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DESIGN EXCELLENCE

The practice of urban design involves the arrangement and design of buildings, public spaces, *mode*s of transportation, services and amenities at various scales, ranging from city-wide to neighbourhood and street level. It is about facilitating connections between people and places, movement and urban form, and nature and buildings, while being responsible and sensitive to the surrounding area.

Urban design also has a significant role in promoting a sense of place and community. It can activate interest and invite people to share a collective vision for the future of places where people will want to live, work, visit and enjoy. As *intensification* becomes more prominent in urban life in Burlington, design takes on a more important feature in the creation of attractive, comfortable, *sustainable* and socially-active places that will contribute to people's health, happiness, well-being and sense of belonging. It is important that residents actively engage in the planning and design of new places as Burlington intensifies.

The policies of this chapter relate to the design of the city's future and existing communities, *public realm*, and buildings. They emphasize land use compatibility, a high quality built environment, and innovative design in public projects and private *developments*. A high standard of design and more attention to the relationships between the public and private realms in the *development* of communities, buildings, streets, urban parks and open spaces are expected.

7.1 GENERAL

7.1.1 OBJECTIVES

a) To ensure that the design of the built environment integrates with its natural setting, preserves, enhances and connects the Natural Heritage System, and contributes to environmental *sustainability.*

b) To ensure that the design of the built environment protects and *conserves cultural heritage resources.*

c) To ensure that the design of the built environment contributes to a sense of belonging by enhancing the *physical character* of established neighbourhoods.

d) To design places that support public transit and active transportation through the design of attractive and well-developed pedestrian and cycling environments.

e) To create safe, vibrant, socially active places that people are drawn to.

f) To achieve a high quality of design within the *public realm*.

g) To promote public interest and achieve a high quality and diverse design expression with respect to the built environment.

h) To ensure *compatibility* and quality in the built environment while allowing for diverse design expression.

i) To integrate urban design into the full range of decision-making activities to assist in achieving the design objectives of this Plan.

j) To ensure that buildings and open spaces are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

k) To work with senior orders of government, *public authorities* and public *utilities*, and the *development* community in the implementation of the design objectives and policies contained in this Plan.

l) To include the diverse opinions of the community in achieving design excellence.

m) To promote *sustainable* site and building design in keeping with the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines, in order to:

(i) increase *active transportation* and transit use;

(ii) contribute to an enhanced *natural environment* and *public realm;*

(iii) improve water quality and drainage;

(iv) implement effective waste and resource management;

(v) reduce waste, energy and water consumption; and

(vi) enhance air quality, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

7.1.2 POLICIES

a) The design policies contained in this section *shall* be considered in the review and approval of all *infrastructure* projects, *public realm* improvements and *development applications*, in balance with other applicable policies contained in this Plan. Notwithstanding the above, the Region of Halton is responsible for the planning, design construction, maintenance and operation of the Regional road network in accordance with the Regional Official Plan.

b) The policies of this Chapter *shall* be implemented through the *development application* process and the comprehensive Zoning By-law.

c) Applicable *development* engineering standards, design standards and design manuals *shall* assist in achieving the *City's* design objectives. Their use *shall*

be required in the design and construction of new buildings, facilities and open spaces as well as the retrofit, alteration or addition to existing buildings, facilities and open spaces.

d) *Design guidelines may* be developed for certain types of building forms, land uses, City *streetscapes*, streets and roads or specific areas in the city. Council-approved *design guidelines* will be utilized in the review and evaluation of *development applications* or *City*-initiated projects. A list of Council-approved *design guidelines* is included for reference purposes in Appendix B: Council-approved Design Guidelines, of this Plan.

e) *Development* proponents *may* be required to prepare and implement an *urban design brief* to the satisfaction of the *City,* prepared by a *qualified person,* that demonstrates how the proposed *development* meets the policies of this Plan and addresses the relevant *design guidelines*.

f) An Urban Design Advisory Panel will be established by the *City* to provide independent, objective and professional advice on issues of design that affect the *public realm*, architecture, context sensitivity and *sustainability.* Membership and review rules and procedures will be set out in Terms of Reference established by the *City.*

g) An Urban Design Award Program will be established by the *City* to encourage creativity and celebrate design excellence in the city. Membership, rules and procedures will be set out in Terms of Reference established by the *City.*

7.2 THE PUBLIC REALM

Beautiful, functional, safe and accessible streets, parks, open spaces and public facilities draw people together and provide a setting for daily interactions, community events and activities that are part of a unique experience for all community members. To do so requires both attention to design in the creation of a remarkable *public realm,* and enhancement of the connectivity, *sustainability* and aesthetics of *streetscapes* throughout the city.

a) The design of the *public realm shall* address considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

(i) improving the quality of public spaces as community destinations and public gathering places through the design of *public realm* facilities, such as public squares, parkettes or promenades;

(ii) providing appropriate and consistent treatments for *streetscape* elements such as sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, lighting, street furniture, signage, street trees and landscaping;

(iii) improving the quality and convenience of *active transportation*;

(iv) creating an attractive and comfortable environment for pedestrian movement while preserving and complementing existing natural features;

(v) implementing design measures in accordance with The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and other applicable Provincial legislation;

(vi) designing *public realm* facilities to perform their diverse roles, balancing the spatial needs of people of all ages and abilities, through the application of the principles of *Universal Design*;

(vii) improving *multi-modal* transportation and public space needs in the design of streets and roads;

(viii) improving the quality of streets, sidewalks and walkways, and cycling facilities to provide more direct *active transportation* access to transit facilities;

(ix) enhancing the aesthetic and functional quality of intersections, as marking major entrances into areas and neighbourhoods, where appropriate;

(x) creating, maintaining and enhancing public views and vistas of significant natural and built features;

(xi) connecting natural areas with existing parks, open spaces, pedestrian trails and bicycle routes, where appropriate;

(xii) introducing or improving links where existing public areas are inadequately connected;

(xiii) identifying opportunities for the placement of public art;

(xiv) recognizing and promoting pedestrian scale, public safety and the perception of safety and access for all users, through the incorporation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles; and

(xv) designing safe, reliable and cost-effective *infrastructure* and minimizing their visual impact.

7.3 URBAN DESIGN AND BUILT FORM

Buildings through their design and placement help enhance the *physical character* of an area and the sense of belonging in the community. Their built form characteristics, siting, access, servicing and parking arrangements, can positively contribute to the success of the *public realm* as each building, collectively with other buildings in an area, can complement and enhance its site and context, within the street, the block or the neighbourhood.

7.3.1 NEW COMMUNITIES

a) In new communities, including within the city's *Designated Greenfield* areas and the MTSA Special Planning Areas, the appropriate *public realm* and built form and the urban design objectives and implementing tools *shall* be determined through a co-ordinated *area-specific planning* exercise. The design of new communities *shall* serve to create and promote a new distinct character within Burlington as a result of an *area-specific plan*.

b) New community design *should* contain *compact built forms* of *development* that support higher densities, are pedestrian, cycling and transit oriented, particularly along transit and transportation corridors, support the achievement of *complete communities* with high-quality *public realm* elements and *encourage* increased use of public transit.

7.3.2 EXISTING COMMUNITY AREAS

a) In areas identified on Schedule B-1: Growth Framework, and subject to the policies of Subsection 2.4 of this Plan, *development shall* address considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

(i) ensuring site and building design are *compatible* with the surrounding area and considering how it contributes to maintaining and enhancing the *physical character* of the surrounding area;

(ii) providing appropriate built form transition in *scale* between buildings, the *public realm* and abutting *development*, through a variety of design methods including angular planes, stepping height limits, location and building orientation, and the use of setbacks and stepbacks of building mass;

(iii) providing appropriate screening, landscape buffering and other design measure to minimize any identified impacts;

(iv) providing pedestrian comfort and *human scale* at the street level reflecting the established and planned *streetscape* to frame the *public*

realm, through a variety of design methods including the use of a *podium* in *mid-rise* and *tall buildings;*

(v) providing safe, convenient and barrier-free pedestrian travel within the site, between the site and adjacent uses, between buildings, parking areas and other facilities, to public streets, and to and from transit facilities;

(vi) providing façade articulation that achieves a *scale* of *development* which is attractive to pedestrians and avoiding the use of blank facades facing a public street or public open space;

(vii) designing and orienting *development* in locations such as corner lots, view terminus lots, and lots facing public open spaces to contribute to the *public realm* and pedestrian environment and provide definition at these locations;

(viii) implementing measures that adequately limit any resulting shadowing, and uncomfortable wind conditions on the *streetscape,* neighbouring properties, parks and open spaces and natural areas;

(ix) taking into account the visual effect of varying topography and existing and proposed vegetation;

(x) promoting pedestrian scale, public safety and the perception of safety and access for all users, through the incorporation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles;

(xi) implementing design measures in accordance with The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and other applicable Provincial legislation;

(xii) considering the needs of persons of all ages and abilities, including new and renovated buildings, parking lots and open spaces through the application of the principles of *Universal Design*;

(xiii) considering *cultural heritage resources* and natural features;

(xiv) creating, maintaining and enhancing public views and vistas of significant natural and built features; and

(xv) considering the adaptive reuse of buildings through innovative design.

7.3.2(1) PRIMARY AND SECONDARY GROWTH AREAS

a) In Primary and Secondary Growth Areas**,** as shown on Schedule B-1: Growth Framework, of this Plan, *development shall* promote a *transit- supportive* and

pedestrian-oriented environment and ensure *compatibility* with adjacent land uses, particularly Established Neighbourhood Areas.

(i) The design of *development* in Primary and Secondary Growth Areas *shall* address the policies of Subsection 7.3.2 a) of this Plan, where applicable, and additional considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

a. locating buildings generally parallel to the public street to define the street edge and along the edges of parks, urban squares and other open space features, and in close proximity to the street and transit services;

b. providing appropriate transitions to adjacent land uses, particularly residential uses;

c. massing new buildings to frame adjacent streets in a way that respects the existing and planned street width but also provides for a pedestrian-*scale* environment;

d. locating building *primary public entrances* for uses located at grade towards a public right-of-way and visible and accessible from the public sidewalk;

e. including direct pedestrian access, including barrier free access from grade level, to the *primary public entrances* located on the building façade;

f. screening or integrating roof top mechanical equipment within the overall composition of the building;

g. creating an attractive and connected interface between the private and the *public realms*;

h. creating a continuous *streetscape* with emphasis on maintaining the continuity of grade-related activity areas, both inside and outside of buildings; and

i. providing appropriate outdoor amenity areas and open spaces and promoting the incorporation of private open spaces to the open space network of the immediate community.

(ii) *development* in Primary and Secondary Growth Areas *should* locate and organize parking, access and service areas to minimize their impact on surrounding properties and the *public realm*. The design of vehicle parking, access and service areas *shall* address considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

a. locating off-street parking in the side and/or rear yards, in

underground or structured parking where appropriate, away from the street edge and adjacent residential uses;

b. integrating parking areas located at or above grade within the built form of the building and away from the street frontage, where appropriate;

c. limiting the number and location of vehicular access points to minimize disruption to traffic flows; and to minimize the impact on local streets, pedestrian travel along sidewalks or cyclists' travel along bikeways;

d. screening and buffering of off-street parking areas from public view through the use of setbacks and landscaping;

e. locating loading areas and service areas to avoid conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and away from adjacent residential uses and adjoining streets;

f. incorporating landscaped islands and pedestrian walkways; and

g. incorporating fencing and/or screening of service facilities, such as loading bays or outdoor storage areas, in a manner which enhances screening from adjacent land uses and the public right-of-way and improves the aesthetic quality of the *development*.

7.3.2(2) ESTABLISHED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREAS

a) In Established Neighbourhood Areas, as shown on Schedule B-1: Growth Framework, of this Plan, *development should* be designed to enhance the existing *physical character* of the surrounding area within which it is situated.

(i) the design of *development* in Established Neighbourhood Areas *shall* address the policies of Subsection 7.3.2 a) of this Plan, where applicable, and additional considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

a. the local pattern of *lots;*

b. the building typologies of nearby residential properties;

c. the heights and *scale* of nearby residential properties;

d. the setback of buildings from the street;

e. the pattern of rear and side-yard setbacks; and

f. in the case of *Neighbourhood Character Areas*, the policies of Subsection 8.3.6 of this Plan.

7.3.2(3) EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AREAS

a) In Employment Growth Areas, as shown on Schedule B-1: Growth Framework, of this Plan, the design of *development shall* address the policies of Subsection 7.3.2 a) of this Plan, where applicable, and additional considerations such as, but not limited to, the following:

(i) allowing for a variety of *lot* sizes and building sizes to accommodate a wide range of *employment* uses, subject to the policies of this Plan;

(ii) maximizing the placement of buildings along the frontage of *lots* facing public streets;

(iii) locating off-street parking away from adjacent *sensitive land uses*;

(iv) limiting the number and location of vehicular access points to minimize disruption to traffic flows and the impact on pedestrian travel along sidewalks or cyclists' travel along bikeways;

(v) locating loading areas to avoid conflict between pedestrian and vehicular traffic away from adjacent residential areas and adjoining streets;

(vi) incorporating fencing and/or screening of outdoor storage areas;

(vii) providing safe and convenient access to buildings for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users;

(viii) screening and landscaping off-street parking areas, loading areas and site service areas; and

(ix) in Business Corridor lands:

a. providing enhanced architectural quality and design elements for buildings and frontage landscaping, given the prestige nature of the land, to take advantage of the highway exposure; and

b. using architectural elements to integrate exposed industrial systems and equipment, where appropriate.

7.3.3 SPECIFIC USE POLICIES

a) To ensure safety and accessibility, the design of *accessory drive-throughs*, where permitted, *shall* address specific functionality, *compatibility* and urban design considerations such as, but not limited to:

(i) safe, efficient and comfortable movement of pedestrians and cyclists;

(ii) sufficient dedicated vehicle queuing areas;

(iii) sufficient separation distances between an *accessory drive-through* and a site access/egress area shared with a private or public roadway;

(iv) sufficient horizontal and/or vertical separation distances, with respect to mitigating adverse effects between an *accessory drive-through* and current or future *sensitive land uses*, including residential uses, where identified as a permitted use on the subject site or adjacent sites through this Plan;

(v) associated buildings and facilities that incorporate urban design that is *compatible* with the surrounding context or area;

(vi) enhanced *streetscape* with buildings and storefronts oriented to the street; and

(vii) locating the *accessory drive-through* in the side or rear of the building containing the principal use.

7.4 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Sustainable building and *development* uses an integrated design approach to balance environmental, economic and social considerations in the design, construction and operation of buildings and sites. *Sustainable* design helps to reduce *infrastructure* costs and demands, environmental impacts, greenhouse gas emissions and long term building operating costs, and contributes to the *City's* goal of being a prosperous, livable and *healthy community.* The *City* will promote *sustainable* design approaches through the implementation of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines.

7.4.1 POLICIES

a) Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments and site plan applications for high and medium density residential, mixed use, commercial, *industrial, office*, *institutional* and *public service facilities shall* address the following *sustainable* design measures:

(i) measures to prioritize pedestrian movement within the site, to the street and to adjacent buildings, sites and neighbourhoods, and other improvements to the *public realm* to facilitate pedestrian use;

(ii) safe and direct on-site connections to public transit where available;

(iii) on-site bicycle facilities;

(iv) measures to reduce reflected/waste light to mitigate adverse impacts on the night sky;

(v) parking lot design and landscaping to minimize the *urban heat island effect*;

(vi) *tree* protection measures and planting of non-invasive *trees* and other vegetation, in accordance with Section 4.3, Urban Forestry, of this Plan;

(vii) storm water quality, quantity, erosion control and drainage measures, in accordance with Subsection 4.4.2(2) of this Plan;

(viii) identification of appropriate snow storage areas to reduce the adverse impacts of salt and de-icing practices;

(ix) a waste management plan with appropriate facilities in accordance with the Region of Halton's requirements; and

(x) bird-friendly design measures for buildings adjacent to the Natural Heritage System and the Lake Ontario shoreline.

b) Through the review of Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, plans of subdivision and site plan applications, the proponent will be *encouraged* to consider *sustainable* design considerations such as, but not limited to:

(i) energy efficiency, passive design measures, renewable energy sources and other low carbon building strategies;

(ii) potable water conservation;

(iii) innovative storm water management techniques such as *Low Impact Development* measures;

(iv) additional *sustainable* transportation measures such as electric vehicle charging stations that exceed the requirements of the Building Code;

(v) *sustainable* building materials and resources;

(vi) indoor environmental and air quality;

(vii) additional measures to mitigate the *urban heat island effect*;

(viii) maintenance, monitoring and communication of *sustainable* building features; and

(ix) other innovative *sustainable* design approaches or technologies.

c) The Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines provide detailed direction for the implementation of the policies in this section. A *development application shall* be deemed to have met the policies in Subsections 7.4.1 a) and b) of this Plan, if it meets the requirements of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines adopted by the *City*.

d) The *City* will consider the provision of non-financial incentives, such as an urban design award, as part of the implementation of Subsection 7.4.1 b) of this Plan, to *encourage* the voluntary components of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines.

e) The *City* will consider the provision of financial incentives as part of the implementation of Subsection 7.4.1 b) of this Plan, to *encourage* the voluntary components of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines, through tools including, but not limited to, *Community Improvement Plans.*

f) The Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines *may* be reviewed and revised periodically without the need for an amendment to this Plan, to respond to innovation and regulatory changes.

g) Building layout *shall* be reviewed for accommodating waste management and waste reduction activities for the use(s) that will be located in the building, in accordance with the Region of Halton's Solid Waste guidelines.

h) Proponents of major *development shall* have regard for Region of Halton Healthy Communities Guidelines.