

Delivering Change on the GROUND

Guelph Urban Design Summit

Professional Workshop PROGRAM

May 6, 2014
River Run Centre, Guelph, ON
guelph.ca/urbandesignsummit
#UDS2014 

Presented by:



In partnership with:



Delivering Change on the Ground in Guelph

Greetings and welcome!

I'm thrilled to welcome urban design professionals to the Guelph Urban Design Summit.

Guelph is considered one of the first planned towns in Canada. Our founder, John Galt, was a planner and city builder. Unlike some Canadian cities that grew around the needs of rural settlers, Guelph grew around a core where amenities such as churches, schools, and stores were already available.

187 years later, the need for good planning is as important as ever, as Guelph continues to grow. As professionals, you know that urban design is crucial to city-building. But the question remains, how do we move beyond the vision to deliver change on the ground?

We are thrilled to have a number of Canada's leading thinkers in urban design with us today to discuss that question. I am looking forward to a thought-provoking, inspiring, and productive day.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Farbridge". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Karen Farbridge
Mayor
City of Guelph

Summit Prize Giveaway



Drop your business card in the box by the Tweet Board for your chance to win a prize. And don't forget to follow the Summit hashtag **#UDS2014** and use the hashtag to tweet out your big 'ah-ha' moments and questions. Don't have a Twitter account? Post your tweet on the Tweet Board in Canada Company Hall.

Ministry of Infrastructure

Ministère de l'Infrastructure

Ministry of
Transportation

Ministère des
Transports

Office of the Minister

Bureau du ministre

Ferguson Block, 3rd Floor
77 Wellesley St. West
Toronto, Ontario
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(416) 327-9200
www.ontario.ca/infrastructure
www.mto.gov.on.ca



It is my pleasure to extend warm greetings to the participants of the Guelph Urban Design Summit.

My Ministry is pleased to support this Summit through the Places to Grow Implementation Fund, which supports projects that promote and help achieve the policies and goals of the Province's growth plans.

Our government understands the importance of our public spaces and building public works as public art. In November 2013, the Ontario government introduced Bill 141, *the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act*. The proposed act is about continuous improvement in strategic, evidence-based and long-term infrastructure planning. A key component of the proposed bill is promoting excellence in infrastructure design. Better design of signature, government-owned transportation, arts, museum and heritage infrastructure can save money over time.



As Minister and a former mayor, I know the importance of our public spaces and high-quality urban design. This Summit brings together experts, citizens and politicians to discuss experiences, solutions and best practices in urban design and growth planning in Ontario. What you learn here will enhance the vitality of our Growth Plan communities.

Please accept my best wishes for a successful and stimulating workshop.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glen Murray".

Glen Murray
Minister

From the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable

Municipal

Urban Designers' Roundtable

An information sharing forum for public sector urban designers in Ontario



Background on

mudr

**Ontario Communities:
Creating better places through
design**

For more information
please contact:

Sean Galloway
City of London
sgallowa@London.ca
519.661.2500 ext. 5361

Or

Jana Kelemen
Town of Oakville
Jana.kelemen@oakville.ca
905.845.6601 ext. 3026

Launched in October 2006, the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable (MUDR) was assembled as an inter-active forum for public sector urban designers and planners, with a view to providing a venue for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of information between Ontario municipalities related to the most current issues and topics on urban design and municipal service delivery.

MUDR meets twice a year, with each meeting hosted in a different location across the province. Now in its 7th successful year, the Roundtable includes participation of more than 30 municipalities across Ontario, including staff of Metrolinx, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Ontario Growth Secretariat.

The purpose of the Municipal Urban Designers Roundtable is as follows:

- **To provide an informal discussion forum for urban designers employed by the public sector;**
- **To encourage dialogue between municipalities on a broad range of issues concerning urban design;**
- **To promote the importance, understanding and awareness of urban design issues facing jurisdictions across the province;**
- **To facilitate the exchange of information, ideas and best practices related to the administration and delivery of municipal urban design programs; and**
- **To identify opportunities and ways to nurture a stronger urban design ethic among Ontario municipalities, including support for those wishing to establish urban design programs through planning and related disciplines.**



On behalf of Planning Services at the City of Guelph, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the Guelph Urban Design Summit: 'Delivering Change on the Ground'.

Guelph has a proud legacy of thoughtful planning, right from our earliest days as one of the first planned communities in Canada. Over the past number of years, the City has built on this legacy, and through extensive community engagement has made fundamental planning decisions that will transform the way the City grows and evolves.

This transformative vision is captured and defined in policy documents such as our new City-wide Official Plan and the Downtown Secondary Plan, in strategies and programs such as the Downtown Strategic Assessment, the Guelph Well-Being and Community Energy Initiatives, and in the City's Corporate Strategic Plan, which upholds City Building as one of its key Focus Areas. Central to all of these is the role of high-quality urban design and placemaking.

So how do we deliver this vision and create change on the ground? The Summit moves beyond visioning and focuses on real-world case studies, successes, challenges and urban design tools and other strategies which can be adapted to communities of all sizes.

The three Sessions:

- Making the Economics Work;
- Showing Results Now; and,
- Evolving the Suburban Commercial Strip

are interactive, each having three different speakers presenting ideas and lessons learned and then participating in a moderated discussion. The Mobile Workshops will further explore the concepts presented during the Sessions in real-world situations here in the City of Guelph.

The Summit is a great opportunity to listen, learn and engage, reconnect with friends and colleagues, and make new connections. Our hope is that the day leaves you more inspired and more motivated than ever.

Enjoy the Summit!



Todd Salter
General Manager, Planning Services
City of Guelph

ATTENTION **Ontario Professional Planner Institute Members**

Don't forget that the Summit is an excellent opportunity to earn CPL learning units!

Agenda

7:45 am to 8:30 am Registration
Meet and Greet Breakfast

8:30 am Welcome Addresses from:

- City of Guelph: Ann Pappert, CAO
- MUDR, Steven Bell, City of Mississauga

8:45 am **SESSION 1** **Making the Economics Work:** Urban design and the creation of value

Speakers: Joseph Minicozzi, Principal, Urban3
Ian Panabaker, Corporate Manager, Downtown Renewal, City of Guelph
Ralph Giannone, Principal, Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects

Moderators: Sean Galloway, Manager, Urban Design, City of London

10:30 am Refreshment and Networking Break

10:45 am **SESSION 2** **Showing Results Now:** Using quick-win strategies to start implementing good urban design today

Speakers: Helena Grdadolnik, Associate Director, Workshop Architecture Inc.
Andrew Howard, co-founder of Build a Better Block
Julia van der Lann de Vries and Khaldoon Ahmed, Urban Designers, City of Hamilton

Moderator: Lise Burcher, Associate Professor, University of Guelph and Guelph City Councillor

12:00 pm Lunch and Networking

12:45 pm **SESSION 3** **Evolving the Suburban Commercial Strip:** Making more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use corridors

Speakers: Tim Smith, Senior Associate, Urban Strategies Inc.
James N. Parakh, Urban Design Manager, Toronto and East York, City of Toronto
Paul Bottomley, Manager of Policy, Research and Forecasting, Region of York

Moderator: Karen Hammond, Lecturer and Manager of Design, School of Planning, University of Waterloo

2:00 pm Networking Break

2:15 pm **Mobile Workshops**
Depart at 2:15 pm and return to River Run Centre for Debriefing Session at 3:30/3:45 pm

- Making it Happen in a Historic Downtown Context
- Evolving Suburban Commercial Centres to Walkable Mixed-Use Nodes
- Evolving the Suburban Commercial Corridor

4:15 pm **Reception and Closing Remarks**
Todd Salter, General Manager, Planning Services, City of Guelph

Making the Economics Work: Urban design and the creation of value

SPEAKER #1: Joseph Minicozzi, Principal, Urban3, will discuss using return on investment tools to prioritize mixed-use, walkable development. Urban3 utilizes meta-data techniques and urban design analytic methods to provide a unique and practical perspective on urban economics. Their approach focuses on bridging the gap between econometric analysis, public policy, and urban design. In general, Urban3 approaches this exercise by looking at municipalities as real estate development corporations, with city administrators being the fund managers of the portfolio. However, sometimes municipalities make policy decisions that undermine their ability to create value.

For this case study, Urban3, in collaboration with City Staff, will perform a comparative analysis by calculating property tax revenue for specific land-use patterns in Guelph. Using this information “rock star” properties/buildings will be identified and the land-use story that is developing and shaping the City of Guelph will be shown. The ‘rock-star’ properties typically include indicator properties that represent average property types. With that, Urban3 will circle back and examine existing policies to investigate what is driving the physical decisions in Guelph and whether or not policies could or should be adjusted to capture the cost of development patterns within a reasonable time cycle.

Joseph Minicozzi, AICP, is currently the principal of Urban3. Prior to creating Urban3, he served as the Executive Director for the Asheville Downtown Association (North Carolina). Before moving to Asheville, he was the primary administrator of the Form Based Code for downtown West Palm Beach, Florida. Joe’s cross-training in city planning in the public and private sectors, as well as private sector real estate finance has allowed him to develop award-winning analytic tools that have garnered national attention in Planetizen, The Wall Street Journal, The New Urban News, National Association of Realtors, Atlantic and other publications. He received his Masters in Architecture and Urban Design from Harvard University.

SPEAKER #2: Ian Panabaker, Corporate Manager, Downtown Renewal, City of Guelph, will talk about the Guelph experience and some of the emerging discussions around the City’s role in proactively supporting growth in the Downtown and for the City as a whole.

Ian Panabaker is the City of Guelph’s Corporate Manager, Downtown Renewal. Ian graduated from the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, University of Toronto, and is a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals. Ian has worked in Toronto in professional architectural practices specializing in heritage and urban planning, as well as heritage restoration, before coming to the City of Guelph. Ian’s current position in the Downtown Renewal Office is to achieve the downtown goals of the City’s Economic Development Strategy, supported by the Downtown Secondary Plan and the Downtown Community Improvement Plan.

SPEAKER #3: Ralph Giannone, Principal of Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects, will discuss how urban design and economics interact in designing mixed-use projects such as the award-winning Port Credit Village. He will talk about his experience in designing mixed-use development and how design contributes to the value and success of development projects.

Ralph Giannone, since 1995, has been leading Giannone Petricone Associates Inc. Architects. He has worked on re-development projects such as the award-winning Port Credit Village, Collingwood Shipyards, Don Mills Centre and all their design components. Ralph graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Toronto in 1987, is a member of the Ontario Association of Architects and the Alberta Association of Architects, and in 2013 was made a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. Since 2007 Ralph Giannone has been a member of the City of Toronto Design Review Panel.

MODERATOR: Sean Galloway, Manager of Urban Design and Geographic Information Systems, City of London

Sean Galloway has worked in various capacities for municipalities in Australia and Canada over the last 13 years. Currently, Sean is the project co-lead on ReThink London, which is one of Canada’s largest public planning processes. Sean holds a Bachelor’s of Environmental Studies in Planning from the University of Waterloo and a Master’s Degree in Urban Development and Design from the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is a member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, the Urban Land Institute, former Chair of the London Regional Children’s Museum Board, and a past board member of Emerging Leaders London.

SESSION 2

Showing Results Now: Using quick-win strategies to start implementing good urban design today

SPEAKER #1: **Helena Grdadolnik, Associate Director, Workshop Architecture**, will demonstrate how municipalities can inspire and kick-start change in the short-term through Action-Oriented Planning. Rather than commission a year-long planning study with a conventional public consultation process, municipalities can set up urban laboratory test sites with relatively low-cost, temporary or small-scale urban design interventions supported by creative community programming. These “tests” or “pilot projects” can be used to solicit meaningful feedback from local stakeholders before implementing permanent changes and planning decisions.

Workshop Architecture will design three to five small-scale urban interventions to address particular issues related to one or more of the mixed-use nodes identified in the Guelph’s Official Plan (which are currently dominated by large-scale commercial development). The intention of the interventions is to help kick-start the process of creating mixed-use urban villages. One of the interventions will be completed for the Urban Design Summit and will be part of the “Evolving Suburban Commercial Centres to Walkable Mixed Use Nodes” mobile workshop. The other potential interventions will be at a scale where they are achievable and can be implemented as early as late spring/early summer 2014.

The presentation will include visualizations of the interventions and successful examples of Action-Oriented Planning used in southern Ontario and beyond. These projects are part of a wider movement often referred to as “Tactical Urbanism” or “Pop-up Planning”, where small-scale urban interventions and actions are strategically implemented in the public realm to serve a larger purpose.

Helena Grdadolnik is an Associate Director at Workshop Architecture, recipients of the Ontario Association of Architects’ 2013 Emerging Practice Award and a Toronto Urban Design Award for the Green Line Vision. Helena has been overseeing the firm’s cultural sector, community engagement and urban design work since 2010. Helena was a Senior Architectural Advisor for the English government from 2006-2009, developed one of the major cultural projects for the 2012 Olympics, and co-authored *Towards an Ethical Architecture* and *The Contemporary Canadian Metropolis*. Helena has taught courses at University of British Columbia, Emily Carr University, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. She is a member of Toronto’s Public Art Commission and on the Toronto Society of Architects’ Executive Committee.

SPEAKER #2: **Andrew Howard, Co-founder, Build a Better Block**, will highlight one of the temporary interventions carried out by the Build a Better Block Team.

Andrew Howard is one of the leading experts in transportation and placemaking. His 14 years of experience in both public and private sector transportation and land development planning and design provides him with an excellent perspective on city and regional issues. Andrew, as the co-Founder of the Better Block and Principal at Team Better Block, helps communities develop and organize their economic assets to build productive, resilient relationships across the public, private, and civil sectors. Now being used in over 50 cities and three nations, the Better Block demonstrates how temporary sustainability improvements to a single city block can build momentum for long-term financial, social and environmental advancements.

SPEAKER #3: **Julia van der Laan de Vries, Urban Designer, City of Hamilton, and Khaldoon Ahmed, Urban Designer, City of Hamilton**, will discuss the Gore Park Pedestrian Pilot Program and Summer Pedestrian Promenade that was carried out in Downtown Hamilton in 2012.

Julia van der Laan de Vries is a provisional member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and an associate member of the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects.

Khaldoon Ahmad is a member of the Royal Architects Institute of Canada and is a professional planner.

Evolving the Commercial Strip: Making more pedestrian friendly, mixed-use corridors

SPEAKER #1: Tim Smith, Senior Associate, Urban Strategies Inc., will discuss how suburban commercial corridors represent real retrofit opportunities for achieving the vision of pedestrian oriented, mixed-use places.

Like other communities in Ontario, as Guelph grew in the latter half of the 20th century, commercial development naturally located itself along primary roads. These corridors have a variety of low-density commercial uses serving surrounding communities. These areas are older and therefore have the potential for redevelopment or infill development in the not-too-distant future.

The case study will describe and illustrate ways to transform suburban commercial strips into more pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use corridors. To further encourage “reurbanization” in these areas, it will be necessary to review them and develop new land use and urban design policies. In addition to describing the appropriate character for each corridor, the new policies should also prescribe how the roads will be made safer and attractive to pedestrians and cyclists. These are also important “mobility corridors” that will continue to see significant car and truck traffic, but need to be designed to encourage transit use, walking and cycling.

The case study will look at opportunities to accommodate growth, contribute to more efficient and complete communities, enhance mobility and improve the pedestrian experience through intensification, placemaking and streetscape improvements along existing suburban commercial strips.

Tim Smith is a Senior Associate with Urban Strategies, a Toronto-based urban planning and design firm. With a background in urban design, economics and photography, he understands the ingredients that make an urban place attractive and viable. He has almost 20 years of experience, much of it focused on revitalizing downtowns and transforming suburbs into sustainable communities. His work has taken him to cities large and small in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Minnesota, Michigan and Connecticut as well as communities across Ontario. He was the principal author of Guelph’s Urban Design Action Plan and Downtown Secondary Plan, and has been involved in a number of other projects in Guelph over the past several years.

SPEAKER #2: James N. Parakh, Urban Design Manager, Toronto and East York, City of Toronto, will focus on how the City of Toronto secures POPS (privately-owned, publicly-accessible space) to enhance the public realm and quality of life for those that live and work in the area. He will show specific case studies that demonstrate (before and after) how POPS are introduced on a given project.

James Parakh is the Urban Design Program Manager, Toronto and East York District at the City of Toronto. James also has experience working in the private sector as an urban designer, project designer and project architect. James holds graduate degrees in architecture and urban design from the University of Houston and Columbia University, respectively.

Evolving the Commercial Strip... continued

SPEAKER #3: **Paul Bottomley, Manager of Policy, Research and Forecasting, Region of York**, will discuss the Retail Trends Study York Region is undertaking. Entitled “Shift the Market and Market the Shift” it will provide guidance to municipalities on planning for retail uses that are more consistent with local, regional and provincial visions of creating compact, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented and transit-supportive communities. Retail uses planned in this manner will support the Region’s planned urban structure, and the Centres and Corridors city building policy objectives of the Region. It is also hoped that the Study outcomes will begin to shift the retail market to locations and forms that are more easily integrated with higher density and mixed-use environments.

Paul Bottomley, MCIP, RPP, Manager of Policy, Research and Forecasting in the Long Range Planning Branch of the Office of the CAO at the Region of York, has been a practicing planner for approximately 20 years. At the Region, he has been involved in the preparation and defense of York Region’s Official Plan, the York Region Growth Management Strategy, growth forecasting, as well as strategic planning and land use planning statistical information systems. Paul is a full member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

MODERATOR: **Karen Hammond, Lecturer and Manager of Design, School of Planning, University of Waterloo**

Karen Hammond has taught urban design and professional practice courses at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo, for over 30 years. She specializes in teaching advanced urban design studios. Karen has organized and facilitated numerous workshops and charrettes, both within the University and in many Ontario communities. Karen has served on juries for several municipal urban design awards. She has also contributed articles to a number of academic journals. She was a member of OPPI’s Urban Design Working Group for over 12 years, including a term as Chair. Her current research interests focus on urban intensification, including the issues of public view protection as well as the transformation of downtown malls.

Making it Happen in a Historic Downtown Context

Downtown Guelph is being transformed. More people, jobs, buildings and activities are being strategically attracted to increase and grow the dynamics of this historic urban centre.

Building on the themes of Session 1, this mobile workshop is a walking tour of Downtown Guelph. The mobile workshop includes a tour of the historic fabric north of the CN mainline rail tracks and the more suburban development to the south where the greatest amount of change is anticipated. Stories behind key public spaces (e.g. St. George's Square, Market Square) as well as highlights of new and historic developments will be part of the tour.

With a recent Council-approved Secondary Plan for the area, key discussion points around this interactive mobile workshop will focus on:

- Maintaining recent private sector momentum to continue the development of a more urban place and creating a regional destination;
- Creating the right public spaces in Downtown Guelph to reduce the risk of creating initiatives in isolation and support the productivity of the area;
- Investigating how strategic public investment can promote long term prosperity; and,
- Implementing the vision of the Downtown Secondary Plan.

After the walking tour, a debrief back at the River Run Centre will include a facilitated group discussion focused on effective next steps for the short, medium and long term to implement the vision of the Downtown Secondary Plan.

Evolving Suburban Commercial Centres to Walkable Mixed-Use Nodes

The Paisley/Imperial Community Mixed-Use Node is one of five major nodes in the City which are intended to transition into distinct “urban villages” – mixed-use, transit and pedestrian-oriented places that provide focal points for civic life, higher density housing, office and retail employment, and live-work opportunities.

Building on the themes of Session 2, this mobile workshop consists of a bus and walking tour of the node and the highlight of the tour is the tactical urbanism intervention. The mobile workshop will include a review of the lessons learned around this intervention and how it connects with the City's long term policy direction for mixed-use nodes.

The City has an adopted Urban Design Concept Plan for this node, which addresses the short-medium term growth. Key discussion points around this interactive mobile workshop will focus on:

- How tactical urbanism in a suburban location can be used as a tool for articulating, and eventually achieving, the long-term vision for mixed-use nodes;
- How to realize the vision of creating walkable ‘urban villages’ and Main Streets in the suburban context; and,
- How private investment can be positively shaped to realize the vision.

After the tour, a debrief back at the River Run Centre will include a facilitated group discussion focused on effective next steps for the short, medium and long term to implement the vision of transforming the nodes into urban villages in these areas. Bus transportation to and from the site will be provided.

Mobile Workshop #3

Evolving the Suburban Commercial Corridor

During the latter half of the 20th century, commercial development primarily located along major roads creating corridors of low-density commercial uses.

Building on the themes of Session 3, this mobile workshop consists of a bus and walking tour of Silvercreek Parkway North. This area was the site of Guelph's first enclosed mall and the area has transitioned into strip commercial development.

The mobile workshop explores the Silvercreek Parkway area which has many of the necessary building-blocks of a successful neighbourhood including: commercial uses; a mix of housing types; and open spaces. In addition, neighbourhood demographics and the prevalence of medium and high-density residential uses contribute to a high degree of pedestrian activity in the area.

With modest private investment occurring in the area, key discussion points will include:

- How can intensification, placemaking and streetscape improvements create better connections;
- How can more positive private investment be encouraged in the area; and,
- What policy interventions can assist in creating positive intensification and investment?

After the tour, a debrief back at the River Run Centre will include a facilitated group discussion focused on effective next steps for the short, medium and long term to evolve the Silvercreek Commercial Corridor. Bus transportation to and from the site will be provided.

Appendices — Case Studies

- 1. The Dollars and \$ense of Land Use Patterns**
Joseph Minicozzi
- 2. Sprouting Nodes**
Helena Grdadolnik
- 3. Evolving the Commercial Strip**
Tim Smith
- 4. Downtown Guelph**
- 5. Silvercreek Parkway North**
- 6. West Node**

Joseph Minicozzi Case Study

The Dollars and Sense of Land Use Patterns

By Joe Minicozzi, AICP

“Are cities across the country acting negligently in ignoring the property tax implications of different development types? We think so, and we’ve done the math to prove it.”

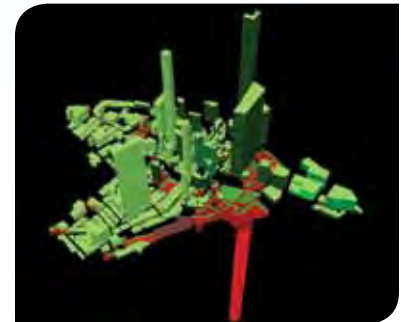
In the age of a post-recession economy, municipal budgets have become more constrained, while demographic shifts have changed the way designers and city leaders think about the form of the city. The advent of meta-data sets of community information have added to the understanding of the urban environment, though telling the story of urban patterns takes blending this information with a physical understanding of urbanism.

Joe will present a combination of techniques used in real estate development, urban design, and public sector planning. He has developed award-winning analytic methods cultivated in Asheville, North Carolina, which have been replicated across the United States. He will explain the methodology, demonstrate case studies, and dig deeper into effective graphic communication methods to tell the story of how community design increases (or decreases) a community’s wealth. This is not your father’s economic analysis. The techniques presented are simple, effective, entertaining, and even funny. Methods are intended to clearly show the potency of higher density mixed-use land-use patterns within every community. Additionally, Joe will address various national policy standards that undermine local desires for downtown improvement, and even citywide improvement. To steal from Jerry McGuire, he will ‘show you the money’, but also provide ways for you to show your community the money.

Joe Minicozzi brings his unique tools and style to help us understand how different development types and building forms contribute to or degrade a community’s financial stability, and therefore tax rates.

In his clear, relevant, and even entertaining way he will review the fiscal returns per acre of different kinds of ‘places’, assessing tax productivity differently. His work represents a paradigm shift for thinking about development patterns.

Featured in *Atlantic Cities*, *Planning Magazine*, *Planetizen*, *Salon*, and *Forbes*, Minicozzi’s work reveals the true productivity of development choices, offering planners and municipal officials new tools to unlock the wealth of downtown and mixed-use centers. Minicozzi is a principal of Urban3, a consulting company of the downtown Asheville real estate developer Public Interest Projects. He is a founding member of the non-profit Asheville Design Center and a graduate of the Architecture program at the University of Miami and a Masters of Urban Design from Harvard University.



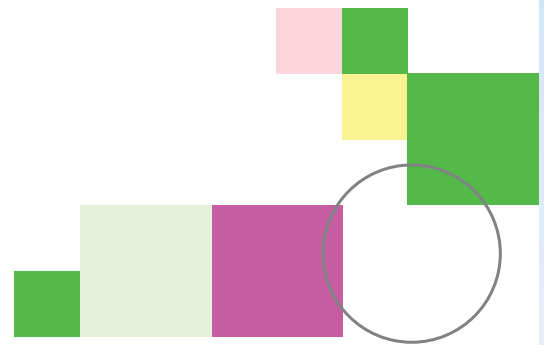
A 3D model of the tax productivity of downtown Asheville, NC.

“Joe has one of the most compelling presentations I’ve seen on return on investment (ROI). He will uncover the imperfections of property tax valuation and force you to rethink how you view land development patterns,” says Mitchell Silver, AICP, President of the American Planning Association (APA), Chief Planning and Development Officer, and Planning Director for the City of Raleigh.

NOTES: Joseph Minicozzi Case Study

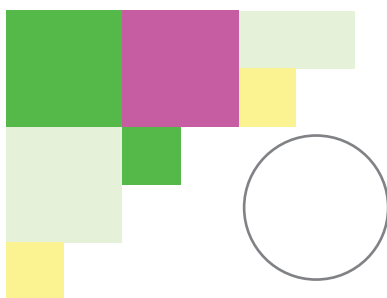
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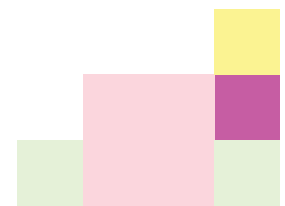
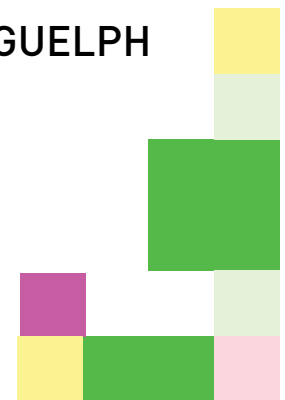
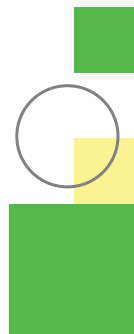


SPROUTING NODES

A CASE STUDY OF ACTION-ORIENTED PLANNING IN GUELPH



WORKSHOP
architecture



April 2014

The Benefits of Action-Oriented Planning

"The lack of resources is no longer an excuse not to act. The idea that action should only be taken after all the answers and the resources have been found is a sure recipe for paralysis. The planning of a city is a process that allows for corrections; it is supremely arrogant to believe that planning can be done only after every possible variable has been controlled."

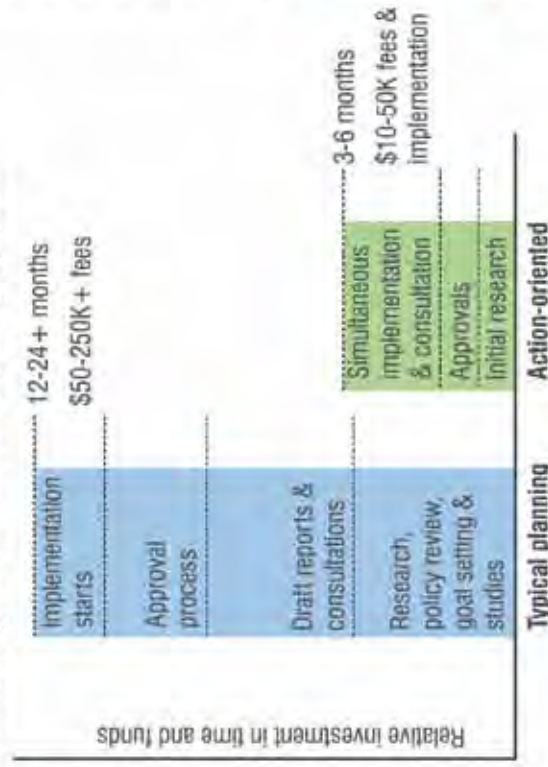
Jaime Lerner, architect, urbanist, former mayor of Curitiba, Brazil

Through Action-Oriented Planning municipalities can inspire and kick-start change in the short-term. Rather than commission a year-long planning study with a conventional public consultation process, municipalities can set up urban laboratory test sites with relatively low-cost, temporary or small-scale urban design interventions supported by creative community programming. These "tests" or "pilot projects" can be used to solicit meaningful feedback from local stakeholders before implementing any planning decisions and permanent changes.

FOUR MAIN APPROACHES TO ACTION-ORIENTED PLANNING (use all four!):

- 1. Improve**
 - Add amenities, make nicer spaces and safer options.
Between a shopping mall and the main civic square in Mississauga, pedestrians were made more visible in the car-oriented area with a crosswalk design by artist Roadsworth.
- 2. Inform**
 - Use infographics & other means to make people aware of their options.
As part of a pilot project where parking spaces were temporarily replaced with patios in Port Credit "road signs" by artists TIMEANDDESIRE encouraged walking and cycling.
- 3. Incentivize**
 - Make transportation options easier by providing amenities (e.g. bike parking) & give a reason for people to support transportation alternatives (e.g. financial, health, social)
NYC's Department of Transportation helped to achieve support for adding bike lanes through measuring the economic benefits cycling infrastructure can bring to a neighbourhood.
- 4. Inspire**
 - Make people excited about the possibilities of a place by re-branding or through a temporary transformation.
In Toronto, Workshop Architecture helped people see the potential of a hydro corridor as a 5km continuous public space through map graphics and naming it "The Green Line."

Timeline of typical & action-oriented planning approaches





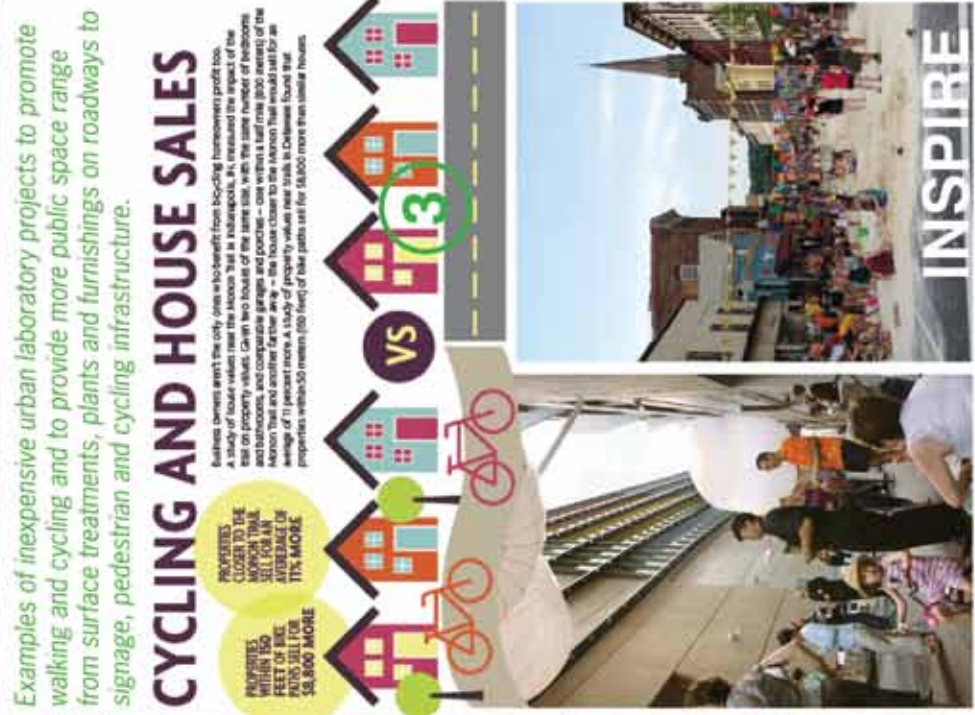
CYCLING AND HOUSE SALES

Business owners aren't the only ones who benefit from bicycling transportation projects too. A study of house values near the Maroon Trail in Dulles, VA, measured the impact of the trail on property values. Given two houses of the same size, with the same number of bedrooms and bathrooms, and comparable garages and pools — one within a half mile (300 meters) of the Maroon Trail and another farther away — the houses closer to the Maroon Trail would sell for an average of 11 percent more. A study of property values near trails in Delaware found that properties within 50 meters (150 feet) of their paths sell for 18,000 more than similar houses.

PROPERTIES WITHIN 150 FEET OF TRAIL PATHS SELL FOR AN AVERAGE OF 11% MORE.

PROPERTIES CLOSER TO TRAIL SELL FOR AN AVERAGE OF 18,000 MORE.

VS



The Paisley-Imperial Mixed-Use Node case study

Goals (step 1):

The Paisley-Imperial area is identified as one of Guelph's Community Mixed Use Nodes and Council approved an Urban Design Concept Plan for the area in September 2012. The intention of Workshop Architecture's Sprouting Nodes intervention at Paisley and Imperial is to help kick-start the process of building an urban village community at this site in Guelph. The project's approach is designed to be replicable and is part of a wider movement often referred to as "Tactical Urbanism" or "Pop-up Planning", where smallscale urban interventions and actions are strategically implemented in the public realm to serve a larger purpose.

Main goals

- Engage the community, businesses & landowners in understanding the vision for the area.
- Increase and improve the pedestrian and public realm.
- Increase the bio-diversity and green space in the area.



Urban Design Concept Plan for the Paisley-Imperial node (approved by Council September 2012).

Existing condition (step 2):

The Paisley-Imperial area combines medium to high residential densities with low-density housing, commercial development and a community centre. The area is not a high quality environment, it is car-oriented, pedestrians and cyclist amenities need to be further developed.

Potential opportunities (quick wins):

- There is a cowpath that is used year-round crossing the undeveloped commercial site between West End Community Centre and the developed commercial site that includes Zehrs grocery.
- There is a seasonal Garden Centre in Zehrs parking lot.
- The library and arena are community hubs and the area has a lot of dog-walkers.
- The area is very multi-cultural with Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Punjabi & Polish spoken.



Above: Google Streetview photos of Paisley Road looking N-W across Zehrs' parking lot to the West End Community Centre (top) and from Elmira Road looking N-E (bottom).

Left: Satellite image of Paisley-Imperial Node (Google Earth)

Ideas (step 3):

WILDFLOWER WALK

From "Planning the Future" to "Planting the Future" -- the Urban Design Concept Plan for the Paisley-Imperial Mixed-Use Node springs to life with the Wildflower Walk. The existing cowpath can be covered in cedar mulch and the sides of the path seeded with native wildflowers and grasses. A simple entrance on each end of the path would invite pedestrians and could also be a location for project and partner info.

PARKING LOT OASIS

Create an oasis in the parking lot for a few weeks or for the whole summer. This could be built upon Zehrs' seasonal garden centre or it could even be a reconfiguring of the garden centre's shape to better support pedestrian and cyclist use and to create inviting shady spots. The outdoor space could be a place to take Zehrs' cafe goods and to see the seasonal patio furnishings and plants available for sale. This is inspired by Petersham Nurseries, a cafe and garden centre in London, UK. Bulk grow bags and flats of flowers could be an inexpensive way to bring in planting.



Above: Bulk grow bags planted by community members in a vacant lot in London, UK. Below: Petersham Nurseries cafe and garden centre, Richmond, UK.





Images: various parking spaces transformed into a public places to make a "pedestrian oasis"

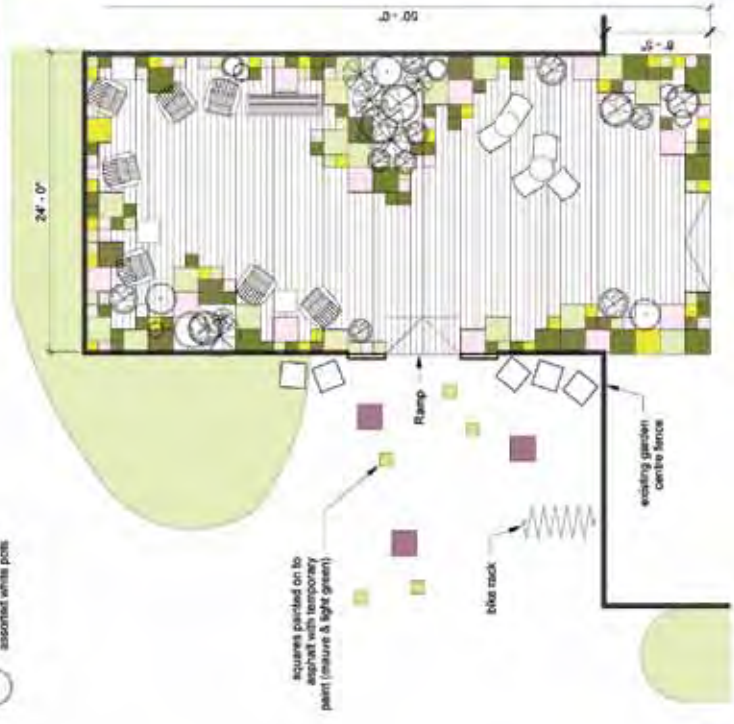


ACTION-ORIENTED PLANNING IN GUELPH

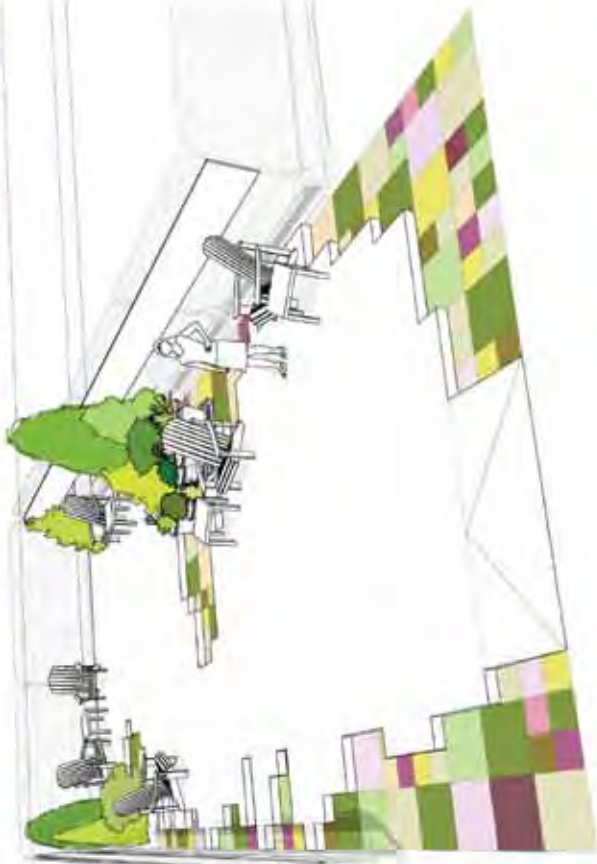
Ideas (step 3 continued):

PARKING LOT OASIS DESIGN

- Legend**
-  PC Muskoka Bench
 -  PC Muskoka Chair
 -  PC Muskoka Side Table
 -  PC Cafe Table & Chair (white)
 -  Assorted signs in assorted white pots
 -  2' x 2' flat of plants (or 2 - 1x2' flats)
 -  1' x 1' flat of plants
 -  6" wide decking in lengths of 6', 8' 1/2', 10' lengths, all finishes as shown, Accessibility signs per sign as shown.
 -  Accessibility signs per sign as shown.
 -  Paint on asphalt.



University of Guelph student work on the future of the area will be printed on the 2'-0" high white coroplast panels lining the fence.



Increased provision of bike parking

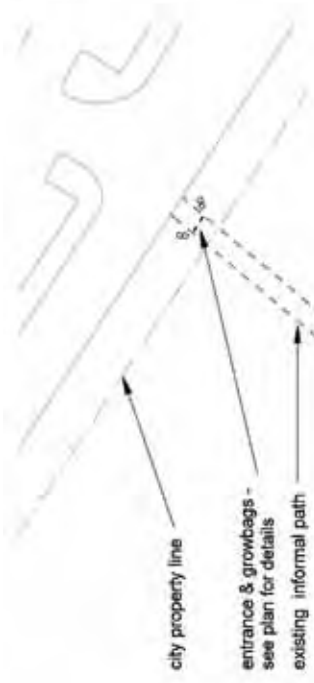


Partnering with Zehrs Garden Centre we will use all white PC Muskoka Line tables, chairs and benches in the Oasis. Also, a range of plants from their inventory in white pots of all shapes and sizes and lots of flowers in all colours and shapes that will change through the season.

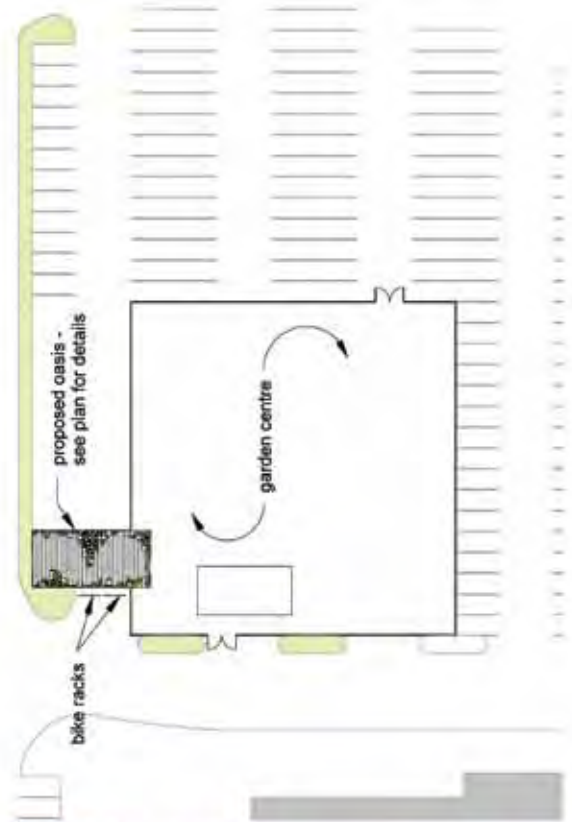


Ideas (step 3 continued):

WILDFLOWER WALK DESIGN & SITE PLAN



entrance & growbags



ACTION-ORIENTED PLANNING IN GUELPH

Potential partners to engage (step 4)

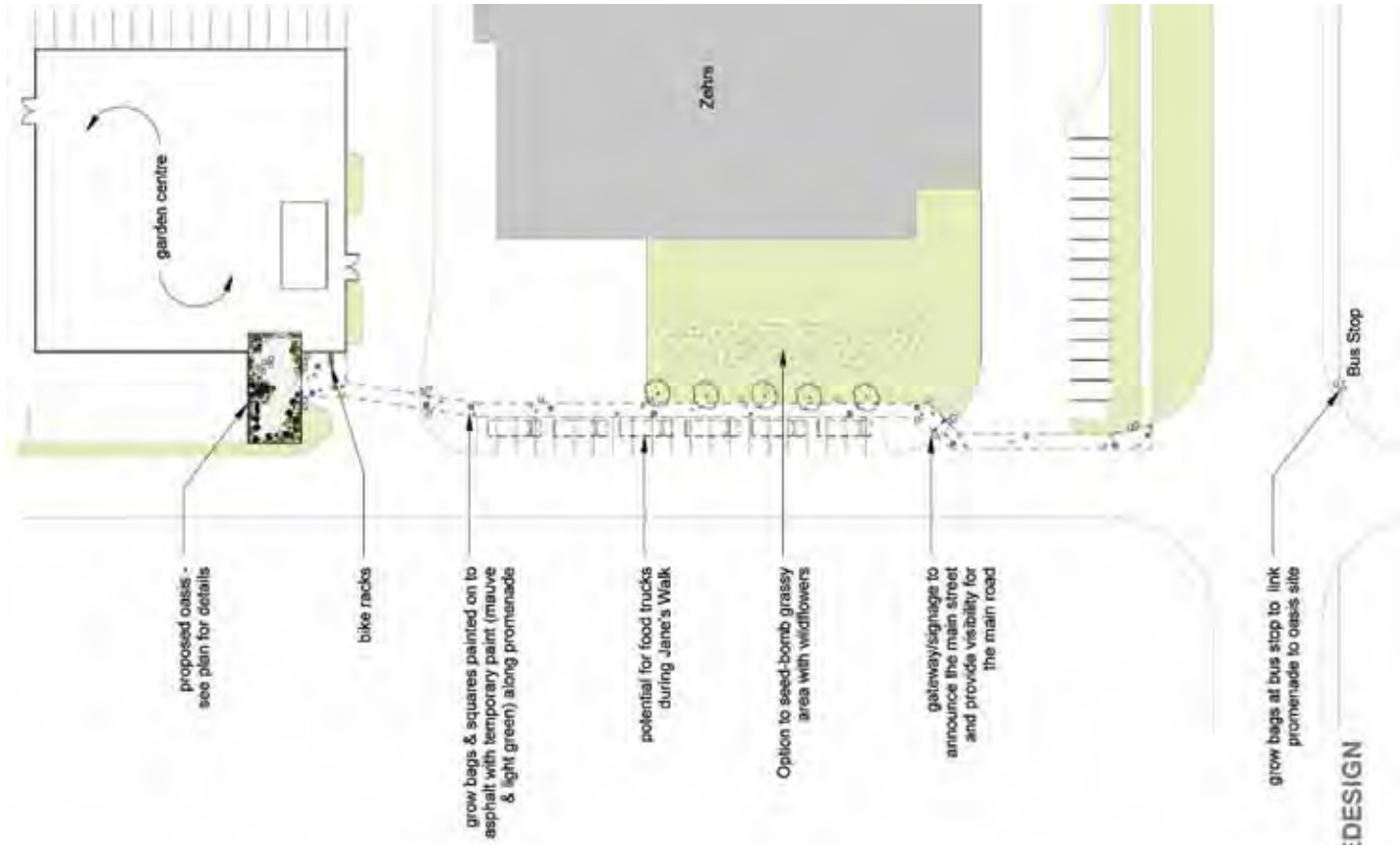
- Community members engaged through a Jane's Walk community planting party and/or through local residents' ownership of (and maintenance of) plantings
- We require permission and buy-in from the local businesses and landowners, Zehrs, and the other businesses could be involved through cross-promotions and in-kind donations (plants & seasonal furnishings)
- City departments could be involved including: Parks (providing expertise, soil, plants and mulch), and Recreation and Library staff (providing community info & programming)

We had a lot of success engaging other City departments, business partners like Zehrs Market, and community partners like University of Guelph Landscape Architecture to provide permissions, in-kind and discounted materials and programming. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure permissions for the Wildflower Walk. We redesigned the walk to become the future Main Street area and connected to the main bus stops in the area.



10

MAIN STREET WALK & SITE PLAN REDESIGN



Feedback and measuring impacts (step 5)

- A public survey asking if this project has made an impact on local peoples' understanding of the node vision and their use of the area, for example: ask why people come to the area, what mode of transportation they use, whether they are coming to the area more or changing their mode of transportation due to this project.
- A trail counter could be installed in the gateway to measure use of the pathway
- With business' co-operation we could get their percentage difference sales from the period last year.

Determining success and what to do next (step 6)

At the end of the summer, after the feedback and measurements are analyzed, the City of Guelph and the project partners can determine whether or not the pilot project met the intended goals. At this point decisions would be made on whether the project should continue, whether further steps or a different approach should be developed, and whether another node could be seeded through a similar process.



Above: Market in parking lot; Below: Scadding Court container market, Toronto.



In Dumbo, NYC after the pilot to convert a parking triangle into a public space (through surface paint, furniture and plants) was a success, the City's Department of Transportation invested further into the area by commissioning an artist to paint a mural in the space to brighten up the area.



HOW TO SPROUT A NODE?

Treat the City as an Urban Laboratory and use the Scientific Method:

Step 1 | Set your goals

- Why are you doing this? What are you trying to accomplish?
- What will you measure?

Step 2 | Assess what's there

- Look at strengths and weaknesses -- and any quick wins
- Harness existing organizations & the energy and knowledge of local people
- Establish baseline measurements

Step 3 | Test out your hunches

- Follow your hunches & hypothesize. Try something, don't be afraid of failure.
- Don't re-invent the wheel -- copy good ideas from elsewhere
- But also try to understand what is unique and tailor the design or approach to the setting

Step 4 | Work out the logistics

- Work through all the logistics, budgets (from bare-bones to ideal) and potential funding sources and volunteer assistance
- Understand your limitations and where things can go wrong (What is the worst-case scenario, can you live with this? Can you eliminate this through planning?).
- Involve the different players and have them learn to work together. Find benefits for other parties (local residents, City depts, property owners, etc.)

Step 5 | Analyze your feedback and measurements

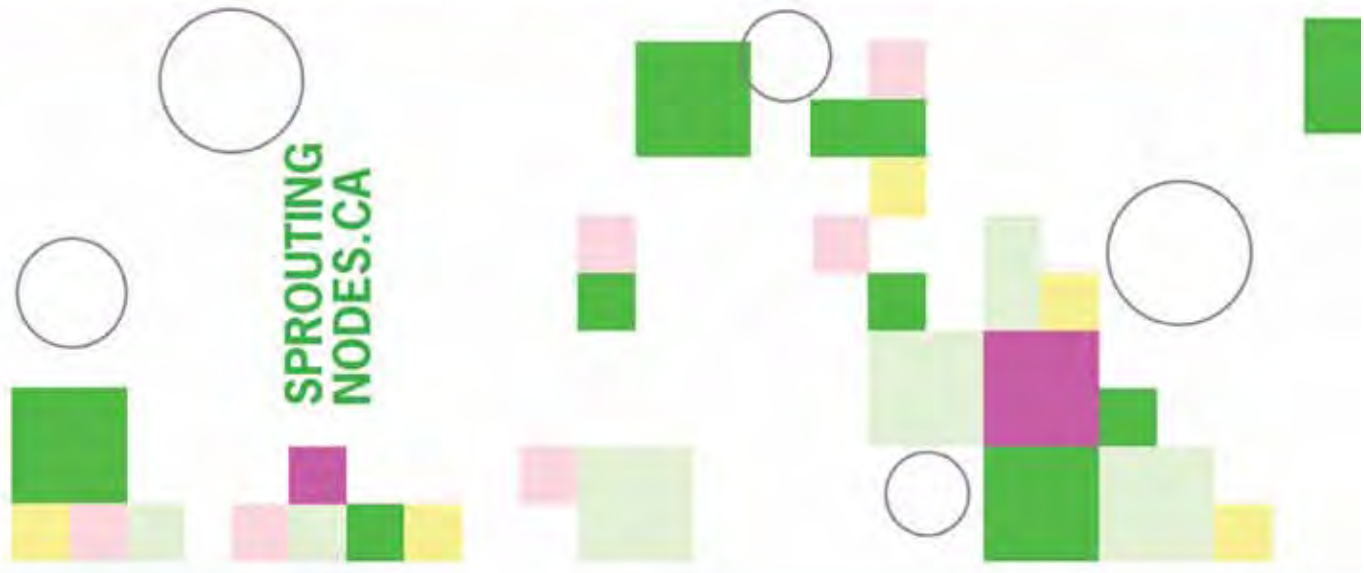
- Make public consultation fun and accessible to all
- Measure the impact against the initial baseline

Step 6 | Make it permanent (or not)

- Go through re-zonings/by-law changes as needed
- Design and construct permanent physical changes (or go back to step 3 and test another idea)

Ongoing | Keep an open and welcoming attitude

- Encourage ideas from local people, artists, community groups (formalize this process with a grant program)
- Ask your City's leadership to encourage a culture of "yes, we'll try"
- Make a City department responsible for implementation (Public Works or Transportation) or make an interdepartmental group to institutionalize this form of working. Examples from other cities include: NYC Plaza program, SF Pavement to Parks and VIVA Vancouver.





Evolving the Commercial Strip



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Guelph Urban Design Summit
May 5-6, 2014



Across North America, many cities and the suburbs that surround them are being re-designed and built to be more walkable, livable and sustainable. Historic downtowns are being re-populated and new downtowns are being erected around suburban transit hubs. Former industrial lands (brownfields) are being cleaned up and redeveloped. New communities are more compact and diverse, with streets that make it easy to get around on foot, bicycle or transit.

In their efforts to build better cities, planners, designers, engineers, developers, politicians and citizens continue to be faced by one distinctive part of the urban landscape that remains the most resistant to change – the suburban commercial corridor.

This paper, prepared for the 2014 Guelph Urban Design Summit, discusses the challenges of “urbanizing” commercial strips and highlights successful suburban mixed-use developments. It includes a case study on the planned redevelopment of the Humbertown shopping plaza in the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke. The paper concludes with lessons learned and four strategies municipalities of all sizes can use to encourage the evolution of commercial corridors into the kinds of attractive people places that are fundamental to a healthy city.



THE CHALLENGES

So much pavement, so much opportunity. Comparing a suburban commercial site to a typically constrained downtown property or a contaminated industrial site, one would think that improving it with a mix of uses and pedestrian amenities would be relatively easy. But in reality there are a number of significant challenges to redeveloping commercial strips.

Economic viability of strip plazas and malls

Economics drives city building, and the viability of low-density shopping centres poses the greatest obstacle to transforming them. There is a demand for the businesses in strip plazas and malls, and the rent paid by tenants provides a reliable income for commercial landowners. Where the land is paid for, the income can be significant, even from “low-end” plazas and malls. Mixed-use redevelopment or even redesigning the commercial use to be more urban typically depends on increasing rents and changing the tenant mix, which is inherently risky in most markets. There is rarely an incentive for landowners or prospective purchasers of commercial sites to take the risk.

Complexity of mixed-use development

Encouraged by land use planning that separates uses, developers tend to specialize in commercial or residential development but typically not both. Mixed-use development requires companies experienced in residential or office development as well as the management of retail space, or it requires a partnership among two or more developers. The complexity of mixed-use development is another turn-off for many commercial landowners.

Too much land, not enough people

With so much land required for single-storey buildings and parking lots, commercial strips occupy a large footprint in every city. Their capacity to accommodate housing or multi-storey office buildings is enormous, far greater than the demand in most cities for dense forms of housing and employment. The scale of a corridor makes it difficult for any one initiative, whether it's a streetscape improvement or a private mixed-use development, to fundamentally change the character of the area and make it pedestrian-friendly. Developers eyeing individual sites can be discouraged if their project is unlikely to trigger broader change in the corridor.

Outdated policies and zoning

Suburban commercial corridors were planned and zoned that way, and while many cities have re-designated corridors in their official plans to encourage intensification and a mix of uses, until the original zoning is amended, low-density, auto-oriented commercial uses will continue to be permitted. In the absence of a redevelopment proposal, updating the zoning to require an urban form of development may face stiff opposition from property owners and even neighbouring residents (see below).

Suburban engineering standards

Commercial corridors were also engineered that way. Traditional design standards for suburban roads put vehicles first, ensuring roadways have plenty of traffic capacity to prevent congestion and maximizing safety for drivers and passengers. On-street parking is generally not looked upon favourably.

Fortunately, the concept of complete streets that balance the needs and safety of pedestrians, cyclists and drivers is gaining traction in more and more municipalities.

NIMBYism

Adjacent to most low-density commercial strips are established low-density neighbourhoods, where not all residents see the benefits of urbanizing shopping plazas and malls. It is common for residents to object to taller buildings being introduced to the area and any development that adds traffic. The cry of “not in my backyard” can be a strong political force that discourages developers from pursuing intensification of a site and prevents a corridor from fully evolving.

The car

The density and form of suburban commercial development is a direct result of the primary mode of travel in most cities. Cars take up a lot of space, hence the wide roads and seas of parking that define every commercial corridor. Parking structures are prohibitively expensive, and discouraging driving by charging for parking or limiting the number of spaces is fiercely resisted by retailers. Even in cities with excellent transit systems, people who have access to a car will use it for most of their shopping trips. This challenge is exacerbated by the fact that most suburban residents are not within reasonable walking distance of a shopping centre. It is hard to turn commercial strips into walkable places when the larger suburban landscape is generally not walkable.



SNAPSHOTS OF CHANGE

Despite the many challenges of urbanizing commercial strips, determined municipalities and creative developers are finding ways to build pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use places where once there was (or would have been) a shopping plaza or mall. The snapshots below of four unique developments provide a glimpse of what our suburban commercial corridors might look like down the road.

1 Highgate Village, Burnaby, BC

Highgate Village is a mixed-use development that replaced an aging shopping mall on the Kingsway commercial corridor in Burnaby, British Columbia. At the front of the 5-hectare (12.4-acre) site, oriented to the surrounding streets and a central square, are 13,000 square metres (140,000 square feet) of retail space on two levels, with a fitness centre located on a third level and parking located underground. The retail includes a grocery store, drug store and a number of smaller businesses. Behind the commercial uses are five apartment buildings framing a large park, four high-rise and one mid-rise together containing 850 units.



2002 aerial view of the former mall on the Highgate Village site



The site today

Evolving the Commercial Strip





▶ The mixed-use heart of Suter Brook Village

2 Suter Brook Village, Port Moody, BC

Suter Brook Village is mixed-use development in Port Moody, British Columbia. Suter Brook runs through the middle of the 9-hectare (22-acre) site within a generous greenway that was pivotal to the project's approval. Three distinct neighbourhoods will ultimately accommodate 1,250 units, mostly apartments, in buildings ranging in height from 7 to 22 storeys. The heart of the community is a pedestrian-oriented precinct where a grocery store and a variety of small shops and restaurants line narrow streets and a plaza. Sidewalks and landscaping are generous. In total, there are 9,300 square metres (100,000 square feet) of retail space. The development also includes a 6-storey office building with 4,000 square metres (43,000 square feet) of office space.



▶ Architectural variety distinguishes the development



A mix of uses on Yellow Pine Avenue



Master Plan

3 Holiday Neighborhood, Boulder, Colorado

Proposed for big-box retail, the 11-hectare (27-acre) site of the former Holiday Twin Screen Drive-in was bought by the City of Boulder to instead build a mixed-use community in which 40 percent of the units would be permanently affordable. Boulder Housing Partners, an arm's-length public entity, partnered with five other developers on the 334-unit project. The architecturally diverse housing has a maximum height of three storeys and is mostly grade-related. The development includes a park, community gardens and small-scale commercial uses at the gateway to the community.



There is a wide variety of architecture in the community.

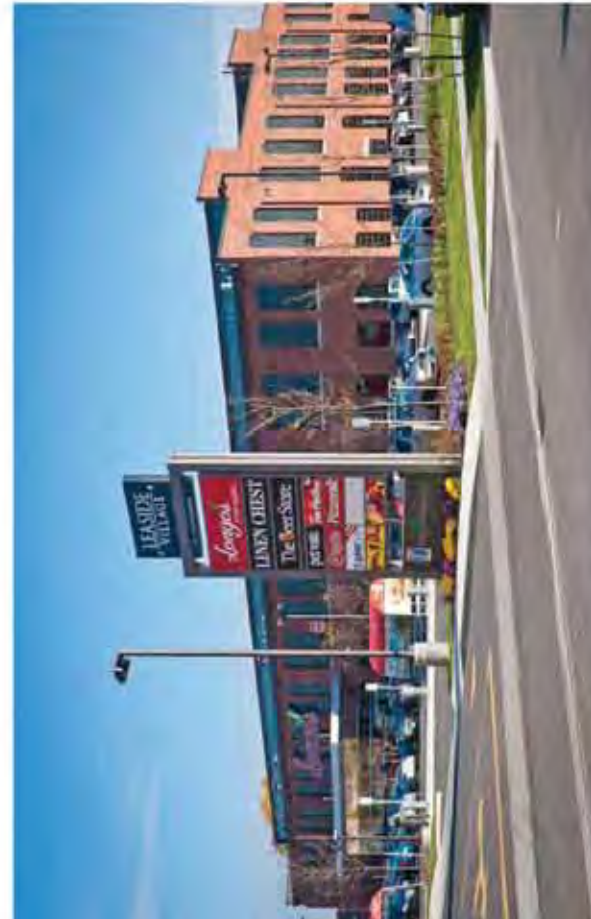
Evolving the Commercial Strip

4 Leaside Village, Toronto, ON

On a 3.3-hectare (8.1-acre) site on Laird Drive in the Toronto community of Leaside, First Capital Realty converted a historic CN locomotive shop into a Longo's grocery store and in front of it built six retail buildings in a tight configuration to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. In total, there is 10,800 square metres (116,600 square feet) of retail space. The main driveway into the site has generous sidewalks and street trees.



Aerial view



The converted CN locomotive shop



Site Plan



The Site and its Context

The Humbertown site is 3.6 hectares (8.9 acres) and comprises two irregularly shaped parcels divided by The Kingsway, a collector street. The original U-shaped mall, anchored by a Loblaw's grocery store, is on the west parcel, while the east parcel is occupied mostly by surface parking but also contains two retail pads (a Beer Store and a Bulk Barn). Almost two-thirds of the entire site is used for parking. Royal York Road, an arterial, borders the east parcel. The site slope down toward the Humber valley to the east, dropping five metres across its length.

When it was built in 1956, the Humbertown shopping centre in the Toronto suburb of Etobicoke offered a unique outdoor mall experience. First Capital Realty bought the site in 2006 and in 2010 decided to do something innovative to refresh the retail environment and add residential uses. An ideas competition was held, and in 2011 a master plan was prepared. The approval process was lengthy, and the plan went through a number of iterations to address community concerns and ensure the residential components were economically feasible. Agreement among the developers, the City and the community on a final plan was achieved in 2013. Its design will make the mixed-use project the first of its kind in Ontario.



The site is a short distance from the Dundas Street commercial strip to the south. It sits within the Humber Valley Village community, one of the more affluent in Toronto's western suburbs. It is surrounded mostly by leafy neighbourhoods of detached homes. Immediately to the north, however, are a series of 4-storey walk-up apartment buildings and a 17-storey apartment building. To the south, kitty-corner from the site, are two condominium buildings, 10 and 14 storeys.

Because of the demographics of Humbertown's setting, current commercial rents are considerably higher than rents in more typical strip plazas in the city. This was a critical factor that made redevelopment of the site a viable proposition.

From a policy standpoint, a mixed-use development on the site is encouraged. The site is designated Mixed-use in Toronto's Official Plan and was zoned for a range of residential and commercial uses; however, First Capital's proposal required a number of amendments to zoning regulations.



^ The community meetings for Humbertown were well attended.

Planning Process

From the beginning, five principles guided the master plan for Humbertown:

- Encourage community vitality through a mix of uses
- Provide new streets and blocks to enhance movement in and around the site
- Develop beautiful edges that respect the community
- Integrate transit, parking and servicing
- Create high-quality open spaces

The initial redevelopment master plan called for seven mixed-use buildings on the site with retail at grade. Following early consultation with the local City councillor and community representatives, the number of buildings was reduced to five, ranging in height from 11 to 21 storeys. This proposal, which also included 28 townhouses, was the subject of a development application submitted in January 2012.

The community remained concerned with scale of the proposal, so a Working Group of community representatives was established to work with City staff and the First Capital team, which now included partner Tridel for the residential components. The consultative process led to a reduction in the number of "towers" from five to three, while the overall density of the project did not change significantly. The previous tower-and-podium buildings became terraced buildings with larger residential floor plates. With each residential building now containing at least 200 units and independent amenity space, the project became more economically viable.

The revised proposal was supported by City staff, but because many in the community continued to oppose it, City Council refused the application. First Capital Realty appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Before a hearing was held, mediation was recommended and was successful in achieving agreement among the parties on further refinements to the scheme that made it acceptable to the community. The settlement was accepted by the Board late in 2013.



1. The Village Square



2. The Kingsway as the primary retail spine



3. Bury loading and servicing



4. The Humberline



5. A diverse mix of housing options



6. Easy to navigate parking strategy

^ The design for Humbertown focused on six key moves.



The Plan

The redevelopment plan for Humbertown is based on a strong public realm framework. At the centre is the Village Square, a gathering place that also accommodates short-stay parking. The Kingsway will become the primary north-south retail spine, while the Humberline, a series of interconnected open spaces running east-west across the site, will invite strolling as it provides access to second-storey retail. Steps down from the Humberline will provide

seating overlooking the Village Square. Lambeth Community Green – a small neighbourhood park adjacent to a future daycare on the site – will anchor the west end of the Humberline.

The residential component of the project includes two condominium buildings, 9 and 12 storeys, and an 11-storey seniors rental building. In total, 471 apartment dwellings and 172 senior units are planned. Twenty-two townhouses will front Lambeth Street, on the south side of the site.



▲ Lanterns will provide easy access to the surface from underground parking.



▲ The Village Square

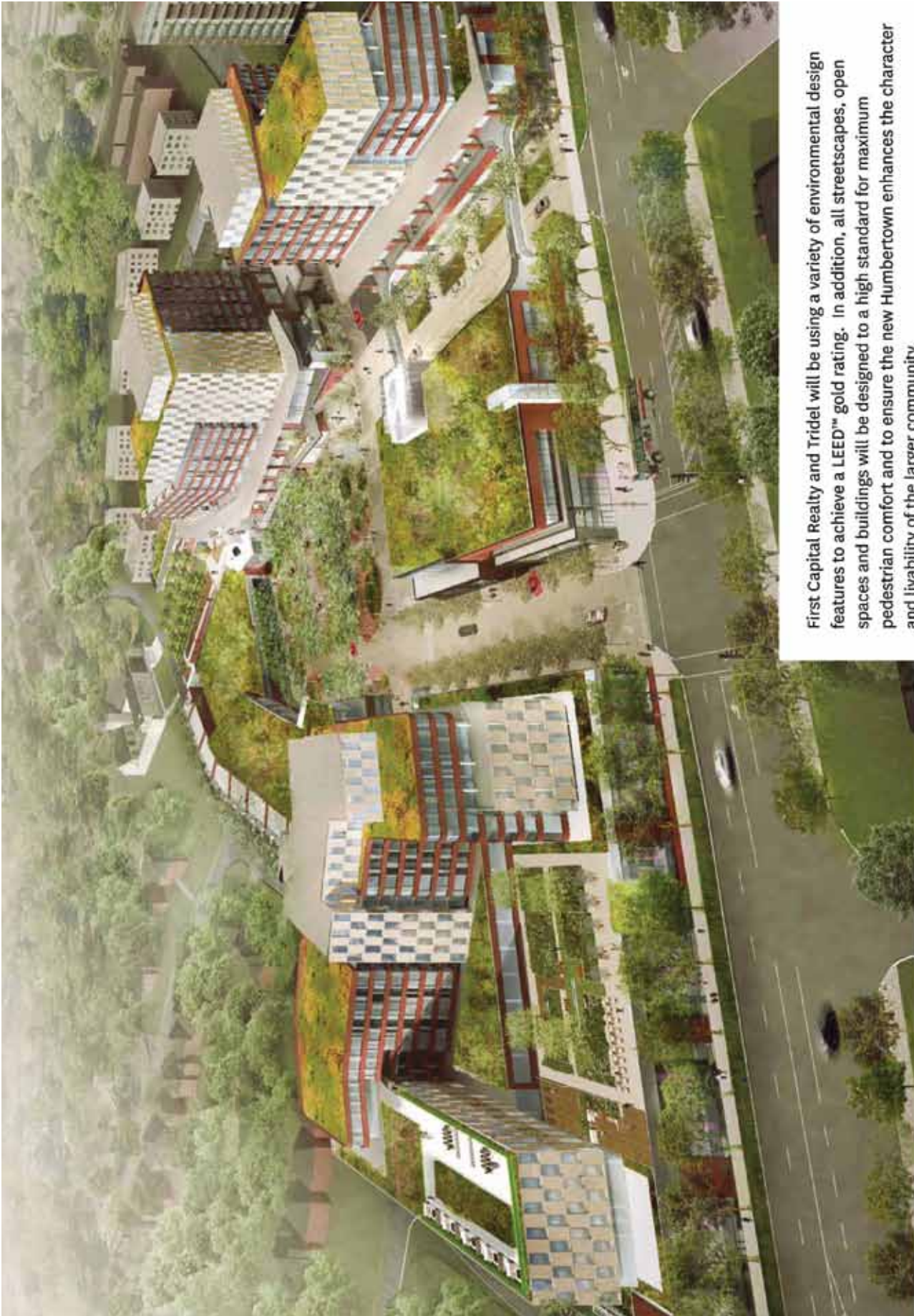
■ Evolving the Commercial Strip

The amount of retail space will increase from the 13,750 square metres (148,000 square feet) that exist today to 21,800 square metres (235,000 square feet). Loblaw's (33,000 square feet), Shoppers Drug Mart (20,000 square feet) and an LCBO (18,000 square feet) will be the retail anchors, with all other commercial units being considerably smaller, most less than 2,000 square feet. Three banks are planned on Royal York Road.

The Kingsway and private streets through the east parcel will have on-street parking. The bulk of the commercial parking will be located on the P1 level, with illuminated "lanterns" providing highly visible access to ground level. The slope of the site also allows the servicing areas for the retail on the west parcel to be located below grade.



▲ Ground floor plan



First Capital Realty and Tridel will be using a variety of environmental design features to achieve a LEED™ gold rating. In addition, all streetscapes, open spaces and buildings will be designed to a high standard for maximum pedestrian comfort and to ensure the new Humbertown enhances the character and livability of the larger community.



LESSONS AND STRATEGIES

The precedents illustrated in this paper and other examples of corridor reurbanization initiatives offer several lessons about the necessary ingredients for success. On the other hand, the limited number of inspiring examples and the ongoing challenges of creating walkable, mixed-use corridors suggest there is much more to be done to realize the vision.

Lessons

Most mixed-use projects are happening in relatively affluent communities where there is demand for apartment dwellings. The experience of a new, more urban retail destination and living environment is not cheap. High commercial rents and higher-end residential development allow a developer to pay for the costlier infrastructure and amenities associated with a successful mixed-use development.

Modest density increases are probably not going to be enough to make a project work. Further to the first lesson, pioneering mixed-use developments that need to stand on their own need a critical mass of retail offerings to attract customers and a critical mass of residents to create an urban feel. The evolution of a commercial strip will generally need to start with one or more high-density projects that act as a catalyst.

Strong anchor tenants are essential. A grocery store or chain drug store guarantees traffic to a mixed-use development, attracts other retailers and can fill much if not all of a ground floor.

A meaningful public benefit can be critical to gaining approval and adding value to a project. The most successful suburban mixed-use developments offer more than a mainstreet shopping experience. They include places

for culture, entertainment and just hanging out. Many include a significant open space feature for the whole community. If there isn't a net benefit for the broader community, then it's hard to make the case for significant intensification.

Sidewalks aren't enough. Creating a truly walkable place that people want to return to again and again requires holistic streetscape design that includes attractive, transparent building facades, street furnishings, distinctive paving, space for restaurant patios and resilient trees.

A little surface parking is not a bad thing. The best place for commercial parking in a city is on the street or out of sight, but that's not always practical. A small parking lot for quick shopping trips can be compatible with a pedestrian-oriented public realm so long as the needs of the pedestrian are met first.

Mixed-use isn't practical everywhere. For most cities, filling their commercial corridors with housing and office buildings will take many decades if it ever happens. Retail sites may remain retail, but as they evolve, they can be redesigned to be more walkable by reconfiguring buildings and incorporating complete streets and driveways.

Overcoming community opposition takes perseverance (and a good plan). As with any complex project that will bring significant change to a community, opposition is to be expected. Early and ongoing dialogue with both objectors and supporters takes time but the result can be many more of the latter if the plan respects City policy, has flexibility for concessions and offers clear public benefits.



Strategies

Evolving commercial strips will take time and, in many cities, will only happen if the municipality actively stimulates change through the following strategies.

Strong land use policies and guidelines. Many municipalities have developed general policies to encourage intensification, mixed-use development and pedestrian-oriented design along their commercial strips. This is an important first step but needs to be followed by detailed policies and guidelines for strategic areas along corridors expected to change in the foreseeable future, to clarify the vision for both landowners and area residents. In Ontario, a secondary plan can accomplish this, or a development permit by-law might also be considered. Where single-storey retail is the only viable use on a corridor property in the short-term, policies and guidelines should encourage buildings that can support second-storey additions and ensure the locations of buildings and driveways do not preclude longer-term intensification.

Financial incentives. Under the Ontario Planning Act, a municipality can identify Community Improvement Project areas and develop Community Improvement Plans with a range of financial incentives intended to stimulate private investments. For example, grant or loan programs can be used for improvements to the pedestrian realm on a site, much as they are used for downtown facade improvements.

Mobility and public realm initiatives. Development on private lands and public realm improvements along commercial corridors need to proceed hand-in-hand. While transit, cycling, streetscape and open space initiatives on their own might not be enough to attract private development to an area, they send a message that positive change is happening.

Public-private development. On the right commercial site at the right time, a municipality could develop the anchor for a mixed-use development, such as a library, community centre, other institutional use or even a park. This could be done through outright purchase of the site or a partnership with a developer. Alternatively, like the City of Boulder, a municipality could purchase a site for an affordable housing project that brings permanent residents and a walkable neighbourhood to an area once dominated by cars and stores.

As the above strategies are pursued, cities should also continue to reinforce their historic urban places, including their downtowns and traditional main streets, for it is those places that inspire suburban mixed-use development.

Downtown Guelph Case Study



Downtown Guelph Case Study

History

Guelph's Downtown is part of the original town plan developed by John Galt in 1827. The business district area of the plan is based on radial streets fanning out from the 'first tree felled' point at the bottom of MacDonnell Street. This radial plan was connected to a regular grid at Norfolk Street, setting up the first residential block pattern. The plan was bisected by the introduction of the railway in 1855. Since that division, the south of the tracks area evolved as industrial lands with mills and manufacturing plants being the predominant pattern along the river. North of the tracks, the commercial core developed along Wyndham Street to become the heart of Guelph. Churches are integral to the skyline, most notably with Church of our Lady terminating the view of MacDonnell Street.

The boundaries of downtown were generally aligned with Galt's radial plan up until 2009 when the Urban Growth Centre was established and expanded the Downtown to include a portion of St. Patrick's Ward. St. Patrick's Ward is the neighbourhood to the east of the Speed River which has a unique character of industry mixed with housing and small-scale commercial buildings.

Built Form Today

- Pedestrian-oriented streets in the historic core include many 19th and early 20th-century two to three-storey buildings. These are some of Guelph's most important urban design assets.
- Low-density, auto-oriented commercial uses predominate south of the tracks. The streetscape is suburban in character, based on modern zoning and engineering standards.
- The St. Patrick's Ward portion of the Urban Growth Centre is characterized by pre-war industrial buildings and small detached residences.
- Several 1960-1980s apartment buildings are also part of the Downtown housing supply, generally occurring on converted industrial sites along the river.
- There are good, long-standing examples of adaptively reusing former industrial or public buildings for residential use throughout downtown and the neighbourhoods.

Public Realm

The Speed River corridor is an important Downtown feature. Public access along the river is generally good, but some important key lengths are not yet public and the interconnection with the urban streets is weak. Some of Guelph's best parks are on the outskirts of Downtown along the river corridors. The historic commercial streets, St. George's Square and Market Square along with the riverfront parks and trails are the most important public spaces.



Land Use

- CBD Zone (downtown) is the most flexible land use category in the zoning by-law
- Important centre for commercial, government, finance, insurance, medical services as well as creative industries

Major recent institutional and cultural investments:

- River Run Centre, the Sleeman Centre (OHL arena)
- New City Hall with Market Square
- New Civic Museum

Major recent Private Sector investments:

- Gummer Building - 18 res. units + Office and Commercial
- Market Commons - 55 res. units + Commercial
- RiverHouse - 130 res. units + Commercial

Residential	17%
Institutional	7%
Office/Commercial	13%
Industrial	3%
Open Space	15%
Transportation	40%
Vacant	5%

Transportation and Circulation

Downtown is central to the local road network located on the route of three provincial highways (7, 6 and 24). The urban main streets are supported by the Gordon/Norfolk corridor on the west side, the Woolwich/Wellington Corridor on the east side, and Eramosa Road to the north. The bicycle network is relatively well developed with good connectivity between Downtown and the University. The CN North Mainline running through downtown serves GO's Kitchener to Toronto service and VIA rail service. It is also used daily for rail freight. Guelph Central Station is the hub of Guelph's municipal transit service, GO and Greyhound buses as well as the train services, creating a true intermodal facility. The University of Guelph, which is approximately 2 km to the south, is connected with a high level of transit service, and is a secondary transit hub location.

Policy Context

Downtown Guelph was identified as an Urban Growth Centre through the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe with growth targets shown in Table 1. The City completed a Secondary Plan in 2012 to plan for this growth. The Zoning By-law has not yet been updated. Implementing documents such as urban design guidelines, streetscape plan, parking plan are under development now.

Table 1 - Key figures

	2011	2031
People	3500	8500
Jobs	6000	7500
Persons+jobs/ha	89	150
Parking On-street	1000	1500
Parking Off-street	4500	TBD

Vision

The Downtown Secondary Plan (2012) established the following vision:

Downtown Guelph: "a distinct and vital urban centre nestled against the Speed River, comprised of beautiful buildings and public spaces, and surrounded by leafy neighbourhoods, where people live, work, shop, dine, play and celebrate."

Several core principles flow from this vision and provide the foundation for the plan:

1. Celebrate What We've Got
2. Set the Scene for Living Well Downtown
3. A Creative Place for Business
4. We Come Together Here
5. Reconnect with the River
6. Make it Easy to Move Around
7. Embody Guelph's Green Ambitions

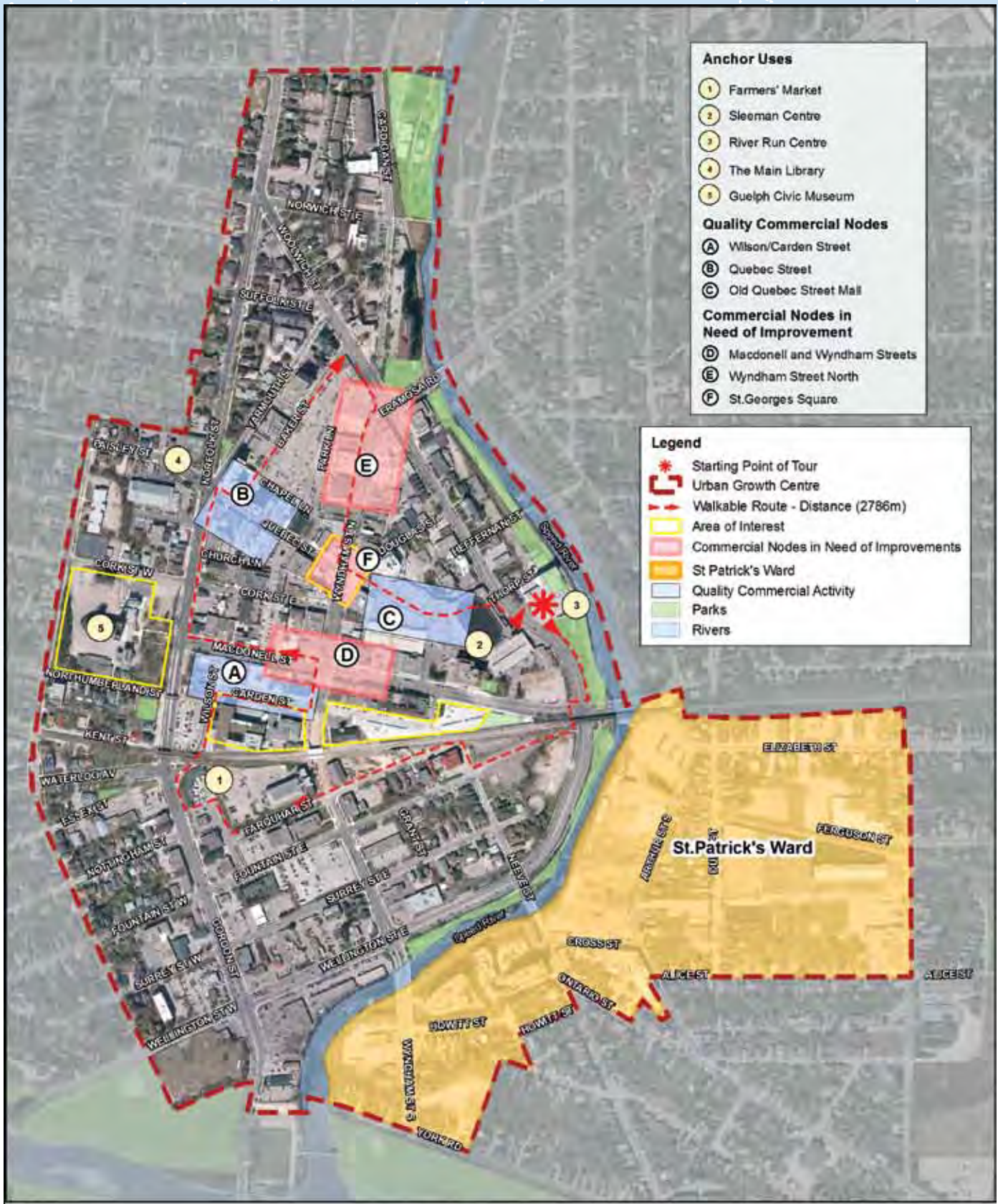
Market Square, DOWtown Guelph



Policy Directions

The Downtown Guelph Secondary Plan:

- Plans for more people and jobs
- Emphasizes redeveloping industrial brownfield sites
- Establishes maximum floorplates for tall buildings
- Encourages predominantly mid-rise buildings with four to six-storey height limits in the historic core
- Directs taller buildings (maximum 18 storeys) outside of the historic core towards the currently auto-oriented landscapes along Wellington Street and industrial sites in St. Patrick's Ward at gateway locations
- Requires tall building step backs above the fourth or sixth storey
- Protects selected public views of the Church of Our Lady (as established in 1973 Zoning By-law)
- Requires active street frontage on key commercial streets
- Promotes transportation mode equality



- Anchor Uses**
- 1 Farmers' Market
 - 2 Sleeman Centre
 - 3 River Run Centre
 - 4 The Main Library
 - 5 Guelph Civic Museum
- Quality Commercial Nodes**
- A Wilson/Carden Street
 - B Quebec Street
 - C Old Quebec Street Mall
- Commercial Nodes in Need of Improvement**
- D Macdonell and Wyndham Streets
 - E Wyndham Street North
 - F St. Georges Square

- Legend**
- * Starting Point of Tour
 - Urban Growth Centre
 - Walkable Route - Distance (2786m)
 - Area of Interest
 - Commercial Nodes in Need of Improvements
 - St Patrick's Ward
 - Quality Commercial Activity
 - Parks
 - Rivers

0 30 60 120 180 240
Meters

Produced by the City of Guelph
Planning, Building, Engineering and
Environment - Development Planning
March 2014

**Mobile Workshop
Downtown Node
2012 Aerial Photography**



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Appealing, pedestrian-oriented historic core and beautiful river
- Good mix of residential, commercial and employment uses
- Guelph Central Station - transit connections to the City and the region
- Surrounded by attractive residential neighbourhoods and parkland

Weaknesses

- Significant anchors are located at the periphery of the Downtown and impairs the ability of businesses to capture the potential demand these create
- Predominance of brownfield and otherwise complicated sites make development economics challenging compared to greenfield
- Wide arterials and sparse urban fabric make for a poor pedestrian environment south of the railway tracks
- Actual and perceived lack of parking
- Open space deficiency

Opportunities

- Strong political will to invest in the Downtown
- Recent GO service improvement announcements
- Space and sites south of the tracks and across the river to expand urban form
- Water, sewer, stormwater and energy infrastructure systematically being renewed

Threats

- Constraints to ongoing financial incentive programs
- Uncertain long-term market for additional high density residential units

Problem Statement

Guelph's historic downtown has been identified as an Urban Growth Centre through Places to Grow. The City has adopted a Downtown Secondary Plan that plans for an additional 6,000 residents and 1,500 jobs by 2031. The last few years have seen the first significant private investments in more than 20 years. Downtown is characterized by many brownfield and otherwise complicated development sites. There has been significant uptake of financial incentive programs offered through Community Improvement Plans however Downtown development economics continue to be a challenge. Maintaining momentum is key, requiring consistent focus on the strands of downtown as a destination, an employment centre and a neighbourhood simultaneously.



Implementation Tools

We are looking for your help to prioritize implementation measures to achieve our vision. Select **3 short**, **5 medium** and **5 long-term** priority actions by placing an **S**, **M** or **L** in the box:

Policy/Regulatory

- Update Official Plan
- Develop Secondary Plan
- Update parking regulations
- Amend Zoning By-law
- Update road engineering design standards
- Implement a Development Permit System
- Institute Design Review Committee
- Allow On-street parking

Design Guidelines

- Prepare Built Form Standards
- Prepare Streetscape/public realm Manual
- Develop Urban Design Concept Plans
- Heritage Conservation District
- _____

CIP Tools

- Tax Increment Based Grant to offset “urban” development cost (e.g. structured parking)
- Façade Improvement Grant
- Redevelopment Feasibility Study Grant
- Grant to revitalize vacant space (e.g. add units above existing commercial)
- 3-year tax break to offset Brownfield Costs
- Grants to offset Environmental Studies
- _____

Public Investments

- Parks and Squares
- Cultural and recreational facilities
- Plantings and Street Furniture
- Public Parking Structures
- Improve streets (Streetscape, complete streets, traffic calming etc.)
- District Energy Infrastructure
- Additional infrastructure investments
- _____

Social/Cultural

- Initiate additional activation strategies for public spaces
- Education and outreach to developers (how well is the city positioned to tell developers what the market is?)
- Increase marketing for Downtown as a great place to live, work, play
- Tactical Urbanism (pop-up planning)
- _____

Economic

- Area specific Development Charges
- Height and density bonusing (Planning Act section 37)

Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

NOTES: Downtown Guelph Case Study

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Silvercreek Parkway North Case Study



Silvercreek Parkway North Case Study

History

During the latter half of the 20th century, commercial development located along major roads creating corridors of low-density commercial uses in Guelph. Developed beginning in the mid-1960s, Silvercreek Parkway North was the site of Guelph's first enclosed mall.

Over the years, this area developed with many of the necessary building-blocks of a successful neighbourhood including: commercial uses and a mix of housing types. In addition neighbourhood demographics and the prevalence of medium and high density residential uses contribute to a high degree of pedestrian activity in the area. Recently the enclosed mall transitioned into strip commercial development, losing the internal corridor that linked interior shops.

Built Form Today

- The area contains a range of land uses dominated by one-storey strip commercial along Silvercreek Parkway.
- Taller, mid-rise residential is also located along Silvercreek Parkway with low-rise suburban residential uses nearby.
- Currently, most arterial and collector roads are designed primarily to facilitate automobile traffic and do not encourage walking and cycling.

Public Realm

The public realm in the area is largely composed of the public streets with a public park located south of Willow Road along Silvercreek Parkway (Sleeman Park). There is little other public space in the corridor although schools and regional parks are located interior to the neighbourhood.

Transportation and Circulation

Silvercreek Parkway is an important “mobility corridor” that will continue to see significant traffic but needs to be designed to encourage transit use, walking and cycling. To this end, Silvercreek Parkway was recently put on a road diet to reduce travel lanes add bike lanes and add a centre turn lane.

To the west is the Hanlon Expressway (Hwy 6) which is planned to evolve over time into a fully-separated highway.

Currently, larger block lengths make pedestrian circulation more difficult. Bus service to the Downtown and surrounding area travels along Silvercreek Parkway and Willow Road.

Could more built form and a better block structure begin to create a more walkable, mixed-use Intensification Corridor?



CREDITS: University of Guelph students Meghan Hunter, Laura Wood, Jamal Nureddin, Adam Finlayson, Ryan Matheson, Mike Lunau, Calen Hamelin

Policy Context

This area of Silvercreek Parkway is designated as an Intensification Corridor through the recent update of the City's Official Plan. This designation is along major roads that are well served by transit and have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed use development.

Vision

Official Plan policies encourage “reurbanization” of Intensification Corridors by creating a holistic vision for each corridor. In addition, to identify and implement the appropriate character for each corridor, the roads will be made safer and more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists.

In particular the vision is for:

- increased residential and employment densities that support transit;
- a mix of residential, office, institutional, and commercial development; and,
- a range of local services.

Policy Directions

1. Add mixed-use buildings.
2. Reinforce and revitalize established neighbourhood commercial centres.
3. Provide enhanced sidewalks and cycling facilities for comfort and safety.
4. Physically and visually link the different land use and character areas along the primary routes in the city.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Mix of housing types and commercial uses in relatively close proximity
- Located along and near key transportation routes (i.e. Silvercreek Parkway and Hanlon Expressway)

Weaknesses

- Lot sizes and land ownership patterns may make consolidation and coordinated intensification difficult
- Currently, most arterial and collector roads are designed primarily to facilitate automobile traffic and do not encourage walking and cycling
- Wide arterials and sparse urban fabric make for a poor pedestrian environment
- Little public open space other than right-of-ways

Opportunities

- Many of the building-blocks of a successful neighbourhood are already here including: commercial uses and a mix of housing types. In addition, neighbourhood demographics and the prevalence of medium and high-density residential uses contribute to a high degree of pedestrian activity in the area
- Improved transit service
- Modest private investment

Threats

- Uncertain market for additional high-density residential units or mixed-use buildings
- Neighbourhood demographics and land values
- Potential local competition with West Node Community mixed-use centre and the new node at Silvercreek Junction to the south

Problem Statement

Intensification, placemaking and streetscape improvements along the transit corridors are planned for the neighborhood. With modest private investment occurring in the area:

- How can we create a more efficient and complete community?
- How can we enhance mobility and improve the visitor experience?
- How can better connections be created?
- How can more positive private investment be encouraged in the area?
- What policy interventions can assist in implementing the vision established through the Official Plan?

Implementation Tools

We are looking for your help to prioritize implementation measures to achieve our vision. Select **3 short**, **5 medium** and **5 long-term** priority actions by placing an **S**, **M** or **L** in the box:

Policy/Regulatory

- Update Official Plan
- Develop Secondary Plan
- Develop block plans
- Update parking regulations
- Amend zoning by-law
- Update road engineering design standards
- Implement a Development Permit System
- Institute Design Review Committee
- Allow On-street parking

Design Guidelines

- Prepare Built Form Standards
- Prepare Streetscape/public realm Manual
- Develop Urban Design Concept Plans
- Heritage Conservation District
- _____

CIP Tools

- Tax Increment Based Grant to offset “urban” development cost (e.g. structured parking)
- Façade Improvement Grant
- Redevelopment Feasibility Study Grant
- Grant to revitalize vacant space (e.g. add units above existing commercial)
- 3-year tax break to offset Brownfield Costs
- Grants to offset Environmental Studies
- _____

Public Investments

- Parks and Squares
- Cultural and recreational facilities
- Plantings and Street Furniture
- Public Parking Structures
- Improve streets (Streetscape, complete streets, traffic calming etc.)
- District Energy Infrastructure
- Add additional infrastructure investments
- _____

Social/Cultural

- Initiate additional activation strategies for public spaces
- Education and outreach to developers
- Marketing as a great place to live, work play
- Tactical Urbanism (pop-up planning)
- _____

Economic

- Area specific Development Charges
- Height and density bonusing (Planning Act section 37)
- _____

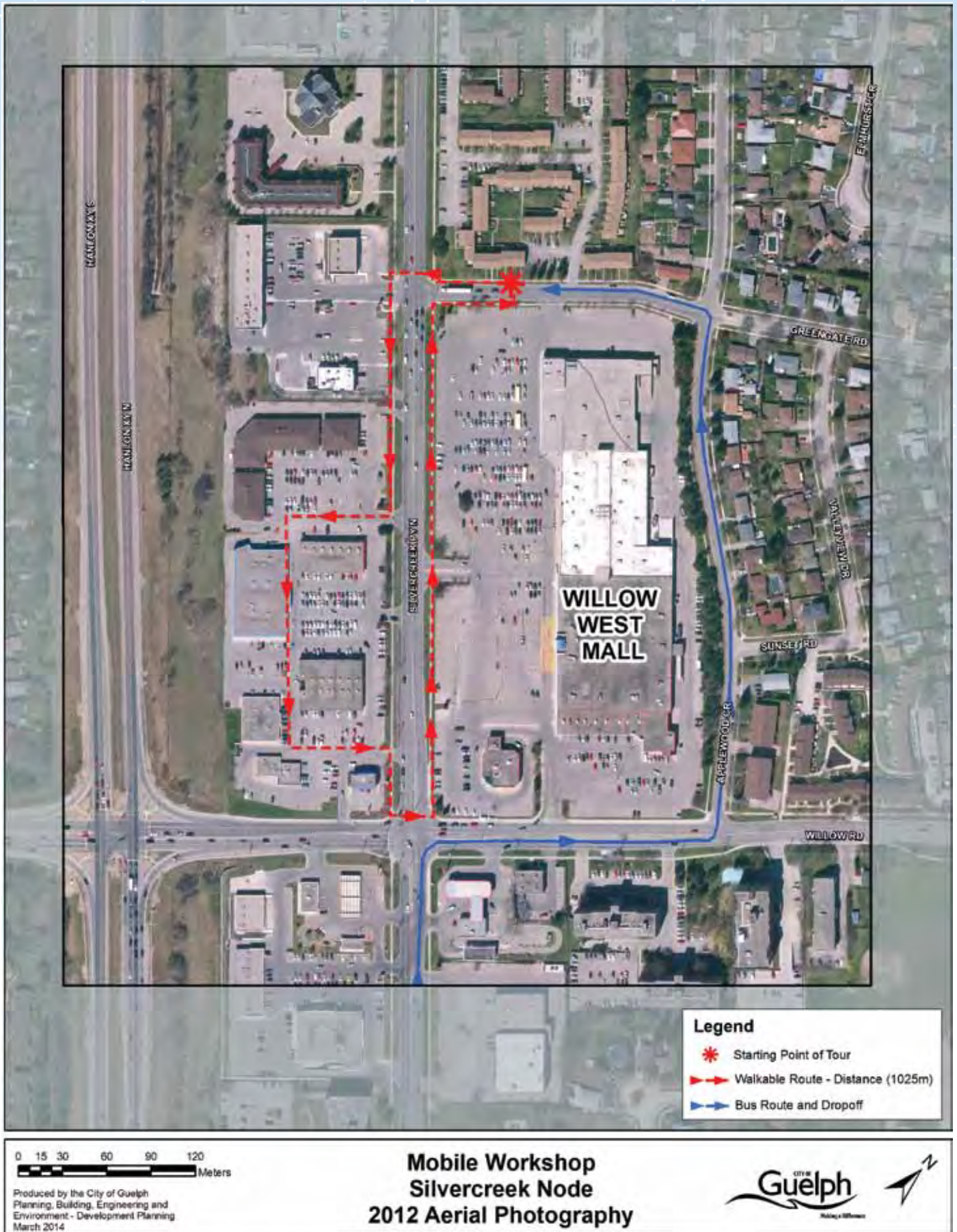
Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



Could more open space and/or improved public realm improve the Silvercreek Parkway Intensification Corridor?

CREDITS: University of Guelph students Meghan Hunter, Laura Wood, Jamal Nureddin, Adam Finlayson, Ryan Matheson, Mike Lunau, Calen Hamelin



NOTES: Silvercreek Parkway North Case Study

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West Node Case Study



West Node Case Study

History

The West Node is within a greenfield area of the city. The area was initially planned in the 1980s as part of a large-scale subdivision. The residential neighbourhoods were built through the late 1980s into the 2000s. The initial phase of the commercial centre was zoned in the late 1990s and construction began in the early 2000s.

Built Form Today

The West Node is situated at the intersection of two major roads (Paisley and Imperial Roads). The Node is planned to contain a range of commercial and residential uses, but to date, following market trends, the commercial portion of the Node has been developed with large format retail and single-storey retail plazas served by surface parking. The buildings within the commercial centre are oriented toward the interior of the site and generally do not address the public streets. Surrounding land uses include cluster townhouse developments, single-detached residential neighbourhoods and vacant lands zoned for high-density apartments. A major focus of the West Node is the City's West End Community Centre (WECC). The Centre was built in 2001 and contains two ice rinks, three swimming pools, gymnasium, café, outdoor splash pad and public library. The site also contains an emergency services station. The WECC is a city-wide resource and a focal point for its surrounding neighbourhoods.



Public Realm

The public rights-of-way are dominated by wide roads that are undifferentiated and not pedestrian-friendly. The rail corridor to the north of the WECC is a barrier and prevents access between Earl Brimblecombe Park to the north and the WECC.

Transportation and Circulation

The Node is situated at the intersection of an arterial road (Paisley Road) and a collector road (Imperial Road). These major roads have four traffic lanes. Elmira Road (to the west of the commercial centre) and Imperial Road include bike lanes. Parking is not permitted on arterial and collector roads. The CN main rail line is situated to the north of the WECC and acts as a barrier visually and for pedestrian mobility. Pedestrian activity is mainly served by sidewalks along municipal roadways. Pedestrian connectivity is not well established and the individual land uses and sites are not well connected. Pedestrian desire lines are evident in the area, for example an informal path through a vacant development site between the WECC and the Zehrs supermarket. The Node is well-served by transit with three bus routes.

As shown in **Figure 1**, the West Node is planned to accommodate 5,600 people and 2,900 jobs within a 10-minute walk of the Paisley-Imperial intersection by the year 2031.



Figure 1 - Planned Population and Jobs - 2031

Policy Context

The West Node is one of five Community Mixed-use Nodes in Guelph. These Nodes are planned for higher-density mixed-uses including residential and employment uses, as well as a wide range of retail, service, entertainment, recreational and commercial uses that serve the local and wider community. The Nodes are intended to be designed to be well-served by transit and facilitate pedestrian and cycling traffic and to be developed in a compact form to support walkable communities. Over the long-term the Nodes are intended to become urban villages with a Main Street experience and attractive private and public spaces. The West Node is designated to permit a broad range of uses including residential, office and community uses in addition to retail.

Vision

The Urban Design Action Plan (2009) identified the following opportunity for Guelph's mixed-use nodes:

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

Planning and Design Principles

The Urban Design concept plan for the West Node includes the following principles:

1. The Main Street area for the Node will be located along a new east-west street north of the existing Zehrs store on both sides of Elmira Road. Ensure a clear/comfortable pedestrian link between the Main Street Area and the large format retail uses.
2. The commercial focus of the Main Street Area will generally be in the vicinity of the Main Street/Elmira intersection.
3. An attractive on-street Transit Node will be developed (i.e. generally bus bays) near the intersection of the new Main Street and Elmira Road including upgraded amenities for transit users.
4. Taller buildings will generally be located at or near the intersection of the Main Street/Elmira Road as well as at Elmira Road/Paisley Road.
5. Building heights, massing, and uses will provide an appropriate transition to the adjacent single-detached dwellings.
6. Introduce a modified grid road pattern that creates adaptable urban blocks and that promotes connectivity and pedestrian/cyclist movement. Road cross-sections, including any private streets, will also be designed to ensure comfort for cyclists/pedestrians.
7. Improve pedestrian connections to the West End Recreation Centre that connect to the high-density residential land use buildings south of Paisley.
8. Establish convenient and comfortable connections between the Trail System and the pedestrian circulation system within the node.
9. Introduce public art component on the west side of Elmira either at the intersection of Elmira/Paisley or Elmira/new Main Street that commemorates the impact of area settlers on Guelph's agricultural heritage.
10. On-street cycling facilities will be established along Elmira and Paisley Road.




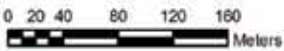
Guelph policies call for the creation of a new Main Street to focus development in the node along with establishing better connections.



Township of Guelph-Eramosa
City of Guelph

Legend

-  Starting Point of Tour
-  Walkable Route - Distance 1064m



Produced by the City of Guelph
Planning, Building, Engineering and
Environment - Development Planning
March 2014

**Mobile Workshop
Westend Node
2012 Aerial Photography**



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- A growing mix of residential (low-medium and high-density) commercial, institutional and community uses within close proximity.
- Zoning permits a range of residential and commercial uses including community and live/work uses.
- Sidewalks and mid-block pedestrian signals along major roads.
- Layout of commercial blocks allows for the creation of a Main Street within the Node.

Weaknesses

- Bulk of available lands within the commercial centre are currently used for low-density, single-storey retail uses and surface parking.
- Limited pedestrian sidewalks through commercial sites.
- Function and design of primary roads generally not conducive to walking and pedestrian-oriented development.
- Poor connectivity within and between commercial and community uses.

Opportunities

- High-density residential development planned south of Paisley Road.
- Future development of vacant commercial land between Zehrs and WECC provides opportunity for connectivity.
- Maximum retail gross floor area limits the amount of retail permitted in the Node thereby requiring alternate uses once cap is reached.
- Urban Design Concept Plan for the Node illustrates design principles for future development.

Threats

- Uncertain market for mixed-use compact form in the suburban context.
- Zoning regulations for commercial uses (e.g. parking ratios, heights).
- Potential impacts on future development/range of uses due to proximity to planned Community Mixed-use Node on Silvercreek Parkway.
- Increased vehicular traffic due to location of Costco.

Problem Statement

The vision for the West Node is a pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use centre and a focal point for the community. However, the node is currently dominated by large-format and single-storey retail development with extensive surface parking and an incomplete pedestrian realm. The commercial centre is currently half built, and some of its key structural elements have been established. In this context, what policy decisions, investments and changes need to be made to ensure that the next stage of development and longer-term redevelopment contribute to the established Mixed-use Node vision.

Figure 2 - Is this what the New Main Street could look like?



CREDITS: Meghan Hunter, Laura Wood, Jamal Nureddin, Adam Finlayson, Ryan Matheson, Mike Lunau, Calen Hamelin, Lise Burcher, University of Guelph 2014.

Implementation Tools

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Social/Cultural

- Initiate additional activation strategies for public spaces
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- Marketing as a great place to live, work play
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- _____

Economic

- Area specific Development Charges
- Height and density bonusing (Planning Act section 37)
- _____

Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



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