


TO: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE **FILE:** D04-URB

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RE: INTENSIFICATION AREA URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

DATE: JUNE 11, 2013

PURPOSE & BACKGROUND

This Memorandum is to provide Development Services Committee with an update on the status of the Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines (Guidelines) project. This update includes a review of the implications of the Guidelines on the planning and development of the City and the steps proposed for the implementation of the Guidelines.

Intensification Study and Official Plan

In 2009, Council adopted the Intensification Study which was completed as part of the overall exercise to bring the City's Official Plan into conformity with the Provincial Growth Plan. The Intensification Study identified areas of focus for intensification within the "Built Boundary" of the City and established density targets for each of these areas. Intensification as defined by the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement means the "development of a site, property or areas at a higher density than currently exists." By its very nature, this definition means the introduction of development into existing areas at higher densities than currently exist and in many cases had not been previously planned for. Consequently, the integration of these developments into the existing urban fabric becomes a key consideration when reviewing development applications and developing policies.

To implement the Vision and Principles of the Intensification Study and to ensure integration of new development into existing areas, the Study recommended that Urban Design Guidelines be prepared for the Intensification Areas within the pre 2010 City boundary.

In June of 2009, Council adopted a new Official Plan intended to implement the policies of the Provincial Growth Plan. The new Plan included policies related to intensification and urban design. Specifically Section 2.3 g) Assumptions of the adopted Official Plan states:

"(g) Intensification, mixed land uses and increased density represent an opportunity to develop complete communities, as intended by the Growth Plan, and in order to ensure success, urban design will be a key consideration in all developments."

Guideline Preparation and Public Engagement

In 2011, the consulting firm of Brook McIlroy was retained to assist staff in preparing the Guidelines to implement the Council adopted Intensification Study and Official Plan. These Guidelines will serve as a tool to assist staff when reviewing development applications and are not intended to be approved by Council as an amendment to the City's planning documents. As such, this Memorandum is being provided for information purposes only.

The goal of the Guidelines is to provide a vision, a set of priority directions and detailed guidelines for both private development and public infrastructure within the identified Intensification Areas. The

objective is to guide future development to create a high quality built form, streetscapes and public open spaces that are safe, accessible, functional and attractive for public use.

Public consultation has been a critical component in the preparation of the Guidelines with the use of a detailed and pro-active public engagement process. This process included meetings with Council Members, City staff, stakeholder groups and general public consultation. One workshop session was held with landowners and two workshop sessions with the general public. A combined total of 35 persons attended the landowner and general public sessions including a mix of residents, property and business owners and City staff.

The public engagement process generated the key priority directions for the Guidelines. These directions included a suggested building form of mixed-use buildings with commercial and retail on the ground level and mid-rise building heights at 6-8 storeys and with taller building encouraged in selected locations. There would also be a mix of housing types, including townhouses and 3-storey walk up type apartments that would transition in height from existing residential areas. Safe, attractive and pedestrian friendly streetscapes and active transportation would be encouraged by creating walkable streets, which are safe and convenient for bicycles.

The input from the public engagement process was utilized to assist in preparing the initial draft Guidelines which were presented to City Council on June 27, 2011. The Consultants then made revisions to the draft Guidelines and forwarded the document to City staff for further review.

The draft Guidelines were then reviewed by an interdepartmental Technical Committee to ensure the document would be functional and implementable. Based on this input, the Consultant made further revisions to the draft Guidelines for staff consideration.

The revised draft Guidelines were also posted on the City's web site and notice of the posting was provided to those persons who participated in the public engagement process and others expressing interest in the draft Guidelines. As a result, staff received one written inquiry regarding the applicability of the Guidelines to the Annexed Lands and providing a suggestion to reduce the landscaping requirements in parking areas by requiring fewer trees to be planted. Staff's response to this inquiry is that the Guidelines provide flexibility with the amount of trees to be determined based on the individual Site Plan requirements. The Guidelines are also intended to apply to the City's Intensification Areas as identified on Schedule I of the Official Plan and therefore not applicable in the Annexed Lands. There are separate Urban Design Guidelines being prepared for the Annexed Lands.

Staff also met with Mr. Don Pratt and Ms. Karen Hansen to discuss their concerns related to mixed-use buildings in the Intensification Nodes and Corridors. They are opposed to the requirement for ground level commercial being recommended by the Design Guidelines and expressed a concern that market forces would result in vacant and unused space. Staff are of the opinion that mixed-use buildings within the nodes and along the corridors are necessary to provide complete streets and encourage walking and more livable environment for our residents. This mixed-use approach is also consistent with the Vision Statement of the Intensification Study and the assumptions and policies of the Official Plan. A number of alternatives were discussed at this meeting including the use of commercial space for interim uses until a critical mass develops or consideration of the potential of offering increased height or density in return for the development of commercial space as an incentive.

Details and Effects of the Intensification Area Urban Design Guidelines

The Guidelines provide the detailed vision, strategy and related criteria for the intensification of the City's Urban Growth Centre, Intensification Nodes and Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas as identified in the Council adopted Intensification Study and the Official Plan.

The Guidelines are divided into four components dealing with the Public Realm, Private Realm, Intensification Area specific guidelines and Implementation Strategies. The Public Realm Guidelines provide direction for work on the public lands including natural heritage features, parks and open space, streets and streetscapes, pedestrian and bicycle circulation and vehicular parking. The Private Realm Guidelines are for private owned lands and include access, parking and general building guidelines. There are also Intensification Area Specific Guidelines including Demonstration Plans for areas including Bayfield Street at Livingstone; Bayfield Street south of Highway 400; Bradford Street; and Duckworth Street at Grove Street. The Guidelines also provide Implementation Strategies including Education Programs, Monitoring and Updating, Urban Design Glossary and an Urban Design Guidelines Checklist.

Overall, the Guidelines implement the vision of the Council adopted Intensification Strategy which includes encouraging higher residential and commercial density in the Intensification Areas. In the Urban Growth Centre, future development is to be characterized by the highest densities in the City. Most of this activity is anticipated to be realized through mixed-use buildings with more pedestrian oriented retail at the street level and residential and offices above. The Strategy anticipates an increase in the vitality of this area resulting from more residents living in this area and using the commercial and community facilities that are available. The mixed-use streetscape would be active and pedestrian friendly. This would be enhanced by the new civic spaces (where possible) and improvements to existing open space for people to gather and socialize.

Within and near the Major Transit Station Areas, the vision is for a mix of residential, employment and retail uses with increased densities within a ten-minute walking distance. This would include higher density mixed-use residential and commercial buildings with a variety of building forms. These uses should encourage activity at all times and include convenience retail that support transit passengers including cafes and other daily use commercial. Local trails and bicycle routes should provide direct routes to the transit facilities with appropriate transit user shelters and secure bicycle storage.

There is also a vision for the creation of "Gateways" at the major entrance points into the City to provide a sense of place for visitors and residents of the City. Other "Gateways" are planned to assist in delineating entry points into the Urban Growth Centre and other distinct areas such as Allandale. These would be characterized by landmark buildings, wide pedestrian boulevards and appropriate way finding signage.

Within the Intensification Nodes and Corridors, the redevelopment of underutilized parcels for street-oriented mixed-use development in low and mid-rise buildings (6-8 storeys) is encouraged. Taller buildings could be located in the Intensification Nodes. These mixed-use main streets are planned to include wide boulevards, landscaping, public art and at-grade commercial uses. The intent is to create a people scaled development with opportunities for active transportation.

The Guidelines provide detailed criteria for the mitigation of perceived impacts of intensification on adjoining residential areas through design and setbacks. For example, building heights in established neighbourhoods are to be designed in a compatible built form to transition to adjacent neighbourhoods. Associated with designing complete communities is the support of active transportation through the provision of bus shelters, sidewalk canopies, bicycle parking and the provision of trails and bicycle routes to link transit facilities within the Public Realm. The Guidelines also include design recommendations related to provisions for accessibility design within the public realm of the Intensification areas.

The Guidelines also recognize the historic neighbourhoods of Brock Park, Allandale and Downtown within the Intensification Areas and provide design guidelines for any infilling within those neighbourhoods.

Other Implications and Implementation Strategies

In addition to the creation of area specific design guidelines, the Intensification Study recommended the creation of a new zone category for intensification areas. Staff anticipate that this new zoning category would establish performance standards for mid-rise, mixed use development and may include the establishment of minimum and maximum building heights, step-backs and angular plane requirements to

define building envelope and building form; reductions in parking standards; and other standards as well as permissions for commercial uses within a residential zone. Planning Services as part of the 2013 Work Plan are developing zoning standards for this new zone which is informed, at least in part by the recommendations of the Urban Design Guidelines.

To implement the Public Realm aspects of the Guidelines, there will be a need for engineering design and related capital works to consider alternate road design standards and consider elements such as wider sidewalks, bicycle lanes and public transit requirements. These types of works may require additional capital expenditure by the City.

It is important to note that the Guidelines can also be implemented in part by the application of Height and Density Bonusing (Section 37 of Planning Act) which facilitates permission by the City for additional development rights (ie. additional floor area) in exchange for the developer making public improvements and/or new community facilities or affordable housing.

The Site Plan Control By-law and the existing Urban Design Manual will be updated as necessary so as to be consistent with the Guidelines. Notwithstanding, the Guidelines will provide a separate set of standards on which to review all development applications within the identified Intensification Areas.



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