

**Policy Paper**  
**Urban Design**



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## **URBAN DESIGN DISCUSSION PAPER**

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## **PREAMBLE**

As part of the *Livable Oakville* work program, the current general policies, land use policies and the structure of the Official Plan are being updated. The new structure will provide a framework in which to add new designations and policies from the six major studies (Midtown, Uptown, Kerr, Bronte, Employment Land and Residential Intensification) and which reflect the approved mission statement and guiding principles. Policy papers are being developed which will direct future land use policy relating to environmental sustainability and transportation, as well as urban design, parks and open space, culture and heritage, commercial and institutional uses.

The focus of this policy paper is on Urban Design.

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## **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This Discussion Paper provides an overview of the direction the Town of Oakville is taking with respect to improving the current state of physical design in the Town. A review and evaluation of existing Official Plan policies (known as “Urban Aesthetics”) was conducted and opportunities for improvement have been identified. These policies were reviewed in the context of the proposed urban structure, the Town’s Official Plan review program (*Livable Oakville*) and other relevant policy documents.

It is the intent of this Paper to provide sufficient direction towards the creation of a structured Design section in the new Official Plan which can drive, and help implement, a higher quality public realm complemented by desirous development.

The current policies of the “Urban Aesthetics” section do little to provide direction with respect to the creation of an engaging, urban environment. As such, the new section for this part of the Official Plan is tentatively titled “Urban Form”. These policies should form the basis of an Urban Design strategy for building a liveable Town.

To debunk the myth, Urban Design is neither just about site planning nor attractive single-detached houses. It is not about the use of building materials to make an aesthetic statement and it is more than just landscaping.

Instead, the practice of good Urban Design should be threaded through everything the Town undertakes. Urban Design, as a discipline, is an umbrella which encompasses planning, architecture, transportation engineering, environmental sustainability, landscape architecture, socio-economics, geography, and numerous other areas of study. The act of designing for the urban environment has continued to evolve and gain greater importance. Urban Design is about creating stimulating, thriving, vibrant spaces for people, building relationships between buildings and the public realm, between people and buildings, between people and public

space, and enhancing each of these. It is also about creating a civic domain that is functional, enjoyable, fluid, flexible and dynamic.

A well-designed space can evoke an emotional response from users through the interaction of that user and the space. The action of fostering this liveliness, and in fact liveability, occurs not through neglect of a municipality’s historic cores, but in celebration thereof. To create the best of environments, especially for its citizens, the Town needs to lead by example and cultivate that civic pride.

This Paper is composed of four main sections that provide an overview of the Official Plan review, the existing Policy Context, other Oakville Design Initiatives and a proposed new Direction for Urban Design in the municipality. There is also an appendix which summarises the review conducted of other municipalities and their relevant Urban Design policies.

“The quality of our lives is inextricably linked to the function and beauty of our natural and built environments, and the built environments we choose greatly influence our relationship with the natural environment.”

- Albert Flootman

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## **2.0 OAKVILLE OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW**

### **2.1 NEED FOR A REVIEW**

Like other municipalities, the Town of Oakville faces a number of challenges as it grows. As the Town approaches its built boundary, much of the Town's new growth must be accommodated through intensification rather than through traditional greenfield development. In addition to physical limitations, an enhanced focus on intensification has been established through key directions as part of recent Provincial legislation. The Town's new Official Plan called *Livable Oakville* must reflect these changes. Thus, *Livable Oakville* must be a document that addresses new forms of growth in a manner which emphasises a high quality environment, encourages innovative and sustainable design, recognises and improves land use compatibility through design, and enables a vision for how Oakville will look in the future.

The challenge of intensification is also an opportunity to create unique and welcoming environments with which people identify. Appropriate urban form will result in an enhanced public realm, which in turn will create walkable, healthy communities, community pride, and a greater sense of identity.

### **2.2 PRELIMINARY DIRECTIONS**

On June 12, 2006, Council received a *Preliminary Directions Report* from Planning Staff which came as a result of input from both a community workshop held on December 1, 2005 and the *Official Plan Review Issues Report* brought to Council on November 14, 2005. The *Preliminary Directions Report* reviewed the performance of the Official Plan and proposed strategies for refining the policies within the Plan. Fifty directions resulted from this report. The directions addressed in the Urban Design Discussion Paper, are outlined below.

#### *Role of Urban Design*

Direction 38: That the role of Urban Design be examined.

#### *Urban Design Guidelines*

Direction 39: That Urban Design guidelines be integrated in all aspects of the Official Plan.

#### *Update Site Plan Requirements*

Direction 40: That site plan policies and guidelines in the Official Plan be assessed and new site plan tools be developed.

## **2.3 MISSION STATEMENT AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

One of the first steps of the *Livable Oakville* work program was to create a new mission statement and guiding principles. After extensive public consultation, Council approved the mission statement and guiding principles in June 2008 through OPA 281. The mission statement and guiding principles set the foundation for the overall *Livable Oakville* framework. The Urban Design policies will reflect and implement these statements.

Strong urban design policy is intrinsic to enacting the Town's mission statement "to enhance the Town's natural, cultural, social and economic environments ensuring environmental sustainability, cultural vibrancy, economic prosperity and social well-being are incorporated into growth and development decisions".

Urban Design is also inherent to successfully upholding the guiding principles which are meant to:

#### *Preserve and Create a Liveable Community*

Preserve, enhance and protect the distinct character, cultural heritage, living environment and sense of community of neighbourhoods.

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Direct growth to identified locations where higher density, transit and pedestrian-oriented development can be accommodated.

*Provide Choice throughout the Town*

Foster the Town's sense of identity through excellence in building and community design.

*Achieve Sustainability*

Achieve sustainable building and community design.

The new guiding principles enhance the focus on mixed use development areas that are compact, high density, and pedestrian and transit focused. The development of these areas require a high quality of design with regards to built form in order to maximise pedestrian comfort and create civic pride. *Livable Oakville* must then accommodate for this new direction through urban design policies with emphasis on mixed use development to create a more sustainable urban environment.

## **2.4 LIVABLE OAKVILLE WORK PROGRAM**

The *Livable Oakville* work program consists of six major studies, technical studies and policy papers which will provide the basis of the new policies for the *Livable Oakville* Official Plan.

It is the intent of this Discussion Paper to develop general urban design directions (and ultimately policies) based on principles of excellence that support other Town studies. In conjunction with this Discussion Paper, the major studies being completed as part of the Official Plan review play a large role in developing urban design policies, in particular the Bronte Village Revitalisation Study, the Plan for Kerr Village, the Uptown Core, Midtown Oakville, and the Residential Intensification Study. Existing Urban Design guidelines for the Town are also reviewed for potential incorporation into the design policies for the Town. These design initiatives and guidelines are outlined in Section 4 of this document.

Through incorporating design initiatives from other studies and guidelines into policy, it is the intent that the *Livable Oakville* Official Plan will contain a stronger Urban Design policy framework to which development must adhere. The proposed Urban Design policy structure is discussed in Section 5 of this document.

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### **3.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

In considering an update to the “Urban Aesthetics” policies of the Official Plan, it is important to examine the broader policy context provided by the *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, the Halton Region Strategic Plan and Official Plan, and the Town of Oakville Strategic Plan and Official Plan. Policies pertaining to urban design in these documents are reviewed in this section and issues that need to be addressed in the future *Livable Oakville Plan* are identified.

#### **3.1 PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

##### ***3.1.1 The Planning Act of Ontario***

The *Planning Act* is the principal piece of legislation governing the development of land in the Province of Ontario. The *Act* outlines the purpose of land use planning, the tools and the power that may be exercised by municipalities, and the various restrictions and procedures that must be followed by municipal government in the process of developing land and changing land uses.

Recently, updates to the *Planning Act*, through Bill 51, have given municipalities more authority over urban design matters. Urban design policies are not prescribed, however, the *Act* recognises that design can be controlled to some extent through regulating massing and conceptual design of buildings, relationship to adjacent buildings, streets, and exterior public areas, as provided under Section 41 – Site Plan Control.

Section 41 now allows municipalities to address “*matters relating to exterior design, including without limitation the character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings, and their sustainable design, but only to the extent that it is a matter of exterior design*” (s.41(4)d)). These advancements provide municipalities to further address and inform the distinct characters of identified areas throughout the town and enable and encourage a more sustainable building stock.

The *Planning Act* also maintains the importance of land use controls. Section 34 of the *Planning Act* states that Zoning By-laws may be passed by the councils of local municipalities for construction of buildings or structures and for regulating the type of construction and the height, bulk, location, size, floor area, spacing, character and use of buildings or structures to be erected or located within the municipality.

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* also has relevance to urban design in that it defines community improvement and community improvement areas as “*a municipality or area within a municipality, the community improvement of which, in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.*” This provides the municipality with a means to improve its urban form.

##### ***3.1.2 Provincial Policy Statement***

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is a key element in Ontario’s land use planning system and is the complementary policy document to the *Planning Act*. The PPS provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development and promotes the Provincial policy-led planning system.

Section 3(10) of the *Planning Act* states that the PPS must be reviewed every five years to determine whether revisions are needed. The new Provincial Policy Statement officially came into effect on March 1, 2005. This coincided with the passage of Section 2 of the *Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act 2004* which requires that any decision made by planning decision makers “shall be consistent with” the PPS as opposed to the previous “shall have regard to” standard.

The Provincial Policy Statement does not deal with matters of physical design and development quality per se, but recognizes the complex interrelationships among economic, environmental and social factors in

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planning. It supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognises linkages among the various policy areas.

Under the new PPS, strong emphasis is placed on promoting intensification, brownfield revitalisation, compact development form, and mixed-uses to enable more efficient use of land and infrastructure, and to support transit-oriented development. This will in turn contribute to better environmental planning and conditions including improvement of air quality and more efficient use of energy through the reduction in travel demand and private automobile use. On energy conservation, the role of development design is highlighted. The policies promote design and orientation which maximise the use of alternative or renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, and the mitigating effects of vegetation.

### ***3.1.3 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe***

Bill 136, the *Places to Grow Act* was introduced in the Ontario Legislature in October 2004. Under the *Act*, Growth Plans are to be established to implement the Province's vision for managing growth and development. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) was released in February 2005, and then approved in June 2006. The Plan is established within the framework of the *Planning Act* and Ontario's existing planning system. Whereas the Provincial Policy Statement provides overall policy directions on matters of Provincial interest related to land use and development for all of Ontario, the Growth Plan provides more detailed policies that further elaborate on the directions and concepts of the PPS for the GGH. Specifically, the Growth Plan identifies areas to grow, areas to protect and priority infrastructure investments to serve current and future needs. It also sets out the criteria and process for the completion of five sub-area growth strategies to address common policy issues at a geographic scale beyond municipal boundaries. Oakville is within the "Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton Sub-area".

Of particular relevance to urban design, is the policy to direct 40% of growth to existing and designated *Urban Growth Centres*. This policy is the backbone of the Growth Plan and is supported by other established

policies that relate to intensification and re-urbanisation, compact development, transit-supportive densities and mixed-uses.

Under the Growth Plan, Oakville's Midtown Core is classified as an *Urban Growth Centre* while the balance of the Town is within the *Built Up Area*. The Growth Plan has policies for each of these designations including intensification targets, development form and densities and implementation tools.

The goal for "Urban Growth Centres" is to achieve a vibrant, compact and efficient urban form. The centres are key areas to accept intensification and the focus is on transit and infrastructure investment to support growth. Opportunities for intensification include those traditionally found in downtown cores, areas with under-utilised infrastructure as well as Brownfields and Greyfields (i.e. large, near vacant commercial parcels).

For greenfield sites, the Growth Plan has policies to: ensure transit-supportive densities; encourage attractive and transit-supportive street configurations; and establish alternative transportation modes including cycling and walking in all new development. The latter principle is echoed in another Growth Plan policy on an integrated transportation network that requires municipalities to establish policies to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle networks are a key component of community design.

The Growth Plan also sets a framework to steer growth pressures away from the places and systems that need to be protected including unique natural and cultural heritage sites, valuable natural resources and high quality agricultural land. Of particular relevance to physical design are the following:

#### The Natural System

"All planning authorities will consider how activities and land use changes outside of the natural system affect the natural system and will promote and undertake appropriate planning and design to ensure

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external connections to the natural system are maintained and enhanced.”

### Cultural Heritage Resources

The Growth Plan considers cultural heritage resources as critical to a community’s identity. These resources include buildings, monuments, streetscapes and neighbourhoods that are recognised as an important link to a community’s past. As they frequently form the traditional core areas of communities, adaptive re-use that would support intensification and mixed-use communities without compromising their heritage value is considered appropriate. To this end, the following policy is proposed:

“Municipalities are encouraged to prepare municipal heritage plans. As part of the planning process, municipalities are encouraged to identify and map significant cultural heritage resources and develop policies for the protection and appropriate use or re-use of cultural heritage resources as part of achieving intensification targets.”

In updating the Town’s Official Plan policies, the role of urban design in growth management will need to be given more emphasis to address the opportunities and challenges ahead. For intensification objectives to be successful, clear, strong Official Plan Urban Design policies are required to ensure infill / redevelopment is sensitively integrated with existing communities.

## **3.2 HALTON REGION**

### ***3.2.1 Halton Region Strategic Plan***

The Halton Region Strategic Plan (2007 – 2010) represents Regional Council’s shared vision for the community. The Halton Region Strategic Plan is comprised of a vision statement, themes, goals and annual actions. The vision statement of the Strategic Plan states:

*Halton - Naturally the Best...A place that values natural heritage and diverse communities, while supporting a prosperous, sustainable future.*

Under this vision, the Plan sets out key directions and priorities that reflect the values of Regional Council and the community. The themes and goals, as they relate to this Discussion Paper include the theme of controlling and managing growth in a sustainable manner with the goal of creating eco-friendly communities and strengthened transportation systems. This Discussion Paper is intended to help in achieve these goals by developing policy that promotes and encourages a sustainable, compact built form which focuses growth with the philosophy of “pedestrian first”, maximising pedestrian comfort, creating places which are habitable and accessible to the person, promoting design considerations for more sustainable construction practices, and providing for a built environment which is safe, accessible, sustainable and liveable.

### ***3.2.2 Halton Region Official Plan***

The Halton Region Official Plan (2006) is the primary long-range strategic land use policy document for Halton Region. The Regional Official Plan sets the regional context for more detailed planning to occur at the local level by protecting the environment, managing resources, directing growth and setting the foundation for providing regional services in an efficient and effective manner.

Relevant to this Discussion Paper, the Regional Plan promotes an urban system comprised of urban areas, nodes and corridors and informs how municipalities are to incorporate these concepts into their Official Plans.

The goals of the Urban System (Part III Section 72) are:

- to manage growth in accordance with the Region's desire to improve and maintain regional unity, retain local community identity, create healthy communities, promote economic prosperity, maintain a high quality, sustainable natural environment, and preserve certain landforms permanently (72.1),

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- to support a form of growth that is compact and supportive of transit usage, makes efficient use of space and services and promotes live-work relationships (72.2), and
  - to provide a range of identifiable communities of various sizes, types and characters, which afford maximum choices for residence, work and leisure (72.3).

One of the main objectives of the urban system is to create an urban structure that supports the development of Nodes and strategically located mixed-use Corridors (73.2).

The objective of Nodes and Corridors is:

- to provide an urban form that is complementary to existing developed areas, uses space more economically, promotes live-work relationships, fosters social interaction, enhances public safety and security, reduces travel by private automobile, promotes cycling and walking, and is environmentally more sustainable (78.1),
- to provide opportunities for more cost-efficient and innovative Urban Design (78.2),
- to provide a range of employment opportunities, facilities and services in centralised locations that are readily accessible by public transit (78.3),
- to promote a greater mix of land uses (78.4), and
- to create a vibrant, diverse and pedestrian-oriented urban environment (78.5).

The characteristics of designated Nodes and Corridors exhibit or will exhibit:

- the presence of both residential and employment lands that would allow residents to live and work within the Node or along the designated Corridor (79.1),
- an appropriate mix of various land uses without a single dominant land use or form (79.2),
- an Urban Design that favours pedestrian traffic and public transit over the private automobile (79.3),

- their strategic location on the inter-municipal / inter-regional rapid transit network (79.4),
- development densities and patterns supportive of a high level of transit service (79.5), and
- an open space system that complements and enhances the urban environment (79.6).

The Regional Plan further indicates that Secondary Plans for Nodes and Corridors must:

- include Urban Design Guidelines to promote transit supportive land uses in Nodes and Corridors in accordance with Regional standards (81.4b) while adopting alternative design standards for Major Arterial Roads through Nodes and along Corridors to promote pedestrian-oriented development and transit-friendly facilities while maintaining the mobility function of the Major Arterial Road (81.5), and
- ensure the proper integration of Nodes and Corridors with surrounding neighbourhoods through pedestrian walkways, cycling paths and transit routes, and the protection of the physical character of these neighbourhoods through Urban Design (81.6).

To implement these directions, strong Urban Design policy should be developed to ensure pedestrian-oriented, compact development is enabled which is appropriate and maintains the distinct characters throughout the Town.

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## **3.3 TOWN OF OAKVILLE**

### ***3.3.1 Town of Oakville Strategic Plan***

The Town of Oakville implemented a new Strategic Plan in 2007. The Town's Strategic Plan was created to steer thinking and planning through 2010, guided by three fundamental elements: a vision, mission statement and values.

The vision is the desired future toward which the strategic plan is directed, describing a future view of Oakville. The vision, "to be the most liveable town in Canada", has been carried through to the Official Plan's mission statement and guiding principles.

The Town's mission statement and values, as they pertain to the Urban Design Discussion Paper are "to create and preserve Canada's most liveable community that enhances the natural, cultural, social and economic environments by continuously improving programs and services that are both accessible and environmentally and fiscally sustainable" under the value in which the Town pursues "innovation by being creative, showing initiative and taking risks".

Ultimately, under the vision, mission and values, the Strategic Plan sets achievable goals. These goals include, but are not limited to, being innovative in everything which is pursued, and to enhance Oakville's natural, cultural, social, and economic environments, with an area of focus (for 2007) on the natural environment. One of the strategies / actions to achieve these goals is through the Official Plan Review.

### ***3.3.2 Town of Oakville Official Plan***

The Town of Oakville's current Official Plan has two sections that deal primarily with Urban Aesthetics, Part B6 Goals and Objectives – Urban Aesthetics and Part C7 General Policies - Urban Aesthetics. Further urban aesthetic related policy is found throughout Part E within various community, district, and special study area plans.

The goal of Urban Aesthetics in the Official Plan (Part B6) is "to encourage excellence in building and landscape design in sympathy with the distinct character of existing communities with the natural features of the landscape" with the objectives:

- to exercise development control to achieve a consistently high standard of building design, siting, massing, and landscaping,
- to control and regulate building and site design so as to avoid conflicts with adjoining uses, and
- to provide a policy guide for the Town's Site Plan Control process.

The general Urban Aesthetic policies of the Official Plan (Part C7) are within a framework organised by the type of planning application. Generally, urban aesthetic policies deal with:

- Urban Aesthetic controls and criteria used to assess proposals for development (7.1),
- applications which are subject to site plan approval (7.2),
- all controls permitted by site plan provisions under the *Planning Act* (7.3),
- design mitigation and compatibility measures such as buffering and lighting (7.4, 7.5)
- design of development in strategic and highly visible locations (7.7),
- subdivision development design (7.8, 7.9),
- the implementation of studies, programs, periodic reviews and guidelines to improve the aesthetics of existing areas (7.6, 7.10, 7.11), and
- encouragement for extensive consultation and specific criteria to evaluate infill and intensification development applications to ensure a proposal is appropriate (7.12).

The *Livable Oakville* program must move its focus from greenfield development to intensification / infill development. As such, new general urban design policy must accommodate these changes. The Plan must then elevate urban aesthetic *guidelines* into strong *policy* to direct the development of compact built environments and specific building

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typologies with regards to matters such as compatibility, pedestrian comfort, and sustainability. In addition, it is advantageous for the development of new general urban design policy to be consolidated into one location within the plan as much as possible.

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## **4.0 OTHER OAKVILLE DESIGN INITIATIVES**

This section examines the design-related direction provided in past and current studies, focusing on specific geographic areas of the Town and specific land-uses, in order to guide the development of urban design policies.

These studies were undertaken with public engagement and consultation in an effort to identify preferences and expectations for general and specific types of urban development.

### **4.1 MIDTOWN REVIEW**

The original Midtown Core Land Use Planning Study was approved in 1999 and contained a set of Urban Design Guidelines for building and site design within Midtown.

The area has been identified in local and regional plans as a growth area with higher density residential and employment uses. Through the 2006 Growth Plan, Midtown was identified as the Town's *Urban Growth Centre*. The Town is undertaking a study with the intent of creating a planning vision for a new mixed-use centre that provides an interesting, diverse, well-designed residential, employment and civic district. The vision is based on principles of sustainability and transit-supportive planning.

The recommendations from the Midtown Oakville Business and Development Plan are critical to the determination of the long-term land uses surrounding the *Urban Growth Centre* as they have significant implications in relation to the transportation network, land uses, scale and form of development. In addition, any proposed changes to land uses in the areas surrounding the *Urban Growth Centre* will directly impact the proposed Midtown Oakville Business and Development Plan.

## **4.2 UPTOWN CORE REVIEW**

The Uptown Core is envisioned as a walkable, mixed-use, transit-friendly community, characterised by a high standard of Urban Design. Although the residential component has generally been successfully implemented over the years, the mixed-use portion has been dominated by “big-box” retail with little office development.

The overall objective of the review is to assess the existing Official Plan policies in light of new Provincial planning policies, evaluate current development applications, assess the availability of existing and new infrastructure such as roads, transit, water and wastewater facilities and comment on other important conditions such as Urban Design and streetscapes. The finalisation of the Study's report and new Official Plan policies addressing land use, transportation, future infrastructure improvements, and implementation mechanisms will guide planning and development.

### **4.3 BRONTE VILLAGE REVITALIZATION STUDY**

The *Bronte Village Revitalization Study* builds upon previous planning work to create an action plan with policy tools that will guide land use development within this unique mixed-use district. This study builds upon the existing character of the area, which consists of a human-scaled commercial main street, a range of housing types within the surrounding neighbourhood, and a destination for residents and visitors that is focused on Bronte Harbour and Lake Ontario. The final document will propose a preferred development scenario to be implemented over time. Urban Design policies will ultimately be prepared to support this scenario and incorporated into the new Official Plan.

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#### **4.4 THE PLAN FOR KERR VILLAGE**

The *Plan for Kerr Village* builds upon previous visioning work to craft an action plan with policy tools that will guide land use development along this vibrant street. This study focuses on the existing urban character of the area to help create a human-scaled, pedestrian-friendly commercial main street with a range of housing types and community / institutional facilities nearby – and proposed various scenarios to carry out development over time. After receiving public feedback and the results of an extensive public workshop, a preferred scenario will be finalised. Urban Design policies will ultimately be prepared to support this scenario and incorporated into the new Official Plan.

#### **4.5 GUIDELINES FOR INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

The Guidelines for Infill Development, dated June 2000, outlines the Town's design intent for areas subject to new infill development, and provides direction for designing these types of projects.

The document identifies the manner in which certain elements must be examined to ensure the appropriate and sensitive design of new infill development such that it fits the character of the neighbourhood. The guidelines are not mandatory, but provide sufficient direction to understand the principles of appropriate design for infill development.

#### **4.6 DRIVE-THROUGH FACILITIES – URBAN DESIGN STUDY AND GUIDELINES**

The *Drive-Through Facilities – Urban Design Study and Guidelines* was published in June 2003 and outlines design direction for the development and assessment of drive-through facilities Town-wide. The Guidelines address issues such as:

- minimising impacts on adjacent properties,
- achieving a locational fit / relationship,

- obtaining attractive streetscapes through a positive contribution to the public realm, and
- establishing functional and safe pedestrian and traffic movements.

The design guidelines accommodate a wide range of potential design alternatives and are also applicable to the creation of other types of high quality commercial developments.

The guidelines (39 in total) can be organised under seven headings: locational criteria; site access, vehicular and pedestrian traffic; stacking lanes; site size; relationship to adjacent uses; building and site organisation and streetscape; and, landscaping.

At the time of publication of this Discussion Paper, an Interim Control By-law has been passed by the Town affecting new drive-throughs in select areas of the municipality. A detailed study is currently underway to determine the long-term goals in the treatment of drive-through facilities.

#### **4.7 NORTH OAKVILLE SECONDARY PLAN – URBAN DESIGN AND OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES**

The North Oakville East Secondary Plan was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in January 2008 and includes the most recent iteration of approved urban design policy in the Town. The secondary plan contains a number of policies based on eleven key principles such as:

- Create a sustainable NHS and Open Space System ,
- Provide access and visibility to open space,
- Create a sustainable street transportation network,
- Create compact, walkable mixed-used development,
- Provide a variety of housing,
- Preserve and extend residential enclave and cultural heritage,
- Sustainable development, and,
- Provide a vital setting for employment uses.

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Further, all development applications will be evaluated by the Town to ensure that they are consistent with the Urban Design and Open Space Guidelines with more specific design directions outlined in section 7.5.4. These directions, as outlined in the Secondary Plan, are relevant to the urban design policy development and include:

- Creating a modified grid road system that respond to topography and open space systems,
- Emphasizing public safety, views and accessibility, both physically and visually, to the natural and open space systems as well as other natural and civic features, and,
- Building densities and land uses designed to support the use of transit and the level of transit service proposed for specific areas shall be located within walking distances of transit stops and lines.

Furthermore, through the draft Urban Design Guidelines there is also an emphasis on “street-based design” meaning that the building to street relationship is key to creating a defined, usable public realm. This results in the need for street cross-sections and surrounding development that responds to their context.

#### **4.8 PARKS, RECREATION, CULTURE AND LIBRARY MASTER PLAN**

The *Parks, Recreation, Culture and Library Master Plan*, approved by Council in June 2006, outlines the principles, directions and recommendations for future decision-making related to park, recreation, culture and library facility design and development Town-wide.

The following is a summary of those principles, directions, and recommendations that are relevant to the Urban Design policy development:

- The principle of “Strengthen Community Identity”, commits the Town to recognize the benefits of New Urbanism concepts and implement these concepts where appropriate, and design all public

facilities as “public spaces” that help define the sense of community, (Principle 8)

- Recommendations related to Park Design (C15 – C23) include incorporating accessibility, pedestrian-friendliness, appropriate mix and types of amenities, clustering facilities, creating formal and informal recreation spaces, maintaining forest cover and pursue naturalisation initiatives, and,
- Recommendations related to Library Design (E6) include redeveloping and renovating facilities in order to create welcoming physical spaces which create a sense of ‘place’ and reflective of community needs and styles.

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## **5.0 NEW DIRECTION FOR URBAN DESIGN**

The following section outlines the direction the Town of Oakville intends to pursue with respect to securing a higher quality public realm and the manner in which to achieve this direction.

### **5.1 URBAN DESIGN AND THE TOWN STRUCTURE**

The Town of Oakville is a unique setting within the Greater Toronto Area with several community centres, a vibrant Downtown, a well-connected natural open space system, direct access to Lake Ontario, Heritage Conservation Districts, and a varied stock of stable neighbourhoods.

The municipality is structured around relatively stable residential neighbourhoods which are connected to employment districts by arterial roads. There are areas within the Town which are considered appropriate for intensification while others may permit limited, compatible development if appropriate – such as near or within a Heritage Conservation District. Generally, the Town is structured in such a manner as to:

- direct new, higher intensity development to the Town's Growth Areas,
- accommodate moderate amounts of intensification along the Town's connecting corridors,
- strengthen the corridors which connect the network of existing, lower-density residential neighbourhoods,
- protect the Town's distinct natural system, as well as pursue a passive pedestrian network within the natural system and along Lake Ontario, and,
- recognise the character and economic significance of the Town's historical Downtown.

New policies will be created through the Official Plan Review process which will strengthen and define these various linkages and identify the

role that the Growth Areas will play as well as where more moderate opportunities for growth can be accommodated.

Oakville's primary Growth Areas include the Midtown, Uptown, and Palermo centres where higher level of transit service is a key component to the future growth and stability of the centres. As a result, the main form of new development needs to focus on creating development that is directly connected to transit facilities. New policies are needed which are clearly based on Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) principles where pedestrian accessibility and affordability (of both retail space and residential units) is fundamental for success.

Oakville's secondary Growth Areas, where some elements of intensification will be accommodated, include Bronte Village, Kerr Street and Downtown Oakville. These areas are no less important in the Town's hierarchy, but due to their proximity to Lake Ontario have an existing historical context which is based on the character of these areas and the established built form, street widths and a conventional street grid network.

Linking the various centres in the Town with the employment, institutional and recreational districts are the Town's Corridors. These areas can accommodate multiple uses and can be accessed by various modes of transportation making them a key opportunity for new development on the edges of predominantly residential neighbourhoods.

New development that will occur in the Town can take the form of greenfield, infill, intensification, redevelopment and/or replacement. In terms of the latter categories, new development may be proposed in stable residential neighbourhoods, along their edges, and within designated Growth Areas. As such, specific policies are needed that guide the "what" and "how" of that new development.

There are also areas within the Town that should be subject to special study due to the role their location plays in the Town and/or their unique site characteristics, such as the Oakville Hospital and lands owned by other

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government agencies (i.e. the *Department of National Defence* lands at Dorval Drive and Rebecca Street).

In addition, there are *Special Character Areas* in the Town which require an examination through a different lens because of the character of the area. These can include the Town's *Heritage Conservation Districts* and *Business Improvement Areas* since these areas have traditionally been the backbone of the Town's commerce and retail.

## **5.2 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY**

Promoting quality urban design and connections across these diverse locations is a challenge worth pursuing as it will ensure the continued process of building a liveable, dynamic community. A balance must be achieved among an efficient transportation system, a range of housing options and tenures and the enjoyment of the natural heritage system.

In order for the Town to be successful in terms of a quality urban environment, an Urban Design Strategy must be developed that:

1. Fosters innovative design solutions for both the public and private realms,
2. Encourages appropriate redevelopment in the right locations,
3. Achieves excellence in the built environment,
4. Ensures a symbiotic relationship between the public and private realms,
5. Ensures viable connections across the Town through various modes of transportation,
6. Encourages development which is compatible within its context,
7. Promotes development that enhances the Town's character and identity, and,
8. Builds upon the achievements reached with the North Oakville policies.

An important step in progressing the Urban Design Strategy is to refine and reconsider existing urban design guidelines into policy for the new Official

Plan. Further Urban Design Strategy recommended programming can be found in section 6.0 *Recommendations* of this paper.

## **5.3 URBAN DESIGN VISION STATEMENT AND POLICY STRUCTURE**

To realise the Urban Design strategy as set out in the preceding sections, a Vision is being proposed which will build upon, and complement, the Town's successes and set the stage for future achievements. This Vision is intended to create excitement in the design of the Town, the interaction between the private and public realm and encourage a high quality of life that enhances the appeal of the Town for residents and business development.

The existing structure of the Official Plan Urban Aesthetics policies do not represent a cohesive and comprehensive set of issues relevant to the discipline of Urban Design, nor provide an appropriate framework for the Town to achieve a quality urban form. In short, the existing policies do not grant the Town the ability to achieve its Vision.

From an urban design perspective, the next step in the Town's evolution requires commitment from both the development industry and the Town of Oakville. This can occur both in partnership and independently so long as the appropriate avenues of Urban Design are being pursued. To that end, clear goals, objectives and policies are required which will balance public and private responsibilities and direct the preferred form of development such that Oakville's citizens can enjoy ease of movement through various means, negotiate locations of commerce and recreation, and feel comfortable in the Town's urban environment.

Greater emphasis is needed to clarify the hierarchy of the Town's structure so these specified areas can work together and contribute to the Town's urban design, including:

- Growth Areas,
- Corridors,

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- Employment and Institutional Districts,
  - Redevelopment (including Infill / Intensification), and,
  - Special Character Areas

### 5.3.1 *Growth Areas*

The Growth Areas are the centres to which most new redevelopment will be directed. The primary Growth Areas include Midtown Oakville (which is a designated Urban Growth Centre in the Province's *Growth Plan*), Uptown Oakville and Palermo. These areas are to function as mixed-use centres, integrating high density residential land uses with office and retail opportunities, and be based primarily on TOD principles where development is directed towards higher order transit facilities.

Transit-oriented development is not intended to simply support development in proximity to transit, but rather to encourage and even require development which integrates transit connections and accessibility into the design of the development project. Furthermore, residential development within TODs is of higher densities, affordable, accompanied by limited parking facilities and complemented by retail uses along the streets which encourage pedestrian activity.

The areas of Bronte Village, Kerr Street and Downtown Oakville are not intended to accommodate as much growth as the three primary areas, but have unique characteristics in each that will influence the type of intensification for that area based on the capacity of existing infrastructure, enhanced transit opportunities, and existing building stock, among others.

### 5.3.2 *Corridors*

Corridors are those areas of the Town which link the centres and districts to each other and generally have some potential for redevelopment due to larger property sizes and/or the potential to amalgamate properties. The corridors are also multi-modal and can accommodate a variety of land uses and support transit.

These corridors could reasonably include Trafalgar Road, Dundas Street, Upper Middle Road, Speers Road / Cornwall Road, Lakeshore Road, Bronte Road, Ford Drive / Ninth Line, Rebecca Street, Burloak Drive, Winston Churchill Boulevard, and lands adjacent to the Queen Elizabeth Way. Each of these have different characteristics which results in different requirements for new development. What is consistent among them though, is the need to ensure safe and consolidated access to properties, appropriate building orientation, design and setbacks where the corridors are adjacent to existing residential neighbourhoods.

### 5.3.3 *Redevelopment (including Infill / Intensification)*

Almost all new development for lands south of Dundas Street will take the form of redevelopment and intensification. Clear policies are needed to ensure that this form of development is undertaken in a sensitive and creative fashion which allows for innovative development and compatibility with the existing context and surrounding neighbourhoods.

In the Growth Areas, there will be more flexibility for creative building forms; but along corridors and adjacent to residential neighbourhoods, more innovative design solutions will be needed to ensure redevelopment responds in an appropriate fashion for the area in terms of massing, building heights and setbacks, thereby allowing a harmonious co-existence between existing and proposed development.

### *Greyfields*

Greyfields generally refer to commercial sites which are under-utilised and provide various opportunities for redevelopment. Unlike brownfield sites, these sites are not environmentally contaminated. Often-times greyfield redevelopment has meant that shopping centres are redeveloped to become more mixed-use in nature. As these sites can be larger in size, they provide opportunities to introduce a more sustainable urban form through measures such as:

- Re-introducing public streets that contribute to establishing or extending a grid-like street pattern,

- Redevelopment of surface parking lots and the creation of development that is more pedestrian-friendly,
- Introducing more mixed-use development (as opposed to single-use buildings) such as offices and, where appropriate, residential development,
- Taller buildings and a more compact built form,
- Creating a development pattern that more positively contributes to and addresses surrounding streets,
- Creating opportunities to better integrate transit into the development form,
- Reducing the amount of impervious surfaces, and,
- Reducing the Town's urban heat island effect.

The new Official Plan should contain principles and policies that address the above issues and outline the Town's expectations regarding potential future applications. Like brownfield (re)development, they present a critical opportunity for achieving the Town's intensification targets.

### ***Brownfields***

The Ministry of the Environment defines brownfields as "abandoned, idle, or under-utilised industrial and commercial properties where the previous property use caused environmental contamination". As well as an environmental benefit, cleaning up contaminated sites presents opportunities to achieve intensification targets.

In Oakville, it is Halton Region's responsibility to ensure that potentially contaminated sites are assessed properly and cleaned up before redevelopment can occur. Development applications may only be considered for approval when the site meets Provincial Guidelines and the Region's standards for soil quality.

While policies regarding brownfield remediation have been proposed through the Sustainable Environment Paper, the redevelopment of brownfields affects urban form too. Brownfields are often located in older employment areas, as well on sites that were previously gas stations. In

creating a sustainable form, redevelopment of these sites should be actively encouraged. Within areas where residential development is permitted, policies similar to those outlined above in the greyfield section should be applied. Where larger brownfields exist within employment districts, general urban design policies for employment areas should be applied, with additional emphasis on:

- Encouraging the reduction of impervious surfaces,
- Encouraging appropriate built form, especially along existing or planned transit routes,
- Encouraging strategies to reduce the urban heat island effect through a variety of means, and,
- Encouraging opportunities to increase the Town's urban forest cover.

Through the Town's implementation strategy regarding *Livable Oakville*, the Town may wish to consider strategies that create incentives for the redevelopment of brownfield lands.

### ***5.3.4 Special Character Areas***

Some areas in the Town require an examination through a different lens since they possess unique characteristics. These may be representative of historical qualities, and/or areas which have traditionally been home of the Town's commerce and retail activity. For example, Heritage Conservation Districts and Business Improvement Areas would potentially qualify as "Special Character Areas" where additional effort may be needed when evaluating how new development would mesh with the existing character of the area.

Provision can be made in the policy for special areas which warrant specific design consideration.

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### 5.3.5 *Employment & Institutional Districts*

There are a number of areas in the Town which would benefit from having urban design policies which can help direct the design of new development, should it occur over time.

These districts are distinct from Growth Areas since they are generally more homogenous in terms of the common land use. As well, districts tend to be more sprawling, with less of a cohesive centre. Examples range from employment districts in Winston Park to Institutional campuses such as a hospital and associated learning centre.

## **5.4 POLICY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The existing policy has a single, very general “Goal” supported by three “Objectives” which do not clearly guide new development but place the emphasis on the site plan control process.

New Goals and Objectives are not necessarily needed at the beginning of the new Official Plan other than to describe intent; however, the policy structure will need to carry a straight-forward theme throughout. It will be the goal of the new policy to identify how Urban Design will be considered and promoted. Further, the policy must describe how the Town will achieve and sustain high quality physical development. The urban design policies are intended to deal with the relationships between public places and their built edges as well as provide a new way of thinking about “city building” which guides high quality development with sensitivity given to the natural environment. The new policies should be updated to reflect the contemporary vision for development design which appropriately addresses the social dimension of the Town.

Similar emphasis has been placed in other, more current, Official Plans in the Greater Toronto Area which identify the need to respect existing communities and create a strong sense of identity. These Official Plans also include objectives which:

- Promote high quality, innovative and diverse Urban Design;
- Encourage sustainable building mechanisms;
- Facilitate harmonious integration of new and existing development from an aesthetic, social and functional perspective;
- Foster closer private-public sector partnership and collaboration.

The new policy needs to include a declaration on the Town’s commitment to be a leader in promoting innovative Urban Design in everything from the design of roads to the accessibility of Town parks. There is a great need to treat Urban Design as an essential city building ingredient rather than just an aesthetic overlay. Urban Design must be integrated into the full range of Council’s decision-making activities to ensure such objectives are achieved. Good Urban Design is good business as well as good social and environmental policy.

The existing title of “Urban Aesthetics” in the Official Plan does not convey the appropriate message with respect to city building. Urban Design is much more than simply the “aesthetic” of the built product. It has everything to do with the method of designing solutions for urban issues based on comprehensive analysis. The policies being derived from this process will generally be tailored to urban centres, while providing guidance for new development in the balance of the Town. As such, a more appropriate title for this section of the Official Plan may be “Development and Civic Design” which would reflect the policy intent. Moreover, the title “Urban Form” addresses the goal of the policy which is to create thriving, vibrant urban environments while also respecting existing neighbourhoods and the Town’s rich natural heritage.

## **5.5 GENERAL URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

There are varied, yet important, elements which need to be addressed when considering new development and redevelopment, especially when it involves infill or intensification projects. Further, there are different expectations for the form of development when considering locational context in the form of “Community-wide” principles (e.g. street network

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and redevelopment) versus “Element specific” principles (e.g. building form and public art).

In setting a new direction for Urban Form policies, there are several major themes which must run throughout the policies in order for them to be relevant, comprehensive, and defensible.

These themes relate to *preservation*, *compatibility*, *connectivity*, *legibility* and a *sustainable urban form* and are discussed in more detail below.

### ***Preservation***

*Preservation* is the art of enhancing the built environment and capitalising on a feature’s historical or natural significance and enhancing the feature such that its story is continued through the evolution of the Town. This can occur in a variety of ways and applies to the built, cultural and natural environment. It encompasses the preservation of views, important places and landmarks. It also extends to the creation of new ones.

The *preservation* and enhancement of these features helps provide context for new development and allows the continued enjoyment of a place for generations. It facilitates compatibility between old and new elements in the Town’s landscape, provides visual interest and a level of urbanism that could otherwise be lost.

A comprehensive approach to creating good design includes the concept of “sustainable design” (discussed in detail below) where a variety of techniques can be employed to arrive at the preferred solution. New policy is needed to help promote the preservation of Town assets worthy of celebration and which will set the tone for a better integration of land uses.

### ***Compatibility***

There are existing policies in the Town’s Official Plan which speak to “encourag[ing] quality building and landscape design in sympathy with the distinct character of individual communities or neighbourhoods, and with

the natural features of the landscape”. These types of policies lack direction regarding how they should be implemented. Additional policies are warranted which can help describe how *compatibility* is to be considered when introducing new development to an existing context.

Appropriate design solutions should, through the design process, identify how new projects will integrate with the existing context and how necessary sensitivities will be ensured. The current policies suggest that *compatibility* is to be accomplished by simply maintaining the status quo in terms of the built environment. This limits the potential for new development to help invigorate a neighbourhood and provide a balance of land uses and development options. Compatibility does not mean the same. Rather, policies should provide guidance for creating new development which can co-exist in harmony with established development and complement the diversity of community functions. It is also necessary for new development to enhance the character of neighbourhoods and communities, the built environment and support the community’s identity.

### ***Connectivity***

As noted above, the Town of Oakville is composed of growth areas and employment and institutional districts connected by corridors. These corridors represent a critical opportunity for the Town in terms of ensuring distinct, multi-modal and accessible avenues of connection for the Town’s citizens and visitors.

*Connectivity* has to occur beyond the macro scale of just building roads and must include consideration for how pedestrians connect to smaller sites, access transit, visit natural systems and do so in safety and comfort (i.e. walkability). New development plays a big role in ensuring this high degree of connectivity by enhancing circulation systems and creating clear routes.

### ***Legibility***

*Legibility* speaks to the need for coherence across the Town’s policies and land use classifications to allow for the harmonious integration of the new

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and existing development projects, especially with respect to redevelopment projects. This also incorporates issues of vertical and horizontal scale, and building massing.

An urban environment which is easy to navigate, safe and encourages public interaction can only be created when that environment is legible and understandable to its users. To that end, it is necessary to ensure the built environment is “human-scaled” and avoids monotony.

At the micro scale, the urban environment defines the individual components of buildings and how they are perceived from a distance. Integrating a new development into an existing context requires care to ensure issues of massing, height and rhythm are dealt with appropriately. These issues affect how a building fits into its surroundings, how it is perceived from the street and across the skyline.

*Legibility* is also created when there is a clear hierarchy of spaces and districts within the built environment. There is a diversity of uses which promotes a balanced land-use mix where residents can live, work and play within the community. This is further identified by the community’s different areas which play a role in the everyday experience of the user. There are mixed-use areas which function as focal points for activity, corridors which act as transitions to established neighbourhoods and connect the Town’s districts, and a multitude of other areas which fit into the urban structure.

To be legible, development must enhance the utility of a space for patrons. This can be accomplished by:

- communicating the identity of the community,
- contributing to a coherent streetscape,
- facilitating recognition and identification of communities and neighbourhoods,
- creating a visual character and identity,
- creating comfortable public spaces,
- encouraging the interaction of residents and visitors with their built and natural environments, and,

- providing a palette of community features which are distinct to the community.

### ***Sustainable Urban Form***

The principle of *sustainability* is found throughout the Town’s Council-approved policy framework. It is a concept that, by its very nature, must be addressed throughout the Town’s Official Plan including in the Town’s urban design policies. As identified in the Sustainable Environment paper, it should be recognised that attempting to achieve sustainability goals and objectives cannot be separated from other aspects of the Official Plan. Instead, *sustainability* principles affect all aspects of the plan. For example, policies that encourage compact development and alternative transportation modes can help mitigate climate change.

From an urban design perspective, policies within this section should promote and require a more sustainable urban form. For example, provincial legislation and policy has become more focused on intensification. Therefore, the new Official Plan must accommodate much of its growth through intensification rather than greenfield development. This growth must be more sustainable, avoiding ecosystem degradations, creating sustainable systems of transportation, promoting walkability “healthy communities”, and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Intensification will result in a more sustainable Town through increased walkability, better support for transit, less waste and the efficient use of services.

From a community design perspective this specifically means policies that address where feasible:

- Enhancing and establishing street-grid road system to allow for efficient transit delivery, pedestrian movement and cycling trips,
- Creating places that are pedestrian-friendly through strategies that address streetscape design, public art, location of active uses at-grade and a high-quality built environment,

- Creating transit-oriented development (and redevelopment) that makes transit practical and efficient including the location of primary entrances,
- Reducing parking standards and changing parking policies to re-enforce the walkability and transit-oriented nature of the growth centres,
- Promoting high-quality design through appropriate building massing, preserving views and vistas, and creating public gathering places,
- Promoting alternative energy forms such as district energy, and,
- Encouraging an evolution in building and landscape design which subscribes to the principles of sustainable architecture (i.e. such as LEED certification).

## **5.6 COMMUNITY SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

There are some commonalities across communities in terms of structuring elements and they can be found in almost every community and Urban Design's role is to recognise and enhance these:

- Public Realm,
- Redevelopment,
- Street network,
- Streetscapes,
- Edges and Gateways, and,
- Transit-Oriented Development

### ***5.6.1 Public Realm***

The public realm is comprised of public buildings, open spaces, streets, parks, plazas and squares. These assets bond people and places together and help establish the character of an area. In an effort to enhance the liveability of the Town, it is necessary to emphasise the continued evolutionary design of these assets through appropriate Official Plan policy. Although the Town

has taken some strides toward creating a high quality public realm through its investments in trails and parks, there has been less emphasis placed on other forms of public buildings, infrastructure, and the creation of signature Town elements. To achieve excellence in civic design across the entire Town, more effort is needed.

In addition, the transition from the public to the private realm is important to consider, and needs better direction to ensure it is more seamless and there is less division between them. Without this, what results is a public realm that lacks cohesion; instead, the private realm should be treated as an extension of the public realm. To accomplish this, the municipality must be able to deliver the physical infrastructure which supports the cultural and social infrastructure of the community.

### ***5.6.2 Redevelopment***

As noted above, the PPS and the Growth Plan identify intensification as an important component of the Province's growth management strategy. Guiding the physical design of future redevelopment projects is important to ensure the harmonious integration of new development with existing built form.

Redevelopment, if properly planned, contributes significantly towards revitalisation and rejuvenation of the community. The Official Plan should distinguish the various forms of redevelopment including infill, intensification (including brownfields and greyfields), replacement and adaptive reuse and to develop policies accordingly.

These policies have to be in a form that ensures appropriate regard is had for the existing scale, form and character of an area, and that new development is sensitive to the existing context and blends into the existing streetscape. More contemporary styles of architecture need to be sensitive and sympathetic to adjacent buildings. New development need not be exactly the same as the existing, but demonstrate that it can co-exist and even enhance the established neighbourhood. This must be the overarching

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principle for ensuring the appropriate design of redevelopment projects, especially in more sensitive areas.

Policy can provide only a finite amount of direction, beyond which a compendium documents may be needed to help users understand the range of issues to examine and consider when contemplating a redevelopment project. For example, a guidance document can help provide clarity on such matters as: the orientation of buildings, the rhythm and design of existing building massing, improvements to streetscapes, minimising overlook conditions, maintaining access to daylight, transition of scale, appropriate buffering, relationship of entrances, building height and cornice lines, fenestration styles, roof styles, use of local building materials, detailing, texture, colour and door forms, parking location, setbacks, accommodating transition, and maintaining heritage / historical characteristics.



### **5.6.3 Street Network**

The street network is one of the major defining elements of the physical structure of a community. As a network, it is an interwoven web that connects the components of the community.

As such, new development needs to continue to support a strong, well-connected street network. Development proposals have to account for the structuring element that the street network creates. As well, the street network has to support pedestrians and cyclists – it is not solely for automobile traffic. The encouragement of a grid-road system contributes to this recognition.

### **5.6.4 Streetscape**

The development of coherent streetscapes is integral to the development of the community as it reinforces the overall hierarchy of the street network, communicates image and character, and directly affects the daily experience of the residents and users of the environment. Streets are also public spaces and meeting places for the community. Their design should recognise this function.

The streetscape consists of a variety of components, including:

- Street trees,
- Lighting,
- Street furniture,
- Signage,
- Built form,
- Paving materials, and,
- Landscaped features.

The design of the streetscape should create an enriched public space for residents and visitors and achieve an environment scaled towards the pedestrian user. In essence, it should be an objective to create an “outdoor room” for the user which is comfortable and convenient to use and navigate. There are a number of ways to create this environment including

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a rational street grid of a walkable size (i.e. in the range of 150 metres and no longer than 250 metres), having buildings properly relating to the width of the street and incorporating appropriate pedestrian protection (i.e. canopies, arcades, colonnades, and podiums). This can occur in those limited areas of the Town which are still subject to further development (i.e. Winston Park West and the Petro-Can refinery lands). Furthermore, opportunities transit and passive activities need to be integrated with the street edge.

With respect to pedestrian-scale, streetscaping is primarily concerned with how a building addresses the sidewalk and creates visual interest. This can greatly affect how the built form supports the comfort of the pedestrian and animates the public realm. On more urban streets, the built form needs to support the pedestrian experience and engage passers-by through the liberal use of transparency for first and second floor windows, encouraging the right mix of uses at-grade, minimising pedestrian and vehicular conflicts and employing appropriately-scaled signage.



### ***5.6.5 Edges and Gateways***

These features provide the means to understand a community at its boundaries, reveal the community's image, and the character of different neighbourhoods and spaces for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. Edges and Gateways provide a clear boundary and definition from one physical space to another.

Gateways represent significant opportunities to mark the entrance into neighbourhoods, communities, centres, districts and the municipality itself. Gateways can be expressed through a combination of elements such as landmarks, building mass, use of high quality architectural materials, landscaping, upgraded sidewalk treatments, wayfinding signage, special lighting, gathering areas, seating, and public art. The scale and character of the "gateway treatment" needs to maintain the context of the area which it is introducing.

Edges are located adjacent to areas which form the boundary to a neighbourhood and allow a transition to occur, through a variety of means, from one area to another.

The new policy structure needs to account for these areas and how they are to be treated through appropriate criteria.

### ***5.6.6 Transit-Oriented Development***

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is a component of city building that requires specific emphasis in Urban Design policy. Creating a well-functioning and active TOD requires a holistic approach to planning at the earliest stage and must be supported by land use, physical design, process and incentives.

TODs carry many benefits to municipalities and to be successful, need two main ingredients – people and good design. It may be argued that if you have the latter, the former will take care of itself, but to have both, TODs need to espouse the virtues of a mixed-use environment.

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Mixed-use development generally refers to the integration of office, retail and residential development in a compact form, usually at higher densities with focus on a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere that encourages the wise use of resources and operates at an efficient scale. As well, these areas become a focal points in the community where people congregate.

Principles to be considered for TODs include giving preference to a structured grid network with active uses at-grade, encouraging intensification and a mix of higher density uses along transit routes, minimal parking requirements, improving accessibility to transit facilities through better integration, and creating an environment conducive to pedestrians and transit-users by promoting properly designed amenities and streetscapes.

Candidates for establishing transit nodes and transit-oriented development are generally within the primary Growth Areas, being Midtown, Uptown and Palermo, as well as in the Kerr Street area.

## **5.7 ELEMENT SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

There are elements within the urban environment that may be found in limited exposure and not across the whole of the municipality. These elements require policy which encourage and support their specific nature because of their contribution to the Town's urban environment. These specific elements include:

- Public Views and Vistas,
- Landmarks,
- Built Form (mid-rise and tall building forms),
- Public Buildings and Infrastructure,
- Parks, Squares and Plazas,
- Landscaping,
- Automobile-oriented uses, and
- Public Art

### ***5.7.1 Public Views and Vistas***

There are prominent public views throughout the municipality and often times, these can become compromised with the introduction of new development that does not take sufficient heed of how to preserve valuable public views.

The public's access to views and vistas are generally located along streets and rights-of-way, but can occur within other parts of the public realm, such as along valley trails. These form a critical part of the visual journey through a community. Examples of views are towards Lake Ontario, the visibility of church spires in the distance, the termination of a viewshed by a significant building or open space.

It is necessary to incorporate the consideration of views and vistas early in the design analysis, particularly when in proximity to parks, community facilities and institutions, and open space links. The strategic location of these view corridors contribute to the creation of a balanced land use pattern as they provide points of orientation and provide a role in distinguishing neighbourhood and community identities.



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Enhancing existing public viewsheds, and creating new ones, can be achieved through the careful placement of new buildings, the strategic alignment of road rights-of-way, and the layout of circulation and open space systems, in addition to the siting of major features and public uses.

New policy is needed which encourages view termini in the public and private realm oriented towards a feature such as a prominent building, and needs to occur at scale levels.

### **5.7.2 Landmarks**

The current Official Plan lacks sufficient policy to allow for the integration of landmarks into new design. Criteria is required which recognises existing landmarks and their characteristics, but also accommodates new landmarks in prominent locations in the Town. The criteria need to account for what a landmark is, and how they are to be treated, based on their locational characteristics and unique function.



Landmarks can include public views, civic buildings, historical sites and structures, new private buildings with specific architectural treatment and public squares, among others.

### **5.7.3 Built Form**

The design of new buildings in the Town needs to be carefully considered and evaluated since buildings become the backdrop of the public realm and provide a multitude of functions beyond simply providing shelter. With different building forms, come distinct challenges in terms of designing great, timeless buildings.

#### ***Tall Building Forms***

Taller buildings are generally 10 storeys and more in height. Outside of select locations in the Greater Toronto Area, almost all buildings of this height will be for primarily residential purposes. The evolution of the Town towards a greater level of urbanisation, will only offer an increase in the quantity of tall, dense residential buildings. The preferred location of buildings of height will generally be directed to the Town's Growth Areas where future residents can make use of the facilities and amenities these areas can offer (i.e. transit, employment and commercial opportunities).

With taller buildings, it is the Town's intent to avoid the slab-like apartment buildings reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s where buildings were wide and thick, dominated the skyline, cast extensive shadows, and were an island in the midst of a sea of parking and poorly landscaped green space. Rather, the objective should be to foster a culture of buildings which exude elegance and grace and are located appropriately on their site where residents and visitors can enjoy public space and perhaps commercial and/or employment uses at the base of the building. To achieve this, there are a number of factors that have to be addressed with new buildings to ensure they can meet the Town's requirements. These include:

- a distinct base, middle and top to the building,
- abiding by maximum floorplate sizes,

- direct parking locations to below-grade with some visitor / servicing parking at-grade, if warranted,
- incorporate build-within (or façade) zones where active uses are required at the base of the building,
- a taller first storey which will permit a greater number of potential uses,
- establish the principle of building form with minimum building and podium heights (if podiums are encouraged) to help address the micro-climate,
- ensure accessibility,
- require the whole of the building be properly designed, including



- the building's top (i.e. cap and/or roof),
- require a varied skyline which exhibits interest.

### ***Mid-rise Building Forms***

Unlike taller building forms, most mid-rise buildings can be less costly and quicker to build and therefore more likely to be proposed for new residential developments in the Town.

Mid-rise buildings are usually 4-10 storeys in height and will most likely be found in the different Mixed-Use designations being proposed with the new Official Plan and along the Town's various corridors where these building heights may be more appropriate. This building form needs to be designed with a focus on the street edge – again to help define a strong public realm, with the building or terrace height being established by the right-of-way width.



Building design needs to:

- have a clear base, middle and top,

- incorporate appropriate terracing to define building height as well as accommodate roof-top amenities,
- have clear articulation with vertical or horizontal elements,
- locate parking appropriately, and,
- consider rooflines and roofscapes.

These requirements should be reinforced in the Official Plan, as well as include policies directing the need for indoor and outdoor amenity spaces such as balconies, terraces, courtyards, and rooftop gardens, among other forms.

#### **5.7.4 Public Buildings & Infrastructure**

Public buildings play an important part in the understanding of a municipality since they are accessible to the public and are often located in prominent locations. As important components of the built form, they should be designed to meet the following objectives:

- To enhance the visual quality of the public domain,
- To promote the character of the community,
- To encourage sustainable design initiatives,
- To communicate civic identity, and,
- To demonstrate leadership with respect to sustainable building design.

These buildings can include civic and sport centres, institutional buildings, fire halls, libraries, parking structures, schools, and community centres. They should function as a centralising part of a community, be designed to a high quality and in a sustainable fashion and have more than a singular purpose. Similarly, quasi-public and institutional uses such as schools, places of worship etc. are also important civic and visual features in the community and have the potential to act as landmarks.

Buildings which occupy such an important part of the public realm need to be located prominently, such as at a terminating vista and include opportunities to engage the public realm by employing open-air gathering and meeting places in the form of public squares and/or plazas. Policies are

necessary to help provide more specific direction for their design and development.

The other component of the public realm is the presence of infrastructure and engineered structures such as: bridges, bridge abutments, headwalls (associated with stormwater management facilities), retaining walls, transformer vaults and drainage channels, among others. These structures and facilities are necessary in the public realm, however, they require better integration and greater screening to mitigate their visual presence. This can be accomplished through the design process of the infrastructure as well as employing unique utility box designs, street furniture, light standards and other streetscape elements.



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### ***5.7.5 Parks, Squares & Plazas***

Spaces used for gathering that are open to the public play an equally important role in defining the public realm as buildings. People need opportunities for passive enjoyment of the outdoors during all times of the year. The current Official Plan policies do not provide enough guidance for the creation or design of these types of facilities. There are already some areas in the Town such as George’s Square and Town Square (in the Downtown) that should act as models for the development of similar types of passive spaces in the Growth Areas.

In a more urban environment, these facilities take on a different texture in that plazas are typically hardscaped. The design of these places needs to work seamlessly between the public and private realms and function as an extension of both as it traverses to the other. Furthermore, there is opportunity for the built form which acts as a backdrop to these spaces, to play an integral role by fronting these spaces and creating the “public room”.

Policies are needed in the new Official Plan which provides sufficient guidance for the building of different forms of public spaces – from intimate parkettes which function as neighbourhood centres to quasi-public squares that act as the welcome mat to civic buildings.

### ***5.7.6 Landscaping***

Landscaping is not currently part of the urban design policy of the Official Plan. It has historically been treated as an after-thought and used to screen visual clutter. Policy is needed that directs the use of landscaping as a unifying and highlighting mechanism which adds to the texture and vibrancy of the urban environment. Landscaping can also contribute to achieving the Town’s goals regarding urban forest canopy.

### ***5.7.7 Automobile-oriented uses***

Oakville is traditionally dominated by the automobile as can be witnessed by the existing design of most of the Town’s roads. That should change somewhat with the evolution of the Town’s Growth Areas, however, there is still a need for sufficient Official Plan policy to direct how the automobile is treated and accepted in everything from parking garages in the Growth Areas to garage locations on single-detached lots.

While the core objective of creating a usable, functional urban environment is to encourage pedestrian-friendly, transit-supportive development, there remains the need to maintain a certain level of automobile-oriented development to cater to the demand of users.

The issues that the policy needs to address are compatibility (in use, scale and character); convenient, comfortable and safe pedestrian movement within and surrounding the site; a clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to ensure ease and safety of movement; and environmental issues. The intent is to ensure the appropriate location of these facilities is appropriate within the given context.

Automobile-oriented uses include parking lots and garages, service stations, drive-throughs, loading and service areas, and driveways.

### ***Parking Lots and Structures***

The principle of locating parking areas properly is key to creating a pleasant urban environment. Although it would be ideal to locate all vehicle parking below-grade, it is impractical for a number of reasons (especially for buildings that are not multi-storey). As such, surface parking lots need to be designed to be secondary to the prime use of real estate – being the development of the built form. Open parking lots require appropriate screening and access, and need to allow pedestrians direct connections from parking areas to buildings with maximum safety and minimal conflict.

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Above-grade parking structures need to be treated in a similar fashion, in that they require appropriate screening in order to co-exist in the urban environment. Garages should be partnered with other uses and screened from view through the use of building materials and liner uses.

### *Site Servicing*

Site servicing includes the locating of those uses ancillary to a business operation or multi-unit residential building such as: loading, driveway access, refuse / recycling areas, and passenger pick-up / drop-off. These areas, while necessary, do not need to be prominent in new development and can be easily screened and incorporated into the design of buildings. Policies are necessary which provide this type of direction to ensure the built form retains prominence and the streetscape design is not compromised.

### *Drive-Throughs*

With the advent of drive-throughs, a new level of conflict was inevitably created between pedestrians and automobiles. Although the Town has a “Drive-through Guideline” document, it remains only a guideline, and does not carry the weight of policy. To that end, additional policies are needed in the Official Plan to provide direction as to where drive-throughs may be acceptable in the Town, as well as how those facilities are to be designed. For example, it may be appropriate to restrict drive-throughs within the Growth Areas, and prohibit them in the Downtown and Heritage Conservation Districts and encourage appropriate separation distances between drive-throughs and residential areas.

The development of properties with drive-throughs, where permitted, needs to respond to the surrounding context, reinforce street edges and contribute to high quality public realm and streetscapes through a combination of site planning, landscaping and built form. The built form design, in turn, needs to contribute to the Town’s objectives for high quality physical design and achieve a pedestrian scale.

Through the current drive-through study, a number of issues relating to built form, on-site circulation, and landscaping, among others, will be evaluated with the intent of revising Official Plan policy as necessary.

### *Service Stations*

The development of service stations has become more complex for municipalities over time due to the increase in property sizes desired by the oil companies and the range of uses located on the sites. Besides canopies, pumps and islands, ancillary structures, signage and lighting, there are now drive-throughs, convenience stores, car washes, mechanics’ garages, and sales display areas. With all of these facilities competing for space, pedestrians are often over-looked as potential users.

Policies are required in the new Official Plan for the purpose of guiding the development of these types of operations and to address building massing and scale as well as pedestrian and vehicular circulation.



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### 5.7.8 Public Art

Public art plays a significant role in reinforcing the public realm, creating visual interest, and instilling civic pride. Opportunities for public art can range from the integration of ideas into the streetscape, open space and built form designs, to the creation of stand-alone sculptures.

To help achieve a greater contribution of public art in the Town, there are a variety of strategies the municipality could employ, including:

- creating a Public Art Programme,
- requiring a certain percentage of a development pro forma be utilised for public art,
- develop a public funding programme,
- increased utilisation of bonusing (through section 37 of the *Planning Act*).

It is also reasonable to identify where in the municipality it would be appropriate to encourage public art – such as at Gateway locations, within



public squares, and at major transit facilities. As well, public art should be encouraged as part of all significant development, both public and private.

## **5.8 IMPLEMENTATION**

The Urban Design component of the Official Plan requires an Implementation section which can provide direction for the application of the policies. Consideration should also be given to include new policies and potential new implementation tools to further promote high quality and innovative Urban Design:

- review of existing Zoning By-law to ensure compatibility with Official Plan policies in respect of urban form and design,
- ensure Urban Design is a component of the Environmental Assessment process,
- the use of Urban Design Briefs during the review of development applications,
- identify areas and/or situations which require additional design guidance, and,
- provide direction for review of site plan control by-law and create a Site Plan Standards Manual.

The section can also refer to compendium guideline documents in use at the Town as well as provide direction for their respective updating and new documents.

## **5.9 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED DIRECTIONS FOR POLICY CHANGES**

The Urban Design section of the Official Plan requires clear direction for addressing both the private and public realms within the Town.

New sections are needed which can account for the Town's several Growth Areas and the corridors that connect them. As well, direction is needed for

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dealing with the specific elements found Town-wide, such as for the built form of new development.

The intent of the directions outlined is to help instil a sense of civic pride, enhance the liveability of the Town and promote a sustainable urban form for residents of the municipality as it relates to the urban environment.

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## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Along with the necessary policy improvements in the new Official Plan, it is warranted that the Town create an overall strategy as it relates to Urban Design and begin to link the Town's various initiatives with the goal of creating an urban environment which responds to peoples' needs.

An Urban Design Strategy should contain programming which includes, among other matters:

- Creating educational sessions and materials,
  - Employ a design-first strategy through the review of new development applications,
  - Encouraging closer private and public sector collaboration in promoting excellence in development and city design,
  - Revise the manner in which the Town conducts site plan review and create a Site Plan Manual to inform applicants of the process and expectations (i.e. use language in the Official Plan which accounts for the direction in Bill 51),
  - Review and revise the Town's Landscape Guidelines for incorporation into a new Site Plan Manual,
  - Create policies to promote sustainable architecture and development practices,
  - Consider the merits of using outside design professionals for guidance purposes (perhaps through a Design Review Panel),
  - Find opportunities to integrate urban design goals with civic undertakings, new capital projects and maintenance thereof (i.e. ensure Urban Design is part of the RFP process and better integrated into the Town's Environmental Assessment process),
  - Create standards for public realm and interface of private projects,
  - Foster appreciation of public art in concert with the Arts & Culture Master Plan and new development opportunities,
  - Holding design competitions for significant public projects,
  - Encouraging senior levels of government and public utilities to have regard for design objectives,
- Promoting the integration of heritage preservation with the urban fabric,
  - Develop and adopt urban design standards for the Town's corridors,
  - Consider the creation of a wayfinding signage programme,
  - Periodic reviews and studies for improvement of existing areas, and,
  - Re-consider the Urban Design Awards programme in its use of promoting excellence in public appreciation for well-designed projects.

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## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

The existing policy structure in the Town's Official Plan, as it relates to Urban Design, does not accurately address the direction in which the Town needs to evolve. Policies are focused predominantly on issues like infill and intensification but do not provide the guidance proponents require in terms of providing viable and functional solutions.

There is a lack of direction in terms of addressing different building forms and the responsibility of both the municipality and the development industry as it relates to creating great public places. There is a need to bolster the Official Plan policies for matters of built form and Urban Design for the purposes of ensuring the Town achieves the best possible quality in new private development and in civic initiatives.

There is also a new direction the Town is taking in terms of directing new development to the Town's Growth Areas in an effort to create mixed-use centres, which is reflective of the Province's policy requirements.

In short, the new Official Plan needs to include clear policy direction which establishes the Town's expectations with respect to the built environment and the public realm.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **CITY OF TORONTO**

#### ***Structure***

Policies and objectives are differentiated through formatting. This helps bring clear definition to what and where the policies are, and pulls out the objectives in a narrative piece away from the numbered system commonly found in many other official plans.

In general, policies in the Toronto Official Plan are more high level than those found in many other Official Plans. Urban Design policies are not explicitly identified. Instead, Urban Design policies are weaved throughout the plan. Reference is made to the creation and application of Urban Design guidelines that fall outside of the plan itself. For example, Chapter 2 Section 2.2.1 Downtown: The Heart of the City Policy # 6 states “design guidelines specific to districts of historic or distinct character will be developed and applied to ensure new development respects the context of such districts in terms of the development’s fit with existing streets, setbacks, heights and relationship to landmark buildings.”

The Official Plan also emphasizes that Urban Design has business and social dimensions in creating places that beautiful, vibrant, safe and inclusive.

#### ***Policies***

The bulk of Urban Design policy is most closely addressed through Chapter 3: Building Successful Cities. This section has policies that, for the most part, relate to Urban Design principles. However, these policies also address other issues. Included are policies that address:

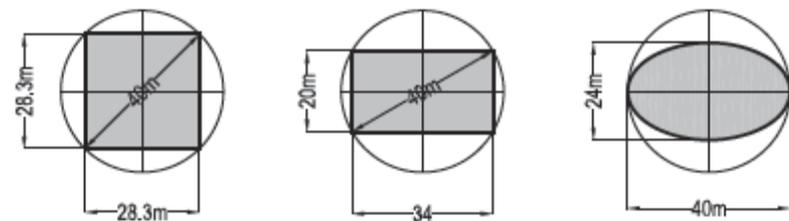
- Architectural Quality;
- Protecting public views;
- City streets as public open space;

- Pedestrian comfort through design;
- Promotion and maintenance of grid streets;
- The importance of public buildings;
- Principles of Universal Accessibility;
- The design of parks and other open space features; and,
- Promotion of public art.

#### ***East Bayfront Design Guidelines / Tall Buildings Urban Design Guidelines***

Policies and guidelines of interest are also found in a number of implementation documents including the East Bayfront Design Guidelines and the Tall Building Design Guidelines. In particular these documents contain useful principles for the design of taller buildings. For example:

- Penthouses are allowed to exceed the max height of buildings however, their setbacks and heights are strictly limited (i.e. 12m height limit, 20m width limit, 40m length limit, minimum 3m setback)
- To encourage slender towers, preserve views and reduce impacts, no portion above 58m is permitted to have a dimension greater than 20m, measured from exterior wall to exterior wall
- For tall building, a minimum distance separation of 25m is recommended



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## **CITY OF BRAMPTON**

### ***Structure***

The Brampton Official Plan identifies a number of Urban Design objectives and how these pillars are going to be achieved. Examples of objectives include promoting:

- a) safety;
- b) heritage;
- c) Transit Oriented Development;
- d) flexibility for innovation; and,
- e) sustainable development practices such as LEED.

Urban Design policies also address many land use designations with certain building forms addressed directly such as tall buildings. In addition, the UD section takes components of those land uses such as parking and loading areas and has general policies that pertain to them more specifically.

Policies are generally divided up into public and private realm policies. Regarding the public realm, the Official Plan addresses its importance and what this means, including promoting the use of design competitions. The Urban Design section also has its own implementation section, which outlines various tools that will be used to achieve these policies.

### ***Policies***

Like the City of Toronto, the road network is directly addressed including:

- Grid like design;
- Smaller block lengths;
- Multiple connections between streets for pedestrians/bikes/cars;
- Street pattern design with topography and natural features;
- Roads abutting natural features and urban on the other side; and,
- The creation of cross-sections.

Public Realm Policies also address:

- Public Squares and their placement at gateway locations;

- Public art as landmarks;
- Reference to cultural master plan – public art policy, funding, incentives;
- Edges and gateways; and,
- Public Open Space and Semi-public Open Space.

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## **CITY OF LONDON**

### ***Structure***

In general, Urban Design policies in London are narrative in nature. Policies generally talk about what is encouraged rather than what is required. London's OP policies also discuss what should be avoided.

Urban Design policies are divided into the following sections: neighbourhood structure, public realm, mixing uses and pedestrian environments.

### ***Policies***

#### ***Neighbourhood Structure***

Policies in the section generally discuss residential subdivision design. Policies include:

- Encouraging a clear and simple development form;
- Creating views to and from significant open space features;
- Setting a maximum block length of 150 m;
- Encouraging grid-network of streets; and,
- Encouraging entry features.

#### ***Public Realm***

The public realm is defined as “all areas where the public has unrestricted physical access and all areas to which the public has unrestricted visual access such as buildings in a streetscape or views and vistas of natural features, parks and open space.” The public realm should have High quality urban characteristic with detailed attention given to elements such as “public spaces such as parks, squares, sitting areas, streets and buildings that reflect the desired image of the community.”

#### ***Mixing Uses, Scales and Densities***

Mixing uses, scales and densities is encouraged because it provides opportunities for “social and economic activities as well as creating physical and visual texture in the urban landscape.”

#### ***Pedestrian Environments***

Creating walkable places is recognized as being interchangeable with creating sustainable urban communities. To achieve this requires “the integration and coordination of elements of both the public and private realm such as landscaping; views and vistas”, as well as things such as street furniture.

#### ***Compatibility of Residential Intensification***

The London OP also addresses the tests for assessing the compatibility of residential intensification. These include:

- building height;
- building scale and massing;
- setback provisions for privacy, access to sunlight, and amenity spaces around / near properties;
- architectural design;
- integration with streetscape (including building orientation and street-building relationship); and,
- traffic volumes.

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## **CITY OF KINGSTON**

The City of Kingston's OP contains detailed policies with regards to defining the aspects of compatibility and adverse impacts.

Compatibility is defined as "the general capacity of a specific project or group of projects to co-exist and function together in a state of harmony."

The OP goes on to define specific aspects of compatibility including:

- Land use characteristics including traffic;
- Impact of physical features such as height and massing; and,
- Architectural treatments.

Regarding architectural treatment in particular, the policies discuss what is meant by compatibility. Compatibility does not mean a simple extension of existing architectural features; instead, it refers to the functional and operational characteristics of surrounding land uses.

The plan also defines significant adverse impacts. In short it means to respecting the context of the surrounding area and may include consequences such as:

- Disrupting adjacent uses;
- Disrupting the visual impression of an area;
- Creating focal points that are unsupported; and,
- Introducing inappropriate activity volumes and traffic patterns.

## **CITY OF MISSISSAUGA**

### ***Structure***

Mississauga's Urban Design policies are found in Section 3.18. The introduction to this section recognizes the importance on context in applying policies. Urban Design policies should give consideration to specific circumstances of each planning district. Similarly implementation of the policies should be flexible and take into account the individual design merits of applications.

The policies are organized into twelve sections:

- Context;
- Places;
- Urban Form;
- Streetscape;
- Pedestrian Activity;
- Spaces;
- Landscaping and Planting;
- Scale;
- Visual Interest;
- Civic Spaces;
- Safety; and,
- Accessibility.

### ***Policies***

In terms of specific policies of interest, Mississauga's Urban Design policies include:

- Buildings above 3 *storeys* are required to address overlook, obstructions of grade level vistas and overshadowing. Therefore the City may require sun and shadow studies, view studies and micro-climatic studies

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- Creating a sense of enclosure, especially at major intersections. Enclosure “means having built form along the street edge to heights appropriate to the context of the intersection”
  - Building entrances should address the street with the main entrance facing the street
  - Buildings with frontage along major roads and provincial highways will have upgraded elevations
  - Buildings and site design will provide bicycle facilities
  - Front building facades should be parallel to the street with periodic indentation in the form of features such as urban plazas
  - Public art should be promoted as integral component of public works, land development and open space planning
  - Urban Design at intersections and along boulevards should be of high quality to recognize their importance
  - The application of CPTED principles

## **CITY OF KITCHENER**

### ***Structure***

In Kitchener’s Official Plan, the Urban Design section provides an overview which notes that the policies are used for guidance purposes and implementation is achieved through co-operation with developers, property owners and residents.

The policies are broken out under headings with a statement of intent under each.

### ***Policies***

There are general policies focused on the following:

- Streetscape,
- Tree conservation,
- View and vistas,
- Skyline,
- Landscaping,
- Human scale,
- Public art
- Universal design,
- Lighting,
- Security,
- Signage,
- Stormwater management,
- Building orientation, and,
- Energy efficiency, among others.