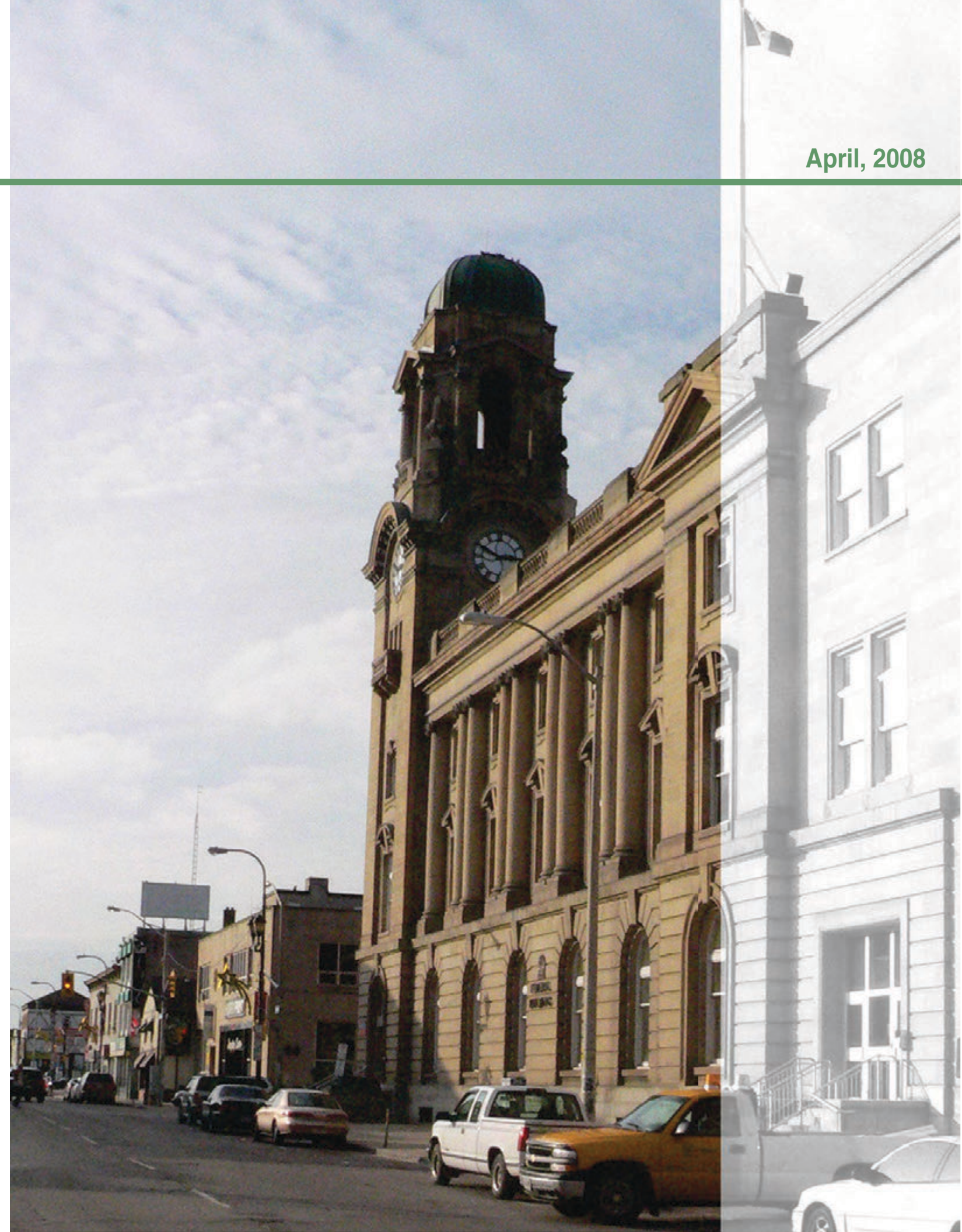




# A Master Plan for Downtown Brantford

April, 2008

## Towards a Stronger Future



**URBAN  
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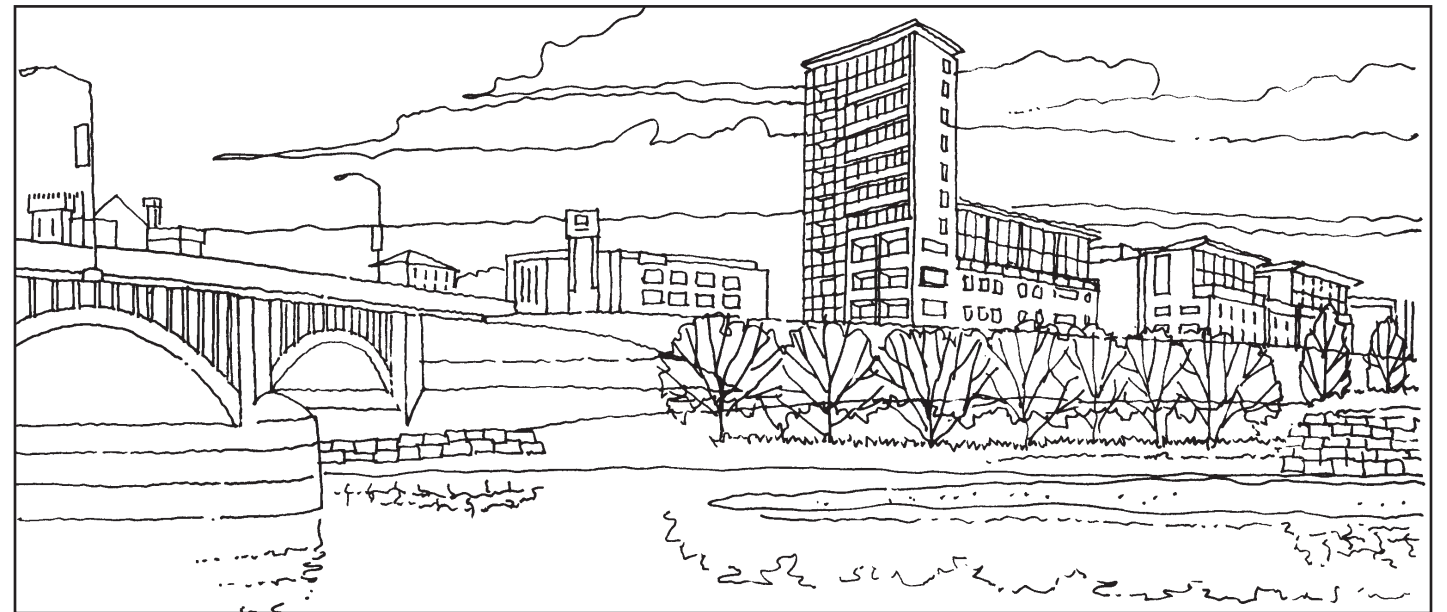
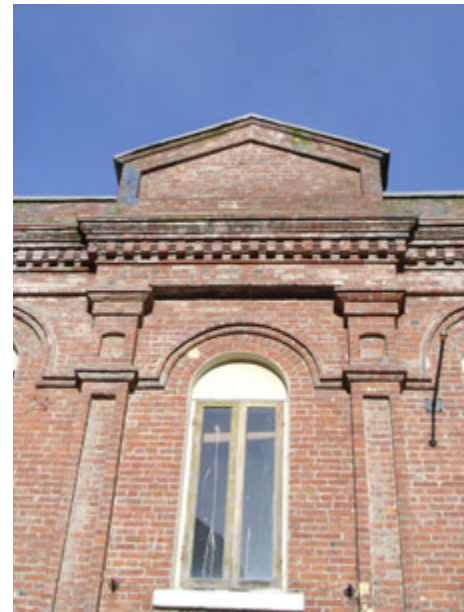
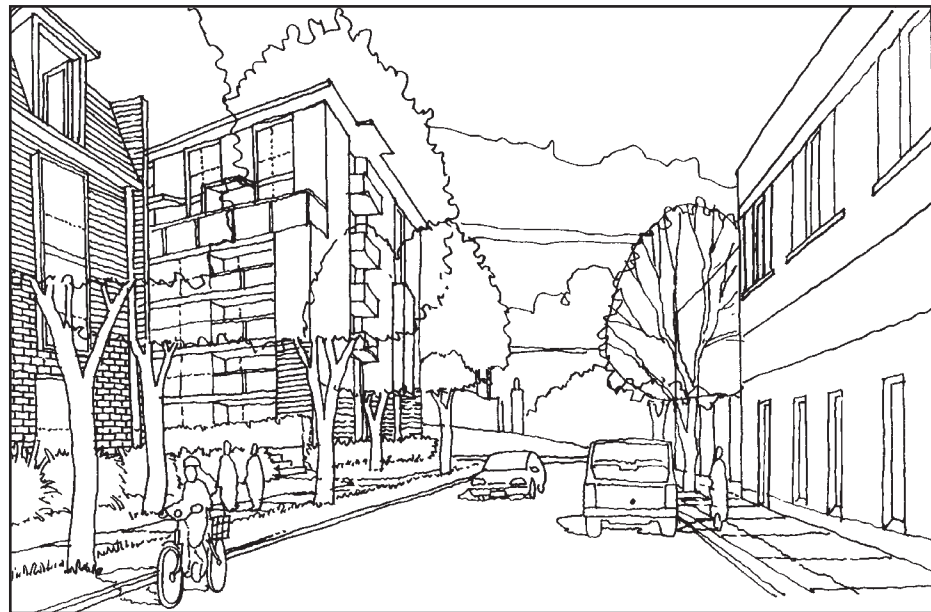
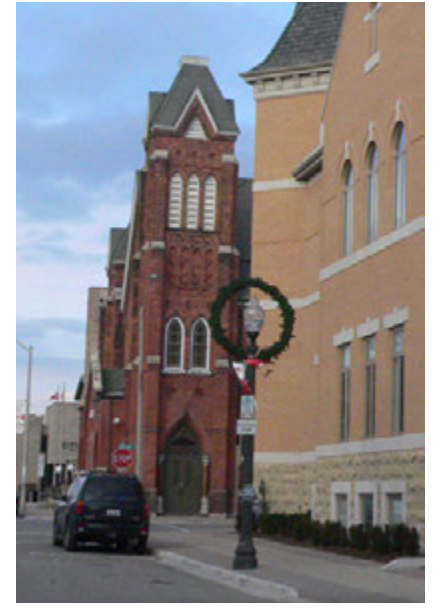
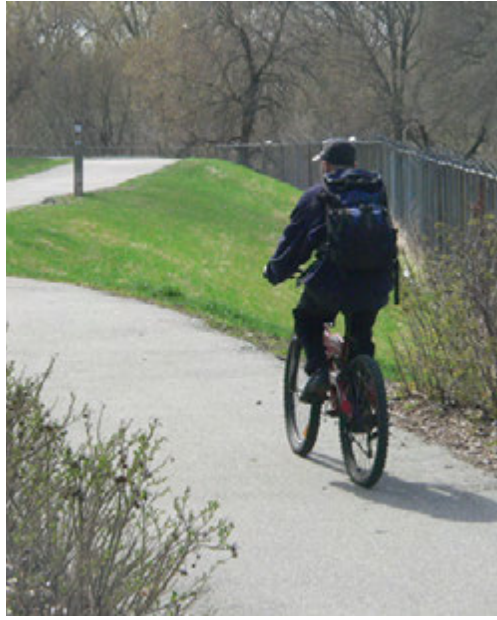
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# A Vision for Downtown Brantford

Brantford is ambitious. The City is striving to create a Downtown that its residents, business community, institutional partners and the wider community can be proud of. The Council is committed to making a difference to the Downtown and making it their success story.


Over the coming years, Downtown Brantford will be transformed into a bustling, diverse and beautiful destination that is recognized as the healthy and vibrant heart of the city. People will be drawn to the Downtown by its new shops, businesses and special events that celebrate the Downtown as a year around meeting place for all. The Downtown will remain the strong civic heart for the communities of Brantford.

Harmony Square will be the centerpiece of a renewed Brantford and a symbol of an optimistic future. Around the Square and across the Downtown, the heritage of the city will be expressed through the best architecture and public realm expressions possible. The Grand River will become a genuine part of the Downtown with new green landscaped routes drawn from the banks of the river right into the very heart of the city.

Established landmark buildings will rediscover their gracious composure and be reclaimed through new uses that contribute positively to the community. New developments will sensitively blend with the city's established heritage assets to create exciting new opportunities for downtown commercial and residential growth.

Attracted to Brantford by the city's privileged location in Southern Ontario, beautiful natural setting, rich history and affordable lifestyle, a diversity of new residents will choose to make Downtown Brantford their home. New residents and an ever expanding student population will continue to fuel street life, bringing further activity and animation to Brantford's Downtown – making it a safe and energized destination for all.



 Downtown Study Area

# 1.0 THE PROJECT





# 1.1 Introduction

Major change is beginning to happen across the City of Brantford. Over the last number of years, tremendous growth is positively impacting on the city as a whole. A glance through the latest Brantford Brant Economic Development News highlights this new investment– from large scale retail development, to new industrial enterprises, to edge of centre development and the renewal of the Downtown as an educational, commercial and cultural centre.

Brantford’s previously troubled Downtown is transforming. Over the last decade, the core has benefited from positive change with a number of quality new developments being introduced. Many of these have been led by the trio of universities and colleges now calling Downtown Brantford ‘home’, while others, such as Harmony Square, the new hotel and top quality restaurants have been led by private interests but made possible through incentives offered by the municipality.

However, there is still much work to be undertaken if these successes are to continue.

This section provides an introduction to the Downtown Brantford Master Plan project, introduces the team behind the project, the context within which the study was undertaken and the process behind the project.

# 1.2 A Priority Project

Downtown is a priority for the City Council. Implementing the Downtown Master Plan will help bring forward the Council’s ambition for making the Downtown a vibrant and successful hub for all, as outlined in “Shaping Our Future”, the City’s recently approved Community Strategic Plan (2006).

This Master Plan provides a series of guidelines and development proposals for the built form and open spaces that can be used by the City of Brantford to inform the future direction of Downtown. High design standards have been set for the Downtown.

This project presents an opportunity for the City of Brantford to continue to strengthen this economically and historically important part of the city by using the Master Plan to inform a series of strategic investment decisions. It is an opportunity to build on the area’s many assets and address existing local challenges to re-position Downtown Brantford for a healthier and more prosperous future.

Work on the Downtown Brantford Master Plan was completed between January 2007 and February 2008.

# 1.3 Project Aims

The Downtown Brantford Master Plan provides a framework to guide both public and private sector investment across the core over the next 25 years. As a Vision and Master Plan, the objectives are clear – provide a strong vision of how the Downtown can continue to evolve and support the Vision through a clear and implementable strategy.

The aim of this project is to empower the City of Brantford to achieve positive and meaningful change throughout its Downtown to help it become “*vibrant and successful – the hub for its citizens, students, businesses, visitors and government*”.

The Master Plan solidifies an agreed Vision for the Downtown and identifies priority actions required for its realization. The Master Plan will be used as a tool to help develop, guide and implement future development projects and public realm improvements across Downtown Brantford.



# 1.4 The Study Process

To achieve the goals of this project, an innovative work plan was undertaken. The plan is summarized in the table below. Consultation was fundamental to the planning approach and various consultation events were integrated throughout each phase of the Work Plan. More details on each of the project's phases are provided below.

### Phase 1: Preparing the Foundation

The intent of Phase 1 was to develop an in-depth understanding of where Brantford has been, where it is now and where it should go in the future. The physical condition of the study area were mapped and significant policies and initiatives documented. As part of this reconnaissance, the first phase of work involved extensive public consultation to ensure that all necessary people, agencies, community groups, initiatives and previous work shape early thinking.

For this phase, the following tasks were completed:

- √ Downtown Action Committee Issues Workshop
- √ Community Open House to Launch the project
- √ Key Stakeholder Interviews
- √ Policy Framework Review
- √ Evaluation of Current Physical Conditions
- √ Building Inventory, Analysis & Assessment
- √ Heritage Review
- √ Evaluation of the Service Role of Downtown Brantford
- √ Detailed Infrastructure, Transportation & Parking Analysis

### Phase 2: Defining the Vision

The objective of this phase of work was to synthesize the work undertaken in Phase 1 and focus discussions on the future opportunities for Downtown Brantford. This work was informed by the consultation, stakeholder meeting and baseline research completed in Phase 1 and built upon in Phase 2.

For this phase, the following tasks were completed:

- √ Information Synthesis
- √ Confirmation of Master Plan Principles
- √ Preparation of Urban Design Concept Plan Development
- √ Identification of Priority Intervention Areas & Supporting Concepts
- √ Presentation to the Committee of the Whole

### Phase 3: Draft Downtown Master Plan

This phase focused on creating a structured draft Downtown Master Plan that translated the goals, strategies, and ideas generated in the previous phases into a graphic plan for the area. General recommendations were presented for a number of planning and design considerations, including land use, movement, infrastructure, built form and open spaces.

For this phase, the following tasks were completed

- √ Preliminary Draft Built Form & Open Space / Public Realm Guidelines:
- √ Preliminary Transportation & Servicing Strategy and Guidelines
- √ Preparation of Preliminary Parking Strategy & Guidelines
- √ Draft Master Plan Framework
- √ Presentation to the DAC and the Committee of the Whole
- √ Development Control Working Session with Project Team
- √ Community Open House
- √ Preparation of Development Concept Plan for Secondary Study Areas

### Phase 4: Final Downtown Master Plan

This final phase of work assembled all of the consultation and work that went into the development of the Downtown Master Plan. The Downtown Plan identifies where both public and private sector investments are required across the core over the next 25 years. To direct spending priorities, guidelines for key components of the Plan were prepared.

For this phase, the following tasks were completed

- √ Refinement of Master Plan
- √ Identification of Priority Interventions & Key Actions
- √ Higher Education Stakeholder Focus Group
- √ Review of Implementation Mechanisms
- √ Costing of Key Interventions & Area Improvements
- √ Public Open House
- √ Presentation to the Committee of the Whole
- √ Final Master Plan & Design Guidelines



# 1.5

## What We Were Told

Public engagement was a thread that wound itself through the work program from start to finish via open houses, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, written surveys & questionnaires, coverage in the local press, an on-line project site and a series of stakeholder and community working sessions.

A myriad of stakeholders were involved in the Master Plan process, including the City, local businesses, the development industry, downtown land owners, the universities and colleges, arts and cultural interests, police, health providers, community interest groups and individual residents, just to name a few.

During these interactions the focus was on listening, seeking input, informing, and offering examples of how the components of the Downtown Brantford Master Plan could meet a diversity of needs and generate excitement and consensus around a shared vision for the future.

Here is a sample of what was said:

Once you get downtown, there is nothing to do  
Walking along Colborne is dangerous  
I love walking along the trails by the River  
You cannot have a healthy community based only on an economic vision  
The downtown used to be a place to be proud of, but not today  
The downtown needs to be more unique  
Pedestrians need greater priority  
Why can't we have more flowers and trees on the streets  
Market Square is the biggest problem in the downtown  
The downtown is one of the poorest wards in the city  
The role of Downtown is about creating a place for everybody  
The universities give the downtown a pulse  
There is no connection to the river whatsoever  
There are wonderful views from Colborne Streets over the River  
We need to preserve the heritage of our city  
The parking garage is dangerous  
The Universities are the jewels in Brantford's crown  
Victoria Park should be used more  
More events in the downtown would be great  
The bad perception of downtown is not really merited  
What they have done downtown have been 'quick fixes' – it needs more

# 1.6 The Study Area

The Study Area in its entirety is comprised of two sub-sections: the Primary Study Area and the Secondary Study Area. Each are described in more detail below.

The Primary Study Area is identified to the right. It includes the entire downtown core bound by West Street, Nelson Street, Clarence Street and Icomm Drive. Along its south-west edge, the study area also takes in one of Brantford's best attributes - the beautiful Grand River.

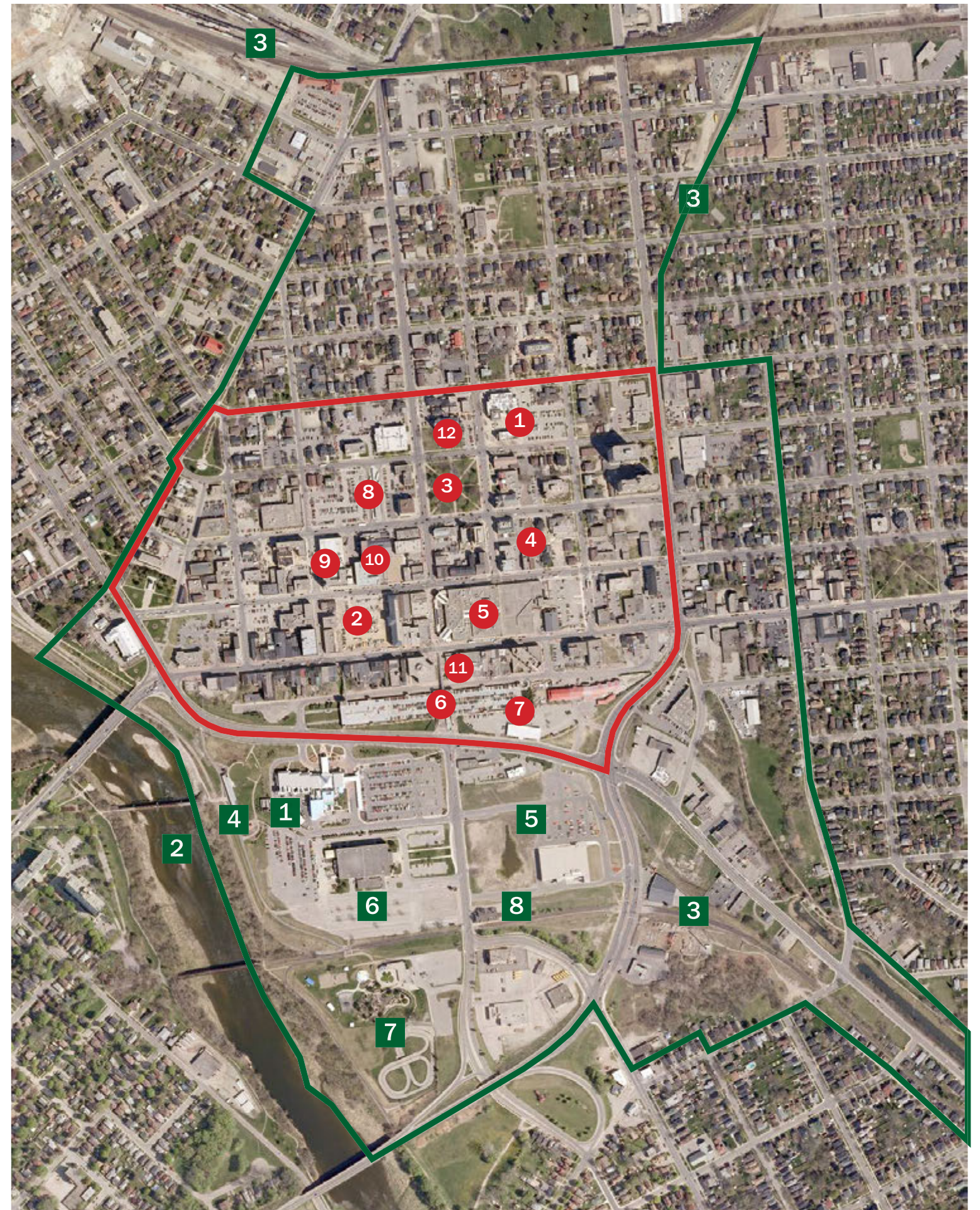
Key features of the Primary Study Area include:

- |                                    |                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> City Hall                 | <b>7</b> The Farmers' Market       |
| <b>2</b> Harmony Square            | <b>8</b> The Bus Station           |
| <b>3</b> Victoria Park             | <b>9</b> Federal Building          |
| <b>4</b> Laurier Brantford         | <b>10</b> Sanderson's Centre       |
| <b>5</b> Market Square Mall        | <b>11</b> Brantford Public Library |
| <b>6</b> The Market Centre Parkade | <b>12</b> Court House & Jail       |

The Secondary Study Area edges the Primary Study Area along its southern, eastern and northern boundaries. To the north is a well established neighbourhood that supports low-rise residential developments segmented by Market Street. To the south is a large brown-field area that contains extensive surface parking and the large format retail stores they support, as well as limited industrial uses, large open spaces and a diversity of leisure and recreational facilities.

Key features of the Secondary Study Area include:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>1</b> Brantford Charity Casino          | <b>5</b> Large format stores                       |
| <b>2</b> The Grand River                   | <b>6</b> Brantford Civic Centre                    |
| <b>3</b> CN rail tracks                    | <b>7</b> Earl Haig Family Fun Park                 |
| <b>4</b> Brant's Crossing & new Skate Park | <b>8</b> Great Western Railway Station, now vacant |



# The Importance of a Healthy Downtown

Building a healthy downtown is important for creating a prosperous city. A downtown – as the heart of a community and the only genuinely shared meeting space that is accessible to all – symbolizes the heritage of a community and provides a sense of identity for a city.

Thriving downtowns are typified by high levels of pedestrian activity, a differentiated retail offer, well preserved historic reference points (buildings, monuments and parks), strong tourist appeal and the presence of respected civic & institutional amenities. Downtown living is critical to bring activity, create safe spaces and generate on-going demand for services.

Revitalizing a downtown stimulates business growth, maximizes the utilization of public resources and provides tax diversification. Features such as unique shopping and dining opportunities, tourist attractions, residential living, employment possibilities and recreational outlets translate into economic stability and a positive external image of a city. A healthy core is integral to a city's overall social and economic success. This project sets out the vision and parameters for a better Downtown Brantford.

To create the Downtown Master Plan, a project team was assembled that combined local, national and international experience in urban planning, urban design, market analysis and transportation planning.

The project was led by Urban Strategies Inc., a planning and urban design firm with more than 25 years experience working on strategic investment and masterplanning projects. Specialist technical support was provided by the IBI Group, an international multi-disciplinary firm specializing in transportation and land use issues.



Urban Strategies Inc. (USI) led the study, providing planning and urban design expertise. USI has gained an extensive track record in producing and delivering successful downtown plans for cities big and small across Canada, the US, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom.



The IBI Group was an integral part of the team and was specifically responsible for developing the transportation and parking systems plans, as well as providing expert advice on market opportunities, heritage and servicing issues.



## 2.0 Brantford

## 2.1 Introduction

Brantford is a mid-sized City of approximately 90,000 residents built on the banks of the Grand River. The historic city was first settled in 1784 when Captain Joseph Brant, a Mohawk Chief, and the Six Nations Indians settled in Canada from the US. Almost 100 years later, Brantford was officially incorporated as a city.

Direct access to the water routes, as well as rail access in later years, fed the economy and population growth of Brantford. Over the last century, the combination of water and rails access helped Brantford develop from a farming community into a modern industrial city.

## 2.2 Yesterday & Today

Historically, as both a former rail hub and a riverside city, the City of Brantford has led a prosperous existence. Industry was drawn to this highly accessible site, bringing with it wealth, innovation and a population. The combination of water and rails helped Brantford develop from a farming community into an industrial city based on the agriculture implement industry. By the early 1900s, Brantford had established itself as an important Canadian industrial centre.

However, by the close of the 20th Century, due to evolving technologies and shifting global economies, the economy of Brantford was in decline. The bankruptcies of major local employers, such as White Farm Equipment, Massey Ferguson, Koering Waterous and Harding Carpets fueled decline. The closure of these businesses left thousands of people unemployed and created one of the most economically depressed areas in the province, if not the country.

Since the mid-1990s, the City has worked hard at generating new employment opportunities through a targeted, highly successful economic development strategy aimed at attracting new manufacturing sectors to the city. This effort was supported by the completion of Highway 403 in 1997. Highway 403 has placed the city with easy access both to the Golden Horseshoe as well as markets in Southwest Ontario. The City's efforts to re-establish itself as a manufacturing destination have been highly successful. In 2004, Procter & Gamble and Ferrero SpA chose to locate in the city. A food cluster is now emerging as one of Brantford's biggest economic engines.

With so much energy being focused on generating traditional employment and clawing back manufacturing opportunities lost in the recession of the 1980s, the City has been unable to balance resources between employment grown on the city's periphery with economic development interventions in the Downtown. Consequently the Downtown has been unable to compete with its over-performing suburban sibling and has suffered in past years from a lack of civic attention and investment.

### ***Making Positive Change Happen:***

Although the Downtown has faced challenges, over the last several years a shift in municipal priorities has begun to make a marked transformation of the downtown. Over the past five years more than \$20 million has been invested into revitalization efforts in the core.

Much of this investment has been made possible through a successful partnership between the City of Brantford, Laurier University and Nipissing University. Both universities have worked to deliver a student-centred satellite campus in the Downtown. This institutional-led expansion has to date resulted in the development or refurbishment of at least six buildings, with more planned over the next two years. However, perhaps more important than the physical renewal has been the social and economic renewal that has accompanied the infusion of almost 2000 students and 80 staff into the core. This infusion has brought life to the streets and attracted new businesses to the Downtown. Today, there are potential new opportunities for Mohawk College to expand its profile in the Downtown.

The City has also been pro-active in undertaking its own public realm projects in recent years, with the new Harmony Square being the highest profile project undertaken to date. Now almost completed, this project will result in a major new landscaped civic square in the heart of the Downtown. The square has been successful in helping to attract considerable private investment in the form of new rental housing, new professional offices and quality new retail spaces.

A message of positive change signaled by the City is gaining momentum. There is a clear realization that the Downtown is an important destination and an asset for the city as a whole. This Master Plan is only one of the many initiatives that the City has committed to in order to bring about sustainable change in the Downtown.





## 2.3 Build on Your Successes

The profile of Downtown Brantford is rising and its role as a community amenity and destination for all is increasing. Identified below are a series of traits that already exist – at least to some degree - within Downtown Brantford that currently make it a special place and unique to the rest of the city. The Master Plan builds upon these traits to maximize their benefits.

### Arts & Culture

For a mid-sized city, Brantford supports a strong presence of arts ranging from the traditional to the contemporary. At the hub of the traditional arts focus is the well established Sanderson Centre, while alternative venues such as the Ford Plant, offer a more contemporary take on arts. The Downtown is also home to a number of independent artists and galleries. Brantford must continue to nurture this eclectic mix of arts & culture in the Downtown and work to maintain a good mix of traditional and entrepreneurial arts.

### History & Heritage

Brantford has a very rich and long history – from a social, entrepreneurial and economic perspective. Today, the identity of the city should be defined by its past, including aspects of the Six Nations, New Credit, unique architecture, the spirit of innovation, beautiful historic parks and an industrious population. These heritage elements must continue to be preserved and celebrated.

### An Institutional Centre

Downtown Brantford is an important hub for municipal and regional services. The City should continue to build on its success as the institutional and civic centre for the region. Building relationships with growing universities and colleges should be a key element of the strategy.

### Youth, Energy & Intelligence

Retaining talented and creative young people is important for bringing creativity, vitality and energy, as well as economic stability to the downtown. Efforts should be made by the City and its partners to inspire Brantford’s student population to build a home in its Downtown.

### An ‘Edgy’ City: Views & Vistas

The Grand River, a Canadian Heritage River, runs through the heart of the city and is directly connected to the Trans Canada Trail system. However, due to topography and access issues the river remains cut-off from the Downtown and is currently an under utilized asset.

The topography of Brantford is unique in that it offers sweeping views over the Grand River from a number of locations in the Downtown. This inspired backdrop can improve the image of downtown and create unique setting for residential opportunities and community festivals. Take advantage of the topography of the Downtown and capture the views it offers over the Grand River.

*“The City of Brantford has a long and varied history that is intimately associated with the Grand River. The Grand, a Canadian Heritage River, played a central organizing role in the settlement of First Nations and Euro-Canadian peoples in Brant County and Southern Ontario generally. Brantford is rich in cultural heritage resources, including built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes, archaeological sites and commemorative monuments, that contribute to a rooted sense of local identity and community and provide continuity between the past and the present.”*

(extract from Brantford’s Official Plan)



## THE VALUE OF DOWNTOWN UNIVERSITIES

*A positive town and gown relationship forged between a university and the city it resides within is critical for the long term success of both the higher education provider as well as the city itself.*

*The benefits of having a higher education provider as a partner in city-building are countless. Universities often play a primary role in rehabilitating downtown housing stock as well as adaptive re-use of run-down buildings. Universities and colleges provide training and educational opportunities for local residents to raise qualifications and help support local entrepreneurs. They attract young people to the Downtown and students create demand for city centre accommodation and local shopping. Higher education providers provide significant higher value employment opportunities.*

*It is in the best interest of the higher education provider to ensure that the downtown is healthy and safe. Like any competitive business, education providers want to attract the top faculty, students, and staff, so it is in their best interest to protect the surrounding environment and develop new facilities.*

*Higher education providers are unique political partners as the longevity of faculty appointments allows for stability and perspective that is sometimes lost in municipal government administrative and political appointments. In addition, successive generations of students bring new and fresh perspective to problem-solving activities. Higher education providers can fill a critical leadership role in downtown regeneration and must not be excluded from participating in planning the future of the Downtown.*

## A Centre for Learning

The establishment and rapid growth of the university and college presence in Downtown Brantford has been a triumph for the City. The City must continue to foster the growth of Downtown Brantford as a centre for training and education. The proposed \$16.75 million Heritage Block development by Laurier Brantford and the recently approved expansion of Nipissing University's satellite campus at 50 Wellington Street and 39 Nelson Street are examples of how the City is working to protect and grow the higher education presence within the city. Mohawk College should also have a stake in shaping the future of Downtown. The role of Brantford as a centre for learning should be promoted even more aggressively across the Region and the Province.

## A Legacy of Partnership Building

Brantford Council understands the value of partnership work and places a strong emphasis on working with a diversity of interests. Some notable examples which Brantford already undertakes include the Chamber of Commerce, "town-gown" partnerships, downtown business associations. Such partnerships allow pooling of ideas and the sharing of responsibility. New opportunities for partnerships should be explored - particularly those that involve the private sector.



## 2.4 Analysis

To produce a viable long-term development plan for any community, it is important to first understand the physical, market and policy environments that influence the area. Gaining an understanding of these conditions - and the impact they have had on the area - is the starting point for preparing responsive recommendations for how the area should evolve in the future. This section provides a review of the existing physical conditions in the Primary Study Area:

### 2.4.1 Physical Analysis

The following is an overview of the Downtown's physical components which define both its character and its opportunities. Understanding these layers and the urban structure that they create is the starting point for analysis of the physical form of the area and preparing responsive recommendations for how the area should evolve.

#### Land Use

Downtown Brantford is a truly mixed-use destination, supporting parks, retail, office, institutional, residential and leisure uses. The edges of the downtown tend to be dominated by residential uses that knit together the core with the surrounding neighbourhoods, while the retail, institutional and commercial uses are clustered along the main routes to and through the centre - namely Dalhousie, Colborne and Market streets. There is a lower intensity professional office hub developing in the north west corner of the Downtown, capitalizing on their close proximity to the civic and institutional cluster around Victoria Square.

While the Downtown possesses all of the ingredients that make for a successful city centre it appears under-served in some key areas. Overall, residential is lacking and home ownership rates are very low. Housing is a necessary tool to ensure a successful long term regeneration strategy for Downtown. Residential living feeds downtown activities and businesses and creates champions of the Downtown to help ensure that the needs of the core are recognized by the City. The lack of people who live downtown constrains the type of retail and commercial offer that is viable.

In addition to residential, the Downtown is also under represented by retail. Although Brantford supports not one, but two, Main Streets, much of these streets support vacant storefronts. Market Square, while originally conceived as a retail mall, no longer functions as such but is now dominated by commercial and civic uses. For a city of 90,000 residents, the Downtown could potentially support a much stronger retail offer.

The plan to the right identifies the existing mix of ground floor uses across Downtown Brantford.



Existing Land Use Map, City of Brantford

- CHURCH / NON-PROFIT
- GOVERNMENT
- BUSINESS
- RESIDENTIAL
- VACANT
- RETAIL
- PUBLIC INSTITUTION
- UNIVERSITY
- MIXED USE
- STUDY AREA

## A Weak Identity: Spread Too Thin

The brand and general character of Downtown Brantford is not strongly defined. Parking lots, vacated buildings and uninspiring streetscapes present themselves to arriving visitors.

The patchwork of retail, vacancies and underdeveloped lots along the Downtown's major streets (Colborne Street, Dalhousie Street and Market Street), creates a less than desirable advert for existing retail. These gaps result in a 'thinning' of the retail environment and may be indicative of an economic issue: too much rentable floor space and not enough market demand to fill the space.

The 'thinning' retail environment prevents downtown from defining itself as a shopping destination and a different experience from the outlying retail nodes. It is important that Downtown emphasize its uniqueness of 'experience' that distinguishes it from suburban business and shopping centres.



Illustration showing the 'thinning' of the urban fabric within the downtown due to vacant lots and surface parking.

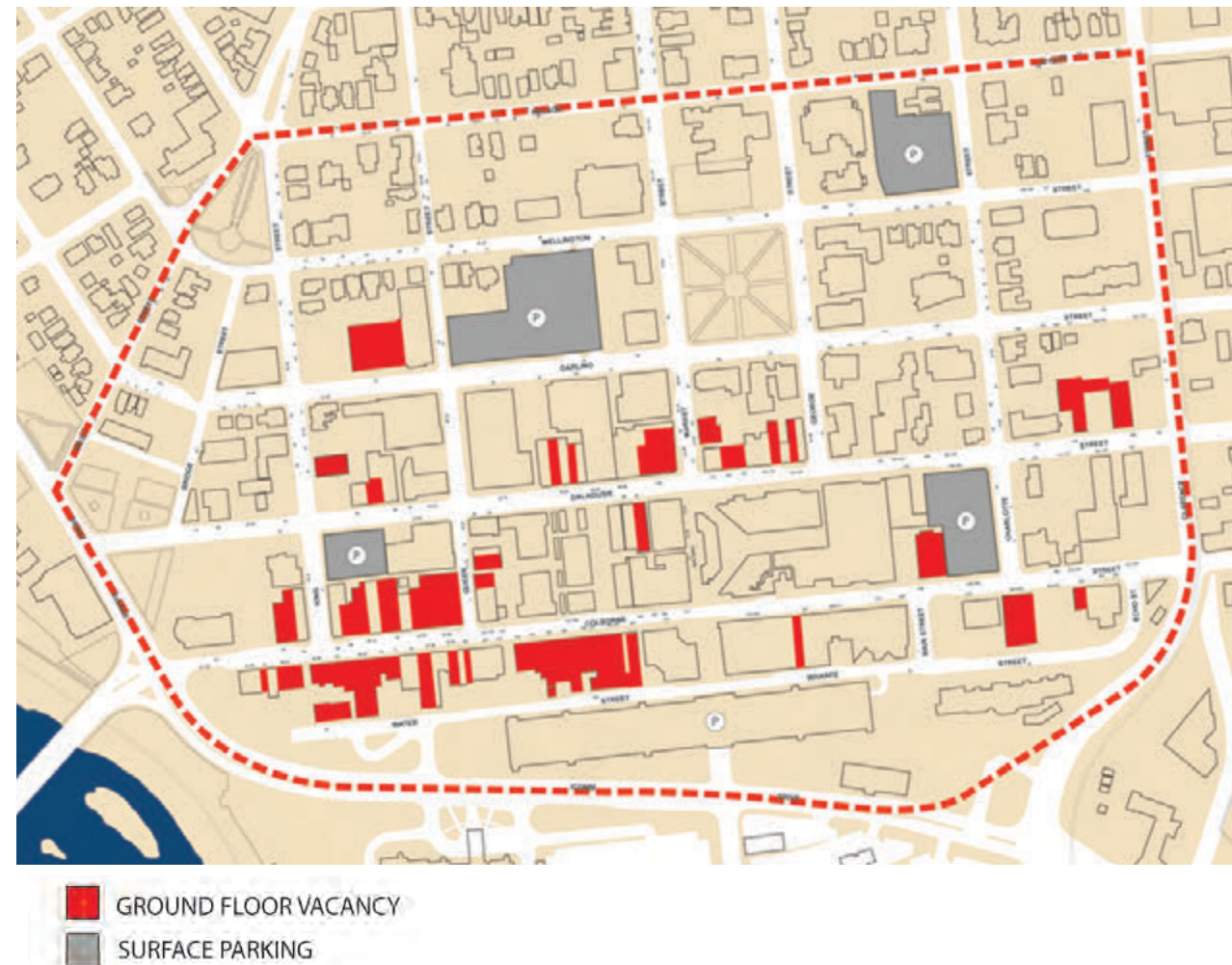
## Vacancies & Voids

Vacancy in Downtown Brantford is relatively high. A tabulation of vacant units indicates there is almost a 20% overall vacancy rate. The highest numbers of vacant units are located on Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street with vacancy rates at 41% and 21% respectively. The southeast corner around Queen and Colborne streets support the greatest concentration of vacant buildings.

In an effort to bring activity to the core and provide viable adaptive reuses for empty storefronts, the City permitted a limited number of conversions from retail to residential uses on the ground floor along Colborne Street in the 1990s. Although this has been positive in that it brings new residents to the core and accommodates a use in what would otherwise be vacant, ground floor conversions tend to be of low quality, aesthetically unappealing and disrupt the rhythm of activity along the street. An additional consequence is that public sidewalk space is being claimed as private amenity space by the ground floor units. Due to these consequences, the policy was amended in 2005 to end the permitted uses.

In general, where at-grade vacancies exist, the overall perception created is one of blight and a discouraging sign for potential future investors.

Additional details on vacancies across the downtown are provided in the Vacancy Audit at Appendix A.

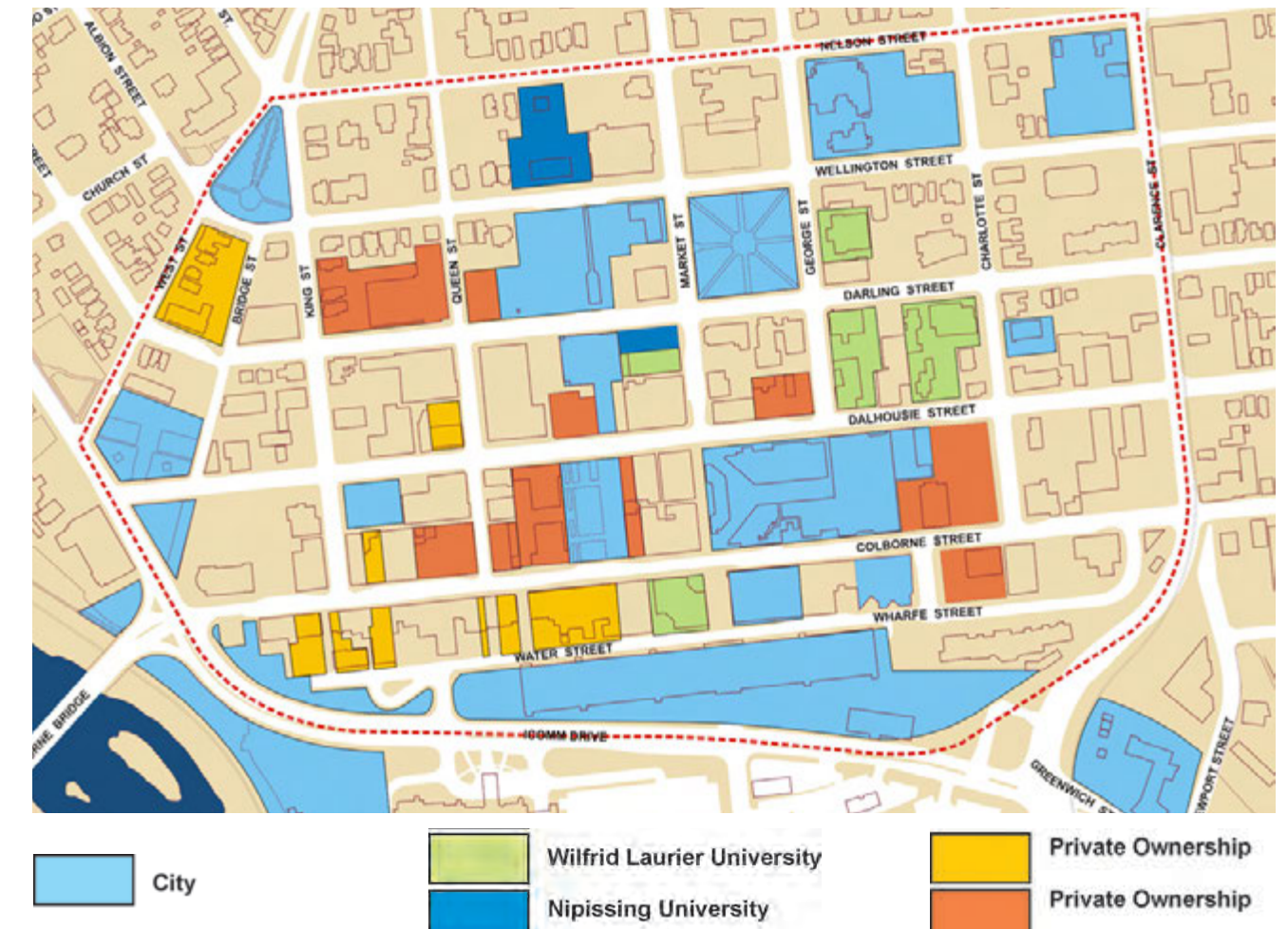


## Ownership

Within the study area, a significant portion of the land asset is controlled by public agencies. Key sites owned by the municipality include City Hall, the Bus Terminal, Market Square, Market Centre Parkade, amongst others. These sites provide opportunities as catalysts for the future development of Downtown.

In addition to the municipality, the three post-secondary education providers are also major landowners and have contributed to on-going positive changes across the Downtown through building refurbishments and public realm improvements. This ownership pattern provides exciting opportunities for partnerships between education providers and the municipality for the introduction of a major new public amenity to complement future development.

Other key ownership in the Downtown resides with private landholders. The quantum of high profile sites held in private ownership has created some challenges for the Downtown, as in some cases owners have been unwilling to invest in their properties to the standards expected. To this end, ownership has been very speculative in nature and has held back the redevelopment of large parts of the Downtown. This is particularly apparent along Colborne Street.



## Islands of Activity

Although there are physical gaps in the urban fabric, nodes of activity still exist in the Downtown, including:

- Civic presence
- Victoria Square & Academic Campus area
- Market Square
- The Sanderson Centre & Harmony Square
- The Farmers' Market
- Charity Casino
- The Skate Park & The Civic Centre
- The Brantford Transit Terminal
- The Public Library / Beckett Senior Centre
- The Trans Canada Trail & Grand River area

Although these nodes of activity exist in the Downtown, barriers - both perceived and real - separate these assets and prevent them from attaining a critical mass. This prevents the nodes from being viewed as a cohesive offer and weakens the concept of the Downtown as a destination for all. Furthermore, where there is a lack of street life there remains an issue of personal security and property vandalism.

Attractions need to be woven more tightly together to tell a coherent story of Downtown Brantford. Securing effective linkages across and through Downtown between these attractions is an ambition of the Master Plan. Linkages have very real consequences for the attractiveness and level of investment potential in Downtown - they help solidify the Downtown as a genuine destination and a place people want to go to with 'things to do' and 'places to go'.



## Heritage Assets



The presence of a historic environment - whether it is buildings, monuments or landscapes - helps to create a unique sense of place and local identity. In many cities, historic buildings and places have played a central role in driving economic development objectives, sustainable growth, regeneration ambitions and cultural development. Well maintained, historic environments can deliver a range of benefits to a city, including:

- creating a sense of place.
- contributing to a positive image.
- attracting visitors, activities and investments to the downtown;
- playing a central role in repopulating inner-city areas by providing character driven housing;
- providing affordable commercial floor space;
- providing a supportive pedestrian environment;
- offering a focus for leisure facilities, such as theatres, art galleries, studios, restaurants and bars

The Downtown contains a large number of heritage assets that have been recognized as important, including many of the buildings and monuments in and around Victoria Park, the Cenotaph, the Federal Building and the Jail House, amongst others. There are also a number of designated homes across the more residential areas of downtown. Most of these wonderful assets are in good condition and contribute positively to the image of the Downtown.

In recent years, Laurier Brantford, with the assistance of the City, has been very active in enhancing the downtown heritage offer through their renovation programme. This has included undertaking improvements to the Carnegie Building, Grand River Hall, Post House Residence, The Wilkes House and the Journalism House.

The special historic character of Brantford's two main streets should be noted. Although not formally designated, several structures along Coborne Street and Dalhousie Street are of note for their historic significance. The City's Heritage Inventory included the buildings along the south side of Colborne Street, from #35 to #171. The majority of the buildings are pre-Confederation and 100 years and older. Fifteen of the properties (35%) are identified as being of Architectural Significance while eight of the properties (20%) are Historically Significant. In total, more than half the buildings are highly rated as being either architecturally or historically significant.

Although these structures are identified as heritage assets, their present condition limits opportunities for adaptive re-uses. The disrepair that many of the buildings appear to have fallen into creates poor market conditions and risks creating a downward spiral of disinvestment if intervention is not undertaken.

## Paths & Trails



The City of Brantford maintains an extensive network of trails, several of which are near the Downtown. The trail network runs on both sides of the river, along abandoned rail corridors, some parts of the Wayne Gretzky Parkway and along the dyke system of the Grand River. With the exception of the on-street bicycle lane on Newport Street, there are no dedicated bicycle facilities connecting the trail system to the downtown.

The Downtown has the potential for significantly enhanced connections to both the Grand River's recreational pathway system and Trans-Canada trail system. However, at present access is challenging due to grade changes and a lack of dedicated pedestrian and cycling routes force pedestrians and cyclists to make their way across several heavily travelled intersections and along busy roads.

To the east of the core, there are very limited connections to existing amenities, such as Shallow Creek Park and Mohawk Lake beyond. To the north, direct connections need to be improved to existing residential neighbourhoods, the Via Rail station and the commercial spine of Market Street. There are few bicycle lanes within the study area and improvements should be made to the bicycle paths connecting the downtown with the Gordon Graves Memorial Pathway, which winds along the Grand River.

Joined-up pedestrian routes are required to improve connectivity between major uses and to the recreational trail system. Improving connections to the waterfront trail system as well as improving conditions for walking and cycling within the Downtown can help add to its livability for existing and future residents.



## Downtown as a Thoroughfare



The primary study area is bounded by Brant Avenue/Icomm Drive to the south, Clarence Street to the east, Nelson Street to the north and West Street to the west. The street network within this study area is primarily a traditional grid pattern and most streets are continuous through the study area, at least as far south as Colborne Street.

At present most streets within Downtown Brantford are operating well below their capacity.

Presently, cars are expedited through the Downtown along the paired one-ways of Dalhousie and Colborne Streets. Based on today's traffic volumes, the capacity provided by the Downtown's one-way streets is not required. The under-utilization of these streets combined with one-way traffic flow encourages speeding, which in turn limits the potential for the Downtown to become a successful pedestrian-oriented destination – Downtown Brantford should be conceived as a destination, not a thoroughfare.

There is an opportunity to rebalance transportation capacity to slow traffic, improve the pedestrian environment and improve access to businesses.

Additional details on movement and circulation conditions are provided at Appendix C.

## Parking Management



With the closure of the parking lot on Harmony Square, combined with increased economic activity due to the university growth, there is increasing pressure on the downtown parking supply. Currently, there are just over 1,200 off-street public parking spaces in Downtown Brantford accommodated in three municipal lots and a series of small private lots. Parking lots are currently operating at about 85% capacity, which is considered an optimal level.

In addition to dedicated parking lots, Downtown Brantford has a good supply of on-street parking consisting of approximately 463 spaces. Most of these spaces are free, but some have a two hour or three hour time limit. While free parking is seen as a positive for businesses, it can also result in abuse. Low turnover rates for on-street parking in some locations is a continual problem. Free on-street parking can also lead to extra traffic as drivers circle attempting to find parking.

A good supply of parking in the right location is essential for nurturing businesses growth. Although there is currently adequate parking to serve the immediate needs of the Downtown, there is an issue with the location of parking in the core. Parking provision is heavily concentrated to the south of the downtown and does not easily service more central downtown destinations.

Additional details on parking conditions are provided at Appendix C.

## Servicing & Utilities

Growth in the Downtown is contingent on the provision of adequate and clean water supply, sufficient underground sewer capacity and subsequent treatment and environmentally responsible management of storm water.

The City of Brantford relies entirely on the Grand River for its water supply. While it is estimated that the existing water treatment plant has capacity for several decades, constant investment in treatment and storage are required because of use of river water. New elevated storage facilities are being planned to serve the southwest portion of the City, including the downtown.

Unlike many older cities, Brantford is fortunate to have separate sanitary and storm sewers. This means that storm water run-off does not take up sanitary sewer capacity, nor does sewage overflow into the storm drainage system.

Brantford is served by one wastewater treatment plant which is operating at about 50% capacity. There is sufficient treatment capacity to meet projected population projections up to 2031, though studies have recommended upgrades to improve the quality of effluent.

In general, municipal infrastructure in the Downtown is sufficient to handle existing demands. In the past, there have been minor capacity issues and incidences of localized flooding, but these were addressed through the construction of a new trunk sewer several years ago. The most significant issue with the underground infrastructure is age. Most of the underground services in the Downtown are 80 to 100 years old. This includes water pipes, sewer lines and utilities (hydro, bell, gas).

The need to re-construct the underground infrastructure under portions of Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street has been identified for some time, and is now reaching a critical point. The cost of upgrading this infrastructure has been estimated at more than \$5 million, for the portions of these two streets where utilities have not already been replaced.

This need presents a good opportunity to refurbish both streets since the upgrades require a full reconstruction of the street, and therefore considerations for two-way traffic, sidewalk and streetscape improvements and other street realm improvements can be incorporated.

## 2.4.1 Market Analysis

The following provides a summary of current commercial market opportunities for Downtown Brantford.

Although this section provides a brief summary of current market conditions and is supplemented by the information in Appendix B, a detailed capacity and market demand analysis should be undertaken by the City. This study should clarify demand and link city growth to release of commercial space. This will help Brantford gain a clearer understanding of their commercial market requirements (retail, office, leisure uses) and link city growth to a strategic release of land to direct growth to the downtown commercial lands over suburban and edge-of-centre areas.

- **Commercial Retail**

The retail environment in Downtown Brantford is spread out over a number of major commercial streets. This, coupled with the significant vacancies in parts of Downtown, creates a relatively negative image and constraint to the development of additional retail in Downtown. This is particularly the case for brand name retailers, many of whom are re-acquainting themselves with “main streets” and the introduction of downtown outlets in many other small and mid-sized cities.

The evolution of the commercial retail environment to a non-hierarchical, nodal system, multiple formats and the pervasiveness of car-borne shopping, necessitates that Downtown establish a complimentary rather than competitive role within the retail hierarchy. The importance of creating destinations within Downtown, including tourism, access to community facilities, cultural and arts activities and other “people generators” is a policy which has been explored by Brantford and should continue to be developed.

- **City Centre Residential**

Downtown Brantford has a very modest housing ownership market with less than four per cent of housing being owner occupied. Coupled with this, the downtown has a very low permanent resident base. For investment in Downtown to improve, residential development in Downtown, as well as in the remaining parts of the Places to Grow “Urban Growth Centre” of Brantford, is important and must exceed current levels of growth (12% between 2001 and 2006).

Market support for intensification in Downtown Brantford is not currently as significant as demand in new growth areas of the City. However, under the Places to Grow Plan, 40% of all new residential growth is to be achieved through intensification of the existing built-up area. If pursued vigorously, this could suggest demand will focus, in part, on Downtown Brantford where residential redevelopment sites exist, together with sites available elsewhere within the existing built-up area including other areas with the defined Urban Growth Centre of the City.

The issue for capturing potential market demand must be to achieve a balance of accommodating rental housing as well as a higher-density product which is attractive to the ownership market.

- **Office**

The current office market offer in Downtown Brantford is typical of a medium-sized City serving a regional market. In addition to municipal, provincial and federal office employment, this includes a range of business services meeting the needs of the principal employment, education and institutional activities in Downtown. Office functions also include those which serve the local and broader community (City and region-wide). The presence of a civic function in Downtown, as well as the provincial courthouse, the university/colleges and Federal Government offices, supports a range of professional services.

Existing office functions are housed in a variety of premises, ranging from purpose built commercial office buildings to converted residential properties and upper floor commercial office development on the principal retail streets. For office users which require modern, purpose built space, with ample parking on-site, locations outside of the Downtown currently have a competitive advantage. However, Downtown remains the principal employment base and benefits from a range of existing support services, including transit and public parking.

The potential to attract a moderate scale of additional office development to Downtown, potentially as part of mixed-use projects or infill, represents an option which should be supported in the implementation of this plan. Evidence of this potential demand is the gradual re-tenanting of space within the Market Square to non-retail uses. The opportunity for a stand-alone office development should not be discounted and implementation of this strategy should be open to a broad-based commercial zoning which enables flexibility in development of well located sites in and around the Downtown.

Large-scale, speculative office development is unlikely to be developed in Downtown in the next 5 years unless sites are made available which are of significant size and which provide significant on-site parking.

- **Leisure, Recreation & Special Purpose**

In the downtown, the main recreation facilities are provided through a mix of city controlled properties (The Brantford and District Civic Centre, the public library, open spaces) and provincial assets (the Casino).

The City of Brantford recently undertook a Facilities Rationalization Study. The outcome of this study may affect a number of recreation and community facilities across the entire city. The City as a major landlord, developer and operator of community facilities and other infrastructure, has the potential to create a significant impact on Downtown through it's own investment and planning decisions.

From an activity perspective, community recreation facilities have the potential to generate regular use by members of the community on a weekly basis throughout the year. These facilities offer the potential for accommodating sports tourism and other activities (special interest group activities) which may generate visitors from outside of the community. From an economic development perspective, the accommodation of regional, city, and even community facilities within or close to downtown cores, potentially generates activities which helps sustain downtowns as destinations.

## 2.4.1 Policy Framework

The Downtown Brantford Master Plan must operate within the existing planning framework for the City and the Province. This section provides a summary of the general intent and ambitions of each of these levels of government with regard to the future of Downtown Brantford.

### Provincial Planning Framework

There were three significant policy / planning documents at the Provincial level to review:

- Provincial Policy Statement, 2005
- Places to Grow Act, 2005
- Places to Grow Plan, June 2006

#### **Provincial Policy Statement, 2005**

The current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on March 1, 2005. The Provincial Policy Statement replaces the Provincial Policy Statement issued May 22, 1996, as amended on February 1, 1997. The PPS provides the broad policy direction for Provincial interest in land use planning.

The Provincial Policy Statement provides for the combination of an appropriate range and mix of residential, employment (including industrial, commercial and institutional uses), recreational and open space uses to meet long-term needs. The Downtown Master Plan accommodates this general principle and will assist Brantford to meet the full range of current and future land needs for its residents.

#### **Places to Grow Act, 2005**

On June 13, 2005, Bill 136, the Places to Grow Act 2005 received Royal Assent. The Places to Grow Act (Bill 136) enabled the government to plan for population growth, economic expansion and the protection of the environment, agricultural lands, and other valuable resources in a coordinated strategic way. The legislation enabled the creation of regional Growth Plans in any part of Ontario. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is such a Plan, as is detailed below.

#### **Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006**

The Growth Plan, 2006, was prepared and approved under the Place to Grow Act, 2005, and took effect on June 16, 2006. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe aims to:

- Revitalize downtowns to become vibrant and convenient centres
- Create complete communities that offer more options for living, working, shopping and playing
- Provide greater choice in housing types to meet the needs of people at all stages of life
- Curb sprawl and protect farmland and green spaces
- Reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices.

Brantford is expected to grow to a population of 132,000 persons by the year 2031. This population growth, coupled with the new provincial policy directives on required intensification and the designation of Brantford as one of only 25 Urban Growth Centres in the province.

The “Places to Grow Plan” offers an integrated growth management concept designed to accommodate significant growth to the year 2031, within a strong policy framework of economic development, liveable and complete communities, environmental protection, resource management, comprehensive transportation improvements and infrastructure investment.

As an Urban Growth Centre, Brantford’s growth areas must work to support seven major policy directions that:

- Direct growth to built-up areas where the capacity exists to best accommodate the expected population, household and employment growth while providing strict criteria for settlement area boundary expansion;
- Promote transit supportive densities and a healthy mix of residential and employment land uses;
- Preserve employment lands for future economic opportunities;

- Identify and support a transportation network that links urban growth centers through an extensive multi-modal system anchored by efficient public transit and highway systems for moving people and goods;
- Plan for community infrastructure to support growth;
- Ensure sustainable water and wastewater services are available to support future growth; and
- Identify the natural system and prime agricultural areas, and enhance the conservation of these valuable resources.

Within the City of Brantford, the Growth Plan intensification target, to be achieved by 2031 or earlier, is a minimum gross density target of 150 residents and jobs combined in Downtown Brantford. As of 2001, the density in Downtown Brantford has in the order of 58 residents and jobs combined.

To help the City meet this requirement, the city crafted a new Growth Management Section in their Official Plan as part of their recent Official Plan Review (see below). The Growth Management section establishes new goals and related policies for Growth Management across Brantford, including the Downtown. Policies are intended to provide for the efficient use of urban land resources through the planning of appropriate greenfield development, intensification and redevelopment opportunities and provision of adequate densities and mix of land uses that promote a compact urban form.

In pursuing the goals of the Places to Grow Plan, the City will need to manage the identification and promotion of residential intensification sites in and around Downtown to ensure targets can be met.

## Local Planning Framework

It is essential that any proposal put forward through the Master Plan is able to operate effectively within Brantford’s existing and emerging planning framework, namely the policies of the City’s Official Plan and Zoning By-law, in addition to supporting other local strategic goals, such as the Community Plan and the Transportation Masterplan. Offered below is a summary of the general intent and ambitions of each.

- Shaping Our Future– Brantford’s Community Strategic Plan
- The Official Plan & OP Update
- The Transportation Masterplan & TMP Update
- Zoning By-law

### **Shaping Our Future– Brantford’s Community Strategic Plan:**

Brantford’s Community Strategic Plan, “Shaping Our Future”, was finalized in January of 2006 as a response to several pressing issues such as aging infrastructure, further promotion of the City’s commercial and industrial sector and the revitalization of the Downtown.

The Strategic Plan acts as an umbrella document that will act as a guide for setting Council priorities, inform budgetary decisions, and provide the services and programs to achieve the community vision. The four key goals presented in the Strategic Plan describe the results the City wants to achieve and include:

- Securing Economic Vitality and Innovation
- Providing a High Quality of Life & Caring for All Citizens
- Managing Growth & Offering Environmental Leadership
- Providing Excellence in Governance & Municipal Management

The following long-term desired outcomes are those which the Master Plan is best positioned to help deliver in partnership with the City and the community:

- Brantford’s downtown will be vibrant and successful – the hub for its citizens, students, businesses, visitors and government.
- Brantford will be a proud city with a positive image.

- Brantford will be known as a city that manages growth wisely, makes optimum use of its infrastructure, and is a leader in infill and brownfields redevelopment
- Brantford will be supported by well-developed and maintained transportation and servicing infrastructure
- Brantford will be well-served by quality local and inter-regional public transportation systems
- Brantford’s natural and built heritage will be protected and enhanced
- Brantford citizens and visitors will enjoy a full range of well-supported and maintained arts, heritage, culture, sports and recreational facilities and programs
- Brantford citizens will be engaged in, and informed about, their community and their city government.

It should be noted that the first strategic action to be completed for Goal 1: Securing Economic Vitality is to develop a Vision and Master Plan for the Downtown. The Community Goals of the Strategic Plan are already moving forward.

### **Official Plan Update:**

A city’s Official Plan provides a vision of its future growth and a policy framework to guide its physical development. It documents the objectives and policies that guide the short-term and long-term physical development of all lands within a city. The policies presented in the Official Plan set parameters for development and provide for orderly growth and compatibility between the many different uses of land within an urban area.

Through the policies presented in its Official Plan, the City of Brantford will plan its future by pursuing strategic goals in the following areas:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Natural and Built Environment
- Economy

- Municipal Servicing
- Transportation
- Accessibility & Movement
- Urban Design
- Accountability and the Planning Processes

Through a recent Official Plan review process, these areas of consideration have been updated and expanded. Modifications to the goals and objectives of the Official Plan - including new goals and objectives for Growth Management and a dedicated focus on the Downtown - reflect shifting civic priorities and ensure consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement and other Provincial policy initiatives.

The Downtown Master Plan works to support the existing and new goals of the Official Plan, particularly through offering an enhanced focus on the role of heritage, culture, growth management and, of course, the Downtown on the city as whole.

Within the Official Plan, the Downtown is designated as the “Core Commercial Area”, one of only four retail activity areas recognized in the Official Plan. This designation makes the Downtown an important component of the city’s commercial development.

The Core Commercial Area extends from the southern termination of Market Street South through to Nelson Street in the north. An arm of the Core Commercial Area continues along the Market Street corridor as far as the Via Rail Station. West Street and Clarence Street act as its eastern and western boundaries. Beyond these boundaries, the area is edged on all sides by a mix of medium and low density residential land uses.

Specific policies important to enhancing the Commercial Core which the Downtown Brantford Master Plan will help realize include:

- 7.3.2.1: The Core Commercial Area will be the primary cultural, economic and office destination in the city.
- 7.3.2.7: Allowing the downtown to function as a neighbourhood shopping area with local service amenities as well as a regional attraction.

- 7.3.2.8: Strengthening the network of pedestrian connections across the core to provide access for all and link downtown attractions.
- 7.3.2.9: Improve the streetscape and façades of buildings throughout the core. This will include improved sidewalks, landscaping, lighting, signage and street furniture.
- 7.3.2.10: Conservation of heritage features, where feasible
- 7.3.2.12: Promotion of in-fill developments
- 7.3.2.14: A focus on maintaining a strong public transit presence in the downtown
- 7.3.2.15: Gateway improvements are proposed at major entranceways to the Core Commercial area
- 7.3.2.17: Pedestrian and visual linkages to the River and the Core Commercial Area will be improved
- 7.3.2.18: Encourage new development that is attractive and of good quality. Specifically, developments are to:
  - Be up to 8 storeys in height, although taller buildings may also be accepted
  - Address the street
  - Respect the setback of adjacent buildings and be built close to street edge
  - Ideally locate parking in interior of blocks
  - Promote active uses at grade
  - For residential uses, multiple-unit dwellings are preferred.
- 7.3.2.19: Support the dispersed expansion of the post-secondary campus in the downtown.

Also of note is that through the Official Plan review process, a dedicated section on Urban Design was approved. The new Urban Design policy section consolidated the numerous urban design-related policies from the previous Official Plan. The general guidelines presented in the Official Plan are highly compatible with the directions of this report, including the following 12 urban design criteria:

- that the development is contextually appropriate to the surrounding uses and neighbourhood.

- development will support and promote the use of transit.
- contribute to the creation of a range of housing options.
- contribute to an attractive, safe and comfortable pedestrian environment that encourages walking.
- provides universal physical access to all publicly accessible spaces and buildings.
- provides a gradual transition of scale and density from higher buildings to nearby lower scale neighbourhoods.
- maintains adequate views and privacy for residents of nearby neighbourhoods.
- minimizes shadows and uncomfortable wind conditions on neighbouring properties, streets and open spaces.
- masses new buildings to frame adjacent streets and open spaces in a way that respects and is proportional to the existing or planned street right-of-way.
- conserves heritage properties.
- is served by adequate parks, community services, water and sewers and transportation facilities, provides for potential streetscape improvements, and addresses compatibility relative to density and height, massing, scale, and siting of buildings.
- minimizes through traffic on local streets.

### ***The Transportation Masterplan & Update***

The City of Brantford Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update was approved in 2007 and completed as a joint project to the 5 year OP review. The TMP builds on the Community Strategic Plan, as well as the previous 1997 Transportation Master Plan, and related transportation studies. The TMP Update emphasizes the link between Land Use and Transportation and highlights the need to provide a more balanced transportation network, inclusive of walking, cycling and transit, and supported by transportation demand management (TDM) measures.

The TMP update includes a section on downtown revitalization and translates the overarching principles for the City's growth into policies and recommendations for the Downtown. Key objectives of the Downtown core strategy includes:

- Diverting through and truck traffic to alternative by-pass routes around the core area
- Providing greater priority for pedestrians, public transit and bicycles on downtown roadway rights of way; and,
- Parking policies that favour short-term business parking over all-day commuter-oriented parking.

The TMP Update also includes recommendations for the road network, transit, walking and cycling facilities and parking. All of the recommendations of the TMP with respect to the downtown core have been reviewed and considered in the development of this Master Plan.

One of the most significant recommendations in the TMP Update is the conversion of Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street back to two-way operation. This recommendation was reviewed and discussed extensively as part of the Downtown Master Plan.

**The Zoning By-law:**

The main tool used to translate Official Plan policies into consistent decisions and ‘on the ground’ actions is the Zoning By-law. While the Official Plan sets out a municipality’s general policies for future land use, zoning by-laws put the plan into effect by setting out specific requirements that developments must follow. These standards include how land may be used, the types of buildings that are permitted and how they may be used, building heights, parking requirements, setbacks from the street, lot sizes and so forth.

**Uses & Classifications:**

The current zoning for the Downtown Area is presented opposite. The dominant land use classification across the study area is “C1”, representing “Core Commercial Zone”. In addition, parts of the northern portion of the Downtown are classified as “C2”, representing “Fringe Core Commercial Zone”. In the heart of the district is Victoria Park which is an “Open Space Type 1” classification.

Outside the Primary Study Area, to the north and west of the Downtown, the dominant classification is “Residential Conversion Zone” reflecting their proximity to the core and mix of uses present. To the east is a more commercial “Mixed Commercial Residential Zone”, while the south is an “F-C1” classification highlighting that this portion of the Core Commercial Zone falls within the flood plain and is a special policy area. Special policy areas allow for a level of flexibility for new development proposals with regard to flood safeguarding.

Permitted uses in the Downtown are extensive and include residential developments, offices, arts spaces, stores and restaurants, hotels, civic and community facilities, medical services, post secondary schools, museums, arts centres and theatres, parks and parking lots, amongst many other uses.

**Density & Built Form Controls**

The current zoning contains both density and height controls. Zoning in the Downtown allows for height and density that is in excess of other areas of the city.

The existing height allowance is set at eight storeys for both the Core Commercial and Fringe Core zones. Within the Core, density (represented by lot coverage) is set at 100% coverage. This is a generous density allowance. In the Fringe Core maximum lot coverage is set at 50%.

Side and front set backs as well as rear yard requirements are minimal or nil in the Core Commercial Area.

**Parking Controls**

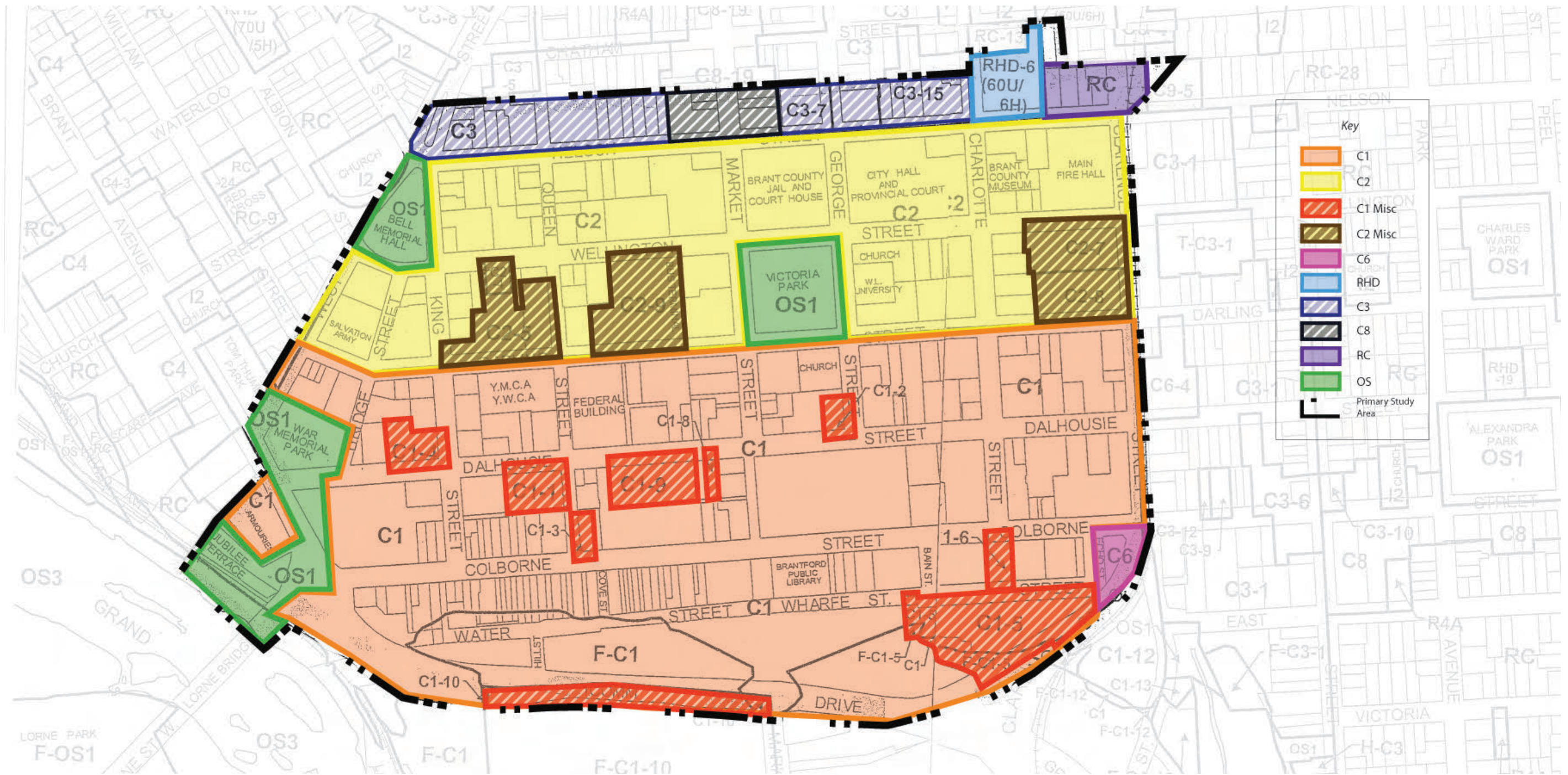
With regard to parking, the number of spaces required is based on the uses proposed on site. The Primary Study Area is covered by three Parking Exemption areas, providing a relief in parking required ranging from 50% to 100% exemption. South of Darling Street qualifies for a 50% exemption. The western portion of Colborne Street is unique in that it qualifies for a 100% exemption from parking provision. Areas north of Darling Street (up to Nelson Street) and immediately south of Icomm Drive must provide 75% of required spaces.

Standard provision is as follows:

- General retail uses: 1 space per 30m<sup>2</sup>
- Multiple units & Apartments: 1.5 space per unit
- Residential: 1 space per unit
- Hotel: 1 space per guestroom
- Offices: 1 space per 30m<sup>2</sup>
- Restaurant: 1 space per 4 person capacity

For residential uses in the Fringe Core, parking provision is set at 1 space per unit. Although parking standards are established in the Zoning By-law, the Official Plan does allow for a reduced cash-in-lieu payment of \$1 for parking provision in the Core Commercial Area. Flexibility in parking provision was intended to act as an incentive for development in the core - especially for sites that simply could not accommodate parking or for those sites where surface parking was deemed as undesirable.

In recent years, however, this allowance has resulted in additional pressure being placed on the City to resolve the parking demand created by private investment.



Existing Zoning Map, City of Brantford





## 3.0 THE VISION & FRAMEWORK

## 3.1 The Vision

**Brantford is ambitious.** It recognizes its existing challenges, but is committed to creating a Downtown to be proud of – a place that people want to live and work in as well as visit. A Downtown must function as the healthy heart of a city, and Brantford realizes that it’s successful peripheral growth needs to be more balanced with a renewed focus on improving the core of its community. The Council is committed to making a difference to the Downtown and making it a story of success.

Downtown Brantford will be...

- ... a special place in the city with a definable identity and services, business and activities that you can’t find elsewhere in the region.
- ... where the City invests in the highest quality public realm to create a better image for the entire city.
  - ... a desirable residential destination offering a range of housing types.
- ... a destination for new employers who wish to locate in a city that is evolving, invests in itself and has access to a well trained work force.
  - ... a destination that capitalizes on its heritage assets – both physical and natural – to make the Downtown a unique competitive destination.
  - ... a model for the unification of formal and informal arts into an integrated cultural offer.
- ... a specialist retail centre with new stores, restaurants, cafes and bars that diversify the downtown and create activity along its main streets.
  - ... a walkable city with safe, pleasant pedestrian routes that are well connected.
    - ...a top college and university destination for young people.
    - ... a safe destination for all users.
    - ... a place where people are proud to stake as their own.

- 1 Improved pedestrian access from Colborne Street to Parkade
- 2 Trail extension and new community park
- 3 Two-way conversion of streets:
  - Dalhousie Street
  - Colborne Street
- 4 Streetscape improvement priority streets:
  - Dalhousie and Colborne Streets
  - Market and George Streets
- 5 Vertical Link connecting Downtown to Grand River/Trans Canada Trail
- 6 New public parks:
  - Market Street Mews
  - Bridge Street Linear Park
  - Navigation Park
- 7 Conversion of rail track to pedestrian & cyclist path
- 8 Gateway treatment at key arrival points to the Downtown
- 9 Skateboard Park & Riverside Event Space
- 10 Future Brantford Laurier Heritage Block
- 11 Tourist Information Kiosk & Harmony Square Programming Centre
- 12 Special Focus Area - Adaptive re-use where viable
- 13 Parkade facade treatment & public art feature
- 14 Residential infill opportunity sites
- 15 Multi-storey parkade above bus station
- 16 Public sector investment focus zone: amalgamated opportunity sites
- 17 Restructured/renovated Market Square
- 18 Removal of east end of Wharfe St. creating development opportunities
- 19 Market building & formalized market square
- 20 Institutional Expansion opportunity sites
- 21 Office/Residential opportunity site
- 22 Expanded transit hub (bus station)
- 23 Revitalized laneway network



Over the next 25 years Downtown Brantford will be transformed into an active and beautiful destination for the entire City of Brantford. It will be recognized as the healthy and vibrant centre of the community and celebrated for the character of its public spaces, quality of architecture and mix of uses that makes it well worth a visit.

People will be drawn to the Downtown by its new shops, businesses and special events that celebrate the Downtown as a year round meeting place. New opportunities for local shopping and dining will bring life back to downtown streets and help transform the area's blank walls and uninspired pedestrian environment to a beautiful pedestrian-friendly realm.

At its heart, Harmony Square will support a range of formal activities and act as the 'bricks and mortar' centerpiece of the renewed Downtown.

This well programmed space will be complemented by the development of other new public spaces able to accommodate more informal events. New parks will be focused along the river and at Navigation Park - the new community park that crests the southern edge of Downtown.

Across the Downtown the heritage of the city will be brought back to life through the best architecture and public realm expressions possible. Established landmark buildings will rediscover their gracious composure and be reclaimed with new uses that contribute positively to the community. New developments will be blend sensitively with existing structures.

Residents and visitors will enjoy improved connections to the regional and national system of parkland, major new open spaces and stronger links to the Grand River. Green connections will be drawn from the banks of the river into the heart of the downtown.

Downtown streets will focus on moving people by all modes, not just cars. Traffic will move slower, but those who choose to drive will no doubt notice new businesses and will take the time to stop. On-street parking will be easy to find because long term parkers will be attracted to new and upgraded off-street parking facilities.

Attracted to Brantford by the city's privileged location in Southern Ontario, its beautiful natural setting, rich history and affordable lifestyle, a diversity of new residents will choose to make Downtown Brantford their home. New residents and an ever expanding student population will continue to fuel street life, bringing further activity and animation to Brantford's downtown - making it a safe and energized destination for all.

## 3.2 Guiding Principles

To guide the Downtown's transformation over the long term, a series of over-arching principles have been created and are presented below. These principles should be followed to influence the form of all future development in the Downtown.

- **Attract new investment and reposition Downtown to better respond to the challenges of a new economy:** The core objective of the Master Plan is to create the appropriate conditions and physical environment across the study area to make it attractive for investment. There must be a stronger economic development focus placed specifically on the downtown.

Developable sites must be opened up and cleaned to allow for future investment. Higher value uses should be clustered around existing areas of strength to secure the highest value possible. In particular, the Master Plan should provide more opportunities for more people to live downtown.

- **Promote architectural and public realm design excellence:** The overall enhancement of Downtown is perhaps the most critical influence on investment potential. This involves aesthetic improvements and urban design enhancements as well as rebalancing the transportation system to reduce emphasis on vehicle movement while improving the pedestrian environment

If Downtown Brantford is to be successfully re-branded as a desirable destination for residential and commercial investment, all new building and public realm development must pursue the highest quality design possible, contribute to sustainable development and inspire an authentic sense of place. Improving attractiveness is important for employers, tourists, and potential residents.

- **Recognize the history of Downtown Brantford:** Where appropriate, key structures and symbols of Brantford's past should be retained and celebrated through design. Where viable, important heritage features should be retained as a reference to the city's rich past. This will contribute to an authentic and highly marketable identity for the downtown.



- **Provide balanced movement systems.** A good balance between vehicular traffic, public transit, cycling and pedestrians must be pursued to meet the needs of sustainability and create a safe, high quality public realm for all users. A fully connected and appropriately scaled movement network (avenues, roads, pathways, trails) is proposed in the Master Plan that establishes a clear hierarchy of public streets and movement systems.

- **Introduce vibrant new communities, while protecting existing neighbourhoods.** The Master Plan promotes the development of sustainable new communities in the Downtown. These new communities will provide increased residential density, additional community services and amenities and quality infill development. New residential developments will help create demand for additional services in the core that will benefit all users of the Downtown. Existing housing choice will be extended through the provision of a diverse range of housing types, sizes and levels of affordability.

- **Foster linkages to surrounding areas.** To ensure that the social and economic opportunities generated by the redevelopment of the Downtown are accessible to local residents, the area must be integrated with surrounding established neighbourhoods and amenities on the fringes of the Downtown.
- **Provide social infrastructure for the long-term success of the area.** To reduce levels of social exclusion in adjacent communities and help to meet the needs of future communities, the Downtown must continue to provide a diverse range of neighbourhood services and facilities. These services should remain centrally located and physically accessible to all.

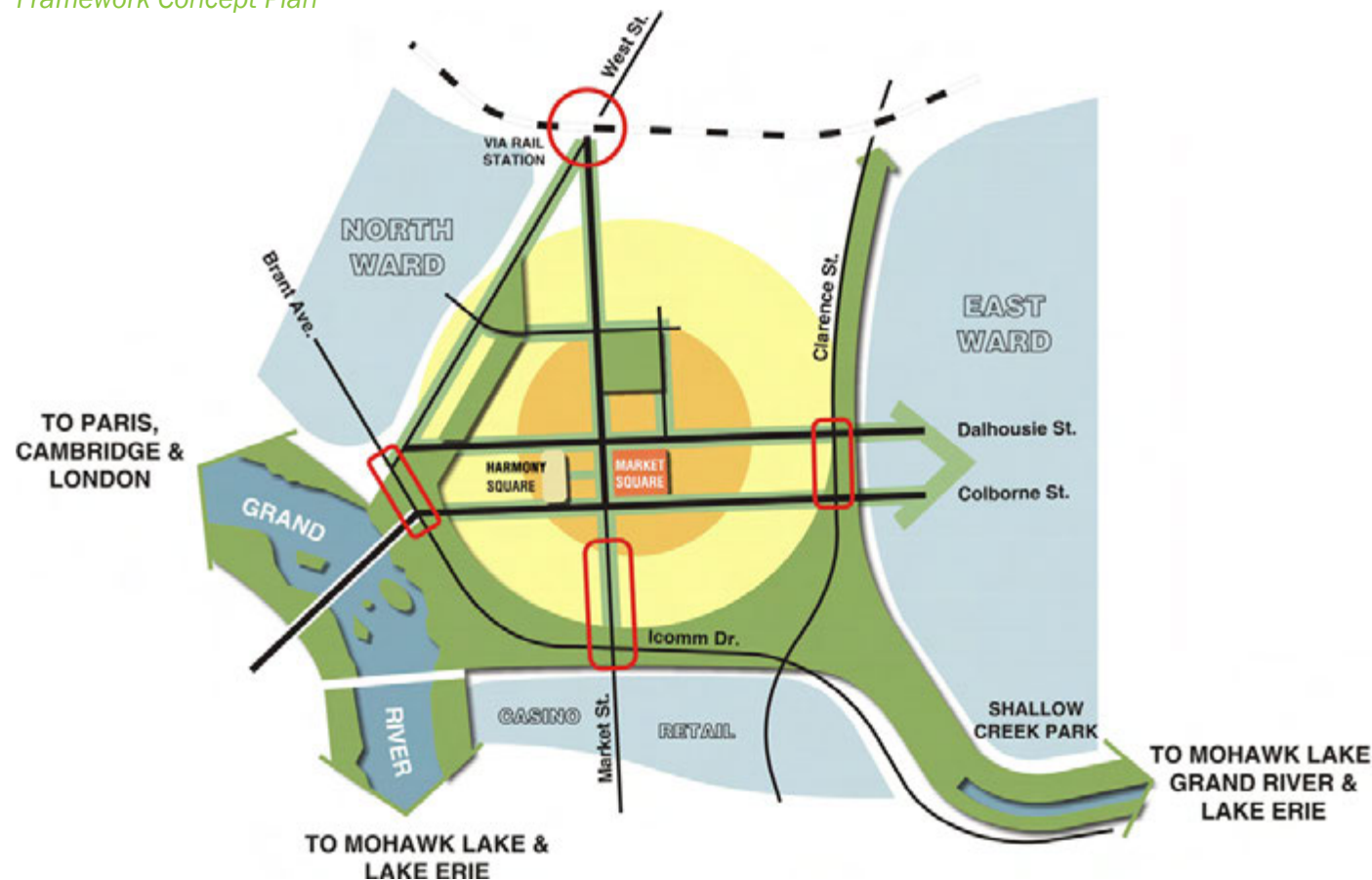


# 3.3 Framework Concept

At the core of Downtown Brantford is a concentration of shops, restaurants and offices enveloped by new parkland and tree-lined streets. A secondary ring is dominated by housing, but also supports clusters of commercial uses, civic buildings and commercial offices. Surrounding neighbourhoods feed the Downtown.

Key intersections act as gateways, highlighting and directing the arrival into the Downtown. The primary east-west routes to and through the Downtown remain Colborne and Dalhousie streets, while Market Street north and south takes a stronger role in helping balance movement across the core. Landscaping and open spaces surround the Downtown with clear connections drawn into the heart of the downtown from the river's edge. The Grand River is now fully embedded as part of the Downtown identity.

Framework Concept Plan



# 3.4 The Components

The Framework Plan to the right represents the primary ideas that have informed the development of the more detailed Master Plan. The Framework represents in graphic form the key concepts that have shaped the development of the Master Plan, including:

- **Provide a Focus to the Downtown**

Part of the problem with the Downtown is that it is simply too large to repair all at once. Within the Downtown, certain locations are able to offer the greatest benefit on public and private investments. Investments in the public realm by way of streetscape and public realm improvements should be carefully targeted to these locations to augment existing strengths.

A smaller downtown can act as a stronger core. To help revive the core, it is recommended that the Downtown's boundary be redefined and more tightly focused around its healthiest assets – Victoria Park, Harmony Square, Market Square and portions of Dalhousie and Colborne streets. Investments and projects would be undertaken in this more focussed area as a priority, as shown below. Once stability is secured in the core, adjacent areas will benefit and the downtown can grow over the course of time as it becomes healthier.

Focusing development will create a critical mass that establishes a Downtown Brantford "identity" that can be used to attract further private investment. A more defined core will contribute to a clearer identity for the Downtown as a destination.



• **Introduce a More Defined Urban Structure to the Downtown**

The Master Plan serves as a long term framework that is flexible enough to accommodate unexpected, yet welcomed, uses while also being firm enough to project a vision of what downtown should be. The structure plan presented opposite identifies the basic structural organization of the master plan including circulation routes, open spaces and development nodes

New public spaces should be introduced to the Downtown and be designed to be comfortable year round and be accessible to a variety of users. These quality spaces will provide the settings in which private investments will be made in future years.

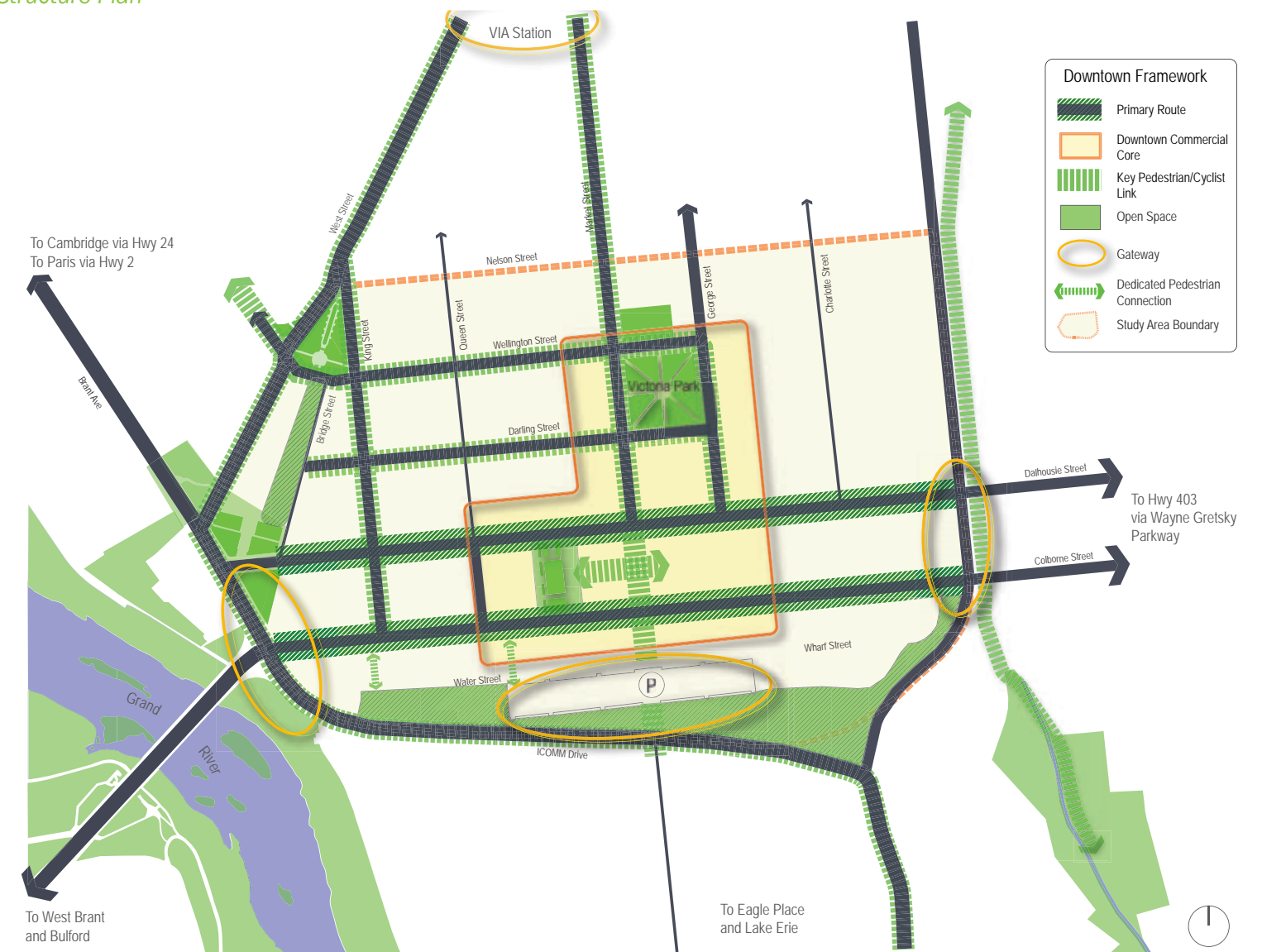
Identification of key use areas signal to private developers that the City is intent on creating a vibrant downtown. Redevelopment opportunities to the east and west and to the north and south will anchor the Downtown. Within these locations, key sites when redeveloped will bridge existing islands of development fortifying an identity for the core area.

• **Consolidate and Link Assets across the Downtown**

The challenge for Downtown Brantford is to establish a public realm framework that creates a unified core through linkages of its key assets. Streetscape and public realm improvements will provide better linkages to the trail system and extend them into the City centre and northward to the Via Station.

Across the Downtown the structure of streets and public open spaces must be multi-faceted and flexible in use: motorists, pedestrians and cyclists must all be accommodated.

Structure Plan



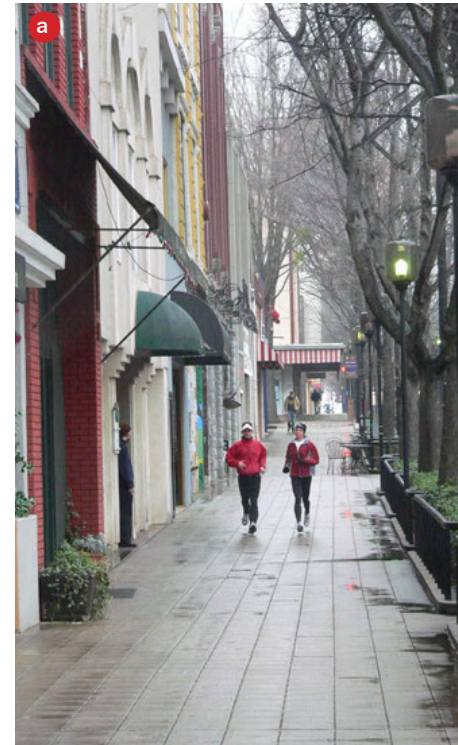
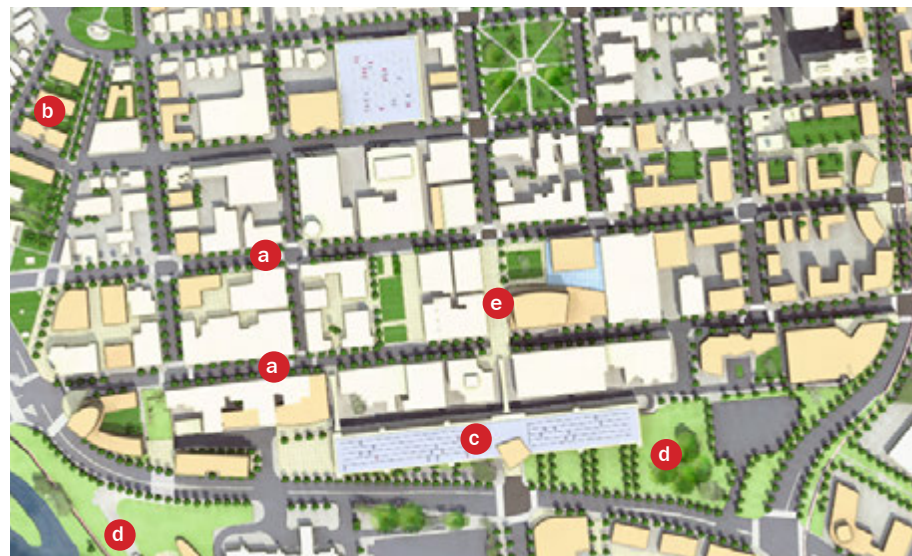
# 3.5 Land Use

Genuinely sustainable communities require a broad range of services and amenities within close proximity. To accommodate this goal, the Master Plan retains and expands the mix of uses currently present within the Downtown. This allows the Plan to operate within the established land use pattern of the Downtown.

The primary business and retail component of Downtown Brantford will remain clustered around Dalhousie and Market streets. Colborne and Dalhousie will remain as retail streets, with a focus on attracting new retail uses between Queen and Charlotte streets. Market Street will offer a mix of retail/restaurant uses, civic amenities and office functions, while George, Charlotte and Darling streets will continue to provide a focus for institutional uses.

In the longer term, new in-fill residential uses are envisioned at both the east and west ends of the Downtown, bookending the commercial core. Residential intensification opportunities also present themselves along Wellington Street and portions of Darling Street.

The Downtown will continue to offer public facilities and spaces, as well as venues for entertainment, recreation, working, tourism and cultural enjoyment as well as living. Combined, these uses will bring different people downtown at different times.



*A variety of uses helps ensure that a downtown remains vibrant and relevant to all types and ages of users.*





# 3.6 Vision Recommendations

- 1 Recognize the principles and policies of the Downtown Brantford Master Plan through formal approval by Brantford City Council and integrate the vision and supporting priority interventions into the City's policy framework.
- 2 Create a more focused retail and commercial geography for the Downtown.
- 3 Undertake a re-branding exercise for Downtown Brantford, including the introduction of new signage and wayfinding. This should also include an expansion of the downtown programming offer to include more events across additional venues (including programming of such locations as Brant's Crossing, Victoria Square, Harmony Square, Shallow Creek Park, the Lanes, etc).
- 4 Transform Market Square into an office hub supported by small scale retail. The success of the office component should be protected as a viable and desirable use.
- 5 Retain the Transit Terminal in the Downtown and expand its current capacity.
- 6 Create new public park spaces to expand Downtown's existing open space network.
- 7 Undertake a review of available redevelopment opportunities in and around Downtown as part of a site marketing exercise to promote new residential and commercial developments.
- 8 Prepare a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the City and aggressively market key opportunity sites in the Downtown to investment interests.
- 9 Work with Mohawk College to explore options for the relocation of the campus to a downtown location. Continue to work with Nipissing University and Laurier Brantford to facilitate further post-secondary expansion in the Downtown.
- 10 Expand operation of the Farmer's Market and potentially relocate to a higher profile location in Downtown.
- 11 Refurbish Market Centre Parkade, including façade improvements to create a positive impression and gateway statement as well as enhanced pedestrian bridge connections to Downtown.
- 12 Continue efforts to keep the Brantford YMCA in the Downtown.
- 13 Re-instate an Investment Incentive Programme specifically for the Downtown.
- 14 Pursue two-way conversions of Dalhousie and Colborne streets. Included in this is public realm improvements along both streets and potentially bicycle lanes on Colborne or Dalhousie east of Clarence Street.



- 15** Begin efforts to undertake land assembly for key opportunity sites in the Downtown, as identified in Master Plan.
- 16** For the traditional commercial blocks along Colborne Street & Dalhousie Street, convert upper floors to a range of rental and / or market housing, in line City's policy goals.
- 17** To move the debate forward as to the future of Colborne Street, it is recommended that the City work with owners to assess the health of individual structures, identify a spectrum of options and explore future development opportunities.
- 18** Re-launch the Downtown as a family destination at the spring opening of Harmony Square. Continue to actively and

loudly promote your downtown successes throughout the year.

- 19** Utilise the Grand River more by creating stronger and more direct pedestrian and cycle connections from the Downtown to the River. Hold major city sponsored events - such as festivals and pic-nics - on its banks.
- 20** Place a greater emphasis on capturing the growing arts & culture market and recognize more fully the unique opportunities Brantford's strong cultural mix offers the Downtown. Key actions include:
  - Create a 'sprout fund' for local arts & cultural groups to nurture their growth, inspire project ideas and show City support.
  - Work with the Brant Historical Society to explore options for the relocation of the the Brant Museum and Archives to a

higher profile, more accessible, larger city-owned venue within the Downtown.

- A public art policy should be developed and adopted by Council, attached to all new public developments across the city.
- As part of the destination appeal of the Downtown, the Casino should play a much more integrated role with the downtown identity. Relations between Tourism Brantford and the Charity Casino should be developed further to better capture opportunities for partnership working and joint-promotion of the Downtown.
- Offer subsidized temporary gallery and workshop space in Downtown buildings.
- Introduce a Tourism Office in the Downtown core. This could be a shared space area with the BIA or potentially other tourism, arts or cultural organizations.





Darling Street In-fill



## 4.0 THE 5 YEAR VISION

# The 5 Year Vision

Repairing the Downtown is a priority that must be realized sooner rather than later. As such, the Master Plan presented opposite highlights the more immediate opportunities for revitalizing Downtown Brantford and maps out the major initiatives that could be realized by the City Council over the next five to seven years. These selected projects are considered to be catalytic interventions that have the capacity of bringing significant spin-off benefit to the Downtown.

Achievement of each of the catalytic interventions identified sets the foundation for the full realization of the longer term Vision, as presented in Section 3.1.

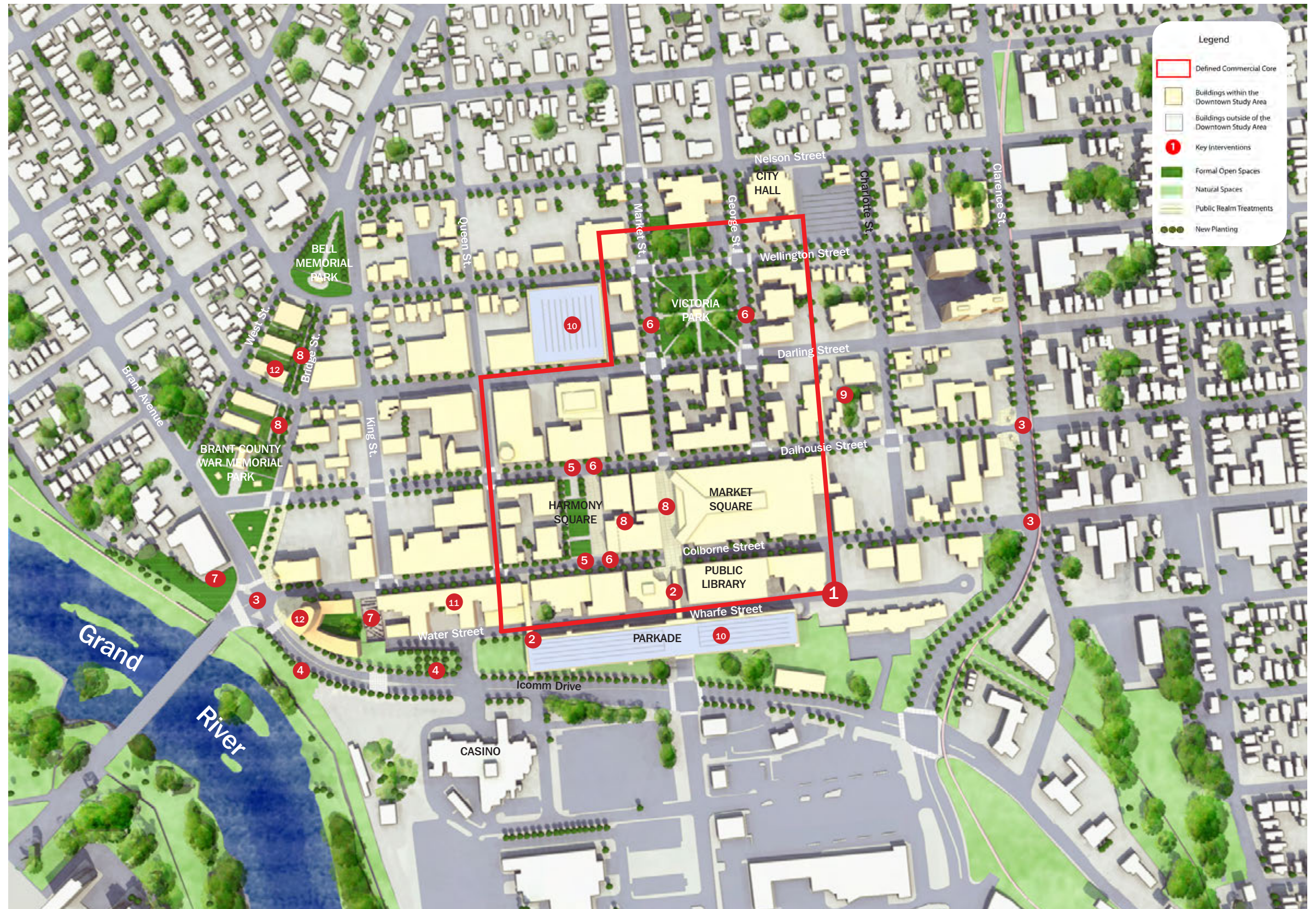
Catalytic interventions considered under the Five Year Vision include:

- i. Pursue two-way conversions of Dalhousie and Colborne streets. Included in this is public realm improvements along both streets.
- ii. Continue efforts to retain the Brantford YMCA in the Downtown.
- iii. Work to attract Mohawk College to a site in Downtown Brantford.
- iv. Undertake land assembly for key opportunity sites in downtown, including the south side of Colborne, around the existing Farmers Market (up to Colborne Street), the Darling Parking block and possible sites along Clarence Street.
- v. Re-instate an Investment Incentive Programme specifically for the Downtown.
- vi. Prepare a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the City and aggressively market key opportunity sites in the Downtown to investment interests.
- vii. Expand operation of the Farmer's Market and potentially relocate this unique downtown destination to a higher profile location.
- viii. Undertake a re-branding exercise for Downtown Brantford, including the introduction of new signage and wayfinding. This should also include an expansion of the downtown programming offer to include more events across additional venues (including programming of such locations as the riverside, Victoria Square, Harmony Square, Shallow Creek Park, the Lanes, etc).
- ix. Refurbishment of Market Street Parkade, including enhanced pedestrian bridge connection and façade improvements to create gateway statement.
- x. As a priority, work with existing owners to undertake an up-to-date review of the condition of the structures on the south side of Colborne to assess their health and identify future potential. In the interim, hold a public art competition and roll-out for the refurbishment of hoardings along the south side of Colborne Street.

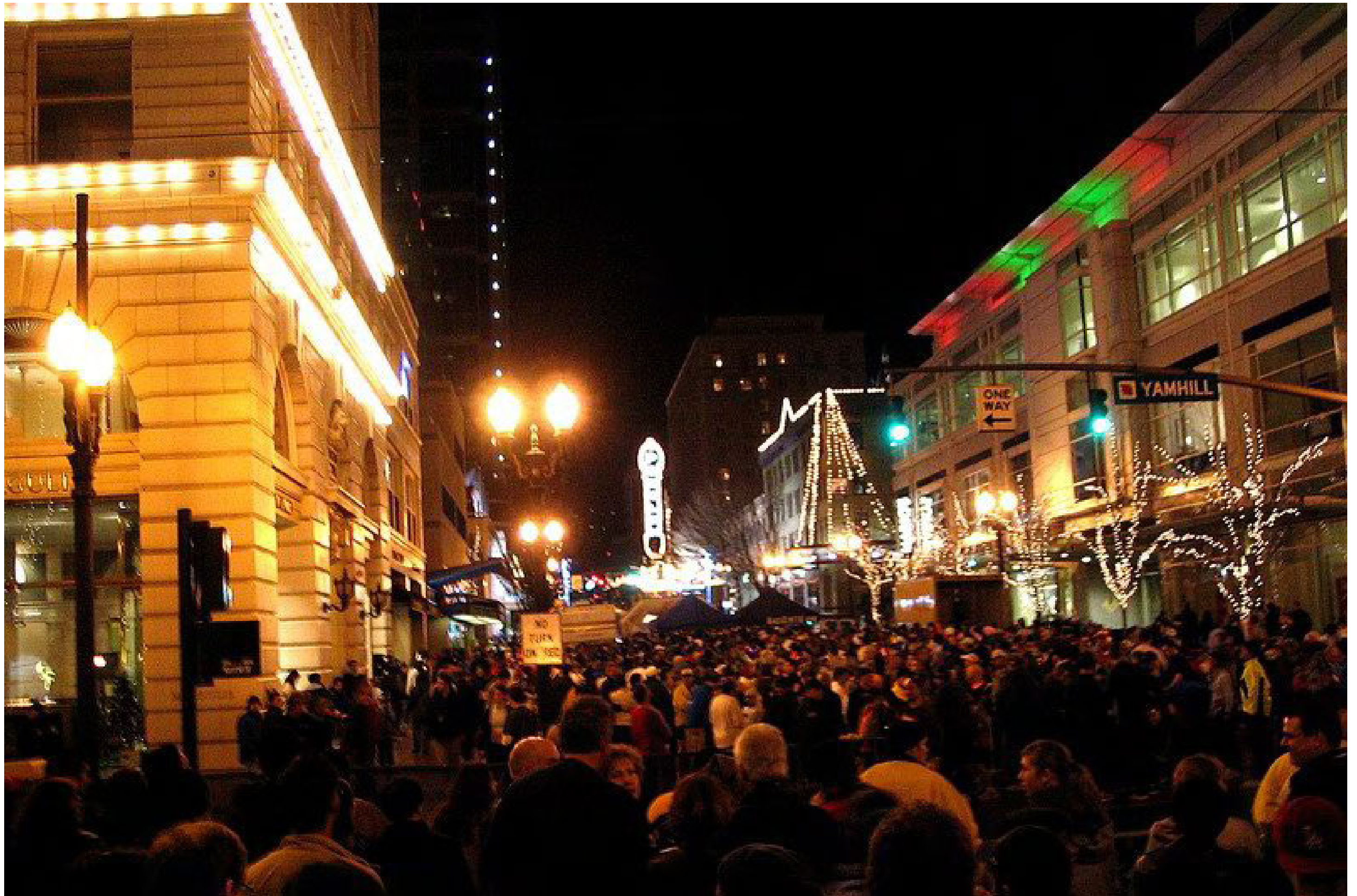


Legend

- 1** A more defined Commercial Core
- 2** Improved pedestrian access from the Parkade to Downtown
- 3** Improved Gateway Entrance:
  - reconfiguration Lorne Bridge intersection
  - enhanced Dalhousie/Clarence junction
  - enhanced Colborne/Clarence junction
- 4** Expanded Cycle Networks:
  - Bikeway extension along Icomm Drive
- 5** Two-way Conversion of Streets:
  - Dalhousie Street
  - Colborne Street
- 6** Streetscape improvement & planting of Priority Streets:
  - Dalhousie Street
  - Colborne Street
  - Market Street
  - George Street
- 7** Direct bicycle and pedestrian link between Grand R./Trans Canada Trail & Downtown
- 8** New public walks and revitalized lanes:
  - Market Square Mews
  - Bridge Street Linear Park
  - Brantford Lanes
- 9** Expanded Institutional Presence
- 10** Downtown Parking Strategy
  - Off-street
  - On-street
- 11** Revitalization of Colborne Street
- 12** Expanded Residential Offer



# The 5 Year Plan



*Built form creates the settings for activity. Well-defined, semi-enclosed public spaces offer ideal environments for civic events.*



## 4.1 BUILT FORM

### Summary Recommendations:

- *Undertake a review of available development sites across the Downtown and begin to market locations to institutional, commercial and residential interests. Land assembly should be pursued for larger sites.*
- *Continue efforts to accommodate a downtown YMCA, an expanded post-secondary institutional presence and an enhanced Farmers' Market as they are important Downtown assets.*
- *Development that supports taller elements than the typical three- to four-storey profile should be promoted at appropriate sites within the Downtown area, including along Clarence Street, as part of a redeveloped Market Square, and the western tip of Colborne Street.*
- *As a priority, work with land owners to undertake an up-to-date review of the condition of structures to assess their health and identify any potential for adaptive re-use.*
- *Preserve the western end of Colborne Street as a new owner occupied residential location.*
- *Introduce gateway features and intersection treatments at key locations coming into the Downtown, including Lorne Bridge, where Colborne and Dalhousie streets meet Clarence Street, and the Parkade entrance.*
- *Establish a Peer Review system to help ensure quality design is introduced as part of the approval process. As part of the development review process, CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) guidelines should be considered.*

## 4.1.1

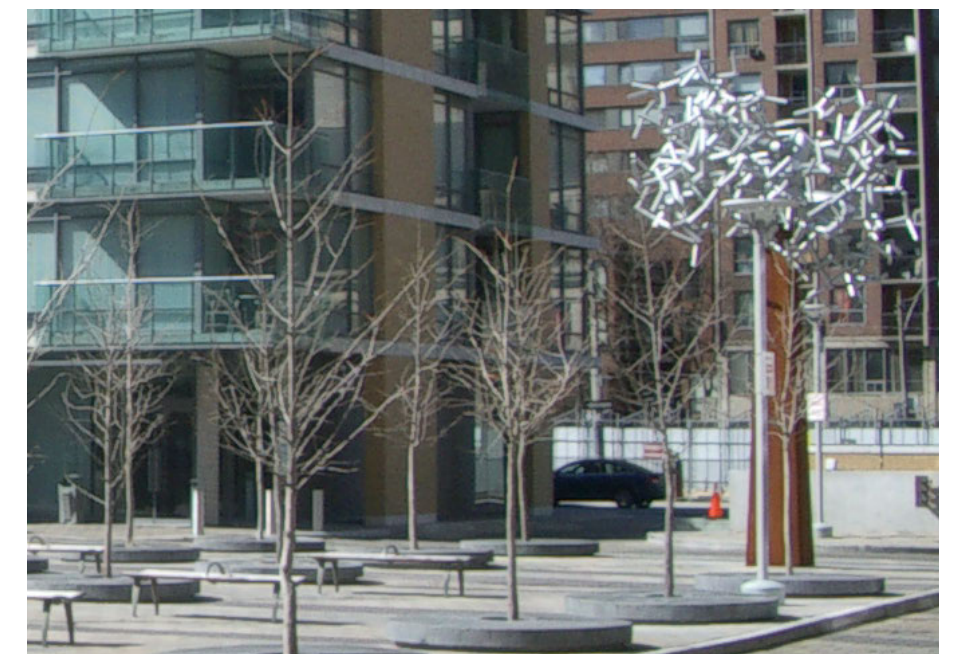
# Built Form Approach

The way one experiences a city is to a large extent through the architecture of the built form: the way buildings look and feel. As Downtown Brantford continues to evolve and becomes further intensified, each new or refurbished building must be given careful consideration with respect to how it contributes to the context of the Downtown and overall image of Brantford as a whole.

Buildings should reflect contemporary design ideas while contributing to the area's coherence and creation of a sense of place. Any new buildings in the Downtown must be mindful of their impact on the environment, the local context, the local heritage and the overall image of the city and brand that the Downtown is trying to establish.

Across the Downtown, the following guidelines should be considered for new buildings:

- Encourage architectural diversity in order to create a dynamic, contemporary image of the Downtown;
- Provide an opportunity for the integration of public art with building - as part of the structure or its public realm;
- A mix of materials and colour should be encouraged to provide design variation; and
- Promote buildings of an enduring quality.



*A diversity of Built Form Expressions suitable for Downtown locations.*

## 4.1.2

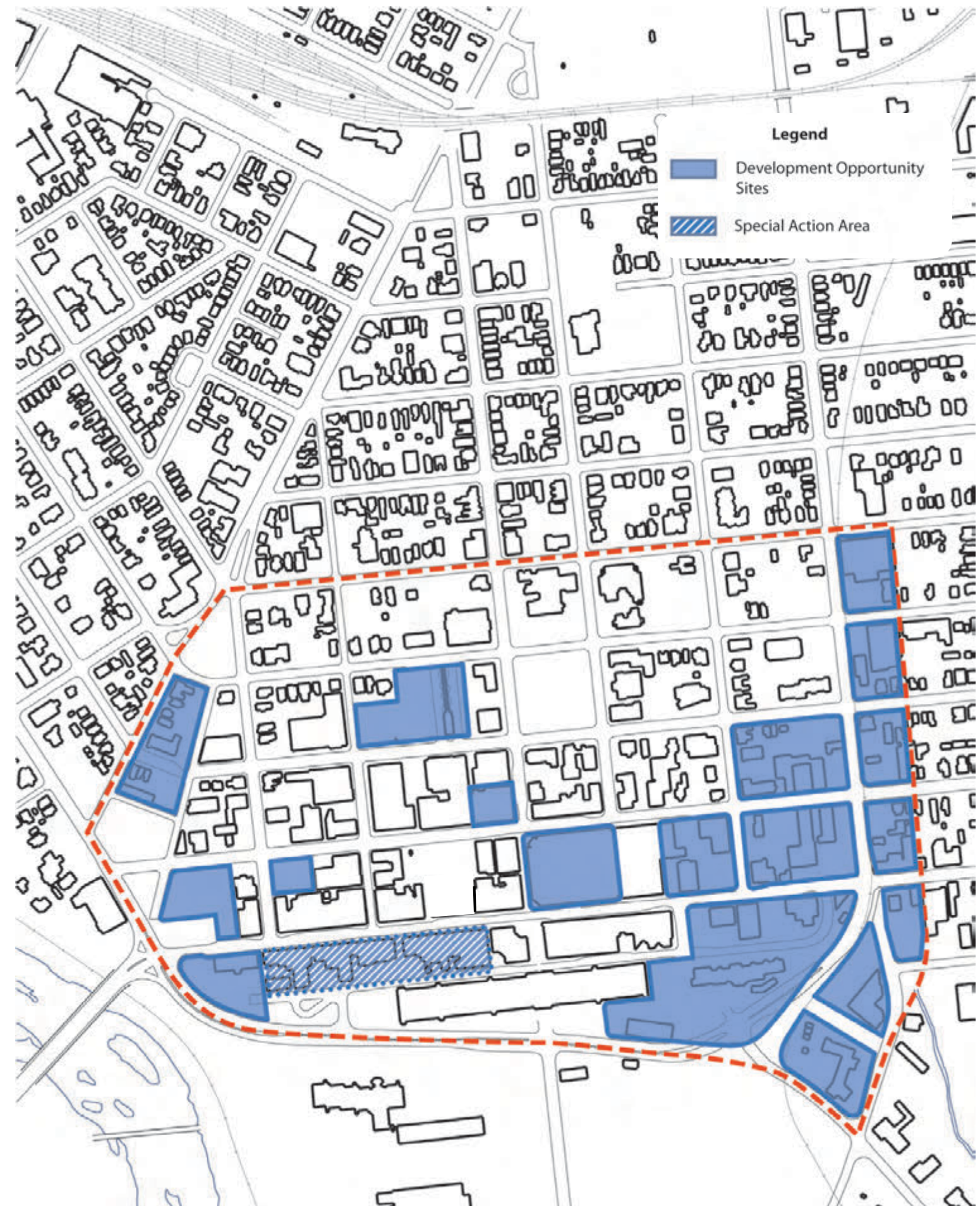
# Development Opportunities

Within the Downtown there are a number of underutilized sites that present themselves as development opportunities - both short and longer term. Many of these opportunity sites are concentrated along the eastern portion of Downtown Brantford.

Although potentially long term, many of these sites are of significant scale to act as development catalysts for the Downtown. Once fully realized, these redeveloped sites will provide employment and living opportunities, leading to a diversified Downtown.

Potential uses for opportunity sites include:

- Post-secondary education campus for Mohawk College and/or expansion zones for Nipissing University and Laurier Brantford University
- An expanded Farmer's Market
- Brantford YMCA
- Owner-occupied residential housing
- Rental housing, including dedicated student accomodation
- Arts & cultural facilities (museums, gallery space, flexible arts space, etc)
- Civic office space
- Health Centre
- Structured parking
- Retail and commerical space



Opportunity Parcel Plan

# 4.1.3 Height

Height restrictions protect pedestrian areas from shade and shadow and are key to maintaining a sense of human scale on the ground level that enhances the quality of the streetscape.

Much of Downtown Brantford is characterized by buildings of three to four storeys. As shown on the plan below, it is recommended that these heights be retained in order to protect the existing heritage character of the area and to maintain the visual significance of buildings such as the Federal Building. However, in some locations, there are opportunities for additional height.

Within these special zones, the buildings that are built on these sites should be held to the highest architectural standards as they will become a visibly prominent feature of the Downtown.

Height should be utilized to demarcate:

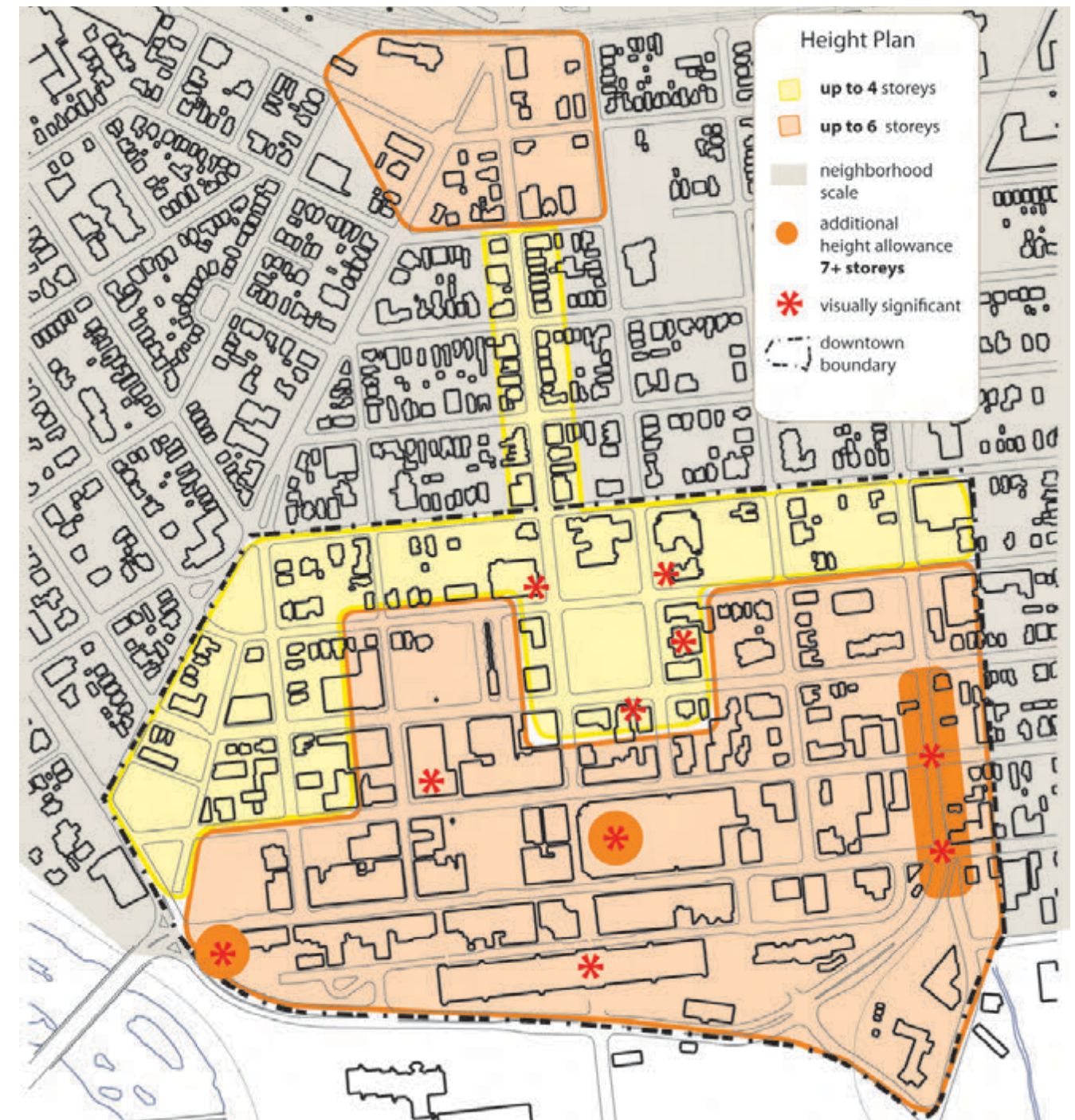
- Gateway areas
- buildings at the terminus of a corridor
- buildings along major corridors with automobile oriented uses where increased height will have no adverse impacts
- visually prominent sites or those with unobstructed views
- buildings of major attraction

Three locations in the Downtown present themselves as candidates for taller building elements:

- The corner of Colborne Street and Icomm Drive. This high profile location supports views over the Grand River and can be clearly seen when crossing the Lorne Bridge or travelling southward along Brant Avenue. As such, it is identified as a gateway arrival point to the Downtown and should be treated as a significant site able to accommodate taller built form elements.

- Market Square is an important site and served as the civic heart until the opening of the current City Hall in 1967. With redevelopment its prominence should be re-established with a building element of grace and vertical stature that clearly indicates the site's significance as the heart of the Downtown.
- Clarence Street is a wide and well used roadway. As such development aligned next to it will need to be robust enough to balance its challenging street conditions. Height should be consistently deployed on both sides of Clarence Street from Colborne Street north to Wellington Street. In this manner along with improved streetscaping the east side of Downtown will act as a gateway into the City centre while also contributing to the evolving character of Brantford.

Additional details on height are provided in the Site Specific Guidelines presented at Section 6.0



## 4.1.4

# Heritage Considerations

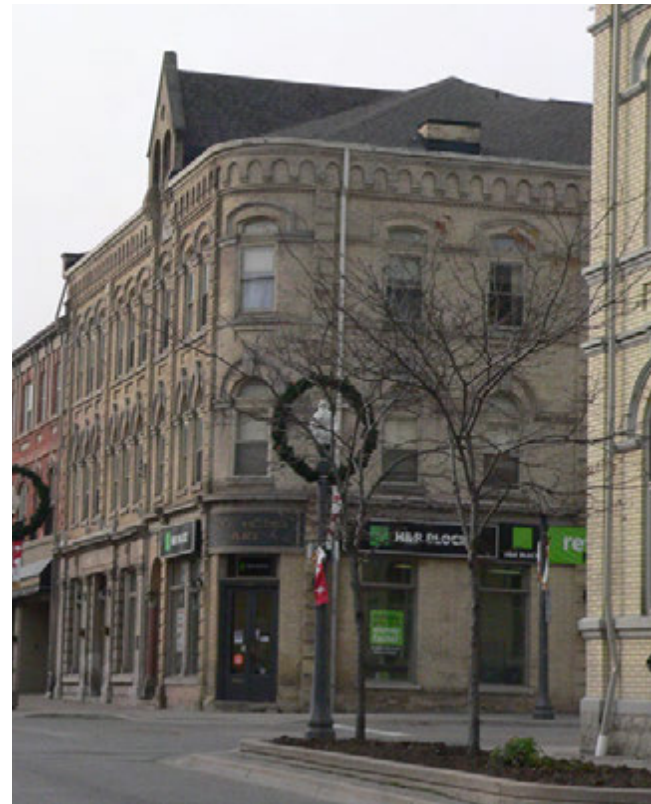
As previously noted, Brantford has a very rich and long history. Much of this history is expressed physically through its built form within the Downtown. The Downtown contains a large number of heritage assets that have been recognized as important, including several designated heritage buildings as well as the Victoria Park Square Conservation District.

The special historic character of Brantford's two main streets should be considered. Although not formally designated, several structures along Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street are of note for their historic significance. Although these structures are not identified as heritage assets, their present condition significantly hinders opportunities for adaptive re-use. The disrepair that many of the buildings appear to have fallen into creates poor market conditions and risks creating a downward spiral of disinvestment if intervention is not undertaken.

In order to move forward and begin to address the deteriorating condition of these two important Main Streets - and in particular the south side of Colborne Street - the Master Plan recommends that the City work with property owners to undertake an up-to-date review of the condition of the structures to assess their health and identify future opportunities for development.

Once a structural assessment has been completed, if the City chooses to intervene and assist with rehabilitation, this could be achieved through the following ways:

- Prepare a Heritage Plan for the Downtown to more fully understand the heritage assets in the downtown. This should include a statement of value that clearly expresses the structures/areas' significance to the community. A community history project could also be completed as part of this study;
- Identification of available incentives for building owners and developers;
- Seek a wide range of grants from senior levels of government for the purpose of reinvestment in the historic fabric;
- Provide City rehabilitation grants, rebuild infrastructure, demonstrate re-investment commitment;



*Victoria Park Square Heritage Conservation District with Victoria Park designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act*

- Actively seek tenants and users for renovated buildings, look at land swaps with commercial users;
- Look at the potential to assemble individual properties into larger blocks (such as the sites identified in Section 4.1.2), while also dealing with large, multi-property owners to facilitate land swaps with other City owned property that might be more easily developed by the private sector.
- Actively seek institutional users, perhaps building on the existing satellite college campuses, for example, training/apprenticeship programs, student housing and graduate offices could be located in renovated buildings on the street.
- Review the potential to relocate some municipal service offices, etc. to assembled properties;
- Consider the potential for a historic/interpretive project that would excavate and rebuild the canal, create a park, visitor centre, etc. that would connect Colborne Street to Water Street.

# 4.1.5 A Gateway Statement

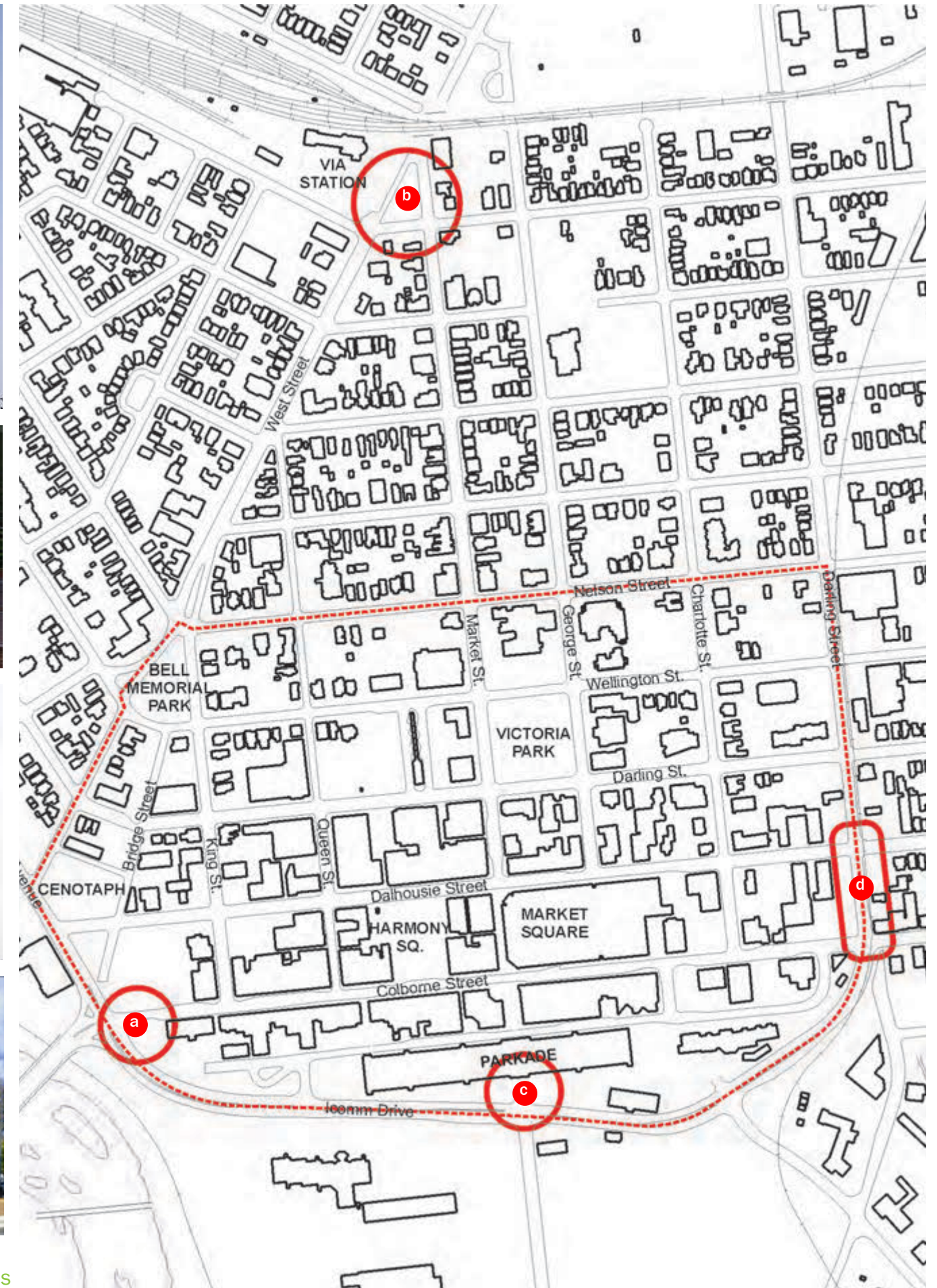
## General Design Approach for Key Intersections

Gateways define specific entry points into the Downtown and are generally located at key intersections. Gateway treatments along main routes alert pedestrians, cyclists and drivers that they are entering a core area of the city.

Gateways do not necessarily need grand statements, but can be defined through such features as distinguished but easily traversed paved surfaces, public art features, landscaping features and the provision of building articulation and height.

The Master Plan recommends the location of specific gateways at:

- a** intersection of Colborne Street, Brant Avenue and Icomm Drive (using the creation of plaza space, public art and architectural massing as an expression of arrival).
- b** triangular island formed by the intersection of Market, West and Durham Streets (using landscape and public art as an expression of arrival);
- c** parkade entrance at Market Street and Icomm Drive (using landscape and the architectural treatment of the structure as an expression of arrival); and
- d** intersections of Dalhousie and Clarence Streets and Colborne and Clarence Streets (using the creation of plaza space, public art and architectural massing as an expression of arrival).



Key Gateway Locations



a



*The best open spaces act as a gathering space for different types of users.*



## 4.2 OPEN SPACE

### Summary Recommendations:

- *Create new public park spaces (Navigation Park and Bridge Street Park) thereby expanding the Downtown's green network and providing settings for future investment.*
- *Upgrade the quality of existing open spaces and create a more standardized identity through co-ordinated signage and furniture.*
- *Significantly expand the programming offer held in public parks.*
- *Utilize the Grand River more fully through the creation of new pedestrian and cycle paths that connect the Downtown to the river and link into the existing trail system.*
- *Revitalize the laneway system across the Downtown as pedestrian links and new spaces for retail and café uses. Improvements to the lanes leading to Harmony Square should be a priority.*
- *As a focus for the new city park, Navigation Park, establish a Brantford Industrial Heritage commemorative trail along the former canal route.*
- *Undertake an aggressive street tree planting programme to replace trees that have died. Appropriate soil mixes, planter boxes and irrigation systems will be required.*

## 4.2.1 Open Space Structure

The Master Plan Vision offers an opportunity to link outdoor spaces to one another through the creation of new parks and greener streets. In so doing, downtown will become a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

By creating a stronger open space network, the City will be creating a framework for new development and an attractive setting for private investment.

The green spaces that now stand in isolation will be appreciated and experienced as part of a greater whole, one that unifies the Downtown with a distinctive identity. Types of spaces that comprise the open space network include:

- Large formal spaces, such as Victoria Park, Harmony Square or Navigation Park, that act as both neighbourhood amenities and regional attractions by providing a formal focus for both passive and programmed recreational activity.
- Smaller community park spaces providing local amenity and green spaces, such as the Cenotaph & War Memorial Park and Bell Memorial Park.
- Dedicated green pedestrian routes to and through the downtown providing greater permeability and links to services, such as Bridge Street Park and Brantford Lanes.
- The natural heritage of the Grand River and its vicinity (including Brant's Crossing Park and the river banks).

With the framework and new systems established for the Downtown and presented above, the Master Plan proposes a series of very important open spaces and public realm improvements. These new open spaces and enhanced public spaces provide the setting for community interaction, activity and recreation for visitors and residents. Critically, they also provide the landscapes and settings for future development opportunities to further realize the City's ambition for change.

*Public spaces function best when they provide for a variety of uses.*

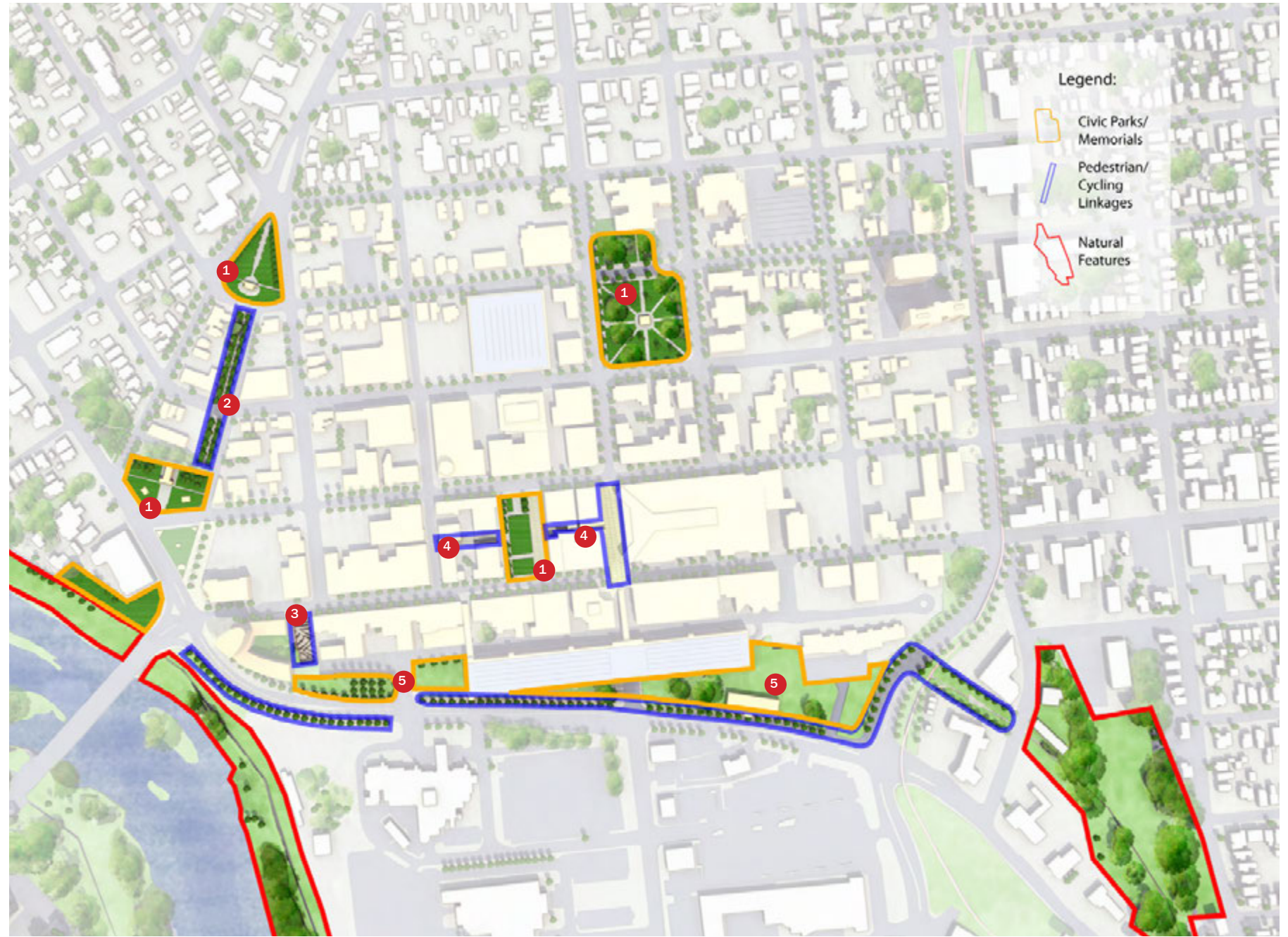
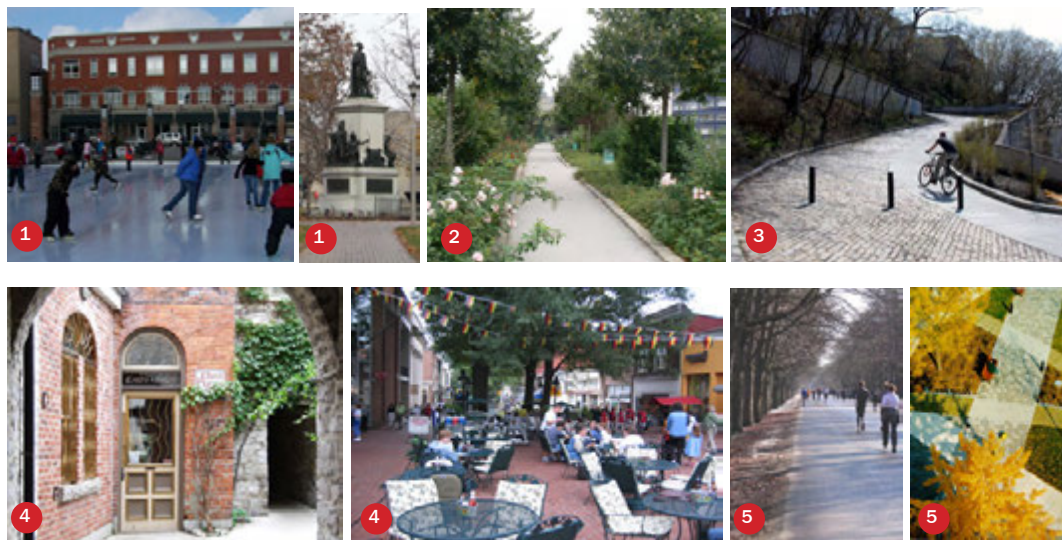


# 4.2.2 Open Space Components

Within this chapter a brief description of the character of the existing and proposed Downtown open spaces is explained. Further elaboration of future public realm improvements will follow within the section entitled “Specific Guidelines”. Many of the new open spaces will be created in tandem with adjacent private developments. As such, guidelines outlining their design parameters are presented together.

The specific sites considered include:

- 1 Harmony Square, Victoria Park, Bell Memorial Park & Brant County War Memorial Park
- 2 Bridge Street Linear Park
- 3 Colborne Hill Park
- 4 Brantford Lanes
- 5 Navigation Park & Pathway



Open Space Network

# Existing Open Spaces

## Harmony Square, Victoria Park, Bell Memorial Park & Brant County War Memorial Park

Four historic open spaces contribute to Downtown Brantford's civic pride. The most recent of the four spaces is Harmony Square, the City's new public square. Of the remaining three parks, by far the most central and defining is Victoria Park.

Victoria Park is a heritage open space dating back to the Lewis Burwell survey of 1830. Victoria Park forms the focus of civic life in Brantford around which City Hall, the Brant County Courthouse, the former Carnegie Library, and St. Andrew's United Church are arrayed. The park's Union Jack layout gives it its structure, while its character is defined by the 1886 Percy Wood monument of Joseph Brant at its centre.

Along the western edge of Downtown is Bell Memorial Park and Brant County War Memorial Park. These parks are best characterized by their monuments, created by the renowned sculpture Walter Seymour Allward. The Bell Memorial was originally designed as the centrepiece of a new civic hub planned by the landscape architects Dunnington-Grubb in 1914. The Cenotaph followed in 1933, although not fully realized to Allward's designs.

These three parks are of significant heritage value and are designated as such. Improvements should be made in the quality of park furniture specifically with respect to Victoria Park and Brant County War Memorial Park. Furniture should be of high quality and complementary to the character of the open spaces in which they are to be sited. If possible, they should also relate to furniture located elsewhere within the Downtown core.



## Downtown as a Destination: Festivals

Brantford already enjoys a number of unique festivals that contribute to making the Downtown a destination, including: the International Villages Festival and Elvisfest. However, with such a wonderful riverside setting available as well as Harmony Square available to stage events, there are further opportunities for new festivals to bring additional life and activity to the core. Potential new festivals to attract visitors and residents downtown could include:

- a Winter Youth Sports Camp that capitalizes on Brantford's strong Gretzky link. This could take place at the Civic Centre or Harmony Square;
- a Chocolate Lovers Family Pic-nic on the banks of the Grand River. This event could be held in conjunction with Ferrero Canada, makers of the world famous Ferrero Rocher chocolates, who have recently opened a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Brantford;
- A Brantford Home Cooking Food Festival that capitalizes on the emerging food cluster around the city as well as the Farmer's Market in the downtown itself.
- An 'Innovation Festival' jointly sponsored by the university & colleges and Bell Canada (as part of their Community Investment corporate objective to build better communities). This could focus on new media and advanced communications.
- A Gore Gaming Festival, using the world-famous "Silent Hill" video game series (currently offering 8 games across the series) and spin-off film series as catalysts. This event would be targeted at young people and could attract attendees from across North America. Video gaming is one of the fastest growing high value industries in the world.

# Proposed New Open Space Components



## Bridge Street Park

One of the new parks proposed in the Master Plan is a linear park edging Bridge Street. Bridge Street Park will link the Bell Memorial and Brant County War Memorial Parks, providing continuity between the two spaces. Linking these two existing open spaces will create a semblance of cohesion in what was previously a fragmented area of the city. The new park will also provide a structure for potential new in-fill development.



## Colborne Hill Park

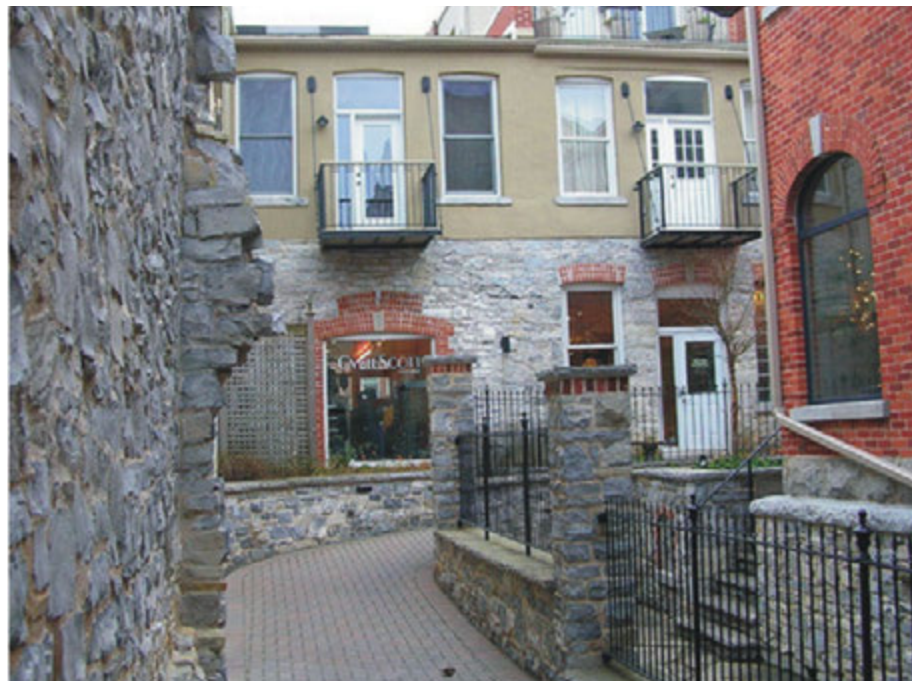
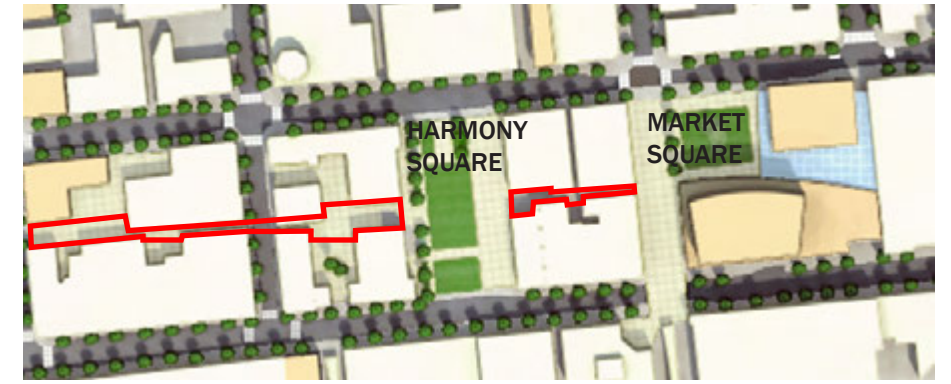
Currently, the downtown is cut off to pedestrians and cyclists from the Grand River and its trail system. This is primarily due to the steep grade changes confronting users when moving between spaces. It is also in part due to the intimidating presence of Icomm Drive as a major vehicular thoroughfare.

With the potential of redeveloping parcels on the south side of Colborne Street near the intersection of Icomm Drive and Brant Avenue, comes an opportunity to create a new vertical pedestrian/cycle link between Colborne and Water streets. This can be achieved through a series of ramps and tiered planters. This park link will offer a graceful and effective transition from Downtown to the river trail system.

## Brantford Lanes

The City should work to reclaim and rehabilitate the lanes that wind throughout the Downtown between King Street and Clarence Street. An early priority should be the revitalization of the laneway between Market Street and Harmony Square. These spaces require a significant upgrade to make them safe and inviting for pedestrians and potentially useable as a commercial address. Once reclaimed, the Lanes could make a special contribution to the development of a unique identity for the Downtown.

The first phase of this reclamation should focus on the link between Market Street and Harmony Square. Currently a servicing corridor for buildings either fronting onto Market Street or Dalhousie Street building uses should be reconfigured to also face onto the lane. Spillover from indoor uses such as seasonal cafe or restaurant seating, vendors and performers as well as window displays will encourage more movement between Market Street and Harmony Square as well as foster a stronger sense of identity. The arched mid-block entrance into the square anticipates more being made of this laneway.



## Market Street (southern portion)

A rehabilitation of Market Street should be pursued to recognize its historical importance as part of the site of the original market as well as serve as a first step in the reorganization of the Market Square Mall.

The focus in recent years has been on improving the mall entrances; however, with the addition of William's Coffee Pub an opportunity presents itself to have ground floor activities face directly onto the mid-block portion of the street. Simple paving treatment and well thought out tree plantings with high quality street furnishings will dramatically improve the character of the public realm in this highly trafficked zone.



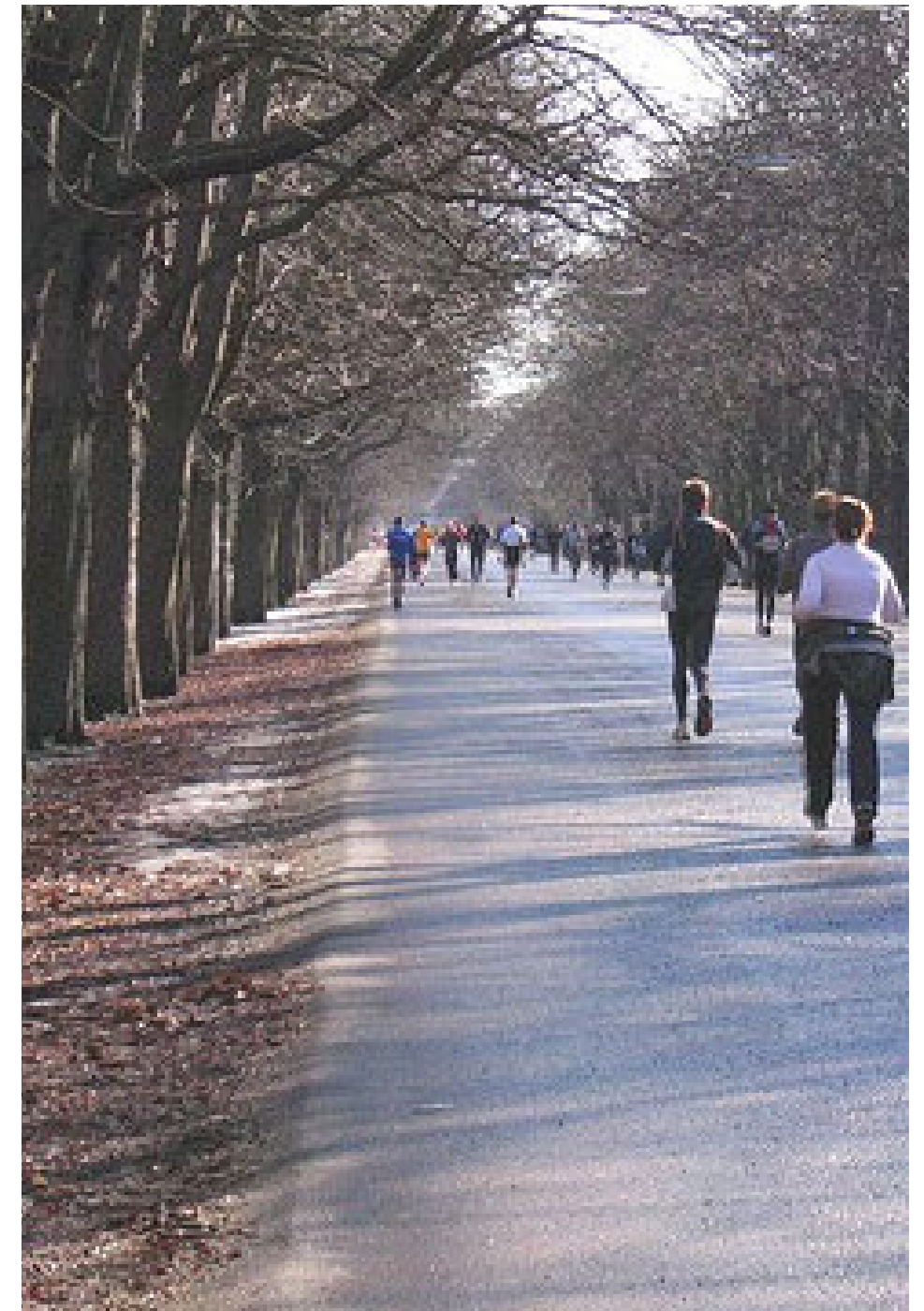
## Navigation Park

Navigation Park will run along Icomm Drive offering a safe and enjoyable pedestrian and cycling route along the south side of Downtown. It will directly connect users of the Grand River trail system with the activities offered in the City's core. In addition, it will function as a green belt softening the imposing character of Icomm Drive itself and provide a camouflage to the unsightly rear portion of Colborne Street.

The short term proposal will see the park constructed from the Casino eastward as far as the parkade entrance. Longer term ambitions will include a continuation of Navigation Park as far as Clarence Street with direct access to Shallow Creek Park. This phase of realization is dependent on the relocation of the Market to a more appropriate siting within the downtown.

As part of this project, the facade of the parkade should be treated to make this dominant feature a striking gateway entrance to the Downtown.

*Navigation Park will be a place to sit and observe while also functioning as a pedestrian and cyclist link between the Grand River and Shallow Creek Park.*









*Streets should be designed to accommodate a variety of different users.*

## 4.3 STREETSCLAPING & PUBLIC REALM

### Summary Recommendations:

- *Undertake full streetscaping improvements along Dalhousie, Colborne, George and Market streets. This should include sidewalk expansion, repaving, intersection treatments, street furniture and planting. Where possible, improvements should be undertaken as part of two-way conversion of Dalhousie and Colborne streets.*
- *Establish a Public Art Strategy and related Public Art Levy for the creation of public art within the City.*
- *Repair existing street furniture and introduce a more co-ordinated palette of furniture across Downtown.*
- *Work with private land owners to replace facades of “the boardwalk”. A public art competition could be held for creative solutions to the treatments of the hoardings along the south side of Colborne Street.*
- *Refurbish Market Centre Parkade to bring it up to a modern day standard and utilize structure as gateway statement and piece of public art.*
- *New signage that is more strongly branded with a contemporary Downtown Brantford identity should be introduced across the Downtown. This should be done in partnership with the BIA, Tourism Brantford, Public Works and Parks & Recreation.*
- *Provide adequate lighting standards across Downtown.*

## 4.3.1

# Streetscaping Approach

In successful cities, streets are much more than traffic arteries. They become important addresses for real estate, locations for cafes and public art and the thoroughfares for walking and biking in the downtown area.

This section provides general design standards for typical street types. The sections demonstrate that rights-of-way are about much more than just vehicular movement; they have the potential to be beautiful, comfortable and multi-functional urban places.

Brantford needs to recognize the importance of its downtown streets as urban places, linear open spaces and walking corridors as well as the traditional role of automobile movement. This section presents a series of streetscaping recommendations that will help improve the quality of the pedestrian experience within the downtown and, perhaps more importantly, create the settings within which new public and private sector investment will be made.

The proposed streetscape improvements are aimed at increasing pedestrian safety and creating a more pleasant pedestrian experience. To be well used, city streets must be well designed, durable, well lit and create a feeling of safety and security for all users. Streetscape improvements are expected to be implemented as adjacent development occurs.

Within this section, all interventions relate to streetscape improvements and present design along the following parameters:

- Street Furniture
- Signage
- Planting & Street trees
- Lighting
- Public Art

*To assist the City of Brantford realize the Master Plan's recommendation for the introduction of co-ordinated street furniture across the Downtown, a series of steps are identified below*

1. *Dedicate a project office to champion the project, guide the process and bring together the required departments*
2. *Undertake an audit of existing street furniture, including a review of the condition and style of existing provision*
3. *Identify gaps in existing provision*
4. *Bring together different City departments to share ideas and aspirations for street furniture. Representation should include:*
  - *Engineering & Operational Services*
  - *Planning*
  - *Heritage*
  - *Parks & Recreation*
  - *The BIA*
  - *Brantford Transit*
5. *Establish a capital budget*
6. *Prioritize areas (geographic or by furniture type) that require priority attention. Types of furniture could include benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, tourist signage, street signs, bike parking, newspaper boxes, information posts, etc.*
7. *Identify palate of design preferences and design inspirations.*
8. *Establish financial arrangements agreeable for the City (typically tied to advertising revenue and maintenance costs)*
9. *Prepare a Request for Proposal to be issued externally that highlights budget, priorities and design preferences*
10. *Collect and evaluate bids based on:*
  - *Design excellence*
  - *Technical: Maintenance & Functionality*
  - *Financials: Contractual obligations*
  - *Track record*

# 4.3.2 Approach to Street Furniture

Street furniture refers to all outdoor equipment that is located within the street right-of-way that includes:

- signage
- bench seating
- pedestrian light standards
- waste receptacles
- planters
- tree grates and guards
- bicycle racks/rings
- bus shelters

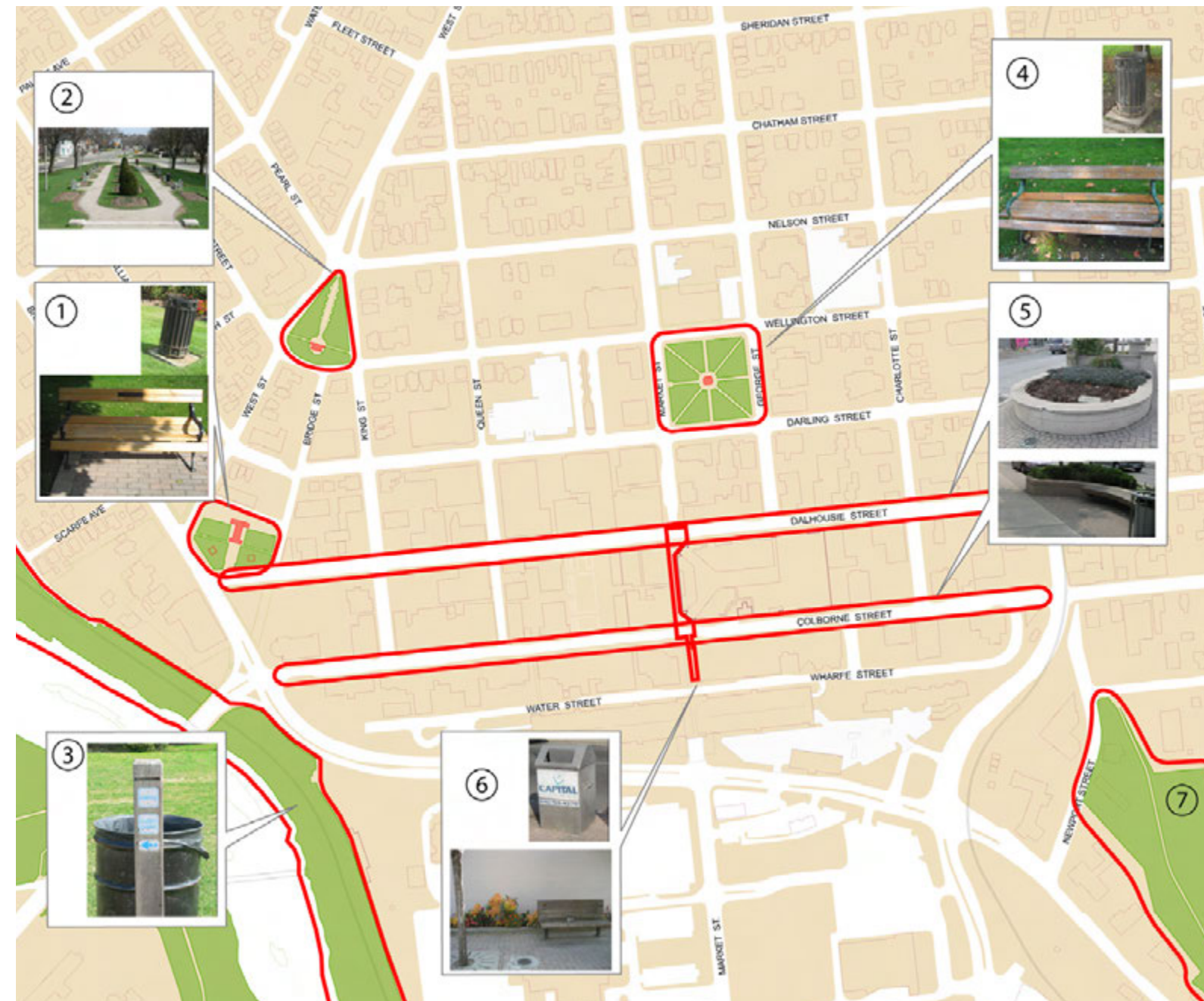
Currently, street furniture in the Downtown is in varying states of disrepair and comes in an array of styles. For example, Harmony Square is equipped with its own unique family of furnishings that are unlike anything else in the Downtown.

A consistent approach to street furniture will contribute to the formation of a “Downtown Brantford” identity. It is recommended that a palette of acceptable benches, light standards, waste receptacles, etc. be established with this in mind.

Street furniture in the Downtown should:

- make streets more pedestrian friendly, enhance public circulation and safety, and promote a positive image.
- be of a consistent style that is appropriate in a contemporary or historic setting;
- be of a high quality (attractive, durable, weather resistant, vandal proof, etc.); and
- be clustered where possible while avoiding cluttering of space.

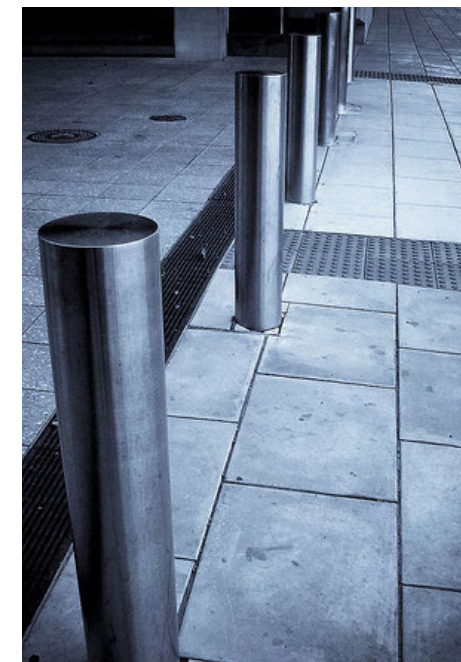
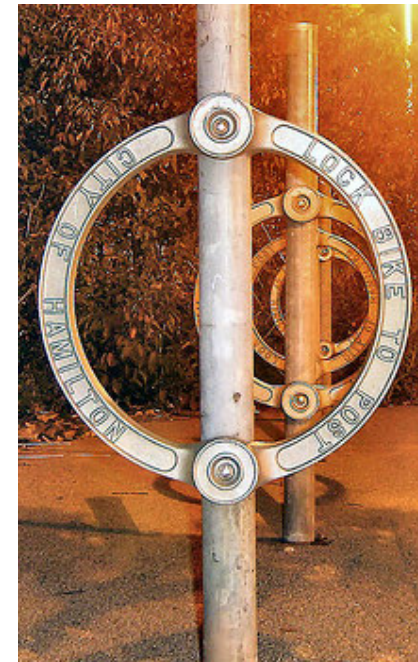
The plan to the right provides a review of the current condition of Downtown Brantford’s street furniture, highlighting where improvements should be considered.



- 1 Centograph and War Memorial:**  
FEATURES: Sculpture and Staircase  
Acts as western gateway to the downtown. Overlooks Grand River.  
FURNITURE: Good - steel/wood
- 2 Bell Memorial Park:**  
FEATURES: Sculpture and Staircase  
Acts as western gateway to the downtown.  
FURNITURE: Fair - concrete/wood
- 3 Grand River Park:**  
FEATURES: River, Skatepark, Trail.  
Provides a pedestrian/bike linkage to West Brant, Downtown and Trans-Canada Trail.  
FURNITURE: Fair - concrete/wood
- 4 Victoria Park:**  
FEATURES: Sculpture and Formal Park at the centre of the uniting the civic and university areas.  
FURNITURE: Fair condition-Steel/Wood. Wooden slats of several benches missing. Not a coherent palate of styles.
- 5 Dalhousie/Colborne:**  
FEATURES: Cultural and commercial centre of activity. Connected by Market Square pedestrian route.  
FURNITURE: Fair - Concrete/Wood. Inconsistent placement of furniture. No coherent palate of styles.
- 6 Market Street:**  
FEATURES: Plaza and outdoor seating in commercial area. Urban Corridor linking to Civic Square, Victoria Park and Parkade.  
FURNITURE: Fair - concrete/wood. No consistent palate.
- 7 Shallow Creek Park:**  
FEATURES: Playground, green space, trail and small creek  
FURNITURE: Fair - concrete/wood. Wooden slats of several benches missing.

## A Palette of Street Furniture

Shown below are various examples of signage, street maps, bicycle racks, bollards, trash receptacles, tree guards, grates and benches. All are appropriate forms of street furniture for Downtown Brantford. Care should be taken when assembling a family of furniture to ensure a harmonious appearance of style and character that is representative of the downtown environment.



## Approach to Paved Surfaces

Paving between building facades and the street edge should be treated simply and cleanly. Materials selected should be comfortable to walk on and also easily repaired after occasional work on sub-surface utilities has occurred. It is recommended that poured in place concrete comprise the majority of the walking surface. This can be augmented with a textured paved band along the less travelled portions of the sidewalk. Granite, clay brick or concrete unit paving are all possible candidates. Durability, longevity, attractiveness and cost will factor into the preference of one over another. The impact of freeze/thaw cycles should also play a role in material selection.



Example of brick paving band augmenting concrete walking surface.

## 4.3.3

### Approach to Signage

At present, there is very little signage that distinguishes Downtown Brantford from the rest of the city, nor is there any significant signage that directs drivers from Highway 403 to the Downtown.

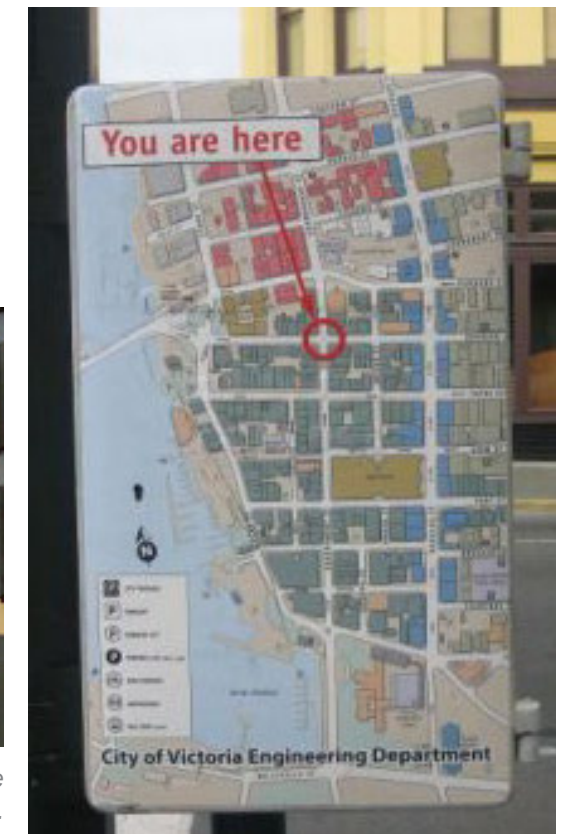
This highlights the need for an improved approach to wayfinding, particularly for visitors who may not be familiar with the city or the Downtown. The look of and approach to wayfinding should be coordinated and include parking signage, gateways signs and other destination signs.

In general, urban wayfinding signs must:

- be attractive;
- be highly graphic with information clearly and simply conveyed;
- be located at key gateway/arrival points to the downtown as well as in primary civic areas;
- direct to smaller destinations;
- be part of an overall downtown identity;
- provide direction over very small distances at lower speeds;
- not compete with street, regulatory and storefront signs for the attention of the motorist/pedestrian; and
- be planned and designed with a consistent set of standards.



Clear creative signage can contribute to the Downtown experience.



# 4.3.4 Approach to Planting & Trees

Additional landscaping and street tree planting is required along many of Brantford’s downtown streets, particularly Dalhousie and Colborne Streets, Market Street and George Street. It should be the goal of the municipality to reintroduce greenery into the heart of the City.

Tree planting along streets should use indigenous species that are adaptable to varying street and climate conditions. Provisions shall be made to ensure sufficient space for viable street tree growth by coordinating the location of street trees, utilities, site furniture and street lighting, and use best practices when designing and constructing tree wells and trenches.

Tree planting should be focused on those places where in-ground street trees have the best chance of becoming fully developed. Ideally, planting should be balanced on both sides of the street. If this is not possible, planting should then be most extensive along the north side of east-west downtown streets where they will benefit from additional sunlight.

The table below identifies how many and in what location new street trees should be planted in Downtown Brantford.

Street Name	# of trees street could accomodate
Dalhousie (north side)	53
Dalhousie (south side)	71
Colborne (north side)	57
Colborne (south side)	66
Bridge Street	38
Market Street (north of Colborne, both sides)	45
George Street (both sides)	45

Tree calculations assume a spacing distance of 8.0 metres with a 15.0 metre distance at corners.

Street trees should be provided generous planting beds and adequate protection to enable their successful growth to maturity.





## 4.3.5

# Approach to Lighting

Two studies on street lighting have been conducted for Brantford since 2005. The first covered a small area bounded by Brant Avenue, Clarence Street, Dalhousie Street and Darling Street. The second study, completed by McCormick Rankin Corporation (MRC) in September 2006, encompassed a larger area essentially the same as the study area defined in this report. The objectives of the second study included analysing the illumination levels on all streets, parking lots and public alleyways and walkways, as well as recommend improvements. The studies resulted in the upgrading of lighting in many downtown locations.

However, regardless of these enhancements, less than half of the streets in the downtown area meet or exceed the minimum light requirements set by Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) although Colborne Street, most of Dalhousie Street and Clarence Street do.

In the 2006 study, 3 options for future lighting standards were presented:

- Provide Minimum Maintained Average Illuminance equal to 25 LUX (to match the levels achieved on Colborne Street) for all streets within the study area
- Classify all streets as major with high pedestrian conflict and thereby maintain a minimum of 17 LUX; and,
- Classify some of the streets as major with high pedestrian conflict and classify the remaining streets as collectors with medium pedestrian conflict and thereby maintain 9 LUX as per IES recommendations.

The latest study also identified four parking lots requiring illumination improvements, including all three municipal lots (#1, #3, #4) and the City Hall parking lot. Although the lot at City Hall has now been upgraded, the following remains to be addressed:

- Lighting standards in three municipal lots
- two laneways require improvements including the an east-west laneway located south of Municipal Lot #4 which has inadequate lighting and a northsouth laneway between Darling Street and Dalhousie Street, south of Municipal Lot #3, which has no lighting.
- The walkway running south from Market Street past Market Square has inadequate lighting.

Lighting should also extend to include the illumination of building facades. Encouragement of this, particularly along Dalhousie and Colborne Streets, Harmony Square and Victoria Park, will contribute to the nighttime ambiance as well as improve the visual interest of the downtown. In addition, laneways that will play a greater role in pedestrian movement should have improved lighting thereby adding to their safety and sense of security.

*Encourage a lighting strategy that includes building illumination as well as street animation through seasonal displays.*



## 4.3.6

# Approach to Public Art

Public art is a crucial aspect of any city's planning and infrastructure. In many cities around the world, the arts have been employed to reinvigorate community cores and main streets with vitality and civic pride.

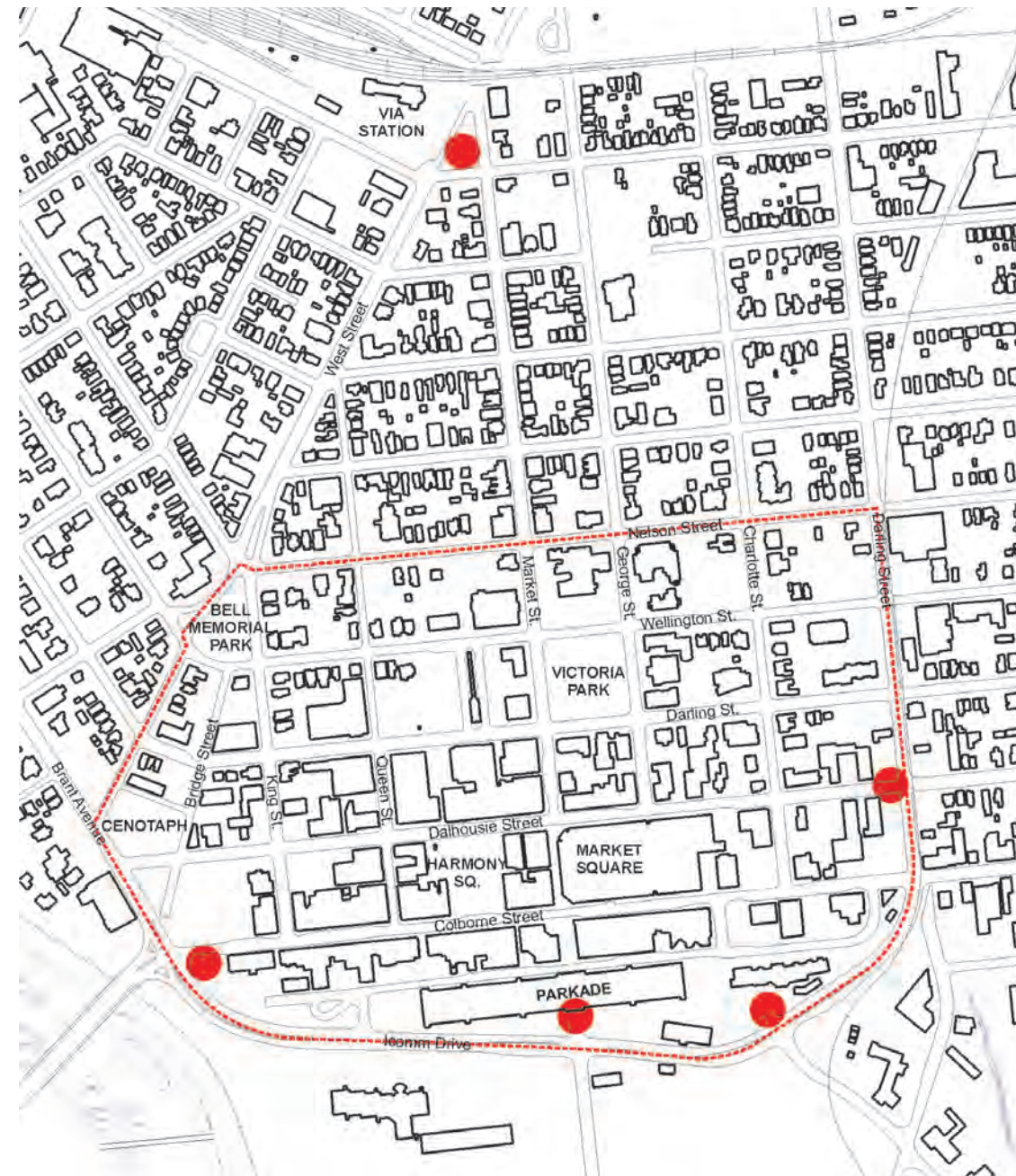
The best public art creates a unique place, a destination, a focal point for activity, a meeting place and a landmark and can be found in the form of:

- sculptures
- monuments
- murals
- fountains
- lighting schemes
- specialized landscaping and streetscaping
- amenities such as seating, lights and signage
- architectural elements

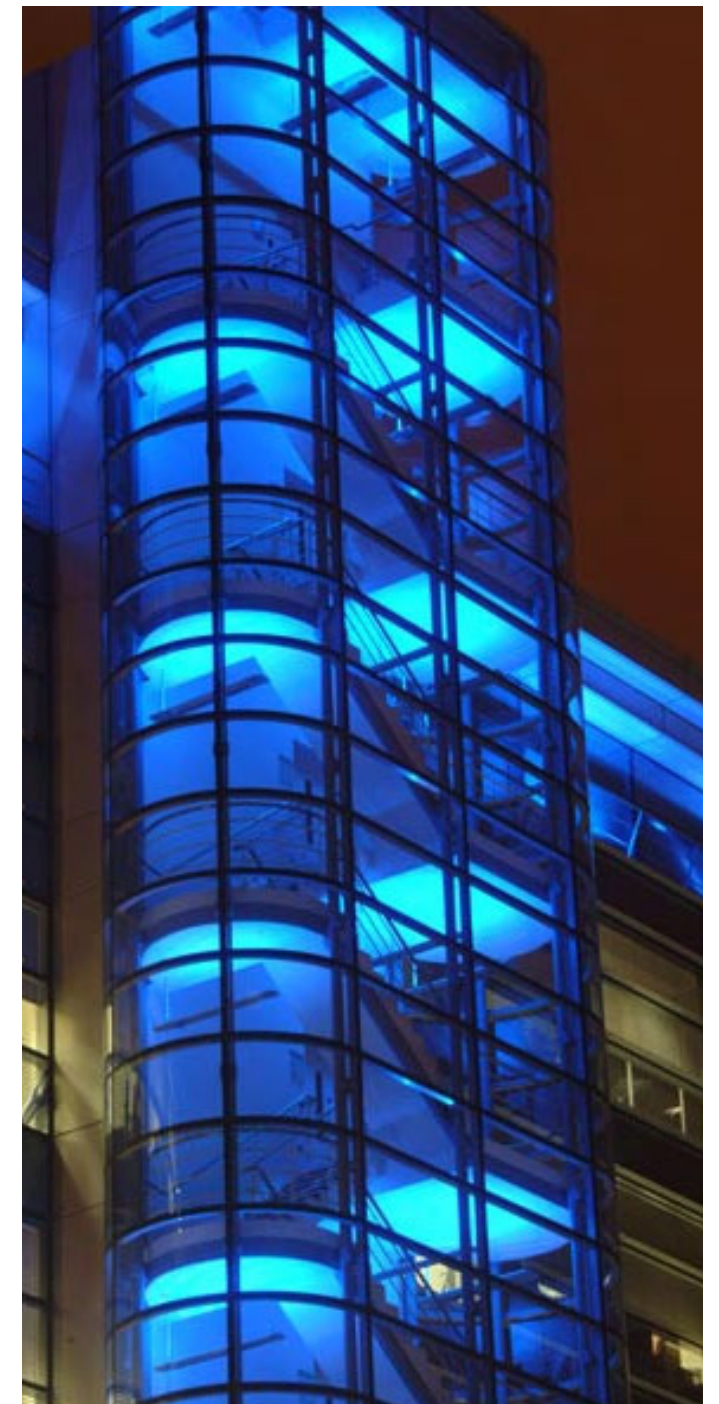
Public art can play an interpretive or commemorative role. It can help identify a city by use of historic monuments. When done well, art automatically becomes an identifiable point in the urban environment, contributing to the creation of a stronger sense of place. This form of art can educate the public about these historically important events. The urban environment can become personalized with art by demonstrating a particular style, activity, or culture.

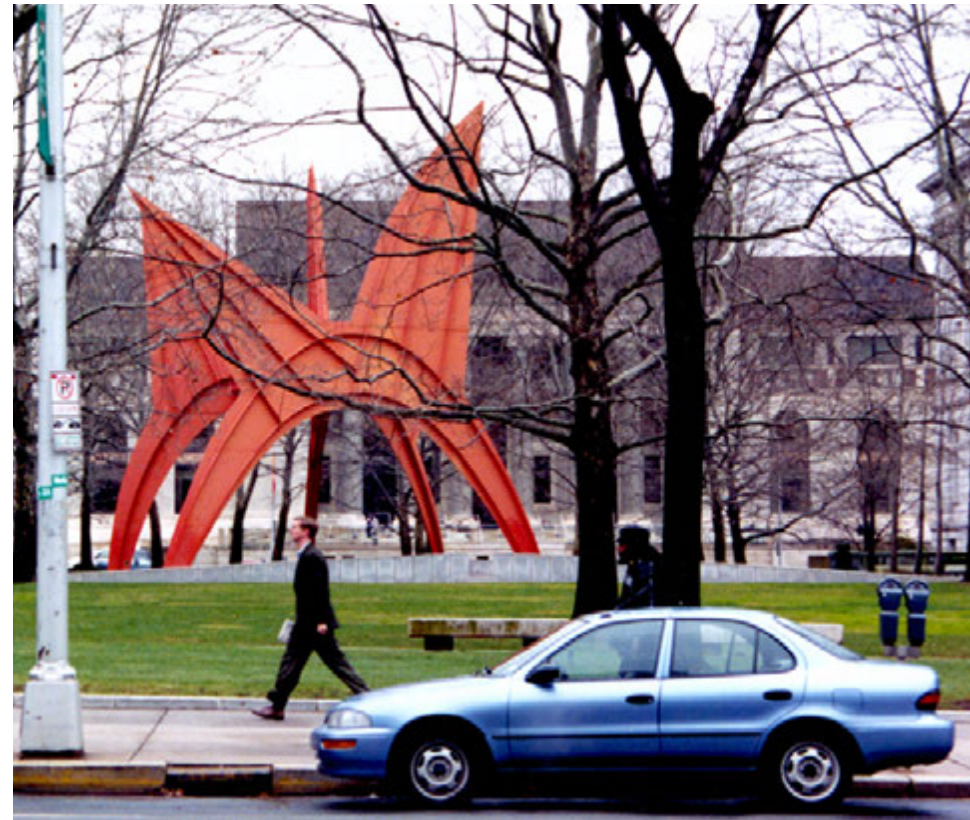
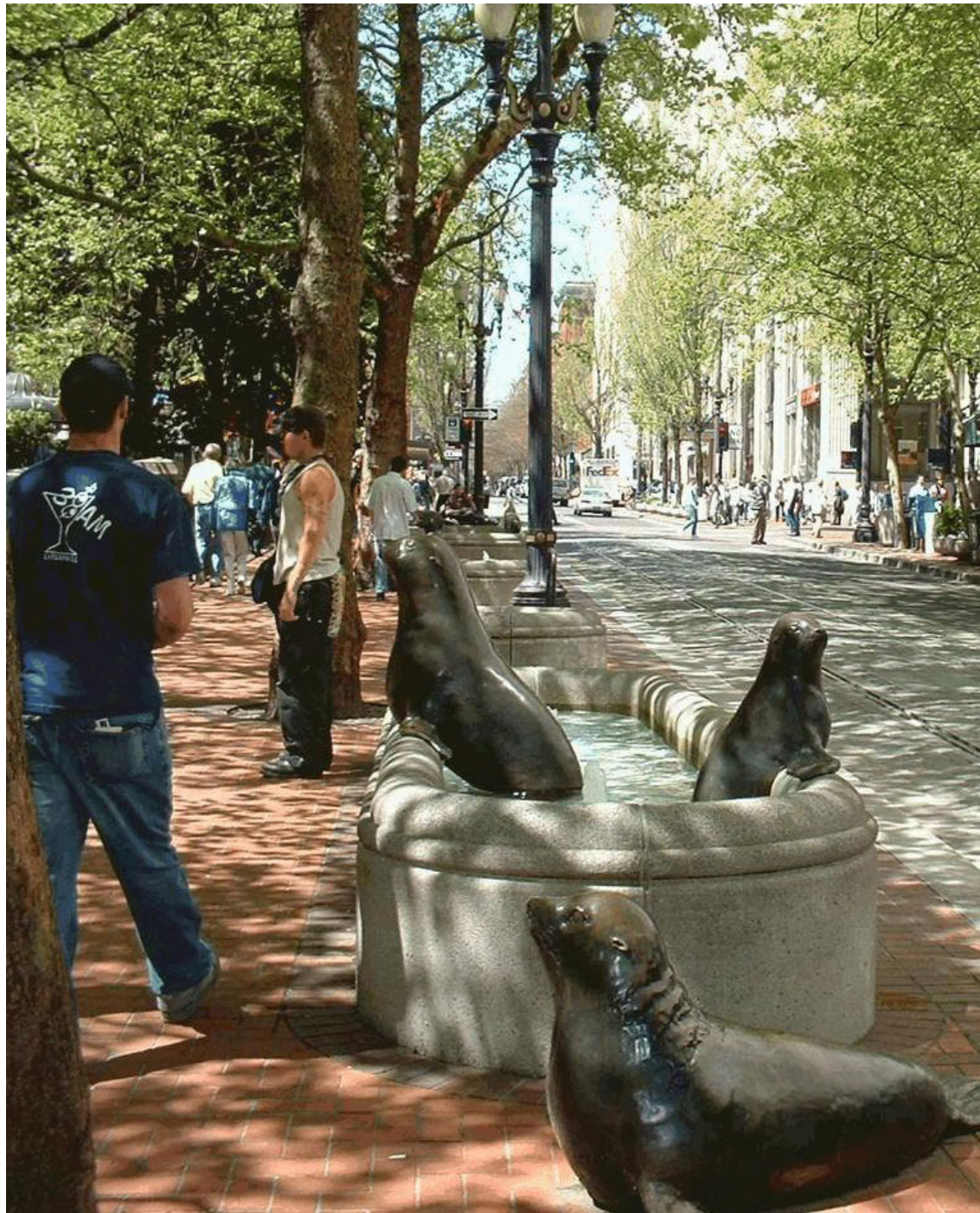
To bring more art into the Downtown, the Master Plan recommends the development and implementation of a comprehensive municipal Public Art Policy and related levy that includes the integration of permanent, site-specific works of art into downtown municipal buildings, natural places, public spaces and structures. It expands efforts to integrate public art into all major, downtown new and redevelopment projects led by the municipality. In time, once the Downtown is more stable, a Public Art Levy should be applicable to all new developments (both public and private).

The City should work with the Brantford Cultural Network, the BIA, DAC, Tourism Brantford, independent artists and other partners to develop a Public Art Locational Plan for Downtown Brantford. A preliminary plan is presented to the right.



Recommended Public Art Installations





Public art should operate at various scales.



*Paving design can be used to enhance the visual experience within the public realm and also delineate special areas and functions within the downtown.*

## 4.4 MOVEMENT & PARKING

### Summary Recommendations:

- *Pursue two-way conversions of Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street. Included in this is public realm improvements along both streets.*
- *Expand capacity of existing Bus Station. New development opportunities could be integrated with station expansion and re-build.*
- *Introduce a new structured parking lot as part of the Bus Terminal redevelopment opportunity.*
- *Create additional pedestrian and cycle routes through the Downtown, to the river, and along Icomm Drive. Improve the pedestrian links to the Parkade. A series of new and/or improved crosswalks at key intersections is required along Clarence, Market, George, Dalhousie and Colborne streets.*
- *Provide bike parking throughout the Downtown to promote alternative travel options.*
- *Prohibit surface parking lots from fronting directly onto Colborne, Dalhousie or Market streets.*
- *Introduce paid on-street parking throughout the Downtown. Re-invest parking revenues in Downtown improvements.*
- *Adjust zoning by-law to ensure that developers share the burden of providing parking.*
- *Integrate recommendations of the Transport Masterplan.*

## 4.4 Introduction

The success of the downtown will be defined by how people move through its streets by foot, bicycle, bus and car. Street hierarchy, circulation, transit connections, availability and cost of parking, walkways and pathways, streetscaping and lighting all help to shape the experiences of downtown employees, shoppers, residents, students and tourists.

This chapter provides a framework and rationale for the proposed changes to the transportation and parking systems in the downtown. Elements considered include:

- Street Hierarchy
- Circulation
- Paths and Linkages
- Public Transit
- Parking Strategy
- Servicing and Staging

### 4.4.1 Street Hierarchy

A paradigm shift needs to be made from an area currently dominated by vehicular traffic to one that can also support a pleasant pedestrian and cycle environment. The Downtown must be able to accommodate a workable balance between vehicular traffic, public transport, cyclists and pedestrians. This can be achieved through the establishment of a stronger hierarchy of streets and the addition of new pedestrian connections to and through the Downtown.

Delineating a clear street hierarchy helps to avoid conflicts between pedestrians and motorists by directing ‘through’ traffic away from key activity generators, and facilitating access to parking for destination-based traffic. A strong hierarchy is also important for maintaining traffic flow, thus providing easy access to downtown amenities.

The City-wide Transportation Master Plan and Official Plan provide direction on street hierarchy by assigning a classification to each downtown street. This plan generally maintains the existing routes and their classification present in the Downtown, but assigns a clearer role/character to each of the key streets as follows:

*Minor Arterial/Major Arterial - Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street:* Within the downtown core, the primary function of Colborne and Dalhousie streets will be to provide access to local businesses. Accommodating through traffic is a secondary concern.

Pedestrians will be accommodated in wider sidewalks and cyclists will benefit from two-way traffic and slower traffic speeds. East of Clarence, Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street will provide for the mobility of through traffic, people and goods; connect major activity centres and neighbourhoods within the study area; and connect to points outside the area.

*Minor Collector - Darling Street/Wellington Street:* The role of Darling Street and Wellington Street will increase with the redevelopment of the transit terminal and parking lot. Amenities such as street furniture and on-street bicycle parking will serve to continue the theme of transportation integration.

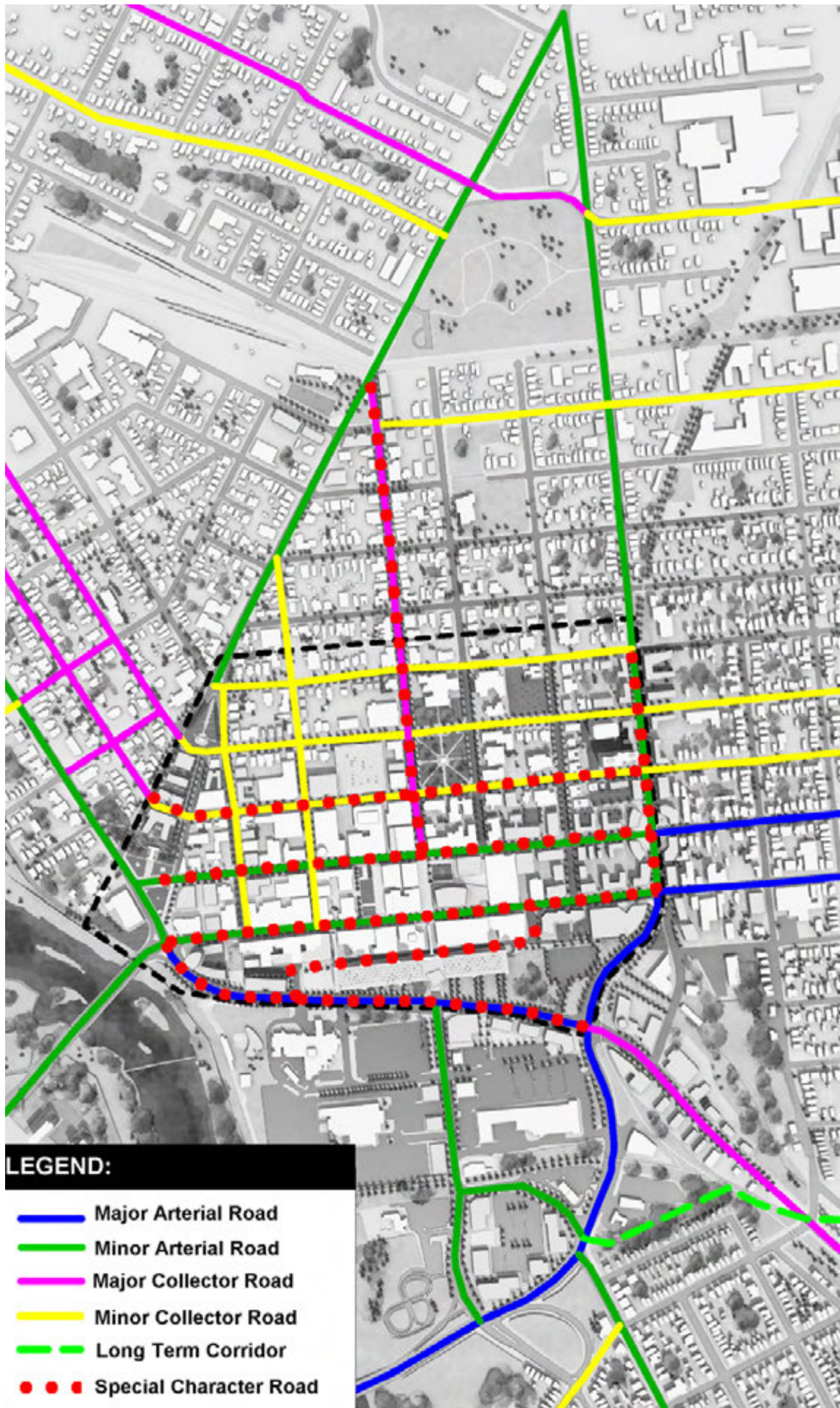
*Major Collector - Market Street:* Market Street is the most prominent north-south street in the core. As with Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street, its function is to provide access and circulation within the Downtown and between the core and the VIA station. Accommodating traffic is a secondary concern.

*Icomm Drive (Major Arterial):* With the conversion of Colborne and Dalhousie Streets to two-way, Icomm Drive will be required to handle higher traffic volumes. In conjunction with this role, Icomm Drive can be gradually redesigned to create a “complete street”, which provides for all modes including bicycles.

*Minor Arterial - Clarence Street:* Clarence Street is a minor north-south arterial and delineates the transition into the downtown. In the longer term, should the adjacent railway tracks become redundant; there is an opportunity to transform Clarence into a multi-modal corridor, including an off-street bikeway. Clarence Street will remain an important connector for local traffic and goods movements.

*Local Street - Wharfe Street/Water Street:* This street is a local street and currently provides servicing access for the library and businesses along south Colborne Street, as well as access to the parking garage. This role will be continued and expanded as the redevelopment of the western end of Colborne Street occurs. In addition to servicing access, Wharfe Street can serve multiple functions, including accommodating pedestrian oriented activities in a shared street arrangement.

All other streets should be considered as local streets.



# 4.4.2 Circulation

Most streets within Downtown Brantford are operating well below their capacity. In particular, Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street are currently designed to maximize traffic throughout, given their one-way configuration. However, this extra vehicle capacity is no longer required due to the completion of Highway 403. The eventual completion of the Brantford Southern Access Road will further reduce traffic volumes on Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street. The under-utilization of these streets combined with their one-way traffic configuration encourages speeding, which in turn limits the potential for the Downtown to become a successful pedestrian-oriented destination.

The Downtown Master Plan provides the opportunity to re-consider the function of each of the major Downtown Streets, with a view to ensuring a more equitable balance of capacity between different modes. In the case of Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street, converting these streets back to two-way operation will help to slow traffic, improve wayfinding and increase exposure for businesses (due to two-way traffic flow), as outlined in the table below.

A considerable amount of work has already been completed on the impacts of converting Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street to two-way traffic. Most recently, the issue was examined extensively as part of the City’s Transportation Master Plan. The Transportation Master Plan examined three potential conversion scenarios

- Full conversion of the existing one-way street system
- Partial conversion from Brant Avenue or King Street to Clarence Street only
- Partial conversion from Brant Avenue or King Street to Murray Street only

### Two-way Conversion

The general conclusion of the TMP was that the full conversion was preferable as a long term objective, but that a partial conversion could be considered as an interim phase.

Since the completion of the TMP, preliminary concept plans for the two-way conversion have been developed. It is noteworthy that the two-way conversion can take place with almost no losses to parking in the Downtown area. In fact, it was determined that extra parking spaces could be provided on the south side of Dalhousie Street between Bridge Street and east of Queen Street.

The Downtown Brantford Master Plan supports the recommendation of the 2007 Transportation Master Plan Update to convert Dalhousie Street and Colborne Street to two-way traffic. It is recommended that the “Full” conversion be implemented from Brant Avenue to Stanley Street.

Two way conversion will bring the following benefits to Downtown Brantford:

- Slower traffic speeds will improve pedestrian and cycling environment
- Improved wayfinding for visitors
- More flexibility for transit routes
- Both Streets require immediate reconstruction to replace underground services, thereby reducing incremental costs of two-way conversion

Potential impacts include:

- On-street parking will be maintained
- Potential for some congestion
- Reduced opportunities for informal loading
- Additional loading zones may need to be designated
- Approximately \$1.6 million in costs (see Appendix C)

Comparison of one-way and two-way streets

Factor	One-way Streets	Two-way Streets
Traffic Movement	Signal systems can be designed to optimize traffic progression thereby increasing capacity	Less throughput capacity, but increased routing options may reduce overall travel distance required
Safety	Fewer conflicts at intersections	Increased conflict points, but generally slower traffic speeds
Air Pollution	Smoother traffic progression results in less emissions per vehicle-kilometre	Improved pedestrian environment, reduced traffic speeds, and more accessible transit may promote use of modes other than cars, thereby reducing overall emissions
Pedestrian Environment	Higher traffic speeds can be deterrent for pedestrians	Lower traffic speeds are not as intimidating for pedestrians
Cycling	High traffic speeds can deter cyclists; indirect routing may promote riding in wrong direction on one-way streets.	More direct routings minimize cycling distances
Transit	Transit users must board at different location than where they exit.	Transit users board and alight at same location; slower traffic speeds may also reduce bus speeds.
User Understanding	Can be difficult for drivers unfamiliar with street system	Universally understandable



## 4.4.3

# Paths & Linkages

Across the study area, an emphasis has been placed on creating a pleasant pedestrian environment able to support a logical pattern of pedestrian routes and linkages to and through the Downtown.

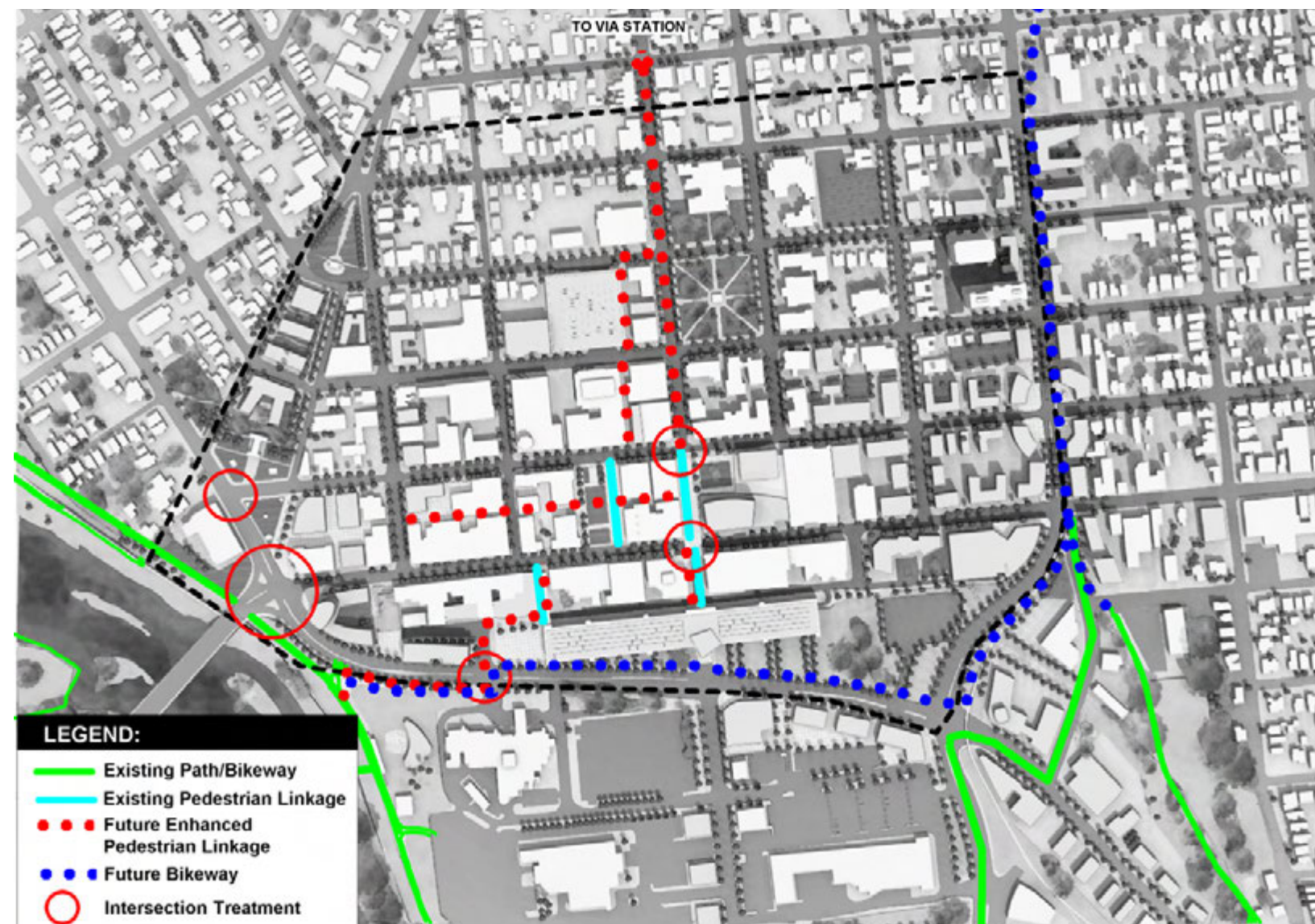
In addition, supporting and augmenting connections with Brantford's existing bicycle and pedestrian network has been a priority. This has been particularly important because it provides access to the Grand River and the Trans Canada trail system, as well as to new destinations such as Shallow Creek Park.

All new pedestrian and bicycle paths should wherever possible be stitched into existing road and pathway networks. Key non-vehicular connections presented through the Master Plan include:

- A mid-block pedestrian and cycle connection at the western end of Colborne Street connecting the Downtown to the river area;
- An improved pedestrian link through the parkade connecting Market Street north and Market Street south. This includes public realm improvements south of Colborne Street along Market Street;
- Enhanced elevated pedestrian connections linking the parkade with Colborne Street and the amenities of downtown;
- The rationalization of the Lorne Bridge/Icomm Drive/Colborne Street junction;
- In the longer term, construction of a bicycle connection under the Lorne Bridge and further westward;
- The potential removal of portions of Wharfe Street to allow for the creation of a new community park space;
- A series of new and/or improved crosswalks at key intersections along Clarence, Market, George, Dalhousie and Colborne streets; and,
- Fully accessible pedestrian crossings at all intersections.

In addition to improving physical pedestrian and cycle linkages to/from and within the Downtown, there are opportunities to further enhance the attractiveness of this mode of travel through the following:

- Amending the zoning by-law to include provisions for bicycle parking for new developments;
- Installing secure bike parking facilities (i.e. bike lockers) in City-owned parking lots and in key areas;
- Installing bike racks throughout the downtown; and,
- Providing benches and other street furniture.



## 4.4.5

# Parking Strategy

Decisions on parking affect all aspects of downtown development including land use, built form, economic development, travel behaviour and financial health. The setting of parking policy is a complex issue involving many interests and stakeholders.

In many downtowns throughout Canada, parking has been approached from a simple demand/supply problem without consideration of the many factors that influence the demand for parking or the impacts of the supply of parking. This Master Plan is based on the conviction that a balanced approach must be adopted for all facets of parking. It reflects current trends in parking management that are moving away from a “more parking is better” approach, in recognition that too much parking is as harmful as too little. However, it is also recognized that having adequate parking supply is essential to the functioning of Downtown Brantford and for attracting new investment in the Downtown.

### Off-street Parking

It is clear that additional parking supply will be required to stimulate and support growth in the downtown. The exact location and size of parking supply options is partially dependent on how the various development proposals such as the YMCA and relocated farmers market play out. However, based on the current needs and overall Vision, several locations are considered priority areas for new public parking as shown on the map opposite.

As development continues to occur in Downtown Brantford, so too will the need for off-street parking. This will include both municipal parking as well as parking to support new development. Efforts to reduce parking demand by improving transit and other modes can help off-set the need for parking expansion.

The Transportation Master Plan estimated that after taking into account travel demand management measures, up to 2200 new municipal spaces would be required in the downtown by 2031. It is estimated that a new parking facility at adjacent to the existing transit terminal could provide up to 900 spaces, assuming a 4 level structure. Additional public parking could also be provided at the foot of Wharf Street, in conjunction with the redevelopment of south Colborne Street.

In conjunction with the construction of new parking, the following supportive strategies are recommended

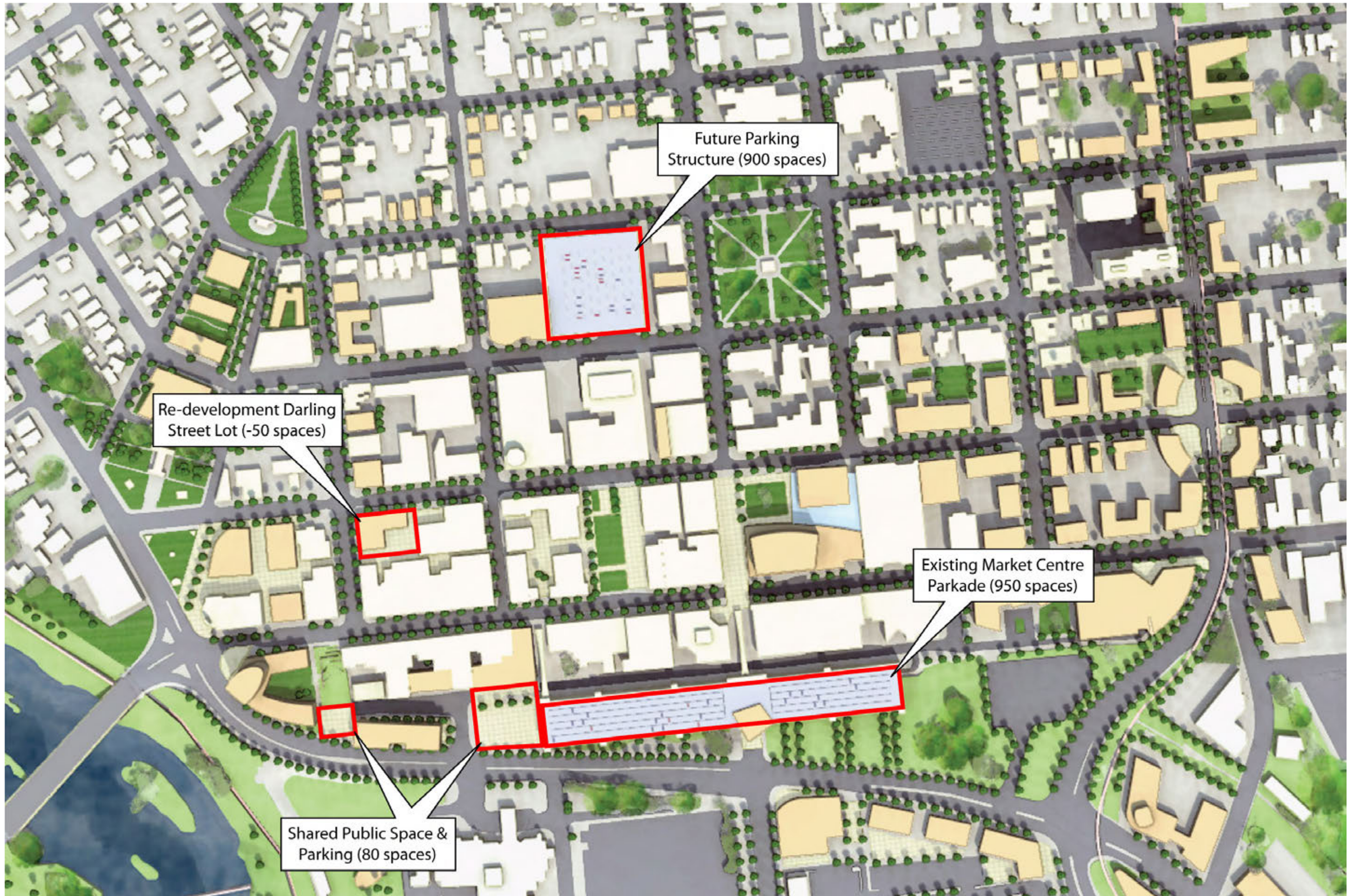
- Construction of new parking structure in central location of downtown. The construction of a new parking structure is preferred over the expansion of the existing provision through the addition of another level. A new structure in a more central location would provide a greater dispersion of parking across the Downtown as a whole. In addition, the new structure could be tied to the redevelopment of the transit terminal and/or other redevelopment opportunities.
- Implement “first hour free” in off-street lots to encourage their use and provide shoppers with option to paid on-street parking.
- Utilize “pay and display” machines for revenue collection.
- Introduce permit parking on residential streets surrounding paid parking area to prevent spill over (if required).
- All monthly (city staff) permit parking should be consolidated to the Parkade. This would free-up parking in the Darling Parking Lot to better service downtown restaurants, retail uses and other downtown businesses.
- Purchase hand held ticketing machines to reduce cost of enforcement.
- Restrict surface parking lots from fronting directly onto Colborne, Dalhousie or Market streets.
- Implement maximum parking standards to prevent over-supply of parking.
- Adjust zoning by-law to ensure that developers share the burden of providing parking.
- Once Downtown is more stable, increase cash-in-lieu payment if parking cannot be provided on site.
- Work with businesses, residents and other stakeholders to customize parking regulations.

### Tour Bus Parking

As tourism in Downtown Brantford increases, there will be a need to address parking for tour buses. At present, the main generator of tour buses is the Sanderson Centre, and in most cases buses tend to drop passengers off and park on side streets such as King Street or Queen Street during performances. This has the impact of taking up on-street parking spaces for cars.

A more preferable approach would be to provide adequate short term (or temporary) bus loading zones on the street, in combination with designated off-street parking areas for longer term parking. In the future, longer term parking could be accommodated on the first level of the proposed parking structure adjacent to the transit terminal. For the more immediate, parking could be offered in another off-street location such as the casino parking lot (subject to securing agreements), City Hall parking lot (after hours) or the Civic Centre parking lot.

Another issue related to tour busses is the loading and unloading of passengers in front of the Sanderson Centre. At present, buses often pull up in at the front door and use the northbound travel lane for drop-off. Under a two-way scenario, this option will no longer remain. A recommended alternative would be to designate a bus drop-off area adjacent to the Sanderson (for up to two buses). Presently this is not possible due to the fire hydrant in front of the Sanderson; however, the pending reconstruction of Dalhousie Street would allow for the relocation of this hydrant. Another option would be to require buses to drop-patrons off on Darling Street, and to upgrade the pedestrian connection on the east side of the Sanderson between Darling Street and Dalhousie Street. An advantage of this is that it would also provide improved pedestrian access for people parking in the Darling Street lot. It is recognized that the parcel of land beside the Sanderson is in private ownership, so further discussions would need to take place on the potential for this pedestrian connection.



### On-Street Parking

Industry accepted practices for on-street parking in Downtown areas provide guidance for Brantford:

- On-street parking should be managed as a public resource with pricing and supply management attempting to balance equity and ensure full-cost pricing.
- No employee (i.e. commuter) should receive free daily on-street parking where parking is in high demand.
- On-street parking regulations should be strictly and consistently enforced to prevent abuse and to reduce the number of tickets issued over the longer term.

Implementation of on-street parking pricing, through meters or pay-and display technologies, is essential for ensuring the efficient use of on-street parking as the Downtown develops. Many of the problems stated by businesses, residents and the public with respect to parking in the downtown could be resolved by instituting a small charge for on-street parking. One of the advantages of on-street parking is that it helps to educate parkers on how long they can park. Conversely, free parking tends to promote abuse and increase the need for enforcement, only to result in poor relations with the public.

On-street parking is an essential public resource and should be managed and priced as such. Many of the problems stated by businesses, residents and the public with respect to parking in the downtown could be resolved by instituting a small charge for on-street parking. Charging for on-street parking will help to:

- Ensure that on-street parking is not being taken up by long term parkers
- Reduce fines by improving the understanding of time limits and other restrictions
- Shift long term parkers to off-street lots, making on-street spaces available for short term business needs
- Generate revenues which can be used to improve signage, street furniture, landscaping, etc.

Recommended strategies for Downtown Brantford are as follows:

- Introduce paid on-street parking throughout the downtown core as a means of encouraging longer term parkers to use off-street facilities, thereby freeing up on-street parking spaces for businesses.
- Consider “first hour free” in off-street lots
- Introduce permit parking on residential streets (if required)
- Implement “pay and display” technologies in high demand areas
- Utilize latest technologies for enforcement, including hand-held computers to replace existing tire chalk method.
- Work with businesses, residents and other stakeholders to customize parking regulations

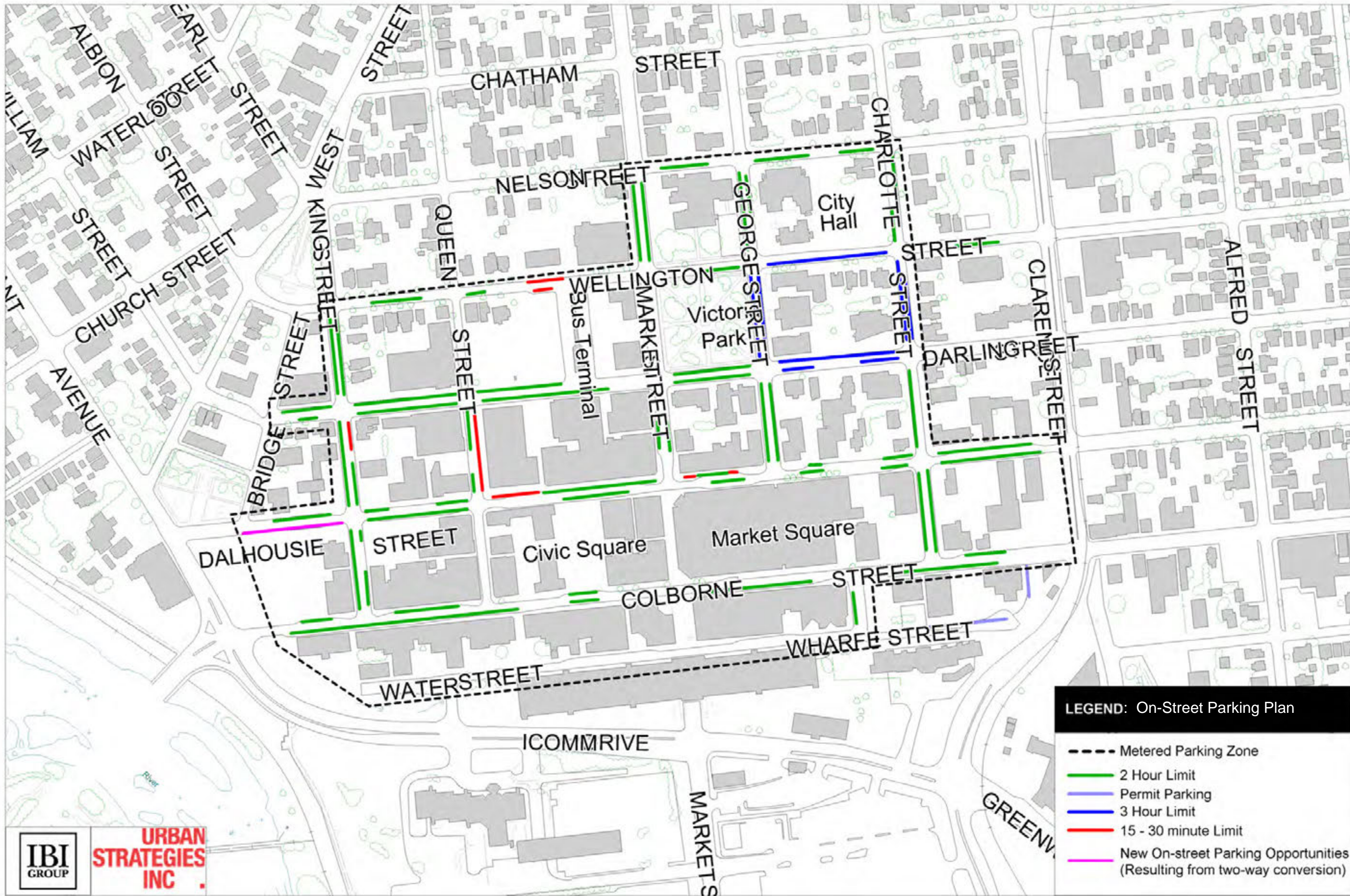
### Student Parking

The presence of three post secondary institutions has generated a need for additional public parking in the Downtown. It is expected that many students take advantage of the free on-street parking, but often park beyond the time limits.

To encourage students to park in off-street lots, a reduced student parking rate has previously been proposed. This suggestion has, however, many implications including reduced revenue to the City as well as potentially undermining the effectiveness of pending programs such as the University Student Transit Pass (U-Pass) and programs to encourage car-pooling.

In general, it is felt that improving transit services and making the Downtown more accessible and liveable is a preferable long term strategy to address student transportation needs rather than subsidizing parking rates. However, regardless of the recommendation, the ultimate solutions must involve a partnership between the City and the post-secondary institutions.





**LEGEND: On-Street Parking Plan**

- Metered Parking Zone
- 2 Hour Limit
- Permit Parking
- 3 Hour Limit
- 15 - 30 minute Limit
- New On-street Parking Opportunities (Resulting from two-way conversion)



**URBAN STRATEGIES INC.**

## 4.4.6

# Public Transit

Brantford transit ridership has increased by more than 33% in the last decade. With the designation of Brantford as an Urban Growth Centre under the Provincial Growth Plan, the importance of transit is even greater. Downtown Brantford is the focal point for local and regional transit services. Although service restructuring may change which routes go downtown, it is safe to say that the downtown terminal will remain the primary hub for Brantford's transit services.

The Brantford VIA Station, located at the top of Market Street, is also an important and growing transportation node. It can be anticipated that VIA Rail service will improve over the next few years and that over time, commuter rail and/or bus services will be introduced by GO Transit.

Key recommendations of this master plan are therefore to:

- Improving pedestrian connections to the VIA terminal, via Market Street;
- Ensuring public parking rates are not sufficiently low so as to discourage transit use;
- Incorporating streetscaping to provide sufficient space for transit stops and other pedestrian-oriented amenities;
- Providing bike racks on transit buses to further enhance intermodal integration.

Expanding the transit terminal is seen as a key project to revitalize the downtown. As discussed in the next section, this expansion can be integrated with the construction of a new public parking garage on the adjacent Darling Street parking lot. Provided that the parking lot is designed to minimize impacts on the pedestrian environment, the added number of people generated by the garage will help to increase pedestrian activity in this area and improve overall perceived transit safety and security.

Brantford Transit is in the preliminary stages of examining the costs and feasibility of constructing a new terminal and expenditures on the terminal are eligible for gas tax funding.



## 4.4.7

# Servicing & Staging



The majority of infrastructure beneath Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street is 80-100 years old and requires immediate replacement. Additionally, portions of the pavement structure of these two streets is also in critical need of repair. In fact, \$100,000 has been budgeted for immediate repairs, to address safety concerns.

Utilities should be clustered or grouped where possible to minimize visual impact. The City should continue to encourage utility providers to consider innovative methods of containing utility services on, or within streetscape features such as gateways, lamp posts, transit shelters, etc., when determining appropriate locations for large utility equipment and utility cluster sites.

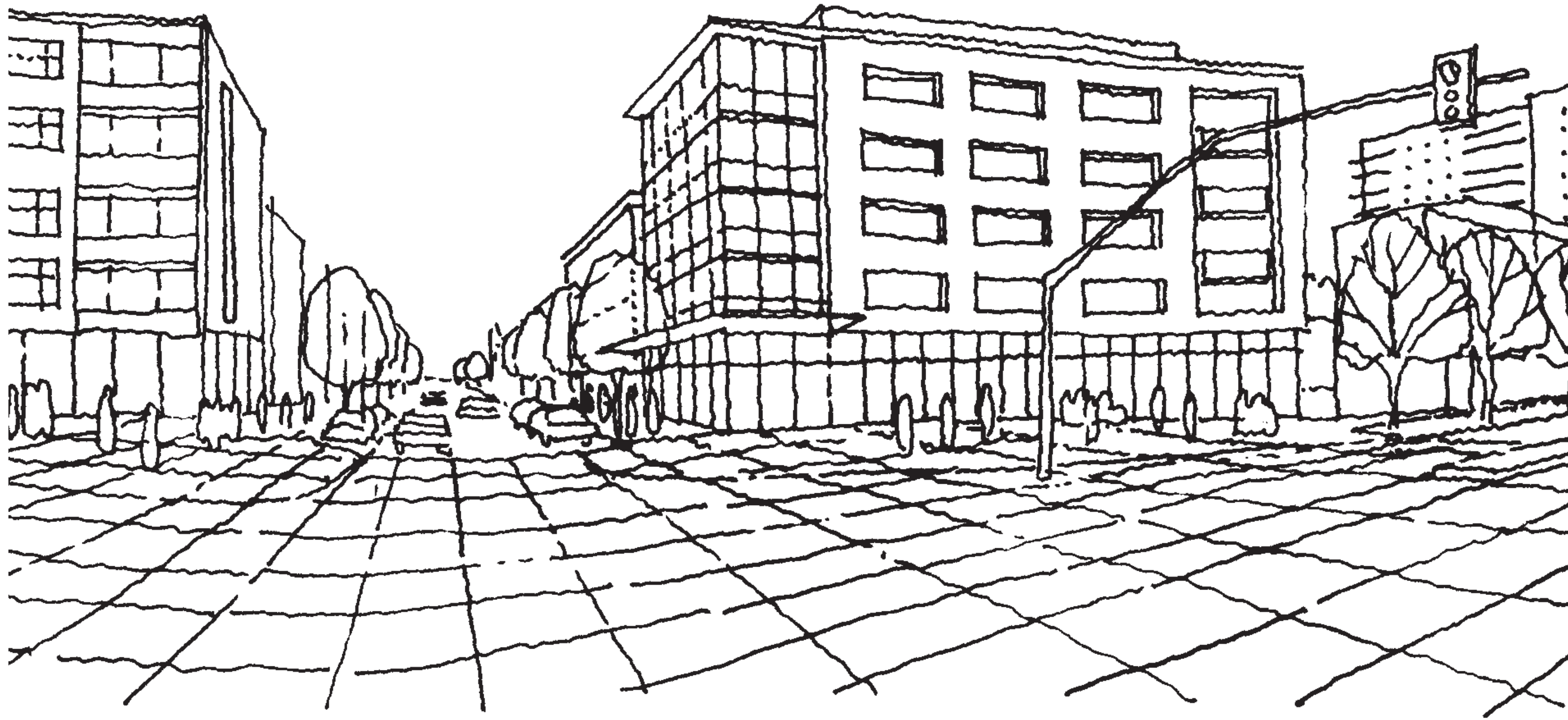
Brantford engineering has identified the need to fully reconstruct Colborne and Dalhousie Street from Brant Avenue to Clarence Street, and carry out major upgrades to the sections from Clarence Street to Stanley Street. Within the Downtown, all utilities require replacement including water, sewer, hydro, gas and telephone. Accordingly, the reconstruction would occur from block-face to block-face.

It should be noted that the part of Dalhousie Street has already benefitted from a reconstruction of its service utilities.

Following the completion of the Downtown Master Plan and confirmation of the recommendation to implement two-way traffic on Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street, the City will proceed to undertake required environmental assessment, preliminary design and detailed design activities. The basic timing of these activities would be as follows:

- Spring 2008 – Fall 2008: Undertake Phase 3/4 Environmental Assessment Study
- Fall 2008- Fall 2009: Complete Detailed Design & Tender Documents
- Spring 2010: Start Construction

The phasing of construction will be influenced in part by the pace of development activities in the downtown core. There may be advantages to completing the sections east of Clarence Street before the downtown core sections if, in 2010, there are a lot of sites under construction in the core. The staging plan will need to be designed to minimize business disruptions. The most efficient approach for reconstruction would be to close portions of each street fully. This means that the parallel street would need to be converted to two-way traffic during the re-construction of the other street.



Corner of Clarence & Dalhousie





## 5.0 GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

# 5.1

## Introduction

There are a number of overarching guidelines that can be applied consistently across the Downtown. These offer a general approach to design issues and are therefore flexible in interpretation. However, the intent of these guidelines is to provide an approach to city building, an approach that is grounded in sound design and, when applied, will result in a high quality built environment.

The guidelines presented here are categorized as follows:

- Ground Floor and Public Realm
- Infill Development
- Parking

The emphasis in this section is to develop a general approach to improving the character of Downtown Brantford. This will involve cosmetic changes to existing building facades as well as sensitive design of new infill buildings. The overriding objective is to enhance what is already good about the Downtown environment and ensure new development will not detract from this. In this way the downtown can grow to realize its full potential without sacrificing its character charm.

Where specific interventions are recommended the section that follows will provide specific guidelines for development. The guidelines presented here will also pertain to those projects.



*Creating a richly articulated public realm.*

## The Value of Good Design

Glancing at historical images of Brantford, one cannot but be moved by the beauty of the Downtown at the turn of the previous century. What is apparent is the civic pride that manifested itself through the city's buildings, parks and monuments. Today, while there are clear gaps in the historic fabric, much of that heritage remains intact if occasionally obscured by add-ons or tacked on veneers.

The challenge for Brantford today is to measure up to its previous legacy. The best way to achieve this is through thoughtful, quality design. Good design will enhance the pedestrian experience along the street and establish a high quality environment for visitors and users of the Downtown. It will evoke civic pride, interest from outside the community which will, in turn, attract media attention and further increase interest (and visitation) from beyond.

In short, good design advertises itself and sends a clear message to those living outside of Downtown: Brantfordians care about their city centre.

While this in the short term is important, in the long term good design lowers maintenance and replacement costs and is thus financially beneficial. Well designed buildings and spaces reduce vandalism, encourage usership throughout a longer period of the day and extend the lifetime of a building or place.

Brantford has a strong foundation of quality buildings and open spaces. The completion of Harmony Square signals a continuation of this commitment to quality. It is the expectation of this report that new projects as presented in the following section will extend the principle of good design thus complementing Downtown Brantford's existing unique heritage.

*Build upon Brantford's existing heritage and excellence in civic design.*



## Creating a Positive Experience on the Ground

The way buildings relate to the ground and how the public and private realms meet is integral to one’s perception of how well a street works. On commercial streets, buildings should promote interaction between the pedestrian and interior spaces of the building, whereas in more residential conditions buildings should attempt to provide for greater privacy and a buffer from the public realm. The integration of parking and servicing is an important part of this mix and can have an impact on the contribution a building makes to its environment.



*Changing past practices: existing ground condition with poor street relationship. Downtown Brantford.*



*Promoting better design: how the treatment of residential ground floor units can positively support the street, Vancouver.*

- **Why is this Important?**

How buildings relate to the street has a significant impact on both pedestrian safety and comfort.

A good street relationship helps to clearly distinguish those areas that are public and those that are private, creating greater certainty about what may or may not be appropriate activities, and about where pedestrians should not just be supported but encouraged. Buildings that are transparent and open at ground level promote safety by increasing both the level of activity and by placing “eyes on the street”.

On commercial streets this sense of comfort can be accomplished by creating smooth and transparent connections between the public sidewalk and interior spaces. On residential streets the same can be accomplished through the provision of direct entrances into units and small garden spaces that also provide private amenity spaces.

For larger structures, a street relationship that supports podiums and appropriate setbacks can help to reduce the sense of scale and mitigate against the impact of height in larger developments.

Consolidated and concealed parking strategies help to reduce pedestrian-vehicular conflict and create greater opportunities for activity and pedestrian-building interaction along the street.



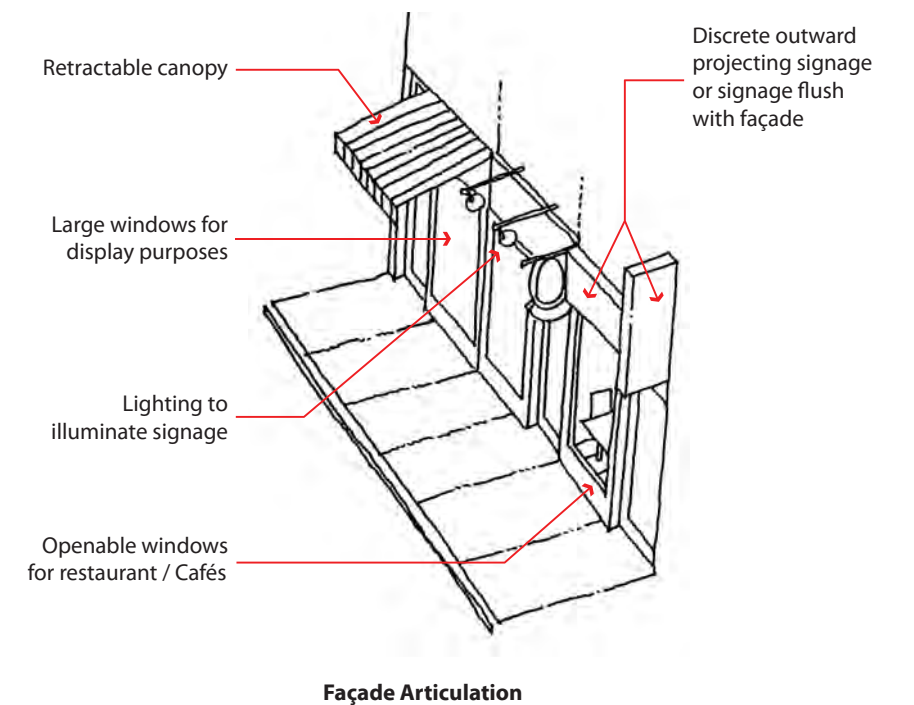
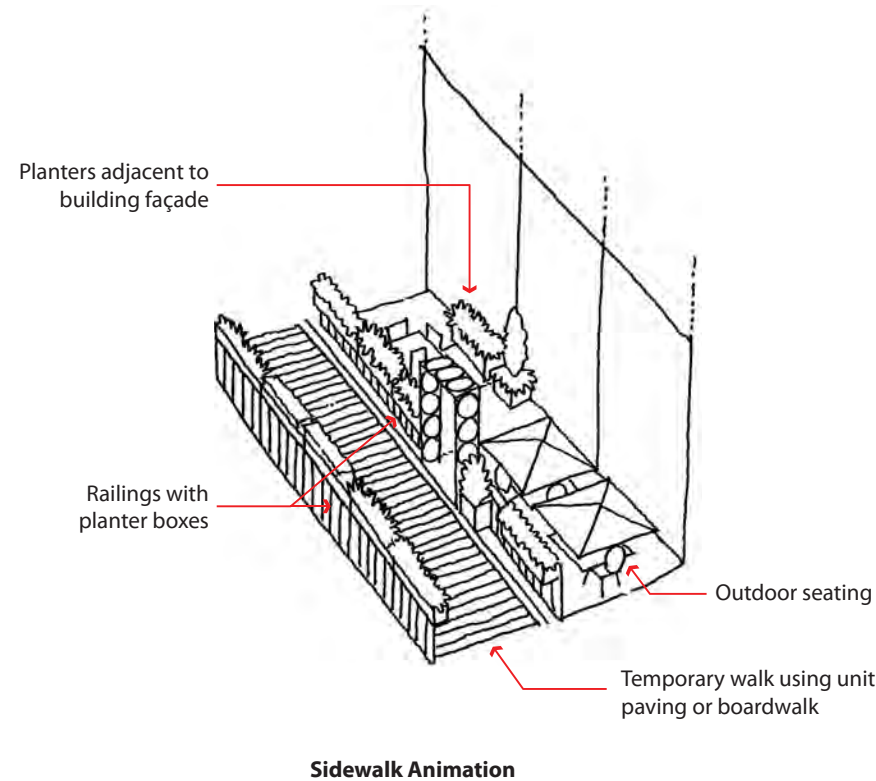
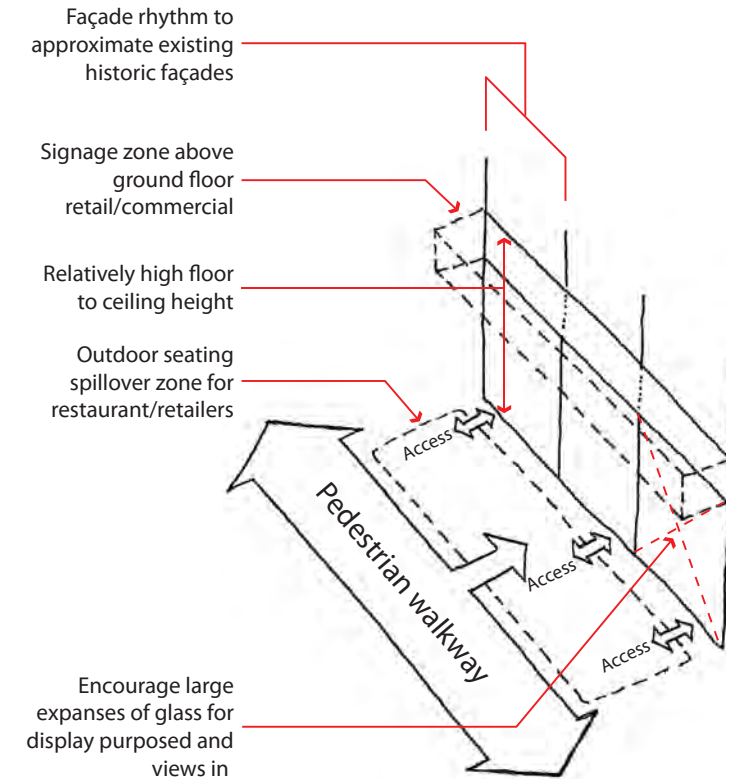
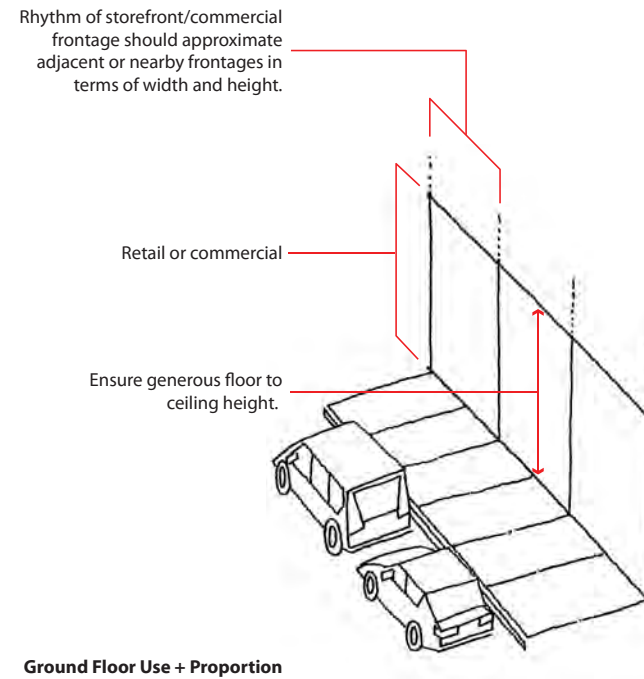
*How a commercial ground floor can contribute to animated street life.*

# 5.2 Creating a Main Street Experience

Through the addition of street trees and new furniture, combined with facade improvements for both older and younger buildings, the character of Downtown Brantford can be transformed from a vehicle dominant environment to a pedestrian friendly district with sidewalk activity and bustle. Engaging with individual shop owners to invest in improving the appearance of the ground floor facade will be necessary.

The following guidelines apply to how a building should relate to the context:

- Where possible, buildings should be setback from the property line to allow for streetscaping, planting and a generous sidewalk width. Downtown commercial area sidewalks should be suited for the expansion of outdoor seating and temporary inclusion of plants and furniture.
- Building Entry should be oriented to the street frontage. Entries should be at regular intervals in accordance with the established street pattern.
- Building lobbies for residential and commercial developments should be accessed from the most prominent street fronting the building.
- Buildings should create animated frontages through the use of windows, raised terraces/balconies, lighting, canopies, awnings, illuminated signage, public art and easily identifiable entrance ways.
- In areas identified for commercial uses at grade, floor-to-floor heights should be adequate to accommodate retail and commercial uses.
- New and renovated buildings should maintain the established pattern of facade division existing along the street by aligning with the horizontal elements of neighbouring buildings.
- Buildings should include a cornice that aligns with neighboring buildings. In addition, facade materials and colours should consider the existing context buildings and remain close to the existing palate.
- Hard landscaping treatments that extend public sidewalks are encouraged along commercial frontages.
- No surface parking lots should be allowed to front directly onto Main Streets.





*Generous sidewalks allow for tree planting, quality paving and transitional zones between the public and private commercial realms.*

# 5.3 Approach to Infill Development

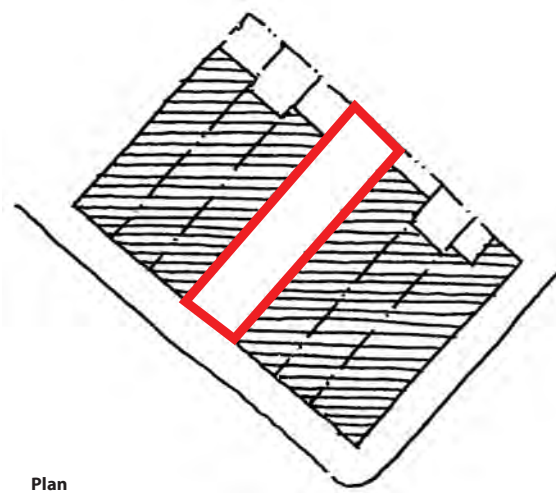
As Downtown Brantford contains numerous heritage structures which contribute to its identity, new development should be respectful and make every attempt to assimilate thereby strengthening the overall effect. This does not preclude a contemporary approach to its architecture; it merely suggests the scale of development and articulation of its facade be in keeping with its neighbours.

Additional height is possible but will be set back from the main building face. The exception to this is an end-block condition where additional height is to be permitted so far as the architecture is of exceptional quality and not distracting in its character.

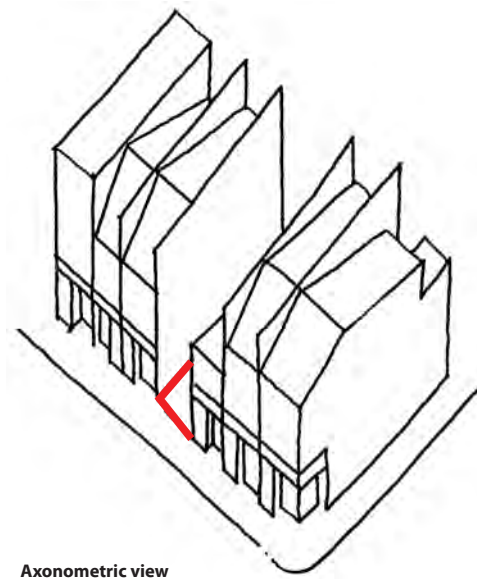
## Infill Development

- *New infill buildings should conform to the design principles established by surrounding context buildings and should illustrate the best qualities and character of the area.*
- *New buildings should adhere to the height recommendations established by city guidelines which may vary by location.*
- *Buildings should include a cornice that aligns with neighboring buildings. In addition, facade materials and colours should consider the existing context buildings and remain close to the existing palate.*
- *The height of the primary facade should be in scale with the surrounding character. An additional 2 floors are permitted if there is a step-back from the primary facade.*
- *At the ground level, a 'zero' setback is permitted.*

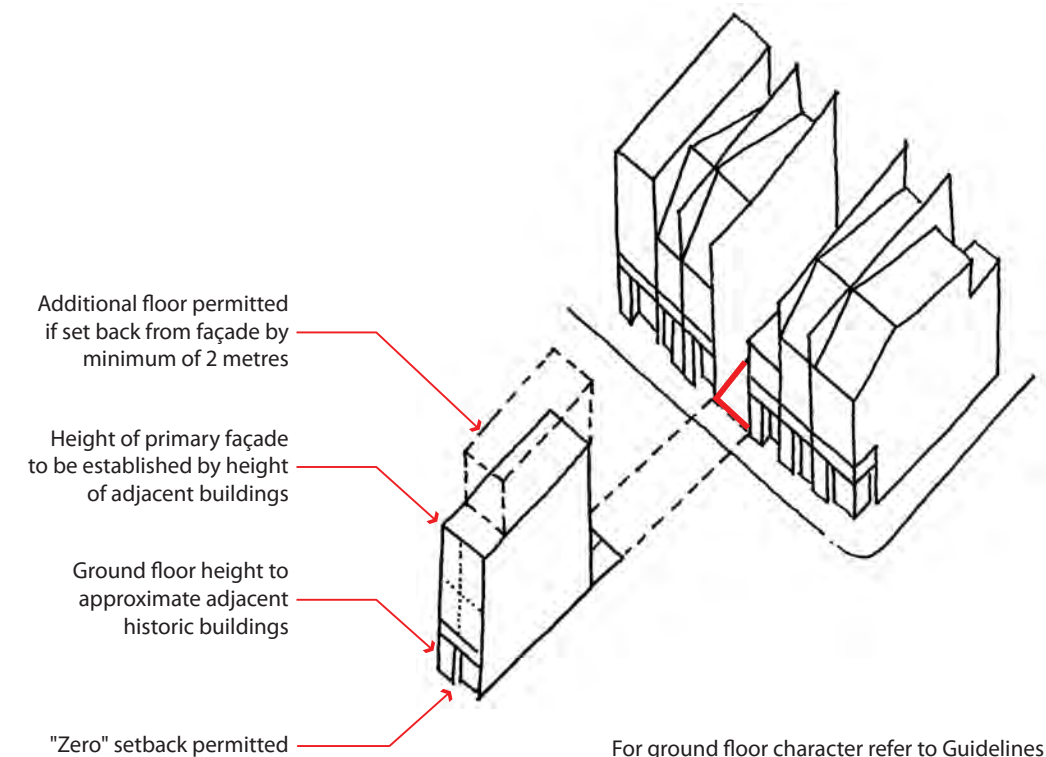
Midblock Infill Development



Plan



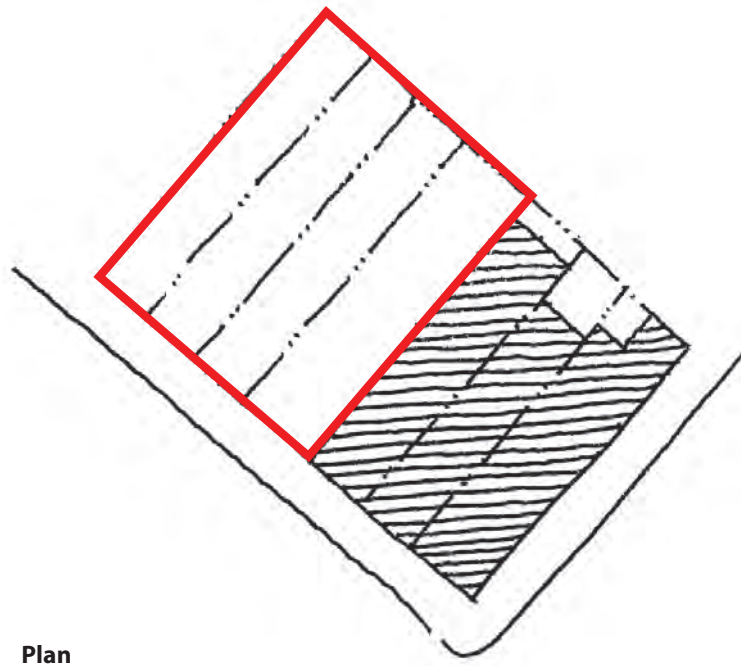
Axonometric view



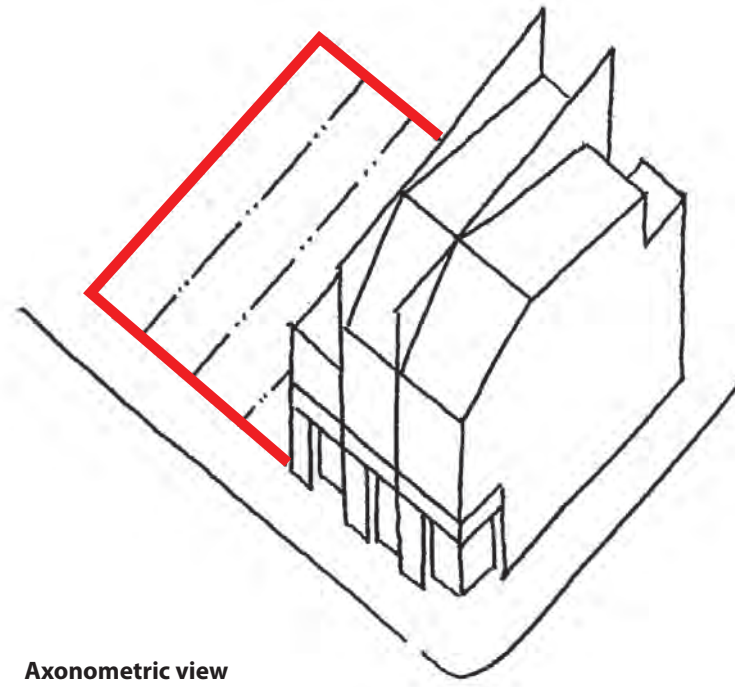
For ground floor character refer to Guidelines



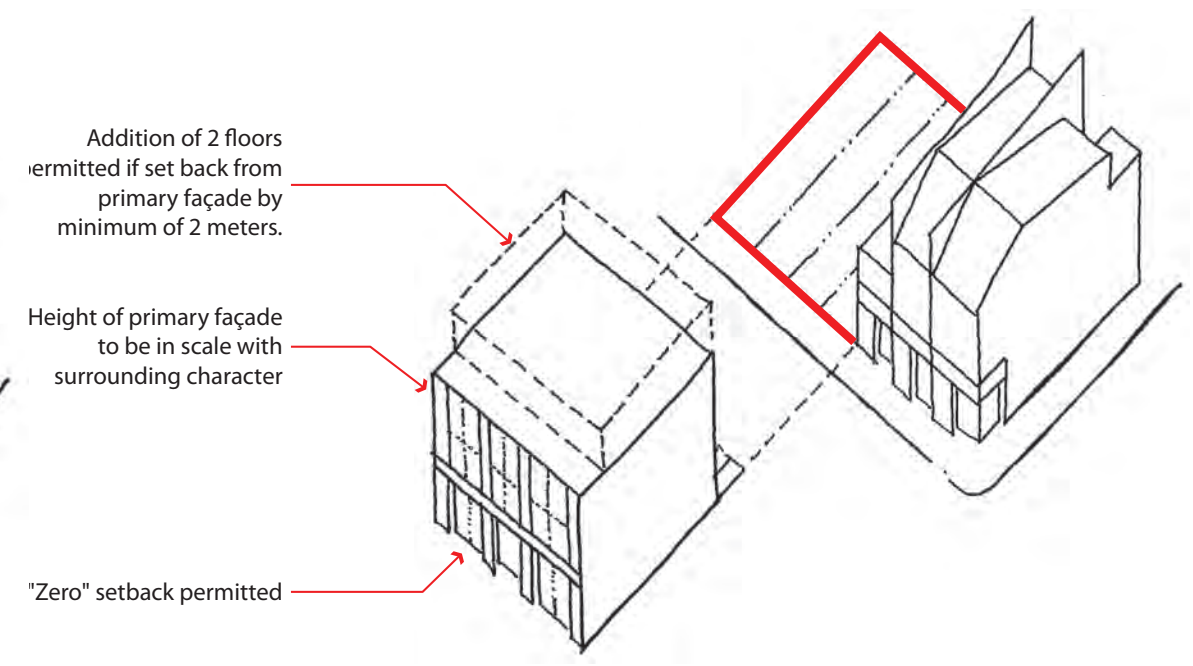
**New Midblock Development (of more than 1 lot)**



Plan



Axonometric view

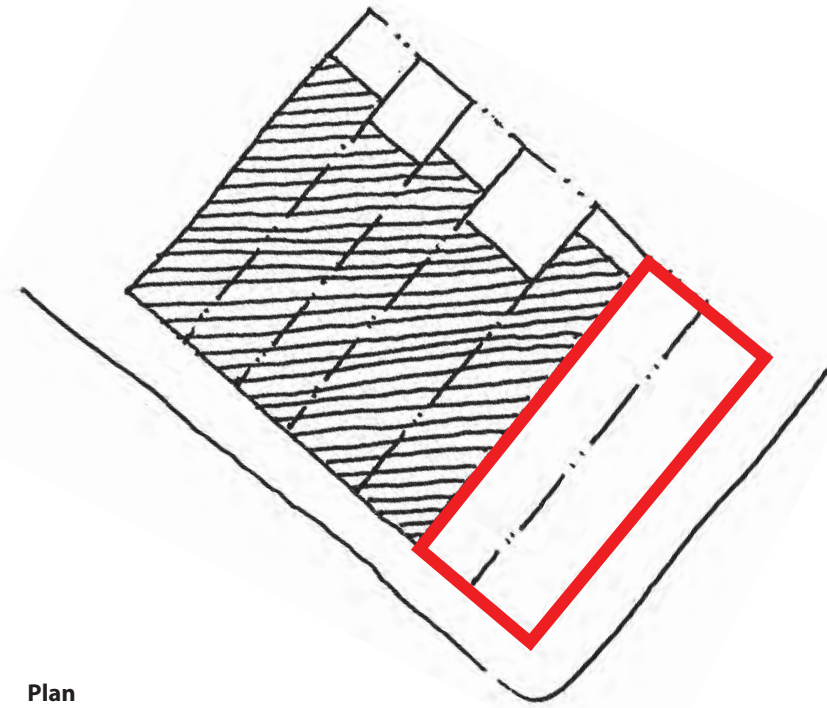


Addition of 2 floors permitted if set back from primary façade by minimum of 2 meters.

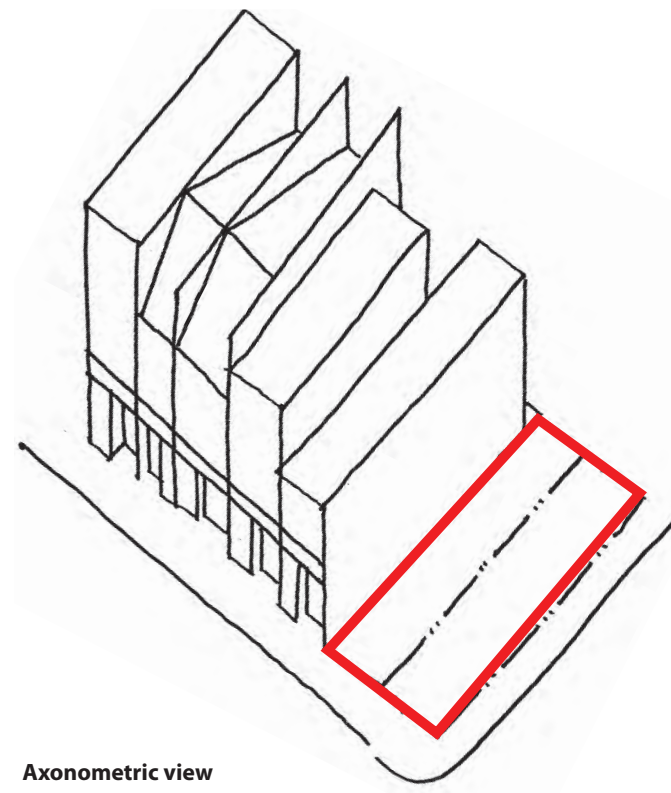
Height of primary façade to be in scale with surrounding character

"Zero" setback permitted

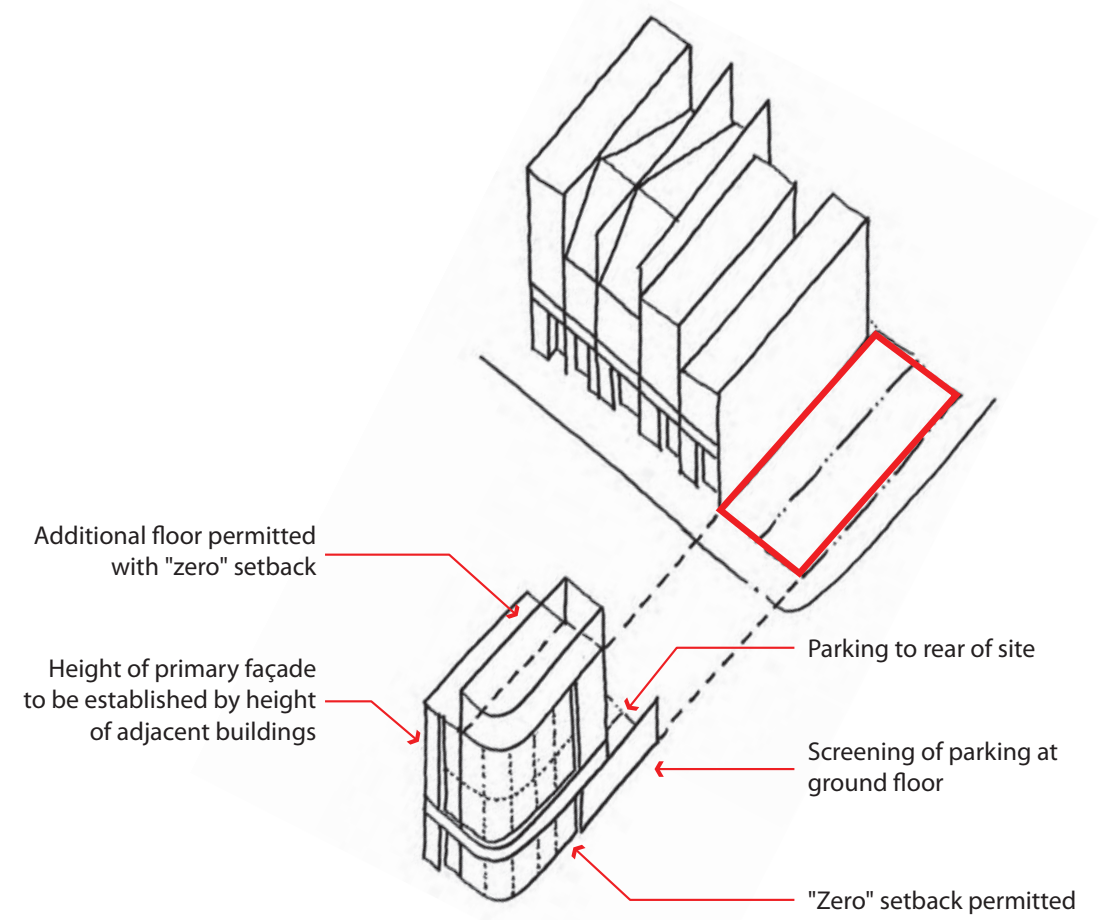
**Corner Infill Development**



Plan



Axonometric view



Additional floor permitted with "zero" setback

Height of primary façade to be established by height of adjacent buildings

Parking to rear of site

Screening of parking at ground floor

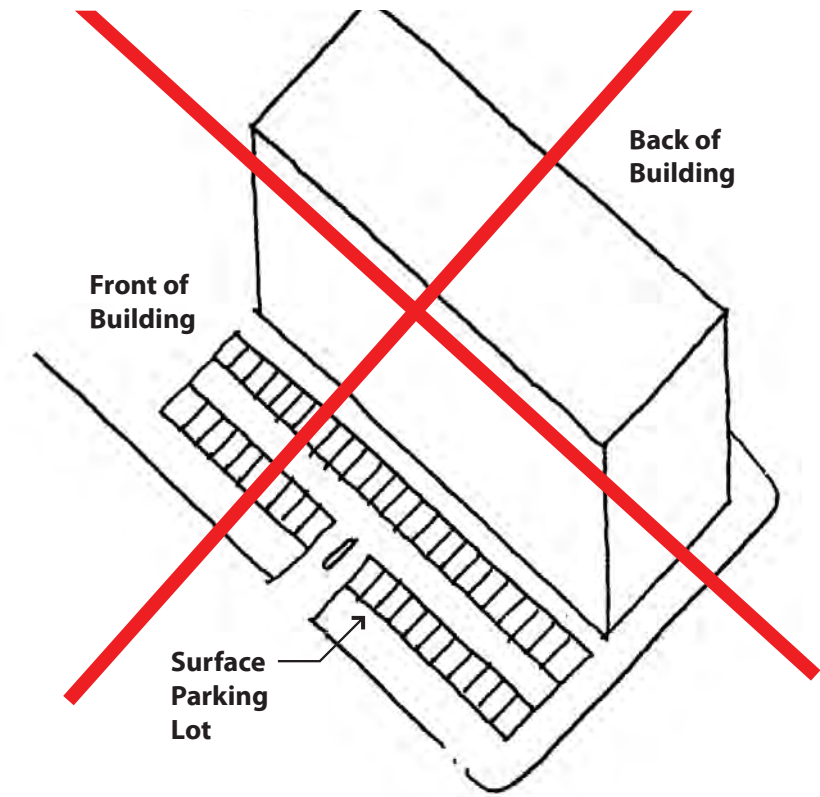
"Zero" setback permitted

# 5.4 Approach to Parking

Although parking is necessary for the survival of any downtown, if not appropriately sited and designed, surface and structured parking lots detract from the visual character and quality of the area.

If Downtown Brantford is to realize its full development potential, where viable, new developments should be self-sufficient in accommodating its share of additional vehicles. In the Downtown, on-street parking is essential, however, for longer term parking on-street parking must be complemented by structured car parking as well as surface car parking lots.

- *Along Main Streets, parking should not be permitted in the public realm zone between the sidewalk and the building edge. Instead, parking should be accommodated to the back or discretely within the building envelope.*
- *Any surface parking provided is to be well landscaped along its edges to enhance the surrounding public walks and views.*
- *Structured parking is to be configured oriented towards the back of the building with its mass wrapped around the parking.*
- *Servicing and parking should be accessed from secondary streets and away from main pedestrian entrances.*
- *Parking and servicing facilities should be combined wherever possible to minimize their impact upon building frontages.*
- *Parking and servicing elements should not detract from the animation of the street through the creation of blank walls or false facades.*
- *No surface parking lots should be allowed to front directly onto Main Streets.*
- *Where parking is located internal to the podium, care should be taken to ensure that it is wrapped in active single aspect uses that maintain activity and “eyes on the street”.*



### Location of Parking

Surface lots should be located at the rear of downtown buildings and **not** in front



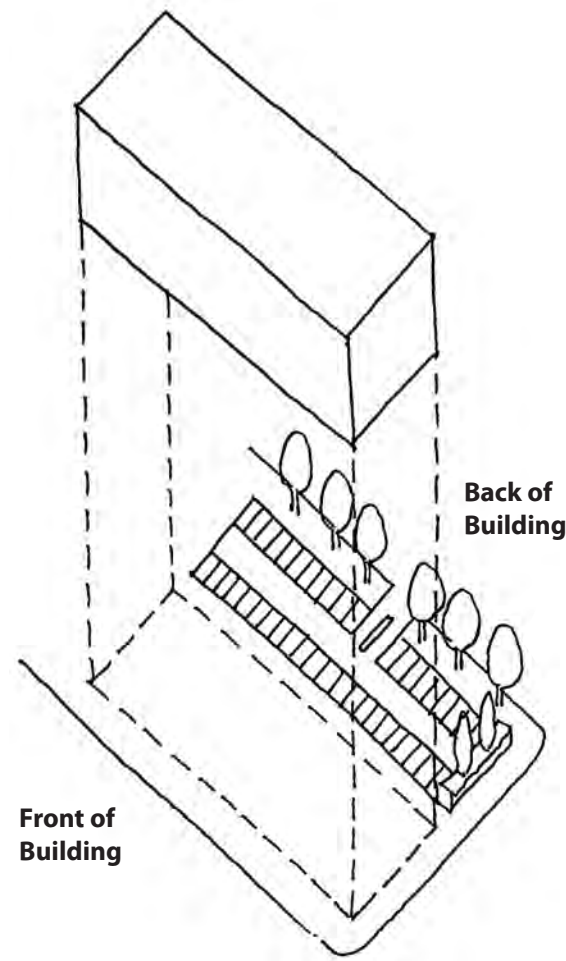
Well designed surface parking in downtown Portland, Oregon uses landscape and paving features to conceal cars and mitigate environmental impact.



Well designed parking structures are attractive, centrally located and accentuate the context of the street like this one in Munster, Germany.  
Photo: W. Huthmacher

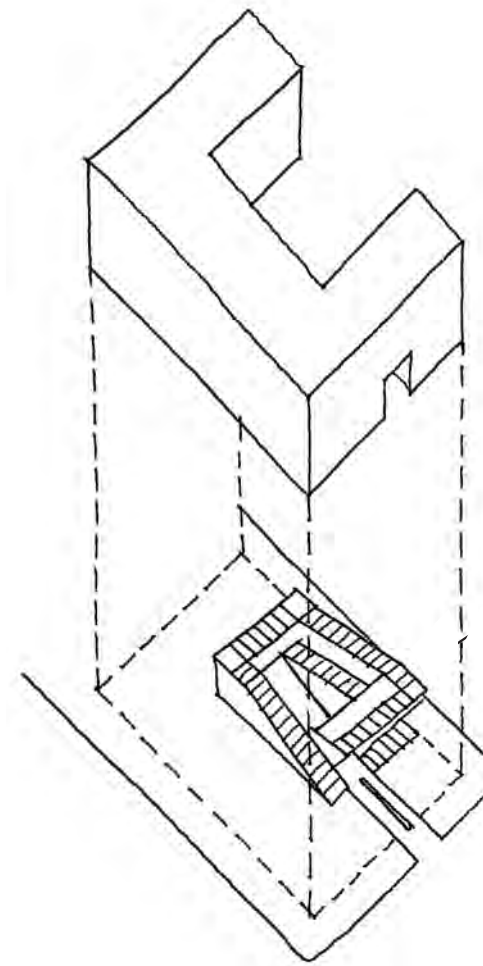


Swales along the edges of surface parking areas absorb vehicular run-off that would otherwise end up in the storm water and river systems.



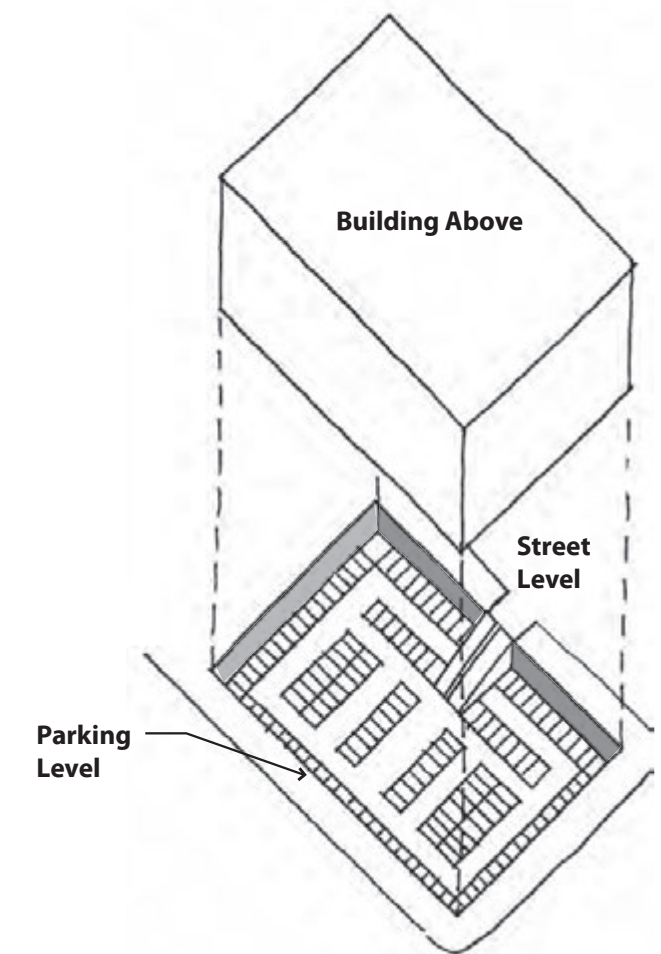
### Surface Parking

Landscape treatment to buffer parking from public pedestrian walkways



### Structured Parking

Wrap building mass around parking structure minimizing exposed surfaces to public realm



### Below-grade Parking

Has exposed edges with access located off of secondary street

### Surface Parking

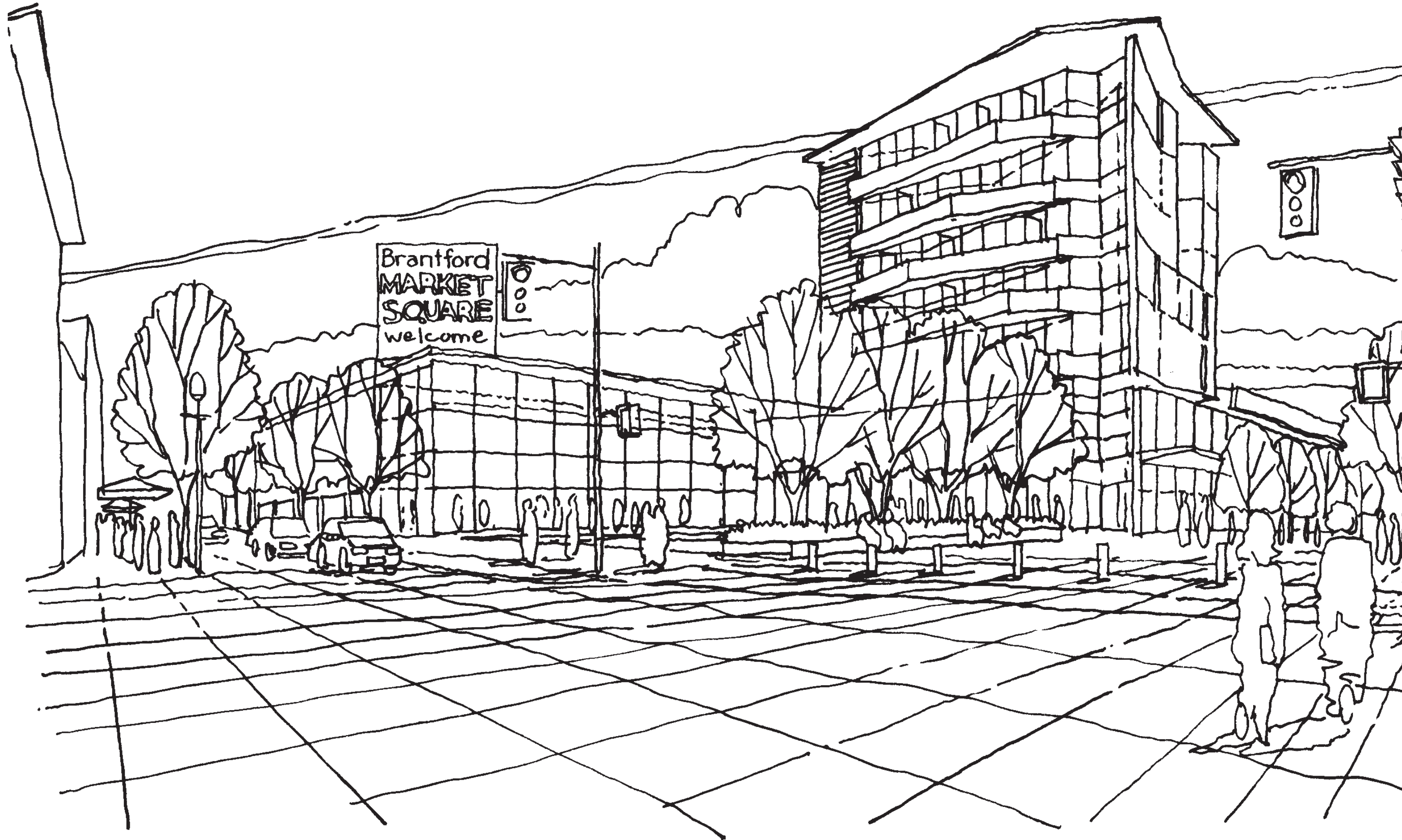
- In the Downtown, surface parking should never be located in front of a building.
- Wherever possible, surface parking should be located internal to the development site, and should include lighting, signage and minimal driveways.
- When adjacent to the street, surface lots should mitigate their visual impact with landscaping and architectural features along the street edge to conceal parked cars.
- Within the parking lot, landscaping, trees, and decorative paving should be used to break the expanse of hard surfaces.
- To minimize the environmental impact of run-off from cars into the storm water system, semi-permeable paving and swales can be used to help absorb water on site and to deter pollution from entering the river system.

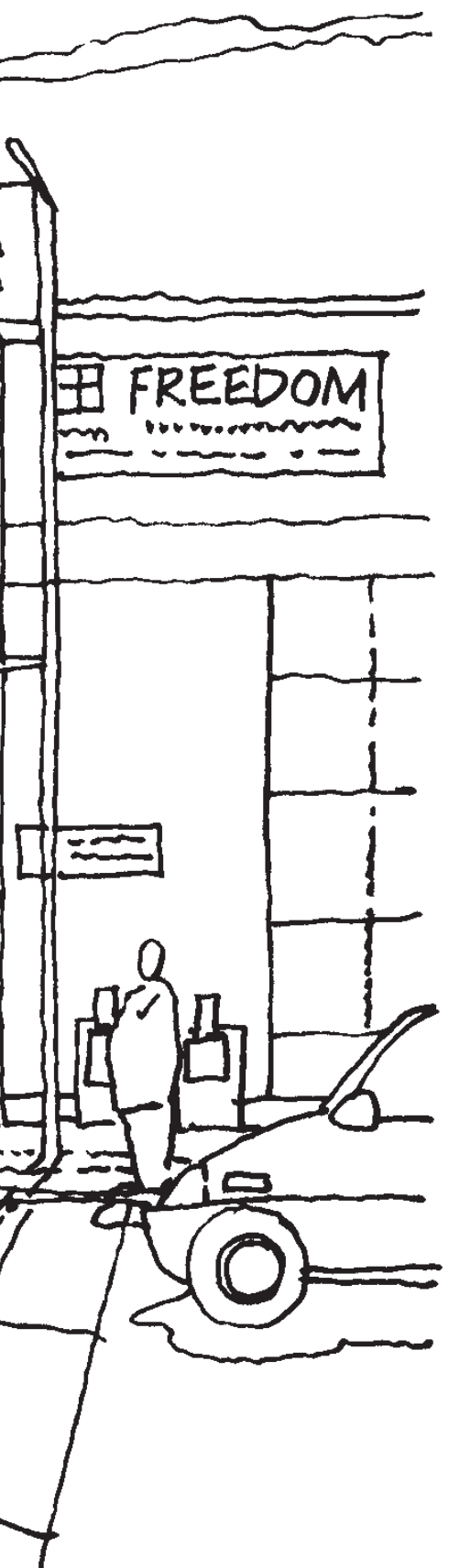
### Structured Parking

- Structured parking should be centrally located, and designed to be integrated into the surrounding built form using similar facade articulation and materials.
- Ground floors should accommodate commercial uses.
- Well sited structures should be designed to accommodate additional levels if expansion is necessary.
- Stairways, elevators and parking entries should be located mid-block.
- Structured parking should be considered for sites such as the Darling Street Lot. (See Guidelines 6.2.4 for details).

### Below Grade Parking

- Access to below grade parking should not obstruct pedestrian traffic and should be designed to not detract from the street level experience.
- Below grade parking should be considered for new building along Colborne Street with parking access at Water Street.





## 6.0 SITE SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

# 6.1

## Introduction

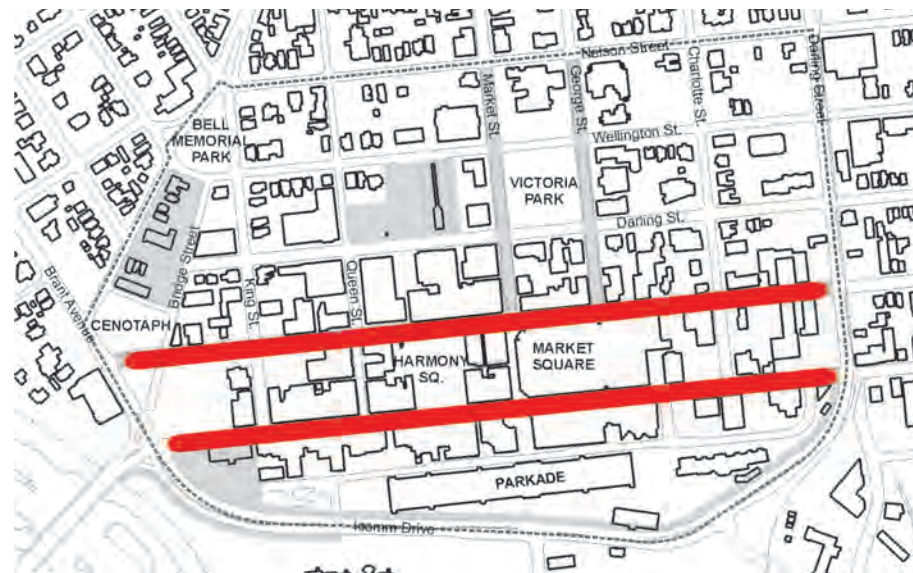
The next 5 years are critical in establishing a future role for Downtown Brantford. Intrinsic to this are a number of projects that include building sites, open space initiatives, and roadway and streetscape Improvements. In addition to Harmony Square these projects will serve as a catalyst towards the revitalization of the Downtown.

Once completed, these endeavours will serve as benchmarks for subsequent developments in the Downtown. Guidelines have been prepared to ensure that these pioneering efforts produce the desired results and contribute to the betterment of the public realm. They are created to assist both developers and city staff in achieving the objectives as stated in this document. They are also to be read in conjunction with other relevant sections of this document. While not overly prescriptive they do indicate a particular direction that new development should follow in order to contribute to the realization of the Downtown Master Plan.

For the most part a graphic depiction of the guidelines shall be read in conjunction with the text. However, should a discrepancy occur between text and graphic, the information supplied by the graphic will supercede that contained within the text.



*Locational key of site-specific projects*



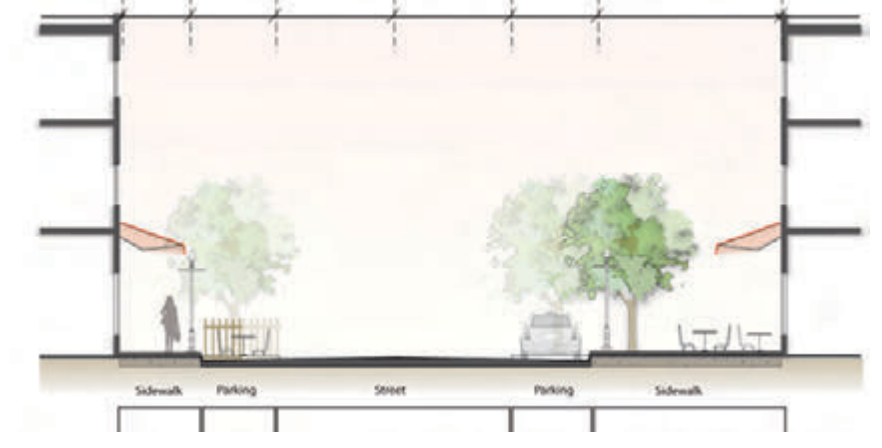
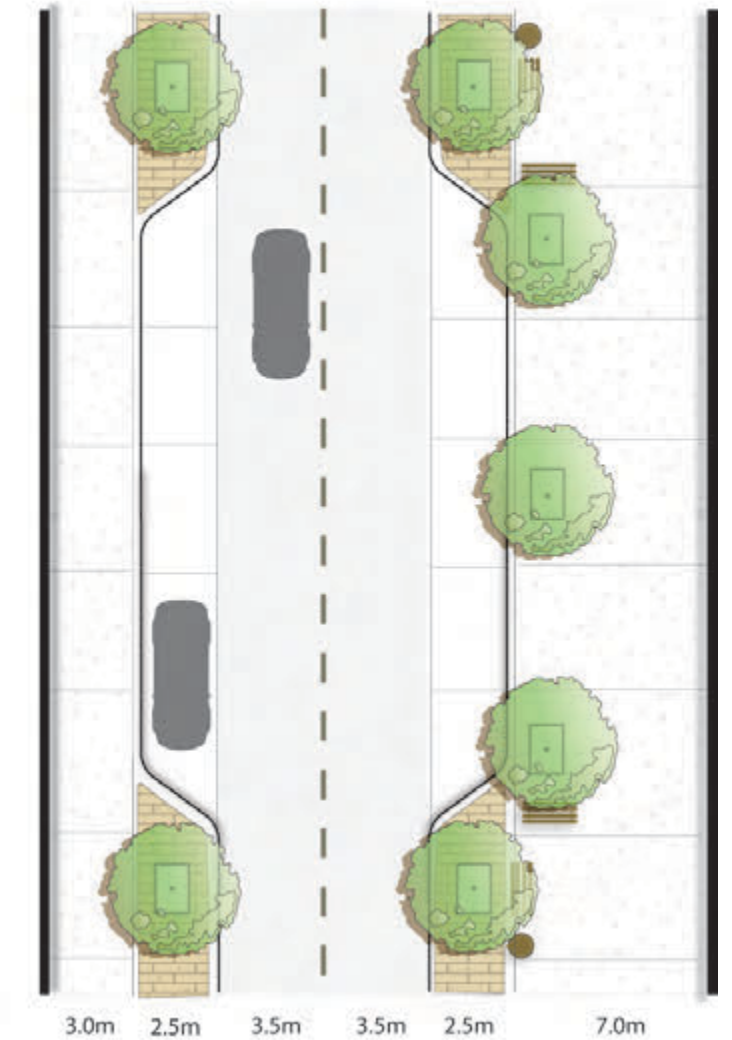
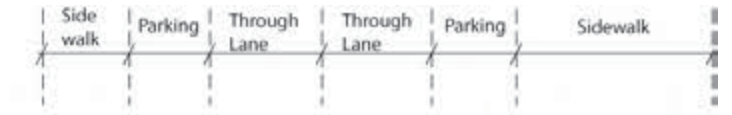
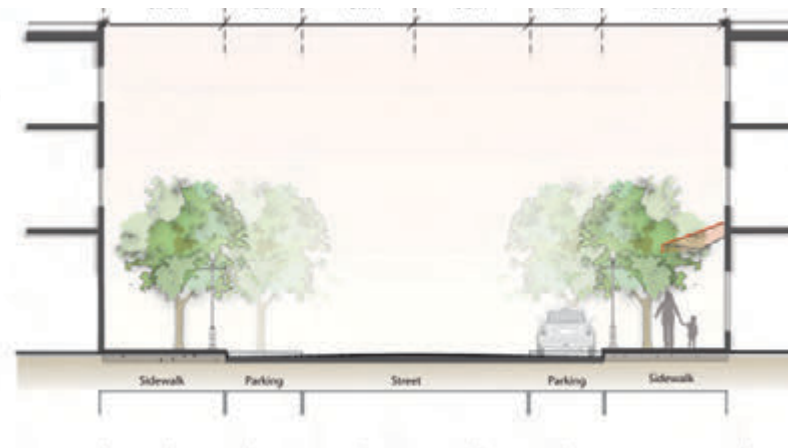
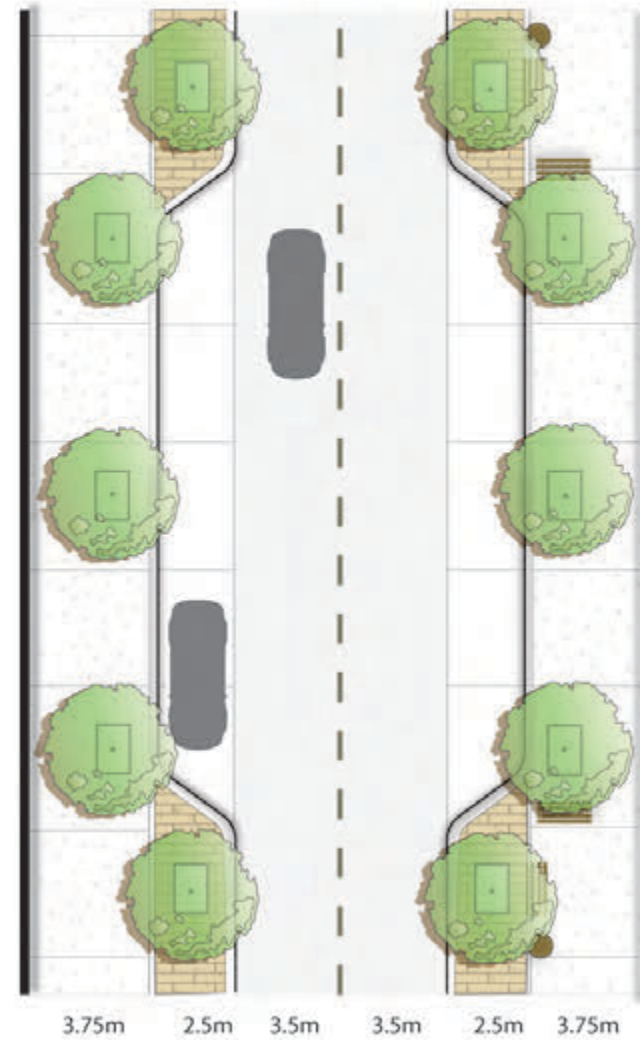
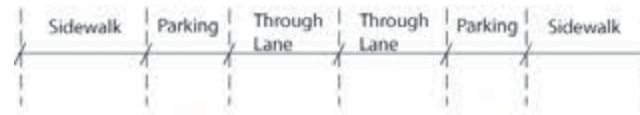
## 6.2.6 Dalhousie & Colborne Streetscaping

Both Dalhousie and Colborne Streets have been identified as possessing aging infrastructure in need of replacement. Also, this study is recommending the conversion of both streets from one-way to two-ways. Thus, conditions are ideal for a rethinking of the streetscape of both thoroughfares, as presented below.

While on-street parking shall be retained the new layout of the streets shall allow for improved streetscaping along both sides, including street trees, new street furniture and amply wide sidewalks are the main features of the two streets.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Simple paved surface with unit paving or brick accent to comprise the sidewalk.
- Street furniture to be of high quality and drawn from a palette of furniture to be used throughout the Downtown.
- Refer to Section 5 for general guidelines that relate to streetscaping and the public realm
- No surface parking lots should be allowed to front directly onto Colborne, Dalhousie or Market streets.
- Work with the BIA and private land owners to replace “the boardwalk” hoardings and vacant storefront windows. A public art competition could be held for creative solutions to the treatments of the hoardings along the south side of Colborne Street.



## 6.2.1 Colborne Street Southside

The revitalization of Colborne Street is a key element of the Downtown Master Plan as well as being one of City Council’s top priorities for this term of office. Now, with the completion of Harmony Square, coming to terms with the future of “The Boardwalk” becomes even more critical.

Although vacancy in Downtown Brantford is relatively high it is particularly apparent along Colborne Street where vacancy rates have been calculated at more than 40%. In general, where at-grade vacancies exist, the overall perception created is one of blight, which is not at all in keeping with the new square and the aspirations for a revitalized downtown. The blight is a discouraging sign for potential future investors and visitors to the city.

Regardless of its deteriorated condition, Colborne Street does support a historic character. The City’s Heritage Inventory identifies that the buildings along the south side of Colborne Street, between #35 to #171, as of historic significance. The majority of the buildings are more than a century old, some dating back to pre-Confederation. Fifteen properties are identified as being of Architectural Significance while eight properties are Historically Significant. Overall, more than half the buildings are highly rated as being either architecturally or historically significant. It is important to gauge the value to the community of preserving this potentially important heritage asset.

Despite the fact that these structures are identified as heritage assets, their present condition does limit opportunities for adaptive re-uses. The high vacancy rate and the deteriorated condition of many of the properties communicate a negative reaction and undermines the ‘city-building’ efforts and financial commitment of Harmony Square and its adjacent buildings. Clearly, the situation on the south side of Colborne cannot continue unresolved.



Identified buildings along Colborne and Dalhousie Streets based on the ‘Downtown Heritage Inventory Study.’

### What issues must be addressed?

The elaboration of the revitalization strategy is complicated by a number of factors, some positive, some negative and/or potentially costly.

On the positive side:

- The fact that approximately one-third of the properties are controlled directly or indirectly by a single individual, which should make a revitalization strategy easier to negotiate and attain;
- The fact that zoning for this area (as for most of the Downtown) is very liberal with 100% coverage, a maximum of 8 storeys, and no parking requirements. Each of these standards should inspire development in the Downtown;
- The proposals in the Downtown Masterplan to convert Colborne Street to two-way, revitalize retail at grade, and provide a landmark residential development at the east end of the site will serve to create a more positive market atmosphere for the block.

However, revitalization may be hampered by:

- The likely premium to redevelopment arising from the small lot size and the 12-metre grade difference between Colborne and Water Streets;
- The speculation that the building foundations (despite their deteriorated condition) are in fact holding up Colborne Street and their demolition will give rise to inordinate expense in providing structural shoring along their base.

### Potential Revitalization Options

In identifying the South side of Colborne Street as a priority, Brantford Council made it very clear that there is no longer the political or popular will to leave this area in its deteriorated condition.

There are three potential revitalization options to explore:

#### A. Full scale preservation and refurbishment of all buildings:

This would require structural analysis to determine the condition of the buildings and the most viable means of restoring them to new uses. It is recommended that a heritage architect be retained in addition to the structural engineer to ensure sensitive and compatible restoration and renovation.

#### B. Selective preservation:

This would require structural analysis to determine the condition of the buildings and the selection of those (if any) which can be viably restored. Again, this should be done concurrently with the input of a heritage architect who could review the importance and feasibility of restoring the most important buildings, and potentially creating complementary infill buildings to replace unsustainable stock.

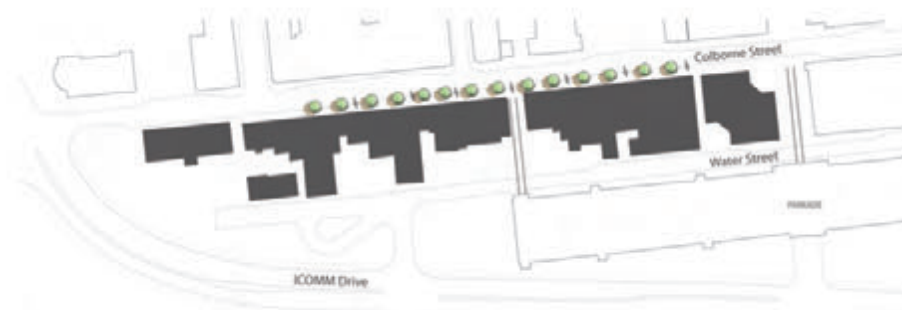
#### C. Demolition of all or substantive portions of the block:

This again would require structural analysis to determine the grade change and slope stability between Colborne and Water streets, and the premium attached to new construction under these conditions.

Each of the options must be subject not only to physical scrutiny, but also to their respective financial viability which will clearly impact their potential to deliver change.

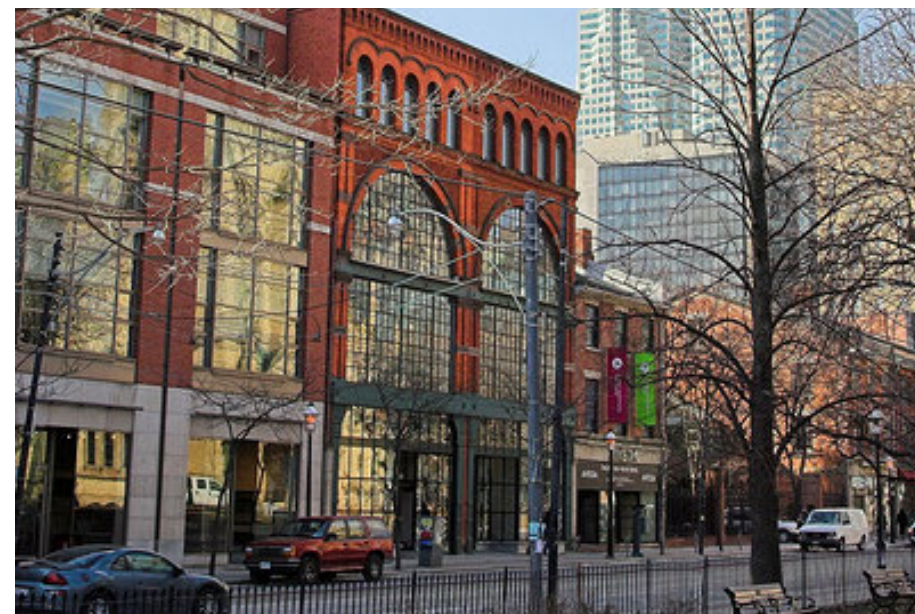


## Option A: Full Scale Preservation



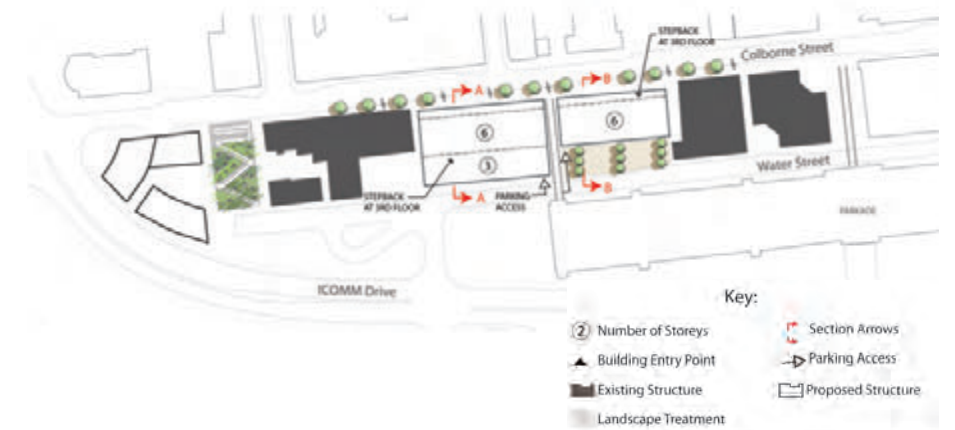
Fully restored buildings in downtown Guelph.

## Option B: Selective Preservation



Contextual infill on King Street East in Toronto.

## Option C: Substantive Demolition



Heritage-inspired new construction in Port Credit.

## 6.2.1 Colborne Street Southside (cont.)

### Towards a Recommended Option

In the absence of necessary technical information on the structural soundness of the buildings (and the related cost implications) along Colborne Street, *it is not yet possible for the Downtown Masterplan Project to come to a conclusion about a preferred option.*

*It is strongly recommended however, that the requisite studies be undertaken immediately, and a decision arrived at before the end of 2008 so that this situation will no longer be allowed to fester and further deterioration occur.*

While the structural and architectural studies are underway, the City should explore potential implementation and funding mechanisms as suggested below:

- Provide incentives such as development grants, rehabilitation grants, tax exemptions for building owners and developers;
- Seek a wide range of grants from senior levels of government for the purpose of reinvestment in the historic fabric;
- Actively seek tenants and users for renovated buildings, look at land swaps with commercial users;
- Look at the potential to assemble individual properties into larger blocks, while also dealing with large, multi-property owners to facilitate land swaps with other City owned property that might be more easily developed by the private sector.

The City is currently proposing to undertake infrastructure improvements along Colborne Street, as well as streetscape and landscape improvements recommended in this report to provide an attractive, green, pedestrianized environment along Colborne Street. This is the most opportune moment to finally determine the future of the South Colborne block.

### Alternative Revitalization Options

In order to aid the discussion about what could realistically be achieved, the design options shown below illustrate the main principles to be achieved on the block. Primarily, there is a scale and a rhythm to the existing buildings which should be retained and restored or redeveloped in a compatible manner. The key is to preserve the character of the street, to match the north side, while seizing the opportunity to reclaim this portion of Colborne Street as a vital, pedestrian friendly street frontage.

Apart from preserving the existing structures along the street two options are suggested. Either applies to selective infill development or the wholesale removal of buildings along the block. Of importance to both is maintaining the street character in terms of massing, materials and window fenestration.

- *Option 1* envisions commercial or retail uses along the ground floor with residential above. The building façade should align with the existing building frontages. A stepback at the 3rd floor will maintain the existing street massing with vertical articulation occurring at regular intervals in keeping with the existing property lot pattern. Buildings should be no more than 5 storeys in height.

- *Option 2* anticipates only residential use for new infill or block developments. The building face should therefore be set back from the existing façade line with access raised by 1 metre from the ground plane. Small front gardens combined with a raised entrance will enhance privacy of the ground floor units.

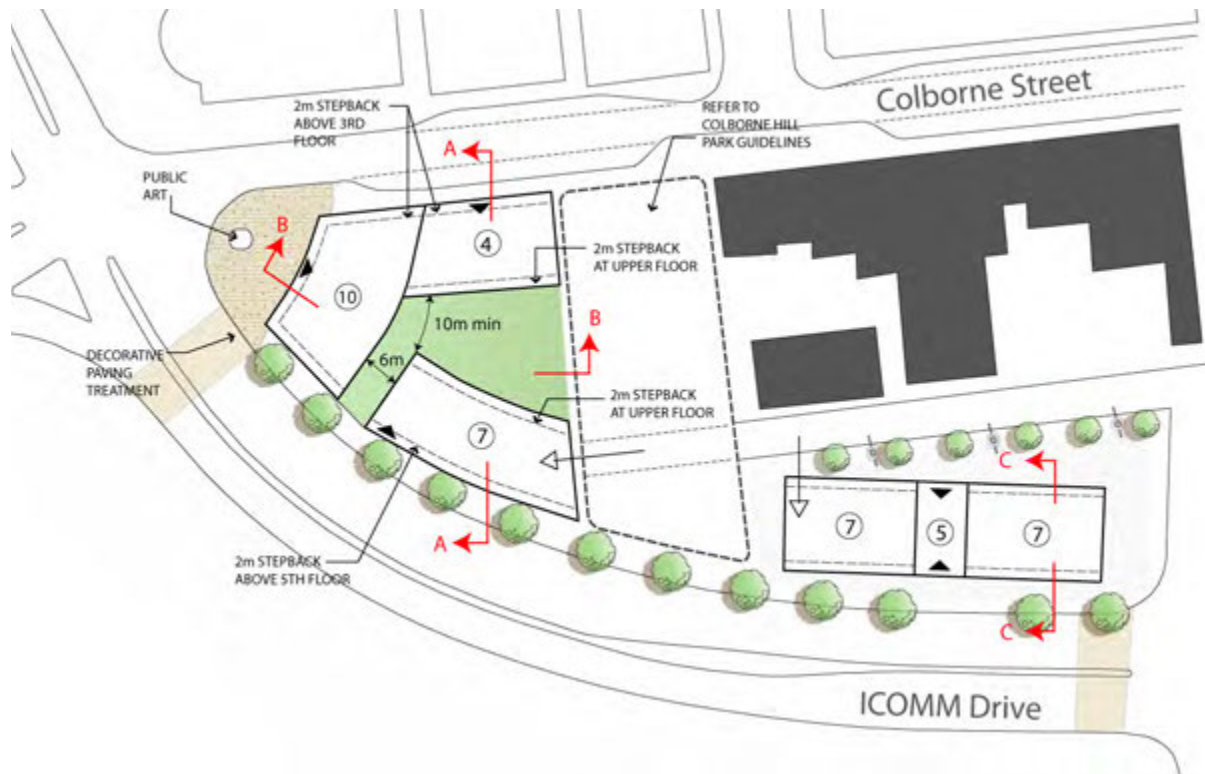
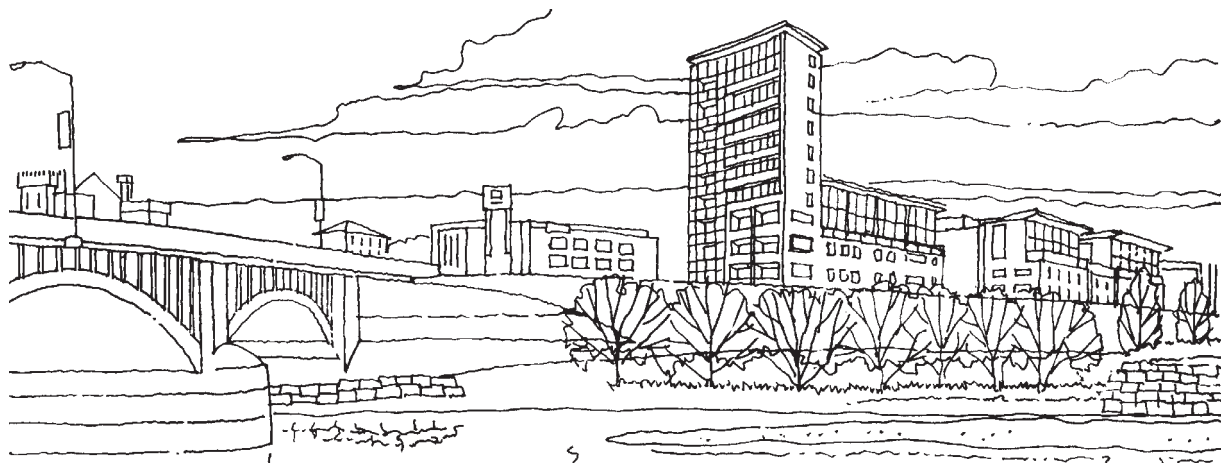
The south side of new development should have a retail or commercial use fronting onto Water Street thereby providing uses that re-animate a previously inactive street. Structured parking either behind or above will be dedicated to the residential units and possibly patrons of the ground floor uses.

### Guiding Design Principles

To aid the discussion about what could realistically be achieved on Colborne Street, the Master Plan recommends the following design principles be followed for any new development:

- *retaining existing building scale and rhythm of buildings.*
- *ensure public realm and facade design contributes to a pedestrian-friendly street frontage.*
- *maintain the street and building character in terms of materials and window articulation. Building façades should align with the existing building frontages.*
- *preserve the character of the street, to match the north side.*
- *commercial or retail uses should be accommodated along the ground floor with residential above.*
- *Typically, buildings should be no more than 5 storeys.*
- *to maintain existing street massing, additional height should be accommodated via a stepback above the third floor..*





## Colborne Point

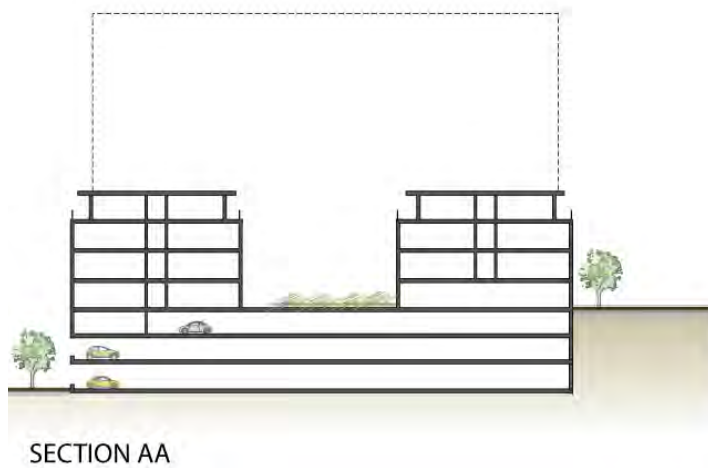
Recognized as a key development site and gateway to the downtown makes the realization of the Colborne Street/Icomm Drive corner as critical to the revitalization of Downtown.

The prominence of the site as well as the views afforded of the river suggest that the development be of significant height. It also suggests that the architecture must be of a high quality.

Residential is the primary use of the site as it extends along Icomm Drive with heights ranging from 4 to possibly well over 7. Ground floor uses along Colborne Street would ideally include restaurants, cafes and retail uses. Parking is to be incorporated at the ground floor level along Icomm Drive and not extend beyond the edges of the building footprints.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Residential is the primary use of the site with ground floor uses along Colborne Street, ideally including restaurants, cafes and retail uses.
- Windows are to dominate the ground floor facade along Colborne Street.
- Public realm, including a gateway plaza at the intersection of Colborne St./Brant Ave./Icomm Dr. to be of high quality and include a publicly commissioned art piece.
- Setbacks from street edge are to be sufficient to permit planting and adequate growth of street trees.
- Parking is to be discretely located and ideally would be incorporated at the ground floor level along Icomm Drive and not extend beyond the edges of the building footprints.





## Colborne Hill Park

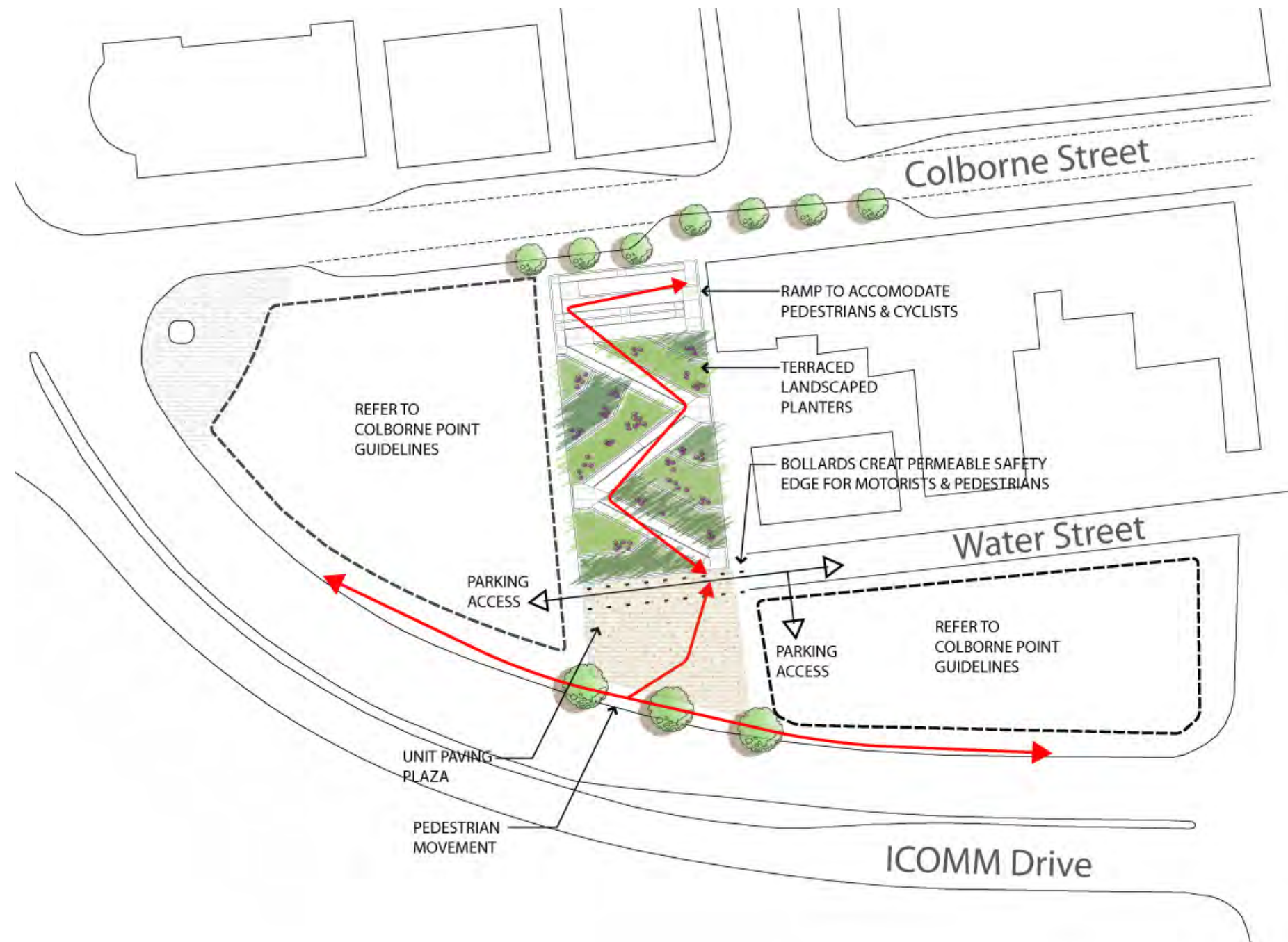
Colborne Hill Park will serve as a new access point to link Downtown to the Grand River, the trail system, the new skateboard park, the Casino and the Civic Centre. This park will be used by pedestrians and cyclists.

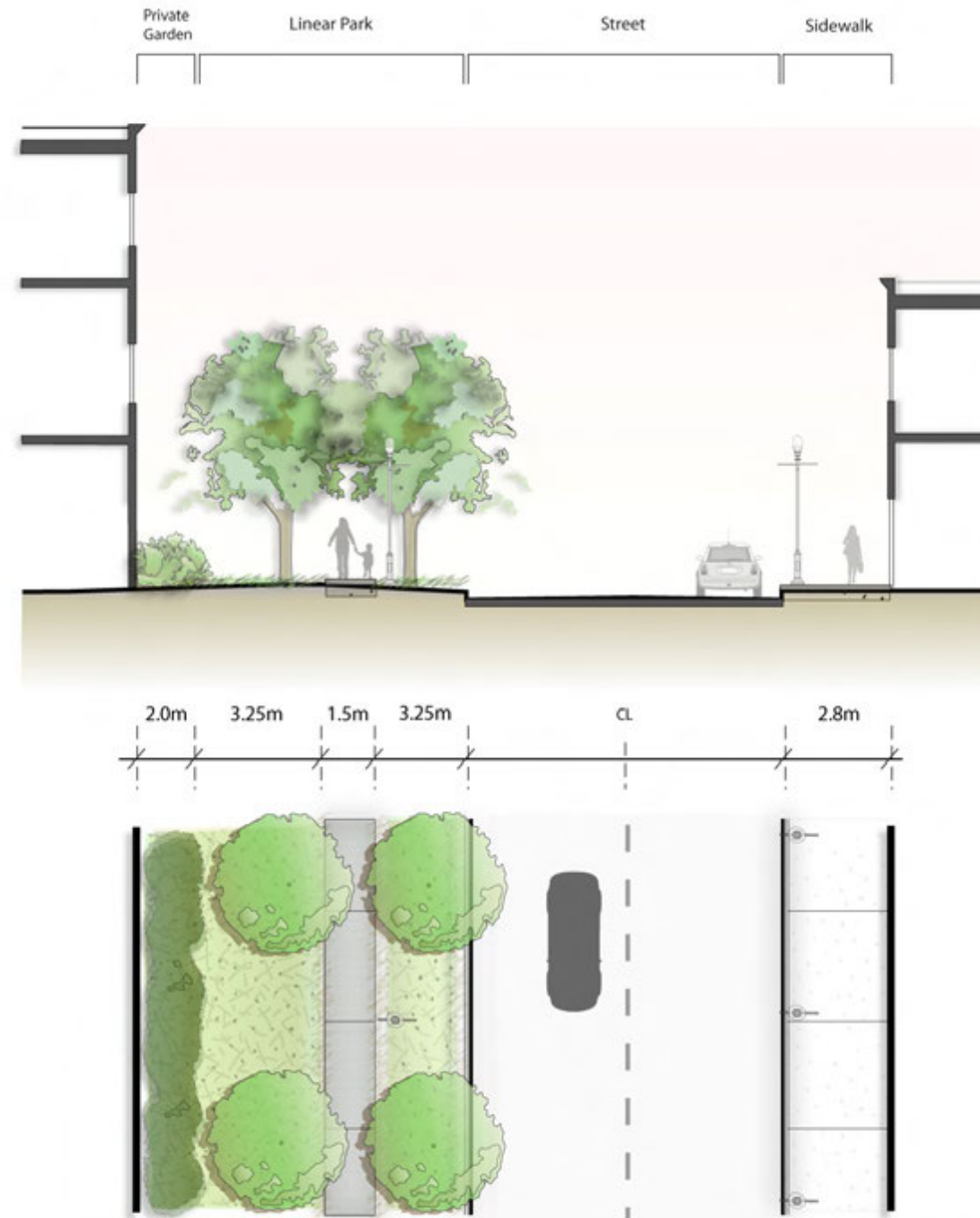
Due to the relatively steep grade a ramping system that permits both cyclists and pedestrians a means to accessing the Grand River must also function as a high quality public realm.

While soft landscape will characterize the sloped portion of the park, a generous sized plaza space will define the bottom of the park. Care will be given to ensuring that vehicular movement does not conflict with people or cyclists.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Ramped pathway linking Colborne and Water Streets will be fully accessible. It will be sufficiently wide and properly ramped to accommodate both pedestrians and cyclists.
- To increase safety, a new crossing at Icomm Drive will be required at the base of Colborne Hill Park. This crossing can link into the Casino and destination leisure area to the south.
- Planters edging the path will be of a high architectural quality and be durable.
- Plant material to be indigenous, hardy and low maintenance.
- Clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movement.
- Appropriate pedestrian-scale lighting and park furniture that is from selected palette of street furniture to be used elsewhere.





Typical Plan and Section



## 6.2.2 Bridge Street Linear Park

Bridge Street Park provides a green link between Bell Memorial Park and Brant County War Memorial Park. The new park space also links into the Grand River and associated Trans-Canada Trail. This segment of green will also provide a focus for redevelopment in the western side of Downtown.

The linear park should be simply conceived with a double row of street trees framing a pedestrian path. Edge planting of substantial stature will act as a buffer between any future private development and the public park space.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Linear park should not be less than 8 metres in width.
- A pathway of generous width will run through the linear park, framed on both sides by trees.
- Understorey plant material shall be of a high quality and be indigenous, sited along the western edge of the pathway; the eastern edge shall be comprised of ground cover.
- Plant material is to be low maintenance, but irrigation may still be required.
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting and park furniture will be provided along the length of the park.
- Where the park meets a street edge, a clearly marked pedestrian crossing will be provided.

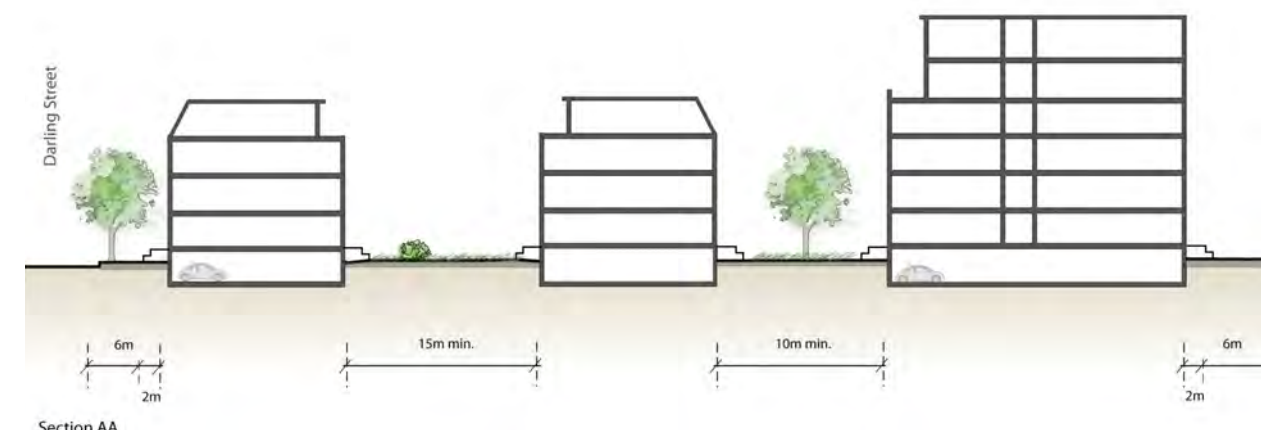
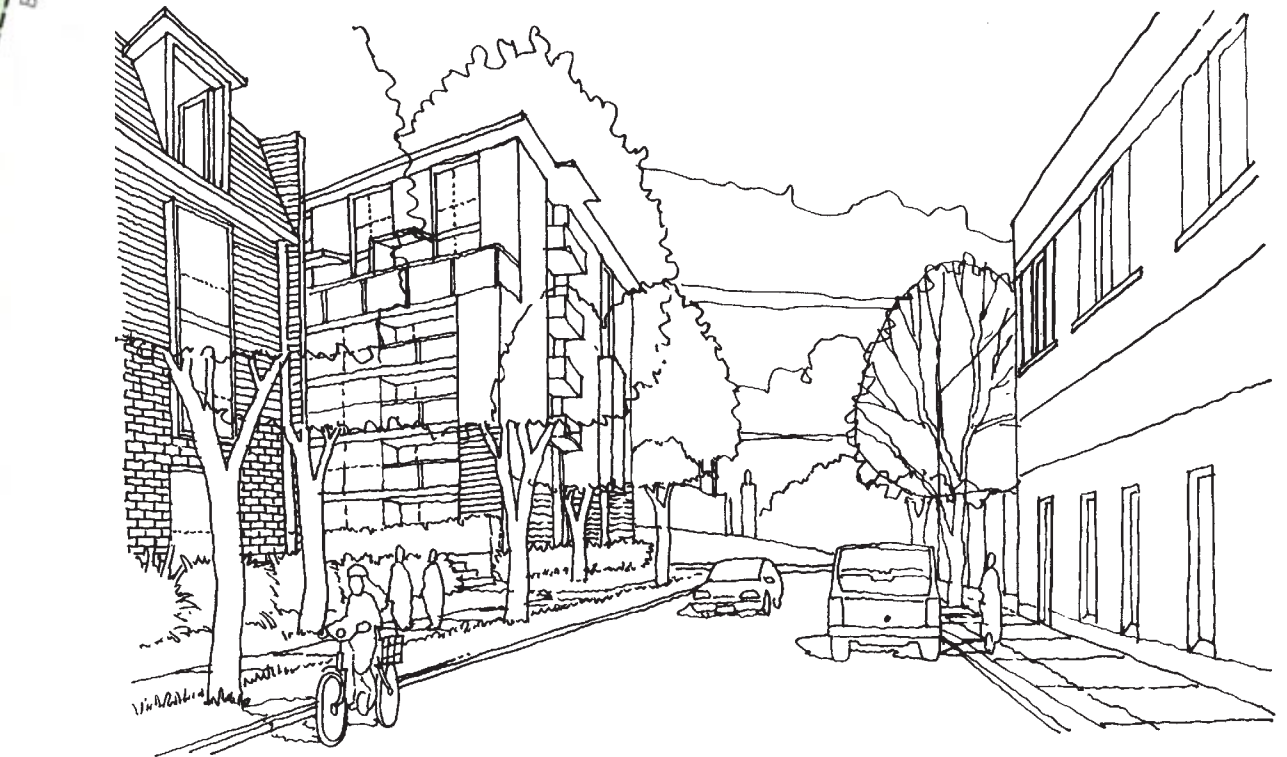
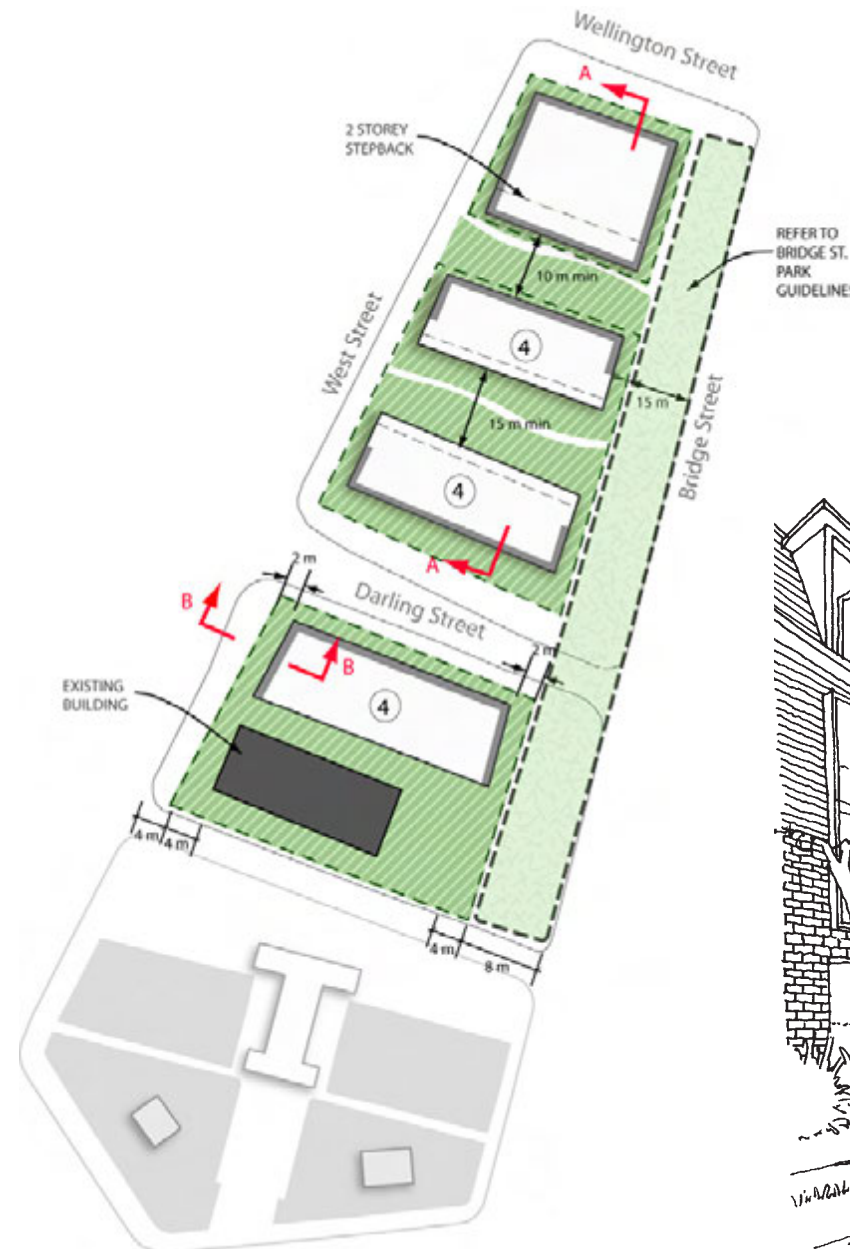


### 6.2.3 Bridge Street Infill

Located between Wellington Street and Brant County War Memorial Park and between West Street and Bridge Street this new development will be characterized by high quality architecture in an expansive garden setting. It is recommended that these be market-value housing no more than six storeys in height with sufficient parking provided below grade or in interior courtyards. A right of way not less than eight metres in width will be set aside along the length of Bridge Street to be dedicated to the creation of a linear park.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- All sides of each building are to be animated with windows and/or entries; blank walls are to be discouraged.
- Buildings are to be constructed of high quality materials, such as brick or stone, and aspire to the highest architectural design standards.
- Where possible, parking is to be located below-grade with access discretely placed so as to minimize disruption to the public realm.
- Ample provision is to be made for courtyards, gardens and backyards that are to meet a high standard of quality.





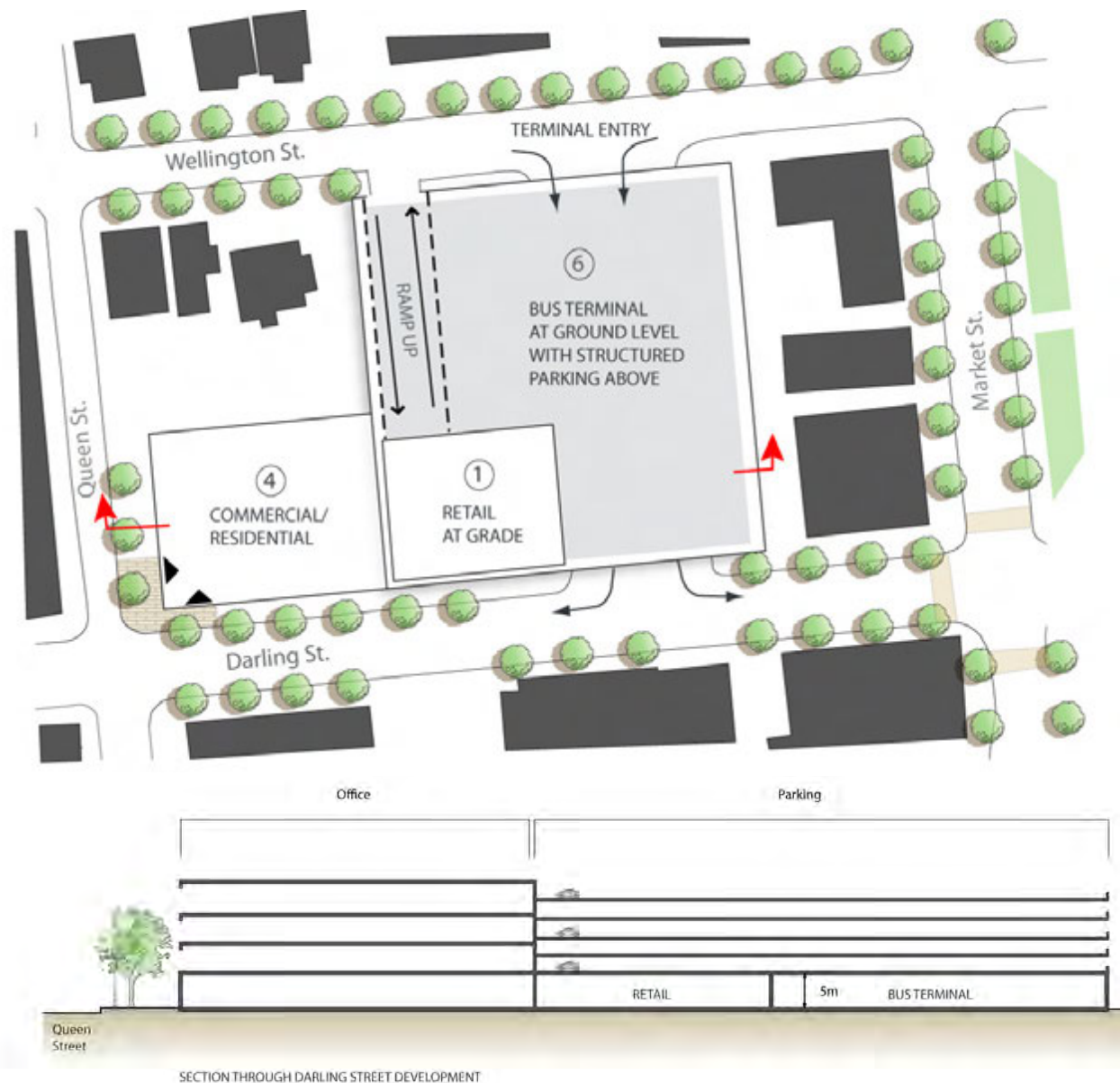
## 6.2.4 Darling Street Bus Terminal & Parking Structure

It has been recognized that the volume of parking displaced by Harmony Square will have to be accommodated by the Darling Street site. In addition, it is anticipated that the bus terminal will expand in the future to meet increased demand.

A multi-level parking structure with the ground level dedicated to current and future bus transit uses is recommended. In addition, active ground floor uses shall front the Darling Street edge of the new structure. An office use, or potentially a residential building, should anchor the development at the corner of Queen Street and Darling Street.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Combined parking structure of no more than 5 storeys be located above a ground floor bus terminal.
- Exterior of the parkade shall be wrapped with a high quality skin that does not deteriorate or date itself over time.
- Retail should front the parkade on the ground level along the Darling Street frontage and, where possible, along Wellington Street.
- A commercial or residential use will be located at the corner of Queen and Darling Streets. Main entry will be from the Darling/Queen corner.
- Building will be of a high architectural standard in terms of material and design.
- Paved and soft landscapes will be of an equally high standard.



Examples of how commercial development can be incorporated into multi-storey parking structures.





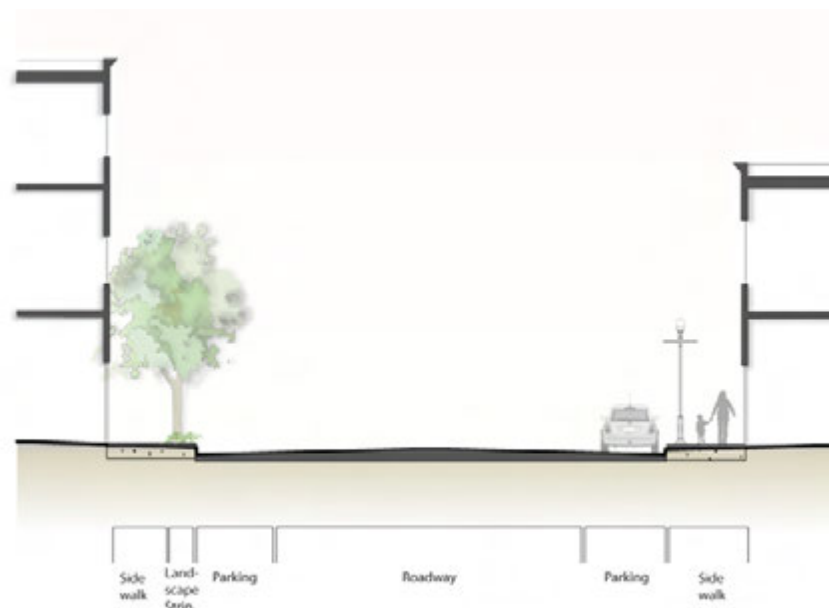


## 6.2.5 Market & George Streets

As an integral part of the Downtown structure, both Market and George streets are to be treated as important streetscapes. Bracketed by Nelson Street and Dalhousie Street these roads serve as the main address for many high profile civic uses, including the Provincial Courts, City Hall, Bell Building, Carnegie Library, Victoria Park, and Laurier's University Student Union Building. As a representation of the civic and institutional role these streets support, these streets should be graceful and well maintained at all times.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Architectural design and material use to be of the highest standard of quality.
- Street trees are to be of an indigenous and durable nature to be planted wherever public realm widths are adequate.
- Street furniture to come from the palette of recommended materials put forth by the City
- Setbacks from street edge are to be sufficient to permit planting and adequate growth of street trees.
- Pedestrian crossings are to be clearly indicated between each block.
- No surface parking lots should be allowed to front directly onto Market Streets.



## 6.2.6 The Future of the Farmer's Market

The Master Plan project strongly recommends that the Farmer's Market be strengthened and utilized more fully as an attraction for the Downtown. This is a unique asset within the city and must be built upon and invested in if it is to become an even greater attraction and contribute to the development of a positive downtown identity for Brantford.

For this to occur, it is recommended that Market operations expand beyond its current two-day-a-week schedule. In addition, vendors should diversify to include a stronger representation from local artisans as well as specialist retailers, such as florist or foods.

With expanded operations, the Farmer's Market could potentially relocate to a higher profile location in the Downtown. It is important that the Market be a part of downtown life and that it relates to other civic spaces within the Downtown. Other considerations include:

- a highly visible and accessible site
- good access to major road network
- tall floor to ceiling height on ground floor
- dedicated loading and servicing area
- concealed garbage area
- adjacent to outdoor plaza space / open space for opportunities for outdoor market stalls
- some on-site parking accommodation





## 6.2.7 Harmony Lane

Harmony Lane will be the main connection between Harmony Square and Market Street. This should be the first link that is restored as part of the Downtown's wider lane-network. Uses in this zone should include outdoor seating for cafes as well as a merchandising area for local retailers.

As a highly trafficked area, surface treatment is to be durable, yet simply treated - comprised essentially of concrete and unit paving or brick paving. Lighting and street furniture to be selected from the Downtown palette and to be carefully located so as not to disrupt movement between Harmony Square and Market Street.

Over time the character, quality and types of outdoor uses will be extended to the laneways and mid-block breaks to the west of Harmony Square, as well as potentially to the east (through the Laurier Brantford campus zone).

*Key guidelines are as follows:*

- Brand this area as a pedestrian only space
- Work with individual shop owners to encourage additional frontages onto the laneway with windows, doors and displays.
- Use of street paving materials that are aesthetically pleasing but of a durable nature, such as stone or concrete.
- Pedestrian scaled lighting is to be introduced and adequately spaced. This is critical for creating safe urban spaces.
- Retail related activities that spill out of stores and into the laneways are to actively encouraged.
- Paving and hard landscaping treatments must be of high quality and very durable. Textured materials such as natural stone are ideal.



*Using character of downtown laneways to build unique commercial and public spaces.*

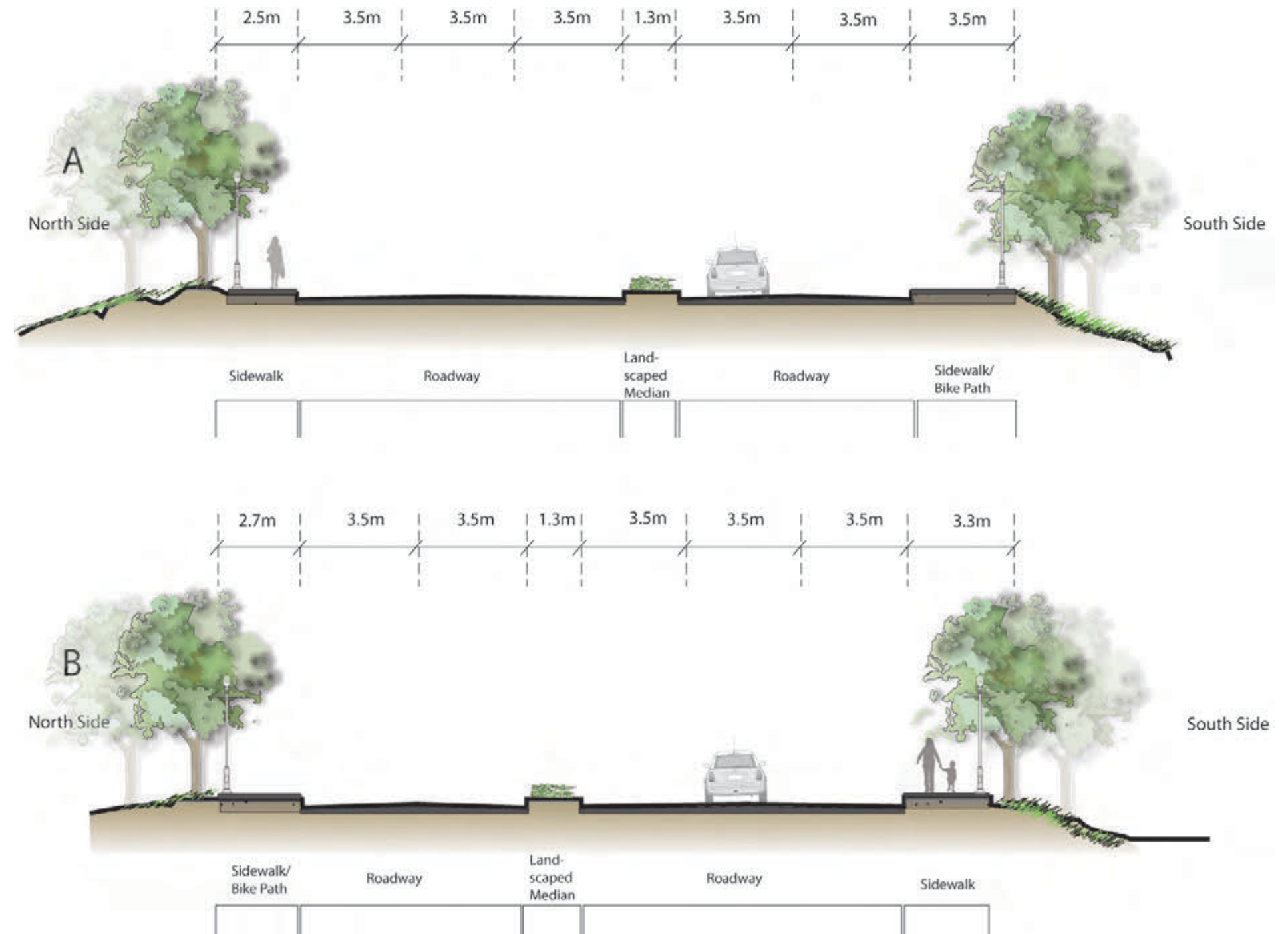


## 6.2.8 Navigation Park & Pathway

Navigation Park and pathway will provide a safe and attractive cycling and pedestrian route from the Trans Canada Trail to Shallow Creek Park. It will also link into Colborne Hill Park. The landscaping of Navigation Park will help to distract from the building backs of Colborne Street, as well as provide a buffer to the parkade. It is anticipated that many visitors will be arriving to the Downtown via the Parkade off of Icomm Drive. Therefore their first impression of the Downtown will be informed by the experience along Icomm Drive. Navigation Park will make a positive contribution to the South Gateway arrivals sequence.

Key guidelines are as follows:

- Introduce an interpretative trail that tells the industrial history of the once active canal.
- A pathway of generous width will run along the park, bounded by street trees.
- Clearly mark separate uses for pedestrians and cyclists to avoid potential conflict of movement. A safe crossing will be required at Icomm Drive.
- Refurbish exterior of parkade to create more pleasant edge to Navigation Park and create a unique gateway feature from existing parking structure.
- Tree planting should be substantial enough at the western edge of the site to provide adequate camouflage to the rear portion of Colborne Street and parts of the parkade.
- Appropriate and clearly marked signage indicating direction to the River and Downtown should be posted along the pathway.
- Pedestrian lighting and park furniture will be provided along the length of the park.





## 7.0 SECONDARY STUDY AREA

# 7.1

## Introduction

This section examines the Secondary Study Area that immediately surrounds the Downtown. The Secondary Study Area is complementary to the Downtown core and must work to reinforce the revitalization efforts of the Downtown. Growth that occurs in this location will help reinforce the role of the Downtown as a destination for a diversity of uses. The redevelopment of this area is important for the revitalization of the traditional Downtown area as growth in the Secondary Study Area will expand the market potential in the Downtown.

Although at present, much of the Secondary Study Area is under-utilized, the area has been identified by the City and the Province as an important area for future growth and intensification. The Growth Plan defines “intensification” as the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites; the development of vacant and/or under utilized lots within previously developed areas; infill development, or the expansion or conversion of existing buildings (based on the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005).

Within the Growth Centre boundaries contained within the Secondary Study Area, a minimum target of 150 residents and/or jobs has been established. By 2015, 40% of all new development must be completed within built-up areas (which are smaller than the Growth Centres). As the entire traditional Downtown core is captured by the Growth Centre boundary, opportunities for intensification in this existing build-up area are limited. Consequently, if the City is to meet its growth targets, pressure for growth will be placed on attracting new development to the Secondary Study Area.

To help meet intensification targets, there are a range of build-out scenarios available to the City. What is presented here is only one option, offering a generalized land use plan and an intensification plan by zone that can help direct future change. The level of intensification pursued will be dependent upon the City.



# 7.2 Land Uses

## 7.2.1 Existing Uses

According to the City of Brantford Official Plan, permitted land uses in the Secondary Study Area are extensive and mirror many of the uses permitted in the Commercial Core.

### **The Northern Zone**

In the northern portion of the Secondary Study Area the permitted land uses are reflected by the area's checkerboard zoning containing eight different classifications. The spectrum of classifications include: Open Space (OS), Institutional School (IS2), Institutional Major (IS3), Mixed Commercial Residential (C3), General Commercial (C8), Residential Conversion Zone (RC), Residential Medium Density (R4) and Residential High Density (RHD). Residential Conversion zones and General Commercial designations dominate the area.

In the RC zones that dominate the area, lot coverage ranges from 40% to 48% with a maximum building height of 3 storeys. In the C8 area extending along the Market Street corridor, lot coverage is set at 40% while building height is limited to 2 storeys. Dwelling units are currently prohibited on the ground level.

### **The Southern Zone**

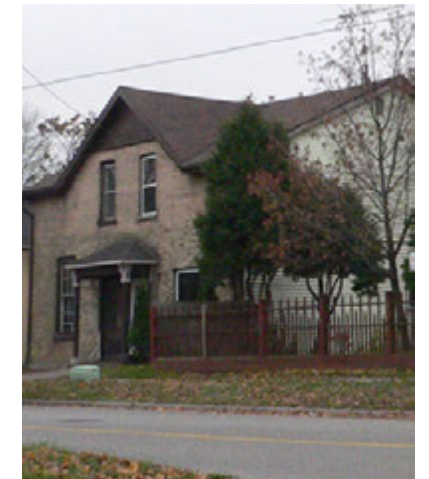
The southern portion of the Secondary Study Area is dominated by C1 zoning classification - a classification that is shared with the traditional downtown core north of Icomm Drive. However, much of the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area is designated as a Floodplain Special Policy Area #1. Thus, although flood risk is still present, the Official Plan does not prevent development in this location, but limits it to the continuation of the historical development pattern. In this area, basements are not permitted and all electrical service equipment must be installed above the first floor. Across the area, all new development is subject to a dual approval system involving site plan control as well as approval from the Grand River Conservation Authority.

As a consequence of the floodplain, the following uses are not permitted:

- Schools
- Hospitals

- Homes and most services for the elderly
- Group homes of any type
- Essential emergency services, including police, ambulance or fire stations (existing stations are permitted and allowed to expand by 50%)
- Electrical sub-stations

Other than those uses identified above, permitted uses in the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area are the same as those in the core. They include such things as residential developments, offices, arts spaces, stores and restaurants, hotels, civic and community facilities, medical services, museums, arts centres and theatres, parks and parking lots, amongst many other uses.



## 7.2.2 Concept

Market Street can be conceived as the central spine leading from the VIA rail station through the heart of downtown southward to Eagle Place. Realistically it is broken primarily by the pedestrianization of the Dalhousie/Colborne St. blocks and by the parkade. As such, its role below Icomm Drive is very different than to the north of the parkade.

For this reason the Secondary Plan Area is divided into two distinct zones. The Northern Zone focuses development around the VIA station with retail/restaurant/commercial uses extended along Market Street into the heart of Downtown.

The Southern Zone is characterized by green open space linkages connecting the riverfront with Shallow Creek Park and eventually the Clarence Street trail. This will establish an environment where landscaping will establish the tone of development minimizing the impact of surface parking and placing greater importance on pedestrian movement.

It should be noted that the Concept Plan presented opposite and the related Preferred New Uses in the proceeding section are a reflection of the area's current conditions and take into consideration recent developments and planning approvals. These uses represent a shorter term plan for the area and should be considered more as interim uses.

Pending market conditions, more intense uses would be desirable for such a central and under-utilized location. However, at present it is difficult to plan for long term change in this area due to uncertainty around major land holdings - both public and private - and recent approvals already secured.





### 7.2.3 Preferred New Uses

To accommodate the Master Plan, the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area requires the most changes in terms of land use classifications. At present, this area is classified primarily as C1 (with a Floodplain Special Policy Area #1 caveat). However, to help target development opportunities and provide a clearer long term vision for the area – as well as position the area to accommodate the required growth targets – a diversification of land uses is recommended.

To realize the Master Plan, it is recommended that new uses be introduced, including a dedicated “Destination Leisure District”, the introduction of a “New Format Commercial Zone” hub for the downtown, the up-zoning of residential in certain areas to an RHD designation, the down-zoning of some commercial parcels from C1 to C8 and a greater dedicated provision of Open Space across the Secondary Study Area.

- **Dedicated Destination Leisure District**

The dedicated “Destination Leisure District” is provided on the lands west of Market Street South where the Charity Casino and existing City controlled community leisure amenities are presently clustered. This designation would create a targeted destination for leisure investment and help to safeguard these unique assets in the downtown area. The Downtown should be a leisure destination and the proximity of these leisure uses and their relationship to the river and trail system should be secured – even if current uses evolve to more contemporary destination leisure uses.

This would require an Official Plan Amendment to revise portions of the area from CP (‘Community Park’) to a new dedicated Destination & Leisure classification.

- **Accommodating New Format Retail in the Downtown**

The introduction of a C12 “New Format Commercial Zone” indicates to investors that this type of retail is a welcome addition to the Downtown within certain areas and can be encouraged as long as design parameters are followed (see below) and services work to complement existing uses in the core. Providing a C12 designation in this area would allow the Downtown to act as an alternative destination for these types of uses and help it compete with edge of centre areas.

Typically this area would accommodate only those uses that cannot be accommodated in the Downtown due to size requirements or excessive parking demands.

The introduction of this designation would require Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments.

- **Residential & Commercial Transition Zones**

To the east of Clarence Street, it is recommended that the current land uses be down-zoned from C1 to a more restrictive designation for commercial uses. As part of providing a more focused Downtown and directing development to the core, the Master Plan advocates only allowing the C1 designation in the traditional Downtown area (north of Icomm Drive).

The downgraded designation should still be able to accommodate the proposed campus office park style development for this highly accessible and visible location. An office campus would introduce a new type of office product not currently available in the Downtown and provides an opportunity for the core to compete with suburban areas for the office market.

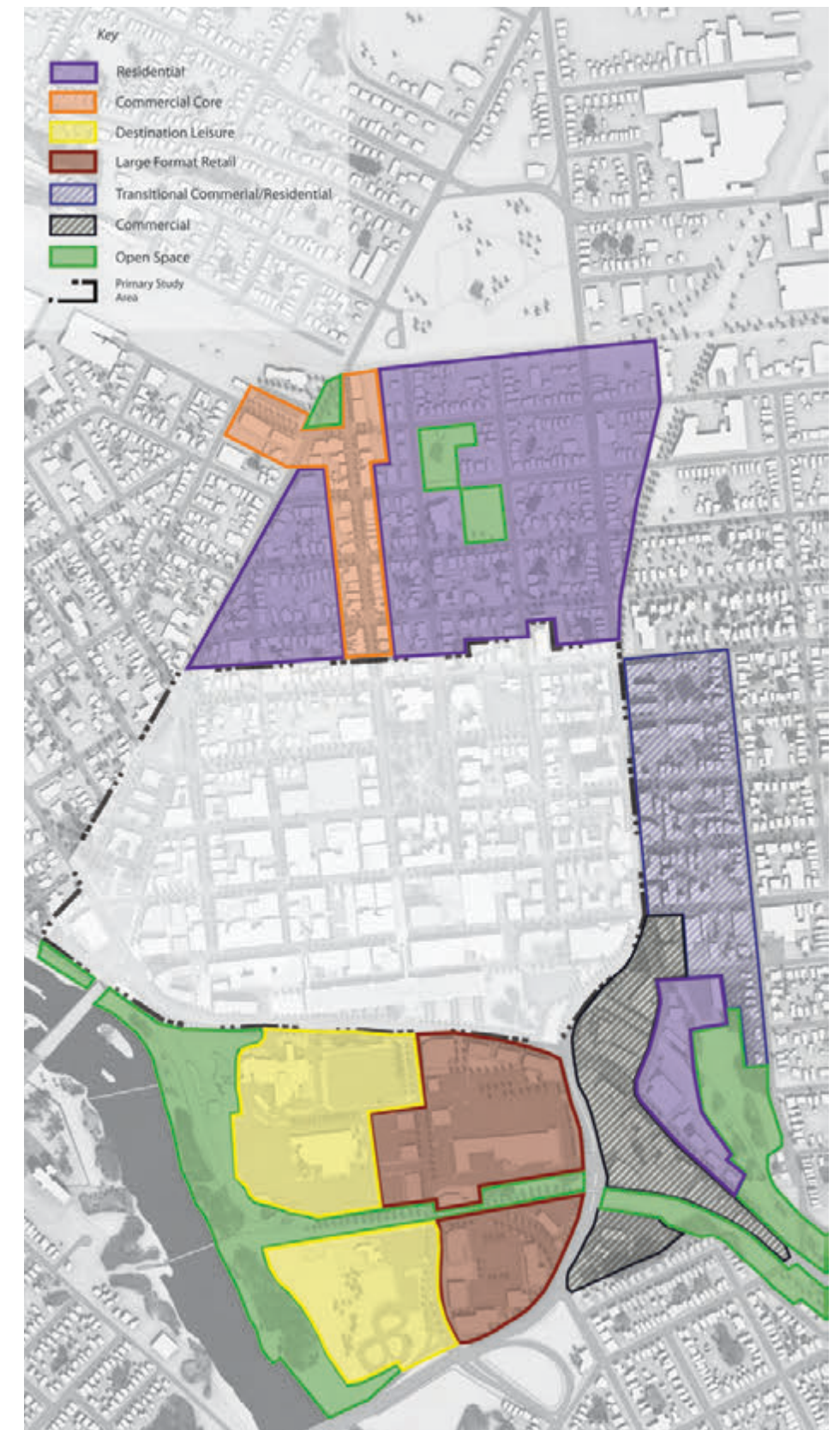
In contrast to this down-zoning for commercial uses, an up-zoning of residential uses is recommended for the area bound by Greenwich Street and Shallow Creek Park. This site behind the C8 area can act as a transitional zone between the commercial areas and the established residential area to the east. The site’s close proximity to the park and the canal could make it a desirable residential destination – one of the few sites suitable for residential in the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area.

The introduction of this designation would require a Zoning By-law Amendment.

- **Market Street Intensification Corridor & Station Node**

Within the northern portion of the Secondary Study Area, the primary land use recommendation is to up-zone the Market Street corridor from a General Commercial designation to a C1 designation, allowing it to better fulfill its role as a linear extension of the commercial core and an important gateway to and from the Via Rail Station.

This land use recommendation allows for more significant intensification opportunities along this corridor and the development of a higher density residential and/or commercial node around the rail station. The remaining land areas in the northern zone are best suited to remain as urban, low rise, residential neighbourhoods that feed the Downtown.



## 7.3

# Intensification Zones

In pursuing the goals of the Places to Grow Plan and the new Official Plan intensification policies, the Master Plan helps the City to direct growth through the identification of key intensification zones, as presented on the plan opposite.

Embracing the principles around sustainable growth, intensification zones are typically located along major corridors (Market Street North), at key transportation hubs (Via Rail Station), prime gateway locations (Icomm Drive and Clarence Street junction) and in those areas edged by open spaces to provide a buffer between the more intense uses and the less intense zones (Shallow Creek residential opportunity).

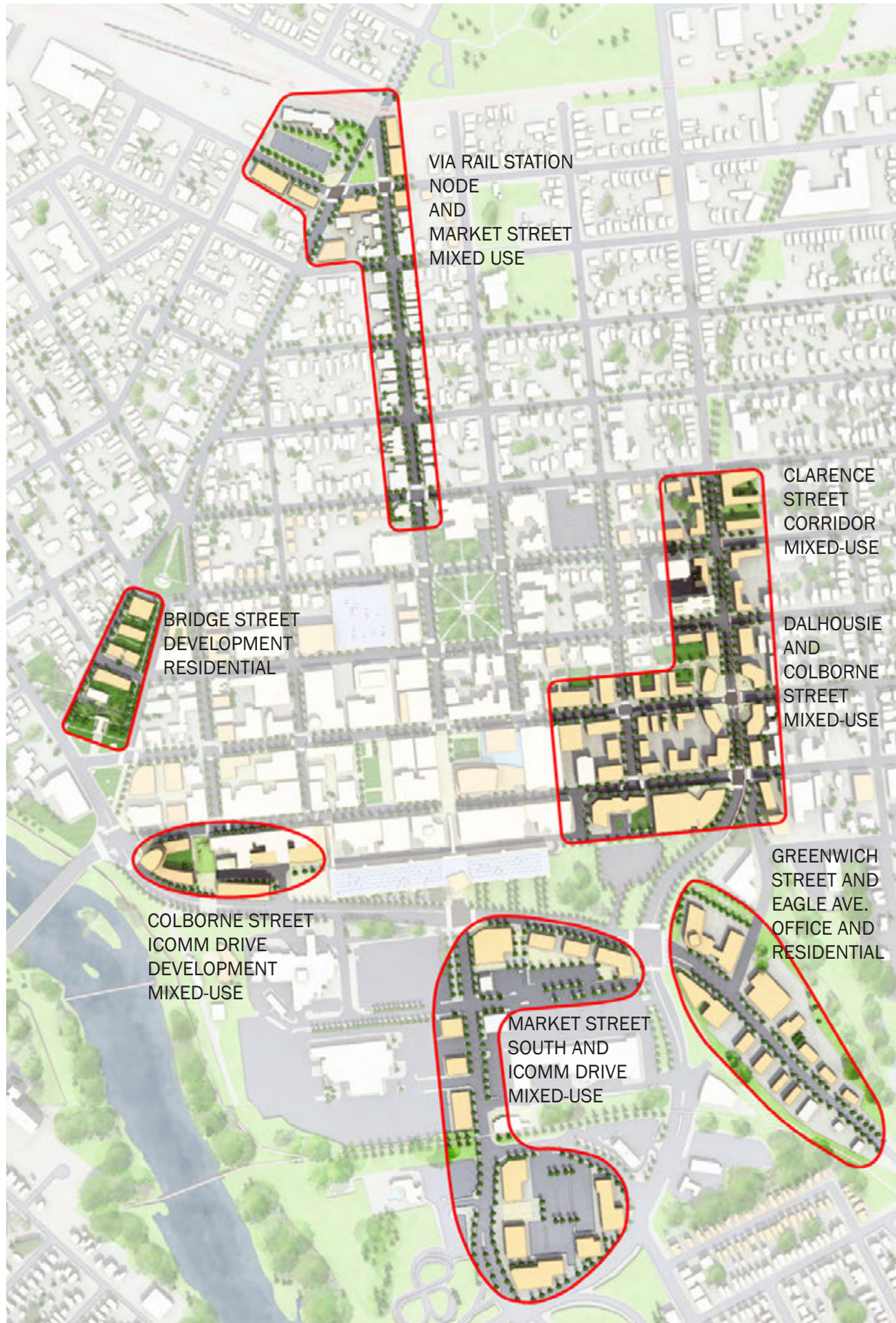
Primary intensification zones include:

- Market Street North and the Rail Hub
- the proposed new retail cluster south of the vacant Market Street South Rail Station
- a residential expansion zone that ties into established residential areas
- a new commercial zone marking the entrance to Downtown from the south at the intersection of Icomm Drive, Clarence Street and Greenwich Street.

It should be noted that intensification options along the Market Street corridor and established commercial streets in the core, such as Colborne, Dalhousie, Clarence and West streets will be influenced by the individual sites ability to meet parking requirements. Intensification of commercial office uses requires a greater provision of parking than residential uses.

Although Clarence Street south of Nelson Street has been identified as an intensification zone (comprised of a series of opportunity redevelopment sites) due to the health of the established housing along the portion of Clarence Street north of Nelson Street, the Master Plan advocates that this northern portion be maintained as a lower intensity residential zone not suitable for higher density development.

As identified, a key intensification zone and opportunity site is presented at the intersection of Icomm Drive, Clarence Street and Greenwich Street. This site, which is under public ownership, forms part of a larger area that the Master Plan identifies as a campus office park. The size of parcels available in this location allow for proposals to offer a balance between parking considerations, open space provision and built form needs. As a gateway site, the development fronting onto the Clarence Street/Greenwich junction should be of a high quality and could be more substantial than many other locations in the Secondary Study Area.



VIA RAIL STATION  
NODE  
AND  
MARKET STREET  
MIXED USE

CLARENCE  
STREET  
CORRIDOR  
MIXED-USE

DALHOUSIE  
AND  
COLBORNE  
STREET  
MIXED-USE

GREENWICH  
STREET AND  
EAGLE AVE.  
OFFICE AND  
RESIDENTIAL

MARKET STREET  
SOUTH AND  
ICOMM DRIVE  
MIXED-USE

COLBORNE STREET  
ICOMM DRIVE  
DEVELOPMENT  
MIXED-USE

BRIDGE STREET  
DEVELOPMENT  
RESIDENTIAL

Intensification Zones

# 7.4 Design Parameters for Intensification Zones

The following design parameters should act as guidelines for intensification and redevelopment to ensure that new proposals are sensitive to and provide for a balance between the provincial requirements for infilling and intensification and existing physical form of neighbourhoods, including heritage resources.

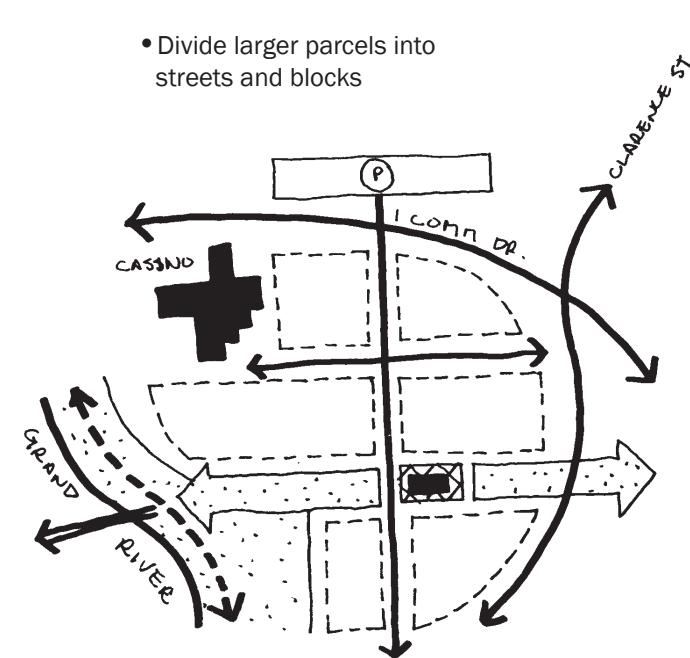
## 7.4.1 Destination Leisure & Retail Area

Future development south of Icomm Drive should be sited along main street edges with entries off of these streets as well as from the internalized parking areas.

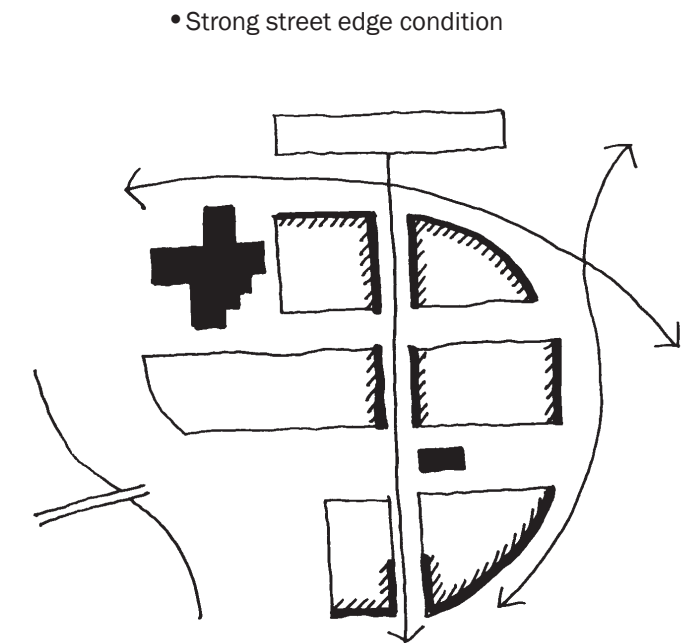
The former rail station shall be preserved for adaptable re-use and be situated on a newly created plaza. A linear park running west to east will connect the station building to the river system and to the new office park and the canal.

The following parameters should be considered when continuing development of the area south of Icomm Drive:

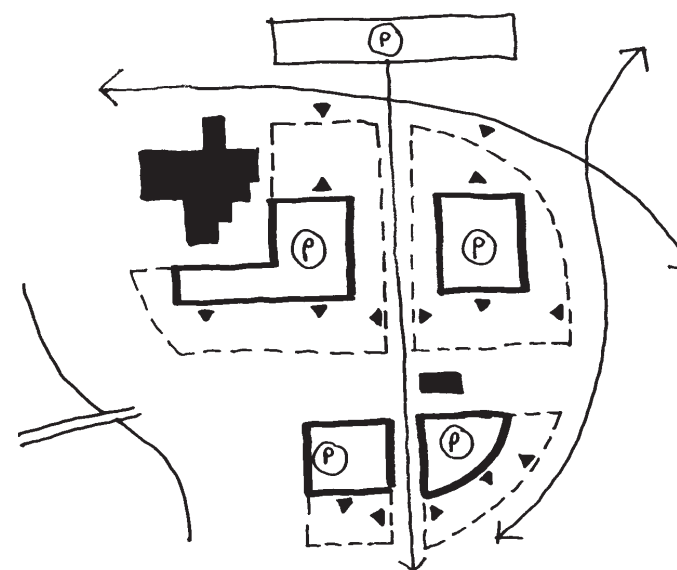
- Maintain a strong street edge with buildings facing outwards as well as towards parking area.
- Parking to be internalized within block with servicing discretely located.
- Provide a generous setback from the street in order to permit gracious pedestrian walkway and green canopy of street trees.
- Establish internal street system that shall eventually link with Casino's thereby creating regularized blocks for future development.
- Establish and maintain a green link from the river to the proposed office park and eastwards to the canal.



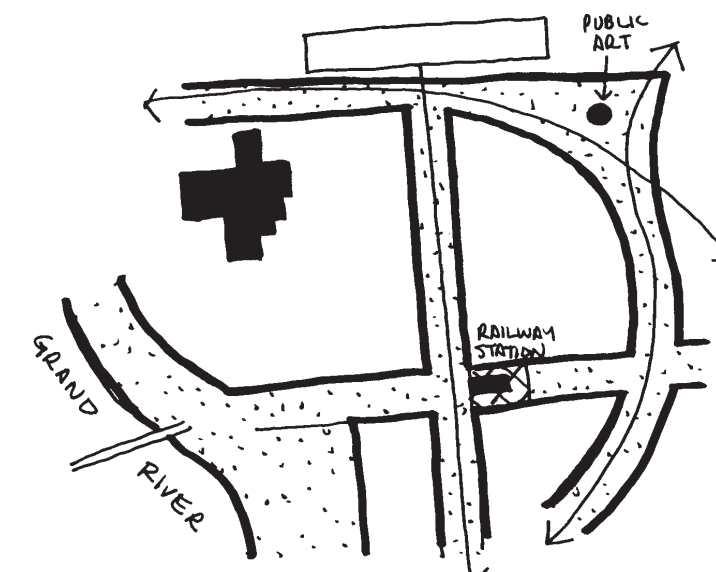
- Divide larger parcels into streets and blocks



- Strong street edge condition



- Internalize parking with building access located off main roads and parking areas



- Landscape the edges to buffer uses and provide green connections

## 7.4.2 Clarence Street

With the eventual discontinuation of the rail line running parallel to Clarence Street the opportunity to redevelop properties that straddle the roadway will present itself. Key to this will be the conversion of the rail line into an arm of Brantford's trail network and the beautification of Clarence Street.

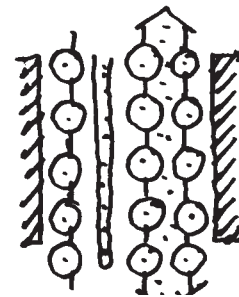
A tree-lined Clarence Street will establish the context within which new development can be attracted. Given the busy nature of the street development shall be of a scale that is greater in height than elsewhere in the downtown. However, in order to create a consistent streetscape, a base building of 6 storeys shall be established. Each development will share a consistent minimum setback from the street to ensure a continuously defined street edge.

As both Dalhousie and Colborne Streets are identified as gateways where they intersect Clarence Streets special landscape and architectural treatment is suggested at these important junctions.

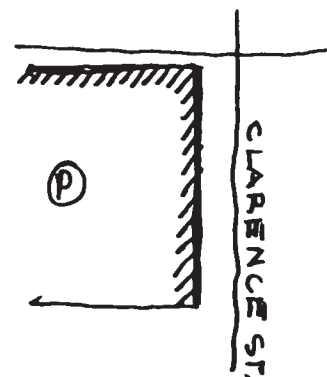
Finally, parking and servicing will be located away from the front of the building with the former being encouraged to be located below grade.

The following parameters should be considered when redeveloping Clarence Street south of Nelson Street:

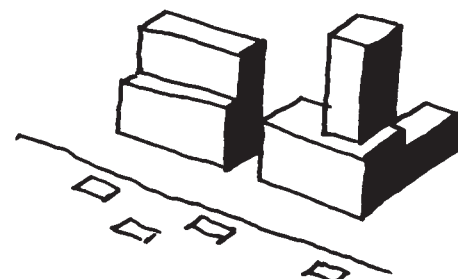
- Clarence Street is to be bounded by street trees along both sides and have a landscaped central median.
- The rail line is to be transformed into a tree-lined pedestrian and cycling path that will directly link into Shallow Creek Park.
- Parking to be internalized within block or below grade with servicing discretely located.
- A common datum of 6 storeys will be established for all redevelopments facing Clarence Streets; buildings of greater height will be permitted as step backs from the base building and as point towers.
- The intersections of Dalhousie and Clarence Streets and of Colborne and Clarence Streets are to be considered gateways using architectural treatment, public art and plaza creation as means to denoting the arrival to downtown.



• Beautification of Clarence St. with consistent building setback



• Active Frontages with parking discretely located



• Establish a consistent base height along the street and allow taller elements behind



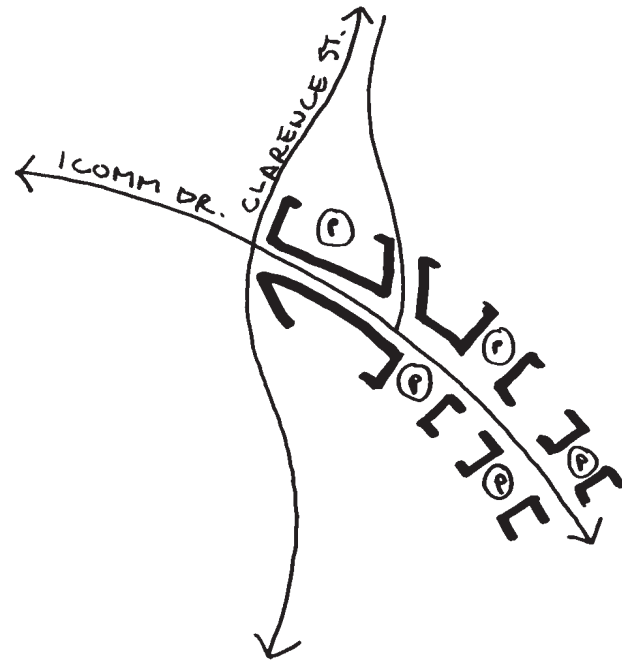
### 7.4.3 Icomm Drive Office Park

The proposed office park development will be focused upon Greenwich Street running southeast from Clarence Street. While buildings will primarily not exceed 4 storeys in height, additional height will be encouraged at the intersection of Clarence and Greenwich Streets. In this gateway location, buildings up to 8 storeys may be appropriate.

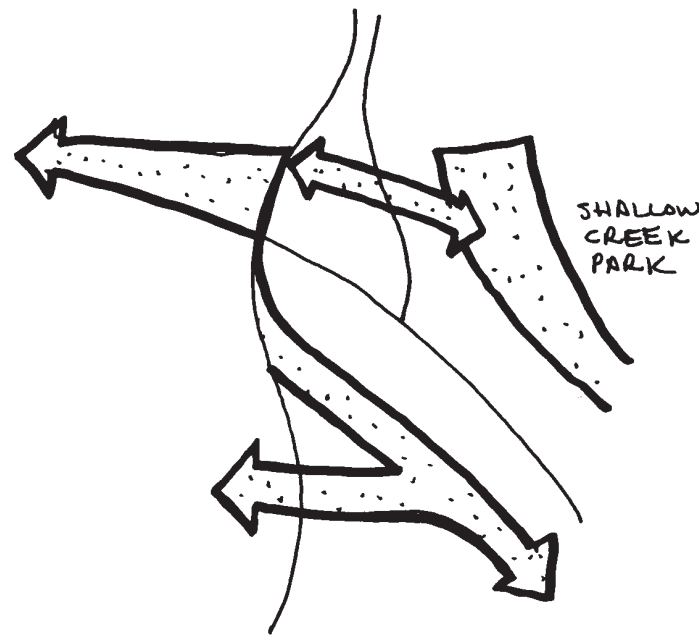
A green link of approximately 20 metres in width will link Navigation Park to Shallow Creek Park and the canal trail system.

The following parameters should be considered when continuing development of the area southeast of Clarence and Greenwich Streets:

- Create a strong building edge along Clarence and Greenwich Streets allowing for generous width for pedestrian walk and street tree plantings.
- Buildings of taller stature to be located at corner of Clarence and Greenwich Streets.
- Office buildings to be located within a lush green setting.
- Parking to be shared and located either between or beside buildings.
- Mid-block connections across Icomm Drive should be prohibited. Crossings should be directed to major intersections.
- Linear Park to link Navigation Park across Newport Street to Shallow Creek Park and the canal.



- Strong Building Edge
- Shared Parking



- Lush Green Setting
- Links into Wider Open Space Network

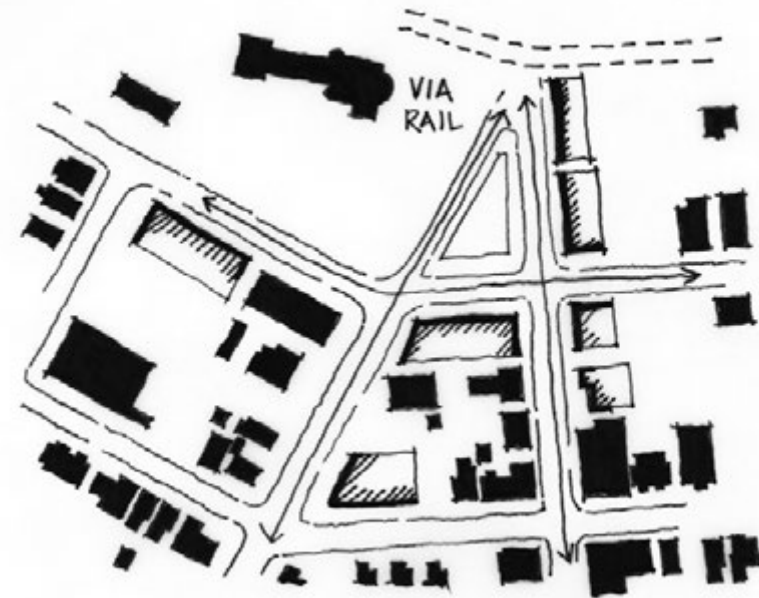


### 7.4.4 Via Rail Hub

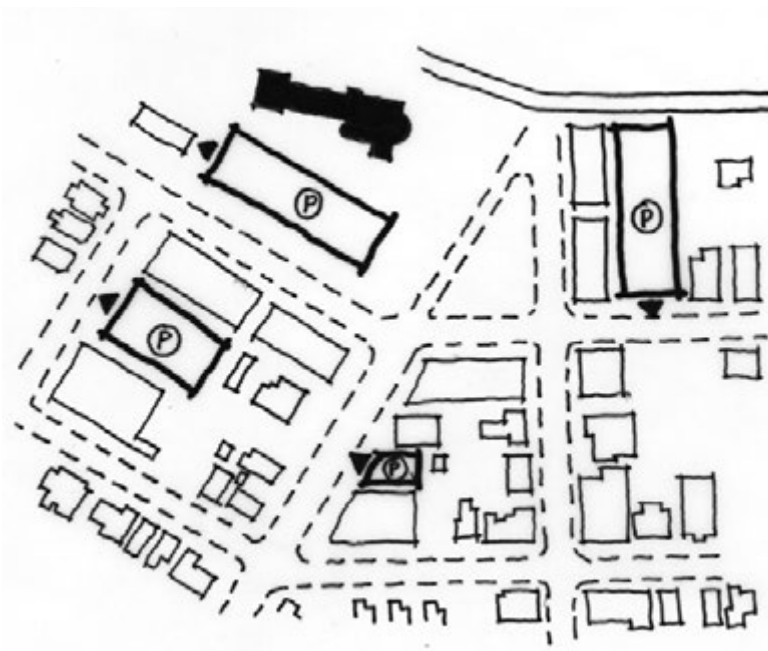
With the Via Rail Station as a major transit node it is recommended that development be intensified around its perimeter. Parking shall be shared and be discretely located between or behind buildings.

The following parameters should be considered when continuing development of the area adjacent to the Via Rail Station:

- Buildings should be significantly taller than surrounding context but without exceeding 6 storeys in height.
- Maintain and improve character of green island between West and Market Streets as main gateway entry feature to Downtown.
- Invest in streetscaping especially as a buffer for pedestrians along street and VIA Rail parking.
- Improve underpass area with additional lighting and public realm enhancements to better link into Terrace Hill neighbourhood.
- Create a pedestrian plaza at corner of West Street and Market Street and maintain well marked pedestrian crossings.
- Ground floors of buildings should be animated with windows and commercial uses.
- Provide a generous setback from the street in order to permit gracious pedestrian walkway and green canopy of street trees.
- Parking should be discretely located behind or between buildings, never in front.



- Maintain strong street edges and build to the lot line

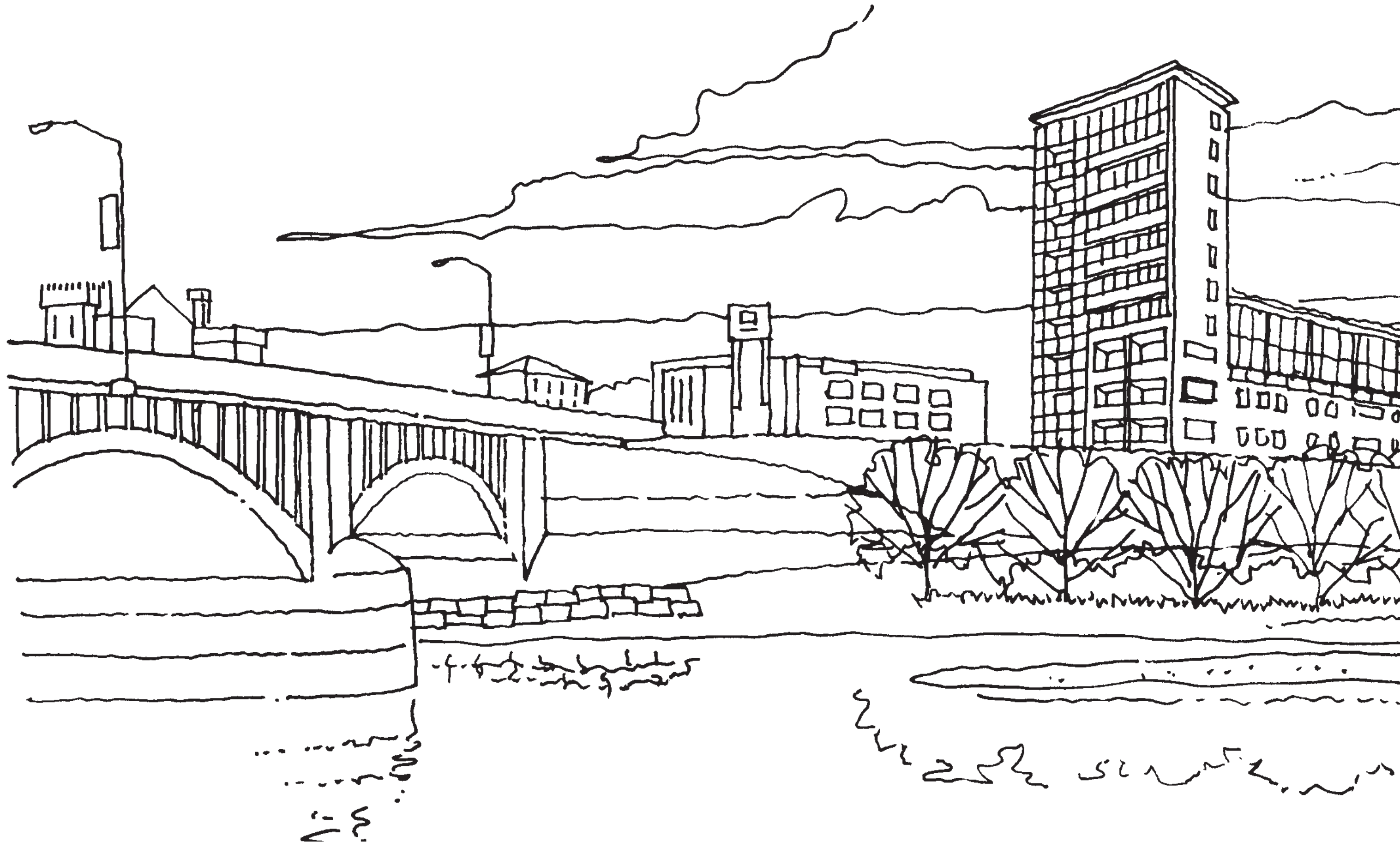


- Parking should be provided between or in back of buildings, not in front



- Provide safe and beautiful pedestrianised linkages between the VIA Station, Downtown and the Terrace Hill neighbourhood.





Colborne Point





## 8.0 DELIVERING CHANGE & MOVING FORWARD

# 8.0

## Introduction

This section presents recommendations on how the Master Plan and related priority interventions can be brought forward by the City of Brantford in partnership with its stakeholders.

To ensure an effective start to project realization, this section presents a clear list of priority interventions and related actions required. It concludes with a summary of implementation and incentive tools available to the City to bring forward the Downtown Master Plan. The implementing policies, programmes and approaches have been crafted to help guide future decision making so that investment opportunities are maximized.

### The Need for Leadership

*Strong, determined and clear leadership is critical for reversing the fortunes of a challenged downtown. A leader must have the ability to champion change and visionary thinking and ensure that their vision is shared by all. Strong leaders often initiate and focus planning initiatives so they become champions when necessary to ensure that support for downtown regeneration occurs.*

*A significant part of this role must include forging partnerships and encouraging meaningful engagement to mobilize the community in regeneration efforts. This is required to help mobilize resources (e.g. money and people) and create a network of enablers that can actively work to successfully deliver the agreed vision (e.g. private/public, public/public, and informal/formal).*

*This leadership role is one which is entrusted to the Downtown Action Committee. Together with the Council and city staff, the Committee's focus must be the constant amelioration of the physical and social fabric of Downtown. The role of this Committee should be continued and further strengthened to lead the implementation of this Downtown Master Plan.*

### The Need for Partnerships

*Part of the strength in leadership is to create a network of partnerships that are mutually beneficial (e.g. private/public, public/public, and informal/formal). Such partnerships allow pooling of ideas and the sharing of responsibility. Some notable examples which Brantford already undertakes include the chamber of commerce, "town-gown" partnerships, downtown business associations.*

*It would also be instrumental in fostering a stronger relationship amongst the business and industrial sectors from outside the downtown – many of these hold meetings, have guests from out of town – and could be encouraged to include the downtown as part of their business and entertainment functions. Inviting them to join the Downtown Action Committee might be one means to enhance their perception and interest.*

*Similarly, First Nations groups such as the Six Nations and New Credit communities should be invited to be part of DAC, or specific arts or cultural committees to foster integration of all Brantford residents in the ongoing evolution of the cultural and physical aspects of the downtown.*

### Priority Capital Projects:

- Two-way conversion and related streetscape improvements to Colborne and Dalhousie streets
- Expanded Transit Terminal
- Introduction of new parking structure in Downtown
- Physical improvements to existing Parkade
- Creation of Navigation Park and Bridge Street Park
- Upgrade of existing public park spaces, including coordinated street furniture programme
- New signage to and within Downtown
- Public realm and streetscape improvements along length of Market Street
- Expansion of Trail and Cycle network across the Downtown
- Upgrading of laneway system, with priority emphasis on creation of Harmony Lane
- Traffic calming and intersection treatments at gateway locations and sections of Icomm Drive

## 8.1

# General Sequencing of Key Interventions

A critical component of implementation is to identify those key interventions which will bring the plan from vision to reality. Realizing the Vision for Downtown Brantford will require a long-term commitment, entailing both private and public interventions.

Early initiatives should include a number of enabling projects, such as open space designation, partnership building, land assembly, where feasible. This early phase should also include detailed discussions with land owners in the area to determine how to best bring forward in partnership the recommendations for new development presented in this study.

Early phases of improvements should focus on the area bound by priority intervention streets, as presented in Section 3.3. This will allow for many of the existing strengths in the Downtown to be capitalized on and linked more strongly to maximize their benefit and create a better defined Downtown for Brantford.

Although the timing for much of the privately led physical development will be market-driven, many of the infrastructure and public realm priority projects will need to be led by the City of Brantford or their public sector partners. Consequently, during the early years of the programme, it is recommended that a focus be placed on implementing those interventions that improve and create settings for new investments, help to build confidence in the downtown and send a message that Downtown Brantford is changing for the better.

Early interventions should offer a focus on public realm improvements, way-finding, signage and downtown branding and public art projects. These types of projects have immediate impact, are relatively discreet and tend to require relatively modest budgets. The positive impact of such projects also signal to the private sector that Brantford City Council is clearly engaged in – and committed to – the regeneration of its Downtown.

Key early interventions should include as a priority:

- Undertake preliminary work to allow the City of Brantford to prepare a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- Two-way conversions of Dalhousie and Colborne streets. Included in this is public realm improvements along both streets.

- Revise parking strategy to reflect Masterplan recommendations
- Undertake intersection improvements at main gateway access points, including Lorne Bridge and Dalhousie/Clarence Street and Colborne Clarence Street junctions
- Provide a stronger focus on tourism opportunities in the Downtown, potentially through a new Tourism Office, additional staff resources and new formalized partnerships.
- Continue negotiations to retain, attract or expand major downtown attractors - such as the YMCA, Nipissing University, Mohawk College and Laurier Brantford.
- Tied to the launch of Harmony Square in 2008, undertake a re-branding exercise for Downtown Brantford, including the introduction of new signage and wayfinding. This should also include an expansion of the Downtown programming offer.
- Get the local arts community involved in finding an interim solution for south Colborne Street - hold a design competition to improve the image and current condition of the hoardings along this Main Street.
- Prepare detailed costings for a comprehensive refurbishment of Market Centre Parkade.
- Through a market study, define Downtown's retail gaps and actively target providers. Lobbying of private developers should also be undertaken to attract new residential uses to the core.
- Where possible, work with private owners to undertake a structural review of the buildings on the south side of Colborne to assess their health and identify any potential for adaptive re-use as well as heritage value.
- Create a marketing strategy for the Downtown to expand opportunities for events and bring partners together.
- Creation of a Downtown Improvement Partnership (including DAC and BIA representatives amongst business, political and community interests) to oversee implementation of Master Plan recommendations

The actual timing of project roll out will be a combination of market conditions and municipal budget planning.

## 8.2

# Costings & Maintenance

As most civic projects, programs and services are funded through municipal budgets, this section attaches cost estimates to the core public sector projects identified in the Downtown Master Plan over the short and longer term.

Pursuing a totally re-imaged downtown is an expensive undertaking that will require significant capital expenditure. However, not all funding required is public and not all funding is required in the early years.

At this stage, private sector contributions cannot be estimated. For public sector contributions, it is estimated that approximately \$7.5M is required over 5 years to implement the priority public sector-led interventions. This does not include a new parking structure with upgraded transit terminal which has been costed at \$20.4M.

Costing details of individual interventions are provided at Appendix D.

### Maintenance

Typically, for new capital public realm projects, the materials and workmanship during the first two to three years are covered under by the contractor under warranty. In these early years, costs should be very little for the municipality beyond their own landscaping and upkeep costs. General upkeep is typically factored into the original contract with the municipality.

Once the warranty has expired, generally up to 5 per cent of the value of the project cost be allocated for general maintenance. After a ten year period costs will increase as quality of materials deteriorates with time and wear and more repairs are required.

## 8.3

# Delivering Change: Tools for Implementation

In recent years Brantford has been extremely pro-active in putting in place effective mechanisms and initiatives to translate its ambitions for the downtown into reality. With innovative initiatives such as the Performance Grant system that has resulted in ‘bricks and mortar’ improvements, Brantford has shown itself to be very adept at proving that targeted public investment can drive positive change.

Implementation will require the inclusion of enabling provisions in the City of Brantford’s Official Plan as well as the drafting of the zoning by-law with the relevant interventions and actions embedded within it, where appropriate.

This section provides a summary of how the ambitions of the Downtown Master Plan can be realized through its integration in the City’s regulatory framework.

### The City of Brantford Official Plan

Brantford’s Official Plan was recently updated. The recent update was current and very extensive and a number of specific recommendations developed for the Commercial Core area, to strengthen the role of the Downtown and implement the new provincial planning regulations, as previously described.

#### **A New Designation for the Downtown**

This study would go one step farther and recommend the addition of a new Downtown Area designation in Section 5 of the Official Plan – The Concept Plan. This would highlight the downtown as a distinct and critical part of Brantford’s urban structure. This new section would contain the major principles and objectives already contained in the Official Plan (Section 5.3, Section 6.2.14) relating to the downtown, to which could be added those which have been elaborated in this study.

Concurrently, it is recommended that the Core Commercial of the zoning by-law be renamed Downtown Mixed Use, again highlighting the special nature of Brantford’s cultural, institutional, residential and commercial core. The change in nomenclature from Core Commercial to Downtown Mixed Use does not entail a whole scale change to the policies contained within the existing Section 7.3.2. Core Commercial Area, but would underline the multi-faceted nature of the downtown – not only focused on commercial uses, but encompassing a true diversity of city

centre activities. It would be bound on two sides by Mixed Commercial Residential areas, both existing and proposed within parts of the Secondary Study area – again highlighting the diverse character of these central areas. It is recommended that the Intensification Corridor along Market Street be similarly redesignated in the Zoning by-law.

Ideally this designation would retain the current Official Plan provisions regarding the downtown and add to them a number of key recommendations from this study, including:

- Recognition of the role of Downtown in accommodating intensification and fulfilling provincial objectives. Formal recognition of opportunities for high density residential infill development along intensification corridors, such as Clarence Street and West Street and Market Street should be made. Specific sites should be identified as part of policy 7.3.2.12.
- Identification of specific sites within the Downtown Mixed Use Area where landmark structures are desired.
- Specific reference made to the creation, size and location of new downtown open spaces, namely Navigation Park and Bridge Park should be made.
- Identification of Priority Retail Streets to highlight their importance, bring forward concept of a more focused downtown, and emphasize the importance of ground floor commercial on these streets.
- Identification of specific Heritage Incentives available to the Downtown. Consideration of designation of key heritage assets which have been preserved and adapted to new institutional uses. Acknowledgment that further analysis is required to explore opportunities along south side of Colborne Street should be made.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the need for enhanced pedestrian connectivity to the River and through the Downtown.
- Reiteration and expansion of the urban design guidelines set out in the recent Official Plan Amendments (restated in Section 2.4.1 of this report).
- The creation of a new leisure designation, large format retail and higher intensity residential uses in the southern portion of the Secondary Study Area

### Zoning By-law

The zoning by-law will require amendment to reflect some of the land use changes recommended above and to reflect some of this study’s recommendations.

Principally it is recommended that new terminology be introduced to replace the current Core Commercial zoning category. The term Downtown Mixed Use more aptly reflects the recommended Official Plan designation change. However, in most instances the provisions of the Core Commercial category remain appropriate, providing flexibility and in most aspects sufficient development opportunity to reflect almost all of the aspirations of the Downtown Master Plan. Amendments suggested include:

- The introduction of a revised height strategy along the intensification zones – in particular Market Street and Clarence Street to direct higher intensity growth and encourage a spectrum of heights across the Downtown.
- a change in provisions to require retail commercial or institutional uses on the ground floor on Retail Priority Streets. On other streets within the Downtown, retail or other uses which promote activity on the street level should be encouraged but not required, as the retail focus is proposed to be concentrated in a smaller area of the Downtown.
- A greater dedicated provision of Open Space across the study area. New zoning categories should reflect the open space proposals presented in the Master Plan.
- The eliminate of parking exemptions in the Downtown.
- C1 only allowed in the Downtown core.
- The up-zoning of Market Street from a general commercial C8 to a C1 designation including Via Rail hub to accommodate intensification opportunities.
- Allow a C12 classification adjacent to Downtown for new format retail.

Detailed amendments to other zoning considerations, such as setbacks, amenity provision, driveway requirements, rear and side yard specifications and loading/servicing requirements will require further analysis.

## Other Potential Delivery Mechanisms:

### **Community Improvement Plan Update**

The City's 2002 Community Improvement Plan is comprehensive and strategic. However, with the adoption of the new Official Plan Amendment, the Transportation Master Plan, and the completion of this Downtown Master Plan Study, it would be timely to undertake a review of the CIP and ensure that its goals, objectives and implementation strategies remain relevant and timely.

### **A Clear Economic Development Strategy**

The City of Brantford must prepare an Economic Development Strategy for the city as a whole. The plan should include a special focus on stabilizing and improving the economic health of the Downtown. This must include a detailed capacity and market demand analysis that links city growth to demand & release of commercial space. This will help Brantford gain a clearer understanding of their commercial market requirements (retail, office, leisure uses) and link city growth to a strategic release of land.

### **Development Permits**

Ontario Regulation 608/06 came into effect January 1, 2007, enabling all local municipalities to use the Development Permit System (DPS).

The DPS combines the zoning, site plan and minor variance processes into one application and approval process. For those areas which have been the subject of more extensive design review, the application of the new development permit system could be considered. The Development Permit is a new planning tool that was added to the Planning Act in 1995 (Section 70.2(1)). Its objective is to allow municipalities to streamline the zoning, minor variance and site plan control processes into one development permit requirement.

Under this system, municipalities have greater flexibility to tailor their individual approval process, specifically allowing them to integrate design considerations into otherwise rigid zoning regulations. In addition, a greater degree of authority is granted staff in approving development applications and minor variations within the permit parameters, thereby reducing Council's role in site-specific planning approvals.

The DPS benefits not only municipalities and the community, but also individual land owners by providing a similar level of certainty as exists in zoning while also providing the added benefits of streamlining, flexibility and the convenience of a one-stop source for planning approvals.

Implementation of the development permit system requires the inclusion of enabling provisions in the Official or Secondary Plans, as well as the drafting of the development permit by-law with the relevant zoning and design criteria embedded. The Downtown or portions of it may be ideally suited for the application of a development permit pilot system, as design guidelines have been elaborated and new zoning created as required to provide the required level of certainty for both the City and the politicians.

### **A Stronger Role for the Downtown Action Committee**

The City should bolster the role of their existing Downtown Action Committee (DAC) and ensure a very close working relationship is built between the recently appointed a city-wide programming manager.

Specific tasks that DAC should be involved with include:

- together with the Economic Development Department, aggressively market key opportunity sites in the downtown to targeted investment interests, especially those capable of providing ownership housing or commercial uses.
- working with the BIA to more effectively promote the downtown as a business and entertainment destination.
- the development of branding that stresses Downtown's distinctiveness.
- managing and fostering the role of City owned enterprises in the downtown (The Sanderson Centre, the Farmer's Market, Harmony Square, Victoria Square) and fostering new public-private initiatives with institutions or private developers.
- adding vitality through professional marketing and events programmes and ensure coordination of timing and marketing of diverse activities.
- work toward the improvement of transport, parking, orientation and accessibility.
- celebrate local heritage through tourism & destination management.
- promoting a better public realm through public art and major infrastructure improvements.
- ensure that the town or city centre is welcoming to all and an experience worth having.

### **A Dedicated Downtown Improvement Partnership**

A Downtown Improvement Partnership comprised of key stakeholders should be established to work closely with DAC to ensure that the recommendations presented in the Master Plan are brought forward. The Downtown Partnership would champion the Downtown revitalization efforts and be comprised primarily of non-City Staff members (unlike DAC). Representation could include:

- local Councillors
- Downtown businesses leaders & BIA representatives
- Major business interests from outside the Downtown
- Post secondary representatives
- Heritage Committee representatives
- Police and emergency services representatives
- The Charity Casino
- Local developers and land owners
- The Chamber of Commerce
- local citizens and community leaders

This Partnership would complement DAC by providing a political and commercial focus for the Downtown improvement agenda. The group would be tasked with spreading recognition that the Downtown is an important asset for all and must remain a priority for the City.

### **Stronger Design Review**

Design Review through site plan control review is the part of the approval process which most addresses the details of urban design and provides the opportunity to enhance the public realm - be it through specifying the nature and quality of landscape and streetscape treatment, pedestrian and vehicular accessibility, or, to a certain extent architectural treatment.

A dedicated Downtown Design Review Panel made up of impartial local Brantford design professionals, City Staff and council members who appreciate the downtown could be created to provide impartial professional advice in matters of design that affect the public realm.

To realize the benefits offered through this review process, the departments and staff involved must be committed and proactive in implementing a design-oriented approach. The same can be said of decision-making around the acquisition and treatment of municipal rights-of-way, which also provide the opportunity to enhance the quality of the public realm.

## 8.4 Incentives

Developing the improvements set out in this report will require funding mechanisms for Brantford City Council, as well as financial incentives to attract high quality development within the Downtown.

The City has committed millions of dollars to revitalization of heritage buildings for institutional purposes; to creation of active spaces (Harmony Square) and to performance grants for appropriate development. This level of commitment to the Downtown should be continued and enhanced to the extent possible.

The use of financial incentives to attract development is of great importance to a downtown like Brantford's which is finally evolving its own distinct identity and character. The key will be to ensure development of the highest quality and in line with the objectives of this Master Plan. Financial rewards for "good development behaviour" is one certain method for ensuring compliance with municipal objectives.

Securing incentives should be dependent on achieving the built form and land use objectives as set out in the proposed design guidelines and the wider objectives of the Master Plan.

### A Downtown Grants Program

This type of grant is provided for under Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act. Currently, the capacity to utilize foregone revenue as a grant payable to the property owner is limited to the municipal portion of the property tax and specifically excludes the Provincial (education) portion of the property tax. Section 28 Grants can be comprised in any appropriate form. The Performance Grant is accessible to the property owner earlier in the process.

In Brantford, the Performance Grant system which arose from the City's General Implementation Plan has comprised approximately \$5 million in grants in an effort to stimulate private sector investment in the Downtown. The Grant system has been instrumental in many of the recent developments in the Downtown including private investments for building refurbishment, the Harmony Square development and expansion of the post-secondary education campus. To date, the City has committed approximately \$5 million in grants to stimulate over \$20 million in investment activity in the downtown core. A small amount of funding is still available through the programme.

It is recommended that a new grants program be introduced for the Downtown and more funds made available, particularly to achieve stated catalytic projects set out in this Master Plan. Grants may well offset the incremental costs involved in requiring developers to provide parking downtown or to achieve a higher design standard.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF) & Tax Equivalent Financing (TEIG)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) should be considered as another one of the ways to inspire new private sector development. The concept around both TIFs and TEIGs is that public investment triggers new development and expands the tax base which can be clawed back in future.

In the case of TIFs funding is provided through the Province and is approved on a case by case basis. It is applicable to capital projects that both provincial and local governments identify as a priorities. Funding flows proportional to the amount of potential development in the designated district.

Tax Increment Equivalent Grants are made under the provisions of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which already has been elaborated for the Downtown. These grants are funded entirely from new incremental tax revenues that, but for the provision of financial incentives, the Town may not otherwise have realized. A budgetary account is established to direct a portion of incremental tax revenues in each year of the program's operation in an amount sufficient to fund annual grants provided. The balance of new tax revenues will contribute to the City's overall tax revenues arising from new assessment growth. The City already has in place the required Community Improvement Plan for the area including the Downtown, so this program could readily be put into place, although an update to the CIP may be required.

Tax Increment Financing is similar to TIEGs in that it relates to new incremental tax revenues that would not have been realized had the financial incentives not been available. In this case of TIFs however, Provincial acquiescence is required, in that among the taxes "forgiven" are the school portion of municipal taxes. Achieving TIFS is a more onerous process, in that application must be made to the Province, who will also be looking for projects which would not have occurred had the TIF grant not been available. In Brantford, the revitalization of the historic downtown to bring new residential, institutional, and commercial development will surely be considered positively by the Province, especially in light of the growth targets aspired to for this centre.

The Council could look to the City of Kitchener as a model, where it has successfully introduced a programme of 'Adaptive Re-Use Tax Increment-Based (TIF) Grants'. Grants are given to projects on lands where an existing/vacant building is proposed to be converted from a commercial, industrial or institutional use to a residential use; conversions from an industrial or institutional use to commercial or office use are eligible.

The City of Kitchener provides a grant in the form of an annual rebate on City taxes, in an amount equal to 100% of the City tax increment. The annual grant continues for a maximum period of 10 years, or until \$10,000 per residential unit has been achieved, and/or five per cent of the eligible project costs has been reached for office and commercial floor space, whichever comes first. Brantford's grant contribution could be higher.

### "Building Canada" Infrastructure Program

The Colborne and Dalhousie conversions and infrastructure upgrades would seem to meet the criteria for funding under the Building Canada Infrastructure Program announced by the Federal Government last year. Under the program, eligible projects would be equally financed by the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments with each level contributing one-third (1/3) of the project costs. Federal funding would be contingent upon the project successfully completing any necessary environmental assessments. As the environmental assessment process would take at least a year to complete, this process should be started as soon as possible. It should be noted that funding under this program is contingent upon the successful negotiation of a framework agreement between the Federal Government and the Province of Ontario. This is not yet in place.

### Cash in Lieu of Parking Policy

The cash in lieu policy for parking provided that developers be enabled to provide cash in lieu of parking at the rate of \$1. However, in view of the level of intensification and development expected in the City it is recommended that developers either provide parking on site, or pay a more significant amount of cash in lieu to enable the municipality to gather sufficient funds to assist in the consolidation and creation of new parking structures and lots.

### Development Charge Exemption

All new development in the Downtown should remain exempt from future Municipal and Regional Development Charges as a further incentive for new development in the Downtown core.

An exception to this is the standard two per cent parks contribution. A full exemption of this requirement should not be allowed.

## Pay Parking & Revenues

A key recommendation of the transportation and parking strategy is to implement on-street paid parking. In general, it is recommended that both on-street and off-street parking prices strike a balance between being affordable for those using the parking, but also ensuring the long term sustainability of the parking system. With increased construction costs, it is now estimated that it requires a monthly rate of \$150 to recover the cost of a structured parking space. Applying the current monthly rate of \$45 for the Market Centre Parkade to new parking lots would imply a significant subsidy on the part of the City.

The Master Plan recommends implementing a modest charge for on-street parking, largely on the basis of increasing turnover and reducing enforcement issues. It is recommended that the hourly rate be set at 60 cents initially, consistent with the off-street lots. Assuming a turnover rate of 5 vehicles per space per day, and that paid parking is applied to 400 on-street parking spaces (slightly less than the total number of spaces in the downtown), the daily revenue from parking would be \$1,200 per day (\$312,000 annually assuming weekday pricing only). Recognizing that there will be initial costs for equipment installation and on-going operating costs, it can still be expected that on-street parking will generate reasonable revenues for the city. These revenues can be invested back into the Downtown to improve signage, wayfinding, streetscaping and other features to make the Downtown more attractive overall.

## Review of Tax Policy

Review current municipal tax policy should be undertaken to determine if there are opportunities to provide further incentives for investment in the downtown. For example, consideration might be given to bring multiple rental accommodation in line with the property class which relates to condominium ownership multiples (which is the same as that applied to single family housing.) This would provide further incentive for apartment development in the downtown as envisaged by the Master Plan.

In addition, property tax relief might be granted vacant buildings to provide economic assistance until the building is reoccupied. However, care should be taken to ensure property and building code standards are maintained to ensure that vacant building not be allowed to deteriorate and become blighted.

## Economic Development Investment Fund

Expand the City's Downtown Reserve Fund. In Kitchener, the City approved the creation of a \$110 million dollar Economic Development Investment Fund, of which \$86.4 million dollars were committed to downtown projects. To pay for the 10-year program, Council approved a special tax levy over the ten years of the fund.

## Residential Conversion & Intensification

To inspire a better quality residential conversion experience in the core and possibly attract new investments, a residential grant programme could be introduced to pay for conversion of existing upper-level commercial space to residential units and the construction of new units on vacant land. This could be a dedicated component of the Downtown Performance Grant programme.

## Facade / Interior Improvement Grants & Loans

Although not popular in the past, in the absence of an over-arching downtown grant, the City could consider establishing a dedicated façade improvement programme for priority investment streets in the downtown. This could be a match-fund programme in partnership with business owners.



Photo by: NormanEinstein



## 9.0 NEXT STEPS

This section presents recommendations on how the Master Plan and related priority interventions can be brought forward by the City of Brantford.

A weak downtown may contribute negatively to the perception of a city as a destination for investment and residential living. Strengthening the Downtown as a centre for investment and community benefit must remain a priority of the City.

Making quality design an important part of place-making, placing a high value on good architecture and investing in high quality public realm projects has become an important direction in many cities across North America. This is especially true for downtowns.

However, downtown regeneration is a slow and complex process that requires time, resources and leadership.

The ingredients for a successful downtown are varied and each city offers a different mix, however across some of the most successful downtowns there are a number of consistent elements, including:

- high quality, durable and well-maintained public realm
- pedestrian-oriented environments
- a unique identity through the look of buildings, quality of open space and types of uses present
- large-scale regional attractions
- a comprehensive public transit systems anchored by a downtown hub,
- high density residential environments
- strong civic presence
- large corporations and institutions.

The City of Brantford has set the stage with many of its recent initiatives. However, continued effort is required to further enhance the public realm, strengthen the business environment and bring more residents to the Downtown.

Realizing the Vision presented by the Downtown Brantford requires a long term commitment and entails a series of both public and private interventions. The first step must be the full endorsement and consensus of the Vision and Master Plan through Council approval.

### **Making it Happen**

The incentive tools described above will only be successful if City staff are committed and organized appropriately to follow through on the recommendations presented in this report.

The Downtown Master Plan must not only be a part of all capital initiatives, but is inherent in the review and negotiations which are an integral part of the development review process.

To realize the vision presented in the Downtown Brantford Master Plan and successfully provide the many benefits that it identifies, the following next steps are required as priority actions within the next 6 to 12 months:

- *Recognize the principles and policies of the Downtown Brantford Master Plan through formal approval by Brantford City Council.*
- *Integrate the vision and supporting priority interventions into the policy framework, namely the updated Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw.*
- *In parallel with the above, identify suitable funding mechanism for public-sector interventions. This could be in the form of a re-initiated Downtown Grants programme, or new forms such as Tax Increment Financing. The City of Kitchener's 'Adaptive Re-Use Tax Increment-Based (TIF) Grants' programme provides a useful model for Brantford.*
- *As a priority, prepare a comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the City and begin to aggressively market key opportunity sites in the downtown to investment interests. Part of this must be a detailed capacity and market demand analysis that links city growth to demand and release of commercial space.*
- *Work with owners to undertake a comprehensive structural review of the buildings along the south side of Colborne Street. This would help assess the structure's health, identify a spectrum of options and explore future development opportunities.*
- *Enter into formal discussions with Mohawk College to identify how City can best assist the college in a possible relocation to a Downtown site. The City should continue to work with Nipissing University and Laurier Brantford to facilitate further possible expansion in the Downtown.*
- *Begin efforts to undertake land assembly for key opportunity sites in the Downtown.*

- *Re-launch the Downtown as a destination at the spring opening of Harmony Square. Continue to actively and loudly promote your downtown successes throughout the year.*

### **Monitoring Your Success**

Monitoring is about the collection of information and data to assist the City understand the progress of a project. Monitoring the changes across the Downtown on an annual basis will help Brantford identify its successes and direct resources to those project areas that are under-performing. Monitoring helps the City trace its progress, highlight achievements, give examples of best practice and flag areas where improvements are required. Importantly, it allows the City to make informed decisions regarding budget allocation, policy fit and delivery of Council priorities.

Monitoring can be as simple or as complex as necessary, however, project analysis can only be undertaken if the Council identifies a clear starting point – the *baseline condition* for Downtown. The baseline condition should include a broad range of social, environmental, physical and economic indicators that reflect the project's aims and objectives. Suitable indicators to be monitored could include:

- Number of buildings restored
- Number of street trees planted & area of sidewalk rebuilt
- Acres of new park spaces created
- BIA membership level
- Number of new businesses registered in the Downtown
- Census count for new residents in Downtown
- Increase in student enrolment
- Number of events held across City-owned parks
- Building permits issued in Downtown