The Planning Partnership

City of Burlington
Official Plan Review – Commercial Strategy Study

Table of Contents

1 INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES ..................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 APPROACH .................................................................................................................................................... 2
  1.3 OUTLINE ...................................................................................................................................................... 3
  1.4 CONTEXT ...................................................................................................................................................... 3

2 POLICY FRAMEWORK ........................................................................................................................................ 5
  2.1 PROVINCIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK ................................................................................................. 5
  2.2 LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK ................................................................................................................... 6

3 MARKET ANALYSIS .......................................................................................................................................... 9
  3.1 Burlington’s Growth Context ....................................................................................................................... 9
  3.2 Burlington’s Commercial Land Supply ...................................................................................................... 9
  3.3 CONCLUSIONS ........................................................................................................................................... 12

4 CITY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS .................................................................................................................. 13
  4.1 Phasing Out Major Retail Designations through a New Mixed Use Hierarchy ............................................. 14
  4.2 Commercial Uses in Residential Areas ...................................................................................................... 25
  4.3 Scale of Commercial Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas ............................................................................ 27
  4.4 Functional Commercial Spaces Along Corridors ......................................................................................... 28
  4.5 Places of Worship in Mixed Use Activity Areas .......................................................................................... 32
  4.6 Auto-related Uses in Mixed Use Areas ....................................................................................................... 34
  4.7 Parking Standards ..................................................................................................................................... 40
  4.8 Location of Parking ................................................................................................................................... 43
  4.9 Reinforcing the Building’s Primary Entrance onto the Street ..................................................................... 44
  4.10 Transitions in Scale and Intensity .............................................................................................................. 46
  4.11 Monitoring and Application Review .......................................................................................................... 47
  4.12 Definitions ............................................................................................................................................... 50

5 DOWNTOWN RECOMMENDATIONS .............................................................................................................. 53
  5.1 A New Retail Structure .............................................................................................................................. 53
  5.2 Enhanced Guidelines for Commercial Uses in the Downtown .................................................................. 56
6 IMPLEMENTATION.................................................................................................................................................. 59
6.1 Updating the Official Plan & Implementing By-Laws ................................................................................................................................. 59
6.2 Urban Design Guidelines ........................................................................................................................................................................... 59
6.3 Integrated Commercial Land Use and Transportation Planning ........................................................................................................... 59
6.4 Comprehensive Area Planning .................................................................................................................................................................... 59
6.5 Information Sharing & Capacity Building ........................................................................................................................................... 60
6.6 Leading By Example .................................................................................................................................................................................. 61

7 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS ................................................................................................................................................. 62

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND RECONCILIATION .............................................................................................................. 11
TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE RE-DESIGNATIONS .................................................................................. 16

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1. PROPOSED SCHEDULE B - COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN - URBAN PLANNING AREA ......................................................... 18
FIGURE 2. VISUALIZING THE CENTRES AND CORRIDORS .......................................................................................................................... 26
FIGURE 3. PROPOSED SCHEDULE A - SETTLEMENT PATTERN .................................................................................................................. 27
FIGURE 4. PROPOSED RETAIL STREET OVERLAY TO SCHEDULE E - DOWNTOWN URBAN CENTRE - LAND USE PLAN ............................. 58

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LAND USE RE-DESIGNATION SUMMARY

APPENDIX B: DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL USES IN MIXED UES ACTIVITY AREAS
1 INTRODUCTION

This study has been undertaken as part of the City of Burlington’s five-year review of its Official Plan, which will be updated to reflect an emphasis on accommodating growth through intensification and infill rather than greenfield development. This emphasis will inform the development of policies that support the success of existing neighbourhoods and a transition towards more compact and complete communities.

Commercial uses have an important role to play in creating vibrant and prosperous neighbourhoods. They offer amenities to support the daily needs of residents and workers, and can serve as important community gathering places when they are planned and designed as people-oriented places. Notwithstanding the enormous potential of commercial areas to contribute to the development of great communities, a significant transformation in commercial land use planning and development is needed to achieve that potential in both aging commercial areas and emerging mixed use areas. Some of this transformation from current and historic commercial formats is, and will continue to, occur naturally as public tastes change and land economics adjust as part of an evolutionary process. The Official Plan Review provides an opportunity to assist in the evolution, and to revisit past policies and establish new ones to strengthen support for an increasingly integrated and people-oriented approach to commercial land use planning.

1.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study has been to develop a set of policy recommendations that will allow the City of Burlington to better incorporate commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design over the next twenty years, with the goal of creating complete, walkable communities.

During Phase 1, the study team identified a number of “strategic considerations” for updating the commercial land use planning framework, which have since been further explored in consultation with staff, stakeholders, the public, and Council. Building on that work, the objective of Phase 2 of the Commercial Strategy Study has been to develop detailed policy recommendations that can be implemented through the Official Plan Review. The key inquiries that guided Phase 2 of the Commercial Strategy Study from a land use planning perspective included:

1. How can the City facilitate the successful integration of commercial areas within neighbourhoods?

2. How can the City facilitate the (re)development and intensification of commercial lands within centres, mobility hubs, and corridors in a way that emphasizes:
- good principles of urban design and sustainability;
- the efficient use of hard infrastructure; and,
- the co-location of community facilities/infrastructure.

3. If need be, how should the policy framework be modified to align with upper tier policy (e.g. Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Grow)?

4. What additional strategies can be used to support the implementation of the commercial land use objectives (e.g. programs and partnerships)?

Alongside these inquiries, the consultant team addressed two additional tasks:

- Developing new urban design guidelines for commercial development to complement the updated policy framework; and,
- Identifying new commercial land use strategies for the Downtown that will support the continued evolution of this important centre to a complete community that also serves as a vibrant and regionally significant mixed use destination.

1.2 APPROACH

To develop the recommendations presented in this report, the consultant team conducted a detailed commercial market analysis and policy review, and developed strategic considerations that were reviewed in consultation with staff, stakeholders, the public and Council.

The commercial market analysis included a review of relevant background materials, analysis of commercial trends, determination of Burlington’s market characteristics, an inventory of commercial space in Burlington, the identification of future retail opportunities, and empirical research (license plate, on-street intercept and online/telephone consumer surveys) – all of which contributed to the completion of a commercial needs assessment. This work is documented in the Commercial Market Supply and Demand Analysis report and summarized in Chapter 3 of this Recommendations Report.

The commercial policy review included a review of the Provincial planning framework under Places to Grow (2006) and the Provincial Policy Statement (2005), as well as the current local planning framework under the Burlington Official Plan and Zoning By-Law. Past and present issues in commercial land use planning were identified through a review of background reports and commercial development applications. The policy review also included a comparative analysis of approaches to commercial land use planning in Southern Ontario,
including a review of Official Plan policies from other GTA municipalities; and, the identification of best practices in commercial land use planning and design from across North America. This work is documented in the Commercial Policy & Design Review Background Report.

The consultation program has included ongoing meetings with staff, a presentation to the Development & Infrastructure Committee of Council (March 2013), online public engagement through a Mindmixer survey (June-September 2013), and stakeholder workshops with representatives of the development community, local businesses, and community groups (September 2013). This Recommendations Report will be considered again by City Council, and the proposed policy amendments will be further vetted through the public and stakeholders as part of the new Official Plan.

1.3 OUTLINE

This report begins with an overview of the historical evolution of commercial land use and community planning in Southern Ontario. Chapter 2 then establishes the provincial and local policy framework within which future commercial policies will be implemented. The key findings of the commercial market analysis are then presented in Chapter 3. In Chapters 4 and 5 outline the strategic considerations and policy recommendations that have been developed through the Commercial Strategy Study. These recommendations are supported by Commercial Urban Design Guidelines in Appendix B. The final chapter provides an overview of the recommendations and next steps towards implementation.

1.4 CONTEXT

1.4.1 HISTORICAL PATTERNS OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT & NEW DIRECTIONS IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

From the mid to late twentieth century, the common commercial hierarchy adopted by municipalities across North America included four basic components:

- an historic downtown;
- regional malls;
- community-scaled malls and plazas; and,
- locally-scaled commercial nodes that offered convenience items and personal services.
During the 1990s, virtually all new regional retail development comprised power nodes, characterized by clusters of large-format retail outlets located along arterials in a highly auto-oriented setting. During this timeframe, the commercial hierarchy contracted with the loss of many former community and district scale shopping centres which lacked the scale to compete with the large format stores and power centres. Some downtowns and enclosed regional shopping centres that were not able to rebrand themselves also experienced functional decline. While the onset of large format power nodes had a significant impact on the retail hierarchy, many regional malls and locally scaled commercial nodes have reinvented themselves, and today tend to compete in the commercial hierarchy relatively successfully. Historical downtowns have also been required to reinvent themselves as centres of culture, administration, service commercial, and niche market retail areas – with a fundamental shift into higher density residential neighbourhoods. Today it appears that those community-scaled malls and plazas are left struggling to compete. Their built form, scale and mixture of retail and service commercial uses being outdated, and in decline. In many cases, they have been converted into non-retail uses or mixed use projects with much smaller retail components.

Although the form and function of retail areas has changed over the last several decades, it is important to note that the success of open format retail areas (i.e. plazas/power nodes) continues to rely on the presence of at least one “anchor”, which draws a large number of customers to the area on a regular basis. In fact, Burlington’s 2003 Commercial Study found that although new retail development is moving away from the typical strip mall style with an anchor at each end and smaller retail in between, it is important to note that the open format with some free standing buildings still requires the presence of at least one anchor.

The emergence of power nodes in the 1990s, alongside low density residential development resulted in the pinnacle of what has since become known as suburban sprawl. As the social, environmental, fiscal and health-related costs of sprawl became more and more evident, ideas about urban planning and community design began to shift. Over the last twenty years, smart growth, place making, and creating more compact, transit supportive, and complete communities has become the mantra of cities across the continent as they strive to promote healthier and more active lifestyles, and to become more fiscally and environmentally sustainable.

For commercial development, these shifting ideas have introduced an emphasis on mixed use development, where commercial uses are integrated with other uses (in a community and within development sites), so that employees and residents can access goods and services by foot, rather than by car. Not only are new segregated commercial areas typically discouraged, opportunities to retrofit existing commercial strips and aging retail centres are being championed as part of a broader intensification strategy, which itself is aimed at creating more compact and transit-supportive communities. In fact, one of the primary shifts in planning during the last decade has been to better integrate land use and transportation planning, in support of transit. In this context, the commercial hierarchies of the past are becoming replaced, at least in Southern Ontario, with hierarchies of mixed use centres and corridors that are linked to the intensification framework and planned public transit networks.
2 POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 PROVINCIAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Provincial planning framework has been informed by, and then subsequently influenced the contemporary approaches to urban planning described in the introduction. As concerns about the impact of suburban sprawl came to a head in the 1990s and early 2000s, the Provincial government began formulating a more “hands on” approach to planning in Southern Ontario that emphasizes complete communities and transit supportive development. Additions to the Provincial planning framework since that time have included a new Provincial Policy Statement (2005, currently under review), the Places to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006), the Greenbelt Plan (2006), and the Big Move (2008).

Although much of the Provincial planning framework, and the Growth Plan in particular, is focused on residential and employment land use planning, expectations for commercial development are integrated through the emphasis on mixed use development and complete communities, intensification, and the revitalization of urban centres, including historic downtowns.

2.1.1 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT & THE INTENSIFICATION FRAMEWORK FOR THE GREATER GOLDEN HORSESHOE

Integrating pedestrian-oriented commercial land uses as a central component of successful communities is strongly promoted under the Growth Plan. One of the guiding principles of the Growth Plan is to “build compact, vibrant and complete communities” (Section 1.2.2) that provide convenient access to jobs, local stores and services, alongside a full range of housing choices, community facilities and open spaces (Sections 2.2.2.1.h and 2.1). Moreover, as municipalities plan for complete communities, they are required to ensure high quality urban design is achieved to “create attractive and vibrant places that support walking and cycling for everyday activities and are transit supportive” (Section 6.3.1.2 c & d).

The shift to higher quality, compact and mixed use commercial development is also expressed through the intensification policies of the Growth Plan, which are focused on the following framework for shaping the regional structure:

- urban growth centres;
- intensification corridors;
- major transit station areas;
• brownfield sites and greyfields (Section 2.1).

Not only is the intensification framework partly based on historical elements of the commercial hierarchy, commercial uses are identified as part of the land use mix for urban growth centres (Section 2.2.4.4.a) and Major Transit Station Areas (Section 2.2.5.1.b). Local services are also highlighted as part of the land use mix for intensification corridors (Section 2.2.5.3). In addition, the Growth Plan recognizes the potential to transform legacy commercial areas (i.e. the regional malls and strip plazas) by promoting the intensification and revitalization of “greyfields” (i.e. underutilized commercial properties) through mixed use infill development.

2.2 LOCAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 STRATEGIC PLAN (2011-2014)

Burlington’s Strategic Plan was prepared through a collaborative process and lays out a vision for the City and priorities for City Council. The stated mission of Burlington’s Strategic Plan is to ensure that neighbourhoods and commercial areas, including those in the Downtown, are safe and accessible. Creating a strategy to redevelop aging retail areas into mixed-use “people-places” is a key component of this Plan, as is promoting a mix of local retail and services in the Downtown to ensure it remains a vibrant place.

2.2.2 THE BURLINGTON OFFICIAL PLAN (1997, JUNE 2012 CONSOLIDATION)

The current Burlington Official Plan was prepared in 1997. The Plan last underwent review between 2002 and 2006, and is generally considered to be in conformity with Provincial and Regional planning policies. Notably, the 1997 Official Plan incorporated the City’s first mixed use designations, and began reworking the traditional commercial hierarchy. Like other municipalities, the City's new commercial hierarchy included a blend of commercial and mixed use designations to reflect the traditional retail centres/hierarchy, and the emerging intensification framework based on centres and corridors.

As the overarching planning policy document for the City of Burlington, the Official Plan establishes eight principles to guide planning and decision-making. These principles reflect contemporary planning approaches, and emphasize the goal of creating attractive, livable and successful communities that offer a diversity of housing, employment, leisure and transportation options within a more compact urban structure. Moreover the eight principles highlight the need for responsible fiscal management in providing growth-related infrastructure and services, and the need to support businesses and a vigorous local economy (Part 1, Section 3.0).

Part I, Section 4.0 of the Official Plan references the City's post-war development pattern, and recognizes itself as a “typical suburban community”, but one that will evolve in response to Provincial planning requirements, and perhaps more importantly, residents' desire to become more sustainable. To this end, Section 4.3 identifies “structural features” that are expected to remain stable over the long-term, including existing residential neighbourhoods, the “historic downtown focused on the waterfront”, the employment corridors along
highways, the City’s shopping areas, and the green space network. Key changes that are currently supported by the Official Plan include creating a greater diversity of housing choices; encouraging jobs in proximity to where people live; intensifying mixed use centres and certain roads; creating a “more balanced” transportation system that improves conditions for walking, cycling and transit; and conserving the City’s natural heritage features. Rather than a whole-scale transformation, these opportunities represent a more fine-grained approach to facilitating change, without challenging existing lifestyles, but instead by creating more choices.

2.2.2.1 EXISTING COMMERCIAL LAND USE POLICIES

The City of Burlington has established a settlement pattern through the Official Plan that concentrates commercial uses within Major Retail Areas, but also permits their controlled dispersion throughout Mixed Use Activity Areas. Commercial land use policies for the Major Retail Areas and Mixed Use Activity Areas are provided under Part III, Subsections 4.0 and 5.0. The current hierarchy of commercial land use designations can be described as follows:

**Major Retail Areas**

- Regional Commercial (Part III, Subsection 4.3) – major activity centres that include retail to serve the city and adjacent communities. This designation applies to mall sites that are a minimum of 20 ha in size with a total retail GFA of at least 45,000 sm. Redevelopment that brings in a mix of jobs and medium-to-high density housing is encouraged for these areas, although to emphasize the retail function of these areas, free-standing non-retail uses are restricted to 50% of the GFA of any property. The maximum permitted height is 12-storeys.

- Community Commercial (Part III, Subsection 4.4) – smaller scale activity centres that function much like Regional Commercial centres, but with a smaller catchment area that includes the surrounding residential and business areas. Residential and office uses are also encouraged at these locations, which are five to 12 ha in size, and may include a maximum retail GFA of 45,000 sm. The maximum permitted height is 12-storeys.

- Employment Commercial (Part III, Subsection 4.5) – areas that are well-suited to accommodate employment and retail uses that require expansive land areas. These areas are meant to serve the occasional needs of residents and the business community, rather than daily or weekly needs. The minimum floor area for permitted uses is 1,000 sm, and it should be noted that new Employment Commercial lands are not permitted. The maximum FAR is 0.3, except for office uses, which may achieve a density of up to 0.5 FAR.

- Neighbourhood Commercial (Part III, Subsection 4.6) – these commercial nodes are located at the periphery of residential neighbourhoods primarily along arterial roads, and provide retail and service commercial uses to serve people’s daily and weekly needs. Smaller-scale nodes are approximately 1 ha in size, with a total GFA of up to 2,500 sq. m to serve the immediate
neighbourhood in its vicinity. These nodes may be located on collector roads. Larger-scale nodes are up to 5 ha in size, with a max GFA of 12,500 sq. m to serve the needs of the immediate and surrounding residential communities. Residential uses are permitted above grade in these centres.

**Mixed Use Activity Areas**

- Mixed Use Corridor Commercial – areas currently characterized by large-format, auto-oriented retail uses that serve the residents of the City and adjacent communities. These corridors will redevelop over the long-term to become transit supportive and pedestrian-oriented with new office and residential uses. Infill will be prioritized over the designation of new commercial corridors. The maximum permitted building height is 3-storeys, except for residential and office use, which may go up to 6-storeys.

- Other Mixed Use Corridors and Centres - Aside from the primary commercial designations listed above, commercial uses are directed towards General and Employment-oriented Mixed Use Corridors, as well as Mixed Use Centres (Downtown and Uptown). While these areas are not intended to serve a primarily commercial function, controlled retail and service commercial uses are permitted as part of the land use mix, particularly at-grade to serve local residents and employees. Notably, large format retail uses related to home improvement are currently permitted in the Mixed Use Corridor – Employment designation.

Outside of the Major Retail and Mixed Use Activity Centre designations, retail and service commercial uses are not permitted in Residential Areas, and are strictly restricted in Employment Areas. Within Employment Areas, small-scale convenience retail and service commercial uses such as restaurants and banks may be permitted to serve local employees, as well as retail that is ancillary to an office or industrial use.

Burlington’s existing commercial hierarchy and land use policies signal a shift towards phasing out post-war commercial development patterns, but retain traditional language (i.e. designation titles) and protections for car-oriented retail uses and built forms. The existing policies also continue to segregate commercial uses from the places where most people live. Rather than comprehensive framework for complete and walkable communities with integrated amenities and services for residents, the existing commercial planning framework takes a more selective approach to introducing new forms of commercial development in mixed use, intensification areas, while maintaining the status quo in “stable” areas.
3 MARKET ANALYSIS

3.1 BURLINGTON’S GROWTH CONTEXT

In recent years as its greenfield land approaches exhaustion, Burlington’s population growth has decelerated. By 2031, Burlington’s population is forecast to reach a total of approximately 195,700 persons, representing total market growth of 12,600 residents between 2012 and 2031. With limited greenfield development opportunities available, the largest share of future residential growth will be attracted to intensification sites: including the downtown Urban Growth Centre; mixed use corridors along Plains Road and Fairview Street; and mixed use areas around the existing malls and GO rail stations.

3.2 BURLINGTON’S COMMERCIAL LAND SUPPLY

Burlington has some 10.6 million sq. ft. (984,772 sq. m) of retail and service space distributed over a traditional commercial structure, with the single largest concentration of overall commercial space within the downtown core. It also has two enclosed regional shopping centres (Burlington Mall and Mapleview Shopping Centre) and four major power centre nodes, which are situated at Brant Street and the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW); Plains Road and the Queen Elizabeth Way (QEW); Appleby and Upper Middle Road; and Dundas and Appleby.

The commercial vacancy rate in Burlington is currently 5.0%, which is indicative of a balanced and healthy market. Although there are several nodes with relatively high vacancy rates, they tend to be due to space transitions and unique circumstances rather than signifying structural issues with the City’s commercial supply.

Since the City’s previous commercial study was prepared in 2003, the growth in commercial space in Burlington generally outpaced population growth. Accordingly, Burlington has experienced a significant growth in space on a per capita basis over the past ten years.

Overall, per capita space ratios are currently above the average of comparable municipalities, which to some extent can be explained by its above average income characteristics and its accessibility to the highway network within the western Greater Golden Horseshoe. It is important to note, however, that the healthy vacancy rates in the community suggest that Burlington is generally not over stored.

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1 Based on urbanMetrics projections for the Primary Zone of the City of Burlington’s trade area, which were derived from population projections obtained from: Regional Municipality of Halton – Best Planning Estimates of Population, Occupied Dwelling Units and Employment, 2011-2031 (June 2011); and Ministry of Infrastructure – The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Schedule 3 (2006). The Primary Zone comprises the City of Burlington in its entirety however, this forecast exceeds the Best Planning Estimates.
Despite limited population growth, there will still be considerable future commercial development occurring through already approved projects and designated vacant sites with existing commercial approvals.

If all of these developments proceed as planned, they would add a total of some 1.194 million sq. ft. (110,926 sq. m) to the existing supply of commercial space in Burlington. Over half of this space would comprise the expansion of the existing regional commercial node at Dundas and Appleby Line in north-west Burlington.

The City of Burlington’s Planning Department has also identified a number of sites as having potential for future commercial development, which include both serviced and un-serviced sites that are generally zoned for mixed commercial-residential or commercial-employment uses. These Other Potential Commercial Development Sites include the 225,000 sq. ft. (20,903 sq. m) IKEA outlet, which would be vacated if the planning application facilitating the relocation of the existing IKEA store is approved.

### 3.2.1 FUTURE COMMERCIAL SPACE WARRANTED IN BURLINGTON

Based on the results of urbanMetrics’ detailed retail market demand analysis, a total of approximately 1.55 million sq. ft. (144,000 sq. m) of additional retail and selected service commercial space will be warranted in Burlington to serve the existing and future population of the City by 2031.

In Downtown Burlington, there will be a requirement for some 190,500 sq. ft. (17,698 sq. m) of additional commercial space by 2031, including: approximately 76,500 sq. ft. (7,107 sq. m) of Non-Food Store Retail (NFSR) space; 31,300 sq. ft. (2,908) of Food Store Retail (FSR) space; and 82,700 sq. ft. (7,683) of other service and selected retail space.

As noted from **Table 1**, the difference between the demand and supply, results in a residual unfulfilled demand of just 350,000 sq. ft. (32,516 sq. m) of commercial space.

Including an application by IKEA to expand and relocate to a site at Walkers Line and the QEW, which has been recommended for approval by Planning Staff, approximately 957,000 sq. ft. (88,908 sq. m) is already approved on Regional Commercial sites. This would consume some 60% of the demand by 2031.

By 2031, there will be demand for some 101,100 sq. ft. (9,393 sq. m) of additional food store space. Recognizing an approved supermarket on Dundas Street, this would leave a residual of approximately 65,000 sq. ft. (6,039 sq. m). A large share of this would be required to serve future growth in the downtown.
Approximately 190,500 sq. ft. (17,698 sq. m) of new commercial space will be required in Downtown Burlington by 2031. If this amount of space were developed in the City's core, it would leave approximately 160,000 sq. ft. (14,865 sq. m) available for new development in the rest of the City.

### TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND RECONCILIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Square Feet</th>
<th>Square Metres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demand</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Food Store Retail</td>
<td>1,192,100</td>
<td>17,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food Store Retail</td>
<td>101,100</td>
<td>9,393</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selected Services</td>
<td>246,300</td>
<td>22,882</td>
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<td>Liquor/Beer/Wine Stores</td>
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<td>641</td>
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<td><strong>Total Demand</strong></td>
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<td>Supply</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immediate Development Prospect</td>
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<td>Other Proposed Developments</td>
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<td>Significant Undeveloped Designated an Zoned Sites</td>
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<td><strong>Total Supply</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,193,972</strong></td>
<td><strong>110,924</strong></td>
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<td>Unfulfilled Demand</td>
<td><strong>352,428</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,742</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.2.1.1 LOCATION OF NEW COMMERCIAL USES

Over the planning horizon to 2031, there is demand for a relatively small amount of new commercial space, and it should support new population growth along intensification corridors and mixed use development in proximity to the GO Transit stations and Regional Mall sites, as well as, providing local serving commercial space in areas such as west Aldershot which may lack certain retail facilities.

There are already a number of vacant sites in these areas with approval for commercial space, often as part of a mixed-use zoning category. Where applications for new commercial space are made, approval should give priority to those developments supporting population intensification areas and in existing areas lacking local serving retail facilities.
3.3 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the market analysis clearly indicate that the available supply of commercially designated lands will be sufficient to meet future demand to 2031. As such, there will be no need to designate additional commercial lands to support growth to 2031. The only exceptions to this would be to meet local serving needs in existing undersupplied portions of the City, such as west Aldershot, or to provide for local serving retail to support future residential development in intensification areas. Similarly, the conversion of employment lands to commercial is not required to support future growth in Burlington and should be avoided.

For detailed analysis and findings, please refer to the urbanMetrics report on Burlington’s Commercial Market Supply and Demand Analysis.
4 CITY-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

Through its existing Official Plan and Strategic Plan, the City of Burlington has already decided that the way it grows and develops in the coming decades will be different than it has in the past. The City’s commitment to changing the way it grows is also exemplified in its current Official Plan Review slogan “We’re Growing in Place”, which emphasizes accommodating growth through intensification and infill rather than greenfield development to support the success of existing neighbourhoods and a transition towards more compact and complete communities.

Burlington’s land use policies for commercial uses already promote higher quality urban design and provide a number of safeguards against car-oriented development, and more generally, signal a transition to a mixed use approach to commercial land use planning that is based on the intensification framework, with policies to guide the transformation of traditional commercial areas. Notwithstanding this, several opportunities have been identified to better incorporate commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design. These opportunities are presented as recommendations below and include:

- Phasing out major retail designations through a new mixed use hierarchy;
- Permitting small-scale commercial uses in Residential Areas;
- Limiting the scale of commercial uses in Mixed Use Areas, while enabling the development of a mix of commercial building types along Urban Corridors;
- Adopting a criteria for permitting places of worship in Mixed Use Activity Areas;
- Better managing auto-related uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas;
- Right-sizing the parking supply;
- Directing parking away from the street edge, and permitting on-street parking;
- Reinforcing the building’s primary entrance onto the street; and,
- Promoting transitions in scale and intensity in intensification areas.

Recommendations are also provided for the implementation of the updated commercial/mixed use planning framework, including with regard to:
• Definitions;
• Monitoring the commercial land supply; and,
• Evaluating development applications.

Throughout the recommendations, Official Plan section references refer to the existing section numbering, which will need to be updated to reflect the deletion of Major Retail Areas, and the introduction of new Mixed Use Activity Area sections. For the purposes of this report, references to Part III, Subsection 5.0 Mixed Use Activity Areas have not been renumbered. All Official Plan section references are to the current policy sections. Where there is no existing policy section the placeholder “x” has been used.

4.1 PHASING OUT MAJOR RETAIL DESIGNATIONS THROUGH A NEW MIXED USE HIERARCHY

4.1.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

It is the City of Burlington’s objective to better incorporate commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design, with the goal of creating complete, walkable communities. To achieve this objective, the Official Plan should promote the redevelopment of traditional commercial areas into revitalized mixed use hubs of activity that demonstrate pedestrian-friendly community design.

4.1.2 DISCUSSION

The City of Burlington’s existing commercial land use planning framework includes policies that permit mixed use redevelopment within Major Retail Areas (Regional Commercial, Community Commercial, and Neighbourhood Commercial). While the existing policy framework includes policies that support redeveloping commercial nodes with residential and office uses to create more mixed use “people places”, there is an opportunity to improve the clarity of the commercial land use planning framework to make it more effective in achieving its objectives, and more user-friendly for developers, decision-makers, the public, and staff.

New Mixed Use Designations

It is proposed the City phase out the existing Major Retail Area designations by merging them with existing Mixed Use Activity Area designations under a new hierarchy of Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors. The advantage of the proposed designations is that they better communicate the type of place, built character and function that the City intends to achieve. For example, while it may not be clear that a mix of uses is welcome in Community Commercial designations, it is more clear that they are welcome in an Urban Centre designation. The hope is that if the designations are clear, the City is more likely to achieve
the desired built outcome as opportunities for change arise over the long term. A summary of the proposed Mixed Use Activity Area hierarchy and how it integrates existing designations is provided in Table 2.

**Impact on the Commercial Land Supply**
With regard to the commercial land supply and demand analysis outlined in Section 3 of this report, it should be noted that the revised commercial/mixed use hierarchy does not significantly increase the total amount of commercial land. Instead, the proposed redesignations are an important step towards re-distributing commercial uses throughout mixed use areas and in proximity to residents over the long term. As outlined in Section 4.11 of this report, this process will need to be monitored by staff through the development approvals process to ensure an appropriate supply and distribution of commercial uses is achieved.

**Employment-related Designations**
The proposed Mixed Use Activity Area hierarchy excludes employment-related designations currently captured under the Major Retail Area and Mixed Use Activity Area designations. “Employment Commercial” lands are excluded because Schedule A of the Official Plan identifies these lands and part of the Employment Lands inventory. Lands identified as “Mixed Use Corridor – Employment” are also excluded since the policies prioritize industrial and office uses, prohibit residential uses, and limit commercial uses (as such, these lands are treated in policy as Employment Lands). Through the Official Plan Review, the City should reconsider the appropriate treatment for Mixed Use Corridor – Employment lands. If the current land use permissions are retained, these lands will continue to form part of the Employment Land supply. However, it is recommended that any Mixed Use Corridor – Employment lands located in proximity to mobility hubs be considered for redesignation as Urban Corridors through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (with appropriate policies to permit a full range of uses, including residential and commercial). Such a re-designation would more effectively permit transit supportive development. Moreover, it has been found that mixed use areas in the Greater Toronto Area are effective in attracting employers and generating jobs because they offer the type of accessibility, amenities, and environment that attracts skilled and professional employees.

**Mobility Hubs**
While outside of the scope of the Commercial Strategy Study, mobility hubs are recognized as important Mixed Use Activity Areas. It was determined through the the Commercial Strategy Study that the vision and role of lands in the four unique areas identified as mobility hubs in the Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Study will be considered through the Official Plan Comprehensive Review.

**Urban Design Guidelines**
In support of the new Mixed Use Activity Area hierarchy, Urban Design Guidelines have been developed to complement the policy framework. The Urban Design Guidelines address performance standards (siting, height and massing, parking, access, loading, transition, interface, and façade treatments). Of particular importance is design guidance for managing transitions between high, medium and low density areas as the City redevelops over time, and design strategies for creating places that are attractive and comfortable for pedestrians.
4.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Replace the existing Major Retail Area and Mixed Use Activity Area designations with a new hierarchy of centres and corridors, including Urban Centre, Urban Corridor, Neighbourhood Centre, and Neighbourhood Corridor, as outlined in Table 2, Figure 1.

Figure 1 is a Proposed Comprehensive Land Use Plan for Burlington's Urban Area, which represent the Consultants’ opinion and should only be used for discussion purposes to support the proposed recommendations. The Proposed Schedule should not be considered official versions of the Official Plan Schedules.

2. Amend policies as needed with language that promotes a transition towards mixed use development, in accordance with the following vision and characteristics for each designation, and the re-designation tables in Appendix A:

a) Downtown Urban Centre – A detailed policy regime for the Downtown is already provided in Part III, Subsection 5.5 of the Official Plan, and should generally be retained, except for any applicable amendments proposed in this report. The Downtown is recognized as the City’s primary centre, which will accommodate the greatest mix of building types and land uses throughout its eight precincts. Planning within this Urban Centre will be consistent with provincial directions regarding the designated urban growth centre area and Downtown Burlington mobility hub.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
<th>Built Form</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional, City-wide, and Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Mix of high, mid and low-rise buildings with minimal at-grade setbacks, appropriate above-grade stepbacks, and active street frontages</td>
<td>Broader mix of commercial, cultural, office, institutional, residential and open space uses, with a commercial emphasis on specialty retailers and restaurants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Uptown Urban Centre – A detailed policy regime for the Downtown is already provided in Part III, Subsection 5.6 of the Official Plan, and should generally be retained, except for any applicable amendments proposed in this report. The existing policies call for the area to develop as an intersection-focused centre with the highest intensity of development adjacent to the intersection of Appleby Line and Upper middle. Notably, Uptown is intended to be “a secondary node to the Downtown” and “a focal point for north-east Burlington... with more urban, rather than suburban, attributes”. The permitted land use mix and built form varies among the eleven sub-designations provided for this Urban Centre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
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<th>Land Uses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional, City-wide, and Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Mix of high, mid and low-rise buildings with minimal at-grade setbacks, appropriate above-grade stepbacks, and active street frontages</td>
<td>Broad mix of commercial, cultural, office, institutional, residential and open space uses, with an overall emphasis on retail and service commercial uses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSED COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE RE-DESIGNATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Designation</th>
<th>Max Height (storeys)</th>
<th>Existing Designation</th>
<th>Max Height (storeys)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Centre</strong>*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Downtown Mixed Use Centre</td>
<td>10 (max. bonus 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uptown Mixed Use Centre</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Commercial (Brant St &amp; 403)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Commercial (Brant St &amp; 403)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium Density Residential (Brant St &amp; 403)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Density Residential (Brant St &amp; 403)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Corridor</strong>*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mixed Use Corridor - Commercial</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed Use Corridor - General</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Designations (Aldershot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Community Commercial</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Mixed Use Corridor – General</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Medium Density Residential</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· High Density Residential</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>· Neighbourhood Commercial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood Centre</strong>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Commercial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Commercial (Appleby Mall; Guelph Line &amp; Upper Middle)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Commercial (Appleby &amp; Dundas)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neighbourhood Corridor</strong></td>
<td>/</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Commercial</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Medium Density Residential</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Where permitted heights currently vary from the proposed maximums for Urban Centres, Urban Corridors and Neighbourhoods Centres, the existing height permissions should be retained. For example, the maximum height of 12-storeys should be retained for the various sites currently designated Community Commercial or Regional Commercial. In addition, other site specific exceptions to the recommended maximum height may be determined through the OPR, for example, staff have recommended that permitted heights for Lakeside Plaza (currently designated Neighbourhood Commercial, and proposed to be redesignated as a Neighbourhood Centre) should be 12-storeys.

**Neighbourhood Corridor applies to a range of conditions, including lands currently designated high density residential and medium density residential. As such, the framework for permitted heights should be based on achieving compatibility with the existing built form, including through the use of appropriate transitions.

Proposed Mixed Use Activity Area section structure under Part III of the Official Plan:

4.0 Mixed Use Activity Areas
4.1 Principles
4.2 General Policies
4.3 Urban Centres
4.4 Downtown Urban Centre
4.5 Uptown Urban Centre
4.6 Brant-403 Future Urban Centre
4.7 Urban Corridors
4.8 Neighbourhood Centres
4.9 Neighbourhood Corridors

Note: Existing Section 4.0 Major Retail Areas is proposed to be deleted in its entirety, with selected policies (e.g. site specific) carried forward as appropriate under the new Mixed Use Activity Area policies.
FIGURE 1. PROPOSED SCHEDULE B - COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN - URBAN PLANNING AREA
FIGURE 2. VISUALIZING THE CENTRES AND CORRIDORS
c) **Brant-403 Future Urban Centre** – This Urban Centre is currently characterized by space-extensive, automobile-oriented large format retail uses, which will re-develop in the long-term in a more intensive, pedestrian and transit oriented manner, but may generally retain their current character in the short and medium-term. As the area redevelops, it will retain a significant retail presence, but in a more compact format. Alongside commercial uses, job creation and residential development at medium and high densities will be encouraged, as well as community services and public outdoor amenities for residents and employees. Intensification and re-development within the Brant-403 Future Urban Centre will contribute to more walkable communities by providing an accessible and attractive pedestrian realm with connections to adjacent residential neighbourhoods wherever possible. Pedestrian, cycling, and bus service connections between the Brant-403 Future Urban Centre, the Burlington GO Station, and the Downtown Urban Centre will also be developed as new residential and/or office uses are developed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
<th>Built Form</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short-medium term</strong></td>
<td>Regional and city-wide</td>
<td>Primarily auto-oriented low-density, medium and large format commercial buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long term</strong></td>
<td>Regional, city-wide, and neighbourhood</td>
<td>Mix of high and mid-rise buildings, with minimal at-grade setbacks, appropriate above-grade stepbacks, and active street frontages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d) **Urban Corridors** – Urban Corridors are key multi-purpose arterial or major arterial roads, including Fairview Street, Brant Street and Plains Road East that will redevelop over time as mixed use streets at transit supportive development densities. The redevelopment of Urban Corridors will happen over time, and that the timing of redevelopment may vary from one segment to another, depending on the existing built form, provision of transit services, and redevelopment pressures. Re-development along Urban Corridors will contribute to more walkable communities by providing an accessible and attractive pedestrian realm along the corridor with connections to adjacent residential neighbourhoods and employment areas. Refer also to recommendation three below regarding transition areas along Urban Corridors, which are recognized as Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial under the existing Official Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
<th>Built Form</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community (may also serve city-wide or regional purpose)</td>
<td>Mid-rise buildings with minimal at-grade setbacks, appropriate above-grade stepbacks, and active street frontages</td>
<td>Mix of office and residential uses, with an emphasis on retail, service commercial, and community service uses at-grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e) **Neighbourhood Centres** – These centres provide opportunities for smaller-scaled mixed use development in key locations throughout the Residential Area. The redevelopment of Neighbourhood Centres will revitalize aging plazas and other types of
traditional commercial areas in a way that retains local access to goods and service for residents in nearby neighbourhoods, and creates a pedestrian-oriented hub of activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
<th>Built Form</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood and Community</td>
<td>Mid-rise buildings with minimal at-grade setbacks, appropriate above-grade stepbacks, and active street frontages</td>
<td>Mix of limited office, medium density residential (including above grade), with retail, service commercial and community services at-grade, and small-scaled open spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

f) **Neighbourhood Corridors** – These corridors are located throughout Residential Areas, and will retain their primarily medium and high density residential character, while providing opportunities to integrate small-scaled amenities and services close to where people live, as well as limited office uses. Redevelopment along Neighbourhood Corridors will reflect the existing built form, and will become more mixed use in proximity to Neighbourhood Centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retail Function</th>
<th>Built Form</th>
<th>Land Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td>Will reflect the existing built form, primarily medium and high density residential; where new buildings are proposed they will have minimal setbacks and flexible first storey heights that can accommodate commercial uses over time</td>
<td>Residential and limited office, with retail and service commercial uses at-grade</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Recognize formerly designated Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial designations as transition areas within the Urban Corridor designation, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

**Long-term transition areas**

x) The following Urban Corridor locations are generally recognized for lower intensity, retail development that may serve residents from across the City and from adjacent municipalities. It is recognized that these areas may generally retain their current character in the short and medium-term, but shall be encouraged to transition to a more compact and pedestrian-friendly form as redevelopment opportunities arise:

(i) south side of Plains Road East, between the CNR at Glendor Avenue and Queensway Drive;
(ii) north side of Fairview Street, between the Queen Elizabeth Way and Drury Lane;
(iii) north side of Fairview Street, between the Regional Commercial area and Walker’s Line, including the north-east corner of Fairview Street and Walker’s Line;
(iv) south side of Fairview Street, between the Regional Commercial area and Woodview Ave;
(v) west side of Appleby Line, between Fairview Street and south to the Hydro Corridor;
(vi) north-east corner of Plains Road West and Howard Road;
(vii) north-west corner of Plains Road East and Cooke Boulevard;
(viii) the north-east corner of Fairview Street and Walker’s Line;
(ix) the 0.7 hectare property at 4175 Fairview Street;
(x) the 6.5 hectare property at 4415 Fairview Street;
(xi) the 0.56 hectare property located at the north-east corner of Plains Road East and Brant Street;
(xii) 101 Masonry Court.

Large-scale retail

x) Within the long-term transition areas identified in Part III, Subsection X, the following uses may be permitted up to a maximum of 5,600 sq. m gross floor area with a maximum ground floor plate of no more than 2,800 sq. m, subject to Site Plan Approval and the preparation of a market impact study:

(i) a limited number and range of large-scale retail and service commercial uses where food products are not the principal goods retailed; and,

(ii) retail commercial uses that require either multi-tenant or freestanding buildings on sites that have significant needs for on-site storage and parking, such as garden centres, automotive commercial, furniture and home furnishing uses and home improvement stores;

4. Adopt Urban Design Guidelines (Appendix B) to support the transition towards mixed use “people places” in the City’s traditional commercial areas. Recognize the Urban Design Guidelines within the Official Plan, as follows:
Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) All new development in Mixed Use Activity Areas that has a commercial component shall be consistent with the Design Guidelines for Commercial Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas. Where there is a conflict between the Design Guidelines for Commercial Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas and any area-specific guidelines, including the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, Plains Road Urban Design Guidelines, and Uptown Mixed Use Centre Design Guidelines, the area-specific guidelines shall prevail.

5. Undertake comprehensive planning for the Brant-403 Urban Centre, Neighbourhood Centres, and segments of Urban Corridors to establish a more detailed policy regime prior proceeding with mixed use development.

6. Re-locate policies for “Employment Commercial” (Part III, Subsection 4.5), which are currently located under Major Retail Areas, to the Employment Areas section of the Official Plan (Part III, Subsection 3). This is in keeping with the Settlement Pattern (Schedule A), which demarcates Employment Commercial areas as Employment Lands.

7. As part of the municipal comprehensive review, examine the “Mixed Use Corridor – Employment” designations to determine whether they should be moved to the Employment Areas (Part III, Subsection 3) or re-designated as Urban Corridors (Part III, Subsection 5).

8. Replace Major Retail Areas from Schedule A (Settlement Pattern) with Mixed Use Activity Areas, as indicated on Figure 3.

Figure 3 is a Proposed Settlement Pattern, which represent the Consultants’ opinion and should only be used for discussion purposes to support the proposed recommendations. The Proposed Schedule should not be considered official versions of the Official Plan Schedules.
FIGURE 3. PROPOSED SCHEDULE A - SETTLEMENT PATTERN
4.2 COMMERCIAL USES IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

4.2.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Permitting convenience commercial and service commercial uses in proximity to where people live is essential to fostering a transition towards complete, walkable communities.

4.2.2 DISCUSSION

Part III of Burlington’s Official Plan does not currently permit commercial uses in Residential Areas, which account for the vast majority of the City’s urban area. Restricting commercial uses in these areas can negatively impact the walkability of neighbourhoods and people’s access to services and goods.

Notably, the City’s Zoning By-Law currently permits offices and convenience stores in the RO2 Zone, which is a residential zone in the Orchard Community that otherwise permits a mix of detached, semi-detached, duplex, triplex, fourplex, and townhouses. In the RO2 Zone, convenience store uses are "subject to the same regulations for a detached dwelling". In addition, convenience stores must be located on a corner lot, or on a lot abutting an RO4 Zone (a mixed-use residential zone in the Orchard Community) or P Zone (a park zone). Convenience stores in the RO2 Zone are also subject to the following criteria:

- Lot width: 15 m
- Floor area: 200 sq. m maximum
- Lot coverage: 50% maximum
- Landscape buffer: 3 m abutting a residential use

It should also be noted that parking is not required for convenience stores in the RO2 Zone.

To create more complete communities, the City should adopt policies that permit small-scale, pedestrian-oriented convenience commercial uses in Residential Areas, subject to appropriate criteria.
4.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend the Official Plan to permit convenience/specialty food stores in Residential Areas, as follows:

Part III, Section 2.2.2.

a) Within Residential Areas, a broad range of residential dwelling types shall be permitted, including assisted and special needs housing such as group homes, rest/retirement homes and long-term care facilities, as well as uses compatible with, complementary to and serving the primary residential use of the land, such as home occupations and cottage industries, neighbourhood parks, and offices, and convenience/specialty food stores.

2. Adopt criteria for permitting convenience/specialty food store uses in Residential Areas, as follows:

Part III, Section 2.2.2

x) In Residential Areas, convenience/specialty food store uses shall be compatible with the surrounding residential character and built form, and shall be subject to the same zoning regulations as for a detached dwelling in the same zone. In addition, convenience/specialty food store uses shall be subject to the following criteria:

   (i) have a maximum floor area of 150 sq. m;

   (ii) be located on a corner lot or adjacent to a park;

   iii) be located on a street where on-street parking is permitted; and,

   iv) be located at least 500 metres (radius) away from another convenience/specialty food store.

x) The outdoor storage, display of merchandise, or equipment shall be prohibited for convenience/specialty food store uses in a Residential Area.

3. Amend Site Specific Policies under Part III, Section 2.2.3 to reflect the new commercial permissions in Residential Areas.

4. Amend Uptown Urban Centre policies to permit convenience/specialty food stores in the various residential designations.
4.3 SCALE OF COMMERCIAL USES IN MIXED USE ACTIVITY AREAS

4.3.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

To prevent the ongoing proliferation of large-format retail uses and an over-concentration of retail uses in one area, municipalities use GFA limits for individual retail outlets, and combined GFA limits for commercial and mixed use centres.

4.3.2 DISCUSSION

The Burlington Official Plan currently includes restrictions on the size and concentration of retail uses under various designations.

- Within Mixed Use Commercial Corridors, large-scale retail and service commercial uses are restricted to a maximum GFA of 5,600 sq. m (excluding food stores) (Part III, Section 5.3.3.2 (b)).

- Within a Community Commercial area, only 30% of a site can be occupied by non-food retail uses that are between 1,800 sq. m and 5,200 sq. m. (Part III, Section 4.4.2 (g)). The existing Major Retail Area policies also include caps on the concentration of retail in traditional commercial areas, at 45,000 sq. m. in Regional Commercial and Community Commercial areas, and 2,500 to 12,500 sq. m. in Neighbourhood Commercial areas.

- Area-specific caps on retail uses in the Uptown Mixed Use Centre (Uptown Urban Centre) are also provided. Within the Uptown Commercial/Residential I and II (UCR I & II) designations located in the northwest quadrant of the centre, a cap of 26,500 sq. m of retail and service commercial floor area is provided for “Phase 1”. In addition, the maximum floor area for any individual retail uses in the north-west quadrant is 7,400 sq. m in the UCRI, and 10,200 sq. m in UCRII (Part III, Subsections 5.6.4(d) and 5.6.5(c)). Site-specific retail caps are also provided for the Regional Commercial centre at Appleby and Dundas under Part III, Subsection 4.3.2(m) and (n), subject to the eventual form of development.

The proposed policy framework marks a departure from the treatment of commercial land uses, and as such new policy approaches will be needed. Existing area-based caps and goals for the concentration of retail and service commercial uses in commercial/mixed use centres should be discontinued, and replaced with the monitoring in accordance with recommendation 4.11 of this report. Also, to support the transition of traditional commercial areas into mixed use centres and corridors, caps on the maximum size of any retail outlet should be introduced for all mixed use designations, including Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors.

Notwithstanding the restrictions on large-format retail proposed below, traditional “big box” retail development will continue to be permitted within Employment Corridor and Employment Commercial designations, unless otherwise determined through the City’s
Employment Lands Study. Moreover, the proposed Urban Design Guidelines include demonstrations of how traditional large-format retailers are adopting a more compact form, which is becoming increasingly common and is expected to grow over the 20-year planning horizon, particularly within areas targeted for intensification.

4.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Under Part III, Subsection 5.2.2 General Policies for Mixed Use Activity Areas, adopt caps on the maximum size of any individual retail use and the maximum size of the floor plate at-grade, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) Where new retail and service commercial uses are proposed in Urban Centres and Urban Corridors, the maximum gross floor area of any individual business shall not exceed 5,600 sq. m and the maximum floor plate at-grade shall not exceed 2,800 sq. m, except as permitted under site and area specific policies. Food-retail shall not be subject to the aforementioned size restrictions within designated Urban Centres and Urban Corridors.

x) Where new retail and service commercial uses are proposed in Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors, the maximum gross floor area of any individual business shall not exceed 500 sq. m, except as permitted under site and area specific policies. Food-retail shall not be subject to the aforementioned size restrictions within designated Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors.

4.4 FUNCTIONAL COMMERCIAL SPACES ALONG CORRIDORS

4.4.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

A key component of achieving walkable, transit supportive and complete communities along Urban Corridors is the integration of retail and service commercial uses close to where people live. To achieve this vision, planning policies must be flexible to permit a mix of commercial building types that can accommodate the uses needed to meet the day-to-day and weekly shopping and entertainment needs of local residents.
4.4.2 DISCUSSION

Current Policy Framework
To support an active street frontage and a pedestrian oriented-built form, retail and service commercial uses along some Urban Corridors are currently only permitted at-grade in mixed use buildings, meaning that stand-alone commercial buildings are not permitted.

The built form of commercial uses is restricted under Part III, Section 5.3.2(c), which applies in the Mixed Use Corridor-General designation, and requires that “retail and service commercial uses are to be located at street level in office or residential buildings”. Notably, this restriction does not apply in the existing Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial designation (which is proposed to be deleted, and superceded by the Mixed Use Corridor-General/Urban Corridor designation). Also, retail and service commercial uses are not currently required at-grade along any designated Mixed Use Corridors.

Existing Commercial Uses Along Urban Corridors
Under the existing policy framework for areas designated Mixed Use Corridor-General, residents and staff have observed that new at-grade retail units are often small in size, and rarely attract restaurants or other types of amenities that residents would like to be able to walk to. Instead, the small ground floor units are occupied by nail salons, real estate offices, dental clinics, and other uses that create a sterile retail environment and do not fulfill the day-to-day and weekly shopping or entertainment needs of local residents.

Challenges to Achieving Functional Commercial Spaces At-grade in Mixed Use Residential Buildings
A number of challenges have been identified with regard to creating truly active retail frontages at the base of residential buildings. In particular, many residential developers lack retail experience, and as a result, ground floor retail, is often characterized by very uniform, unimaginative spaces that are cost effective to build, but that are not attractive for commercial occupants in terms of their size, storefront treatment, or internal considerations, such as plumbing and wiring. Residential developers may also be hesitant to attract some forms of commercial uses due to concerns over traffic, noise and smell nuisances that could impact other occupants and the image of the building.

The Proposed Policy Framework
Within this context, there is a desire to revisit the commercial policies for Urban Corridors to ensure they facilitate the development of functional commercial spaces that truly meet the needs of local residents, and contribute to a more complete community. A nuanced policy framework is proposed that responds to the evolving condition along Urban Corridors, and includes:

a) more flexible built form policies to permit retail and service commercial uses at-grade, as well as below grade and on the second storey of mixed use buildings;

b) criteria for permitting stand-alone retail and service commercial uses as an interim use;
c) greater direction for how to accommodate restaurants and bars in mixed use buildings while protecting residents;

d) requirements for at-grade retail in prime locations where it is most likely to succeed;

e) requirements for commercial-grade design at-grade in prime commercial locations; and,

f) minimum commercial unit sizes for development on large sites.

It will be particularly important to strike an effective commercial policy framework for Urban Corridors as this designation “absorbs” areas currently designated “Mixed Use Corridor-Commercial”.

The recommendations below primarily focus on Urban Corridors, but also provide direction for Urban Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors where equivalent commercial policies make sense.

4.4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adopt more flexible commercial building form policies to accommodate retail and service commercial uses at-grade, below grade and on the second storey of mixed use buildings that are located along Urban Corridors, as follows:

   Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

   c) Retail and service commercial uses are to be located in office or residential buildings at street level in office or residential buildings, and may also extend below grade or into the second-storey to accommodate larger retail uses within a compact format.

2. Permit selected retail and service commercial uses within stand-alone buildings along Urban Corridors as an interim use, subject to Site Plan Approval and other criteria, as follows:

   Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

   x) Notwithstanding Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(c) of this Plan, selected retail and service commercial uses, including restaurants, bars, nightclubs, movie theatres, fitness clubs, hardware stores, convenience/specialty food stores and supermarket/grocery stores, which serve the day-to-day and weekly shopping, recreation and entertainment needs of local residents may be permitted in a stand-alone
commercial building, subject to Site Plan Approval and the following criteria:

i) stand-alone commercial buildings shall only be permitted on development sites that include, or are planned to include, a mixture of uses, including office and/or residential uses;

ii) the development shall be street-oriented and pedestrian friendly and shall adhere to the site planning policies for Urban Corridors; and,

iii) where phased development is proposed, a phasing plan shall be required to demonstrate how the site will be developed or redeveloped over time to achieve the objectives under Part III, Subsection 5.3.1 for Urban Corridors, and the development proponent may be required to enter into agreements with the City regarding the ultimate build-out.

3. Provide direction for how restaurants and bars should be integrated along Urban Corridors to support the development of these vibrant pedestrian-oriented uses while protecting residents in mixed use buildings, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

x) Where restaurants and bars are located in residential buildings, “buffer” uses, such as offices, fitness clubs, common rooms and private fitness spaces associated with the residential uses shall be required on the storey above. Restaurants and bars may also be permitted in office buildings, or in stand-alone commercial buildings in accordance with Subsection 5.3.2(x). This policy does not apply to cafes, which shall be permitted in mixed use buildings of all types, even where buffer uses are not provided on the storey above the cafe.

x) Where a licensed establishment is located in a residential building, the City shall require that operational restrictions be applied through the Business Licensing process to limit potential noise or other related nuisances.

4. In areas along Urban Corridors that are best suited for commercial uses, enable the City to require commercial grade design and retail and service commercial uses at-grade, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

x) To facilitate land use flexibility and adaptability over time, the City shall require commercial-grade design for the first storey of buildings located within 100 m of a major intersection or a park, or in segments of the corridor that have historically been served by commercial uses.
x) The City may require retail or service commercial uses at-grade within 100 m of a major intersection or a park, or in segments of the corridor that have historically been served by commercial uses.

5. Within Urban Corridors and Neighbourhood Corridors, enable the City to require minimum commercial unit sizes on large development sites where there is a need for a greater mix of commercial uses to serve the day-to-day and weekly shopping and entertainment needs of local residents.

Part III, Subsection 5.3.2 and Subsection 5.X.2 (new section for Neighbourhood Corridors)

x) Where retail or service commercial uses are proposed or required on sites that are 0.36 ha in size or greater, the City shall determine whether a minimum unit size(s) is required based on the types and sizes of other commercial uses within 800 m of the site, to ensure a mix of commercial spaces is available along the corridor to meet the day-to-day and weekly needs of local residents.

6. Beyond Urban Corridors, where retail and/or service commercial uses are permitted in the Uptown Centre and Brant-403 Future Urban Centre they should also be permitted below grade and on the second storey.

4.5 PLACES OF WORSHIP IN MIXED USE ACTIVITY AREAS

4.5.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

The City is interested in exploring policy approaches to better integrate places of worship as a permitted land use in Mixed Use Activity Areas.

4.5.2 DISCUSSION

It is desirable to integrate places of worship into mixed use communities, including former commercial areas that are being redeveloped and intensified as community hubs. Burlington staff have identified a particular demand for non-conventional places of worship that serve the needs of smaller congregations, for example within mixed use buildings rather than purpose-built places of worship, such as churches, synagogues or mosques.

Under Part II, Section 4.0 of the Official Plan, places of worship are identified as an institutional use that is already permitted in all land use designations. The only limitation on places of worship is that they are subject to a zoning by-law amendment and risk assessment when they
are proposed within Business Corridor, General Employment, and Mixed Use Corridor – Employment designations. Although the Official Plan generally permits places of worship, the Zoning By-Law restricts this use to selected employment, mixed use, and Uptown zones, and establishes development criteria for purpose-built places of worship. Beyond restricting places of worship from locating in some commercial and mixed use zones, the Zoning By-Law also does not make provisions for places of worship as a use that may be integrated within a mixed use building.

Although the Official Plan already permits places of worship as-of-right in mixed use and commercial designations, there is an opportunity to strengthen this permission by listing this use as a permitted use in each designation, which will establish direction for updating the Zoning By-Law accordingly.

Broader consideration is being given to land use planning for places of worship under a separate City led review being completed as part of the Official Plan Review.

4.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the general policies for all Mixed Use Activity Areas, adopt policies for places of worship, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) In Mixed Use Activity Areas, small-scale places of worship may be permitted within mixed use buildings, at-grade, below grade and on the second storey. Such small-scale places of worship shall not exceed 300 sq. m. Places of worship that satisfy these criteria shall not require a Zoning By-Law Amendment, and may have their parking requirement waived or reduced, subject to the availability of adequate shared-parking.

x) Places of worship that are located in stand-alone buildings may be permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas, and shall:

i) be located in a highly accessible location;

ii) be compatible with the surrounding built form, particularly with regard scale, massing, setbacks, and height transitions;

iii) contribute positively to an attractive streetscape and public realm;
iv) demonstrate pedestrian-friendly site planning;

v) provide parking at the side or rear of the building; and,

vi) orient the building front and primary entrance towards the street.

All applications for stand-alone places of worship within a Mixed Use Activity Area shall be subject to Site Plan approval and the requirements of the implementing Zoning By-Law. The City may adopt maximum gross floor area limits for places of worship in Mixed Use Activity Areas within the implementing Zoning By-Law, and/or design guidelines.

2. Include places of worship in the list of permitted land uses for each Mixed Use Activity Area, including Urban Centre, Urban Corridor, Neighbourhood Centre, and Neighbourhoods Corridor, subject to the requirements outlined in recommendation 4.5.3-1 above.

4.6 AUTO-RELATED USES IN MIXED USE AREAS

4.6.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

By their traditional form and function, auto-related land uses such as drive-throughs, car washes, gas stations, service stations and car dealerships, detract from the walkability of places. For this reason, some municipalities prohibit, discourage, or otherwise regulate the design and location of auto-related land uses in intensification areas and other important nodes and corridors.

4.6.2 DISCUSSION

Burlington has adopted the following policies regarding auto-related land uses:

Auto-related Uses

Under Burlington’s current Official Plan, gas stations, car washes and “other automobile related uses” are captured under the definition for service commercial uses. A definition for automotive commercial uses is also provided, but only applied throughout the Uptown Mixed Use Centre policies.¹ Service commercial uses are widely permitted throughout existing Major Retail Areas and Mixed Use Activity Areas, subject

¹ The Burlington Official Plan defines automotive commercial uses as,
to other applicable policies regarding the commercial function and scale of development within the specific designations. Outside of the Uptown Centre, auto-related uses or automotive commercial uses are not expressly identified as a permitted use in Major Retail and Mixed Use Activity Areas, except as identified below for motor vehicle dealerships.

It should be noted that one of the recommendations of this report (see Section 4.12) is to amend the definition of service commercial to delete the reference to “service stations, car washes and other automobile related uses”. As such, the automotive commercial phrase will need to be added to the list of permitted uses for any designation wherever the intention is to permit these uses.

**Motor Vehicle Dealerships**

Motor vehicle dealerships are currently identified as a permitted use in Mixed Use Corridors (General, Commercial, Employment), and the Employment Commercial and General Employment designations. Under Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(n) of the Official Plan, express permission is provided for the expansion of large scale motor vehicle dealerships in four locations along Fairview Street and Plains Road in the Mixed Use Corridor – General designation, without amendment to the Plan.

**Drive-throughs, Service Stations, Gas Stations & Car Washes**

Currently, drive-through uses are not defined within the Official Plan, and there are no specific policies addressing drive-throughs (or gas stations and car washes). The Zoning By-Law does provide basic policies for drive-through facilities in Mixed Use Corridor Zones, which provide minimum guidance regarding landscaping and setbacks (Zoning By-law Part 5, Section 4.11).

To support a transition to a more pedestrian-friendly environment in important mixed use areas, greater guidance is needed for where auto-related land uses can locate and how they are designed. The policy framework should be nuanced, recognizing the varying needs and impacts of different types of auto-related land uses, constraints to relocation, and long-term objectives for the redevelopment of mixed use corridors.

“retail uses involving the sale of automobiles and service commercial uses involving the repair and maintenance of automobiles and the sale of gasoline or similar products and shall include motor vehicle dealerships [large scale motor vehicle dealerships are > 0.2 ha, small scale motor vehicle dealerships are < 0.2 ha], repair garages, car washes and service stations” (Part VIII).

Automotive commercial uses are expressly identified as a permitted use under designations within the Uptown Centre, including Uptown Commercial, Uptown Commercial/Residential I & II. Within the Uptown Centre, automotive commercial uses are not permitted in Uptown Commercial Residential III, Uptown High Density Residential, Uptown Employment, Uptown Mixed Use Corridor Employment Area, Uptown General Employment Area designations.
4.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide direction for where drive-through uses can be located within Mixed Use Activity Areas, and how they are to be designed to better promote a pedestrian-oriented built form and streetscape.

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) Drive through uses shall not be permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas, except within the Urban Corridor designation along Fairview Street. Where drive through uses are permitted along Fairview Street, they shall be designed to define the street edge and minimize negative impacts on walkability by meeting the following design requirements:

(i) Drive throughs shall not be located at the intersection of two roads, i.e. on a corner lot;

ii) Drive throughs shall not be paired in the same building;

iii) A drive through use shall not be permitted within 150 m of an existing drive through (on either side of the Fairview Street) so as to limit the impact on the street wall;

(iv) a minimum 50% frontage shall be required for all drive through sites;

(v) building structures shall be built to public right-of-way, with no front yard setback unless one is required to accommodate a patio;

(vi) the front of buildings shall be oriented towards the street and shall include the primary building entrance used by customers, employees and other people to enter and exit the building;

(vii) an unobstructed 2.0 m pedestrian walkway shall be provided between the public sidewalk and building entrance, as well as between any on-site parking area(s) and the building entrance;

(viii) only one curb cut that is no more than 6.0 m in length shall be permitted for accessing a drive through;
(ix) a minimum 2.0 m sidewalk shall be provided in the public right-of-way across the private access driveway, with little or no change in elevation;

(x) parking areas shall not be located between the front of buildings and the public right-of-way;

(xi) a minimum 3.0 m landscaped strip shall be provided along the edge of the site where parking areas are located adjacent to the street. The buffer may include trees, shrubs and low walls;

(xii) the number of vehicle stacking spaces shall not exceed a maximum of eight spaces;

(xiii) stacking lanes shall be located as far away as possible from the street line, and never adjacent to a public right-of-way;

(xiv) A minimum buffer of 30 m shall be provided between any part of a drive through facility and the edge of the lot line of any residential use or designation where residential uses are permitted; and,

(xv) other design strategies may be required to meet the objectives of Part III, Subsection 5.2.1 and to limit noise, pollution and light spillage impacts on adjacent uses.

x) To limit any negative impact of drive through uses on Mixed Use Activity Areas or areas where they are permitted, the City may develop additional design guidelines for drive through uses.

Refer to a recommendation 4.12 for a proposed definition for drive through uses, to be included in Part VIII of the Official Plan.

3. Provide direction for where gas stations and car washes can be located and how they are to be designed to better promote a pedestrian-oriented built form and streetscape.

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) A gas station and/or car wash may be permitted on arterial roads within Mixed Use Activity Areas. Where gas stations and/or car washes are permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas, they shall have a site size no greater than 0.56 ha for sites including a gas station and car wash, and no greater than 0.42 ha for sites including only a gas station. In addition, where gas stations and/or car washes are
permitted within Mixed Use Activity Areas, they shall be designed to define the street edge and minimize negative impacts on walkability by meeting the following site design requirements:

(i) the number of curb cuts shall be minimized, with only one curb cut for mid-block sites and a maximum of two curb cuts for a corner site;

(ii) the length of any curb cut shall be a maximum of 6 m;

(iii) building structures (such as convenience stores and canopies) shall be located close to the street, with the exception of car washes;

(iv) an unobstructed 2.0 m pedestrian walkway shall be provided between the public sidewalk and building entrances;

(v) a minimum 2.0 m sidewalk shall be provided in the public right-of-way across private access driveways, with little or no change in elevation;

(vi) a minimum 3.0 m landscaped strip shall be provided along the edge of the site where parking areas are located adjacent to the street. The buffer may include trees, shrubs and low walls;

(vii) stacking lanes associated with a car wash shall be located as far away as possible from the street line, and never adjacent to a public right-of-way;

(viii) architectural or landscape features shall be provided at the corner on corner sites to define the street edge;

(ix) a minimum setback of 6.0 m shall be required between the gas station/car wash and the edge of the lot line of any residential use or designation where residential uses are permitted;

(viii) a screen fence shall be provided along the property line of any adjacent residential properties; and,

(ix) other design strategies may be required to meet the objectives of Part III, Subsection 5.2.1 and to limit noise, pollution and light spillage impacts on adjacent uses.
4. Ensure any new *motor vehicle dealerships* or service stations in Mixed Use Activity Areas achieve a compact urban form (and meet the existing site plan considerations for development along Urban Corridors), and adopt policies to better manage any expansion and/or upgrades of existing motor vehicle dealerships in Urban Corridors (i.e. the four specific uses located along Fairview Street and Plains Road).

Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

a) The following uses *may* be permitted within the Mixed Use Urban Corridors – General, Mixed Use Corridor Employment and Mixed Use Corridor Commercial Corridor designations:

(i) a wide range of retail, *service commercial* and personal service uses; financial institutions and services; a broad range of office uses; *entertainment, recreation* and other *community facilities* such as day care centres; and *small scale motor vehicle dealerships* and service stations that achieve a compact, urban format;

n) Notwithstanding the uses permitted in Part III, Subsection 5.3.2 a) of this Plan, *large scale motor vehicle dealerships* existing on the day of the adoption of this Plan *may* be expanded on the abutting property within the Mixed Use Corridor – General designation *by a maximum of 50%* without an amendment to this Plan, at the following locations:

(i) south-east corner of Fairview Street and Drury Lane;

(ii) south-west corner of Fairview Street and Brant Street;

(iii) north-west corner of Plains Road and Brant Street; and

(iv) north side of Plains Road West, opposite Daryl Drive.

x) Where expansion of a *large scale motor vehicle dealership* is permitted under Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(n) of this plan, the development *shall* incorporate design strategies to achieve a more compact form, better define the street edge, and minimize negative impacts on walkability, as follows:

(i) Multi-storey structures for the showcasing and storage of motor vehicles are *encouraged*;

(ii) An unobstructed 2.0 m pedestrian walkway *shall* be provided between the public sidewalk and building entrances;
(iii) A minimum 2.0 m sidewalk shall be provided in the public right-of-way across private access driveways, with no change in elevation;

(iv) A minimum 3.0 m landscaped buffer shall be provided along the edge of the site where parking areas or vehicle storage areas are located adjacent to the street, and motor vehicles shall not be permitted to park on the landscaped area. The buffer may include trees, shrubs and low walls;

(v) Only one curb cut at a maximum length of 6 m shall be permitted to provide access to the site;

(vi) Any new or relocated buildings shall be located close to the street edge and at the corner on corner sites, and shall include transparent doors and windows; and,

(vii) Where new buildings are erected or buildings are relocated, parking and vehicle storage areas shall be located at the side or rear of buildings.

4.7 PARKING STANDARDS

4.7.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Along with design standards, reduced (or “right-sized”) parking requirements are a useful tool for limiting the impact of parking on walkability and the design of commercial areas. Mandatory bicycle parking requirements can also be used to offset the need for car parking and encourage cycling as a viable mode of travel in suburban areas.

4.7.2 DISCUSSION

Burlington’s Official Plan currently includes a general provision permitting the use of reduced parking standards in Mixed Use Activity Areas to encourage transit use, walking and cycling (Part III, Subsection 5.2.2(l)). Within the Mixed Use Corridor – General and Mixed Use Corridor – Employment designations, the policies allow standards for off-street parking to be reduced “for sites with transit-supportive designs or shared parking arrangements” (Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(d)(v) and 5.3.4 (e)(iv)). Reduced parking standards, shared parking and on-street parking may also be permitted in Mixed Use Centres (Part III, Subsection 5.4.2(m)). Within the Downtown, parking reductions may be approved based on a Transportation Demand Management Plan (Part III, Section 5.5.14.e), and non-residential uses are exempt from parking requirements in the Downtown Core and Wellington Street Mixed Use Precincts. Under the City of Burlington Zoning By-Law (2020), the number of required parking spaces for retail uses is 4/100 sq. m for a retail store and 5.25/100 sq. m for a retail centre. Supermarkets are required to provide 10 spaces/100 sq. m. (City of Burlington Zoning Bylaw 2020, Table 1.2.6).
With regard to bicycles, Burlington’s Official Plan states that “the integration of cycling and transit modes shall be encouraged by requiring adequate and secure bicycle parking at...commercial, employment and institutional developments,...” (Part II, Section 3.5.2.f). The City’s Zoning By-Law (2020) establishes a minimum bicycle standard of 2 spaces plus 1 space/1,000 sq. m for retail, retail centre, service commercial, and office uses. Standards are also provided for industrial uses and schools (Table 1.2.8).

Complementary to the redesignation of commercial and mixed use areas as proposed under recommendation 4.1 of this report, transportation demand management should be encouraged for all Mixed Use Activity Areas. In addition, all parking standards should be reviewed through the Parking Study, with particular consideration for:

- Ensuring minimum parking standards support compact, mixed use development (where it is permitted) and the use of transit, walking and cycling;
- Introducing maximum automobile parking standards so that the amount of parking serves the day-to-day needs of commercial uses, rather than limited peak period needs associated with holiday shopping; and,
- Introducing comprehensive bicycle parking standards for all non-residential and multi-unit residential uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas so that local customers (i.e. residents) have parking facilities at both ends of their shopping trip.

4.7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage the use of transportation demand management measures, including but not limited to shared parking and transit oriented development, in all Mixed Use Activity Areas, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) Within Mixed Use Activity Areas, the use of transportation demand management measures, including but not limited to shared parking, shall be encouraged to limit the expanse of surface parking and cost of providing structured parking.
2. Permit reduced parking standards where it is demonstrated that projected demand is less than the standard parking requirement, as follows:

   Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

   x) Reduced parking standards *may* be permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas where a parking study demonstrates the projected demand for parking is less than the amount of parking required in the Zoning By-Law, for example due to the walkability of the area, and/or the availability of transit, shared parking and/or off-street parking.

3. Require the implementing Zoning By-Law to include appropriate parking standards for Mixed Use Activity Areas that reflect the objective of creating compact, pedestrian-oriented and transit supportive places, as follows:

   Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

   x) The parking standards for Mixed Use Activity Areas implemented through the Zoning By-Law shall support the achievement of a compact and pedestrian-oriented built form, and shall reflect enhanced opportunities for walking, cycling and transit use within Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors. Parking standards may be used to discourage automobile use within Mixed Use Activity Areas.

3. Direct the staff and/or consultants completing the Official Plan Review Parking Study to identify maximum parking standards for retail uses that reflect the day-to-day needs of commercial land uses.

4. Direct the staff and/or consultants completing the Official Plan Review Parking Study to identify bicycle parking standards for all non-residential and multi-unit residential uses in all Mixed Use Activity Areas, and preferably the entire municipality. The standards should address both secure and short-term bicycle parking facilities, and consider requirements for other end-of-trip facilities (e.g. showers and change rooms).
4.8 LOCATION OF PARKING

4.8.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Automobile parking is an important amenity to residents and businesses, but when it is designed poorly it can make walking less attractive by creating hazards between pedestrian and motor vehicle movements, increasing the door-to-door travel distance for pedestrians and transit users, and detracting from a consistent street edge. Detailed design guidance can be provided for parking lot design, but there are also basic policies that municipalities are using to guide the location of parking away from the street edge, to the side or rear of buildings, and/or in above or below grade structures.

4.8.2 DISCUSSION

With regard to parking lot design, the existing Official Plan policies encourage parking to be located at the rear or side of buildings within the Mixed Use Corridors – General designation (Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(g)(v)). Stronger policies are provided for Mixed Use Centres, where parking is required to be located at the side or rear of buildings (Part III, Subsection 5.4.2(g)(vii)). Density incentives are also offered for developments within the Mixed Use Corridor General and Mixed Use Corridor Commercial designations that include underground parking (Part III, Subsection 5.3.2(d)(i) and Subsection 5.3.3.2(e)). In addition, surface parking is banned in the Downtown’s Old Lakeshore Road Precinct, Core Precinct, and Wellington Square Mixed Use Precinct (Part III, Subsection 5.5.7.2(g), Subsection 5.5.8.2(e), and Subsection 5.5.9.2(e)).

Building on the existing parking policies for Mixed Use Areas, there is an opportunity to strengthen the preference for locating parking at the side and rear of buildings by changing the wording from “should” to “shall”, and by extending the requirement to all Mixed Use Activity Areas, which are proposed to be redesignated as the Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors.

4.8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Extend the current requirement to locate parking at the side or rear of buildings to all Mixed Use Activity Areas, as follows:

   Part III, Subsection 5.3.2

   g) The design and development of Mixed Use Urban Corridors shall promote a pedestrian-oriented environment and ensure compatibility between the Mixed Use Urban Corridors uses and adjacent land uses, particularly residential uses. The following
factors shall be considered in reviewing proposals for new and/or expanding Mixed Use Urban Corridors uses shall be consistent with the following criteria:

... (v) wherever possible, off-street parking should be located in the side and rear yards and away from the street edge adjacent residential uses, and shall not abut an intersection. Off-street parking areas, loading areas and service areas shall be screened and landscaped and located to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent residential uses;

Adopt equivalent policies under Part III, Subsection 5.0 within the site plan policies for Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors.

2. Encourage the provision of on-street parking in Mixed Use Activity Areas as a traffic calming measure and amenity for street-related commercial uses, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) On-street parking shall be encouraged wherever possible within Mixed Use Activity Areas, including within lay-bys.

4.9 REINFORCING THE BUILDING’S PRIMARY ENTRANCE ONTO THE STREET

4.9.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Providing a primary entrance onto a public street is essential to ensuring commercial and mixed use buildings are pedestrian friendly and transit supportive. However, it is common for commercial developers to resist functionally orienting their building’s face towards the street when parking is located at the rear, and most customers are still arriving by car. While a doorway may be provided on the main street, it often does not function as the primary entrance and may even be locked. Windows facing the street are also often covered, and as such do not serve their intended function of animating the street. Within this context, the challenge remains how to achieve functional building frontages within a suburban context that is only beginning to transition to a more pedestrian oriented built form and transportation pattern.

4.9.2 DISCUSSION

The existing Official Plan policies provide support for orienting buildings toward the street in Urban Centres and Urban Corridors, but do not require the primary building entrance to face the street. Specifically, Part III Section 5.3.2(g) outlines site plan considerations for Mixed Use Urban Corridors and states that “buildings should be located so as to be in proximity to the street, to provide a sense of human comfort and pedestrian scale and interest, and should be in close proximity to transit services”. Similarly the general policies for Mixed Use Centres under
Part III Section 5.4.2(g)(i) specify that "buildings should be located with their front face to the street, to provide a sense of human comfort and pedestrian scale and interest, and in close proximity to the street and transit services, wherever feasible". Within the policies for Major Retail Areas (Regional Commercial, Community Commercial, Neighbourhood Commercial) no reference is made to building orientation under site plan considerations.

To support the transition towards a more pedestrian-oriented built form in the Mixed Use Activity Areas, a stronger policy and design framework is needed to ensure buildings are truly oriented towards the street with a functional entrance, while also providing an accessible entrance from parking lots. Official Plan policies must be supported by urban design guidelines, zoning regulations, as well as the Property Standards By-Law and associated enforcement activities. As densities in Mixed Use Activity Areas increase over time and a critical mass of street-oriented buildings begin to create a consistent street wall, pedestrian activity will increase. In the interim, functional building entrances onto the street are an essential component of the evolving built form.

4.9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend/adopt site plan considerations for all Mixed Use Activity Areas that require buildings to face the street with a functional entrance, as follows:

Replace Part III Section 5.3.2(g) (site plan considerations for corridors) and 5.4.2(g) (site plan considerations for centres) with the following, and adopt the same as part of the site plan considerations for Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors.

- the front of buildings shall be oriented towards the street and shall include the primary building entrance used by customers, employees, residents, tenants and other people to enter and exit the building;
- the front of commercial and mixed use buildings shall have a high level of transparency with a minimum 75% clear (not tinted, opaque, or reflective) glazing to maximize visual animation;
- the primary building entrance at the front of buildings shall include pedestrian and cyclist amenities, such as bicycle racks, waste receptacles, benches, and planters;
- wherever reasonable, the primary building entrance shall be oriented towards the nearest transit stop;
- a secondary entrance shall be permitted at the side or rear of a building to provide access between parking and the building where it is demonstrated through development approvals process that this secondary entrance shall not detract from the day-to-day function of the primary entrance onto the street.
2. Provide direction within the Official Plan for the Zoning By-Law and Property Standards By-Law to include standards that require buildings to functionally and visually face the street, in accordance with the site plan considerations for each Mixed Use Activity Area.

3. Through the Transportation Master Plan, evaluate opportunities to introduce on-street parking in Mixed Use Activity Areas to support street-oriented buildings and uses.

4.10 TRANSITIONS IN SCALE AND INTENSITY

4.10.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

Urban design policies, standards and guidelines are used to inform and evaluate development proposals in terms of their function and impact on adjacent uses and streetscapes. In areas where intensification is proposed, it is important to evaluate how transitions between high, medium and low density areas are managed. These considerations will become increasingly important as the City intensifies Mixed Use Activity Areas over the coming years, including its traditional Major Retail Areas.

4.10.2 DISCUSSION

The urban design guidelines proposed under Section 4.1/Appendix B of this report provide guidance with regard to transitions, particularly between intensification areas and adjacent low density residential areas. To support the consideration of these guidelines, design plans submitted as part of a development application should be required to demonstrate a transition in scale and intensity between high, medium and low density areas, as an integral component of achieving an attractive and appropriate built form. In support of this direction, the Official Plan should highlight setbacks, stepbacks, and landscaping as tools for managing transitions.

4.10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend Part II, Subsection 6.3(d) to require design plans submitted as part of a development application to demonstrate a transition in scale and intensity between high, medium and low density areas, as follows:

   Part II, Subsection 6.3

   d) City Council may require the preparation of design plans in conjunction with development proposals. These plans shall, among other things, identify the natural environment system as the organizing framework for new community forms, define a physical
organization that supports the goals of mixed land use, diversity and pedestrian orientation, define the public realm and the relationship of built form to the public realm, address issues of the physical integration of the community with surrounding areas, demonstrate a transition in scale and intensity between high, medium and low density areas, encourage the use of public transit and the creation of an environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, identify opportunities to integrate public art or other cultural elements into the community, and promote public safety.

2. Adopt policies under the site plan considerations for each Mixed Use Activity Area designation to require transitions between high, medium and low density areas, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.0 (existing and new site plan consideration policy additions for Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors)

x) transitions in scale between high, medium and low density areas shall be achieved through the use of appropriate setbacks, stepbacks and landscaping.

4.11 MONITORING AND APPLICATION REVIEW

4.11.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

A monitoring and evaluation framework can be used to track development applications for new commercial development to ensure there is an appropriate supply of commercial lands overall in the City, and to direct new commercial development to appropriate areas.

4.11.2 DISCUSSION

Monitoring
The intent of the monitoring program is to ensure that future space approvals in the City do not compromise the viability of the downtown Urban Growth Centre, as well as, existing and planned mixed use corridors and nodes.

As per the market analysis, limited population growth over the next 20 years will restrict the amount of new retail and services space that would be warranted. As indicated by the Market Supply and Demand Analysis, demand to 2031 would support just over 1.5 million sq. ft., of which almost 1.2 million sq. ft. have already been accounted for in vacant designated and zoned sites, proposed developments with a strong
likelihood of approval, and immediate development prospects. The remaining unfulfilled demand amounts to approximately 350,000 sq. ft., which should be directed to intensification areas where new residential growth will be directed, i.e. Mixed Use Activity Areas.3

When the new supply approaches or exceeds the warranted space identified in the Market Supply and Demand Analysis, the City should be particularly cautious with regards to permitting new designations outside of intensification areas. At the same time, it is important to recognize that the unfulfilled capacity should not impair the addition of space in the downtown Urban Growth Centre or mixed use areas which are anticipated to support population and employment growth. Overall, the unfulfilled capacity of 350,000 sq. ft. should be treated with some flexibility as Mixed Use Activity Areas intensify over time.

**Application Review**
When the City is reviewing applications for new commercial space, the utmost priority should be given to those applications which support intensification areas or areas with a shortage of local serving facilities. Market studies can be used to confirm the appropriateness of commercial proposals, particularly outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas.

### 4.11.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In that the majority of population growth will occur through intensification, the City should ensure the projected capacity for 350,000 sq. ft. (32,516 sq. m) of new commercial GFA is allocated to designated Mixed Use Activity Areas, and areas, such as Aldershot with a shortfall of local serving retail facilities. As the new supply of commercial lands approaches or exceeds 350,000 sq. ft. (32,516 sq. m), new commercial development outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas should be not be permitted.

2. Newly approved supermarkets should support intensification, and not detract from existing or planned intensification areas in Mixed Use Activity Area designations.

3. In monitoring the commercial land supply, the City should track:
   - The amount of new commercial space resulting from re-designations and re-zonings; and,
   - The amount of commercial space lost from re-designations, re-zonings and other redevelopments.

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3 Supermarkets are particularly important to the planned function of neighbourhood serving retail facilities and are imperative to support population growth. As per the Market Supply and Demand Analysis, there is market to support two to three new supermarkets in the City to 2031. The planned growth in the provincially designated downtown Urban Growth Centre itself will require another supermarket or large grocery store.
4. In support of the preceding recommendations, amend Part III, Subsection 5.2.2 of the Official Plan to require market studies for new commercial development over 1,500 sq. m. outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) Applications for new designations or re-zonings outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas involving a net addition of over 1,500 sq. m of retail/service space shall be subject to a market study that demonstrates:

   (i) The commercial space will not impact the commercial viability of the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area;

   (ii) The commercial space will not cause a loss of food space in the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area;

   (iii) That the commercial space will support the existing and future residential population of the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area, or an area currently underserved by local serving commercial facilities; and,

   (iv) That sufficient commercial demand will continue to be available to warrant the full range of local serving commercial facilities, including food stores, required to support the Downtown Urban Centre and other Mixed Use Activity Areas.

5. In support of the preceding recommendations, amend Part III, Subsection 5.2.2 of the Official Plan to require market studies for new commercial development over 5,600 square metres within the Downtown Urban Centre or other Mixed Use Activity Area, as follows:

Part III, Subsection 5.2.2

x) Applications for new designations or re-zonings within a Mixed Use Activity Area resulting in a net addition of over 5,000 sq. m. of retail/service space shall be subject to a market study that demonstrates:

   (i) The commercial space will not impact the commercial viability of the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area;

   (ii) The commercial space will not cause a loss of food space in the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area;

   (iii) That the commercial space will support the existing and future residential population of the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area, or an area currently underserved by local serving commercial facilities; and,
(iv) That sufficient commercial demand will continue to be available to warrant the full range of local serving commercial facilities, including food stores, required to support the Downtown Urban Centre or any other Mixed Use Activity Area.

4.12 DEFINITIONS

4.12.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Official Plan definitions are used to interpret the meaning and application of planning policies. As such, it is essential to identify new terms used in the planning policy framework and/or terms that need to be amended to reflect the spirit of the new policy framework.

4.12.2 DISCUSSION

The City of Burlington Official Plan includes definitions under Part IV. With regard to commercial land uses, definitions are currently provided for automotive commercial, service commercial, large department store, small department store, large scale motor vehicle dealership, small scale motor vehicle dealership, large home and auto supplies store, large building supplies/garden store, large furniture & appliance store, supermarket/grocery store, convenience/specialty food store, regional commercial area, regional scale shopping, community commercial area, and neighbourhood commercial area.

Some of the existing definitions need to be updated or deleted to provide consistency with the proposed policy framework for Mixed Use Activity Areas under Part III, Subsection 5.0 of the Official Plan. In some circumstances, new definitions are required for key terms.

4.12.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Amend Part IV of the Official Plan, the definitions, to reflect the updated policy framework, as follows:

   **Automotive Commercial** – Means retail uses involving the sale of automobiles and **service commercial** uses involving the repair and maintenance of automobiles and the sale of gasoline or similar products and **shall** include motor vehicle dealerships, repair garages, car washes and service stations.

   **Community Commercial Area** – A commercial centre that offers a wide range of retail and **service commercial** uses, and **community facilities** not generally found within residential communities. These commercial areas are smaller in size and function to a Regional Commercial Centre and serve as a focal point for community activity for the surrounding residential and business areas.
City-wide Commercial – a commercial use that meets unique and/or occasional goods and service needs of residents from across the City.

Community Commercial – a commercial use that meets the day-to-day and weekly goods and service needs of surrounding residential and business areas.

Convenience/ Specialty Food Store – A retail establishment with a maximum size of 1,000 sq. m., selling various convenience and food items, such as meat, fish and seafood, fruit and vegetables, bakery items, candy/nuts, health food, etc.

Drive through – commercial establishment where products or services are dispensed through an attendant, a window, or an automatic machine to persons remaining in vehicles that are in a designated stacking aisle. A gas station or a car wash is not a drive through facility.

Entertainment Establishment/Nightclub/Bar – a premise, or part thereof, including but not limited to a dance hall or disco, used to provide dance facilities for patrons, where seating is not provided for the majority of patrons beyond 11 PM and where food and/or beverage services may be offered for sale as an ancillary use.

Greyfield – A previously developed property that is not contaminated. Greyfields are usually, but not exclusively, former commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant.

Licensed establishment – a premise, or part thereof, including but not limited to restaurants and dance halls, that is licensed by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario to sell alcoholic beverages to patrons.

Neighbourhood Commercial Area – A commercial centre within or at the periphery of residential neighbourhoods in locations that meet residents’ day-to-day and weekly goods and service needs.

Neighbourhood Commercial – a commercial use that that meets the day-to-day and weekly goods and service needs of nearby residents.

Pedestrian friendly – a place or design that can be easily accessed and navigated by foot by people of all ages, abilities and incomes, with clear, safe and direct walking routes, enhanced amenities to meet the unique needs of people travelling by foot (for example, with regard to shade, seating and weather protection), and street-level animation and interest.

Re-development – The creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield or greyfield sites.
**Regional Commercial Area** – A large commercial area providing a wide range of retail and service commercial uses and community facilities, considered major activity centres in terms of their size and use and intended to serve all of the City as well as population in adjacent municipalities.

**Regional Commercial** – a commercial use that meets unique and/or occasional goods and service needs of residents from across the City as well as residents in adjacent municipalities.

**Regional Scale Shopping** – Retail activity which serves the entire population of the City and also population from adjacent municipalities. Regional scale shopping can occur in different forms including a Regional Shopping Centre and freestanding developments.

**Service Commercial** - Non-retail commercial uses including financial institutions, and professional/business offices and service stations, car washes and other automobile related uses.

**Supermarket/Grocery Store** – A retail establishment with a minimum floor area of 1,800 1,500 sq. m., engaged primarily in the sale of a general line of food, such as canned, dry and frozen foods; fresh fruits and vegetables; fresh and prepared meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, baked products, and snack foods; and which also retails a range of non-food products, such as household paper products, toiletries and non-prescription drugs, and in which a minimum of 51 per cent of the total sales floor area of the establishment is devoted to the sale of food.
5 DOWNTOWN RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant amount of work has also already been undertaken to understand what kind of commercial role the Downtown should play, and what kind of commercial development will ultimately be most successful in this area. Complementary to this research has been the development of detailed urban design guidance and land use policies for this important focal point of the City. The Official Plan policies and urban design guidelines for the Downtown establish a framework for creating the type of regional centre that is envisioned under Provincial policy, and emerging local policies.

Within this context, the recommendations below introduce opportunities to enhance the commercial land use policy framework for the Downtown. It is recommended that the City establish a new “retail street” hierarchy for the downtown, and develop enhanced guidelines for commercial uses in the Downtown. These strategic considerations are intended to feed into the City’s ongoing work regarding the Core Commitment for the Downtown.

5.1 A NEW RETAIL STRUCTURE

5.1.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

Easy access to a diversity of retail and service commercial amenities and attractions, including smaller-scale and boutique shops, helps to define the character and function of the Downtown. To improve the long-term success and attractiveness of the Downtown as a place to live, work, and play, greater consideration is needed for where different types of retail should be located throughout the Downtown.

5.1.2 DISCUSSION

Retail Function

The Burlington Official Plan currently identifies the Downtown as a Mixed Use Centre that offers city-wide lifestyle and entertainment amenities, while also serving a Community Commercial function for local residents (Part III, Section 5.5.1(i)). In addition, specialty retail is promoted to create a unique shopping experience, “as an alternative to the car oriented, shopping plazas, malls and business corridors” available in other parts of the City (Part III, Section 5.5.1 e, 5.5.2.e). A mixed use approach is generally advocated for accommodating retail stores and other commercial uses in the Downtown (Part III, Section 5.5.3.h).
Retail & Service Commercial Permissions
Notwithstanding the general principles and objectives for the Downtown (Part III, Subsection 5.4), which promote mixed use development, local service and retail uses are only permitted within the Downtown Core (Part III, Section 5.5.8.2.a), Wellington Square Mixed Use (Part III, Section 5.5.9.2.a), and Old Lakeshore Road Mixed Use Precincts (5.5.7.2.a). Throughout the remainder of the Downtown Precincts (including St. Luke’s Neighbourhood, Emerald Neighbourhood, Downtown Residential Medium and/or High Density Residential, Downtown Major Institutional, and Waterfront West/Public Lands), retail is not currently permitted. As with the City-wide residential areas, small-scale convenience and service commercial uses should be permitted more broadly within the residential precincts of Downtown, as well as the institutional precinct. This will help to create more complete communities within the City’s primary Urban Centre.

Retail & Service Commercial Core
Within the Downtown Core, Wellington Square Mixed Use, and Old Lakeshore Road Mixed Use Precincts, retail is currently required at-grade (Part III, Sections 5.5.7.2.f, 5.5.8.2.d, 5.5.9.2.d). Notwithstanding these permissions, not all streets in these three districts are the same, and greater definition is needed to reflect the distribution and types of retail suited to each street. In particular, the character of traditional main streets should be protected, while permitting a broader mix of retail types, including urban larger format retail, in other areas. Moreover, streets that are primarily residential should also be recognized without restricting the possibility for small-scale convenience uses, e.g. corner stores, to serve local residents.

5.1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduce a new retail structure for the Downtown Urban Centre, as follows:
   a) Remove retail and service commercial requirements from the Precinct-level policies for the Downtown Core, Wellington Mixed Use, and Old Lakeshore Road Mixed Use Precincts under Part III, Subsections 5.5.7.2 (f), 5.5.8.2 (d) and 5.5.9.2 (d); and,
   b) Under the General Policies for the Downtown Urban Centre (Part III, Subsection 5.5.3), introduce new retail street policies, as follows:
      Part III, Subsection 5.5.3
      x) Retail and service commercial uses may be permitted in the Downtown in accordance with the Downtown Retail Streets Overlay to Schedule E, Land Use Plan – Downtown Urban Centre, and in accordance with the following:
         i) Along Main Street Retail Streets, small-scale street-oriented retail or service commercial uses, up to 500 sq. m in gross floor area, shall be required at-grade. Permitted uses shall serve a city-wide or neighbourhood commercial function and may
include specialty shops and restaurants. Development shall reflect the existing built form, with narrow, active street frontages.

ii) Along Mixed Use Major Streets, small and large format retail or service commercial uses shall be required at-grade, and may be permitted on the second-storey of buildings. The maximum gross floor area of any individual business shall not exceed 5,600 sq. m and the maximum floor plate at-grade shall not exceed 2,800 sq. m, except as permitted under site and area specific policies. Food-retail shall not be subject to the aforementioned size restrictions. Permitted uses shall serve a city-wide commercial function. Development shall be street-oriented, with a narrow street frontage. Articulation of the storefront and frequent entries shall be required for large format commercial development.

iii) Along primarily residential General Mixed Use Streets, retail or service commercial uses, up to 500 sq. m in gross floor area, that serve a neighbourhood commercial function may be permitted.

iv) Convenience/specialty food stores may be permitted on any street within the Downtown Urban Centre, including in residential neighbourhoods where retail streets are not identified. Where convenience/specialty food stores are proposed on a residential street, their built form shall be compatible with the surrounding residential character and built form, and shall be subject to the same zoning regulations as for a detached dwelling in the same zone. In addition, convenience/specialty food store uses shall be subject to the following criteria:

- have a maximum floor area of 150 sq. m;
- be located on a corner lot or adjacent to a park;
- be located on a street where on-street parking is permitted;
- be located at least 500 metres (radius) away from another convenience/specialty food store; and,
- shall not use outdoor space for the storage or display of merchandise or equipment.

x) To facilitate land use flexibility and adaptability over time, residential development along General Mixed Use Streets in the Downtown shall include commercial-grade design at-grade, including a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of at least 4.5 m.

x) To support retail and service commercial uses at-grade along Main Street Retail Streets and Mixed Use Major Streets, development proponents shall be required to:
i) Submit a Commercial-Grade Design Study that is prepared by a qualified consultant and demonstrates the first-storey of any building has been designed to accommodate retail or service commercial uses. At a minimum the study shall consider the ceiling height and location of load bearing beams; and,

ii) Submit a Noise and Vibration Study if the proposal includes residential uses above non-residential uses;

iii) Administer Disclosure Agreements for any condominium units located above non-residential units notifying future residents of potential impacts associated with residing above a non-residential use.

c) Amend Part III, Subsection 5.5.3 (j) to reflect the retail streets overlay, as follows:

j) Hotels, theatres, cafes, rooftop terraces, sidewalk patios, restaurants, cultural and recreational facilities and tourist-oriented attractions and services shall be directed to locate within the Downtown Core, Wellington Square Mixed Use and Old Lakeshore Road precincts, subject to the Retail Streets policies of Part III, Subsection 5.5.3(d).

d) Adopt a retail streets overlay to Schedule E Downtown Mixed Use Centre Land Use Plan to accompany the retail streets policies, as shown on Figure 4.

5.2 ENHANCED GUIDELINES FOR COMMERCIAL USES IN THE DOWNTOWN

5.2.1 STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION

The Downtown Urban Design Guidelines provide an adequate overarching structure and direction with respect to the public realm, built form and the interrelationship between them, however, strategic consideration should be given to introducing specific design guidance for commercial functions.

5.2.2 DISCUSSION

Design guidance for commercial uses is especially important for the Downtown context, given the importance of properly designed commercial functions in activating the public realm and/or reinforcing distinct area characteristics. The existing Downtown Urban Design Guidelines (2006), do not currently provide specific direction for commercial uses.
5.2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Update the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines with additional design guidance for commercial development in the Downtown, including for the following categories:

   a) *Area-specific retail guidelines* that provide greater direction for distinct areas on the appropriate scale, interface and character of retail uses and how they interface with the pedestrian realm. For example, Brant Street has a prevailing traditional ‘main street’ character that ought to be reinforced through specific guidance on matters such as shop front design, maximum retail floor areas and frontage widths that support the fine-grained, highly animated and pedestrian-oriented nature of the streetscape.

   b) *Retail format type guidelines* that provide greater direction for a variety of potential retail formats to ensure design considerations that are supportive of the distinctive Downtown context. Specifically, the appropriate integration of medium to large format retail uses essential to supporting a robust residential population in a manner that does not detract from the quality of the pedestrian environment. For example, other Downtown contexts can provide valuable lessons for accommodating larger formats stores by directing them internal to the block or the second levels so that smaller and more pedestrian-friendly shops interface with the street or grade-level.

   c) *Optimal retail design guidelines* that provide specific direction for ensuring the optimal design of retail spaces to enhance their visibility, flexibility and prominence, and in doing do strengthens their appeal to potential tenants and commercial success. This is especially important in mixed-use developments where high-density residential design often do not pay enough attention to quality and character of the grade-level commercial spaces with respect to the configurations, locating of structural columns and design distinction of the commercial functions.

If developed, strategic consideration should be given to connecting the commercial urban design guidelines to the proposed ”retail streets” designations.
FIGURE 4. PROPOSED RETAIL STREET OVERLAY TO SCHEDULE E - DOWNTOWN URBAN CENTRE - LAND USE PLAN
6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 UPDATING THE OFFICIAL PLAN & IMPLEMENTING BY-LAWS

This Commercial Strategy Study has been prepared to identify amendments to the Official Plan that are needed to better align planning policies with the evolving objectives for community development in the City of Burlington. It is recognized that the preceding recommendations will impact broader community planning and design considerations in the Official Plan. It is expected the recommendations will be revised and integrated with the updated policy framework as part of staff’s approach to comprehensively updating the Official Plan.

In addition to amending Part III (the land use policies) of the Official Plan and associated schedules, the implementation of a number of the recommendations may also require amendments to the Zoning By-Law (to be considered during the upcoming Zoning By-Law Review), and the Property Standards By-Law. In particular, where the use of specific numerical figures and detailed design guidance has been outlined in this report, it is the project team’s understanding that City staff will determine whether to integrate these figures within the Official Plan, or within the Zoning By-Law.

6.2 URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

The implementation of a number of the recommendations is intended to be informed by the attached Design Guidelines for Commercial Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas. The Guidelines provide a supplementary narrative and design details for ensuring new commercial uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas contribute to the creation of pedestrian friendly community gathering places over time. The Design Guidelines are intended to be used in tandem with Official Plan policies and the Zoning By-Law to outline for development proponents the City’s expectations for new commercial development in Mixed Use Activity Areas. As outlined below, additional site-specific design guidelines may be required to support the comprehensive redevelopment of some Mixed Use Activity Areas.

6.3 INTEGRATED COMMERCIAL LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

A number of the recommendations within this report address parking and transportation issues, the consideration of which must be integrated with land use planning if the objective is to transform commercial areas into walkable community hubs. As such, recommendations regarding on-street parking and reduced parking standards will require further consideration under the Parking Study and Transportation Master Plan being completed as part of the Official Plan Review.
6.4 COMPREHENSIVE AREA PLANNING

To facilitate the redevelopment of Mixed Use Activity Areas, including centres and corridors, the City should proactively undertake comprehensive local area planning, to establish area-specific policy frameworks and demonstration plans for how existing commercial areas can evolve over time into mixed use community hubs of activity. The comprehensive planning process not only establishes a vision and expectations for how redevelopment will occur, but it is also an effective tool for engaging local property owners, developers, businesses and residents in the transformation of their community. The process will establish a framework for both private sector investment in commercial areas, and public investment in associated infrastructure and open space upgrades.

Comprehensive planning has already been completed for the Downtown and Uptown, and detailed design guidance also exists for the Plains Road Corridor. Additional areas where comprehensive area plans (e.g. Secondary Plans, Neighbourhood/Tertiary/Precinct Plans) and/or area-specific design guidelines could be useful include the proposed Neighbourhood Centres, the Brant-403 Future Urban Centre, and the Fairview and Brant Street Urban Corridors.

6.5 INFORMATION SHARING & CAPACITY BUILDING

The proposed policy framework for commercial land use planning is consistent with the objectives of the current Official Plan Review, as well as with provincial policy and best practices in urban planning. Notwithstanding the merits of the recommendations, they do signal a departure from the status quo for commercial development in the City of Burlington. Efforts to build understanding and capacity among local stakeholders will be important to support the implementation of the proposed policy recommendations and urban design guidelines. The information-sharing process was initiated through the stakeholder and public consultation activities undertaken as part of the Commercial Strategy Study. Moving forward, the City can promote understanding of the new policies by:

- Developing informational materials that summarize the objectives and requirements for development in Mixed Use Activity Areas, and distributing those online and in-person through the Planning & Building Division;

- Working with developers to highlight successful development projects as case studies; and,

- Hosting information sessions with members of the development community, Council and other stakeholders, such as residents and business associations.
6.6 LEADING BY EXAMPLE

The City has an obligation to demonstrate best planning practices wherever it is a proponent, for example in the development of new community facilities. City-led developments are a strategic opportunity to contribute to the transition of commercial areas into mixed-use people places. By demonstrating how best practices are implemented on the ground, the City can play a key role in building capacity and supporting the uptake of the new mixed use policy and design framework.
7 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Taken together, a comprehensive set of recommendations have been proposed to better integrate commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning throughout the City, along with additional recommendations for how to elevate the multi-faceted role and prominence of the Downtown. The recommendations are intended to support the next step in the City of Burlington’s transition towards complete communities, and a more compact and mixed use built form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Considerations for the City-wide Network of Commercial Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Phase out major retail areas through a new Mixed Use Activity Area hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Permit small-scale convenience stores in Residential Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Limit the scale of commercial uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Enable the development of a mix of commercial building types along Urban Corridors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adopt criteria for permitting places of worship in Mixed Use Activity Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Better manage auto-related land uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Right-size the car parking supply and introduce bicycle parking standards in Mixed Use Activity Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Direct parking away from the street edge, and permit on-street parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reinforce the building’s primary entrance onto the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Require development proponents to illustrate transitions in scale and intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Adopt a monitoring program to track commercial development and to inform the development review process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Harmonize Official Plan definitions with the proposed commercial policy framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategic Considerations for the Downtown

1. Adopt a new retail hierarchy
2. Enhance the design guidelines for commercial uses

### Strategic Considerations for Implementation

1. Update the Official Plan and implementing by-laws.
3. Address on-street parking and reduced parking standards in the Parking Study and Transportation Master Plan.
4. Undertake comprehensive area planning for mixed use centres and corridor segments.
5. Build capacity among stakeholders to support and build more people-friendly commercial areas through information-sharing activities.
6. Lead by example when developing new city-owned facilities.