



DRAFT DOWNTOWN DIRECTIONS

Framework for the Downtown Guelph Secondary Plan



August 16, 2010

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Introduction

This document summarizes key draft directions that will provide the basis for a new Secondary Plan for Downtown Guelph. It describes the long-term vision and principles for downtown, illustrates the structuring elements of the plan, and outlines proposed policies and guidelines. It concludes with a set of key initiatives intended to guide implementation of the plan.

In addition to transportation and the public realm, this document includes directions regarding land use and built form for all areas of Guelph's "Urban Growth Centre", as defined in the Official Plan, with the exception of the W.C. Woods properties east of the Speed River. The City continues to consult with residents regarding this area of the plan. The results from the consultation will be incorporated into the Draft Secondary Plan.

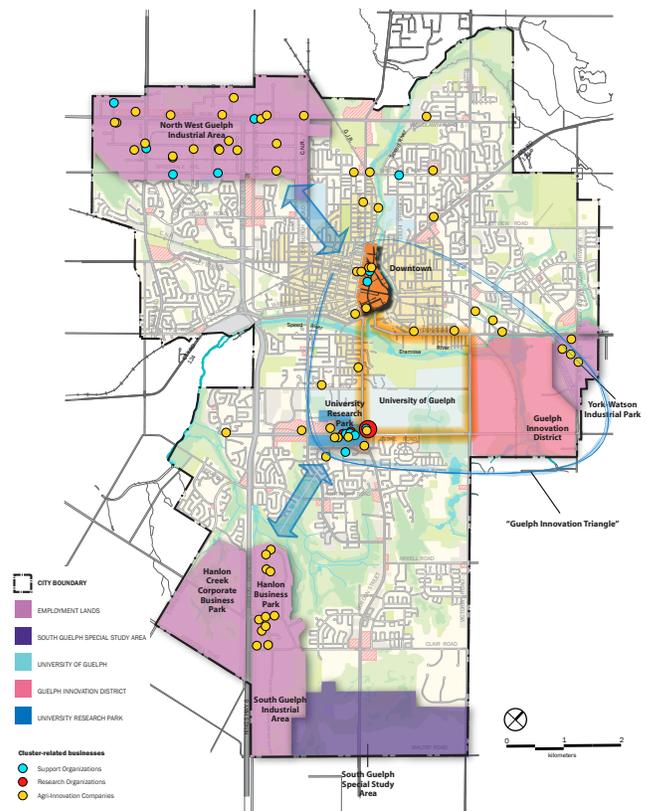
The purpose of this document is to elicit feedback and discussion on the proposed directions for all other areas of the Urban Growth Centre prior to preparation of draft Secondary Plan policies.

Comments on the proposed directions for the downtown should be submitted by October 4, 2010, to:

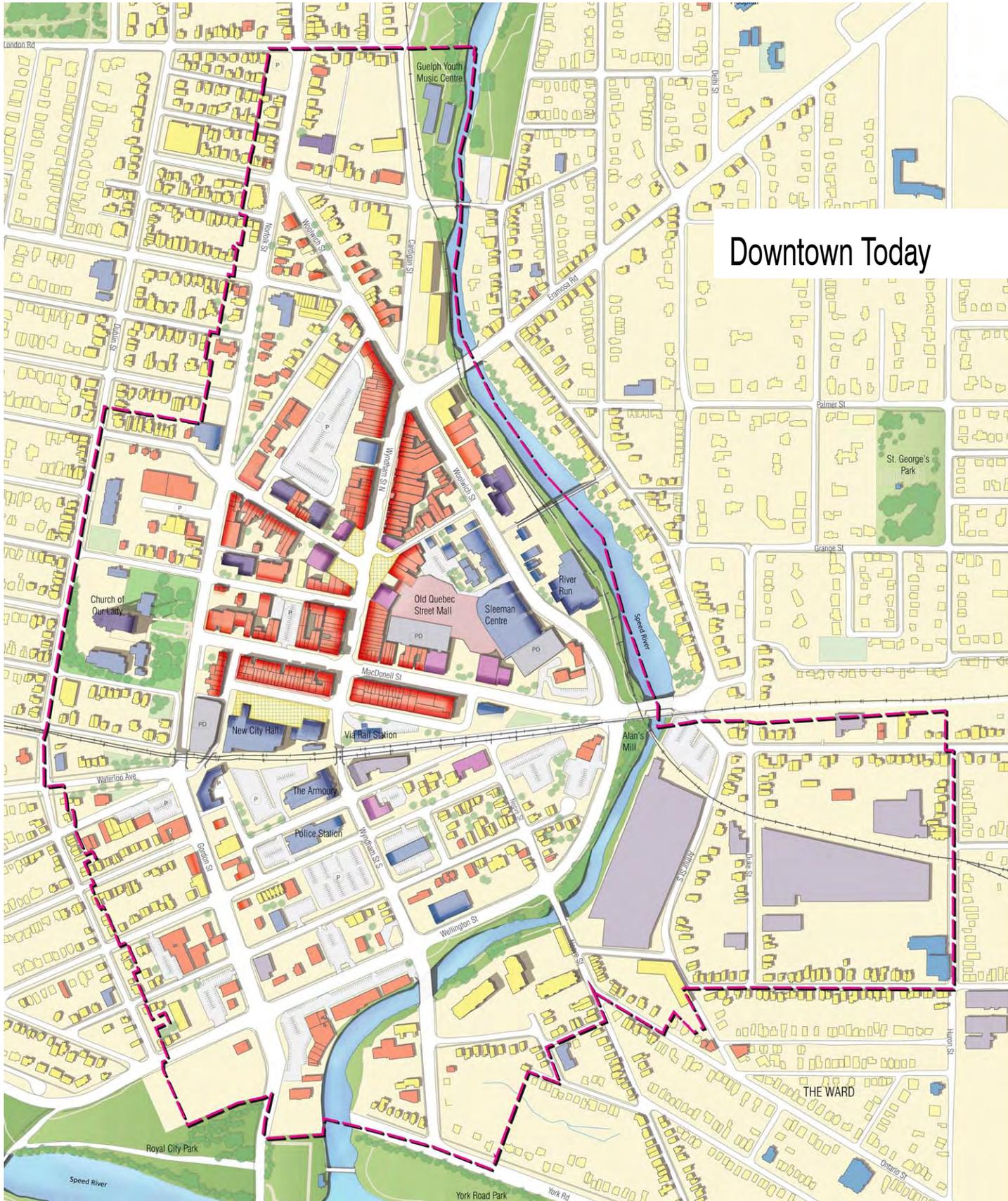
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Downtown's Role within the City

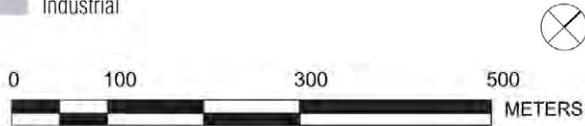
Downtown Guelph plays a fundamental role within the City's urban and social structure. From the beginning, it has been the civic and cultural heart of the city, designed to house key City and County institutions and amenities. It is used and enjoyed by all residents, but also in itself is a neighbourhood to the people who live downtown and an integral part of communities which immediately surround it. From an economic perspective, downtown remains a major employment centre and provides an identity for the city that attracts business and visitors. It is a vital place within Guelph's "innovation triangle" and has been identified as a priority area in Prosperity 20/20, the city-wide economic and tourism strategy recently adopted by Council.



Downtown Today



- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Residential | Institutional | Industrial |
| Parks | Small scale commercial | |
| Commercial mixed use | Key commercial | |
| Office | Places of worship | |



Context: key drivers for change

There are a number of policy documents and physical changes occurring downtown that set the stage for ongoing reinvestment, including the following.

Places to Grow and the Local Growth Management Strategy

As a designated Urban Growth Centre in the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow), Downtown Guelph must be planned to reach or exceed a density target of 150 people and jobs per hectare by 2031. The current density is approximately 96 people and jobs per hectare. The City's Local Growth Management Strategy sets a target of approximately 3,000 new housing units, or 6,000 new residents, and approximately 1,500 new jobs, which would result in a density of approximately 150 people and jobs per hectare.

Community Energy Initiative

Downtown has a key role to play in helping the City achieve the targets of the Community Energy Initiative (CEI) regarding energy efficiency and localized energy generation facilities. The CEI's recommended "scale projects" include downtown revitalization and the possible development of integrated energy and water master plans for large redevelopment sites in St. Patrick's Ward.

Major Transit Station

As part of its Transit Growth Strategy, the City is about to commence construction of a major transit station on Carden Street. The station will establish a single, central transit hub downtown, shifting the existing bus hub from St. George's Square and accommodating GO peak hour rail service, which Metrolinx is planning to resume in the near future. The station will also continue to be used by VIA trains, Greyhound buses and other inter-city bus services.

Other City Investments

Replacing, improving and augmenting existing facilities, the City recently has been planning and implementing a series of major projects that are gradually transforming the downtown public realm, including:

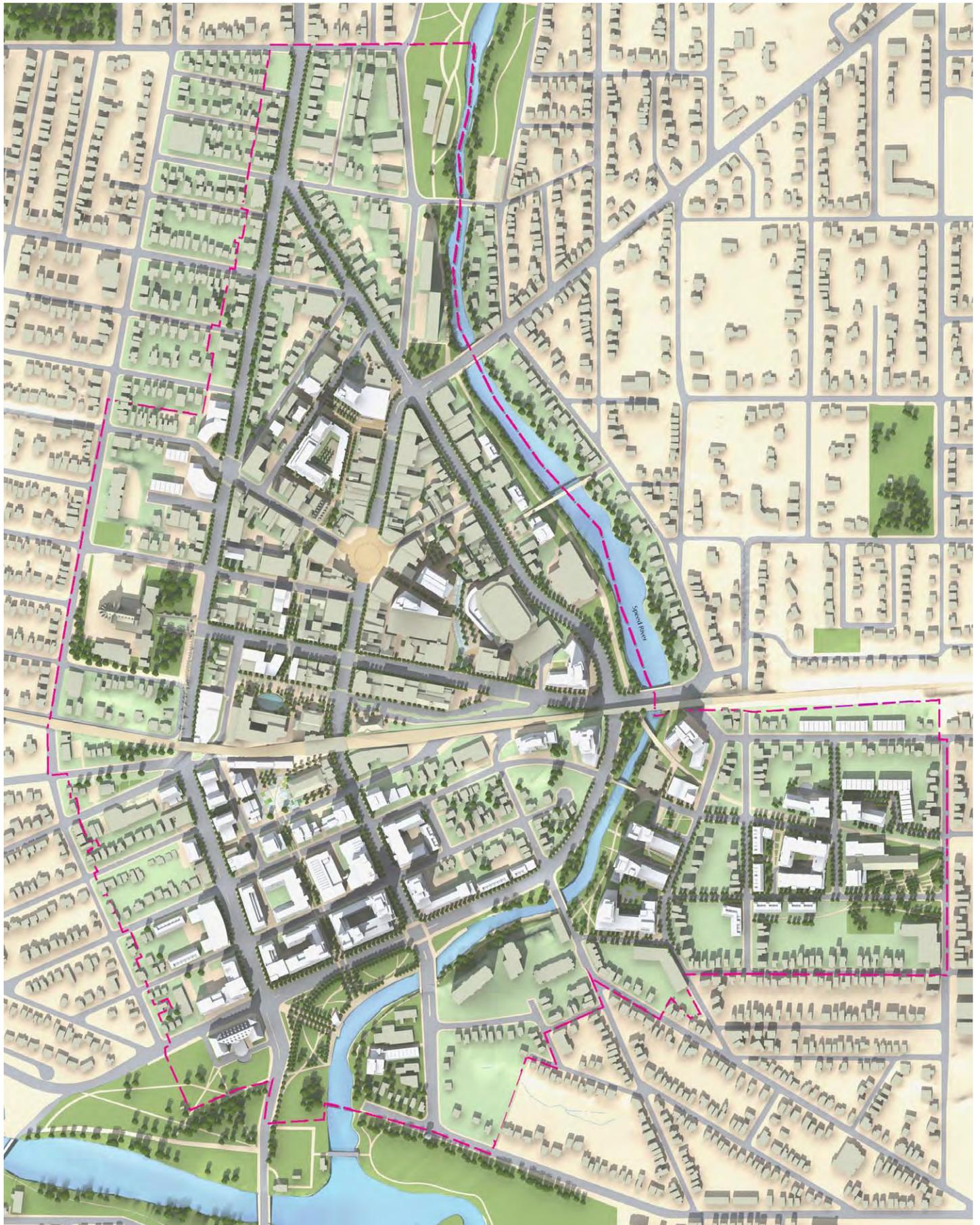
- Riverfront / Trans Canada Trail Investment
- New City Hall and Civic Square
- Gordon Street and Norfolk Street Improvements
- New Civic Museum
- Wyndham Street and Underpass Improvements
- Wilson Street Parking Structure (planned)
- New Downtown Library (planned)
- Baker Street Parking Structure (planned)

Private Investment

There have been encouraging signs of private reinvestment interest downtown. The Secondary Plan needs to guide the redevelopment of this and other strategic sites to ensure private development respects the city's heritage and contributes to a holistic vision of the downtown.

Economic Development

Downtown continues to attract small businesses in the creative and cultural sectors of the economy, including a number of communications and information technology firms. These businesses are capitalizing and building on the existing foundation of excellent cultural facilities and heritage assets. The Secondary Plan needs to establish land use, heritage, mobility, public realm and parking policies that encourage job creation and support the lifestyles of those who want to work or live downtown, or both. In addition, the downtown will be a focus for major office and institutional uses along with retail and entertainment uses vital to a successful creative economy. As reinforced in the City's economic development and tourism plan, Prosperity 2020, the success of downtown is important for the whole city.



Vision and Principles

Downtown Guelph will be:

A COMPLETE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Cities everywhere are discovering they must support the central business district role of their downtown with significant residential development and amenities to support a high quality of life. By accommodating and promoting a broader mix of uses, downtowns can maintain a vibrant retail environment and achieve a healthy live-work balance that supports walking, cycling and transit for daily trips.

Downtown Guelph is home to some 3,000 people and its edges overlap with healthy residential neighbourhoods, but there is a lack of neighbourhood amenities downtown. With approximately 6,000 more people projected to move Downtown by 2031 comes the need for change. Residential intensification will create the opportunity for a more complete downtown.

Many new residents will occupy infill projects in the historic core of downtown north of the CN tracks—including new apartment buildings on the Baker Street parking lot. Most will live in new buildings south of the tracks or on former industrial sites in the St. Patrick's Ward community east of the Speed River. While street-related housing will be encouraged, most of the new housing will be apartments of varying unit types, sizes and levels of affordability. Existing and new residents will find a range of commercial amenities on the ground floors of buildings, and as the downtown population grows, new riverfront parkland and community gathering and recreation spaces will be created.

A HUB FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Downtown is Guelph's cultural hub and home to a growing number of creative, innovative businesses. To emphasize its role as a creative and innovative place, and support the diversification of Guelph's economy, the downtown should also be home to an applied arts and technology college and/or a satellite campus of the University of Guelph. Business and creativity incubators, where entrepreneurs, artists and others have access to support services and low-rent space, should be encouraged. New hotel and conference facilities will facilitate the exchange of ideas and support existing businesses. Besides housing many new businesses, downtown's historic buildings will provide the backdrop for a thriving arts and culture scene.

A GREEN SHOWCASE

Downtown is an inherently sustainable place due to its density, mix of uses and walkability. Downtown Guelph will become more sustainable as it adds more people, jobs, parkland and pedestrian-oriented places. The options of taking transit, walking or cycling instead of driving will be more attractive as transit facilities, streetscapes and trail connections are improved. Redevelopment may create opportunities for district energy systems and will demonstrate best practices in environmental design. Green roofs and cool roof materials will mitigate the heat island effect, and rainwater capture and reuse systems will reduce run-off into the rivers. The riverfront itself will be greened, reinforcing Guelph's relationship to its natural features.

Aerial view of the historic core of downtown looking southeast



AN AUTHENTIC AND BEAUTIFUL PLACE

Downtown Guelph's remarkable character, rooted in John Galt's plan and the rich legacy of limestone buildings, is one of its greatest assets. In the heart of downtown, the existing character will be maintained—key heritage buildings will be protected, new development will blend in and taller buildings will be kept to the periphery. South of the tracks, contemporary buildings will embody the principles of durability, adaptability and simple beauty so evident north of the tracks. The redevelopment of former industrial sites east of the river will respect and maintain the eclectic character of St. Patrick's Ward. The qualities of the public realm throughout downtown will be enhanced. St. George's Square will be redesigned as a gathering place, and new, only-in-Guelph places will be created.

A DESTINATION FOR FOOD AND CULTURE

Building on the city's roots in agriculture, its strong arts community and its reputation for fine dining and good music, downtown's role as a food and culture destination will be reinforced. An enhanced and more accessible farmers' market, with a year-round indoor component, will attract more Guelph citizens and out-of-towners to downtown, and support the city's agri-innovation cluster. A community-based arts space and more arts-oriented events will give local artists more opportunities to display their work. More major festivals downtown will celebrate the city's strengths and bring customers to downtown shops and restaurants.

The historic armoury building and site, when the current uses can be relocated, could become a major cultural and creativity hub containing some of the uses described above and providing a venue for events and a tourist destination.

Illustration of the long-term vision for a new mixed-use neighbourhood south of the railway

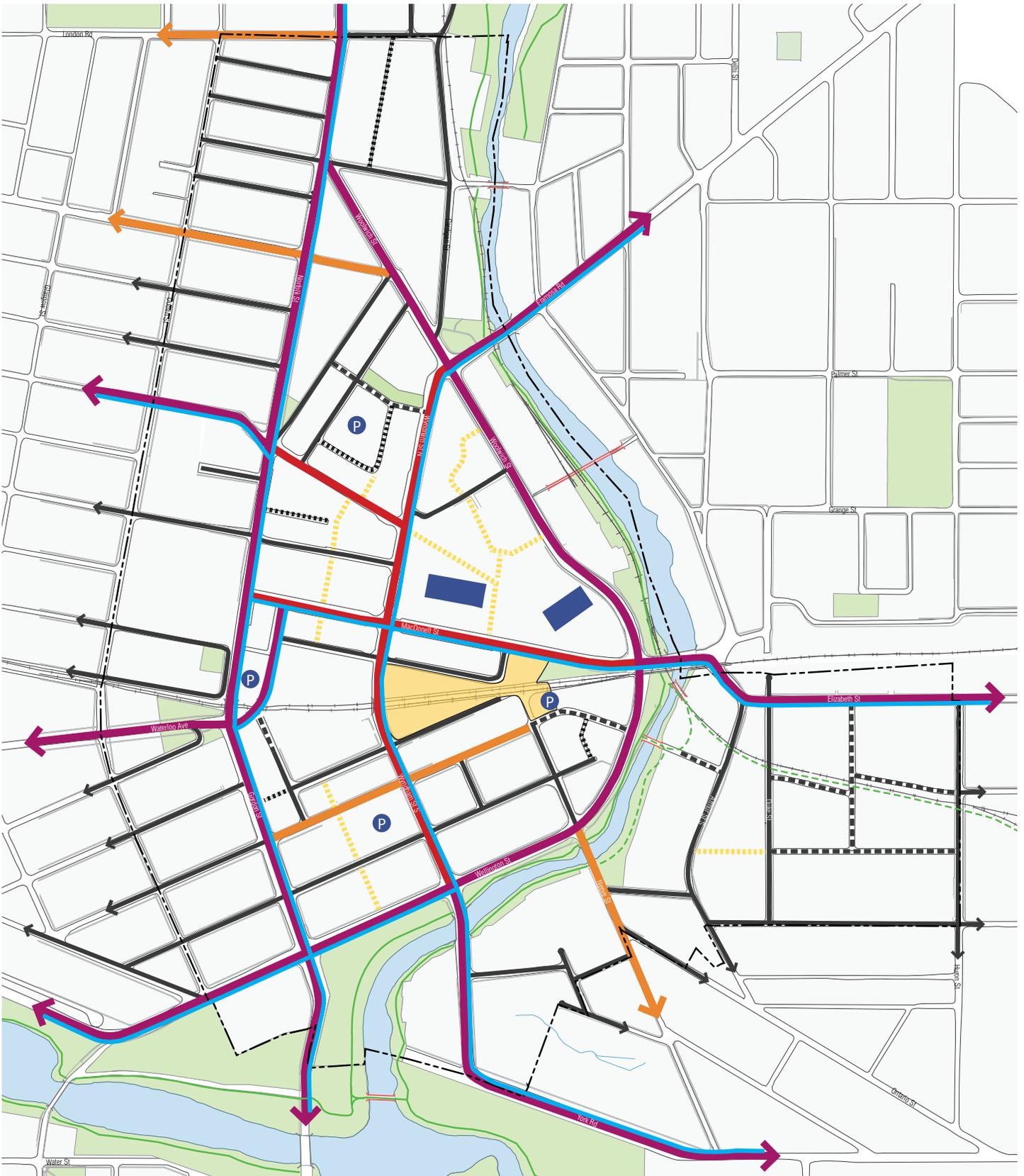


A TRANSIT HUB

As downtown becomes a more important and attractive place to be, it will also become more accessible, particularly by transit. The new major transit station will draw more employers downtown as well as more residents seeking easy access to destinations throughout Guelph and cities beyond. A transit hub means more than improved transit facilities—it will include a mix of commercial uses and other amenities around the station and a high-quality pedestrian environment that together enhance the transit experience. High-density office and residential uses within a short walking distance of the station will support a high level of transit service. Downtown Guelph will continue to be accessible by car, but a major transit station will help attract the diversity of employment, residents and visitors a downtown needs to be successful.

The Secondary Plan will be based on the following eight core principles:

- 1 Protect, respect and enhance downtown's core assets and heritage resources.**
- 2 Establish new and better connections and relationships to the Speed River—a vital community-wide asset.**
- 3 Rejuvenate signature streets and create inviting spaces for pedestrians across downtown.**
- 4 Increase vitality and create complete neighbourhoods by significantly increasing the residential population downtown.**
- 5 Foster a strong and diverse business environment.**
- 6 Create opportunities for new civic, cultural and educational institutions.**
- 7 Provide transportation options that work for everyone—pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and drivers.**
- 8 Promote energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure.**



- | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Primary street (arterial) | | Future trails | | Major transit station | |
0 100 300 500 METERS |
| | Downtown main street | | Key pedestrian connections | | Existing parking structure location | | |
| | Secondary street | | Laneway | | Future parking structure | | |
| | Local street | | Future secondary street | | | | |
| | Pedestrian bridge | | Future local street | | | | |
| | Trails | | Bike lanes on streets | | | | |

Mobility Plan

Improving key pieces of transportation infrastructure to provide multiple ways of traveling to and through downtown.

Key features:

- › An enhanced transportation system, including a major transit station and new local streets and pedestrian connections, intended to improve access to and through the downtown for transit users, drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.
- › “Guelph Central Station” to straddle rail corridor to facilitate pedestrian access, bus movements and pick-up/drop-off.
- › The designated Major Transit Station area may include transit facilities, parking, bicycle parking and commuter pick-up/drop-off areas.
- › Establish a hierarchy of streets that respects the Galt Plan.
- › Downtown Main Streets—Wyndham, Macdonell and Quebec—will be “pedestrian-priority” streets and support increased transit use while continuing to accommodate private vehicles, cyclists and parking.
- › Gordon, Norfolk, Wellington and Woolwich are recognized as key access and through streets.
- › Alternative design standards for Wellington Street, especially between Wyndham Street and Macdonell Street, that promote walking, cycling and transit uses will be considered to create an urban street cross-section.
- › Carden Street and Farquhar Street, east of Wyndham, to be designed for high transit and pedestrian use.
- › In order to improve connectivity within the Major Transit Station area, a connection between Farquhar Street and Neeve Street may be required.
- › New local streets east of the river to be created over time to serve redevelopment and improve access and circulation for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.
- › New pedestrian bridge to link the downtown to St. Patrick’s Ward east of the river.
- › Mid-block open spaces to be created for pedestrian movement.
- › Additional public parking facilities planned.

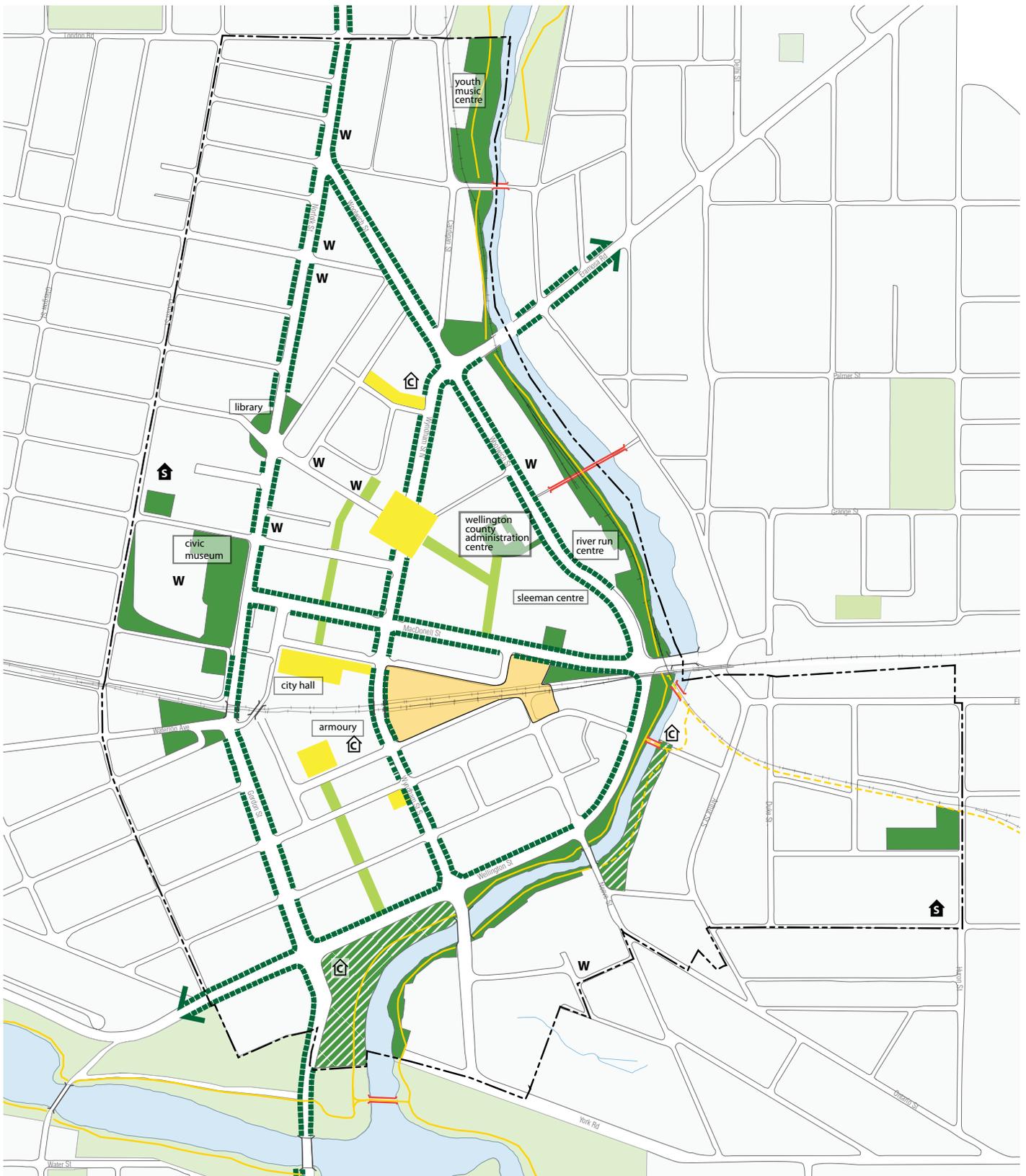
- › Significant new commercial, institutional and residential developments shall be required to submit Transportation Demand Management Plans that identify strategies intended to reduce reliance on single occupant vehicle trips.

Short-term initiatives (next 5-10 years):

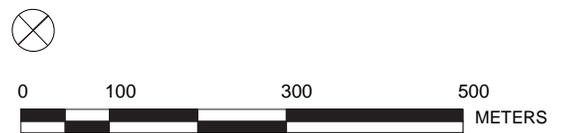
- › Intermodal Transit Station*
 - › Downtown parking strategy*
 - › Wilson Street parking structure*
 - › Street and trail connections to the St. Patrick’s Ward neighbourhood
 - › New local street between Wyndham and Yarmouth.
 - › Baker Street parking structure
- (* priority projects within the next 2-5 years)

Longer-term initiatives:

- › Completion of Riverfront Trail (west side)
- › New pedestrian-bicycle bridge
- › New local streets east of Arthur Street to serve redevelopment
- › Extension of Freshfield Street to Wilson Street following relocation of market
- › Fountain Street parking facility



- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
|  | Mid block pedestrian mews |  | Future parks |
|  | Parks and publicly accessible open space |  | Pedestrian bridge |
|  | Existing and future urban square |  | Place of worship |
|  | Secondary plan boundary |  | Potential civic, cultural, or community use |
|  | Primary streetscapes |  | Major transit station |
|  | Trails |  | Parks and open space outside downtown |
|  | Future trails |  | Schools |



Public Realm Plan

Enhancing the network of parks, open spaces, streetscapes and community facilities to make downtown more liveable and beautiful.

Key features:

- › Downtown open space system to be enhanced and interconnected with new parks, squares, pedestrian connections
- › New riverfront parks and trail connections—south of Wellington Street and east of the river.
- › Improved streetscapes for Macdonell and Upper Wyndham with wider sidewalks.
- › New urban square adjacent to planned downtown library.
- › Development of a new neighbourhood park on Huron Street, as currently zoned.
- › St. George's Square re-designed for civic gatherings, passive enjoyment, and café and retail activity.
- › New mid-block connections west of Wyndham.
- › Armoury building and site renovated for public uses and a new public square.
- › New and improved squares and parks to be designed as outdoor community centres for passive use, casual interaction and programmed activities.
- › Potential for new community and/or cultural facilities on former industrial sites in St. Patrick's Ward.
- › Public art installations in existing and planned open spaces and streetscapes.

Short-term initiatives (next 5-10 years):

- › New library and adjacent park
- › Upper Wyndham streetscape improvements
- › Riverfront park and trail on Woods 1 site
- › Potential community/cultural use on Woods 1 site
- › St. George's Square master plan and improvements
- › Armoury acquisition strategy
- › Downtown public art program

Longer-term initiatives:

- › Macdonell streetscape improvements
- › Armoury building renovation and reprogramming
- › Neighbourhood park on Huron Street
- › Riverfront park and trail south of Wellington

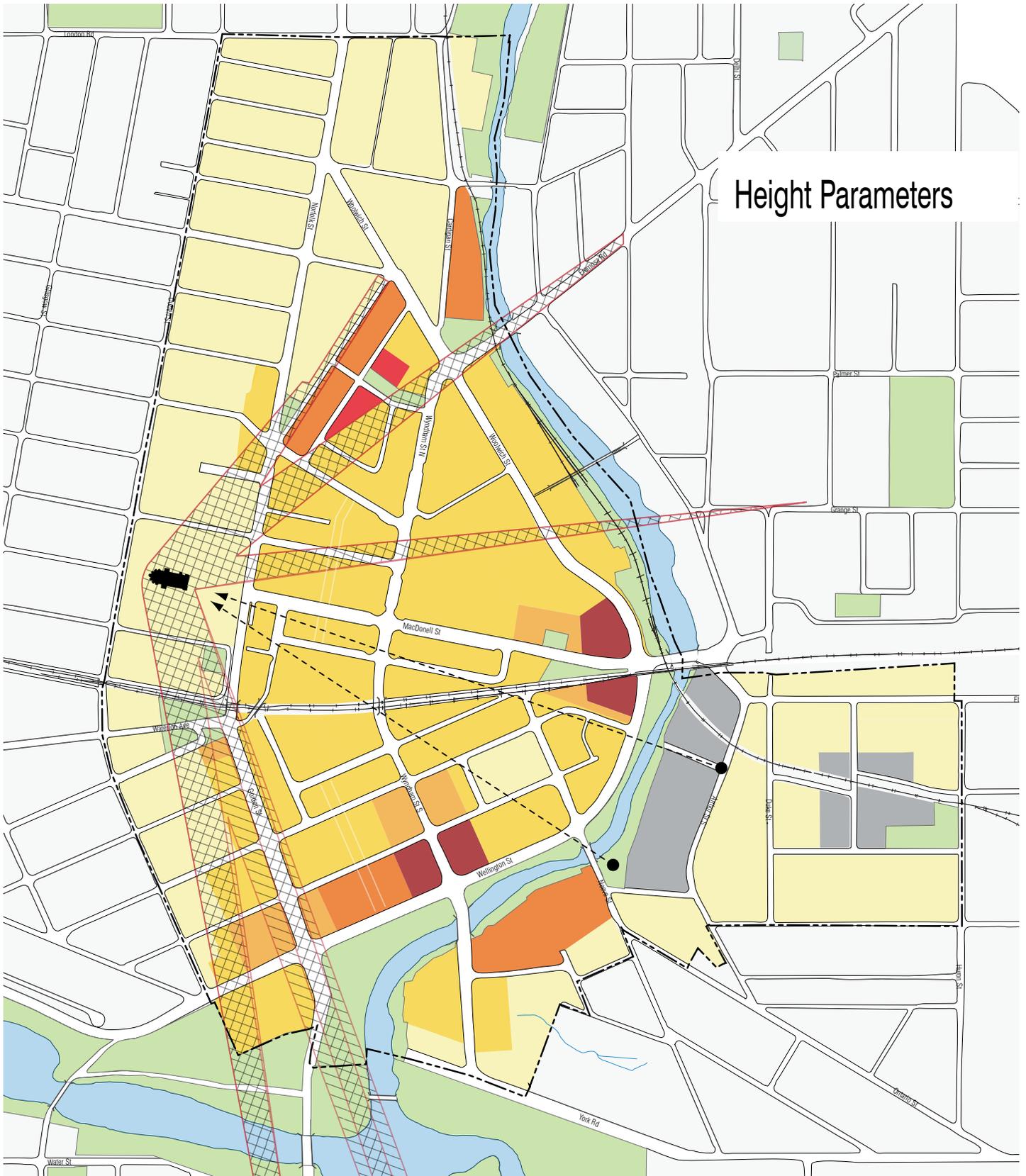
Land Use Plan

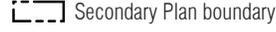
Accommodating and encouraging a variety of land uses to ensure a vibrant downtown for Guelph residents and visitors.

Key Policy Directions:

- › Range of uses permitted in Mixed Use areas: office, retail, restaurants, entertainment, professional and personal services, studios, institutional, hotel, residential, public parking.
- › Ground floor, street-related retail, restaurants or other active uses required on Wyndham, Macdonell, Quebec, Carden, Wilson and Wellington, as indicated.
- › Higher density office and institutional uses encouraged to cluster around major transit station.
- › Offices and services on downtown main streets encouraged to locate on upper floors.
- › Detached and semi-detached houses, townhousing and low-rise apartment buildings permitted in Residential 1 areas.
- › Apartment buildings and townhousing (including stacked townhouses) permitted in Residential 2 areas.
- › Residential developments should include an affordable housing component.
- › Larger developments shall include a significant proportion of units suitable for families with children.
- › Existing policies for flood-prone area shall continue to apply.
- › Drive-through establishments and new gas stations shall not be permitted.

Height Parameters



- | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|
|  2-4 storeys |  6-15 storeys |  Park |  Secondary Plan boundary |  |
|  3-6 storeys |  6-18 storeys |  Maintained view corridors |  Potential view sensitive locations |  |
|  4-8 storeys |  Existing view corridor reduced |  Appropriate heights to be determined | | |
|  4-12 storeys | | | | |

Built Form and Site Development Policies

Establishing rules and standards for development to ensure downtown's heritage fabric is respected, important views are protected, and an attractive, liveable and sustainable environment is created.

Built Form:

- › Downtown should contain a variety of building types, from detached houses to apartment and office buildings, each suited to its planned context.
- › New buildings shall respect the scale, form and architecture of neighbouring historic buildings.
- › Minimum and maximum heights shall apply across downtown (see Height Plan). In areas where buildings taller than 4 storeys are permitted, height bonusing in exchange for community benefits shall be permitted. The maximum bonus shall be 1-3 storeys, depending on the height limit in the area and proximity to the major transit station.
- › Notwithstanding the height parameters, one-storey houses shall continue to be permitted in Residential 1 areas.
- › In Mixed Use areas where buildings taller than 4 storeys are permitted, buildings generally shall occupy a minimum of 65% of the lot.
- › New buildings on commercial streets where ground floor retail uses are required (including Wyndham, Macdonell, Quebec, Carden, Wilson and segments of Norfolk and Wellington) as well as on Gordon Street shall have a street wall at the right-of-way and at least 3 storeys high before step-backs.
- › Mid-rise buildings up to 8 storeys, where permitted, shall have step backs of at least 3 metres at the 4th storey on downtown main streets and local streets, and at the 6th storey on Wellington and Gordon.
- › Residential and hotel buildings taller than 8 storeys shall take a podium and tower form. Podiums shall be no taller than 4 storeys; towers generally shall be set back from the edge of the podium and have a maximum floor plate of about 750 square metres. Adjacent towers shall be a minimum of 25 metres apart.

- › Mechanical penthouses shall be screened and integrated into the design of the building.
- › Apartment buildings on secondary and local streets generally shall have main floor units with entrances on the street. The entry to main floor units and front patios, where provided, shall be elevated from the street.
- › Buildings comprised of attached townhouses in Residential 1 and Residential 2 areas generally shall not exceed 40 metres in length.
- › Where provided, balconies shall be integrated into the design of the building and generally recessed.
- › High-quality, enduring building materials, such as stone, brick and glass, shall be used throughout downtown. Stucco, vinyl and brightly coloured glass shall not be permitted.
- › Existing architectural guidelines in Private Realm Improvement Manual shall be reviewed and revised.

Environmental Design:

- › If and when a district energy system is in place downtown, new development shall be encouraged to connect to it where practical.
- › All buildings greater than 1,000 square metres shall be encouraged to be built to LEED-NC Gold or equivalent standards, at a minimum.
- › All residential development shall achieve an Energy Star or equivalent rating, where applicable.
- › Green roofs, solar capture equipment and/or cool roof materials shall be required on the roofs of buildings generally greater than 1,000 square metres.
- › New development generally shall include rainwater harvesting and reuse systems.
- › Landscaping shall be water efficient and drought resistant.

Parking and Servicing:

- › Entrance to parking and servicing areas generally shall be on secondary or local streets or laneways. Shared driveways shall be encouraged.
- › Servicing areas shall be located at the rear or side of buildings and internalized or screened.
- › Parking in Residential 2 and Residential 3 areas shall be located underground where practical. Surface parking for residential or commercial uses generally shall be located at the rear of buildings. No parking shall be permitted between the front of a building and the public right-of-way.
- › Above-grade parking structures shall be designed to appear as fenestrated buildings, with materials and architecture that blends with neighbouring buildings, and should contain commercial uses on the ground floor where appropriate.
- › Transit-oriented parking standards, with minimum and maximum ratios, shall be developed for downtown.
- › All new office, institutional and multi-unit residential buildings shall include secure indoor bicycle parking.

Implementation

Identifying strategic initiatives to guide short-term actions by the City, developers and the community.

Summary of short-term initiatives (next 5-10 years)

Mobility:

- › Intermodal Transit Station
- › Downtown parking strategy
- › Wilson Street parking structure
- › Street and trail connections to the St. Patrick's Ward neighbourhood
- › New local street between Wyndham and Yarmouth
- › Baker Street parking structure

Public Realm:

- › New library and adjacent square
- › Upper Wyndham streetscape improvements
- › Riverfront park and trail on Woods 1 site
- › St. George's Square master plan and improvements
- › Armoury acquisition strategy
- › Downtown public art program

Programming:

- › Frequent year-round downtown events
- › Culture and tourism strategy
- › Major food festival
- › Public art program
- › Coordinate the programming of all City assets downtown

Development Planning and Facilitation:

- › Complete the District Energy Feasibility Study
- › Update zoning by-law and/or consider a development permit system
- › Expand Community Improvement Plan to address residential conversions and improving energy efficiency
- › Undertake heritage conservation study
- › Facilitate developers workshops to communicate the plan, address barriers to development and generally promote investment downtown

Development Projects:

- › Woods 1 site redevelopment
- › Baker Street housing
- › Macdonell-Woolwich site redevelopment (office/hotel/residential)
- › Fountain Street parking lot redevelopment (institutional/mixed-use)
- › Potential Fire Station relocation and redevelopment (mixed-use)

