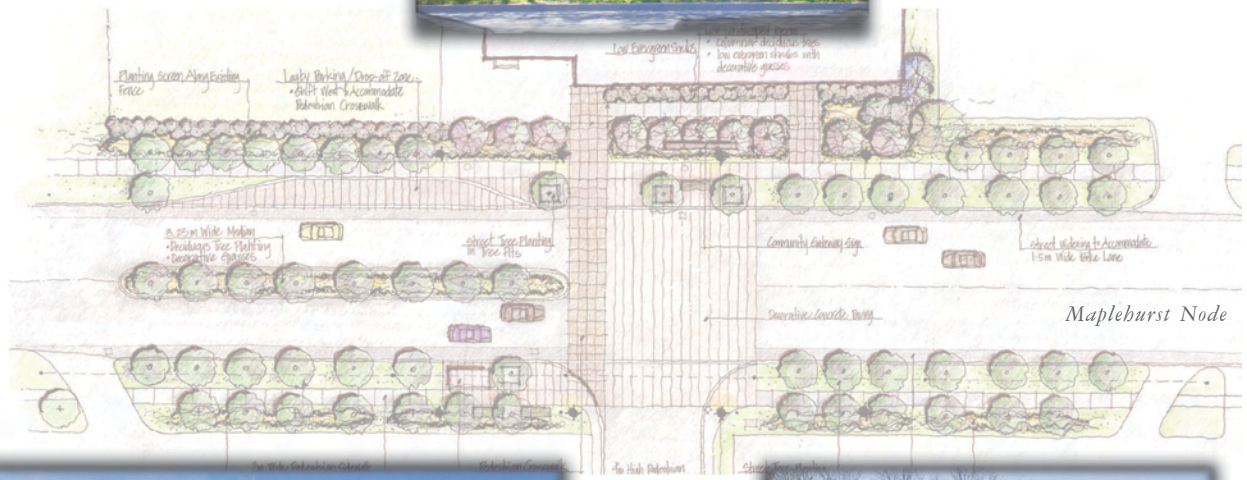




Maplehurst Node





PLAINS ROAD CORRIDOR URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

JUNE 2006

ENVISION - The Hough Group Scott Burns Planning Consultants Joseph Bogdan Associates Inc. Read Voorhees & Associates

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Study is to refine the vision that the Plains Road Village Vision (PRVV) had been advocating and to create design guidelines to assist the City to direct future redevelopment of the roadway and adjacent lands. This document recommends design guidelines for public and private sector infrastructure investment along the road right-of-way and for private sector redevelopment proposals adjacent to the road corridor.

Contents of the Study Document

The report has four main components:

- The community's vision for Plains Road, the planning and market context and an analysis of the corridor including land-use and a landscape level evaluation of the setting;
- Overall urban design goals and objectives;
- Design guidelines to direct redevelopment initiatives; and
- Recommendations for future actions and implementation strategies.

The study examined the objectives of the PRVV as a starting point for confirming the vision, goals and objectives for Plains Road. The foundation of the design guidelines resulted from the consultation process and public input. The study process reviewed current Official Plan policies and Zoning By-law to determine the relevant policies to be regarded when preparing the guidelines. The study also examined the economic and market factors that are creating redevelopment opportunities, and traffic and transportation issues that influence the design of the road-right of way.

A detailed assessment of the road corridor revealed that the study area was not homogenous in character, in fact the seven kilometre roadway has definable districts that need to be treated distinctly to preserve and enhance the more attractive aspects of the streetscape and also to have unifying elements throughout the corridor to distinguish it from other arterial roads in Burlington. The evaluation led to the refinement of the overarching principles and strategies that generally strive to encourage more pedestrian usage, calm traffic and improve the aesthetics along the right-of-way.

The design guidelines are presented in three sections that address: General Streetscape Guidelines for all planned changes within the publicly-owned right-of-way; District Guidelines providing more detailed and specific direction for each of the seven districts along the road; and Site Planning and Built Form Guidelines to encourage compatible redevelopment projects and more pedestrian-oriented mixed uses in appropriate locations.

The final section of the report identifies key actions for the implementation of the plan and makes recommendations on strategies for Council and staff to consider when moving forward with both planning and public works activities. The implementation section also identifies roles and responsibilities for the partners and potential funding opportunities.

How the Study fits into the City's Planning Tools

The Guidelines are intended to be used by city staff to assist in evaluating Planning Act applications and to be considered during the planning of capital works projects and preparation of operating budgets. They are also intended to be used by landowners during the preparation of development applications and also during the building design and maintenance processes. The Guidelines set out preferred approaches to development and redevelopment rather than being prescriptive. It is recognized that all elements may not be achieved for reasons such as cost, functional considerations and overriding legislation.

Within the Guidelines, there are three terms used to assign clarity to the level of compliance required. The three terms are "shall", "should" and "may". These terms are intended to have the following meanings with respect to compliance:

- "Shall" indicates that it is mandatory to be complied with;
- "Should" provides a clear directive but the directive may be avoided for a good reason and in the public interest;
- "May" is discretionary.

For example, the term "shall" was used in instances where the guideline was in keeping with an Official Plan policy or Zoning By-law regulation.

User's Guide

This report is a tool to assist development proponents to prepare plans that meet the vision and urban design objectives that have been developed during the study process. This report will also be used by City staff while reviewing applications to determine if urban design objectives are being met.

Development proponents should review the contextual sections of the report (Section 1.0 Background and Section 2.0 Planning Context) and become familiar with the broad urban design 'goals, objectives and strategies' that are desirable to achieve along the corridor. When determining which guidelines apply to a development application, the proponent will need to identify the location of the property within the corridor. Because the Plains Road guidelines address an area that is approximately 7 km in length, the road corridor has been segmented into seven districts (Refer to Figure 1), based on existing landscape character and land-use (Section 3.0 Urban Design Evaluation). It is important to identify the appropriate district, the area specific design guidelines that apply to that district and finally the site planning and built form guidelines for the proposed land-use.

The guidelines are presented in three categories:

General Streetscape Guidelines

- apply to all planned changes within the publicly-owned street right-of-way throughout the corridor and to abutting private properties;
- address overall streetscape elements for the Plains Road corridor such as lighting, sidewalks, location of multi-use pathways, cycling routes, street trees, street furniture, parking area treatments and pedestrian area treatments.

District Guidelines

- provide area-specific guidelines for the planned character and streetscape of each of the seven districts including

  -Burlington Gateway
  -Royal Botanical Gardens Parkway
  -Unsworth District
  -LaSalle District and Waterdown Village Node
  -Shadeland District
  -Maplehurst District
  -King Road District

Site Planning and Built Form Guidelines

- provide design direction for commercial and residential property improvements and redevelopment including

  -Regional commercial
  -Local commercial
  -Village/ Nodal Commercial
  -Low Density Residential
  -Medium and High Density Residential
  -Heritage Residential

The three categories address the design of the corridor including public investment in streetscape improvements as well as renovation, redevelopment and infill of properties along Plains Road. They are not intended to mandate the specific design but rather to provide approaches, which are to be applied in conjunction with other site-specific considerations.



King Road Node Local Commercial Area

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Urban Design Study Background & Objectives

Since the 1800s Plains Road has served as an important transportation link between Hamilton and the west end of Burlington. It has evolved from its original function as a toll road, to a Provincial Highway, to its present role as a municipal major arterial road. Throughout its history, Plains Road has been the spine of the retail and service commercial activities for the residents of the Aldershot area and for the traveling public.

Today, segments of the Plains Road corridor have a distinctive visual quality that should be protected and reinforced through careful planning and urban design. The western portion of the road corridor is generally quite verdant: the right-of-way is wide, with generously landscaped boulevards and mature trees. Along the corridor, several precincts each have a clearly defined visual character that reflects the character of adjacent neighbourhoods. Streetscape and built form guidelines are needed to protect and reinforce this character. Other segments of the corridor are in transition and need clearly articulated streetscape and built form guidelines to ensure that redevelopment supports a green "parkway" corridor.

The City recognizes that the implementation of urban design guidelines for the corridor is an important part of the planning regulation system governing land use. There is a desire to improve the pedestrian and transit experience on Plains Road that could connect Burlington's waterfront amenities with the Waterfront Trail. The study assesses the most appropriate location for public infrastructure investment and establishes streetscape guidelines that can direct future road improvements and inform development review for site plan applications. The guidelines specifically recommend that existing features, such as mature street trees and buildings with heritage characteristics be protected to ensure that the built and cultural heritage features remain part of the corridor's overall character.

The Study evaluated a number of technical issues including:

- An assessment of the visual characteristics along Plains Road;
- A review of the existing land uses and characteristics;
- A review of transportation functions; and
- An analysis of the development incentives to foster desired growth

Report PL-144/03 set out the terms of reference for the Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Guidelines Study that was approved by Council on December 15, 2003. The actual study commenced in 2004 and was overseen by a Steering Committee consisting of the local Councillor, members of PRVV, and City staff.

Several other Official Plan review studies provided background for the Urban Design Study including:

- Draft City Wide Transportation Study update (2003);
- Review of Mixed Use Activity Areas (2004);
- Commercial Retail Study (2003); and
- Plains Road Waterdown Road Traffic Impact Study (1991).

1.2 Community Context

The Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Study was initiated by the City at the request of the local community and has relied on the time and effort of the community to develop, refine and improve the urban design vision and guidelines. The process included an initial open house, three focus groups, and individual correspondence, working with City Planning staff and Councillor Craven and his staff, an open house to present the draft guidelines for comment, as well as three steering committee meetings. The success of the guidelines will depend on the continued strong interest of the community in assuring the implementation of the vision.



King Node Parkette

Aldershot first became a part of Burlington in 1958 and is one of the oldest settled areas in Burlington. Many of the existing families descend from the first settlers and farmers, and others have been loyal to this lakefront community for more than a generation. Plains Road Village Vision is a group of residents who have been working for several years as part of the Aldershot Community Council to bring about positive changes to the road corridor. In 2000, they held a visioning workshop to generate ideas about the future of the Plains Road corridor. Working with staff from the City, they went on to prepare streetscape proposals and presented these at a Public Open House held at the Royal Botanical Gardens on May 9, 2002. With Council support and community donations, they embarked upon a demonstration garden on the southwest corner of King Road and Plains Road that includes a landscaped seating area and planted medians.

With this start, Plains Road Village Vision called for a "renewed focus on streetscaping and landscaping" along the length of the Plains Road corridor and the "establishment of architectural guidelines for new buildings." This led to the Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Study of which this is the final report.

An Open House was held to kick off this study process on June 24, 2004 to ask for public input about what is important to residents along the street. Overall the comments were that the street is very long, the traffic moves too fast, truck traffic is a concern, spill over traffic is heavy when Highway 403 is jammed, and the size, density and character of some new development

proposals is not suited to a low density suburban community by the lake. The community also conveyed the need to improve the vitality of the street and the setting for local businesses. The importance of trees, existing heritage and institutional buildings, and the Royal Botanical Gardens were emphasized. Through the Plains Road Village Vision and through local discussion regarding the changes seen and heard along the Plains Road corridor, a great deal of discussion has occurred regarding how important the street is to the community. Many said they would like to see it have the character of a real "main street" with improved pedestrian walkways and lighting and additional landscaping to beautify the right of way while others were sceptical that such changes could be made given the speed, volume and attitude of the traffic.

The purpose of the Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Study is to draw upon the brainstorming that has taken place and recommend practical approaches to achieving desired ends.

Following the June open house, the design team held three focus groups during the fall to inform their initial work on opportunities and constraints.
The City staff focus group included representatives from the departments of Planning, Parks and Recreation, Engineering, Transit and Traffic, and Roads and Parks Maintenance. The meeting allowed the study team to better understand the dynamics of public space and transportation planning and to scope the feasibility of various options.

A focus group was held with representatives of the local institutions including churches, schools and the Roman Catholic Cemetery Board. These are places where the community comes together along Plains Road and the street needs to serve the users in ways that improve the safety of drivers, passengers and pedestrians. Each of the institutions has ideas regarding the future site design of their own property and the opportunities to mesh their short and long term plans with possible improvements to the public right-of-way.



Plains Road Village Vision Volunteers

Local businesses were given the opportunity to discuss their concerns regarding streetscape improvements and built form guidelines in a focus group. Slowing down traffic was seen as a way to improve the ability of local business to capture drive-by clientele within the commercial segments of the corridor. Ensuring that sign and landscaping guidelines for private property still permitted visibility and parking was important.

An open house was held on November 29, 2004 to present and discuss in detail the draft guidelines. The meeting was widely advertised and well attended. The notice of the meeting is included in Appendix A.

The community input to the study has been extremely important during the preparation of the guidelines. The policy and implementation recommendations contained

in this report will, however, only be achieved with the continued participation of the community to ensure that the guidelines are followed and interpreted in ways that are satisfactory to the community over time.

The following are issues and ideas that were raised by the community during the public consultation. These 'opportunities' became the foundation for the goals, objectives and principles for the design guidelines.

Enriching the Public Realm

The scale of the street, the generous width of road right of way and the character of the building facades that border the Plains Road corridor (particularly along the south side), provides the setting to create a more pedestrian friendly civic realm. Through design leadership, the PRVV has launched pilot projects such as the King Road Parkette and the proposed improvements at the Maplehurst School to demonstrate how high quality innovative site planning can benefit the civic realm. This study should suggest how to expand these efforts and establish focal areas and corridor-wide linkages.

Designing for All Seasons

A streetscape with mature street trees provides protection from harsh winter winds and blistering summer sun making the public realm more desirable and attractive to the community. Supporting ongoing community participation in beautification programs, sustaining ongoing streetscaping efforts and fostering partnerships to continue to improve environmental conditions like the Maplehurst School is crucial to the implementation of the 'vision' of a liveable and vibrant roadway.

Residential and Commercial Intensification

In order to build vibrancy into the corridor, it is essential that the redevelopment opportunities are realized and new residential and retailing uses along the Plains Road corridor are conceived of and built within the overall objectives of the urban design guidelines. The guidelines need to inform the City's planning process by directing and guiding site planning and built form to ensure that new projects are consistent with the community's vision and quality standards.



Example of an Animated Streetscape, Toronto

Flexible Framework

Master plans reflect a single solution that responds to current issues, opportunities and constraints. Design guidelines provide clear direction, but also permit and encourage a range of solutions that respond to a dynamic planning environment over a longer timeframe. For example, the community wants to see urban design improvements such as burying overhead electrical infrastructure. Because of the high cost, this work would need to be implemented over time, as redevelopment occurs and as funding for major infrastructure improvements becomes available. Improvements of this nature along the entire corridor are expensive because of the length of the roadway, however, the burial of electrical infrastructure should be a priority in key redevelopment nodes where new buildings and public spaces are positioned immediately adjacent to the road right of way.

Land Economics

The economic realities of land development need to be understood and considered in the planning process in order to ensure that guidelines are achievable and realistic. Section 6.5 of the Study investigates the advisability of introducing such incentives as Development Charges related to density, and reduction in other municipal fees to process higher density applications to encourage mixed-use development in urban form.

1.3 Acknowledgements

The Study team thanks the Steering Committee members, stakeholders and members of the community who attended the focus group meetings, workshop and presentations. Their input was essential to creating a design framework, principles and guidelines that reflect the unique opportunities on the Plains Road corridor.

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2.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.1 Official Plan and Zoning By-law Status

The Plains Road corridor is subject to the City of Burlington Official Plan and the City of Burlington Zoning By-Law. The area is also subject to Site Plan Control with the exception of single-family homes and semi detached dwellings. The following briefly reviews the highlights of these planning regulations as they apply to the Plains Road corridor.

2.1.1 Official Plan

The Plains Road corridor is subject to a number of land use designations in the Official Plan including:

- Mixed Use Corridor
- Residential
- Medium Density
- Residential – High Density
- Residential – Low Density
- Parkway Belt Plan Area
- Neighbourhood Commercial
- Arterial Commercial.

The main part of the Corridor is designated Mixed Use Corridor with a large portion of the Corridor in the mid-section designated for Residential – Medium Density.

For the area designated Mixed Use Corridor the following policies of this designation are of relevance to the Urban Design Guidelines:

- "provide locations along arterial or major arterial roads that will serve as areas of concentration for mixed use developments with medium and high density residential, retail, service commercial, office, entertainment, community facilities and institutions, and open space uses."
- "to encourage higher intensity, transit-supportive and pedestrian-oriented mixed use development while retaining compatibility with nearby land uses."
- "to permit mixed use developments on individual sites where various combinations of residential, retail, office and other uses are located, or on different sites where residential, retail, office and other uses are located next to one another."

The Residential-Medium Density designated area permits either ground- or non-ground-oriented housing with a density ranging between 26 and 50 units per net hectare and this includes detached and semi-detached homes, town houses, street town houses and attached town houses, attached housing and walk-up apartments.

Therefore, the designations applying to the Plains Road corridor are quite varied and permit a range of land uses as is observed today.

Of particular relevancy to the question of urban design guidelines are a number of policies in the Official Plan, which encourage appropriately designed development. Of particular note with respect to Urban Design Guidelines is Section 6.0 DESIGN, in the Functional Policies Part II of the Official Plan. In this section, it indicates "design principles will supplement the policies that apply to each of the land use designations as well as those matters that fall under the Zoning and Signs Bylaws, Site Plan Control and Subdivision Process.

The design principles shall be used primarily for guideline purposes." The Plan then enunciates a number of policies under various headings.
Section 6.6 of these policies outlines Design Guidelines Policies:

- "The density, form, bulk, height, set backs, spacing and materials of development are to be compatible with its surrounding area."
- "The design of all buildings must recognize pedestrian scale, safety and the perception of safety and access and the preservation of public vistas and views."
- "The streetscape appearance of arterial and major arterial roads and collector streets shall be enhanced by encouraging buildings to present their main facades to these roads or to enhance their treatment to avoid the appearance of blank buildings at service entrances."

With respect to policies that apply to the public realm, two are of particular note:

- "Design opportunities to enhance the quality of the public realm shall be encouraged as part of the design of all municipal undertakings."
- "Traffic calming measures shall be implemented in certain areas to enhance the potential for pedestrian activity, through reduced speeds and road widths and on-street parking."

These Official Plan Policies, which apply to the whole City of Burlington, provide a very solid foundation for the more detailed area-specific urban design guidelines proposed for the Plains Road corridor.

The section with respect to design goes on to enunciate a number of Implementation Policies. Of particular note is the policy that states, "Zoning By-law regulations shall be reviewed from a design perspective and shall encourage innovations that achieve City design objectives."

This section also indicates that, "the preparation of design guidelines shall be required as part of the consideration of major site or area-specific development proposals."

These policies are consistent with the preparation of the Urban Design Guidelines for the Plains Road corridor in addition to the recommendations that are made later in this report to incorporate these design guidelines as part of the Official Plan for this area and to review the Zoning Bylaw regulations in the context of the guidelines.



Unsworth District Residential Area

2.1.2 Zoning By-Law

The Plains Road corridor is subject to a variety of zoning categories including:

- 01, CN2, RM2, RH4, CC1, MXG, MXE, and MXR. The MXG category applies to large parts of the Plains Road corridor.

These Citywide generic zoning categories all contain general regulations for uses, height, set backs, landscape areas, etc. These generic regulations should, in light of the proposed urban design guidelines, be reviewed from a design perspective as is called for in the Official Plan policies reviewed above. This review of generic regulations is *extremely important* since site plan control cannot overrule as-of-right zoning permissions.



Shadeland District Local Commercial Area

2.1.3 Site Plan Control

Site Plan Control is used by the City to review development proposals along the Plains Road corridor. As is the case in the rest of the City, site plan control applies to every new development except detached and semi-detached housing developments. The Site Plan Control Review Process in Burlington has been delegated to staff that means that staff review and grant approval for site plan applications without consulting City Council. However, at the request of the local Councillor, Site Plan Control can be 'undelegated' so that the application is considered by City Council. Normally in the course of Site Plan Review the public is not consulted, although it is common practice for major or controversial applications to be subject to an open house or non-statutory public meeting at the request of the local Councillor. Such a consultation request by the Councillor may or may not avoid the 'bump up' to City Council for consideration.

Site Plan Review is seriously hampered by the lack of urban design guidelines applying to the corridor. Therefore, City staff do not have any urban design guidelines to refer to in assessing development proposals and development proponents do not have any City documents to refer to when designing their proposals. The proposed urban design guidelines in this document are specifically formulated to address this problem.

2.2 Existing Redevelopment Pressure & Future Market Opportunities

This section provides an overview of current redevelopment pressures in the Plains Road corridor and an assessment of future market opportunities.

The most important market influence for the Plains Road corridor is its location in the heart of the greater Toronto-Hamilton market area. This market area has experienced strong growth that is expected to continue. A recent report by the Conference Board of Canada on the economic outlook for Canadian metropolitan areas predicts the greater Toronto area as having the highest economic growth in the 2005-2008 period.

Currently the Plains Road corridor is experiencing significant pressures for residential redevelopment. There have also been some non-residential redevelopments, largely in the form of retail uses. The larger population base is in Central/Eastern Burlington.

The basic geography of the Plains Road corridor limits the non-residential market since the catchment area is constrained by the lake to the south and the largely undeveloped areas in North Aldershot to the north and the lands of the Royal Botanical Gardens to the west. Also the general growth area of Burlington is further to the east as opposed to this west end of Burlington.

There is a difference between the east and west ends of the Plains Road corridor in terms of market opportunities. Because of its location closer to the growth areas of Burlington, the east end of Plains Road corridor has a much stronger market for non-residential, largely retail, redevelopment. While there is pressure for residential redevelopment in this east-end area, the central and western areas of the Plains Road corridor have a much greater market for future residential development given their superb residential neighbourhood setting.

In the past, retail development along the Plains Road corridor has been largely oriented to the local market. While this will continue to be the case, a number of general retail market evolutions indicate that uses such as large-scale food stores, electronics, furniture etc. will not be located in this area as they currently prefer much larger store sizes and gravitate to either the east end of the Plains Road corridor or further east, more central to the larger Burlington market.

One of the primary attractions of the Plains Road corridor area from a redevelopment perspective is lot size. Lot sizes along Plains Road are relatively large and offer an opportunity for comprehensive, particularly residential, redevelopment not available in other more recently developed areas in the Toronto-Hamilton market area. Within the long length of Plains Road there are numerous opportunities to achieve redevelopment. While facilitated by the relatively large lot sizes, these opportunities are constrained by the value of existing uses. While some existing uses would appear ripe for redevelopment given their relatively low density of existing use, they present an obstacle to redevelopment if this use is profitable to the owner, raising the speculative purchase price of the site for redevelopment.

2.2.1 Commercial Market Opportunities

The future office market in the Plains Road corridor area will be limited to uses that serve the local area. While this will provide some very real redevelopment opportunities, they will be limited.

To the north of the Plains Road corridor, there are a number of existing industrial and employment uses. A number of these uses will, given their nature and locational needs, likely remain for the foreseeable future. Some of these are relatively heavy industrial uses and their impacts—particularly in terms of truck traffic—need to be taken into account. The Cooke Boulevard area provides a particularly attractive 'pocket' employment area. There are a number of smaller uses in this area and a high technology use that serves a global market. Again, there is little likelihood that these uses will relocate. There is a site on the east side of Waterdown Road just to the north of the Plains Road corridor that was the subject of a recent planning dispute at an Ontario Municipal Board hearing. The Board ruled that a restricted number of non-residential uses would be permitted, further reinforcing the employment use policy in this area.

In terms of the future retail market opportunities it is anticipated that these will be largely focussed on the local area market.
What will improve the market for these commercial uses is the implementation of the full interchange at Waterdown Road and Highway 403. In the Executive Summary of the report Ramping Up for the Future - A Business Case for Expanding the Highway 403 & Waterdown Road Interchange, these market improvements are noted:

"Retail Benefits Strengthen the Viability of Retail and Service Commercial Uses:

The interchange will help to attract new retail investment, enabling greater access to the community for residents beyond the Aldershot area. The interchange provides the basis to establish a range of new retail services in an area that has the capacity to draw from a local customer base that includes both local residents and workers.

An Ontario Municipal Board Decision in 1999 provided a basis for new retail facilities on lands located immediately south of the CN railway tracks at Waterdown and Masonry Court, known locally as the TCG Lands (now owned by Paletta International). The Board has recognized the opportunity for certain retail uses on a portion of these lands including, retail warehouse, selected retail, restaurants and other service commercial activities. The WRI expansion would help to advance the market position of these lands in a manner that is consistent with the permitted uses as determined by the Board."

"While Aldershot and the neighbouring community of Waterdown demonstrate strong residential growth prospects over the next 20 years, it must be emphasized that population growth in the vicinity will occur whether the interchange is expanded or not. Nonetheless the interchange could accelerate the demand for residential growth in the vicinity."

2.2.2 Residential Market Opportunities

Both the general market conditions described previously and the fact that this area is a high quality residential neighbourhood because of the quality of building stock and proximity to the lake, suggests that there is an excellent market in the future for residential development. This opportunity is evident from a number of development pressures being exhibited in the area. These are in the form of both condominium redevelopments in multi-storey apartment-form buildings and proposals for 'infill' townhouse-type developments.

The strong market for residential projects is summarized in the Official Plan Review Mixed Use Areas Study, March 2004 prepared by GSP Group in conjunction with PricewaterhouseCoopers as follows:

"The Plains Road West corridor through South Aldershot has, and will continue to be, an important area for new apartment construction in the City. Over the past several years the area has seen strong interest in higher density housing forms.

The Oakland Green project built by Westbury International represents one of the most significant high-density housing projects in Aldershot (some 266 units). Although it is not situated in the mixed-use corridor proper, it is located at its western periphery. The project provides a clear signal that the Plains Road mixed use corridor can and will attract new residential projects going forward.

Currently, London, Ontario based developer, Drewlo Holdings is planning to redevelop the Aldershot Plaza into a residential project containing up to 1,000 new units. The City is working with Drewlo to establish a ground floor retail component within the residential project. Although this redevelopment site is located within a Community Shopping Area designation, it too signals the type of opportunities that exist elsewhere in the corridor. The opportunity to redevelop neighbouring sites such as the Canadian Tire store and a remnant parcel on the southwest corner of Plains and Waterdown Road provide further opportunities to strengthen the corridor through intensification.

Nodal-type, mixed use development at Plains Road and Waterdown Road, represents a unique opportunity to create high quality housing within easy walking distance to the Aldershot Go Station and the Cooke Business Park, as well as future employment activities planned in the Highway 403-Aldershot corridor.

While large-scale redevelopment projects have been the primary focal point of construction there have been several examples of small-scale mixed use projects in the South Aldershot community comprising retail at grade with rental apartment units above. These include:

- *685-695 Plains Road West:*
- *127 Plains Road West; and*
- *418 Plains Road West*

2.3 Traffic & Transportation Context

Plains Road is a major east-west roadway in Burlington's street system. The section covered by the Plains Road Corridor Urban Design Study runs from the QEW in the east where it links into Fairview Street, to the City boundary in the west where it connects to York Boulevard and to Highway 6. Transit is a key component of the traffic and transportation context due to strong ridership along Plains Road. With development intensification and the expansion of GO services in this area it is expected that demand for transit will continue to increase and the need for transit related facilities will remain strong.

Plains Road is classified as an arterial road in the Official Plan. Presently, it is a five-lane road from the QEW west to York Boulevard. In addition, bicycle lanes are marked out on the roadway over this length. It has an urban cross-section with curb and gutter. The section of Plains Road from York Boulevard to the Highway 6 connection is a two-lane road, and has a rural cross section with ditch drainage.

The Plains Road corridor historically provided the east-west highway route across the area, but is now paralleled by Highway 403 that carries the major commuter flows. However, Plains Road still functions as an arterial, and provides an alternate route when problems occur on the adjacent freeway. Such occasions can overload Plains Road, but are not considered to be the standard to which the roadway should be designed.

Daily volumes on the easterly section from the QEW through King Road are around 30,000 vehicles per day (vpd). The volume decreases slightly proceeding west, with about 26,000 vpd at Waterdown Road. West of Waterdown Road the volumes continue to decrease, with 15,000 vpd at Spring Garden Road. The peak hour directional volumes on Plains Road are 700 vehicles per hour (vph) eastbound in the morning at Spring Garden Road, increasing to 1500 vph at the QEW Ramp. In the afternoon peak hour the peak directional volumes are westbound, with 1950 vph at the QEW Ramp and 1100 vph at Spring Garden Road.

Traffic signals are located at access points and intersections along the Plains Road corridor. The key intersections in terms of capacity and traffic operations are at Plains Road and King Road, at Plains Road and Waterdown Road, and at Plains Road and IKEA/Francis Road. The intersections are busy, but have adequate capacity for current volumes. The other signalized locations provide access opportunities to get on Plains Road. Daily volumes are low and the intersections do not have any capacity issues in terms of traffic engineering

Plans have been prepared for upgrading of the Waterdown Road interchange on Highway 403. This will add ramps to and from the east, supplementing the existing ramps to and from the west. It is likely that Waterdown Road will be widened to four lanes from Plains Road to North Service Road, and to extend the North Service Road. There are plans to grade-separate the intersection of Highway 6 and Old York Road, and to close the present at-grade intersection of Plains Road at Highway 6. MTO is undertaking an extension of Plains Road north from the existing connection to Highway 6 up to Old York Road.

The City is currently participating in the Waterdown-Aldershot Transportation Master Plan EA Study, which is evaluating North/South and East/West capacity deficiencies, network improvements in a study area from Highway 6 to Brant Street, north of the CN rail line. The work includes analysis of the Waterdown Road interchange, but there are no options that involve Plains Road.

Plains Road will remain as a four-lane road, and continue to provide an arterial function. A widening of Waterdown Road and upgrading of the Waterdown Road interchange should provide the capacity needed for any increase in traffic generated by new development in the Plains Road corridor study area.

The urban design guidelines and recommendations for corridor enhancement that are described in the report will not restrict the road capacity that is available and required in the Plains Road corridor but they are intended over time to reduce speeds and calm traffic.

3.0 URBAN DESIGN EVALUATION

The study area is approximately 7 km in length and was evaluated using land-use and visual (streetscape) character as defining elements. The corridor as an entity is too long to be evaluated in its entirety. It was necessary to break the corridor down in order to evaluate the unique opportunities that exist in each district. The districts are based on existing landscape character and land use. Rather than unfolding as a continuous undifferentiated streetscape, Plains Road has areas that "hang together" based on historical development, existing buildings, trees and other landscape elements, and community use. Within each of the seven districts are unique locations or nodes that have distinct qualities that lend character to the district itself and as part of the entire experience of the corridor: Seven distinct segments were identified (Figure 1).

- Burlington Gateway
- Royal Botanical Gardens Parkway
- Unsworth District
- LaSalle District and Waterdown Village Node
- Shadeland District
- Maplehurst District
- King Road District

The land uses, and consequently the activity and traffic characteristics of Plains Road, change from East to West. Wide landscape boulevards dominate the corridor in the vicinity of the Royal Botanical Gardens and the residential lands west of Waterdown Road. The corridor evolves to a mix of residential and local commercial uses and finally becomes a major regional retail centre at the east end. Overall, the streetscape character lacks consistency and varies in aesthetic quality. The public right-of-way varies in width from 36m to 42m and supports both higher speed traffic and high volume traffic (peak times). Although the current Official Plan update proposes a 36 m right of way, the unique and more picturesque sections of the street are a consequence of the wider parkway like road allowance that supports street trees and green boulevards. The wider 42 m right of way is required in order to preserve the green, parkway-like character of the west portion of the corridor. Many of the districts have landmarks or special nodes of pedestrian activity that could be accentuated to further enhance the visual character of the Plains Road corridor. In most cases the pedestrian nodes are focused on institutional, commercial or tourism uses. The design framework proposes the application of continuous streetscape elements that are punctuated with special pedestrian oriented nodes having intensified urban design treatments. The Waterdown Road Village Node and the existing King Road Node are identified as potential locations for more intense urban redevelopment.

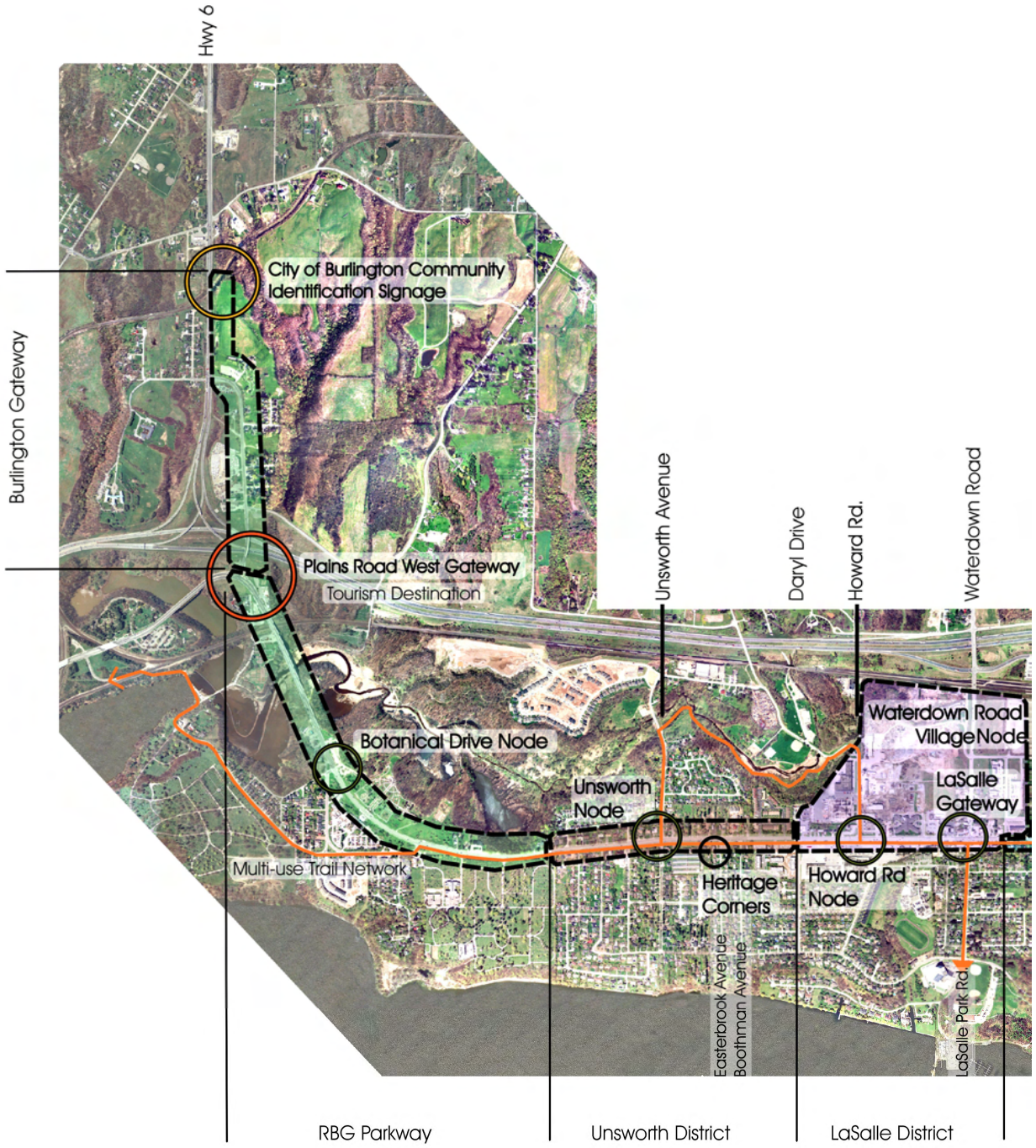
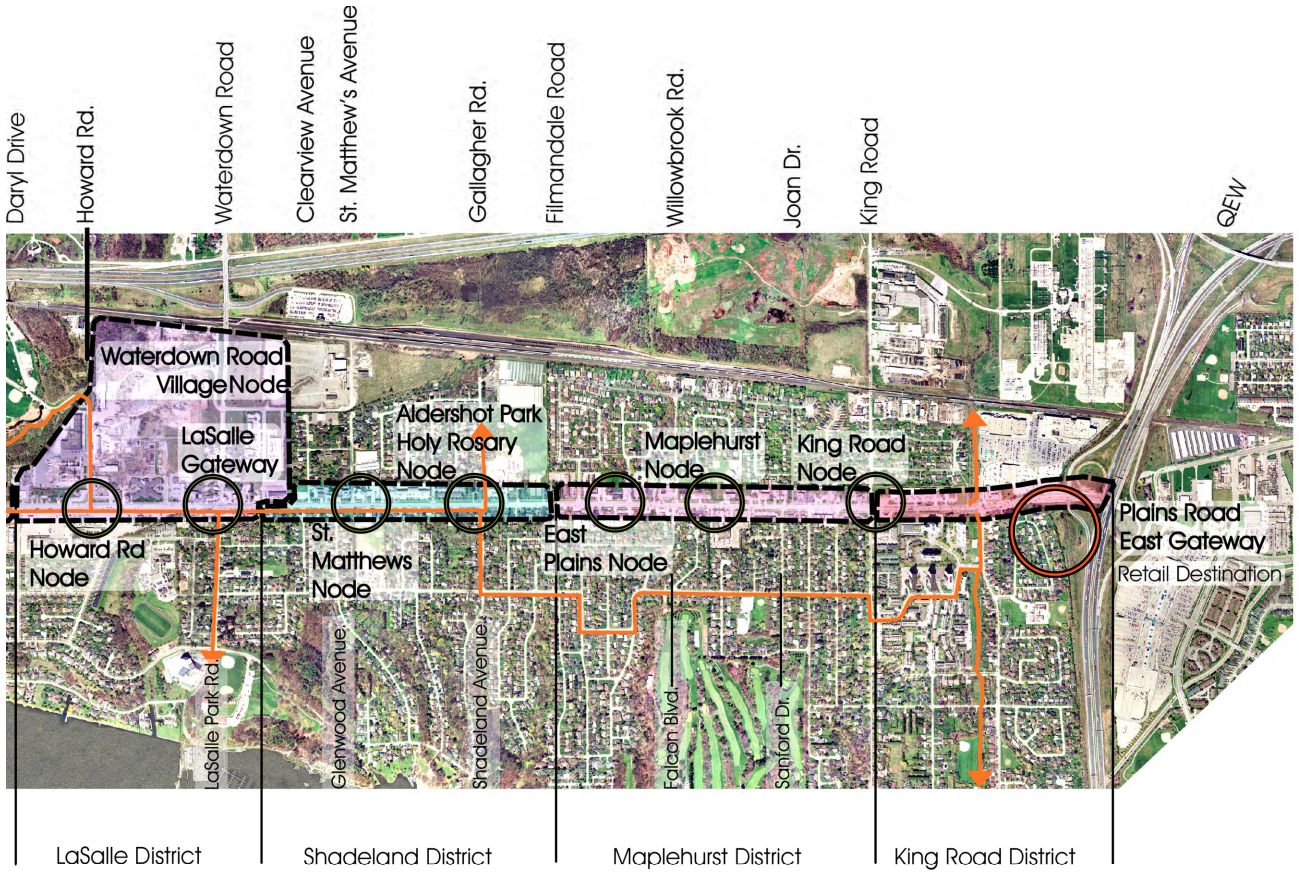

Hwy 6
City of Burlington Community Identification Signage
Burlington Gateway
Plains Road West Gateway
Tourism Destination
Unsworth Avenue
Daryl Drive
Howard Rd.
Waterdown Road
Waterdown Road Village Node
Botanical Drive Node
Unsworth Node
LaSalle Gateway
Multi-use Trail Network
Heritage Corners
Howard Rd Node
Easterbrook Avenue
Boothman Avenue
LaSalle Park Rd
RBG Parkway
Unsworth District
LaSalle District

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

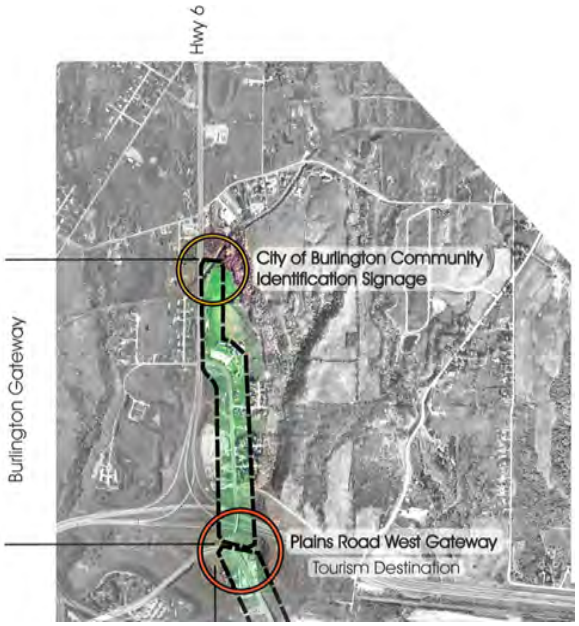
Plains Road Urban Design Guidelines Study

City of Burlington

ENVision - The Hough Group
Joseph Bogdan Associates
Scott Burns Planning Consultants
Read Voorhees



- Burlington Gateway
- RBG Parkway
- Unsworth District
- LaSalle District
- Shadeland District
- Maplehurst District
- King Road District



3.1 Burlington Gateway

The section of Plains Road between Highway 6 and York Boulevard known as the Bridgeview area defines the area representing the Burlington Gateway. This section of Plains Road has a rural cross-section and has mixed use development that is comprised of low density residential, commercial, and motel uses.

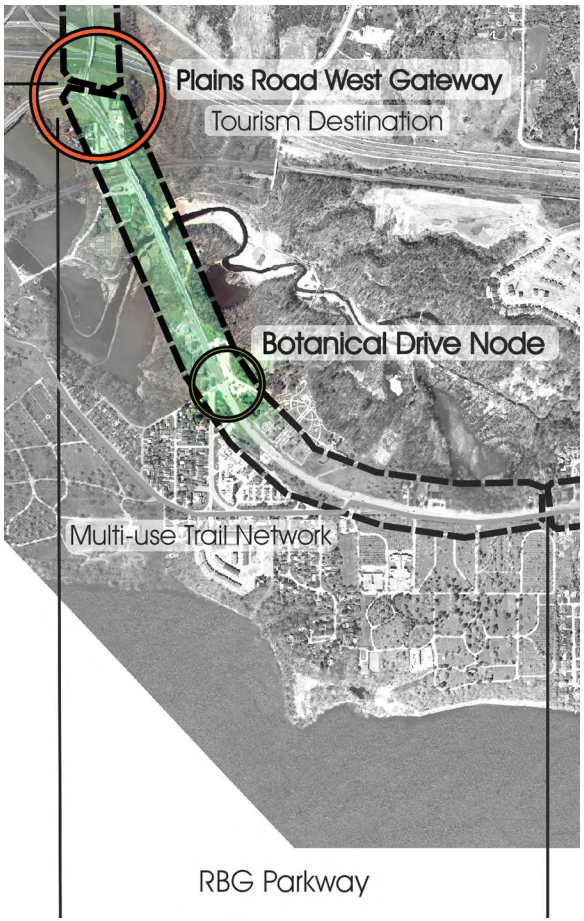
Currently, vacancies and underutilized properties present a weak community image.

Both the low density of development and the wide road cross-section encourage traffic to travel at high speeds. The intersection of Plains Road and Highway 6 is the "western gateway" to both Burlington and the Royal Botanical Gardens District. Unfortunately, the Burlington Gateway has poor wayfinding and lacks community identification signage.

Future plans to extend Plains Road north, parallel to Highway 6, involve a planned full interchange with Highway 6 at the intersection with Old York Road. This road reconstruction and interchange creates the opportunity to introduce an urban design gateway with community identification signage, lighting, and landscaping.



Burlington Gateway District



3.2 Royal Botanical Gardens Parkway

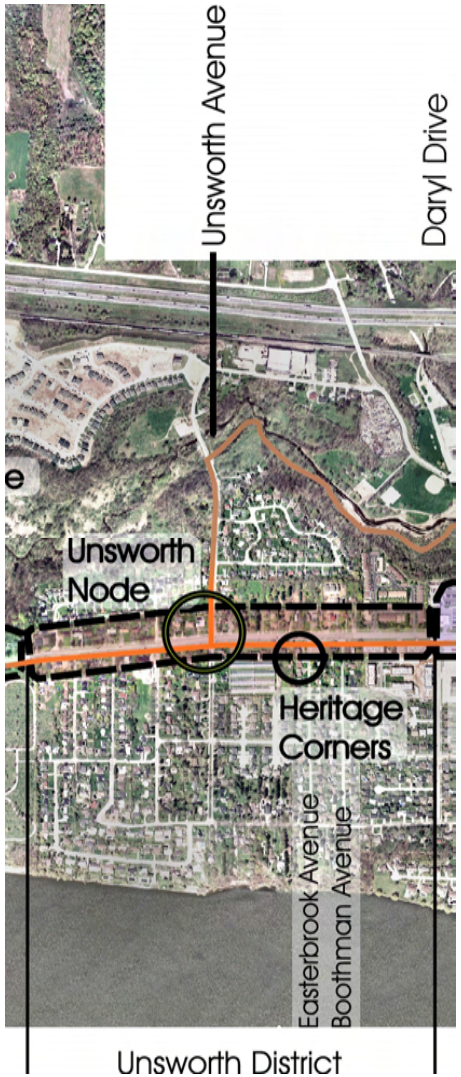
The Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is a regional tourism destination for Burlington and Hamilton. The gardens are set in the natural landscape setting of the Grindstone Creek and Lake Ontario Shoreline. Extensive views into the RBG property have a positive impact on the Plains Road corridor. In addition to the RBG, the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery and West Plains United Church add to the distinct institutional character of Plains Road through this section. Cycling links from Hamilton connect to existing cycling facilities on Plains Road.

Confusing access and a lack of clear orientation to various RBG facilities and parking areas constrain this otherwise lovely segment of the corridor. Better-organized signage for wayfinding, and rationalized entry and egress locations are important features for this district. Design elements such as a landscaped median, signage, banners, and boulevard landscaping can be used to improve wayfinding and to highlight the presence of RBG along Plains Road.

The limited turning movements through this portion of the Plains Road corridor provide an opportunity to introduce a planted median island. This median could help to enhance the parkway character of the corridor, calm traffic and showcase views to the gardens. These improvements should be undertaken in concert with RBG redevelopment plans. The RBG is currently undertaking a master planning exercise, and should be encouraged to have regard for the urban design directions proposed in this document.



RBG Parkway District



3.3 Unsworth District

The Unsworth District is defined as the portion of Plains Road between Danforth Avenue and Daryl Drive. This portion of the Plains Road corridor has an attractive, well-maintained and landscaped appearance reflecting the character of several heritage quality residential buildings. Land use along this portion of the Plains Road corridor is best described as stable single family residential with pockets of infill single family and town homes. There are also new, attractive, low-rise condominiums on the southwest corner of Daryl Drive and Plains Road. Future planning should ensure that infill development remains sympathetic to the surrounding heritage quality and scale of the existing neighbourhood.

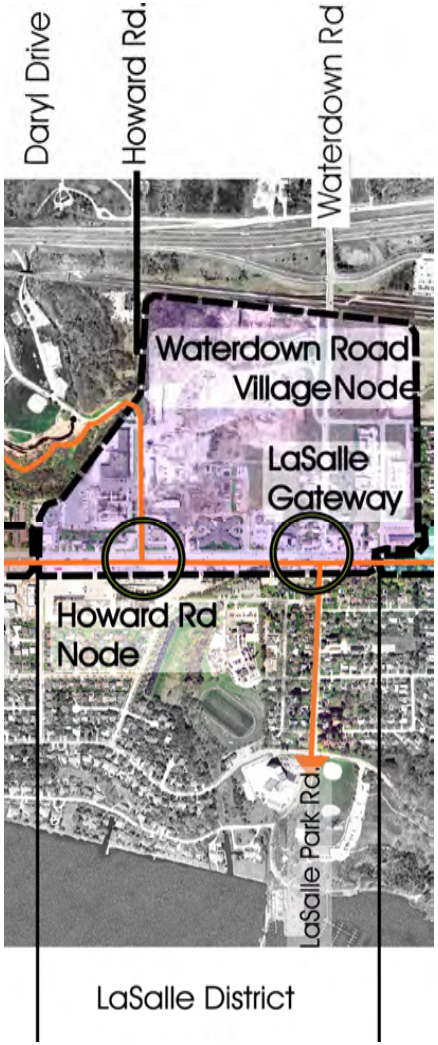
Adding to the heritage quality of the Unsworth District are the mature street trees lining the roadway. One of the main constraints to additional tree planting is the overhead electrical infrastructure on the south side of the roadway. Due to the high cost of burying overhead wires, opportunities should be sought to coordinate this when other major infrastructure improvements are undertaken.

Consistent with the Royal Botanical Gardens District of Plains Road, the wide cross-section of the road and setbacks, encourage high-speed travel. Locating trees and urban design elements closer to the roadway may assist in calming the traffic.

A multi-use trail and bike lane exists on a portion of the south side boulevard of Plains Road. The off-road multi-use trail should be expanded and improved to enhance the off-road cycling experience. On-road cycle lanes should also be improved to City standards and to link to Hamilton's cycling facilities.



Unsworth Residential Area



3.4 Lasalle District & the Waterdown Rd. Village Node

The LaSalle District is defined as the portion of the Plains Road corridor between Daryl Drive and Cooke Boulevard. The LaSalle District currently has a large site under redevelopment review. The most notable projects are high-density residential developments proposed on the former Zellers Plaza site, and the currently vacant southwest corner of Plains Road and LaSalle Park Road. Recently, a few commercial redevelopments (such as the Bernardino site at 127 Plains Rd. West) with good built form design have taken place on the north side of the district, including mixed-use, commercial and retail uses. The existing road cross-section is wide and favours vehicular traffic over pedestrian use. Traffic calming measures such as the introduction of pedestrian nodes with an emphasis on pedestrian crossings where use is higher due to community institutions and transit stops could assist in slowing traffic. Other design elements such as lighting, expanding pedestrian pavements at intersections and introducing medians/islands for temporary refuge will also improve the public realm.

The intersection of Waterdown Road is a significant source of traffic along the Plains Road corridor, and future plans to create an interchange at Waterdown Road and Hwy 403 will increase the importance of this node. Instead of limiting the future design of the Waterdown Road/Plains Road intersection to maximizing traffic movements, the traffic should be of secondary importance after consideration of a high quality, pedestrian-oriented public realm. Village redevelopment and intensification should be encouraged in planning regulations at the Waterdown node. Urban design treatments such as community identification focal features, pedestrian lighting, wayfinding signs, transit facilities and publicly accessible open spaces (squares, parkettes) should be integrated into this village node. This is a major departure from existing thinking. However, in the spirit of the PRVV's vision for Plains Road as Aldershot's 'main street,' the LaSalle District is one area within the corridor that has the potential focus of activity to successfully create a community and commercial destination.



3.5 Shadeland District

The Shadeland District is defined as the segment of the Plains Road corridor between Cooke Boulevard and Filmandale Road. This District is characterized by an eclectic mix of land uses on the north side of the corridor and primarily residential and home office uses on the south side. Key sites include:

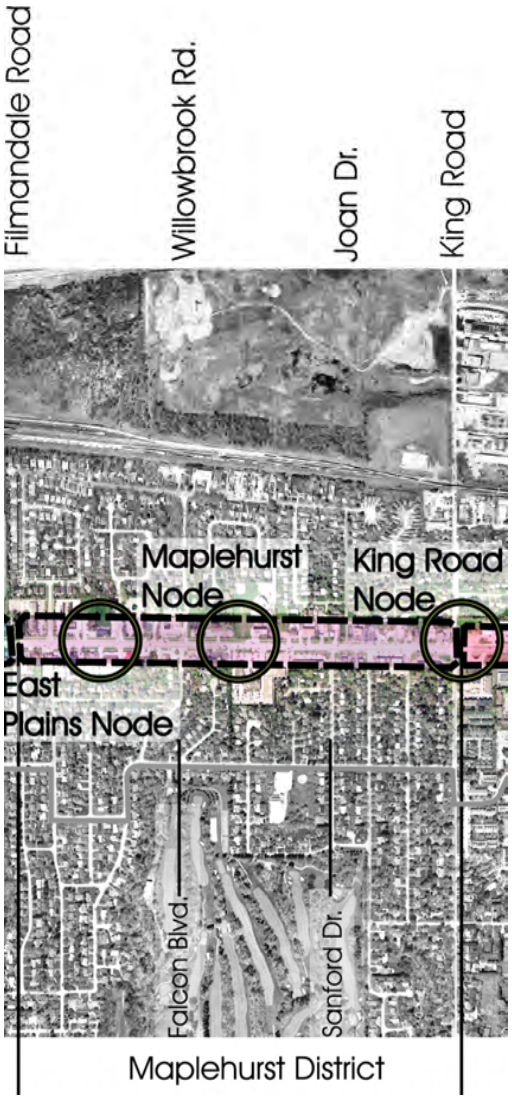
- Russell William's Restaurant on the south side – Plains Road "landmark"
- Vacant and underutilized sites at corner of Cooke & Plains
- White Oaks Plaza on north side – mixed use commercial with residential above
- Co-op housing on north side – mature trees along boulevard with privacy fence
- Redevelopment site on north side – mature trees along the boulevard
- Heritage character single family residential with some home commercial uses on south side
- St. Matthew's Church and Holy Rosary Church and school campus – very gracious landscaping

Urban design objectives should concentrate on consolidating and infilling commercial/industrial uses and preserving and enhancing the residential and home commercial uses. Mature boulevard shade trees and existing landscaping along the corridor should be protected.

The underutilized sites at Cooke Boulevards and Plains Road could be redeveloped to provide an improved gateway/entry point to the industrial park. Redevelopment should capitalize on the attractive landscaping along Cooke Boulevard. At-grade parking along the frontage of commercial properties should be screened with low growing vegetation to improve the appearance of the corridor.



Shadeland District Residential Area



3.6 Maplehurst District

The Maplehurst District is defined as the segment of the Plains Road corridor between Filmandale Road and King Road. This District is comprised of a mix of institutional, commercial and retail uses that abut the corridor, often without adequate setback or landscaping. Most commercial developments have at-grade parking, which in some areas juts into the boulevard or sidewalk. Freestanding pylon signs and at-grade parking dominate the streetscape. Future urban design strategies should focus on creating a more uniform streetscape treatment for commercial frontages including shade tree planting where feasible and improvements to pedestrian circulation.

Several important institutional uses are located in this District including the East Plains United Church and the Maplehurst Public School. The school is located close to the street, at a signalized intersection to the plaza across the road. The streetscape along the corridor and the landscaping associated with the school is worn. Although there are adequate lay-by/drop-off facilities for school buses, other elements such as medians, improved pedestrian crossing pavements and lighting would assist to calm traffic, increase pedestrian safety and improve the visual character of this node.



Maplehurst Public School



3.7 King Road District

The King Road District is the segment of the Plains Road corridor between King Road and the QEW. This district is primarily comprised of commercial, regional scale retailing and high-density residential development. The east edge of the corridor is automobile oriented due to the presence of major retailers such as IKEA and close proximity to the QEW. The Pioneer cemetery in the vicinity of the IKEA property should be protected and the landscaping associated with the site should be appropriately maintained. A commemorative marker to interpret the heritage significance of the site should be provided.

There are a variety of commercial uses ranging from traditional two storey plazas to 'big box" power centres. Generally, the plazas and strip malls are set back from the street with generous parking areas facing the corridor. This District has a section of mature shade trees that should be preserved and enhanced with inter-planting. The King Road intersection has been enhanced with planted medians and a landscaped parkette on the southwest corner. This urban design feature was implemented by the PRVV as a demonstration project. The expansion and continuation of this community based partnership effort should be supported.

The intersection of Plains Road and the QEW provides an ideal opportunity to create an eastern gateway to the Plains Road corridor and to begin the introduction of streetscape elements that "announce" Plains Road as a major destination and community asset. Streetscape elements that are introduced here, such as lighting, landscaping and signage should be carried through the entire length of the study area.



King Road District Local Commercial

4.0 URBAN DESIGN GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

4.1 Goals and Objectives

Design goals and objectives for Plains Road are based on the Official Plan and were further refined during the study process and through public consultation with key stakeholders, the business community and City staff. Four overarching goals for the Plains Road corridor were identified.

- To make Plains Road an enjoyable and attractive place to live and a destination that can attract tourism and business.
- To preserve the green 'verdant' parkway character of the corridor where it exists today and to expand the 'greening strategy' along the length of the corridor.
- To enhance the aesthetics of the streetscape by improving the public realm.
- To create an urban design strategy that can be implemented over time and that all stakeholders can embrace and work towards.

4.2 Strategies

The design workshop, public consultation focus group sessions, and input from City staff provided a forum for discussion of the opportunities and challenges to achieving these objectives. The principles that emerged from the consultation process included:

- Establishing Plains Road as a destination for tourism and business;
- Improving community identity, streetscape character and wayfinding;
- Creating civic gateways to mark arrival;
- Recognizing that the corridor has special precincts or districts and use urban design features to reinforce the special character of the various districts;
- Using urban design features to support nodes with more intense pedestrian activity;
- Protecting and enhancing the integrity of parkway character of the corridor;
- Employing a range of traffic calming tools and facilitating alternative modes of transportation;
- Creating more pleasant pedestrian environments;
- Protecting existing cultural heritage resources;
- Creating policies to encourage appropriate redevelopment;
- Providing a policy context to create an intensified Village Node at the Waterdown Road intersection;
- Encouraging street-related land uses;
- Preparing site planning and built form guidelines to direct redevelopment and building improvements.

5.0 URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

This section of the report presents the Urban Design Guidelines developed by the design team in co-operation with the community and the City. Following from the analysis and principles in the previous sections, these guidelines are the *operative* part of this report providing the detailed guidance for public and private investment and redevelopment.
The guidelines are presented in three categories:

- General Streetscape Guidelines, intended to apply to all planned changes within the publicly-owned street right-of-way throughout the corridor and to abutting private properties;
- District Guidelines, providing area-specific guidelines for the planned character and streetscape of each of the districts identified in the Urban Design Framework; and
- Site Planning and Built Form Guidelines, providing direction for commercial and residential property improvements and redevelopment.

The guidelines reflect the City's approach to the design of the Plains Road corridor including public investment in streetscape improvements as well as renovation, redevelopment and infill of properties along Plains Road. They are not intended to mandate the specific design but rather to provide approaches, which are to be applied in conjunction with other site-specific considerations. These guidelines are to be used by City staff and the public in the City's capital works planning process and the development review process.

5.1 General Streetscape Guidelines

General Streetscape Guidelines are intended to apply to all planned changes within the publicly owned street right-of-way throughout the corridor and to abutting private properties. Key streetscape elements for the Plains Road corridor include: lighting; sidewalks, multi-use pathways, cycling routes; street trees; wayfinding signs; street furniture; parking, and pedestrian nodes.

5.1.1 Lighting

1. Light fixtures along the Plains Road corridor should have consistent luminaire and pole styles that are "unique" in Burlington and reflect the heritage of Aldershot. Some elements will vary with respect to corridor lighting, including customizing the size and mounting height of the luminaire, pole spacing and intensity of illumination but all should be within the same style "family".
2. All roadway lighting should meet the City of Burlington and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) illumination standards.
3. Overhead electrical and telecommunication infrastructure should be considered for burial where feasible when other buried services such as water mains and sewers are being replaced or upgraded or as part of redevelopment proposals or during municipal servicing improvements. A plan to co-ordinate burial over the long term should be included in public works capital forecasts. The plan should be based on discussions with the relevant public and private utility providers to determine the feasibility of burying overhead overhead electrical and telecommnications infrastructure.

For future infrastructure and infrastructure that cannot be buried, the following guidelines should be taken into consideration. Utilities and/or telecommunication shall be:

1. coordinated, planned and installed in common trenches, wherever possible, within public road allowances or within appropriate easements to avoid unnecessary over-digging and disruption of municipal rights of way, as part of public works capital forecasts;
2. clustered or grouped, where possible, to minimize visual impact of above-ground infrastructure; and
3. encouraged to consider innovative methods of containing their above-ground infrastructure.
4. Luminaries should protect the night sky (all illumination is downward) and have minimal glare.
5. The multi-use pathways and "pedestrian nodes" along the Plains Road corridor should be lit with pedestrian scale luminaires and poles.
6. Recommended Fixture: Lumec Domus Series DMS50 luminaire, mounted on the double straight arm (OM). Light fixtures and poles should all be black.

5.1.2 Sidewalks, Multi-Use Pathways, Cycling Routes

1. A combination of sidewalks, multi-use pathways and in-road cycle lanes are proposed along the Plains Road corridor to provide pedestrian and cycle access to the community. A choice in the type of pathway and surface assists in separating recreational users from pedestrians, and offers an alternative to cyclists who do not want to cycle on the roadway. On-road bike lanes provide a direct route with few impediments to on-road commuter cyclists. The lanes should be added when road upgrading and reconstruction is planned
2. A multi-use pathway should be located along the south side of the Plains Road corridor from Spring Gardens Road to Shadeland Avenue. At the west end of the corridor, the multi-use trail should connect to the proposed Hamilton on-road cycle route on York Boulevard and to the Waterfront Trail network. The multi-use pathway should link to the residential area south of Plains Road through the local roads network, connecting at several points to the Waterfront Trail and City's open space system.
3. The on-road bike lanes should be continuous along the entire length of Plains Road connecting to the Hamilton in-road cycle route on York Boulevard and the Waterfront Trail network in the west end and ultimately extending past the QEW to connect with Fairview Street and Brant Street in the east end.
4. The multi-use pathways and bike lanes should be constructed to City of Burlington standards.

5.1.3 Street Trees

1. Existing street trees along the Plains Road corridor should be preserved, protected and enhanced through additional planting. Inter-planting new trees between mature specimens will ensure that the parkway-like character of the corridor can be protected in the future.
2. New tree species should be hardy and tolerant of urban conditions. Suggested species are detailed in 5.2 District Guidelines.
3. 6-8 trees of the same species should be planted in any given street block to avoid a monoculture. The same species and number should be reflected on the opposite side of the road. Random changes in species should be avoided. Grouping like species in one area assists to unify the streetscape character.
4. The City's tree by-laws should be reviewed to ensure consistency with this guideline.

5.1.4 Municipal Pedestrian &Vehicular Wayfinding (Signage)

1. Municipal signage along the Plains Road corridor should have a unified appearance, and be designed as a system of signs with a clear hierarchy that assists in differentiating major gateways, districts, nodes, and historical markers and Wayfinding signage.
2. Standard background colours, text type and colour, supporting structure and lighting should be developed.
3. All signage should be lit with accent lighting. Backlit signage is not encouraged. Where backlit signage is used, individual block letters are preferred. Box signage should be avoided.
4. Signs for multi-use pathways and bike lanes shall conform to City of Burlington standards. Signage should be provided at trailheads to identify intended user groups and warning signs should be posted to indicate conflict areas such as high traffic intersections.

5.1.5 Street Furniture

1. Street furniture should be located in the "pedestrian nodes", should be consistent and complement the style and colour of the other streetscape elements, such as signs, decorative paving and light standards.
2. The family of street furniture should include benches, garbage receptacles, recycling receptacles, bike racks, bollards, bicycle racks, tree grates and bus shelters. These furnishings should be clustered together to avoid a cluttered sidewalk appearance and located with regard for pedestrian circulation.
3. Planters for seasonal landscaping may be incorporated with light standards and/or be stand-alone but should be integrated with overall street furniture.
4. The furniture chosen should be low-maintenance, vandal-resistant, and easily replaceable.
5. Bicycle racks should be placed where they will create minimal conflict with pedestrians and cyclists. If possible, racks should be visible from the inside of buildings.
6. Recommended Furniture:

- *Benches: Hauser 6' 'English Garden' with backs and arms*
- *Trash Receptacles: City of Burlington standard: Custom from Paris Equipment Manufacturing (Custom flare top trash with door and lock).*
- *All furnishings should be a consistent colour, preferably black.*

5.1.6 Parking

1. New parking areas adjacent to the Plains Road corridor should be discouraged.
2. Visible parking spaces should be minimized and screened from view with a landscape buffer consisting of both evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs. Parking lots should include planted islands and provide pedestrian walkways (min. 1.2m wide) between the sidewalk and buildings.
3. Where roadside at-grade parking areas exist, trees and shrubs should be planted to screen the cars and help define the pedestrian space. Screening can be accomplished with plant material of sufficient height (1.0 m) and density to block views to parked cars, while remaining porous enough to allow sightlines for pedestrian safety and traffic safety.
4. Plant materials appropriate for screening parking include medium height shrubs (1.0 m) and shade trees with a minimum branching height of 1.5 m. This combination of plant materials permits views into the parking lot and to businesses while screening the view of parked cars. For effective screening throughout the year, the selection of plant materials should include some evergreen species.
5. Screening planting should be accommodated in continuous planting beds with a minimum width of 2.0 m.
6. Trees should be planted in all parking lots to provide shade, visual relief, and screening. These trees should be planted in curbed islands at the ends of parking aisles. Tree locations and species of appropriate height should be coordinated with retail signage placement to ensure signage is not obscured by vegetation.
7. Pedestrian nodes are located to provide focal points along Plains Road including but not limited to Waterdown Road, King Road and Maplehurst School. These nodes are areas of intensified streetscape treatment concentrating community signage, public transit facilities, pedestrian lighting, street furnishings, decorative pavement, landscaping and traffic calming measures to create an identifiable sense of place and encourage pedestrian activity.
8. Pedestrian crosswalks on the roadway should be constructed of materials with contrasting colour and texture, and serve as visual and auditory cues to slow vehicles.
9. Sidewalk treatment within these intensified pedestrian nodes should have decorative details and be designed with Urban Braille criteria:

- Minimum 2.0 m smooth concrete travel way;
- Contrasting and textured borders;
- Streetscape elements such as lighting, signage and furniture shall be located outside the travel way.

5.1.7 Utilities

1. Large, above-ground utility infrastructure should be located and designed to be compatible with its environment.
2. Innovative methods of containing utility services on, or within streetscape features, such as gateways, lamp posts, or transit shelters, should be considered when determining appropriate locations for large utility equipment and utility cluster sites.



Example of Gateway Feature

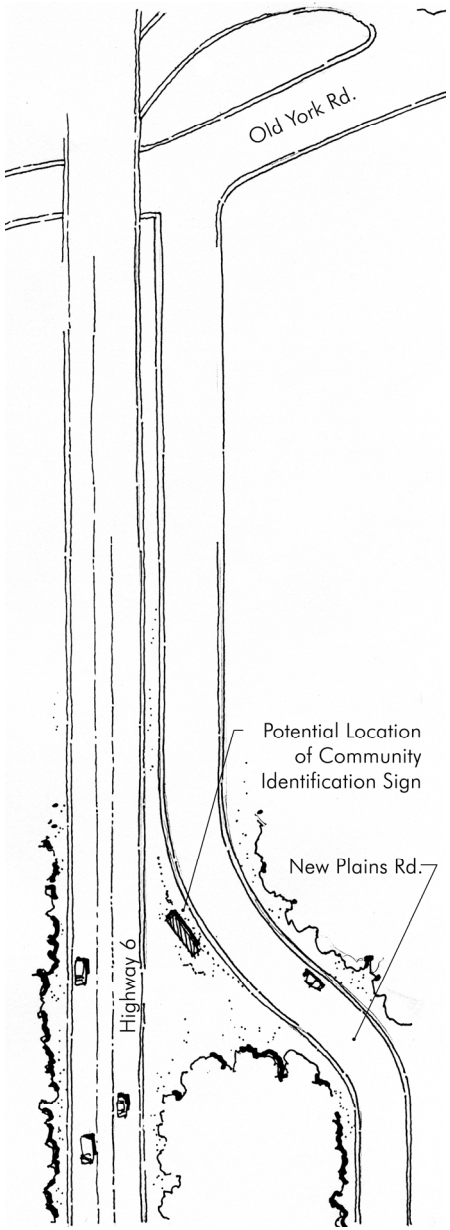
5.2 District Specific Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Framework for the Plains Road corridor is based on the emergence of seven definable districts. Each of these seven districts has a unique character that is the focus of these guidelines. In this section of the report, District Guidelines are presented to describe each district's urban design attributes and to provide guidance on how to enhance these attributes in the future.

This section further refines the General Streetscape Guidelines working at a more detailed scale and level of refinement.

5.2.1 Burlington Gateway Design Guidelines

The portion of the Plains Road corridor between Highway 6 and York Boulevard services a mixture of land uses and generally has a rural character and cross-section. Currently, this area serves as the western entrance to Burlington but lacks adequate signage and landscaping to mark this important transition. Future plans for this area include the extension of Plains Road north to Old York Road as part of the province's plans to reconstruct Highway 6 as a limited access expressway. The focus of the urban design guidelines in this area is to highlight the arrival into the City of Burlington and to link this area to the rest of Plains Road by using common elements such as light standards, wayfinding signage, street tree planting (where appropriate) while still retaining the "rural" character.



5.2.1.1 Lighting

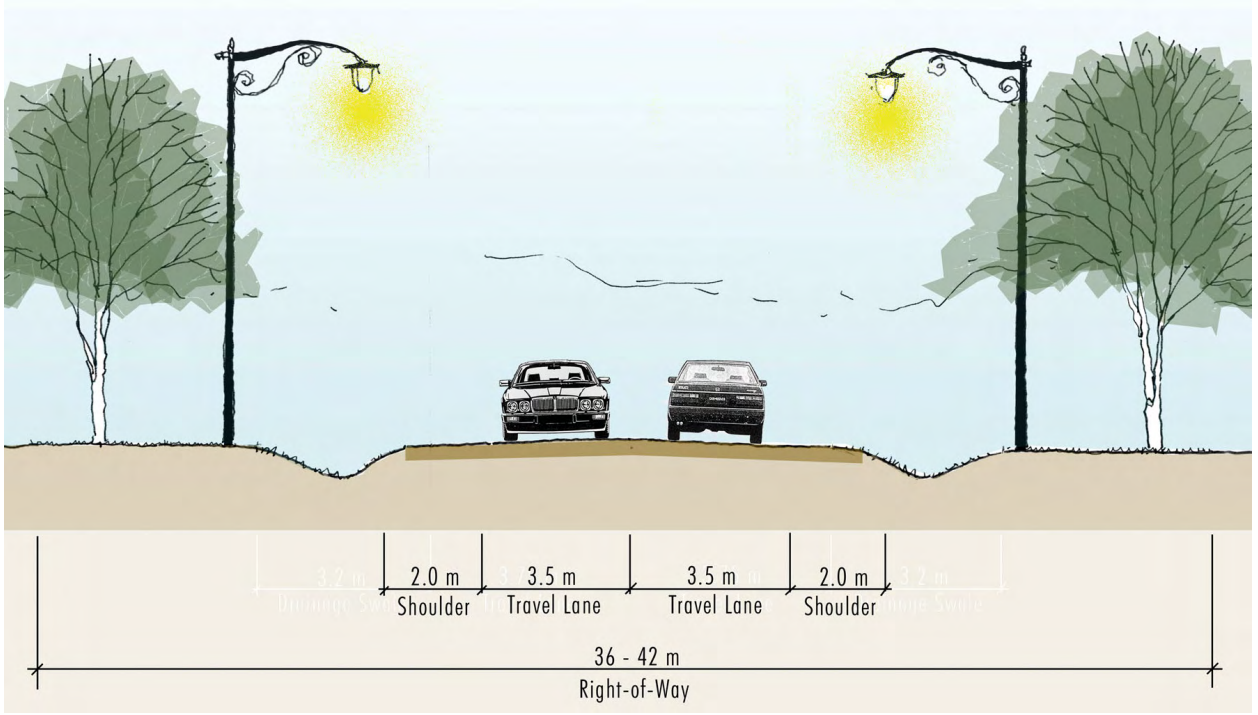
The lighting in this area should be designed primarily for vehicular traffic, since pedestrian use along this portion of Plains Road is minimal.

5.2.1.2 Street Trees

Street trees should be introduced beyond the roadside drainage facilities. The recommended spacing for these trees is 8 metres. The selected species should have a large and arching crown to create a canopy over the roadway. Recommended species are Red and Sugar Maple and Oak.

5.2.1.3 City Identification Signage

This area serves as the western gateway to the City of Burlington. Therefore a gateway feature with City identification signage should be placed at the Highway 6 interchange. The signage feature should be designed to be appreciated by motorists, be well lit, and denote the image and character of the City of Burlington. The design of this City gateway should reflect the scale of other entry features in the City.

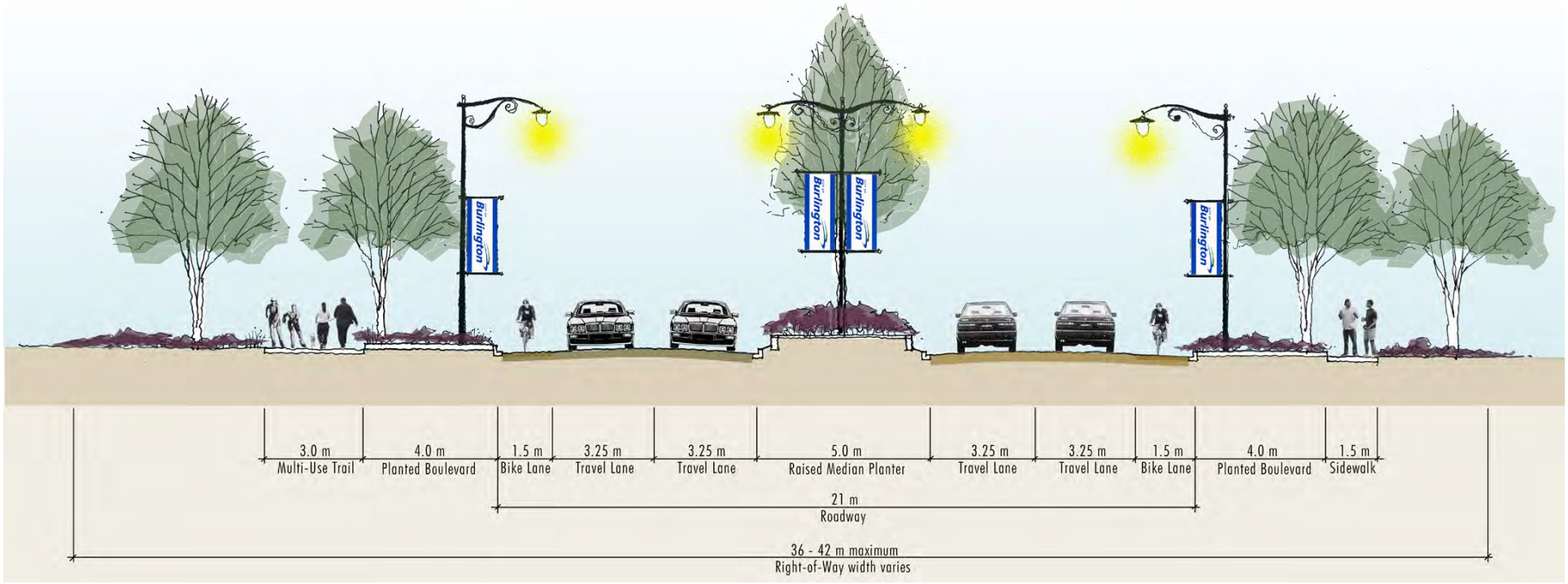


Burlington Gateway Cross Section

5.2.2 Royal Botanical Gardens Parkway Design Guidelines

The arrival into Burlington from Hamilton is signalled at the York Boulevard-Plains Road intersection. This location presents an excellent opportunity to create the western gateway to the Plains Road corridor with a major urban design feature at the intersection. The portion of the Plains Road corridor between York Boulevard and Danforth Avenue has a very verdant, mature, parkway character. Plains Road bisects the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) site offering panoramic views into the valley and RBG displays. The corridor borders the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, again offering panoramic views into the grounds towards the lake. The intent of the design guidelines for this area is to enhance the "parkway" character of the corridor and calm the speed of traffic. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Creating a major urban design feature at York Boulevard such as public art integrated with horticultural displays or a traffic circle
- Providing landscaped medians for traffic calming



RBG Parkway Cross Section

5.2.2.1 Plains Road West Gateway

The intersection of Plains Road and York Boulevard serves as the western gateway to Plains Road. In order to accentuate this gateway, the potential for a traffic circle (roundabout) should be considered, including landscaping that could be the display setting for public art elements and integrated Plains Road Village identification signage. This gateway feature should also provide wayfinding to the RBG.



Example of a traffic circle as a gateway feature

5.2.2.2 Landscape Medians

The design of the medians should allow a minimum of 3.0 m of planter width, in a raised bed (approximately 50 cm above the road surface) and planted with material that will allow views through while contributing to the street canopy and parkway character. Planting trees in groupings, leaving a substantial gap between groupings, and using low growing groundcovers can achieve views through the planting. The streetscape design and planting themes should be prepared in partnership with the RBG.



Example of Landscaped Median

5.2.2.3 Lighting

The lighting in this area shall be designed for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Where pedestrian activity is high, pedestrian scale lighting shall be provided.

5.2.2.4 Walkways

The multi-use pathway through this District links to the Hamilton segment of the Waterfront Trail system along Spring Road. Wayfinding signage should be provided to identify the route.



RBG parking, Plains Road, surrounded by treed boulevard

5.2.2.5 Street Trees & Horticultural Displays

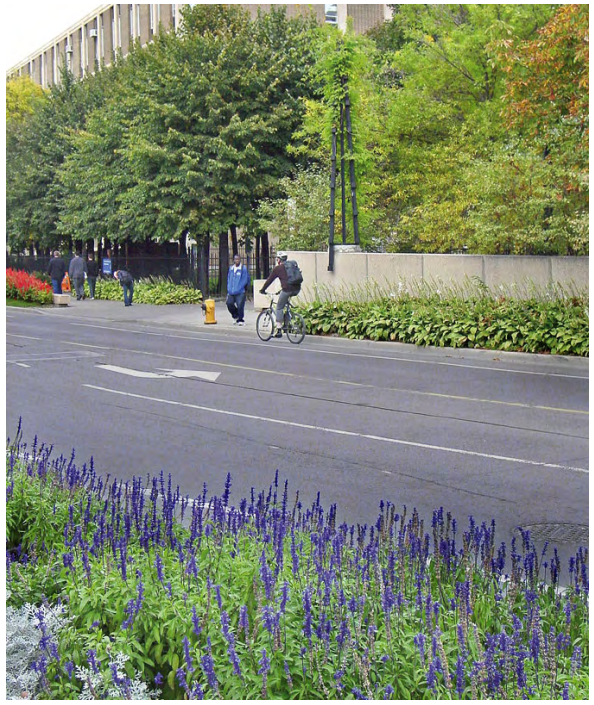
Street trees should be planted along the corridor and in medians to create a sense of enclosure and to encourage a slower, calmer, greener roadway corridor. Spacing of trees through this District should be 8 – 10 metres and the species chosen should have a large parkland quality. Recommended species for the boulevards include maple basswood, and white oak. Species for the medians include honey locust with an understory of shrub rose.



Unsworth Avenue (from Plains Road)

5.2.2.6 Botanical Drive Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Botanical Drive a pedestrian node may be created that strengthens the Royal Botanical Gardens main facility entrance and presence on the corridor. This node may have intensified use of the streetscape elements, and should be themed to reflect the history and contributions of the RBG to Aldershot. This node is an ideal area for and should incorporate a public art display.



Example of an on- street bikeway and horticultural display

5.2.3 Unsworth District Design Guidelines

The Unsworth District is a residential area with historic references to the Unsworth Greenhouse site and homes of one of Aldershot's founding families. The housing is primarily good quality single-family homes, on wide lots, with deep frontages along Plains Road. Some new low-rise infill re-development has occurred and has generally respected the depth and frontage characteristics of this residential district. Due to its predominant large lot residential pattern, this portion of the Plains Road corridor has retained a mature, green, generous streetscape. The intent of the guidelines for this District is to preserve, enhance and protect this 'verdant' residential character by renewing the street tree planting, protecting the setbacks and landscaping on private property, and improving the transit and pedestrian facilities.

5.2.3.1 Multi-use Trail

Wayfinding signage should be provided where the multi-use pathway intersects with the off-street trail at Unsworth Avenue.

5.2.3.2 Street Trees and Boulevard Treatment

A continuous row of street trees should be spaced at 8 metres to assist in traffic calming. New deciduous trees should be inter-planted between the existing trees in order to support the continuous landscape canopy. Recommended species include oak and maple. All existing plant materials should be protected.

The boulevard treatment on private property should be harmonious with the existing character of the streetscape and should reflect and complement the existing residential properties.

5.2.3.3 Lighting

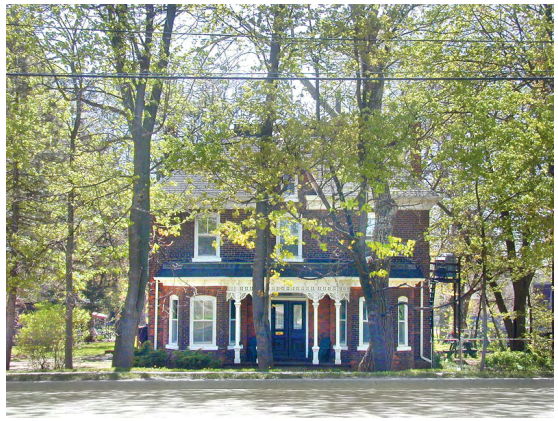
Lighting in this District should provide illumination for the roadway, multi-use pathway and pedestrian node.

5.2.3.4 Unsworth Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Unsworth Avenue, a pedestrian node should be created to reflect and recall the contribution of the former Unsworth Greenhouse to Aldershot. This node should include expanded pedestrian areas, utilize intensified streetscape elements, and should be themed to reflect the history and contributions of the Unsworth property on Plains Road.

5.2.3.5 Heritage Corners

This location is anchored by one of the former Unsworth homes in a setting of mature trees. Self - interpretive signage and streetscape elements such as decorative paving and lighting should be employed to highlight and interpret the unique quality of the heritage buildings at the intersection of Plains Road and Easterbrook Avenue.



Plains Road heritage home in the Unsworth District

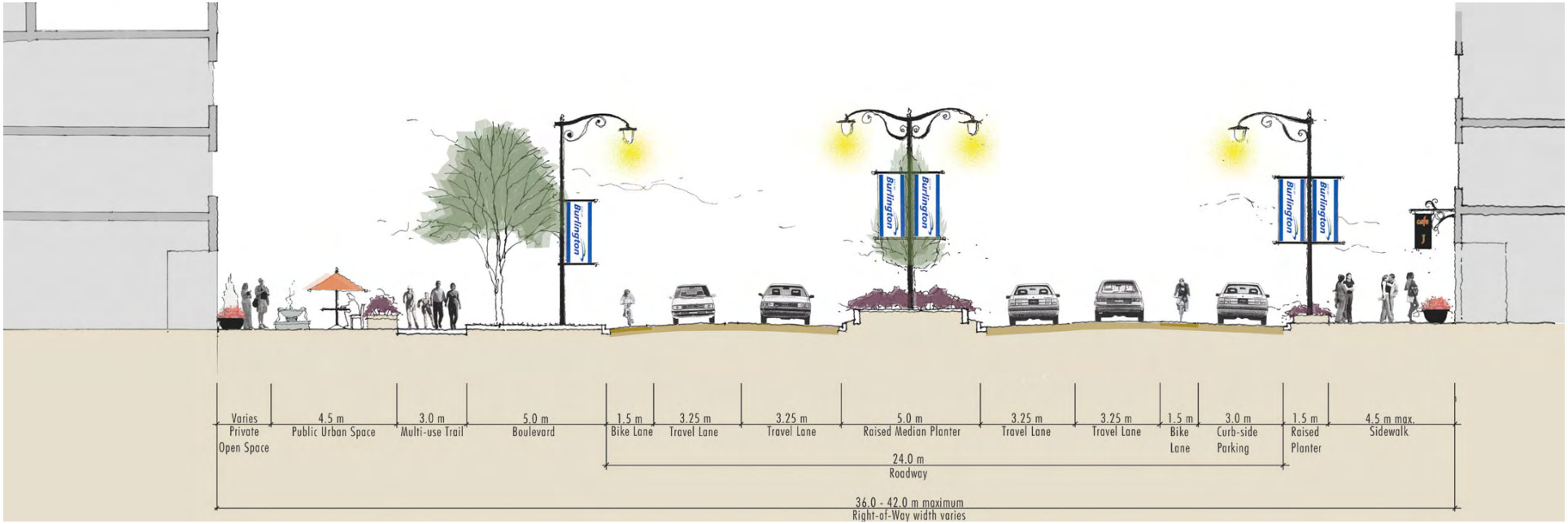
5.2.4 LaSalle District & the Waterdown Road Village Node Design Guidelines

The land use in this area is in transition with a number of residential properties being redeveloped to commercial and retail uses. Several lots are vacant and the streetscape along front yards is used for parking. Additional pressure for change is anticipated with the proposed interchange improvements at Hwy 403 and Waterdown Road, bringing higher volumes of traffic through this area. The guidelines for this area are intended to encourage the development of a Village Node, with intensified street related land uses in the vicinity of the Waterdown Road intersection. Strategies to achieve this include:

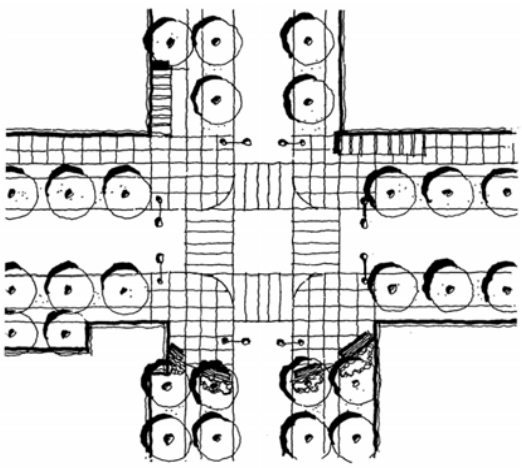
- Encouraging intensified mixed use, pedestrian focused redevelopment in the Waterdown Village Node
- Creating an urban design feature at the LaSalle Park intersection that creates a formal threshold to the south Aldershot residential community

5.2.4.1 Sidewalks and Multi-use Pathways

The multi-use trail connects from the south side of Plains Road northwards along Howard Road to a system of off-street trails that connect to the Grindstone Valley. Way finding signage would be beneficial. The trail also connects through the urban design feature and south along LaSalle Park to one of Burlington's most unique and naturalistic waterfront parks.



LaSalle District Cross Section



Design Treatment Extended Across Four Corners

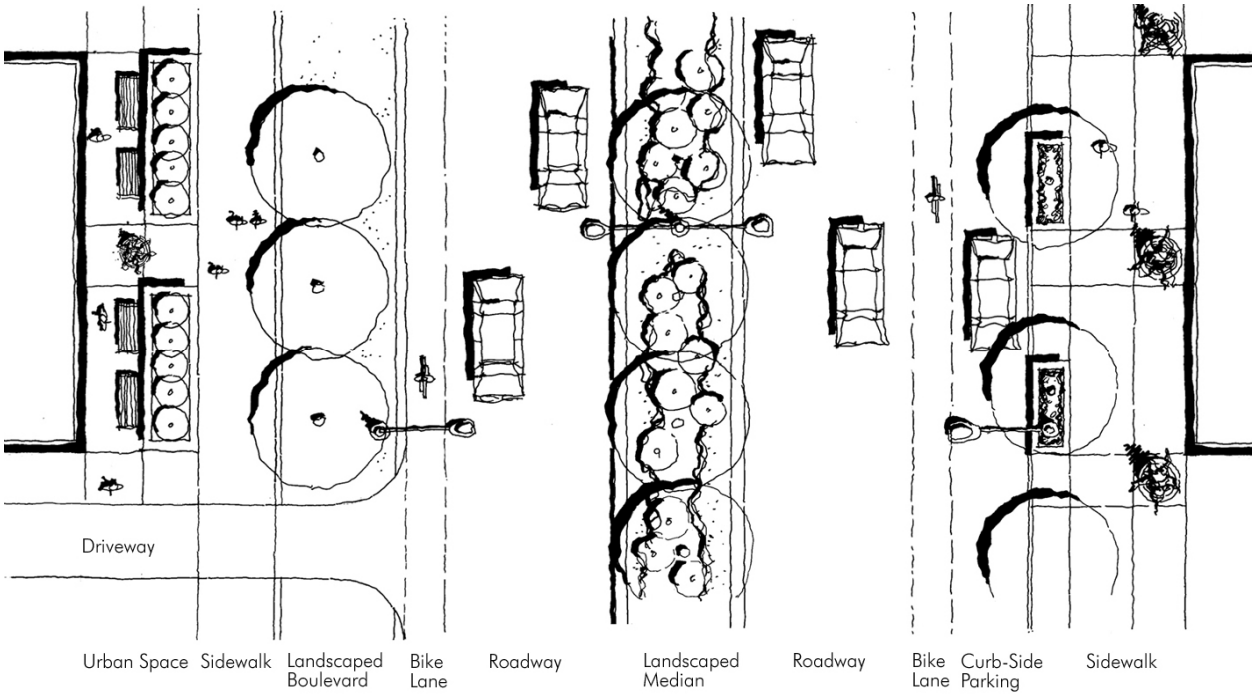
Waterdown Road Village Node should be developed as an intensified, urban, mixed-use zone with streetscaping that reflects greater pedestrian activity. The sidewalk should be expanded from the curb line. Pedestrian treatments extend across the four corners of the intersection.

The four corners of the node should be linked together with design elements that include pedestrian lighting and pavements. To aid in improving pedestrian access for people of all abilities, sidewalks should be designed with Urban Braille criteria. The paving materials should include rich colours and textures that add visual interest.

5.2.4.2 Street Trees and Boulevard Treatment

Street trees within the village node should be high branching deciduous trees with a light, transparent crown in order to maintain the visibility of storefronts from the street. A spacing of 8-10 metres is recommended. The plant materials should be located in raised planters or placed in tree pits in the pavement.

Recommended species include Honey Locust and Kentucky coffee tree.



Waterdown Village Node Concept Plan

5.2.4.3 Median Treatment

Landscaped medians are proposed for the intersection of Waterdown Road and Plains Road to assist in creating a focal point, calm traffic and provide an area of refuge for pedestrians. The medians narrow the street and create the opportunity to beautify the Village Node.

Plant materials should include high branching trees with a light canopy (i.e. Honey Locust, Common Hackberry), low growing shrubs, perennials, grasses and annual flowers.

5.2.4.4 Curb Side Parking

Curbside parking should be provided within the Village Node on the north side. These parking spaces are inset in a third lane where the spaces are contained by bump-outs to discourage traffic movement in pedestrian zones and to reduce interference with the on-road bike lane.

5.2.4.5 Lighting

Both a roadway light fixture and pedestrian light fixture should be combined on the same light standard throughout the Village Node. The light standards should be furnished with banner arms or hanging basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.

5.2.4.6 Waterdown Road Village Node

The north side of the Waterdown Road intersection has an opportunity for additional commercial, retail and residential intensification. The streetscape along the Plains Road corridor needs to support a pedestrian friendly environment that integrates transit facilities and a system of pedestrian walkways with an intensified re-development enclave.

5.2.4.7 LaSalle Gateway

The LaSalle Gateway delineates the threshold between the mixed-use development on the north side of the Plains Road corridor and the residential community of South Aldershot. An urban design gateway may be developed, primarily on the south side of Plains Road, and include a square, parkette or green space that faces the corner.

5.2.4.8 Howard Road Node

The pedestrian environment in the Howard Road area should be improved with lighting and a clearly delineated crossing to better connect the new residential developments on the south side of Plains Road and the specialty retail area on the north side.



Example of effective landscape median

5.2.5 Shadeland District Design Guidelines

The Shadeland District is characterized primarily by high quality residential development on the south side that reflects the residential character of the Aldershot area and a mix of commercial and institutional uses on the north. The intent of the streetscape design guidelines for this District are to preserve and enhance the mature boulevard landscapes associated with the south side residential properties and to improve the streetscape character along the north side of the corridor.

5.2.5.1 Sidewalks and Multi-use Pathways

The multi-use pathway on the south side of the corridor connects northwards to Holy Rosary School and Aldershot Park. This is a major intersection and requires way-finding signage. The trail continues after turning south along Shadeland Avenue where it carries on eastwards along Townsend Avenue.

5.2.5.2 Street Trees

Existing street trees should be retained and inter-planted with new trees spaced at 8 metres to "green" the corridor and to assist in traffic calming. Recommended species include Oak, Maple, and Ash.

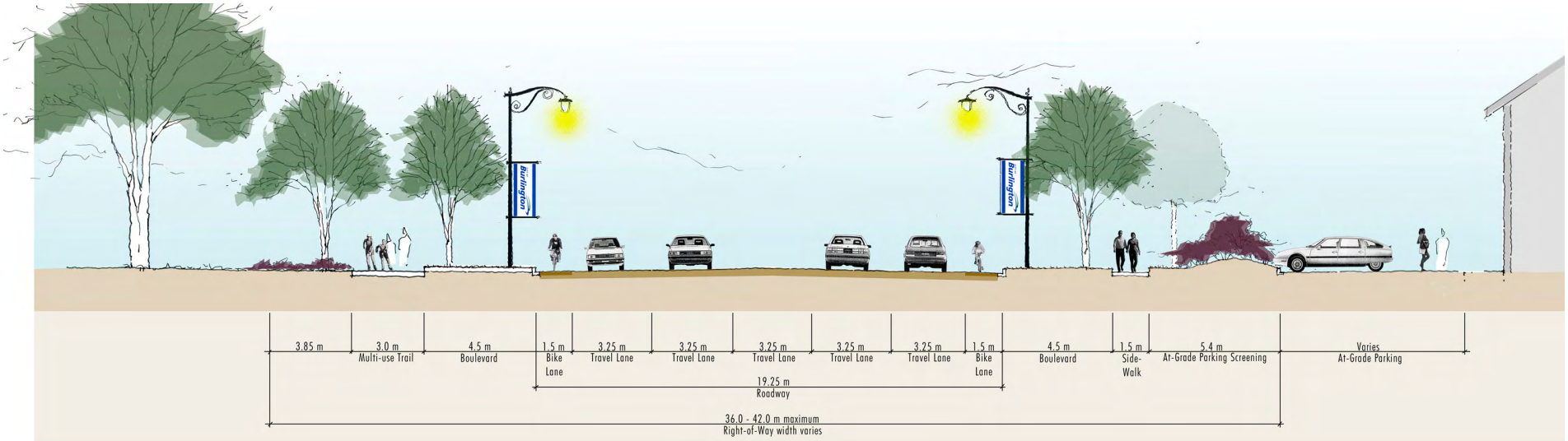
The landscape treatment on private property should be harmonious with the existing character of the streetscape and should reflect and complement the existing residential properties.

5.2.5.3 Aldershot Park/Holy Rosary Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Gallagher Road a pedestrian node should be created to support the activities associated with Holy Rosary School and improve the pedestrian linkages to Aldershot Park.

5.2.5.4 St. Matthews Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Glenview Avenue a pedestrian node should be created that accentuates and supports St. Matthews Church. This node should have intensified use of the streetscape elements and should be themed to reflect the history and contributions of St. Matthews Church on Plains Road.



Shadeland District Cross Section

5.2.6 Maplehurst District Design Guidelines

Under-utilised commercial strip malls, high volume traffic, an inconsistent street edge, absence of vegetation, and a pedestrian realm that lacks definition characterize the Maplehurst District. The intent of the streetscape design guidelines for this district are to create a consistent street edge, "green" the streetscape, define and enhance the pedestrian realm, and redefine and/or screen at-grade parking.

The Maplehurst District is anchored by institutional facilities such as the Maplehurst School and East Plains United Church. These properties need to become the focal point of this district and locations for streetscape improvements and pedestrian amenities that will assist in traffic calming.

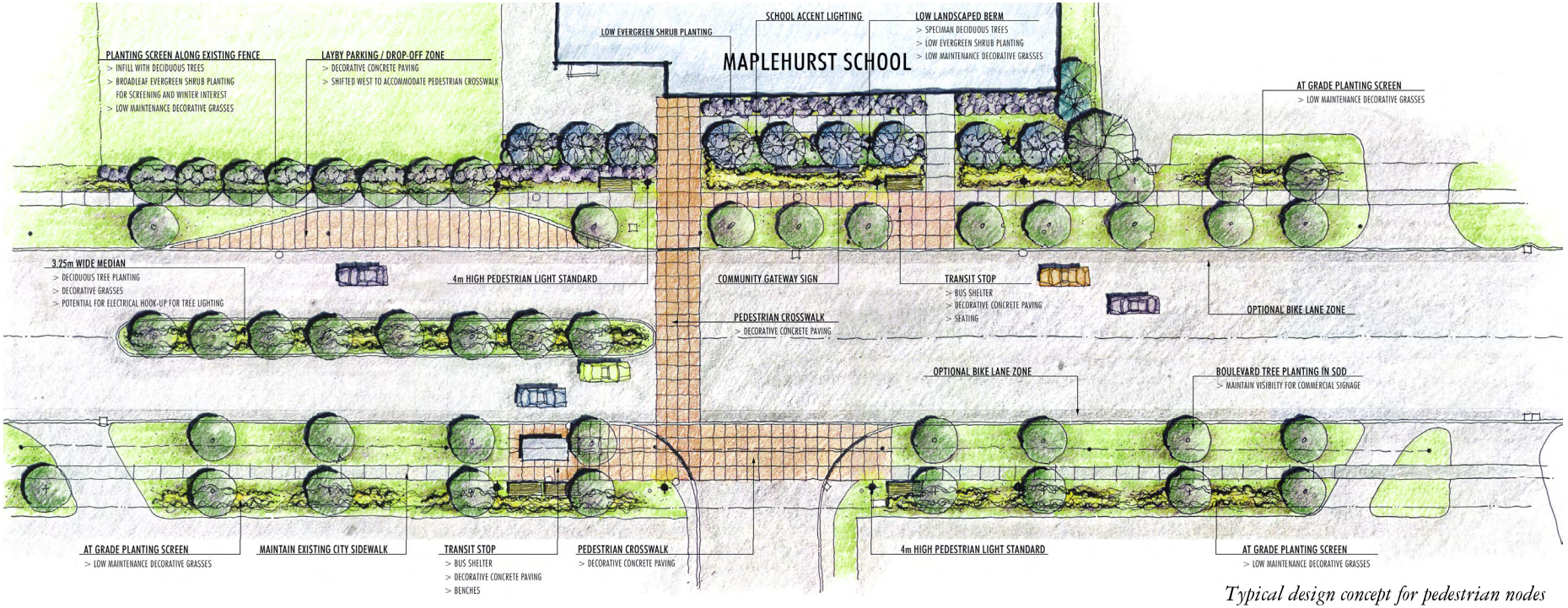
5.2.6.1 Street Trees

A continuous row of street trees should be planted in sodded boulevards whenever conditions permit. Where this is not possible due to paving requirements, trees should be planted in irrigated and drained tree pits containing structural soil.

Trees planted in front of retail storefronts should be high branching with a light canopy in order to allow for safe pedestrian movement underneath and maintain visibility to the storefront and signage. Recommended species include Honey Locust and Common Hackberry.

Existing at-grade parking should be screened with a continuous bed of low shrubs, perennials and grasses.

A spacing of 8-10 metres apart for trees is recommended in this district.



Typical design concept for pedestrian nodes

5.2.6.2 Lighting

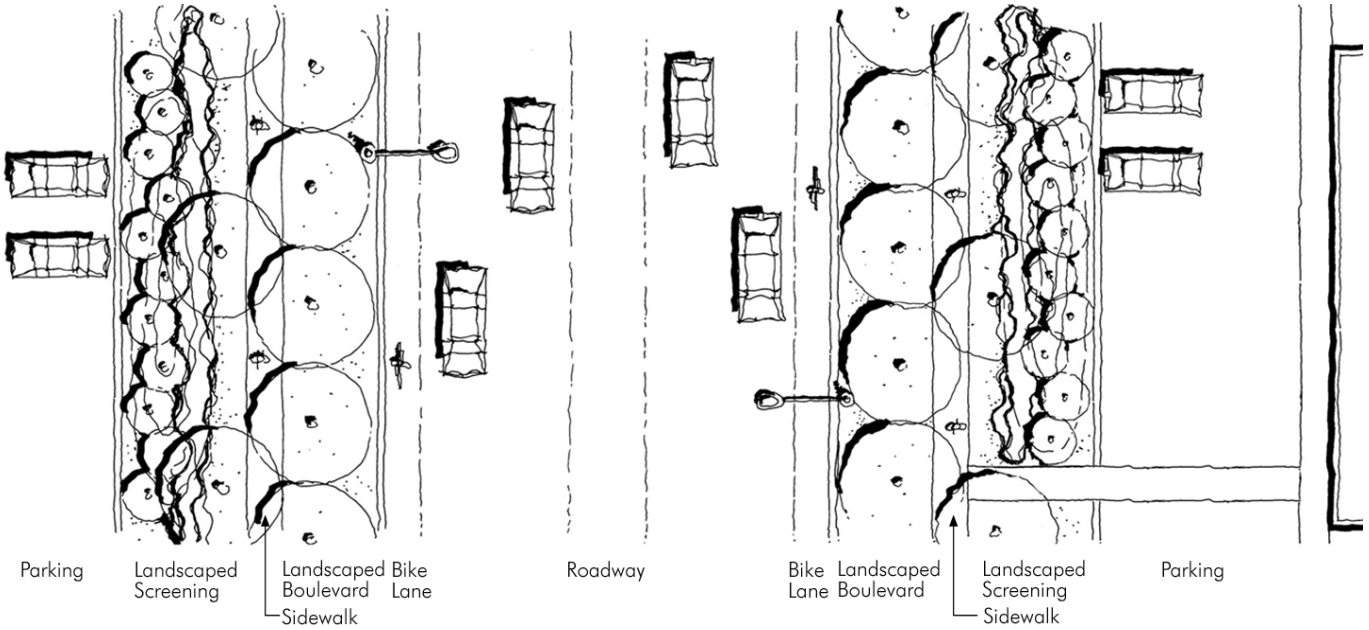
Light standards should be oriented towards both the roadway and pedestrian realm throughout this district. Fixtures could be combined on one pole or pedestrian lighting could be provided on separate light poles. These poles should be equipped with banner arms and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.

5.2.6.3 East Plains Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Dovercourt Avenue, a pedestrian node should be created that accentuates the presence of East Plains United Church. This node should have intensified use of the streetscape elements discussed in 5.2.3.

5.2.6.4 Maplehurst Node

At the intersection of Plains Road and Maplehurst Public School a pedestrian node should be created that accentuates the presence Maplehurst Public School and provides traffic calming and streetscape beautification features. The design of the node should include planting improvements adjacent to Maplehurst School, integration of a widened sidewalk and bus drop-off, landscaped medians to provide locations of pedestrian refuge, pedestrian lighting and signage.



Maplehurts and King District Area Plan

5.2.7 King Road District Design Guidelines

The King Road District is characterized by regional level commercial properties such as Ikea. Associated with this major retail node is a high volume of traffic, large parking lots fronting on Plains Road, and highway commercial uses such as gas stations. The intent of the design guidelines for this District is to announce the arrival onto Plains Road and to support the commercial intensification of this area to supplement the existing streetscape. Strategies to encourage this include:

- Intensifying the mixed use, pedestrian focused redevelopment in the King Road Node
- Enhancing the existing urban design feature at the King Road intersection to identify the threshold to the south Aldershot residential community.

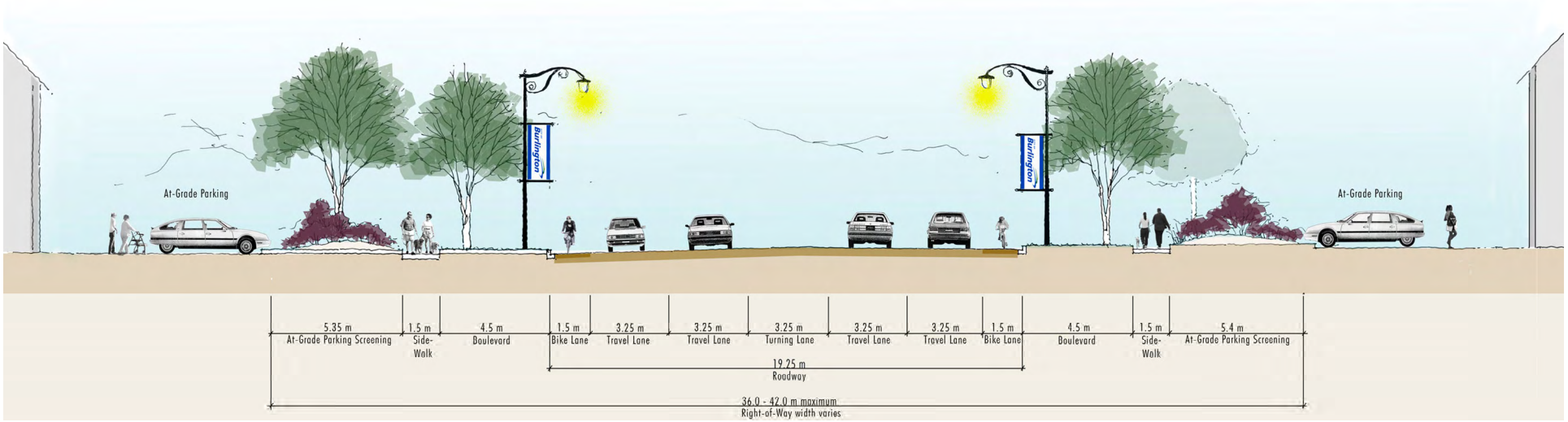
5.2.7.1 Street Trees

Wherever possible, trees should be inter-planted to support a continuous vegetated streetscape. Where this is not possible due to existing paving conditions, plant materials should be located in raised planters or placed in tree pits in the pavement.

Street trees within the Village Node should be high branching deciduous trees with a light, transparent crown in order to maintain the visibility of storefronts from the street. A spacing of 8-10 metres is recommended. Recommended species include the Honey Locust and the native Kentucky coffee tree .

5.2.7.2 Lighting

Both a roadway light fixture and pedestrian light fixture should be combined on the same light standard throughout the Village Node. The light standards should be furnished with banner arms or hanging basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.



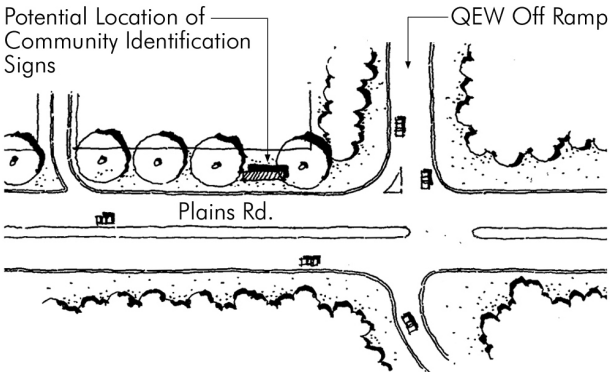
Maplehurst and King District Cross Section

5.2.7.3 King Road Node

The intersection of Plains Road and King Road has the opportunity for additional commercial and retail intensification. New streetscape improvements along Plains Road should build on the greenspace feature on the southwest corner to create a more pedestrian friendly environment (e.g. integrated transit facilities, a system of pedestrian walkways) on all four corners.

5.2.7.4 Plains Road East Gateway

The intersection of Plains Road and the QEW presents an opportunity to create an eastern gateway to the Plains Road corridor. In order to accentuate this gateway, a major landscape feature surrounding Plains Road Village identification signage and/or public art would be appropriate. Together with the reinstatement of the MTO ramp, the site should be redesigned to include an urban design gateway announcing the Plains Road Village.



5.3 Site Planning & Built Form Guidelines

Commercial Areas

Commercial uses along the Plains Road corridor occur primarily between the QEW, where it is most intense, and Waterdown Road and in limited pockets areas further to the west. This pattern may transform over time with re-intensification of commercial activity in local nodes. The design guidelines are use specific and not necessarily related to zoning because most lands are zoned mixed use. The application of the design guidelines must have regard for both the location along the corridor, adjacent uses and the scale of the commercial development proposal.

Three principal types of commercial uses are located in the corridor: Regional Commercial, Local Commercial, Nodal / Village Commercial

Regional Commercial

These are businesses serving the needs of several communities and are located on large sites near exit ramps from major highways. The QEW-403 intersection is currently the only regional commercial centre and is anchored by IKEA. This development attracts business from a regional market, requires a large site, convenient access to a major highway and extensive parking. The IKEA site is the only location along the corridor, however, a full interchange at the Waterdown Road-403 intersection may create additional regional commercial opportunities in the vicinity of Waterdown Road.

- Large-format stores on self-contained sites with extensive parking



King Road District Regional Commercial

Local Commercial

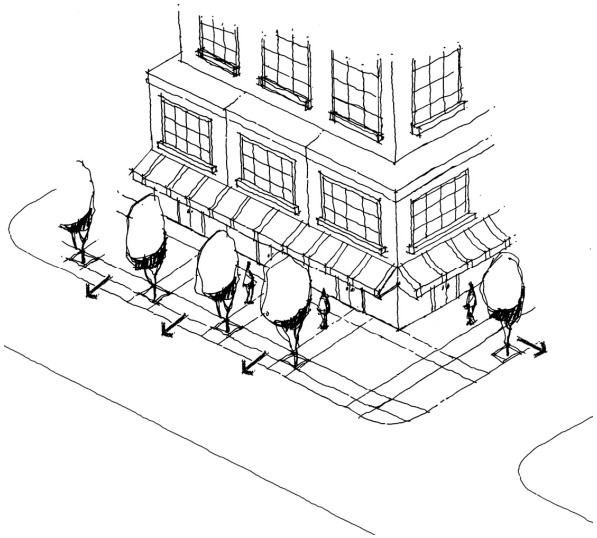
These businesses serve local community needs and are generally found within a range of building types. The purpose of the design guidelines is to improve urban design relationship between the public realm and new and re-development proposals. Local commercial developments are moderate in scale and include:

- small plazas with individual shops and related parking
- stand-alone, single storey buildings for retail or restaurant use with related parking
- gas stations, car dealerships and repair/service shops
- single detached homes converted for business use

Nodal / Village Commercial

These are businesses located in areas that have the potential to become commercial focal points within the community and serve the needs of the surrounding neighbourhood, often with a greater intensity and pedestrian orientation.

- businesses located at primary intersections, such as the King Road and Waterdown Road nodes, as designated in the Urban Design Framework



Pedestrian oriented commercial uses



Example of street oriented local commercial

5.3.1 Commercial Area Design Guidelines

Design of commercial areas should be based on design principles intended to generate lively, street-focused activity of traditional main streets and shopping districts. Commercial built form and site planning should define the street edge and enhance the appearance of the streets. This section includes design guidelines that address issues of site planning, built form, parking, servicing and signage that are applicable to all commercial development or redevelopment sites. Design guidelines following this section are specific to the type of commercial (Regional, Local, Village/Nodal) and shall be read in conjunction with these general guidelines.

5.3.1.1 Site Planning

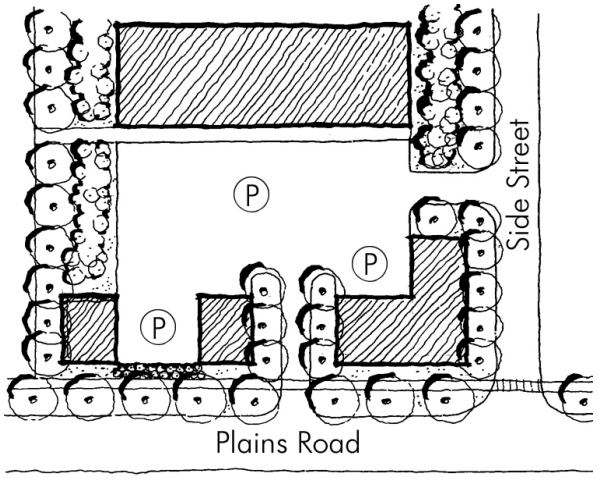
Built form should be located closer to the front property line and oriented to create a well-defined street edge and more attractive streetscape. Site planning should also recognize pedestrian and vehicular movement.

1. Mixed-use development that animates the streetscape and provides a variety of uses is encouraged, particularly at village nodes.
2. The front building face and entrances to buildings should be oriented to Plains Road.
3. Where adjacent land use is sensitive (residential or other non-commercial), increased side-lot setbacks and/or landscape buffers may be required.
4. A paved, illuminated pedestrian walkway, should be provided from main building entrances to parking areas.
5. Pedestrian walkway paving should use attractive materials or paving patterns.
6. Pedestrian walkways should be clearly demarcated with curbs, changes in paving material or other suitable means where they cross vehicular routes.

5.3.1.2 Built Form

The design of built form should contribute to a more attractive, lively streetscape.

1. The primary building face should be oriented to Plains Road and have store entrances and display windows, with glazed apertures and appropriate architectural detailing that respects the scale of the building and the public realm.
2. Built form on corner properties at important street intersections such as the King Road Node and the Waterdown Road Node should be located at or near the minimum allowable setback; the design should address both street frontages and receive special attention to detailing to reflect the importance of the corner location.
3. Elements that relate to a pedestrian scale and promote pedestrian comfort, such as canopies, awnings or projecting display windows should be incorporated in the building design.
4. Blank facades shall be avoided through the use of fenestration, changes in wall plane, cornices, canopies or signage features.
5. Mechanical equipment shall be screened from view in a manner consistent with the materials and architectural style of the building.



5.3.1.3 Parking

The integration of parking in commercial areas is an important consideration for attractive site development and streetscapes. While some visibility of parking is important for retailers, large expanses of asphalt parking visible from the street, which are unattractive and push buildings well back from the street, should be avoided.

1. Major parking areas should be located to the side and/or to the rear of buildings; some short term or visitor parking may be permitted in front of regional or local commercial uses (refer to appropriate sections).
2. Vehicular and service access from residential streets should be minimized.
3. Parking areas should be well illuminated.
4. Curbed, landscaped islands should define the ends of parking aisles.

5.3.1.4 Service and Loading

The overall visual impression of new development along Plains Road to both pedestrians and motorists should be a well-defined streetscape featuring building fronts with attractive façades and entrances. Service, loading and waste storage areas shall not be visible from the street.

1. Building design and site planning should locate loading, service and garbage areas at the side or rear of the building.
2. Where service and loading areas are visible due to site planning limitations, they shall be screened from view with landscaping or built structures whose design is compatible with the form and materials of the building.
3. Where street-related commercial development has no alternative but to locate loading doors at the street façade, such doors should be recessed from the façade to minimize their visual impact.
4. Waste areas and storage shall not face any public street. Such areas should be incorporated inside the building.
5. Site planning and built form design should ensure that servicing does not impede pedestrian and vehicular movement, and loading activities and that no waste is stored within the public R.O.W. at any time.



Example of wall mounted sign



Example of architecturally-treated parking structure

5.3.1.5 Signage

Commercial signage along the Plains Road corridor is a very visible aspect of the built environment that conveys an impression of the streetscape. Signage should be evident and attractive, yet not dominate one's perception of the commercial streetscape.

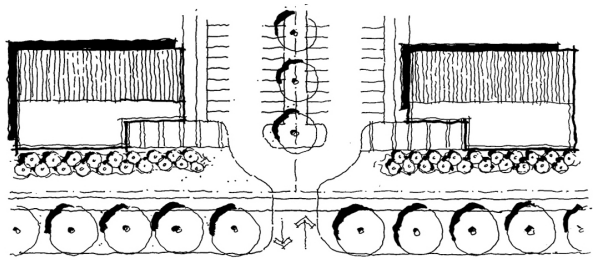
1. The design of commercial signage should be of a quality comparable to the building in its scale, materials and consistency.
2. Commercial signage on the building façade should generally occur within a 1.2m band or facia located between 2.5m and 3.6 m above average grade.
3. Illuminated signage should be designed with minimal glare and light spillage.
4. Wall mounted accent lighting over signboards, or individually lit letters should be considered as an alternative to backlit sign boxes.
5. Signage should not be located directly on glazed apertures of the building face.
6. Where multiple tenants exist, consistent signage design should be incorporated into the building design, such as block letter signage mounted on grilles or fascia panels, or placed within a monument sign whose appearance complements the building's design.
7. The design of monument signs shall conform to signage by-laws, be well integrated with the site landscaping and reflect the architectural character of the building.
8. Rooftop and pole-mounted signs shall be prohibited.

5.3.1.6 Regional Commercial Guidelines

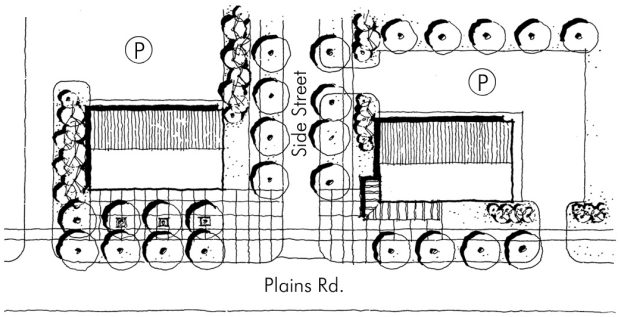
Proposals that locate some built form and attractive buffer landscaping at or near the street make a contribution to the public realm. Such plans give greater definition to the street edge and screen extensive asphalt parking areas from the street.

For larger, self-contained sites serving regional needs a portion of the development's built form should be located in close proximity to the street, and the street-facing building elevations should be designed to appear and function as a front facade, with windows and building entrances visible and accessible from the primary street.

1. Built form should be located in close proximity to the street and facing the primary street.
2. Where a large development property is located on a corner, the built form should feature a smaller building or a portion of the larger building in that area, located close to both streets.
3. Smaller buildings or the corner portion of larger buildings should be located near main entry drives and address the streetscape to form gateways.
4. Building entrances should be visible to motorists and pedestrians from the streetscape.
5. Pedestrian and vehicular movement on regional commercial sites should be designed to foster a sense of commercial "streets".
6. Paved pedestrian walkways from parking areas to the building shall be illuminated and clearly demarcated by paving material, change in grade elevation or other appropriate means.
7. Parking areas should have landscaped islands at the ends of parking aisles.
8. Parking structures should be screened from Plains Road and should have complimentary architectural treatment to adjacent buildings.



Consolidated Site Access

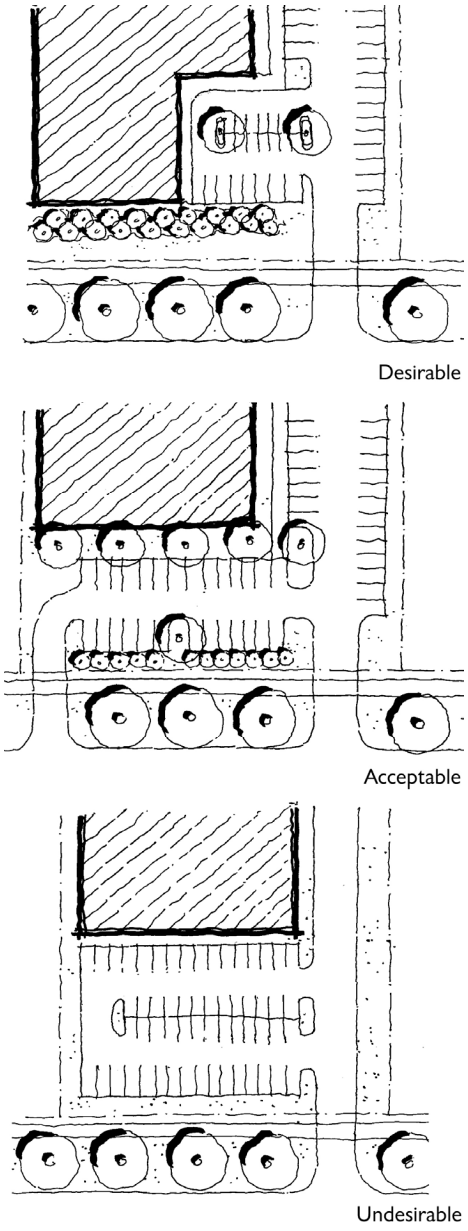


Building Oriented to
Primary Street and Corners

5.3.1.7 Local Commercial Guidelines

The following guidelines encourage local commercial site planning alternatives to bring the development closer to the street, limit the amount of parking in front of the building, locate parking to the side or rear, tone down signage and locate landscape buffers to screen parking from the street for the purpose of dramatically improving the appearance of the development, creating a stronger street edge and enhancing the streetscape. A recommended maximum setback allowing two rows of parking at the front also encourages a common building setback for adjacent developments and a more uniform definition of the streetscape edge.

1. At-grade parking should be set back from the front property line by a 3.0m landscaped buffer with low growing shrubs and high canopied trees to provide pedestrians and motorists partial screening from parked cars and asphalt paving.
2. The maximum front lot building setback should be 23.0 m and is intended to allow for a 3.0 m landscape buffer, two rows of parked cars, one driving aisle and a pedestrian walkway adjacent to the building.
3. Where a development property is located at a corner flanked by two streets, the building entrances should be oriented to the primary street or to the corner.
4. Joint access driveways are encouraged for use by adjacent developments wherever possible to reduce curb cuts and increase the opportunity for landscaping within the boulevard.
5. To minimize interruptions to the pedestrian sidewalk, driveways should be no wider than necessary to provide adequate vehicular access.
6. Outdoor patios should be located to compliment the development, be integrated with streetscape elements and have landscaping to provide shade and buffers.



Desirable

Acceptable

Undesirable

Parking configuration

5.3.1.8 Village / Nodal Commercial

Village or nodal commercial will serve the local needs of the residential community and create a strong pedestrian environment. Built form is usually located at or near the street edge with its mixed use street related retail activity supported by features such as a wide sidewalk graced with street trees, other planting, bench seating areas, outdoor retail and attractive street lights. Building design is often low scale, with large, attractive shop-front windows and recessed entrances, projecting elements such as canopies or bays and attractive signage. Parking is at the side or rear of the development, with paved walkways from the parking area to the street-facing shop entrances.

The Framework section of this document identifies key intersections having the potential for nodal commercial development at King Road and at Waterdown Road. The goal for these locations is to develop street-oriented retail with a pedestrian orientation and a village-like character, embodying the characteristics described above.

1. The ground floor of buildings should contain uses that encourage animation such as retail, service and commercial.
2. The minimum building height should be encouraged to be 2 stories.
3. The minimum front lot building setback should be 3.0 m from the R.O.W., allowing for landscaping treatment such as planting, seating or a widened sidewalk within the pedestrian realm in front of the building.
4. At corner lots, the maximum building setback should be 4.5m from the R.O.W. along Plains Rd., and for a minimum distance of 15m along the secondary street. It is also recommended that the building setback on secondary streets beyond 15m from the corner be 13.5m.
5. The design of building entrances and display windows should relate to a pedestrian scale and reflect the 'village' character intended for the area.
6. Outdoor patio areas should be located beyond the R.O.W. and should be oriented to the public realm. Landscaping should be provided to enhance the setting.



Example of Street-oriented Building Entrances



Example of Building facing the corner

5.3.2 Residential Areas Design Guidelines

Residential land use along the Plains Road corridor occurs currently as either low density or higher density forms. Low density occurs as single family dwellings on generally larger lots, on both sides of the street in the Unsworth district between Danforth and Daryl and in the vicinity of St. Matthews Anglican and Holy Rosary churches on the south side of the street in the Shadeland District, where it is mixed with some dwellings having home business commercial use. The application of the design guidelines in mixed use areas must have regard to both the location along the corridor, adjacent uses and the primary purpose of the development proposal.



Shadeland District Residential Area

A range of higher density forms, including townhouse, seniors housing, infill and apartments occur or are presently planned for the south-east corner of Unsworth, lands in the vicinity of Daryl including the south-west and south-east corners and lands on the opposite side of the street, both sides of White Oak Drive, two sites in the Maplehurst district and high-rise apartments east of King Road.

Over the next few years, Plains Road is expected to experience strong growth in the medium and higher density residential sectors. The community is continuing to provide residential development to accommodate new arrivals and the transition of current residents to alternative higher density forms. Prime redevelopment areas will likely be underutilized sites on Plains Road and in the vicinity of Waterdown Road.

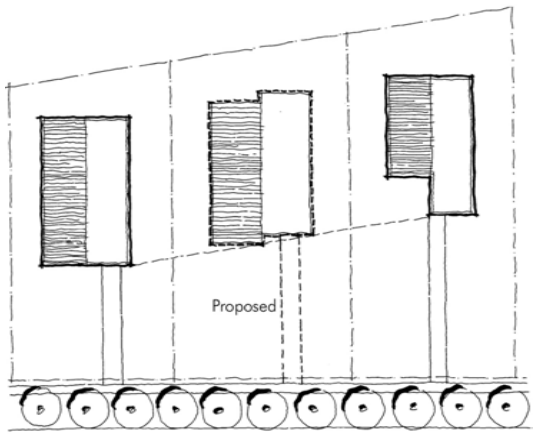
Additional higher density residential developments along the Plains Road corridor are expected, and at least some, if not most, will be located adjacent to sensitive land uses such as existing low-density residential or commercial use. Site planning of higher density developments tends also to concentrate tall building masses in smaller floor plates located with minimal regard for the block structure and streetscapes of their surroundings.

The following design guidelines address, among other things, the issues of site planning and non-compatible adjacencies. They steer new residential development toward site planning and built form which respects the block structure and streetscapes of their surroundings, as well as the context of existing adjacent land use, density, and setbacks, built form, site grading and access.

5.3.2.1 Low Density Residential

The following guidelines are for new lower density residential development in areas of existing low density residential and are intended to reinforce the existing context and character of the street:

1. Lower intensity land use compatible with adjacent residential buildings is encouraged, including low-density residential infill, home based businesses such as residence/professional office or bed and breakfast, with built form of a scale similar to the neighbouring dwellings.
2. Front lot building setbacks should match either the neighbouring building setback or a line projected between the nearest front corners of the existing adjacent dwellings.
3. The principle façade should be oriented to the primary street (Plains Road).
4. Garages or other structures shall not encroach on the minimum front lot setback.
5. Garages should not project beyond the front face of the dwelling.
6. The scale of new building elements should relate to the scale of the existing adjacent dwellings.



New Building Setback

5.3.2.2 Medium and High Density Residential

Where higher intensity uses such as senior's housing, medium or high density residential or mixed uses occur in existing residential areas, the following guidelines should be observed, in addition to the guidelines for low density residential above:

1. Site planning should locate built form, having a clear visual relation to the street and direct access for vehicles and pedestrians.
2. Large site developments proposing higher density buildings whose form, orientation or location does not adequately address the streetscape or the block structure of the community are discouraged.
3. Surface parking areas should be located mainly in side yard or rear yard areas.
4. Were surface parking extends to the front of the lot, it should be set back from the front lot line by a minimum 3.0m buffer, landscaped in coordination with the landscape plan for the adjacent boulevard.
5. Surface parking areas should include treed islands and paved, illuminated pedestrian paths.
6. For corner lot developments, below-grade parking access and egress should be where possible provided from the adjacent local street, not from Plains Road.
7. Provide paved walkways from the main building entrances to the public sidewalk.
8. Built form located 4.0m or less from the minimum front lot setback should have a 3 storey base; the next 3 storeys above that should be set back further by an additional 3.0 m. minimum. The storeys above that should be set back not less than an additional 2.0 m.
9. Built form located more than 4.0m from the front lot setback, can have a 4 storey base and the storeys above that should be set back an additional 3.0 m minimum.

5.3.2.3 Buildings with Heritage Character

Existing dwellings with heritage characteristics, such as properties listed on the Heritage Inventory are encouraged to be preserved and the following guidelines dealing with heritage building preservation and the streetscape are applicable:

1. Alterations or additions to heritage dwellings should be stylistically consistent with the original structure.
2. Alterations to the grounds of heritage dwellings, visible from the public realm, should reinforce the design character of the dwelling with lighting, fencing and landscaping which is stylistically consistent with the original structure.
3. Where non-residential or higher intensity residential land uses are proposed next to heritage dwellings, the minimum side lot setback for the proposed structure should be 9m and include an appropriately planted landscape buffer.
4. Heritage dwellings represent a unique opportunity for streetscaping and should be considered as prime locations for a landscaped seating area, special signage, lighting or other features within the boulevard.

6.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Official Plan Policy Recommendations

Effective implementation of urban design guidelines, under Ontario's Planning Act, requires a number of steps. This is basically because the Zoning By-Law, in any Ontario municipality, provides 'as–of–right' allowances to a landowner. These allowances or permissions relate primarily to land uses, density, height, and building setbacks. Therefore the implementation of urban design guidelines needs to take two courses:

- First of all, the regulations of the as-of-right Zoning By-Law must be examined and, if necessary, adjusted to be consistent with the guidelines.
- Secondly the urban design guidelines can be applied through the site plan review process. In order to formally institute this, it is recommended that the urban design guidelines proposed for the Plains Road corridor be inserted into Burlington's Official Plan.

The following **recommendations** outline the steps required to obtain this objective.

1. **That the urban design guidelines for the Plains Road corridor be adopted by Burlington City Council and added as an Appendix to the City of Burlington Official Plan.**

2. **That the following policy be added to the Official Plan:**

   "5/2/2 POLICIES"

   Plains Road corridor:

   h) The Plains Road corridor has played a significant role in the historical development of the City of Burlington. In the future it is expected that development and redevelopment will occur on either side of Plains Road. In order to guide this future development to ensure that it is of an appropriate urban form along the Plains Road corridor, and to ensure preservation and enhancement of the character of the Plains Road corridor and the adjacent residential neighbourhoods, Appendix XX outlines Urban Design Guidelines for the Plains Road corridor. These guidelines will be used by City Council and City staff in assessing development proposals under the Site Plan Control Process. The Guidelines in Appendix XX will also be followed in the design and construction of City works, particularly in the Plains Road right-of-way."

6.2 General Streetscape Recommendations

The Plains Road Village Vision Urban Design Sub-committee (PRVVUDS) suggested a number of ideas that contributed to the development of the overall urban design strategies. This Study process broadened, further articulated and refined these strategies through consultation with key stakeholders. The following **recommendations** outline the general streetscaping strategies that the City should pursue to establish Plains Road as a vibrant ad attractive public right-of-way. One of the key issues that emerged from the study process was a discussion about the width of the public right-of-way. Currently, it varies in width from 36m to 42m. Although the current Official Plan update proposes a reduction in the right-of-way to 36m, the unique and more picturesque sections of the street are a consequence of the wider 42 m parkway like road allowance that supports street trees and green boulevards. The wider 42 m right of way is useful in preserving the green, parkway-like character of the west portion of the corridor. Additionally, the wider road right-of-way provides areas for wider sidewalks, off-road multi-use trails, on-road bike lanes and street tree planting and landscape buffers to screen at grade parking. The decision to reduce the width of the right-of-way should be reconsidered.

1. Improve community identity, streetscape character and wayfinding

- Implement comprehensive family of signage and street furnishings

2. Create civic gateways to mark arrival onto Plains Road

- Use landscape features, public art and signage with consistent design content to improve identification and arrival

3. Recognize that the corridor has special precincts or districts and use urban design features to reinforce the special character of the various districts

- Develop unique streetscape themes for each district within a system of common wayfinding symbols for the entire Plains Road corridor
- Develop recognizable urban design treatments that visually link the districts

4. Use urban design features to support nodes with more intense pedestrian activity

- Create more pedestrian friendly walkways
- Use decorative pavements, pedestrian lighting, banners, and horticultural displays to beautify the public realm

5. Protect and enhance the integrity of parkway character of the corridor

- Preserve views to adjoining open space
- Where possible maintain a 42m right-of-way in the Official Plan to preserve the 'green parkway' character of the boulevards
- Protect existing landscaping along the corridor and on adjacent private property
- Undertake street tree planting to replace declining boulevard trees
- Whenever feasible, bury overhead utility infrastructure

6. Employ a range of traffic calming tools and facilitate alternative modes of transportation such as transit and cycling

- Employ a traffic circle at the RBG, and planted medians in appropriate locations
- Provide curb side parking in urbanized village nodes
- Integrate transit stops within pedestrian nodes
- Review the City's Bikeway Plan to encourage cycling routes
- Enhance transit locations by making them accessible and including benches and lighting
- Co-ordinate transit stops with key pedestrian crossing locations

7. Create more pleasant pedestrian environments

- Build multi-use walkways
- Expand the sidewalk in areas of high pedestrian activity
- Provide pedestrian illumination in areas of high pedestrian activity
- Screen roadside at-grade parking
- Integrate public art
- Improve pedestrian crossings of Plains Road and major side streets

8. Protect existing cultural heritage resources

- Protect structures with heritage value
- Protect existing mature trees
- Protect the cultural landscape to take into account the increased heritage value of retaining buildings, site features and landscape as a unified whole
- Provide incentive programs for heritage restoration

9. Create policies to encourage appropriate redevelopment

- Amend the Official Plan, Zoning By-law and other by-laws, where needed, to support urban design
- In low density residential areas consider amending the Zoning By-law to establish a front yard set-back that is the average of the front yard setbacks of the adjoining properties and to require that garages do not project beyond the front facade

10. Undertake comprehensive plan to create the planning framework an intensified Village Node at Waterdown Road

- Consolidate and intensify commercial and residential activity in response to GO Transit and MTO initiatives
- Prepare a comprehensive Plan and/or create a Community Improvement Area

11. Encourage street-related land uses

- Delete uses currently permitted in the zoning By-law, such as automobile related uses, that by their very nature are not pedestrian oriented
- Discourage parking lots adjacent to the corridor
- Create pedestrian linkages from buildings to the corridor
- Provide greenspace amenities adjacent to principal entrances
- Require principal entrances to front the street
- Encourage high quality architectural detailing

12. Review and update property standards by-laws to support appropriate maintenance standards

- Prepare an updated property maintenance by-law
- Request a maintenance surety or bond to be in force concurrent with landscape construction warranties (two year guarantee)

13. Ensure that all pedestrian areas are well lit and provide a safe travelway

- Provide pedestrian lighting for walkways and parking areas
- Maintain buffer plantings to allow views to building entrances

14. Review the zoning by-law for conflicts with the design guidelines

- Review potential conflict areas between the guidelines and existing bylaws, specifically regarding setbacks (front yard setback for infill residential)
- Amend the by-laws where required

15. Provide technical review of urban design issues at the outset of the development approval process

- Dedicate qualified staff to review urban design components of development applications
- Ensure that urban design issues are identified at the outset of the design process

6.3 District Specific Recommendations

Districts along the Plains Road corridor have a distinctive visual quality that should be protected and reinforced through careful planning and urban design. Streetscape and built form guidelines are needed to protect and reinforce this character. Other segments of the corridor are in transition and need clearly articulated streetscape and built form guidelines to ensure that redevelopment supports a green "parkway" corridor.

Many of the districts have landmarks or special nodes of pedestrian activity that could be accentuated to further enhance the visual character of the Plains Road corridor. In most cases the pedestrian nodes are focused on institutional, commercial or tourism uses. The following **recommendations** address actions that the City should undertake to ensue that the special characteristics of each unique district are appropriately enhanced.

13. Burlington Gateway

The Burlington Gateway area is defined by the section of Plains Road between Highway 6 and York Boulevard. This section of Plains Road has a rural cross-section and has mixed use development that is comprised of low density residential and low intensity commercial uses.

- Collaborate with MTO and RBG to develop a visually distinct western gateway
- Actively seek to enhance the streetscape and include urban design elements through concurrent transportation planning processes

14. Royal Botanical Gardens Parkway

The Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) is a regional tourism destination for Burlington and Hamilton. The gardens are set in the natural landscape setting of the Grindstone Creek and Lake Ontario Shoreline. Extensive views into the RBG property have a positive impact on the Plains Road corridor. In addition to the RBG, the Holy Sepulchre Cemetery and West Plains United Church add to the distinct institutional character of Plains Road through this section.

- Collaborate with the RBG to develop a visually distinct western gateway
- Seek to reshape the streetscape and include comprehensive urban design features through the master planning process

15. Unsworth District

The Unsworth District is defined as the portion of Plains Road between Danforth Avenue and Daryl Drive. This portion of the Plains Road corridor has an attractive, well maintained, 'heritage' residential quality that should be protected and enhanced through the use of planning tools and heritage style street streetscape elements. Preserve and enhance the heritage quality of the district by protecting existing built heritage features. Policy initiatives may be required at the municipal level to designate or otherwise protect existing heritage structures.

- Seek opportunities to bury overhead electrical infrastructure and include urban design features during road and infrastructure improvements and redevelopment projects.

16. LaSalle District and the Waterdown Road Village Node

The LaSalle District is defined as the portion of the Plains Road corridor between Daryl Drive and Cooke Boulevard. The existing road cross-section is wide and favours vehicular traffic over pedestrian use. Traffic calming measures such as the introduction of pedestrian nodes with an emphasis on pedestrian crossings where use is higher due to community institutions and transit stops could assist in slowing traffic. The intersection of Waterdown Road is a significant source of traffic along the Plains Road corridor, and plans to create an interchange at Waterdown Road and Hwy 403 will increase the importance of this node. Instead of limiting the future design of the Waterdown Road/Plains Road intersection to maximizing traffic movements, the traffic should be of secondary importance after consideration of a high quality, pedestrian-oriented public realm. Village redevelopment and intensification should be encouraged in planning regulations at the Waterdown node. Urban design treatments such as community identification focal features, pedestrian lighting, wayfinding signs, transit facilities and publicly accessible open spaces (squares, parkettes) should be integrated into this village node.

- Develop municipal policy and guidelines for the Waterdown Road intersection area, appropriate to pedestrian-oriented retail uses, to encourage development of an intensified "village". This should occur in conjunction with the implementation of a full interchange at Highway 403.
- Establish pedestrian nodes along the Plains Road corridor that support local institutional and community based activity

17. Shadeland District

The Shadeland District is defined as the segment of the Plains Road corridor between Cooke Boulevard and Filmandale Road. This District is characterized by an eclectic mix of land uses on the north side of the corridor and primarily residential and home office uses on the south side. Urban design objectives should concentrate on consolidating and infilling commercial/industrial uses and preserving and enhancing the residential and home commercial uses. Mature boulevard shade trees and existing landscaping along the corridor should be protected.

The underutilized sites at Cooke Boulevards and Plains Road could be redeveloped to provide an improved gateway/entry point to the industrial park. Redevelopment should capitalize on the attractive landscaping along Cooke Boulevard.

- Protect the existing streetscape character of the residential and home office uses on the south side of the corridor by preserving existing landscape elements, setbacks and respecting the height an massing of existing buildings
- Establish pedestrian nodes at St. Matthews Church and Holy Rosary Church to support local pedestrian safety

18. Maplehurst District

The Maplehurst District is defined as the segment of the Plains Road corridor between Filmandale Road and King Road. This District is comprised of a mix of commercial and retail uses that abut the corridor, often without adequate setback or landscaping. Most commercial developments have at-grade parking, which in some areas juts into the boulevard or sidewalk. Future urban design strategies should focus on creating a more uniform streetscape treatment for commercial frontages including shade tree planting where feasible and improvements to pedestrian circulation. Several important institutional uses are located in this District including the East Plains United Church and the Maplehurst Public School. The streetscape along the corridor and the landscaping associated with the school is worn. Although there are adequate lay-by/drop-off facilities for school buses, other elements such as medians, improved pedestrian crossing pavements and lighting would help to calm traffic, increase pedestrian safety and improve the visual character of this node.

- Improve the streetscape characteristics along the commercial and retail frontages with shade trees and low plantings to screen parking as well as improving sidewalk linkages for better pedestrian
- Establish pedestrian nodes with urban design enhancements at East Plains United Church and the Maplehurst Public School

19. King Road District

The King Road District is the segment of the Plains Road corridor between King Road and the QEW. This district is primarily comprised of commercial, regional retailing and high density residential development. The east edge of the corridor is automobile oriented due to the presence of major retailers such as IKEA and close proximity to the QEW. The intersection of Plains Road and the QEW provides an ideal opportunity to create an eastern gateway to the Plains Road corridor and to begin the introduction of streetscape elements that "announce" Plains Road as a major destination and community asset. Streetscape elements that are introduced here, such as lighting, landscaping and signage should be carried through the entire length of the study area.

- Establish an "eastern gateway" at the QEW intersection 403, including community identification signage, decorative lighting, and landscape plantings to distinguish the threshold to the Plains Road Village
- Support ongoing community based streetscape beautification partnerships

6.4 Site Planning & Built Form Recommendations

Short-term improvements to existing commercial properties should also be supported. Some of these may be funded by private landowners, Business Improvement Association initiatives, or other community initiatives, rather than through the land redevelopment process.

The following **recommendations** identify strategies that the City should encourage to improve commercial areas adjacent to the public right-of-way.

20. In the short term, the urban design goals for Plain's Road's commercial land use areas are:

- Enhance the interface between private property and the public boulevard;
- Improve the arrival experience at commercial entrance driveways;
- Improve the appearance of existing building facades
- Upgrade/repair the condition of entry islands; consider landscaping and/or decorative paving;
- Provide pedestrian-scaled accent illumination of buildings, particularly at individual entrances;
- Create more pleasant pedestrian areas within specific sites, using planters, benches and paving.

21. Longer-term urban design goals for Plains Road's commercial areas include the short-term goals stated above as well as:

- Achieve an environment that is welcoming to pedestrian and retail activity through development of appropriate built form and site planning.
- Guide future commercial development along the street, to make an attractive contribution to the streetscape, while meeting the needs of retailers and consumers.
- Create a well defined street edge, better retail recognition and a streetscape with stronger pedestrian focus, particularly at Village Node areas.

Over the next few years, Plains Road is expected to experience strong growth in the medium and higher density residential sectors. The community is continuing to provide residential development to accommodate new arrivals and the transition of existing land uses to alternative higher density forms. Prime redevelopment areas will likely be underutilized sites along Plains Road and in the vicinity of Waterdown Road node.

The following **recommendations** identify strategies that the City should support to improve residential areas adjacent to the public right-of-way.

22. In the short term, the urban design goals for Plain's Road's residential areas are to:

- Enhance the appearance of the present residential streetscape for pedestrians and motorists.
- Ensure that existing heritage dwellings are protected and integrated with the streetscape.
- Ensure that new residential development respects the setbacks, scale, and orientation to the street and general massing of adjacent buildings.

23. In the long term, the urban design objectives are to:

- Preserve the block and street structure of the community and ensure that new developments relate well to the scale and uses on adjacent lands, and make an attractive contribution to the streetscape.
- Create a well defined street edge and a streetscape with a stronger pedestrian focus.

6.5 Urban Design Incentive Programs

6.5.1 Community Improvement Project Area and Plan

One 'incentive' program that can be considered for the Plains Road Corridor is the Community Improvement Plan. The following reviews this program, followed by an assessment of its suitability for the Plains Road Corridor.

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) may be instituted by a municipality as a relevant tool that could be applied to support the various infrastructure improvements along the Plains Road corridor and Waterdown Village Node. According to Section 28(1) of the Planning Act, a community improvement project area is defined as "an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, and overcrowding, faulty management, unsuitability of buildings or for any other reason". For the purposes of carrying out a CIP a municipality may:

- Acquire, hold clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- Make grants or loans to registered or assessed owners to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- Enter into agreements for the carrying out of studies and the preparation and implementation of plans and programs for the development and improvement of the municipality.

The advantage of establishing a CIP for a designated area, is that a number of additional tools are available to guide redevelopment, including establishing partnerships to oversee implementation of the plan and developing incentive programs.

The implementation tools that may be relevant for the Plains Road corridor include:

- Façade improvement programs
  These programs provide financial assistance to property owners or tenants to restore or upgrade exterior commercial facades. The financial assistance provided does usually the City pay a percentage or matching grant. The City also provides a consulting architect to review and/or assist in the development of appropriate façade plans.
- Financial incentive programs to assist in heritage preservation
  Historic Places Initiative (HPI) is a long-term funding program provided by the federal government. The program is developing a national historic places registry and guidelines as well as providing financial incentives to the private sector for the restoration of heritage buildings.
- Mixed use intensification/redevelopment programs and incentive:

These programs provide incentive to developers to create compact transit-supportive development patterns through the use of policies and financial incentive programs developed by the City. The provincial government is currently investigating the possibility of developing an incentive program for cities and municipalities.

These programs would need to be clearly defined, have a community consultation process and have the support of Council and in the case of HIP programs, the support of the Province Additionally, it would be necessary to have a Technical Committee comprised of senior City staff, responsible for the development of the incentive programs and providing technical and financial advice to Council and the community partners.

In assessing the Planning Act criteria for designating a CIP area, the Plains Road Corridor certainly cannot be described as 'dilapidated, overcrowded or suffering from faulty management'. These are not the only criteria. Council can designate an area CIP 'for any other reason' when they feel community improvement is 'desirable'. In our opinion Council should consider designating the Plains Road Corridor a CIP area for the following reasons:

- The Plains Road Corridor is one of the original parts of Burlington's urban structure that citizens know and identify with regardless of where in the City they live. It is the 'central spine' for the surrounding neighbourhoods. For these reasons we feel it deserves special treatment.
- While the market is providing support for new residential development in the area the additional tools available to the City through CIP designation could benefit areas of new investment that the market is not currently providing strong support - façade improvements, heritage preservation.
- A strong partnership of residents, businesses, the City and other public sector agencies already exists and is very active in the area.

6.6 Roles, Responsibilities & Partnerships

The precedent for meaningful partnerships already exists for the Plains Road Corridor. Currently the PRVV is an active partner in establishing streetscape beautification projects. The existing model involves having a community group such as the PRVV or the newly formed BIA identify a project that could be implemented with the cooperation of the City and other community based partners. This model is useful for clearly defined, stand-alone projects, but is not suitable for major infrastructure works. For major public works projects, capital budgets for infrastructure replacement must include urban design features such as bike lanes, pedestrian nodes, medians, pedestrian lighting, burial of overhead utilities and streetscaping.

6.6.1 Municipal Role

The City through its Planning Department must ensure that the policy context for decisions regarding land-use and Zoning By-laws supports the application of the urban design guidelines. This study will inform the O.P. update process and will establish the urban design guidelines as an important tool for guiding redevelopment. Additionally, future-planning studies may be required in the Waterdown Village Node area to ensure that a comprehensive approach is developed to address intensification in response to interchange improvements.

The City, through its Engineering Department, must ensure that future infrastructure improvements along the Plains Road corridor have regard for the urban design study. Elements such as roadway lighting, on-road cycle lanes, burial of overhead electrical infrastructure and implementing traffic calming measures such as median islands and tree planting should be planned and constructed when other major servicing improvements are contemplated. The cost of implementing streetscape beautification should be identified as an "urban design premium" in concert with a funding program during capital budgeting for public infrastructure reconstruction. For example, when the Waterdown Road interchange is upgraded, urban design features, consistent with the guidelines should be integrated as part of the engineering budgeting studies.

Finally, the City should build on community-based initiatives by providing technical support and seeking senior government partners to assist in funding when suitable capital programs are created.

6.6.2 PRVV Role

The positive influence and commitment of the PRVV has been demonstrated through a number of community-based projects including the King Road parkette and Maplehurst Node streetscape beautification. These activities should be encouraged and a longer-term strategy such as a "five year plan" for continuing these activities would be desirable to help coordinate and focus volunteer efforts.

The PRVV has an important role as the local community improvement advocate. Many public sector capital funding programs require municipalities to partner with a local "not for profit" organization as demonstration of community commitment. The PRVV's streetscape beautification efforts are constructive and should be supported in collaboration with the City. The PRVV's Urban Design Sub-committee should continue its role as the "facilitating group" that coordinates and monitors the implementation of beautification projects along the corridor. City staff should continue to provide technical support and act as the liaison for ongoing municipal infrastructure replacement or upgrading.

6.6.3 Other Partners

Additional partnerships should be forged with the newly formed BIA, property and business owners, and major institutions such as churches, schools and the RBG. Clearly, implementation of the guidelines will be much more successful if all of the parties are aware of the mutual benefits of working together.

The BIA, through its organization, is best positioned to undertake programming and marketing activities that can promote the corridor. As part of these activities the BIA should consider sponsoring seasonal displays such as flower baskets, banners and special lighting during the holiday season. Again, these efforts should be coordinated with property owners, the City and PRVV.

The RBG has a significant presence and influence on the corridor. This important community asset should become fully integrated within the streetscape. Continued dialogue during the RBG's planning process is essential to ensuring that the opportunities inherent in the Plains Road Corridor vision are realized.

6.7 Funding Opportunities

When looking at funding opportunities, it may be beneficial to investigate sources to address the various facets of the project. This includes financing the physical streetscape infrastructure as well as supporting elements such as heritage, tourism and community development. Some funding programs, which may be applicable, include:

6.7.1 Tourism and Event Funding

6.7.1.1 Tourism Event Marketing Partnership Program (TEMPP)

The TEMP program is an ongoing government initiative. As part of Ontario Tourism's marketing strategy, the Ministry provides assistance in the marketing of tourism events and festivals across the province. Sponsorship of festivals and events is an effective marketing tool not only for Ontario Tourism but also for the destinations themselves. Funding is limited to a maximum of $50,000 and must not exceed 33% of the total event operating cost. In-kind contributions can be used towards matching Ontario Tourism funding, however, it cannot exceed 25% of the total matching funds required for the initiative. Eligible costs may include: placement of paid advertising: broadcast, electronic, or print advertising. Further details are available at www.tourismpartners.com

6.7.2 Heritage Funding

6.7.2.1 Preservation Works! Program

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, although not a source of funding, may provide support through its Preservation Works! program. This program can provide advice/evaluations for conservation projects for a nominal fee ($250 for a non-profit organization or $750 for a municipality). One of the areas they will provide advice on is a fundraising strategy for projects and appropriateness of a development proposal or municipal project.

In addition, a number of tools exist which can facilitate private capital into improving and/or restoring heritage buildings. These include:

- Development Charges Credit on Existing Buildings Program
- An amendment to the Development Charges By-law can be made to provide for greater flexibility in allowing credits for all redevelopment projects, which utilize existing buildings. The basis for this credit lies in the fact that, in many circumstances, a renovation project may not impose any additional capital servicing costs on the Municipality than the previous use.

6.7.2.2 Heritage Loan Program

A Heritage Loan program can be established to assist property owners with financing improvements to designated heritage buildings under both Part IV and Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, and restoration projects as approved by Heritage Burlington Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee. This type of program can provide additional incentives for both residential and commercial property owners to restore, upgrade or maintain those properties protected under the Ontario Heritage Act.

6.7.2.3 Heritage Tax Incentive Program

A Heritage Tax Incentive Program by-law may be developed to make provisions for the making of a grant or loan to the owner of any building or structure within a designated Heritage District for the purpose of subsidizing, in part, heritage building restoration or redevelopment projects. The amount of the grant is generally structured to equal to the amount of the annual increase in the municipal portion of the real property taxes for such property that is the direct result of a reassessment due to an approved restoration project. The calculation is then provided as a credit against the property owner's real property taxes annually for a maximum period of ten consecutive years.

6.7.2.4 Heritage Fee Program

A Heritage Fee Program may be instituted for all designated buildings under Part IV and Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. This program makes provisions to waive all building and planning fees as they pertain to all heritage properties that are undertaking restorations, renovations and reconstruction initiatives.

6.8 Review & Approval Process

As discussed earlier in the report, one of the major difficulties encountered by municipalities is the review and approval of development proposals - and indeed this has occurred recently along the Plains Road corridor. Development proponents can make applications, which meet the Zoning By-Law regulations but do not achieve the urban design policies outlined in the City Official Plan. The City can process these types of development applications through the Site Plan Approval Process but since they meet the as-of-right regulations, there is limited leverage on the part of the City to alter the design.

It is for this reason we recommend that the Zoning By-Law, as it applies along the Plains Road corridor, be carefully reviewed. Amendments to the Zoning By-law may be necessary in order for the various regulations to be consistent with the Guidelines. This particularly applies with respect to heights and set backs, and the possible introduction of build-to lines.

The City currently applies site plan control to all categories of development along the Plains Road corridor except detached and semi-detached houses. This practice does not need to be changed. The City practice in terms of site plan review is to process site plan applications at the staff level. These applications can be 'bumped up' to City Council's attention at the request of the local Councillor. It is recommended that this process be altered: it should be a formal City practice that the processing of site plan applications includes consultation with the local community groups as identified by the local Councillor.

With the introduction of detailed urban design guidelines as outlined in this report, the issue of City resources to apply these new policies is raised. At the moment, it is our understanding that the City of Burlington has streetscape guidelines in the downtown, which apply to City-owned property. They are planning to, but have not implemented to date, the introduction of urban design guidelines that would apply to private development proposals in the downtown. Also, design guidelines have been introduced for the Alton and Orchard communities that apply to private development proposals. These are in their very introductory stages and are quite different from the Plains Road corridor situation since both Alton and Orchard are newly developed communities and the design guidelines will likely get applied as part of the plan of subdivision approval process.

6.9 Future Plans

Finally, the node at Plains Road and Waterdown Road will likely, as discussed, be the subject of increased development pressures when the full Highway 403 interchange moves forward. When the implementation occurs, it may be advisable for the City to review its Official Plan and Zoning regulations for the area and consider undertaking a Tertiary Plan to address planning and redevelopment issues comprehensively.