

City of Brantford • Ontario
COLBORNE STREET SOUTH SIDE

Urban Design Guidelines

April 26, 2010

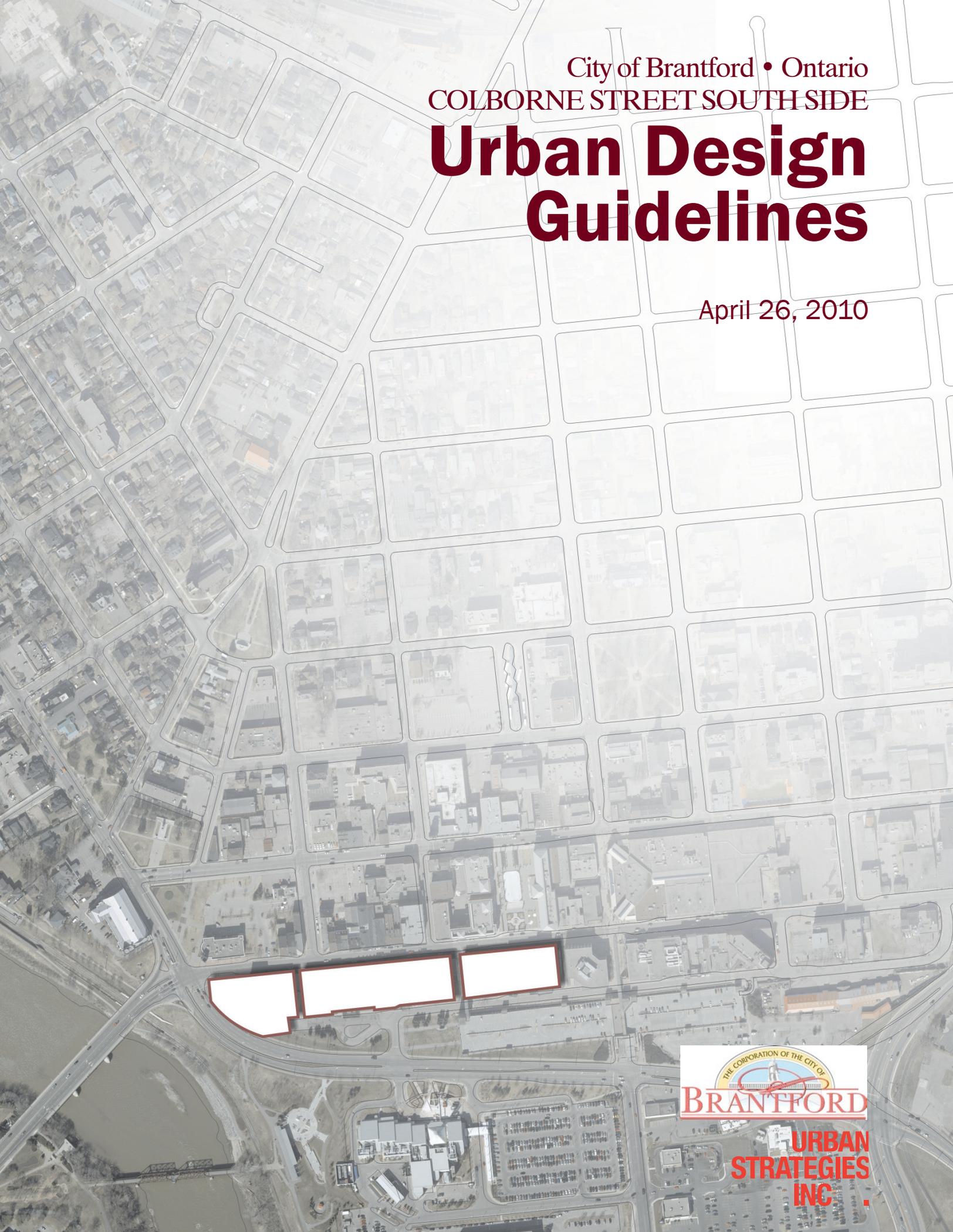
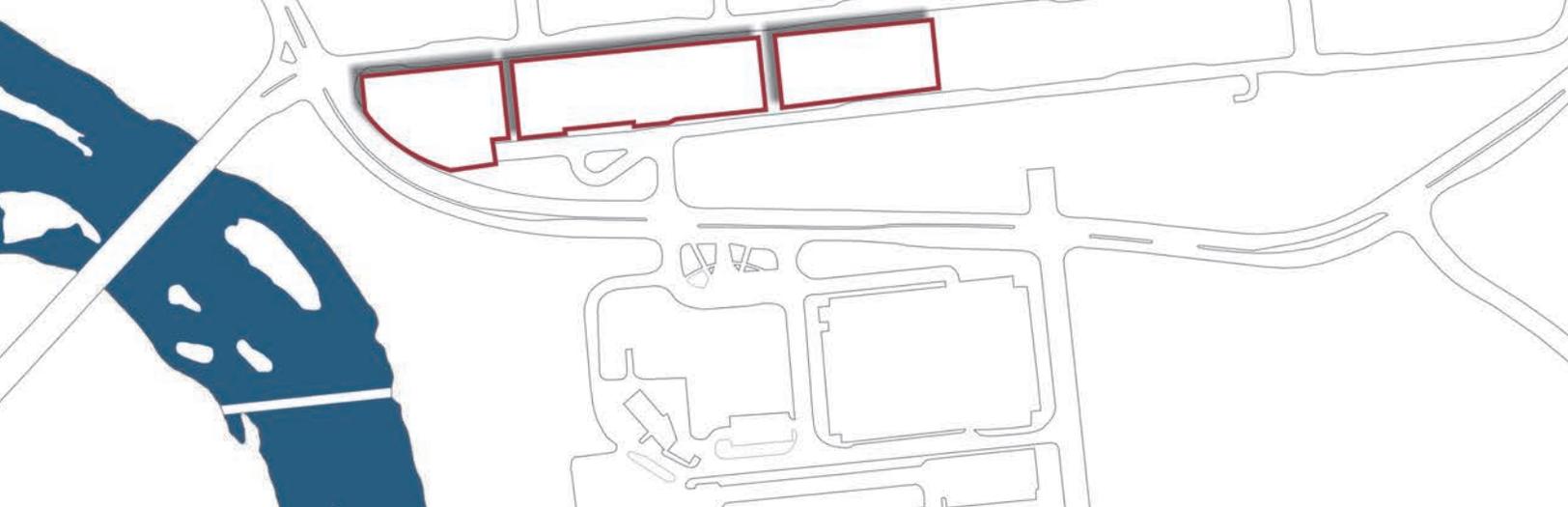


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VIA Rail Station

West St.

Nelson St.

Wellington St.

Victoria Park

George St.

Charlotte St.

Clarence St.

Darling St.

Market St.

Dalhousie St.

Harmony Square

Market Square

Colborne St.

Subject Site

Parkade

Parkade

Icomm Drive

Grand River

Brantford Casino

Brantford Civic Centre

5-minute walking distance

Introduction



On August 4th of last year City Council voted to expropriate a number of properties lining the south side of Colborne Street. The buildings were underutilized and in varying states of deterioration. The intent of this expropriation was to create sizeable land parcels for redevelopment thereby enhancing the urban character of the Downtown.

With expropriation complete and demolition slated to begin, Council passed a resolution for public consultation in shaping the future of the south side of Colborne Street. Urban Strategies Inc. was retained to conduct “visioning” sessions with members of the public and, through this process, develop design guidelines that will establish parameters for redevelopment. Two workshops were conducted on February 24th with 55 members of the public taking part. Participants were asked the following question: What does your vision for the future of Colborne Street look like? A follow up open house was held at City Hall on the afternoon of March 10th where the workshop results and evolving principles and draft guidelines were displayed for review and comment.

This document is the end result of this process and serves as a framework for the redevelopment of Colborne Street. It is structured in a manner that allows for its inclusion in any future development RFP process the City may wish to engage in for one or more parcels within the Study Area.

The Downtown Master Plan

The 2008 Master Plan for Downtown Brantford, adopted by City Council, made a number of recommendations. Those relevant to the Colborne Street redevelopment initiative are listed below:

- Creation of a more focused retail and commercial geography for the Downtown;
- Establishment of new public park spaces to expand Downtown’s open space network;
- Refurbishment of the Market Centre Parkade;
- Continuance of efforts to keep the Brantford YMCA in the Downtown; and
- Pursuance of the two-way conversion of Dalhousie and Colborne Streets.

Directly relevant to Colborne Street itself, the Plan provided guidance on enhancing the south side. Three scenarios were presented, one of which investigated the substantial redevelopment of the land. Highlights of these recommendations included:

- Development of an iconic, or landmark, building at the west end of the street (Colborne Point Plaza);
- Creation of a park space that links Colborne Street to the riverfront and provides accessibility for both pedestrians and cyclists (Colborne Hill Bike Link); and
- Establishment of a linear park that runs the north length of Icomm Drive (Navigation Park).

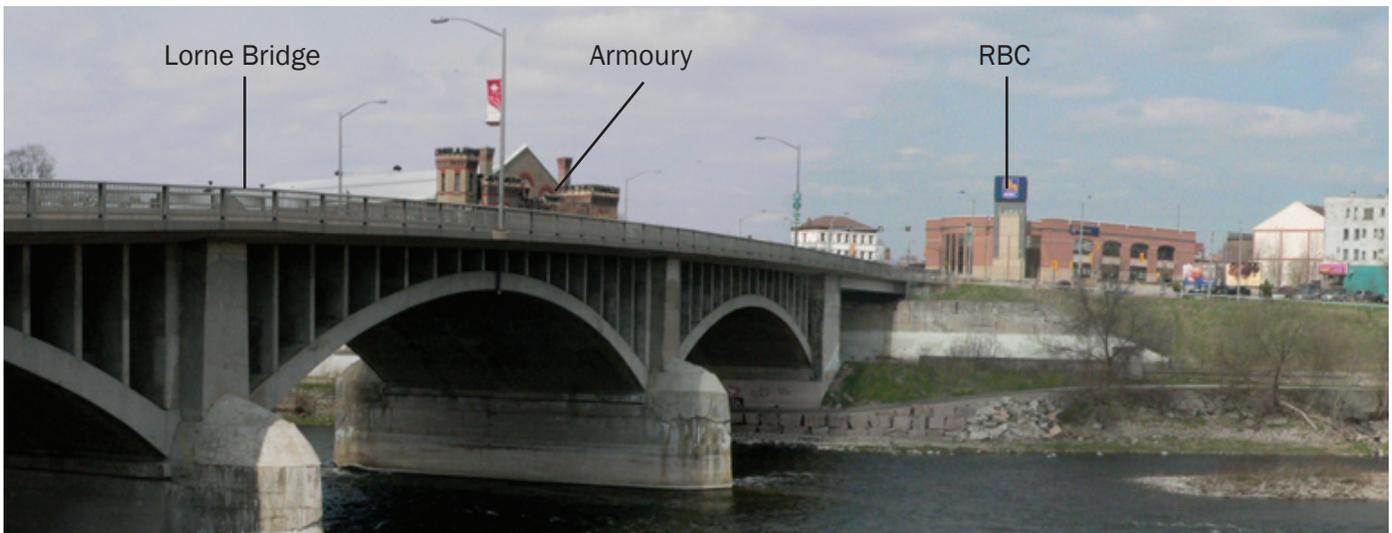


Opposite Page: Aerial view of Downtown Brantford with study area boundaries for the south side of Colborne Street indicated.



The 2008 Downtown Master Plan which identified a number of key initiatives over both the short and the long term with the objective of rejuvenating the City's core. One of these projects identified the redevelopment of the southside of Colborne Street.

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



Panoramic view of Colborne Street as seen from west bank of the Grand River.

Location and Context

The subject site is located on the south side of Colborne Street and extends westward from Grand River Hall, immediately west of the Market Street Parkade entrance, to the intersection of Brant Avenue and Lorne Bridge. The site extends down a sizeable slope to Water Street which ranges in steepness from approximately 9 metres along its eastern edge to over 12 metres at its western extremity. Water Street, a service road that is accessible from Icomm Drive defines the site's southern edge. Colborne Street is a one-way roadway that runs from west to east. A narrow right-of-way of 20 metres and "zero" lot setbacks has greatly restricted sidewalk widths and activity thereby hampering potential commercial uses.

The site occupies land that is on the periphery of the Downtown. On the north side of Colborne Street are existing buildings approximately 100 years old which range in heights from 2 to 4 storeys. While many of these structures are underutilized the recently completed Harmony Square has become a hub of activity within the City. With its surrounding ground floor retail, cafes, restaurants and upper level residential and hotel units, the Square is vibrant throughout the year with programmed events and spill over activities. Further to the east is Market Square, a former retail mall that currently serves as an annex for municipal offices and smaller scale shops. Dalhousie Street, the one-way roadway paired with Colborne Street, is the primary retail corridor for the Downtown. South of the site is the Parkade, a 1,600-car multiple tiered parking lot that is accessed by vehicles from Icomm Drive and by pedestrians from Colborne Street.



Top to bottom: Colborne Street looking east (existing buildings on south side to be demolished); view of Water Street looking east towards the Parkade; skaters in Harmony Square.



Opportunities and Challenges

Successful redevelopment of the south side of Colborne Street will require addressing some key challenges. Among these are the following:

- Steep cross slope will require design and engineering solution;
- Perceived security issues (personal safety, vandalism) along Water Street;
- Poor access currently exists between Colborne Street and Grand River; and
- Establishment of a building relationship with surrounding context.

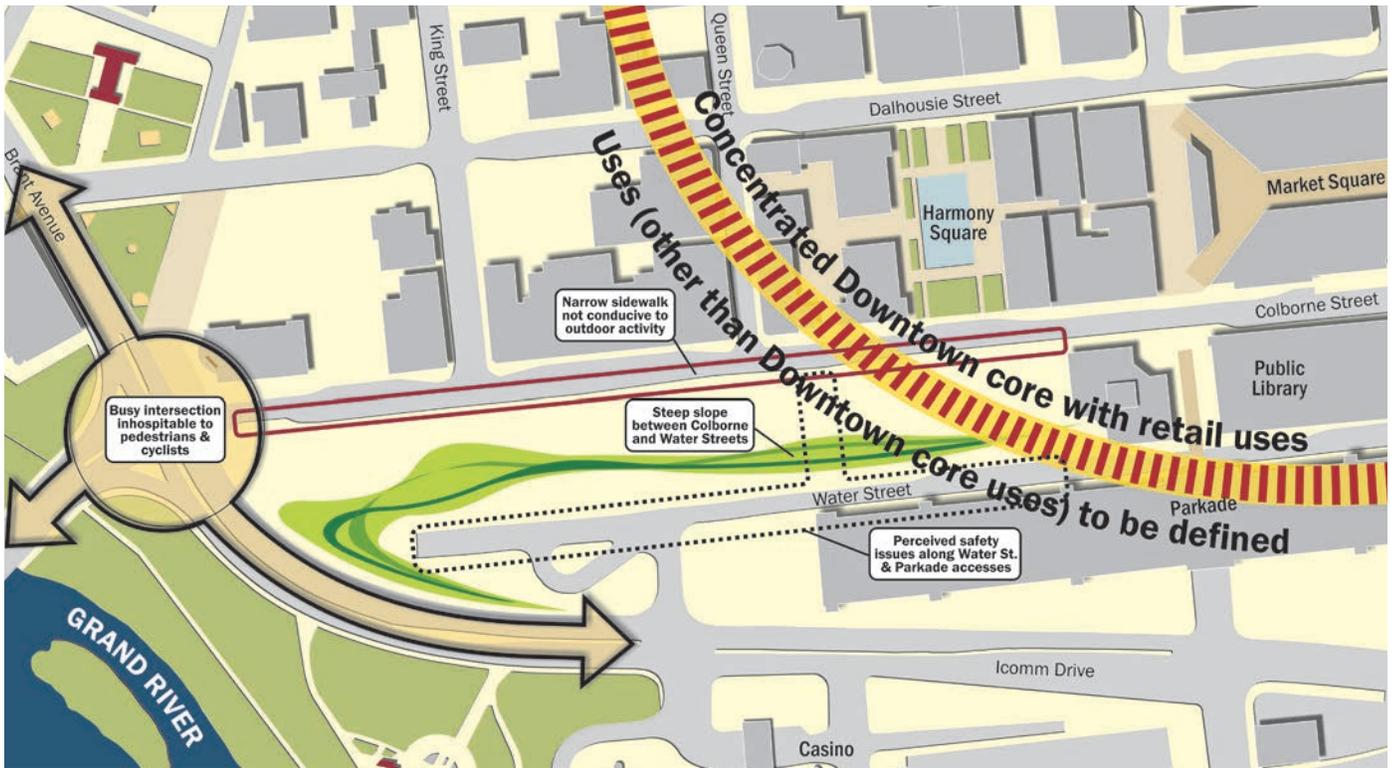


However, there are a number of opportunities inherent in the site that make this a remarkable circumstance for development. These include:

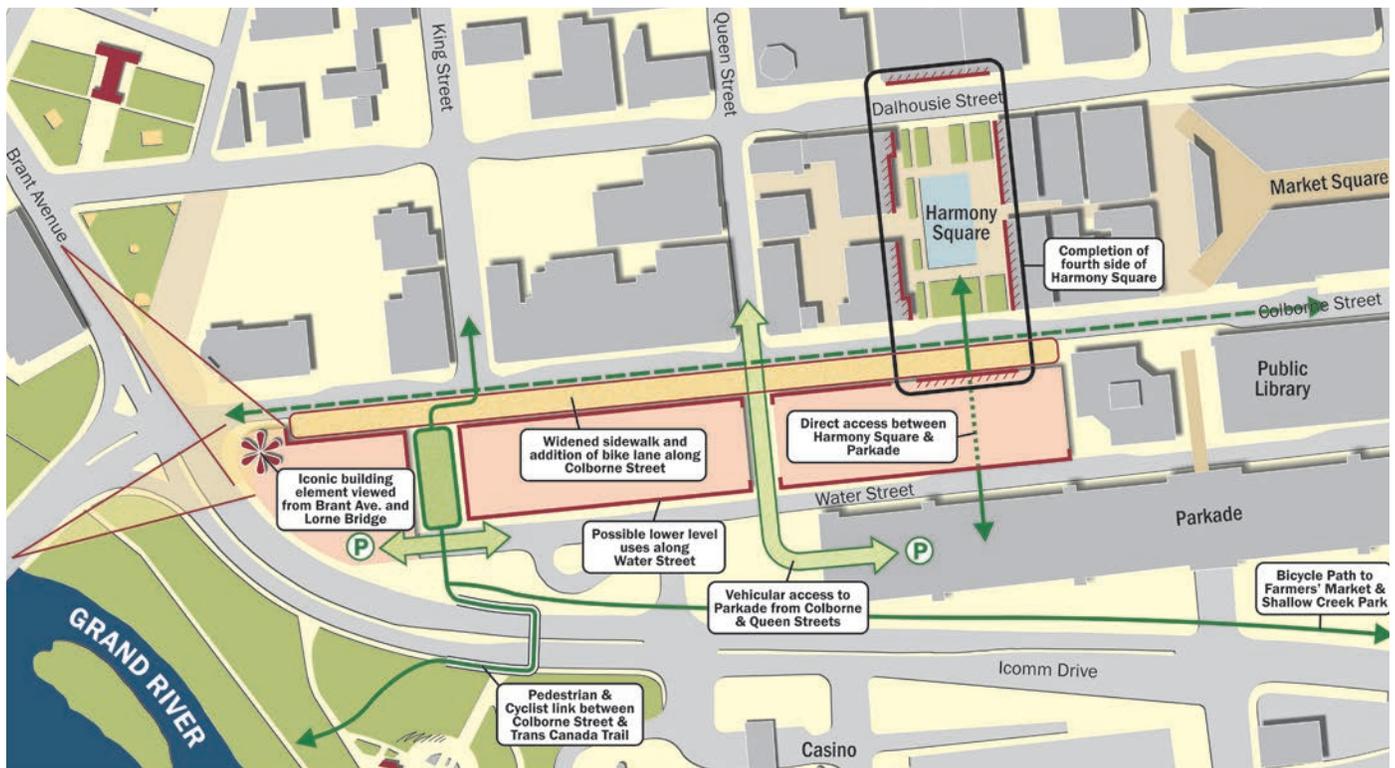
- Vehicular access at a lower grade from Icomm Drive and Water Street;
- Possibility of sidewalk width expansion;
- Easy access to nearby Parkade;
- High visibility from Lorne Bridge and Brant Avenue;
- Close proximity to Grand River and the Trans-Canada Trail;
- Nearby student activity at Grand River Hall and Brantford Public Library;
- Nearby civic and retail activity at Harmony Square; and
- Newly established residential population around perimeter of Harmony Square.



Clockwise from bottom left: Brantford Public Library; Grand River Hall; steep embankment along Water Street; pedestrian bridge connection to Parkade between Grand River Hall and the Public Library; intersection of Lorne Bridge, Colborne Street, Brant Avenue and Icomm Drive.



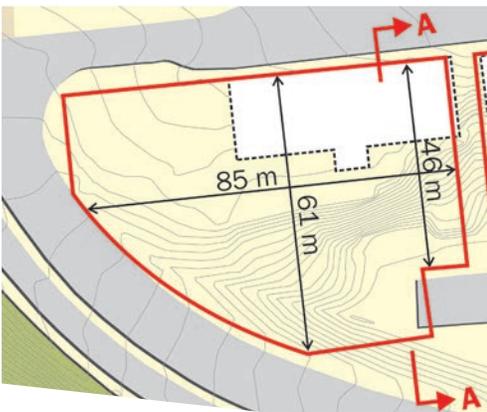
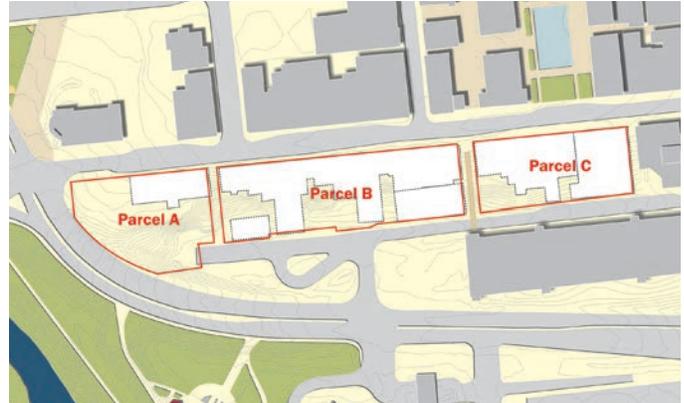
Identified challenges facing the redevelopment of Colborne Street's south side.



Opportunities to be realized with the south side redevelopment.

Site Parameters

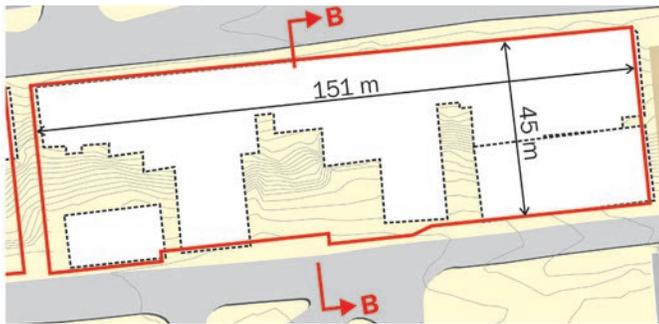
The overall site runs a length of approximately 350 metres with its depth ranging from 42 metres to the east to 61 metres at its western end. It can be divided into 3 parcels with the middle parcel (Parcel B) being set aside for a new YMCA proposal. The grade conditions of the 3 parcels are indicated on the accompanying sections.



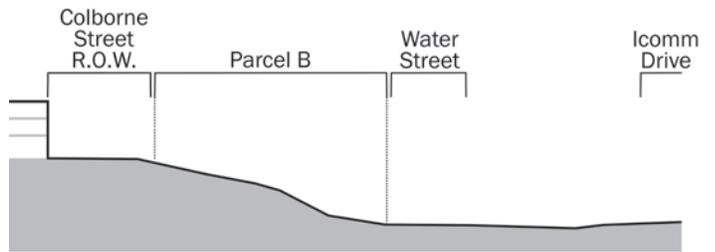
Parcel A



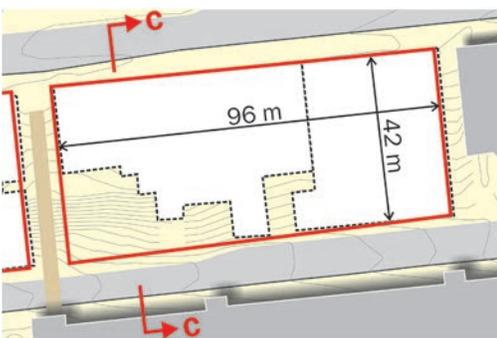
Scale 1:1250



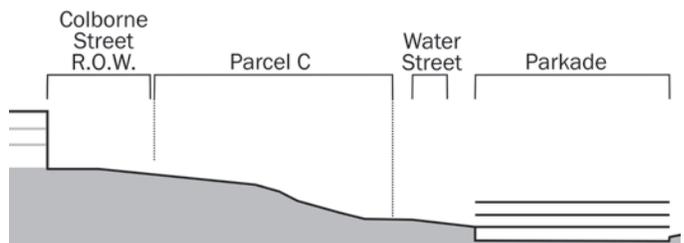
Parcel B



Scale 1:1250



Parcel C



Scale 1:1250

Plans and sections of three identified parcels (please note that plans are not to scale).

YMCA Proposal

Currently, the YMCA is developing a plan for Parcel B of the redevelopment lands. The parcel extends from the foot of King Street to the western edge of Harmony Square and occupies an area of approximately 6,830 m². Access to the facilities will be possible from both Colborne Street and from a lower level along Water Street. While some parking will be provided at the Water Street entrance, this will be primarily for handicapped users. The majority of the parking will be provided by the existing Parkade adjacent to the proposed Y.



Top of page: Preliminary site plan for the proposed YMCA; middle of page: Colborne Street elevation; bottom of page: view of the south facade of the YMCA as seen from the skateboard park (Architects: Garwood-Jones & Hanham).

Workshop Conclusions



As indicated above, public workshops were held to develop a vision for Colborne Street, by posing the question: **What does your vision for the future of Colborne Street look like?** Response to this query was broken down into 4 themes:

- **Street Character;**
- **Appropriate Building Design;**
- **Connections and Linkages; and**
- **Activity and Animation.**

Street Character:

- Quality materials; quality design;
- Co-ordinate character with Dalhousie Street (Downtown “look”);
- Introduction of bicycle lanes;
- Wider sidewalks;
- Artist designed street furniture (including bicycle racks);
- Direct access to Parkade; and
- Traffic calming for pedestrians.

Appropriate Building Design:

- Quality materials; quality design;
- Design to LEED standards;
- Maintain existing building facade rhythm along street (i.e. avoid long horizontal expanses of wall);
- Ground floor transparency (large windows, primary entries);
- Consider view from river and create vibrant frontages along Water Street;
- Work with character of existing contextual buildings;

- Multi-purpose ground floor uses with residential above;
- 3 to 6 storeys with setbacks for taller building elements;
- Provide a mix of contemporary and more traditional styles; and
- Make accessible to all.

Connections and Linkages:

- Wider sidewalks;
- Bicycle lane along Colborne Street;
- Formalized and safe connection from Colborne Street to river either across/over Icomm Drive;
- Link to Farmer’s Market via Navigation Park;
- Create wayfinding system from the Parkade and within the Downtown;
- Redesign connections to the Parkade; and
- Provide safe pedestrian crossing across Colborne Street between Harmony Square and the Parkade.

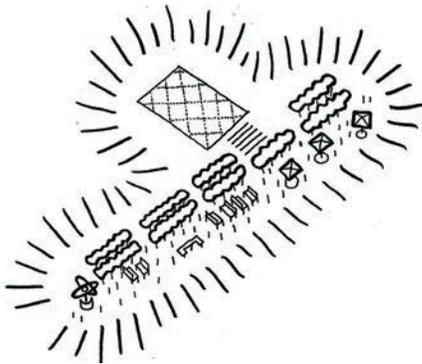
Activity and Animation:

- Residential units above at-grade retail or commercial uses;
- Parcel A (west end of Colborne St.) to be taller, iconic, mixed use residential building;
- Retail uses should occupy the ground floor of the YMCA along Colborne Street;
- Creation of a cafe strip along Colborne Street;
- Create places to meet, sit and socialize;
- Encourage a “cultural district” across from Harmony Square; and
- Look to Water Street for entrepreneurial opportunities or tourist-related uses.

Principles

Based on the results gathered from the workshops a set of principles emerged. These represent the overarching ambitions and aspirations for the future of not only the south side of Colborne Street, but the Downtown as a whole. The 10 Principles are as follows:

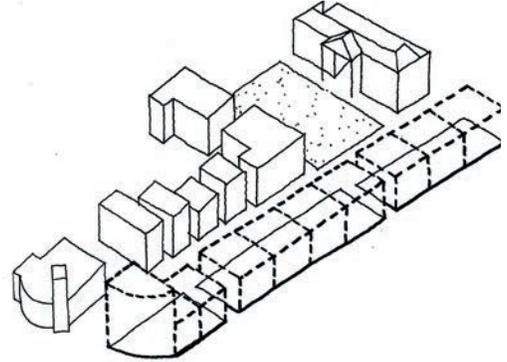
1. Creation of a vibrant public realm that is complementary to Harmony Square



The public realm, which includes sidewalks, park and plaza spaces, and pathways should be designed in a manner that is attractive and inviting to pedestrian activity. Careful consideration of streetscape elements such as street trees, lighting, seating, and signage will contribute to improving the urban quality for both building tenants and passers-by alike. By planning for more passive types of activity Colborne Street can serve as a complement to the more structured and programmed uses in Harmony Square.

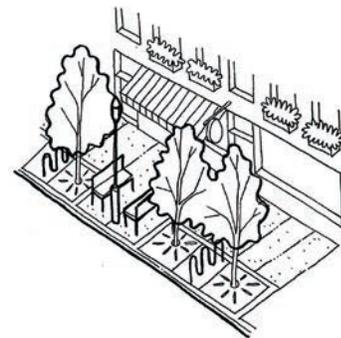


2. Character and scale of new development to be in keeping with surrounding buildings



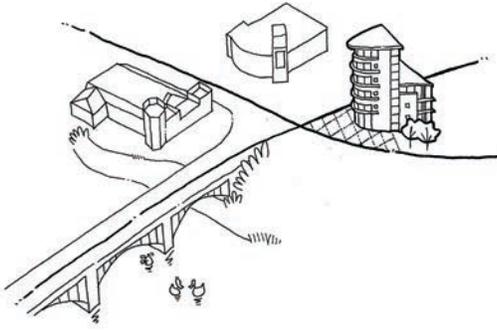
New development should be respectful of the context in which it is to be situated. As such, buildings adjacent to Harmony Square should be of a scale that is commensurate with those already flanking the square and will not cast shadows over the Square at key times of the day or year. Similarly, buildings on the south side of Colborne Street should be massed at a height similar to the existing structures on the north side. Any taller building elements should be set back from the base of the development and should not exceed a total height of 6 storeys.

3. Materials and uses to be of high quality



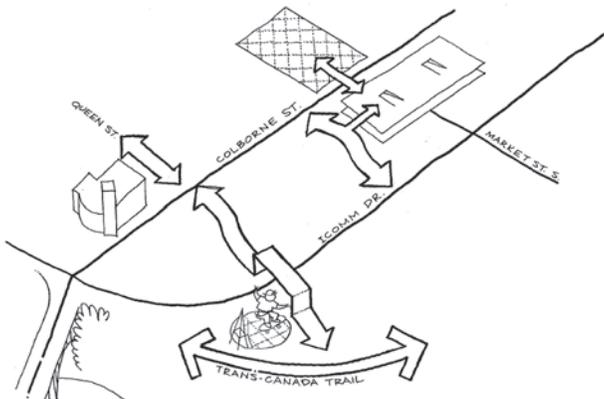
Quality construction and materials will help ensure the longevity of the south side. LEED certification should be one of the objectives of any new development. Adaptability of use should be another with the ambition of creating new buildings and public realm that will endure for several generations.

4. Creation of a gateway feature at west end of Colborne Street



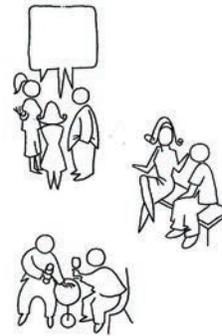
Given its prominent location as seen from the Lorne Bridge and Brant Avenue, the west end of Colborne Street is the exception to the 6-storey height limit. A taller building of high design quality will serve as the western gateway into the Downtown. Its opportune siting will also allow for panoramic views from within looking across the Grand River valley.

5. Better permeability between Colborne Street and Icomm Drive



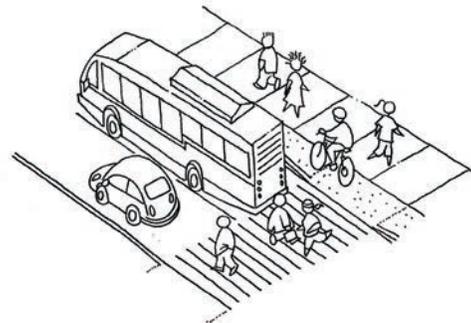
Avoid creating a wall condition along the street edge. The Grand River is one of the City's great assets and access to it should be a high priority. Breaks between buildings with new pathways connecting the River, the Trans Canada Trail and the Downtown should occur at intervals along the length of Colborne Street.

6. Creation of places to meet, greet and socialize



A widened sidewalk along Colborne Street should provide the setting for all manners of informal activity. Street furniture can serve as props for daily spontaneity and attract spillover activity from Harmony Square and academic venues. Awareness of the potential of street theatre will only benefit the uses and activities on the other side of the new development's walls.

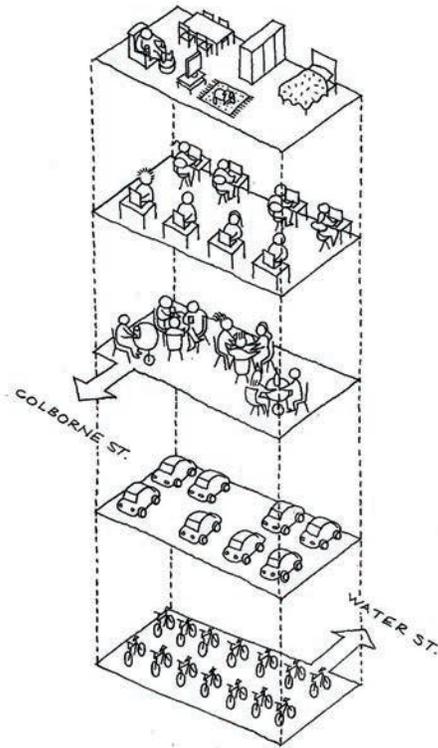
7. Safely accommodate various modes of transportation along Colborne Street



Colborne Street must be thought of as more than a thoroughfare for vehicles. Slowing traffic down and providing for safe cross-movement of pedestrians at King, Queen, Market Streets and Harmony Square should be a priority. Provision for cyclists should also be carefully considered and planned for with the reconstruction of the street.

8. Provide for a mix of uses

A range of uses should be planned for the street's south side. Apart from the new YMCA proposal, the highest priority should be the provision of market-value residential units. This will contribute to increasing the market residential housing stock and add a year-round population to the Downtown core.

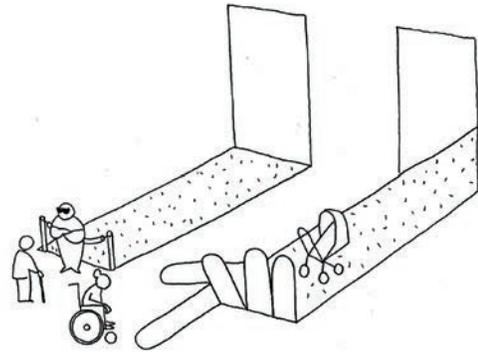


9. Unlock the potential of Water Street



Water Street currently sits as an underutilized back alley at the bottom of the Colborne Street embankment. However, its adjacency to the river system and the skateboard park offers an opportunity to exploit its context. Providing space for uses that tie into waterfront activities or benefit from a fringe location would serve to re-energize this neglected street.

10. Accessibility for all



All buildings and public spaces must be designed to be accommodating of all. Consideration will be given to not only physical limitations but also age considerations. Both young and old must feel equally welcomed along the street. Similar to Principle No. 8, not only a mix of uses but a mix of users will infuse Colborne Street with a rich dynamism that will be of long lasting resonance.

The following design guidelines offer parameters for realizing a new and enhanced Colborne Street. They are a guide to prospective developers, architects, engineers, and landscape architects in the creation of appropriately scaled building massings and open spaces by addressing public realm improvements as well as accessibility and servicing considerations.

Principles to Guidelines



Design guidelines have been derived to best articulate and permit the achievement of the aforementioned stated principles. The guidelines are focused on the following themes:

Streetscaping: character (including street furniture elements) and dimensions of sidewalks, roadway

widths and building setback from the Colborne Street right-of-way;

Building Height and Stepbacks: overall height of new construction and the height at which a building should be set back from its primary, ground-related facade;

Principles

Guidelines

Materials and Uses to be of a high quality

develop street character palette for whole of Downtown
no stucco for building facades: brick instead
street trees; more green in general
LEED standard development

Character and scale of new development to be in keeping with surrounding buildings

typically 4-6 storeys with higher buildings set back (4 storeys across from Harmony Square)
awnings; appropriate ground floor signage
ability to see indoor activity at ground level
breaks in horizontal building expanses to create facades of appropriate scale
primary building accesses to face Colborne St.

Creation of a gateway feature at the west end of Colborne Street

Iconic, landmark building at west end of Colborne Street
taller building elements modern in character

Creation of a vibrant public realm that is complementary of Harmony square

balance Harmony Square's "active" uses with "passive places and uses along Colborne Street
public art
bike racks as sculpture
way-finding signage

Better permeability between Colborne Street and Icomm Drive

improved connections for cyclists and pedestrians to Harmony Square, Parkade, River, and Farmer's Market

Creation of places to meet, sit and socialize

new green space along Colborne's length
benches under street trees

Unlock the potential of Water Street

encourage uses that tie in to Y and to River

Accessible to all

WHO age-friendly checklist

Provision of a safe environment

appropriate uses along Colborne Hill link
residential uses above street-friendly uses

Mix of uses

residential use overlooking connections
retail uses along ground floor of Y

Building Character: recommended materials for lower floor expression; vertical breaks in horizontal wall expanses, architectural expression of the building facade;

Accessibility and Servicing: location of primary entry points, servicing access, vehicle parking criteria;

Connections: linkages to key contextual uses, landscape treatment of proposed connections;

Public Art: indication of location and character of public art initiatives along Colborne Street

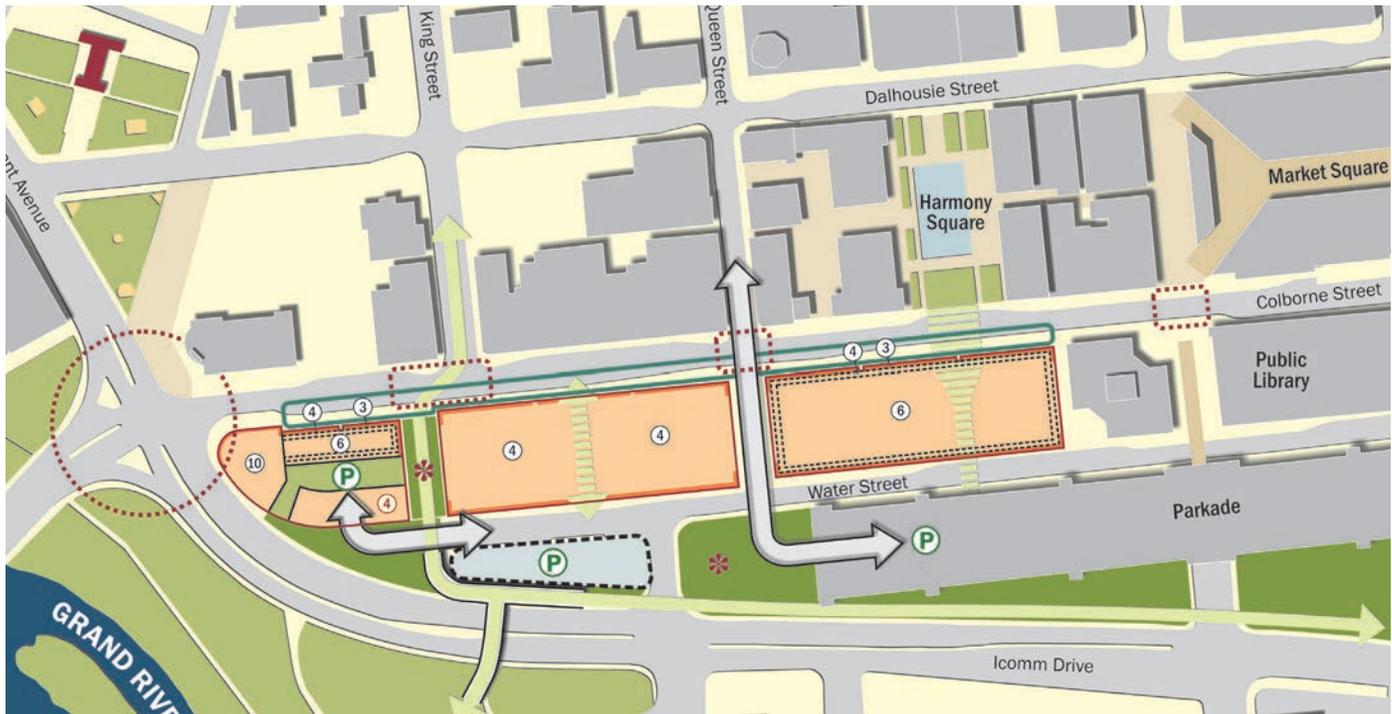


Design Guidelines



These recommendations will be used to review future development along Colborne Street thereby contributing to the re-emergence of Downtown and the realization of the Downtown Vision. The following guidelines identify potential development parcels and ascribe appropriate building heights, setbacks and stepbacks associated with them. Potential connections to adjacent destinations are indicated as are public realm improvements. This includes identifying possible sites for public art with the purpose of enlivening a pedestrian's on-street experience.

To assist in communicating the character and quality of new development a series of precedent images has been assembled to articulate the potential that new development has to offer for the south side of Colborne Street.



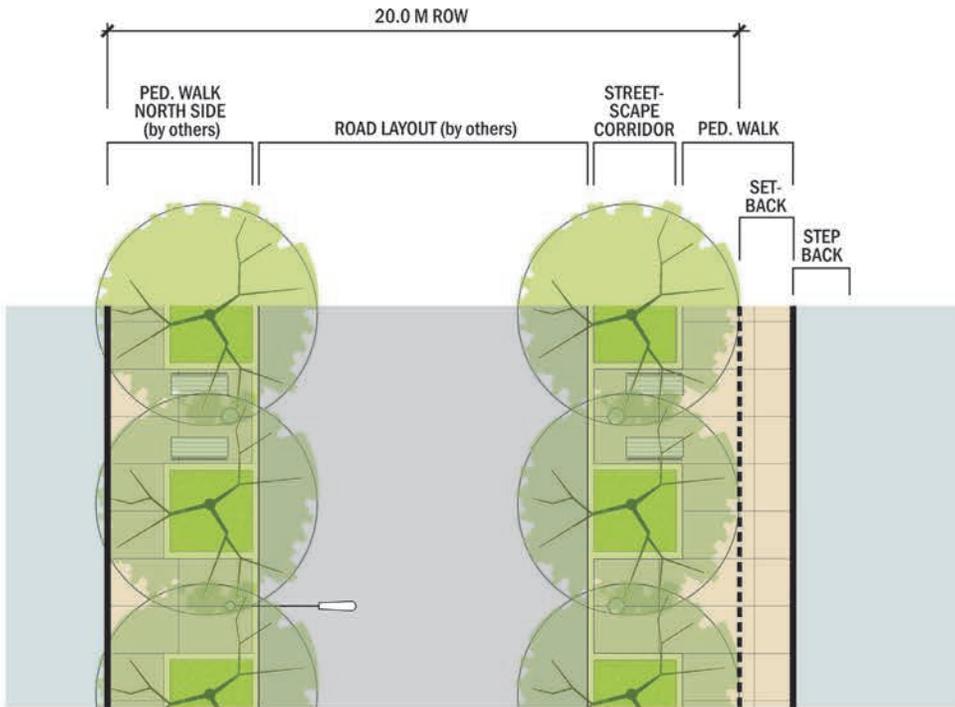
Design guidelines for 3 consolidated parcels along Colborne Street's south side.

Summary:

- Creation of an enhanced public realm along Colborne St.;
- Active uses at ground level to be encouraged along both Colborne Street and Water Street;
- Prevent long expanses of walls along Colborne Street by means of vertical breaks;
- Iconic, taller building to be featured at west end of Colborne Street;
- New parkade access from Colborne and Queen Streets

Legend

| | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Development Parcel | Pedestrian connection |
| Active building frontage with vertical facade breaks above the ground floor breaks | Interior pedestrian connection |
| Building setback | Pedestrian priority crossing |
| Maximum building height in storeys (as measured from average Colborne Street elevation) | Enhanced public realm |
| Maximum building height in storeys (as measured from average Water Street elevation) | Structured vehicular parking |
| | Surface vehicular parking |
| | Proposed park |
| | Public art feature |



Typical plan view of Colborne Street.

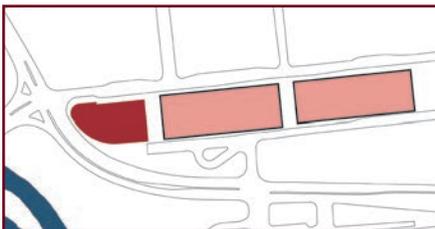
Summary:

- Building setback creating wider pedestrian walk and allowance for street trees;
- Potential for live/work units at ground floor;
- Parking to be incorporated within building envelope along Water Street with potential residential use or incubator space (start up design or artist studios) above.
- Overall height set at 10 storeys.

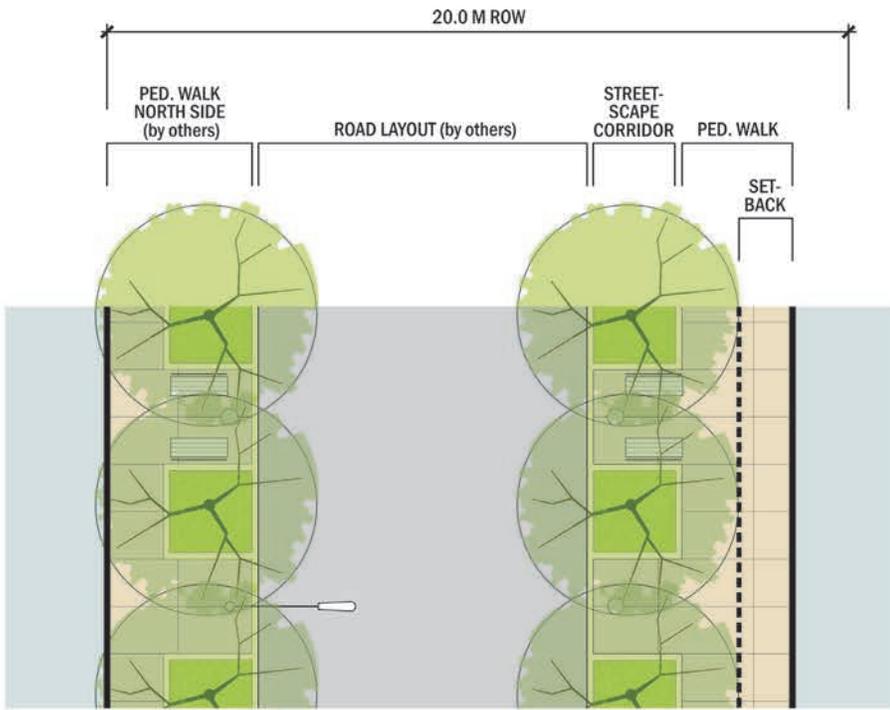
EXISTING BUILDING ALONG NORTH SIDE OF COLBORNE ST.



Parcel A



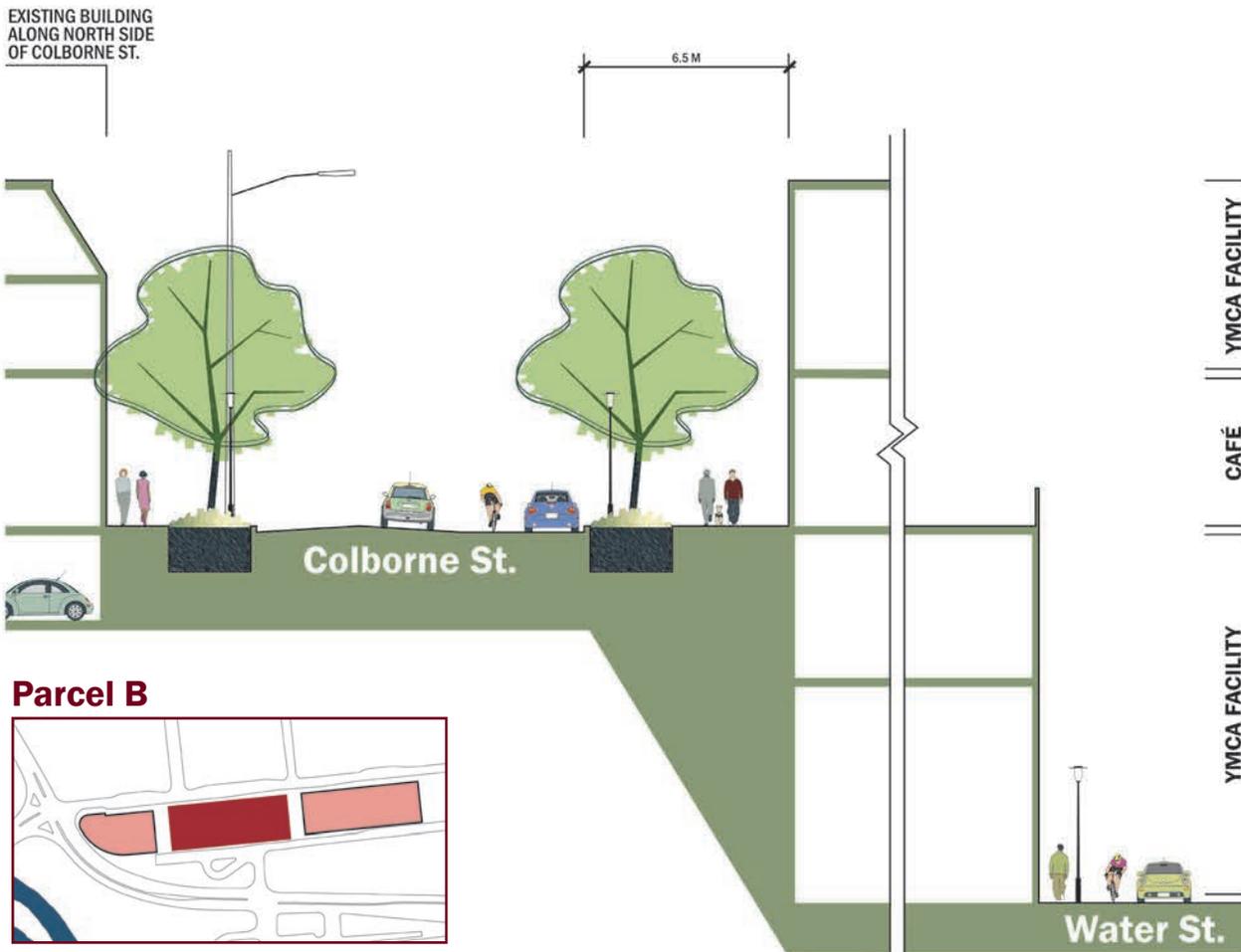
Typical section through Parcel A indicating building heights and grade relationships with Colborne Street and Water Street.



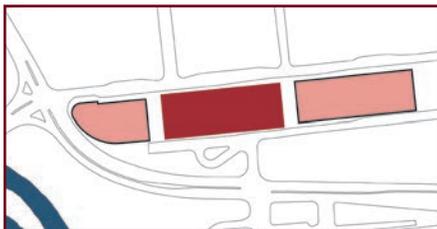
Typical plan view of Colborne Street.

Summary:

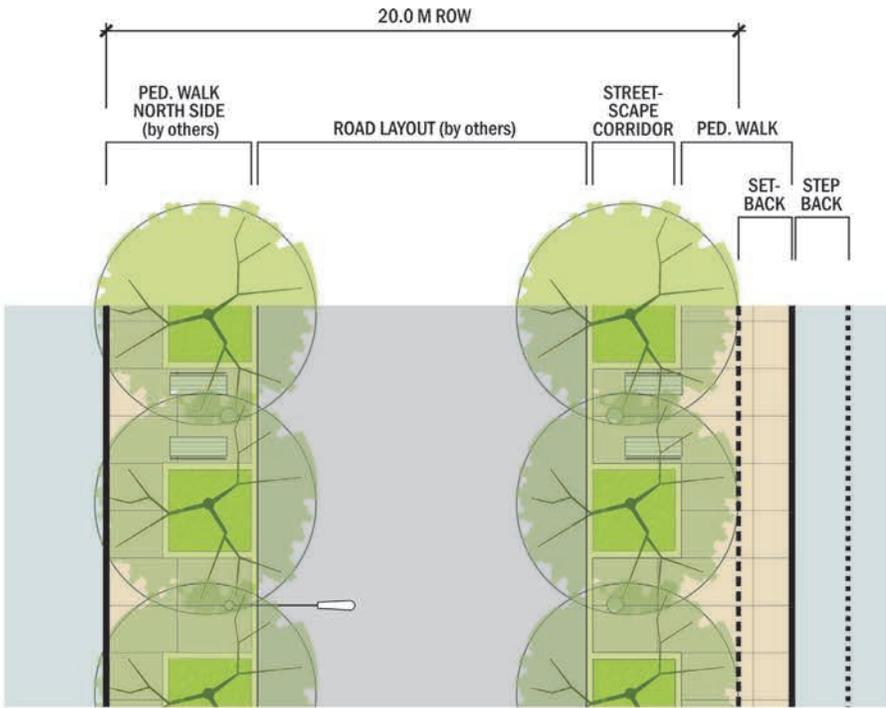
- Building setback creating wider pedestrian walk and allowance for street trees;
- Active grade-related uses along both Colborne Street and Water Street;
- Building height along Colborne Street to be established at no less than the equivalent of 4 storeys.



Parcel B



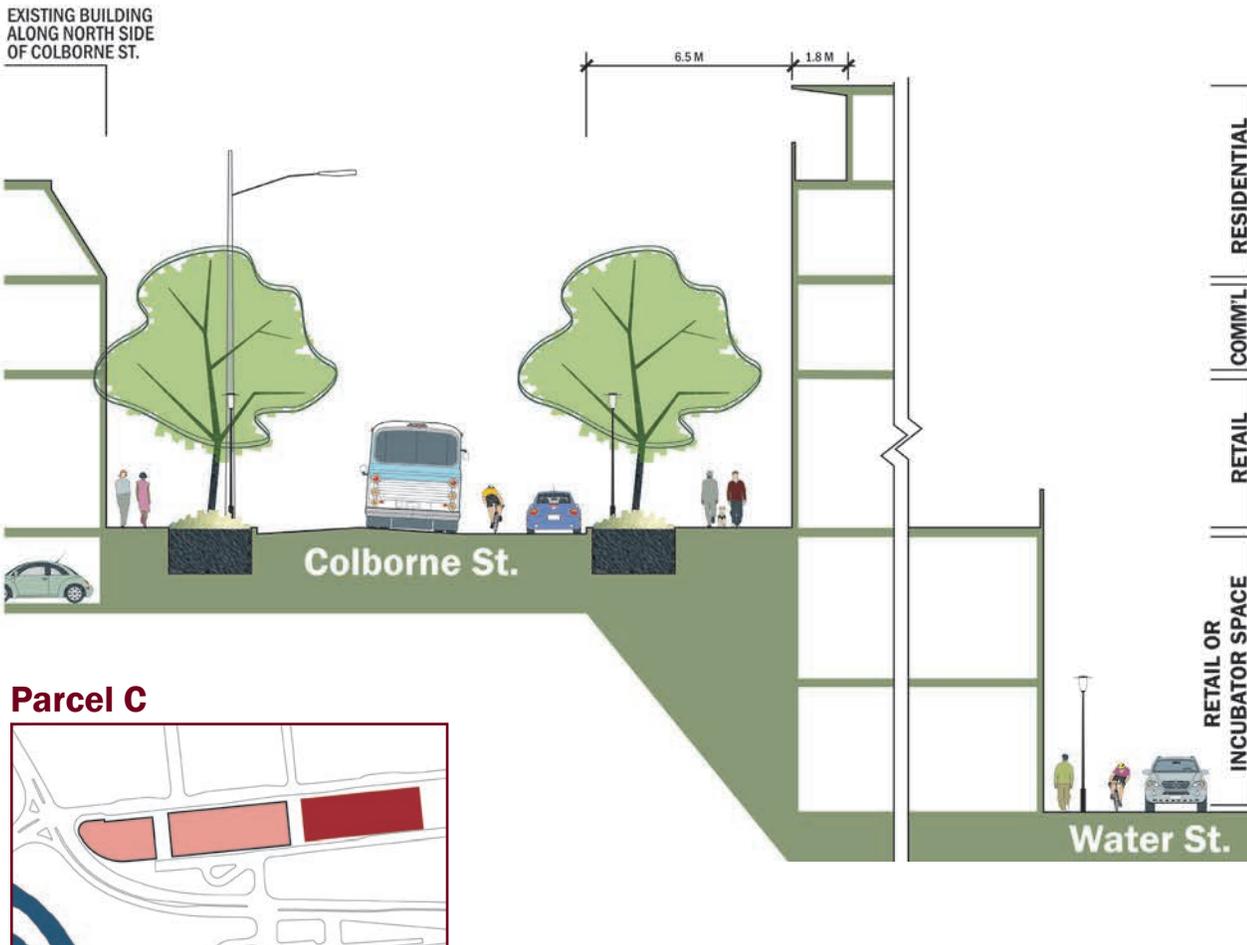
Typical section through Parcel B indicating building heights and grade relationships with Colborne Street and Water Street.



Typical plan view of Colborne Street.

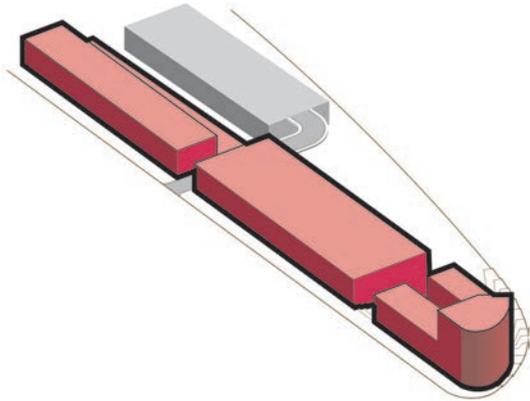
Summary:

- Building setback creating wider pedestrian walk and allowance for street trees;
- Active grade-related uses along both Colborne Street and Water Street;
- Building height not to exceed 6 storeys with setbacks after 3 storeys.



Typical section through Parcel C indicating building heights and grade relationships with Colborne Street and Water Street.

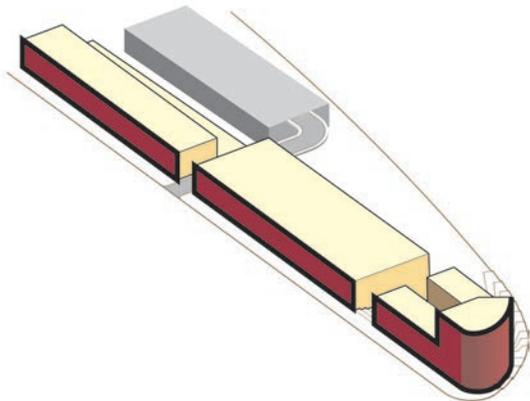
Massing



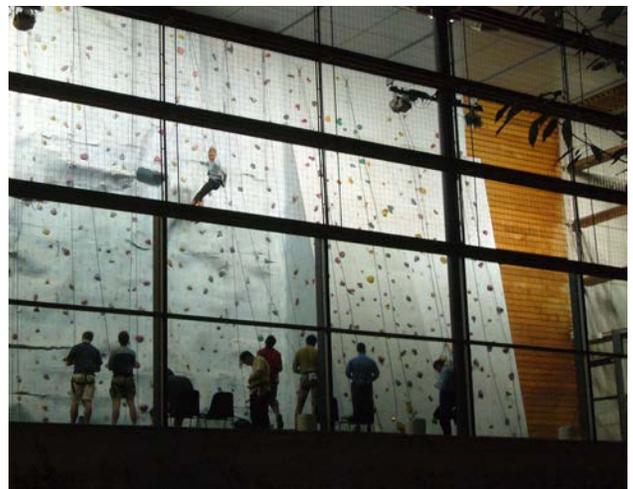
Top row: setbacks at upper floors will retain appropriate building scale as well as horizontal breaks along street-facing walls;
Middle row: both Parcels B and C should have buildings of simple massing with well-proportioned window fenestrations;
Bottom row: examples of appropriate massing treatment of Parcel A at corner of Colborne Street and Icomm Drive.



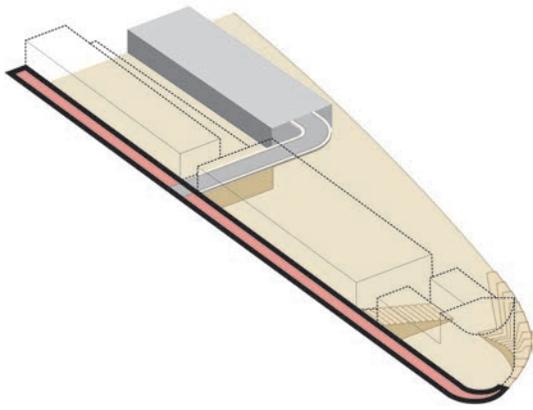
Facade Treatment



Top row: example of appropriate facade treatment for street-related retail along Parcel C; **Middle row:** careful articulation of roof lines and ground floors; **Bottom row (left to right):** examples of lower cost facade treatment along Water Street that attract youth culture; potential active frontage for Parcel B.



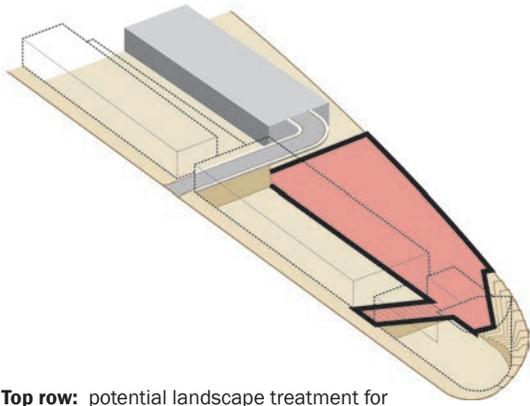
Streetscape



To the right: examples of appropriately designed street furniture;
Middle row: wider sidewalks using simple paving materials and street trees to create an inviting pedestrian zone;
Bottom row: Landscape treatment, pedestrian-scaled lighting and well placed street furniture create a high quality environment for pedestrians.



Park Space



Top row: potential landscape treatment for Navigation Park along Icomm Drive; **Middle row:** terraced landscape between Parcels A and B accommodating to both pedestrians and cyclists; **Bottom row:** public art that is both bold and inviting should be sited within Navigation Park, Colborne Hill Park, Colborne Point Plaza and other appropriate locations along Colborne Street.

