of Gordon—natural, rural, “new urban”, neighbourhood, campus, “historic urban”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ensure Intensification Corridors continue to accommodate goods movement, where necessary</td>
<td>4 Prepare and implement a phased program of streetscape improvements for all Intensification Corridors. While enhancing connectivity and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists and maintaining a consistent quality, the improvements should respond to the varying character of each corridor. They generally should include the items listed in Action 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Physically and visually link the different land use and character areas along the primary routes in the city</td>
<td>5 Prepare a Community Improvement Plan for Community Corridors that identifies those corridors that are priorities for reinvestment and considers financial incentives for redevelopment, such as tax increment equivalency grants (TIEGs), application fee waivers and development charge waivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Maintain and celebrate significant heritage features along Intensification Corridors</td>
<td>6 Establish a working group comprised of staff from the City, Wellington County and the interregional transit, transportation and trail authorities to meet regularly to review and coordinate land use, urban design and transportation initiatives affecting mobility corridors</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 Prepare urban design strategies and streetscape guidelines for Woolwich, Wellington and Eramosa</td>
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There are two potential communities still to be planned in Guelph, one in the south end of the city, between Clair Road and Maltby Road, and the second in the Guelph Innovation District. Established but not fully built-out communities, however, will continue to expand, and new neighbourhoods will be created on large vacant or under-utilized sites within the city through intensification and redevelopment. This section applies to those lands and sites intended primarily for new housing.

The healthiest communities are those that enable and encourage all residents to walk to schools, parks and shops; accommodate a mix of housing types, employment and live-work opportunities; and offer variety and beauty in their architecture, open spaces and natural heritage areas. Much of Guelph’s residential development over the past several decades is automobile-oriented and separated from commercial and employment areas, and limits the visibility of public open spaces. New and growing communities in the city should provide housing variety and some employment opportunities, increase the presence of parks and natural areas, and reinforce a sense of identity, all while supporting movement by transit, pedestrians, cyclists, cars and service vehicles. From an environmental perspective, they should demonstrate “low impact development”.

**Challenges**

- Location, size and configuration of potential sites may make it difficult to integrate them into new communities and established areas
- Developers and homebuyers are accustomed to traditional suburban neighbourhoods—changing the pre-conception of a desirable community may take time
- There may be resistance to new urban design standards and features
- Alternative development standards may affect the operations of municipal services
- The shift to larger schools necessitates more bussing and makes it more difficult to plan, design and maintain neighbourhood schools
- There are significant environmentally sensitive areas that will need to be protected
THE OPPORTUNITY

Create new neighbourhoods on greenfield, brownfield and vacant commercial sites that contain a mix of housing types and employment opportunities, contribute to complete, walkable communities, protect natural and cultural heritage, and support the goals of the Community Energy Plan.

Cars, driveways, garages and an excessively wide street dominate this neighbourhood on Elmira Road.

Stormwater management facilities and natural heritage should be integrated into the design of a community.

Preserving and respecting cultural heritage is one way to give communities a distinct identity.
Precedents and Principles for New Communities

Public edge along natural heritage areas and parks

Pedestrian-oriented housing and parks

“Corner stores” and other amenities within walking distance

Linear open spaces for connectivity and amenity
Special architectural treatments on corner sites

Rear garages with accessory units above

Low-rise apartment buildings

Architectural variety

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
### Objectives

1. Create residential communities that encourage walking and cycling and display architectural and public realm variety
2. Establish and reinforce Community Nodes, neighbourhood centres/nodes and “main streets” as foci for commercial amenities, employment opportunities, civic spaces, community services and public transit
3. Ensure most new residents live within a 5-minute walk of a park and a store that sells basic foods
4. Provide a range of housing types and tenures in each community for a range of household types and incomes
5. Integrate significant existing natural features into the design of new communities and provide residents easy access to natural areas in and adjacent to their community
6. Minimize the adverse effects of new communities on natural systems through low impact development
7. At the edges of the city, generally maintain a gradual transition in form and density from urban development to surrounding countryside
8. Integrate opportunities for urban agriculture in the planning and design of public and private open spaces

### Actions

1. Complete the study of alternative development standards and adopt the recommended standards
2. Amend the Official Plan to include new general “sustainable community design” policies for new communities, guided by the policy directions appended to this document
3. Working with landowners, identify and plan a site for a pilot project that demonstrates the new sustainable community design policies
4. Prepare a detailed community design and Secondary Plan for the Clair-Maltby lands

*Action currently underway*  
*Priority Action*
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1. Complete the study of alternative development standards and adopt the recommended standards.
2. Amend the Official Plan to include new general “sustainable community design” policies for new communities, guided by the policy directions appended to this document.
3. Working with landowners, identify and plan a site for a pilot project that demonstrates the new sustainable community design policies.
4. Prepare a detailed community design and Secondary Plan for the Clair-Maltby lands.
5. Integrate significant existing natural features into the design of new communities and provide residents easy access to natural areas in and adjacent to their community.
6. Minimize the adverse effects of new communities on natural systems through low impact development.
7. At the edges of the city, generally maintain a gradual transition in form and density from urban development to surrounding countryside.
8. Integrate opportunities for urban agriculture in the planning and design of public and private open spaces.

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
As Guelph’s population and economy grow, its primarily industrial employment areas will grow and evolve. The city should be prepared to accommodate a range of employment types occupying a variety of building types, from small office buildings to large warehouses. In addition to Employment Areas, office buildings should be located Downtown, in Community Nodes and along Intensification Corridors, where office workers can support and benefit from commercial activity and public transit. Employment Areas are most appropriate for industrial uses that need large sites and separation from neighbourhoods. With Guelph’s major industrial areas located at gateways to the city, more attention should be paid to their image. As the Community Energy Plan notes, “business parks” are prime candidates for large-scale sustainability measures, such as district heating. A greater focus on sustainable industrial development should also make Guelph a more attractive place to invest and work.

The Guelph Innovation District, straddling the Eramosa River east of Victoria Road, is currently being studied and planned as a complete community focusing on future employment but distinctly different from other employment areas in Guelph in terms of its range of uses, form and character. Clearly the lands present a remarkable opportunity to set a new standard for sustainable urban design.

Challenges

• Adjacent natural areas do not currently figure prominently in the image of existing business parks and industrial areas

• Truck operations, automobile reliance and the prevalence of surface parking can have adverse impacts on the environment through air pollution, noise and stormwater run-off

• Competitive regional real estate market makes it difficult to attract prestige employment uses and enforce high design standards

• Disparate types of employers and facilities make it difficult to establish and enforce consistent urban design standards

• Lack of pedestrian and cycling access and transit service to business parks
THE OPPORTUNITY

Enhance existing and new employment areas by capitalizing on and protecting the natural settings and creating consistent and attractive streetscapes.

The image of a business park is much improved when parking is located at the side or rear of buildings.

The Guelph Innovation District has the potential to become a model for sustainable development.
Precedents and Principles for Industrial Areas

Stormwater management facilities incorporated in landscape design

Articulated buildings with high-quality materials

Distinctive architecture

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
Well designed employee amenity areas

Buildings fronting pedestrian-oriented streets

Landscaped parking lots that provide shade and permit water infiltration

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
<table>
<thead>
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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1  Intensify existing employment areas</td>
<td>1  Working with the Province, complete a detailed secondary plan and implementation strategy for the Guelph Innovation District that demonstrates the highest standards of environmental stewardship, energy and water efficiency, and urban design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  Separate stand-alone office and light industrial uses from heavy industrial uses</td>
<td>2  Guided by the policy directions appended to this document, amend the Official Plan to include general urban design policies for existing and new employment areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  Portray a positive image of employment areas from adjacent primary routes, emphasizing landscape and architectural features</td>
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<td>4  Establish a consistent streetscape quality in each distinct employment area</td>
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<td>5  Provide a range of amenities for workers within or close to employment areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>6  Protect environmental areas adjacent to employment areas</td>
<td>3  Develop and implement a phased landscaping program for key gateways to existing industrial areas, aligning the program with streetscape guidelines for York Road and the Hanlon Expressway</td>
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<tr>
<td>7  Minimize the adverse effects of new industrial uses on natural systems through low impact development</td>
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<td>8  Ensure employment areas are well connected to the city’s transit and cycling networks</td>
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Legend:
- Light blue: Action currently underway
- Yellow: Priority Action
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1. Intensify existing employment areas
2. Separate stand-alone office and light industrial uses from heavy industrial uses
3. Portray a positive image of employment areas from adjacent primary routes, emphasizing landscape and architectural features
4. Establish a consistent streetscape quality in each distinct employment area
5. Provide a range of amenities for workers within or close to employment areas
6. Protect environmental areas adjacent to employment areas
7. Minimize the adverse effects of new industrial uses on natural systems through low impact development
8. Ensure employment areas are well connected to the city's transit and cycling networks

Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
The University of Guelph has a central role in the city — physically, culturally and economically — as recognized in the university’s 2002 campus master plan. As the city and the campus evolve, the latter’s place in the city should be emphasized and the visual and physical connections between the two should be reinforced.

**Challenges**

- Improvements to the public realm may be difficult for the university to fund
- Aligning public and campus streets and paths to encourage public access to and through the campus
- Balancing academic priorities and campus master plan principles
- Traffic on Gordon Street splits the campus, posing a barrier to pedestrians and cyclists
THE OPPORTUNITY

Highlight gateways to the campus and enhance its edges with improved pathway linkages, landscaping, streetscaping and strategic developments.

The City and the University should collaborate on an implementation strategy to transform Gordon Street through the campus into a distinct, unifying public space.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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| 1 Maintain architecturally and culturally significant heritage buildings on the campus | 1 Continue to have regular meetings between City and University planning staff to discuss new and ongoing projects and generally ensure campus development supports the City’s broad urban design objectives. Strategies to be discussed and jointly pursued through these meetings should include:  
  • identification, protection and maintenance of heritage buildings and landscapes on the campus  
  • landscape initiatives at the edges and gateways to campus  
  • identifying pedestrian and cycling routes through campus for general public use  
  • updating the campus master plan |
| 2 Maintain a high quality of new architecture and landscape architecture on the campus | 2 With the university, refine and implement the master plan design concept for the Gordon Street streetscape through the campus |
| 3 Establish attractive and consistent streetscapes within and bordering the campus |  |
| 4 Reinforce a distinct character and pedestrian-friendly environment for Gordon Street through the campus, enhancing its role as a gateway and a seam linking uses and spaces on both sides |  |
| 5 Enhance connections to and through the campus for pedestrians and cyclists |  |
| 6 Ensure uses and built form at the edges of campus are compatible with adjacent neighbourhoods, other development and natural features |  |
## OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain architecturally and culturally significant heritage buildings on the campus
2. Maintain a high quality of new architecture and landscape architecture on the campus
3. Establish attractive and consistent streetscapes within and bordering the campus
4. Reinforce a distinct character and pedestrian-friendly environment for Gordon Street through the campus, enhancing its role as a gateway and a seam linking uses and spaces on both sides
5. Enhance connections to and through the campus for pedestrians and cyclists
6. Ensure uses and built form at the edges of campus are compatible with adjacent neighbourhoods, other development and natural features

## ACTIONS

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Adopted by Council on May 4, 2009
This section focuses on important elements of urban design that are not confined to just one part of the city but are found or threaded throughout, presenting discrete challenges and opportunities.

NEIGHBOURHOOD INFILL

As Guelph’s neighbourhoods age, they will inevitably change—socially and physically. Much of the new development that will occur in and adjacent to established neighbourhoods will bring new types of housing, some at higher densities than previous or surrounding development. This kind of change can be healthy for a community when it renews decaying buildings, expands housing options or otherwise improves the quality of a neighbourhood. It will also help the City achieve the objectives of its Local Growth Management Strategy. One of the major challenges the City is likely to face in the years ahead will be integrating new “infill” development within existing neighbourhoods. Some of these areas are potential heritage districts, and others, while not historic, have distinct character. Many neighbourhoods have not seen substantial change since their initial development. These factors will require the City and developers to be more proactive about planning infill. Adopting clear policies, zoning and guidelines and engaging communities before applications are made will ensure infill projects are positive neighbourhood additions that support growth targets and help create more complete communities. In strategic areas, where redevelopment, renewal and intensification would clearly enhance a community, sites should be “pre-zoned” to encourage compatible infill projects.

Challenges

- Local resistance to neighbourhood change
- Generality of current policies and lack of specific plans for neighbourhoods in transition
- City resources required to process infill applications
- Potential for lengthy, costly approval process discourages developer investment

THE OPPORTUNITY: Use infill development to enhance the quality and liveability of existing neighbourhoods and help manage growth sustainably.
NATURAL HERITAGE AND TREES

Guelph’s river and creek corridors and other natural heritage features are integral to its urban design. As the city grows, they must be monitored, protected and, wherever practical, enhanced. Except in highly sensitive areas, trails through or along natural heritage lands should be provided.

The value of trees to a city, not just in natural heritage areas but everywhere, cannot be overestimated. Increasing urbanization and climate change necessitates closer monitoring of tree health and maintenance. Besides protecting existing mature trees, planting more trees on public land is one of the most cost-effective investments the City can make to improve its urban design.

THE OPPORTUNITY: Enhance the presence and accessibility of the city’s natural heritage assets, and use trees to define the image of neighbourhoods, streets and parks.
UTILITIES AND LIGHTING

As essential as they are, hydro lines, utility boxes and other above-ground utility infrastructure can diminish the attractiveness of a street or neighbourhood. The City should develop a long-term strategy with Guelph Hydro to bury hydro lines along main roads where they are currently above ground. In preparing area-specific plans and design guidelines, the City should work with all utility providers to include policies and guidelines aimed at minimizing the impact of utility infrastructure on the public realm.

Effective lighting is critical to one’s feeling of safety and comfort in a city, and lighting techniques are an important element in the design of the public realm. However, excessive or inefficient lighting is often unwelcome and wastes energy.

PUBLIC ART

Guelph celebrates the arts and culture with festivals, performances and other events but for the most part does not prominently display public art in the built environment of the city, notwithstanding commemorative statues. Public art, incorporated into buildings, infrastructure or landscapes, contributes to interesting and memorable places, often providing moments of serendipity for residents and visitors alike. To achieve more public art, the City needs to lead the way with policies, incentives and possibly grants, all implemented and coordinated on an ongoing basis.

THE HANLON EXPRESSWAY

The Hanlon is the main road into Guelph and provides the first impression of the city for most visitors arriving by car. With the city’s major industrial areas at both ends, it is also a vital goods movement corridor. The landscape along the Hanlon varies, and most urban development backs onto to it. As more intersections become grade-separated, it will become a true expressway. With a long-term landscaping program in place, it could also become a “parkway” that reinforces Guelph’s attachment to its natural heritage.

TRAILS

Designated trails for walking, jogging, in-line skating and cycling through parks, natural areas and other open spaces are important recreational assets and transportation routes. They are also essential to experiencing the richness of places within a city. Guelph has an extensive trail network and a master plan for how it should grow and be improved. As a measure of sustainability and improved urban design, the City should set and monitor annual targets for the lengths of new off-road trails and on-street bicycle lanes to be built.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood Infill</strong></td>
<td>1. Update the Official Plan to encourage sensitive infill</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| • Develop vacant or underutilized sites within established areas in ways that support the City’s growth management and urban design objectives  
• Ensure infill development is sensitive to its context and enhances the quality of the neighbourhood | 2. Amend the development application process to require owners and potential developers of infill sites to consult with the surrounding community prior to making an application |
| 3. Undertake Heritage Conservation District Studies for four priority areas outside Downtown--Brooklyn College, Oxford Glasgow, The Ward and St. George’s’s | 4. Complete an infill design study that:  
• examines areas outside of the Downtown and Community Nodes where redevelopment and intensification is encouraged  
• results in general urban design guidelines for infill development that address such issues as building typologies, height, massing, setbacks, coverage, angular planes, mid-block connections, parking and lighting |
| 5. Review and update the Zoning By-law for the city’s older residential areas and neighbourhood centres to permit minor infill projects, ensuring compatibility with surrounding development | |
| **Natural Heritage and Trees** | 6. Complete the Natural Heritage Strategy and update the City’s natural heritage mapping and policies accordingly |
| • Increase the current proportion of natural heritage lands as the city grows  
• Expand and improve the trail network within the natural heritage system, enhancing linkages with other movement systems and the usability of key linkages year-round  
• Annually increase the city’s tree cover | 7. Prepare an Urban Forestry Plan that includes an inventory and implementation strategy with annual targets for new tree plantings and forest cover |
<p>| 8. Review and update tree guidelines for right-of-ways to ensure they reflect current best practices for sustaining street trees | 9. Refine the Tree Protection By-law to strengthen controls on the removal of mature trees on private land |</p>
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<th>PRIOR ACTIONS REQUIRED</th>
<th>URBAN DESIGN PLAN</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>TARGET DATES</th>
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| **Utilities and Lighting** | • Reduce the presence of hydro lines along the city’s main roads  
• Ensure adequate lighting along streets and other public spaces for safety  
• Reduce light pollution |
| | 10 Develop, with Guelph Hydro, a strategy for burying hydro lines along Gordon Street, Wyndham Street and York Road  
11 Develop lighting policies in the Official Plan and guidelines that support broad public realm objectives and the goals of the Community Energy Plan |
| **Public Art** | • Steadily increase the number of public art installations in open spaces and infrastructure, focusing on Downtown, the riverfront, major parks and gateways to the city |
| | 12 In the Official Plan, identify appropriate locations for public art and adopt policies that encourage public art and recognize it as a community benefit for which extra height and/or density may be permitted  
13 Develop a public art program that annually selects a site and an artist, and awards a grant, for a new installation |
| **Hanlon Expressway** | • Transform the Hanlon Expressway into a green highway lined with trees and naturalized landscaping |
| | 14 Rename the Hanlon Expressway the Hanlon Parkway  
15 Working with the MTO and adjacent landowners, develop a Hanlon Parkway Beautification Program that coordinates landscaping projects with capital improvements, identifies annual City initiatives, and encourages landowners to plant native trees along the edge of the parkway |
| **Trails** | • Steadily expand the network of off-road trails and on-street bicycle lanes in accordance with the City’s Trails Master Plan |
| | 16 Establish and monitor annual targets for kilometres of new off-road trails and on-street bicycle lanes  
17 Identify a route and implementation plan for a mostly off-road “Creek-to-Lake Trail” linking the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area to Guelph Lake |
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Utilities and Lighting

• Reduce the presence of hydro lines along the city's main roads
• Ensure adequate lighting along streets and other public spaces for safety
• Reduce light pollution

10 Develop, with Guelph Hydro, a strategy for burying hydro lines along Gordon Street, Wyndham Street and York Road

None

√ √

2011 TBD Required

11 Develop lighting policies in the Official Plan and guidelines that support broad public realm objectives and the goals of the Community Energy Plan

None

√ √

2009 2009 Not required

Public Art

• Steadily increase the number of public art installations in open spaces and infrastructure, focusing on Downtown, the riverfront, major parks and gateways to the city

12 In the Official Plan, identify appropriate locations for public art and adopt policies that encourage public art and recognize it as a community benefit for which extra height and/or density may be permitted

None

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2009 2009 Not required

13 Develop a public art program that annually selects a site and an artist, and awards a grant, for a new installation

None

√

2011 ongoing Required

Hanlon Expressway

• Transform the Hanlon Expressway into a green highway lined with trees and naturalized landscaping

14 Rename the Hanlon Expressway the Hanlon Parkway

None

√

2011 2011 Not required

15 Working with the MTO and adjacent landowners, develop a Hanlon Parkway Beautification Program that coordinates landscaping projects with capital improvements, identifies annual City initiatives, and encourages landowners to plant native trees along the edge of the parkway

None

√ √

2012 2013 Required

Trails

• Steadily expand the network of off-road trails and on-street bicycle lanes in accordance with the City’s Trails Master Plan

16 Establish and monitor annual targets for kilometres of new off-road trails and on-street bicycle lanes

None

√

2010 ongoing Not required

17 Identify a route and implementation plan for a mostly off-road “Creek-to-Lake Trail” linking the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area to Guelph Lake

None

√

2010 2011 Not required
PART 2: INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

Part 2 of the Action Plan focuses on how the processes the City uses to review and approve development applications and major public projects can be improved to ensure projects achieve urban design objectives. It also identifies strategies and actions aimed at broadly promoting good urban design.
Successful urban design relies on collaboration within the City and with communities and developers. In order for public-private relationships to be effective there must first be collaboration among the various disciplines involved in planning and design on all sides. This section of the Action Plan outlines procedures, processes and organizational changes the City should pursue to promote a culture of collaboration and ensure planning decisions support local and city-wide urban design objectives.

### OBJECTIVES

1. Engage Guelph citizens in plans for significant change in their community
2. Maintain clearly defined, transparent and efficient review processes for developments and capital projects
3. Ensure urban design is integral to planning and development processes and decision-making
4. Maintain a collaborative, interdisciplinary and enjoyable planning environment at the City
STRATEGY: WORK CLOSELY WITH COMMUNITIES UNDERGOING CHANGE

As Guelph grows within its built-up areas, working with communities will be critical to the success of individual projects and the larger goals of city-building and place-making. Where major sites, entire neighbourhoods or larger areas are expected to undergo significant or incremental change, studies should be undertaken, ideally before development applications are submitted, to develop a shared vision and urban design guidelines. Community groups should have an integral role in these studies, some of which have been identified in the previous sections. A common vision that clearly articulates parameters for development and community improvements will provide certainty to residents, businesses and developers about the changes that are appropriate, acceptable and desired.

When an application for redevelopment or intensification is being considered, the proponent should be required to consult with the local community prior to finalizing the initial proposal. By involving and fully informing communities early in the planning process, conflicts that delay approval or lead to unsatisfactory outcomes can be avoided.

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<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Budget Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Establish regular meetings involving senior CDDS staff and individual ward councillors to review and discuss active development proposals and applications and local planning issues</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Based on the Public Engagement Process Review involving Council, establish a pre-application process for significant developments and define the appropriate roles of staff and councillors at each stage in the consultation process</td>
<td>2009</td>
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STRATEGY: REQUIRE AND CREATE NEW COMMUNICATION TOOLS TO ILLUSTRATE HOW PROPOSED PROJECTS FIT WITHIN AND CONTRIBUTE TO A BROADER VISION

As development increasingly occurs within the city’s built-up areas, it will be important to understand and communicate the physical impacts it will have on surrounding areas. Significant proposed projects, both private and public, should be illustrated by an array of drawing types—site plans, ground floor plans, rendered landscape plans, elevations, sections—as typically required by development applications in Guelph. In addition to a detailed site plan, a general site plan within a plan of the larger area, i.e., a context plan, should be provided, and neighbouring buildings, streets and open spaces, existing or planned, should be included in elevation and section drawings.

In many cases, particularly where height, massing, transition and views are critical issues, the City should also require the submission and presentation of physical or computer models and realistically rendered perspective drawings. Where planning for large areas of the city is initiated, the City should create working models to inform decisions around built form and illustrate the broad vision for the area, as has been done for Downtown. As resources become available, digital models for such areas should also be built, within which proposed projects can be inserted and evaluated.

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<tr>
<td>3 Amend the City’s development application submission requirements to include:</td>
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<td>• conceptual site plans with all rezoning applications</td>
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<td>• context plan, elevation and section drawings with applications for reurbanization (i.e., infill and redevelopments)</td>
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<td>• a three-dimensional computer-generated model for major projects</td>
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<td>4 Prepare a digital model of Downtown that reflects existing conditions and the current vision to aid the communication of design guidelines and review proposed projects</td>
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<td>5 Prepare digital models of the Community Nodes to aid in developing new visions, policies and guidelines and to test development proposals</td>
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<td>6 Commit resources to developing and maintaining a digital model of the entire city for reviewing and presenting proposed development</td>
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STRATEGY: SUBMIT MAJOR DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TO A RIGOROUS URBAN DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Bolstering urban design resources and further integrating planning teams should result in more efficient and effective application review processes. The area teams should also be involved in the formulation and review of significant capital projects by the public sector, be they infrastructure, buildings or parks, since public projects have a significant and lasting impact on the physical quality of a city. Generally, such projects should follow a typical site plan review process and, when not initiated by a planning team, should be shared with the appropriate team in the concept phase, before much investment has been made in design and engineering. This should prevent projects being sent back to the drawing board late in the review process.

It has been demonstrated in many cities that also subjecting major developments, both public and private, to review by a panel of planning and design professionals benefits the project and the city as a whole. Urban design review panels bring a fresh, objective perspective informed by the panel members’ broad experience. Ontario municipalities have the authority to establish such panels as advisory bodies, and Guelph should act on this. An urban design review panel will effectively expand the collaboration that occurs on important and complex projects, where there is much to consider before determining the best design approach and solution. The City will need to define the mandate and make-up of the review panel and the process by which it will provide its advice. The work of the panel would need to be guided by clear policies and plans adopted by Council for the subject area. Generally, the panels are comprised of local and non-local professionals in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning. The panel may function much like Heritage Guelph. It will be important for staff to carefully manage the process to ensure the panel’s recommendations are consistent with City policy and to maintain a transparent and streamlined review process for site plans and capital projects.

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<td>7 Refine the review process for major public-sector capital projects, making it more consistent with the site plan approval process</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Define the mandate, membership and process for a pilot advisory urban design review panel responsible for reviewing and making recommendations regarding major projects</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Establish as a pilot project an urban design review panel for major projects</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRATEGY: FOSTER A MORE INTEGRATED, TEAM-BASED APPROACH TO AREA PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT REVIEW AND PROJECT COORDINATION

The Community Design and Development Services department brings together staff from different disciplines, all heavily involved in planning, and facilitates a multi-disciplinary approach to planning studies and development review. Functional teams have been created to facilitate information sharing and collaboration. The next step the City should explore is evolving these teams into flexible, cross-disciplinary planning teams with responsibility for ongoing planning within defined areas of the city. Initially, for example, there may be a South Team to cover the city below the Eramosa River and Speed River, a North Team to cover the remainder of the city, excluding Downtown, and a Downtown Team.

The teams would be managed by a senior planner and include a development planner, urban designer, transportation planner, public works engineer, environmental planner, zoning reviewer and community services planner. Some staff may be on more than one team. As necessary, the teams will need to be augmented by representatives from Emergency Services, Economic Development, Corporate Property, the School Board, Guelph Hydro, the Grand River Conservation Authority and other agencies.

The teams should foster frequent collaboration among all disciplines and interests within the City on matters of land use planning and development. The teams would meet bi-weekly to discuss development applications and other initiatives. The normal process of circulating applications to individual departments for comments would continue; the regular meetings would provide an opportunity to coordinate comments and clarify and resolve issues. The teams would also be responsible for local planning studies, while larger policy and urban design studies would be led by the City’s policy planners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Budget Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Evolve existing functional teams into flexible, multi-disciplinary planning teams with responsibility for ongoing planning within defined areas of the city and establish bi-weekly team meetings to discuss development applications and other planning initiatives</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Priority Action
STRATEGY: REINFORCE THE ROLE OF URBAN DESIGN WITHIN COMMUNITY DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

To comprehensively address the growing issues and opportunities related to urban design, from policy development to project review and implementation, an urban design team is required within CDDS. The City’s new Urban Design Programme Manager will spearhead and coordinate many of the initiatives in the Urban Design Action Plan, but additional staff will be required. Other responsibilities of the team will include managing the urban design review panel, City-sponsored design competitions and promotional programs.

Taking advantage of opportunities in the new City Hall to create spaces for collaboration, the City should consider creating an urban design “studio” within CDDS, which involves little more than providing a large table where project materials can be displayed, reviewed and discussed. Such a space would encourage creative collaborations within the urban design team but also could draw other planning staff into discussions about urban design.

More urban design resources, improved integration of planning teams, updated area plans and guidelines, and an urban design review panel together should ensure the processes of reviewing development applications and major public works are transparent and effective. With more focus on urban design at the professional level within the City and greater community consultation, City Council can focus on the critical task of establishing policies and priorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Budget Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Allocated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Increase the number of urban designers in CDDS, providing the resources necessary to implement the Priority Actions in this plan

12. Design CDDS’s office space to encourage casual interaction among all staff, particularly managers, and to display plans and models of proposed projects as well as examples of good urban design
As the City directs development and place-making in Guelph, it also has an important and multi-faceted role to play in promoting good urban design. This section outlines five general initiatives aimed at achieving the following objectives.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Increase the number of small-scale, community-based initiatives that enhance the design of neighbourhoods and the city
2. Increase awareness among developers and the public of the importance and value of good urban design
3. Make Guelph citizens even more proud of their city

**GRANT AND LOAN PROGRAMS**

Strategy: Develop grant and loan programs under Community Improvement Plans to encourage site remediation, facade improvements and building retro-fits, and through Community Services make grants available for neighbourhood beautification, park improvements and public art.

**URBAN DESIGN AWARDS**

Strategy: Enhance the biennial urban design awards program established in 2006 by creating additional categories, revising the jury selection process and holding a awards night gala.
SYMPOSIA AND LECTURES
Strategy: Initiate an annual public symposium or lecture, inviting well-known figures to speak on a topic relevant to urban planning and design.

YOUTH OUTREACH AND EDUCATION
Strategy: Develop educational programs on urban design and the city’s historical evolution that staff can deliver in schools.

CITY HALL DISPLAYS
Strategy: Use the ground floor of City Hall to promote successful projects and provide information about urban design initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Budget Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Develop and implement an “Urban Design 101” course for all CDDS and other interested staff and councillors</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Enhance the biennial urban design awards program by adding open space and community initiative categories, creating separate infill and conservation/adaptive reuse categories, and holding a more public awards night celebration that includes a public lecture</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2008 YOUTH CHARRETTE
SUMMARY OF PRIORITY ACTIONS

This final section of the Urban Design Action Plan synthesizes and summarizes Priority Actions identified in the previous sections. It is recommended that these actions all be initiated in the next two years. The Priority Actions have been categorized according to the City’s multiple urban design roles to emphasize the need for a balanced approach to the plan’s objectives. Many of the actions will have implications for the City’s operating and capital budgets, while many should have little or no financial impact.

CDDS staff should report annually to Council on actions completed, progress made on others, changes to the plan and initiatives planned for the upcoming year. Monitoring and updating the Action Plan will be critical to keeping it relevant and implementing it successfully.

Summary of key actions currently underway:

- Official Plan Update
- Downtown Design Strategy and Secondary Plan
- Baker Street Urban Design Study
- Civic Square Project
- Wilson Street Parkade Project
- Downtown Intermodal Transit Station Project
- Study of Alternative Development Standards
- Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan and Implementation Strategy
- Natural Heritage Strategy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY ACTIONS</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Target Start Date</th>
<th>Lead Department</th>
<th>In Current Budget?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Policies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Amend urban design and public art policies in the</td>
<td>DT, CN, IC, NC, EA, CW</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS/CS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare and adopt a new Downtown Community Improvement Plan</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Econ Dev</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare East Community Node Design and Secondary Plan</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare a Plan and Guidelines for the York Road</td>
<td>IC</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corridor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Update the Zoning By-law to permit minor infill</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plans and Studies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare an Urban Forestry Plan, update guidelines</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS/Operations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for street trees and refine the tree protection by-law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undertake Heritage Conservation Studies for Downtown</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS/HG</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Brooklyn College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Undertake an Infill Design Study</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Projects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare and execute an implementation plan for</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Econ Dev</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redevelopment of the Baker Street site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand and complete the program of infrastructure</td>
<td>DT</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and streetscape improvements Downtown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement Community Node transit hubs</td>
<td>CN</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS/CS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set annual targets for kilometres of new trails and</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bike lanes and develop plan for Creek-to-Lake Trail</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Processes</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish regular CDDS-Councillor meetings</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amend application requirements for rezonings and</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>infill projects and refine pre-application process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refine review process for major public projects</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of urban designers in CDDS</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design CDDS’s office space to encourage interaction</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define mandate, membership and process for an</td>
<td>t.b.d.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advisory design review panel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evolve functional teams into area planning teams</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and implement an “Urban Design 101” course</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>CDDS</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DT - Downtown   CN - Community Nodes   IC - Intensification Corridors   NC - New Communities   EA - Employment Areas   CW - City-wide
Urban design policy directions for:

- Community Nodes
- Community Corridors
- New Communities
- Employment Areas

Strengthening the City’s Official Plan, Zoning By-law and guideline documents, and preparing new policy tools, will be essential to achieving the objectives described and illustrated in the Urban Design Action Plan. The policy directions on the following pages are primarily intended to guide amendments to existing Official Plan policies and the preparation of secondary plans for areas expected to undergo significant change. Before being implemented, these policy directions will be reviewed in the context of area-specific opportunities and challenges and in consultation with affected landowners and communities. While the directions may need to be refined in some cases to incorporate a degree of flexibility, the principles that underlie them shall be maintained.

Policies for two other key areas for change, Downtown and the Guelph Innovation District, will be developed through the secondary plan studies underway for these areas. With respect to the University of Guelph, the design policies and guidelines in the University’s Campus Master Plan remain relevant.
URBAN DESIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR COMMUNITY NODES

To realize the urban village concept for Community Nodes, the City should consider the following urban design elements in developing Official Plan policies, zoning and guidelines for nodes:

1. Each Community Node should be planned and designed as a distinct place for people to live, work, meet and shop.

2. Community Nodes should accommodate a range of uses that support “place-making” and the concept of “complete communities”, including retail, personal and business services, professional offices, community services and facilities, and housing.

3. Community Nodes should accommodate a mix of housing forms, which may include townhouses, residential units above retail and mid-rise apartment buildings, to enhance the range of housing types within a community and support an active public realm.

4. Buildings close to the main transit stop and on main shopping streets in a Community Node should be mixed-use, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential units or office space above.

5. Auto-oriented service commercial uses, e.g., gas stations and drive-thru establishments, should be prohibited in Community Nodes, to create a safe and comfortable pedestrian and residential environment.

6. Development in Community Nodes should have a density that supports frequent transit service from neighbourhoods beyond walking distance and contributes to the creation of a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment.

7. Development within a Community Node should be pedestrian-oriented and structured by an interconnected grid-like pattern of streets and pathways that provides direct access to transit stops and minimizes walking distances, to facilitate intensification and encourage walking.

8. Major internal drive aisles should be designed as streets to comfortably accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

9. New streets or drive aisles parallel and adjacent to transit corridors should be prohibited.

10. The location, orientation and form of commercial and mixed-use buildings should contribute to a “main street” experience. Buildings should front and address...
public or private streets, with main entrances directly accessible from the street and sidewalk.

11. The width of storefronts should be limited to ensure front doors are frequent, thus encouraging pedestrian activity along main shopping streets.

12. The number of large-format stores in each Community Node should be limited, and they should be integrated with smaller-scale stores to create a main street environment or located on peripheral sites within the node, on or directly linked to the main street.

13. Most buildings should be a minimum of 2 storeys, to give definition to streets and open spaces.

14. Sidewalks on commercial streets should be wide enough for retail displays, outdoor café seating, benches and trees, to help establish a comfortable pedestrian environment.

15. Community Nodes should contain publicly-accessible open space with sitting areas and shade trees for passive enjoyment. Squares and small parks within shopping areas should be framed by buildings with active ground-floor uses.

16. Maximum parking standards should be established for Community Nodes to promote the efficient use of land and alternative travel modes.

17. On-site parking for commercial uses should be located at the rear or side of buildings, and parking between the front of a building and the street should be prohibited.

18. Public and private streets within Community Nodes should accommodate on-street parking. Angled parking may be considered.

19. Underground or above-grade parking structures designed to look like occupied buildings, particularly for office uses and apartments, should be encouraged, to create opportunities for intensification and open space amenities.

20. Parking lots should be well landscaped and lighted to provide safe, comfortable walking environments and minimize energy waste.

21. Townhousing and other ground-related housing in Community Nodes should be serviced by rear laneways to help create attractive streetscapes and minimize the impact of driveways on the pedestrian realm.

22. The incorporation of “green” features that conserve energy and minimize waste and other environmental impacts in site and building design should be promoted.
URBAN DESIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR INTENSIFICATION CORRIDORS

To encourage and guide mixed-use development along main roads that supports objectives related to growth, transportation and place-making, the City shall consider the following urban design elements in developing Official Plan policies, zoning and guidelines for Intensification Corridors:

1. Intensification Corridors should accommodate a range of uses that support “place-making” and the concept of “complete communities”, including neighbourhood-oriented retail and services, business and professional offices, community services and facilities, and housing.

2. Intensification Corridors should accommodate a mix of housing forms, which may include townhouses, residential units above retail and mid-rise apartment buildings, to enhance the range of housing types within a community and support an active public realm.

3. Auto-oriented service commercial uses, e.g., gas stations and drive-thru establishments, should be prohibited or restricted in Intensification Corridors, to create a safe and comfortable pedestrian and residential environment.

4. Development in Intensification Corridors should have a density that supports the level of transit service planned for the corridor and contributes to the creation of a compact, pedestrian-friendly environment.

5. Development should be pedestrian-oriented and structured, where practical, by an interconnected grid-like pattern of streets and pathways that provides direct access to transit stops and minimizes walking distances, to facilitate intensification and encourage walking.

6. Driveway accesses on primary roads should be minimized in favour of public or private streets that rationalize access and reduce block sizes.

7. Major internal drive aisles should be designed as streets to comfortably accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

8. New streets or drive aisles parallel and adjacent to the transit corridor should be prohibited.

9. New buildings should front and address the main road or secondary streets, with main entrances directly accessible from the sidewalk.

10. Commercial and mixed-use buildings should be consistently located close to the sidewalk. Residential buildings not on a shopping street generally should have slightly deeper front setbacks.
11. Reverse lot frontages should be prohibited.

12. Buildings should be a minimum of 2 storeys.

13. Long buildings should be articulated to prevent a continuous wall effect.

14. Commercial signage should be displayed in a consistent location on buildings, at
the top of the ground floor, and not on top of buildings or poles.

15. The width of storefronts should be limited to ensure front doors are frequent,
thus encouraging pedestrian activity along main shopping streets.

16. The number of large-format stores in each Intensification Corridor should be
limited, and they should be integrated with smaller-scale stores to create a main
street environment.

17. Where retail and mixed-use buildings are clustered along a corridor, sidewalks
should be wide enough for retail displays, outdoor café seating, benches and
trees, to help establish a comfortable pedestrian environment.

18. Maximum parking standards should be established for Intensification Corridors to
promote the efficient use of land and alternative travel modes.

19. Lay-by parking should be accommodated on the main road, and new public and
private streets should be designed to accommodate on-street parking.

20. On-site parking for commercial uses should be located at the rear or side of
buildings, and parking between the front of a building and the street should be
prohibited.

21. Underground or above-grade parking structures designed to look like occupied
buildings should be encouraged, particularly for office uses and apartments, to
create opportunities for intensification and open space amenities.

22. Townhousing and other ground-related housing fronting the corridor should be
serviced by rear laneways.

23. Parking lots should be well landscaped and lighted to provide safe, comfortable
walking environments and minimize energy waste.

24. The incorporation of “green” features that conserve energy and minimize waste
and other environmental impacts in site and building design should be promoted.
URBAN DESIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR NEW COMMUNITIES

To promote the development of diverse, complete, sustainable communities, the City shall consider the following urban design elements in developing Official Plan policies, zoning and guidelines for new communities:

1. New neighbourhoods generally should contain a mix of housing types and densities, including grade-related homes (detached, semi-detached, townhousing) and apartments.

2. Substantial new communities should include a significant proportion of “affordable housing”.

3. Most residents in a new community should live within a five-minute walk of a basic foods store, a park or other open space amenity, and a transit stop.

4. Substantial new communities should include live-work and other employment opportunities.

5. Second units in single-family homes and above detached garages should be permitted.

6. New communities should be pedestrian/cyclist oriented and transit supportive.

7. Street networks should be highly interconnected, respond sensitively and creatively to natural and other established features, and link to adjacent developed areas, to maximize connections and encourage walking and cycling.

8. Rear lotting and streets parallel and adjacent to collector and arterial roads should be prohibited to ensure these roads are pedestrian-friendly.

9. Block dimensions should be limited to optimize connectivity for pedestrians. Longer blocks should have mid-block pedestrian links.

10. Community design plans should identify the character and dimensions of local streets, ensuring the right-of-way width of most local streets does not exceed 18 metres and accommodates street trees and sidewalks on both sides, to create a comfortable pedestrian environment.

11. Streets should be designed to safely and comfortably accommodate cyclists.

12. Pedestrian and cycling trails should be integrated with the network of streets, parks and larger open space system to facilitate pedestrian connectivity within and outside the community.
13. Natural heritage areas and parks should be highly visible and accessible. A large proportion of their edges, at least 50%, should be adjacent to a public street or other publicly accessible open space.

14. Lots narrower than 9.0 metres generally should be serviced by rear lanes to minimize the impact of driveways, garages and parked cars on the pedestrian environment and the character of communities.

15. Minimum and maximum front setbacks for residential use should be established, generally between 2.5 metres and 6.0 metres, to ensure buildings frame the street and encourage social interaction.

16. Front facing garages should be no wider than half the width of the house and should not project from the front wall of the house to ensure they do not dominate the streetscape and to promote “eyes on the street”.

17. Driveway widths at the sidewalk should be minimized and spaced to maximize opportunities for on-street parking.

18. Garages behind houses, accessed from the street or a rear laneway, should be encouraged.

19. The form of apartment buildings should be compatible with other types of housing in the community.

20. Parking for apartment buildings should be located at the rear of the building or underground.

21. The development of neighbourhood commercial nodes or main streets that contain retail amenities, employment opportunities and higher-density housing, preferably in mixed-use buildings, should be promoted to support the concept of a complete community.

22. Retail stores and mixed-use buildings should be oriented to a street, and the size of stores should be limited, to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

23. Schools and other community facilities should be pedestrian and cyclist oriented. Parking and pick-up/drop-off areas in front of the building should be restricted.

24. Communities should display a variety of architectural expressions.

25. The incorporation of “green” features that conserve energy and minimize waste and other environmental impacts in site and building design should be promoted.
URBAN DESIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AREAS

To enhance existing employment areas and design new ones sustainably, the City shall consider the following urban design elements in developing Official Plan policies, zoning and guidelines:

1. Within employment areas, uses similar in type and scale should be clustered to create identifiable and distinct use “zones”.

2. Stand-alone office buildings should be encouraged to locate Downtown and in Community Nodes, where they would be closer to communities and amenities.

3. “Gateways” to employment areas should be defined by high-quality architecture and landscape design. Generally, auto-oriented service commercial uses should be prohibited on gateway sites.

4. The pattern and design of streets in employment areas should facilitate and encourage walking, cycling and transit use.

5. Pedestrian and cycling trails should be integrated with the street network to facilitate pedestrian connectivity within and outside employment areas.

6. Industrial uses should be separated from natural heritage areas and publicly accessible open spaces in new employment areas with a road or other public right-of-way to ensure natural heritage is highly visible and accessible and to minimize opportunities for adverse impacts on natural areas.

7. Employee parking lots and loading areas generally should be located to the side and/or rear of buildings and screened from view from primary roads to help create attractive streetscapes.

8. Parking and driveways adjacent to identified natural heritage features and their buffers should be restricted.

9. Parking lots should be well landscaped and lighted to provide safe, comfortable walking environments and minimize energy waste.

10. Outside storage should be prohibited in prestige employment areas and, where permitted in other areas, it should be screened from public view.

11. Loading and garbage service areas should be located at the rear of buildings and screened.

12. Building elements and/or landscaping should be used to screen views to parking and loading areas in employment areas adjacent to the Hanlon Expressway.
13. Shared driveways should be encouraged.

14. Primary streets in employment areas should be consistently lined with buildings, and buildings should have a consistent setback from the public right-of-way.

15. Building on main roads in employment areas should be a minimum of two storeys at the front to reinforce the edges of roads.

16. Main building entrances should address and be accessible from a primary or secondary road.

17. Building signage should be incorporated into and coordinated with the architecture of the building, and ground and directional signage should be incorporated into the design of the landscape.

18. High-quality exterior cladding materials, such as glass, steel, metal paneling and masonry, should be used on the sides of buildings facing primary roads or the Hanlon Expressway.

19. Best practices in “green” design for buildings, landscaping, parking, servicing and other infrastructure should be encouraged.

20. Stormwater management facilities should be incorporated into the planning and design of open spaces, buildings and paved areas.