



TO: Development and Infrastructure Committee
FROM: Planning and Building Department
SUBJECT: Report providing information regarding the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study: Transmittal of Phase 2 and Phase 3 reports.

Report Number: PB-09-14 Wards Affected: All

File Numbers: 505-08-01

Date to Committee: March 24, 2014 Date to Council: April 7, 2014

Recommendation:

Receive the Phase 2 and Phase 3 deliverables of the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study by urbanMetrics and The Planning Partnership inclusive of the:

- *Phase 2: Commercial Policy Recommendations Report (March 2014);and*
- *Phase 3: Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas (March 2014);*
and

Direct the Director of Planning and Building to provide a Directions Report which considers the findings of the Commercial Strategy Study.

Purpose:

The purpose of the staff report PB-09-14 is to present the Phase 2 and Phase 3 deliverables of the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study enabling the study findings to be considered as part of the Official Plan Review Project and in the preparation of an Official Plan Review (OPR) policy directions report.

1.0 Executive Summary: (N/A)

2.0 Background:

3.1. Focus of the Study

In Fall 2012, urbanMetrics and The Planning Partnership were retained to undertake the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study (OPR Commercial Study). The scope of the study was established to address both the Official Plan Review and the Downtown Vision Update Project (Core Commitment Update). The terms of reference for the study were developed with the input of Planning and Building Department staff, Burlington Economic Development Corporation staff and Downtown Task Group members.

The primary focus of the study related to the Official Plan Review is in the context of the provincial policy objective of planning for a “Complete Community”. As such, the study consists of a land budgeting analysis, in addition to obtaining guidance on integrating commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design to assist the transformation of commercial areas as the City approaches build-out.

The secondary focus of the study was in the context of the Strategic Plan objectives related to achieving a vibrant and prosperous downtown. A fundamental goal of the Downtown Task Group was to ensure that any revised recommendations to Core Commitment are achievable and as such, the study includes areas of analysis to ensure that proposed recommendations are based on a solid foundation of quantitative and qualitative data.

Pertinent Council Resolutions

April 10, 2012 (Staff Report PB-03-12: Core Commitment Downtown Vision Review: Process and Budget Update)

Council directed the Director of Planning and Building to consult with stakeholders on the objectives of a Commercial Study and to prepare Terms of Reference for Council consideration.

June 11, 2012 (Staff Report PB-35-12: Proposed Terms of Reference for the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study)

Council endorsed the Terms of Reference for the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study (Study); authorized the Director of Planning and Building to engage consultants through a Request for Proposal process to carry out the Study in accordance with the above noted Terms of Reference; and provided the Manager of Purchasing delegated authority to award the contract and issue a purchase order to the highest scoring proponent, subject to budget limitations noted within PB-35-12.

April 8, 2013 (Staff Report PB-13-13: Official Plan Review: Commercial Strategy Study)

Council received the Phase 1 deliverables of the Official Plan Review Commercial Strategy Study inclusive of the *Commercial Market Supply and Demand Analysis Background Report (February 2013)*, *Commercial Policy & Design Review Background Report (March 2013)*, and *Interim Discussion Paper on the Downtown (February 2013)*; and referred the findings and strategic considerations of the Phase 1 reports for consideration in the Official Plan Review and Core Commitment Update.

3.0 Discussion:

3.1. Key Findings of the Phases 2 and 3 Deliverables

This section discusses the main components and study highlights of the two deliverables from Phases 2 and 3 of the OPR Commercial Strategy Study:

- Phase 2: Commercial Policy Recommendations Report (March 2014).
- Phase 3: Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas (March 2014).

The Commercial Policy Recommendations Report and the Proposed Design Guidelines are available under separate cover and on the City's OPR website. Please note that the highlights identified in the subject staff report have been selected from a broad set of consultant strategic considerations and recommendations. The two documents should be referred to in order to obtain the full discussion and rationale of the policy recommendations and design guidelines.

3.1.1. Phase 2: Commercial Policy Recommendations Report

The Phase 2: Commercial Policy Recommendations Report is intended to provide a set of policy recommendations that have been developed through the Commercial Strategy Study. The key inquiries that guided Phase 2 from a land use planning perspective included:

- How can the City facilitate the successful integration of commercial areas within neighbourhoods?
- How can the City facilitate the (re)development and intensification of commercial lands within centres, mobility hubs, and corridors in a way that emphasizes good principles of urban design and sustainability; the efficient use of hard infrastructure; and, the co-location of community facilities/infrastructure.
- If need be, how should the policy framework be modified to align with upper tier policy (e.g. Provincial Policy Statement and Places to Grow)?
- What additional strategies can be used to support the implementation of the commercial land use objectives (e.g. programs and partnerships)?

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

- Developing new urban design guidelines for commercial development to complement the updated policy framework (Basis of Phase 3); and,
- Identifying new commercial land use strategies for the Downtown that will support the continued evolution of this important centre to a complete community that also serves as a vibrant and regionally significant mixed use destination.

Components of the Commercial Policy Recommendations Report

Below is an outline of the components contained within the Commercial Policy Recommendations Report:

- Overview of Historical Patterns of Commercial Development and New Direction in Community Planning;
- Provincial and local Policy Framework;
- Key findings of the commercial market analysis;
- City-wide Strategic considerations and policy recommendations;
- Downtown Strategic considerations and policy recommendations;
- Implementation

Highlights of the Commercial Policy Recommendations Report

The study has identified several opportunities to better incorporate commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design. The following are strategic considerations from the Commercial Policy Recommendations Report:

City - Wide Recommendations

A. Phase Out Major Retail Designations through a New Mixed Use Hierarchy

While the existing commercial land use planning framework includes policies that permit mixed use redevelopment within major retail areas with residential and office uses to create more mixed use “people places”, there is opportunity to improve the clarity of this framework to better achieve the incorporation of commercial land use planning with neighbourhood planning and urban design. This objective can be achieved by:

- Replacing the existing Major Retail Area and Mixed Use Activity Area designations with a new hierarchy of centres and corridors, including Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors.
- Amending policies as needed with language that promotes a transition towards mixed use development, and better communicate the type of place, built character and function that the City intends to achieve.

- Recognizing formerly designated Mixed Use Corridor – Commercial designations as transition areas within the Urban Corridor designation.
- Adopting Urban Design Guidelines in all new development in Mixed Use Activity Areas to support the transition towards mixed use “people places” in the City’s traditional commercial areas.
- Undertaking comprehensive planning for the Brant-403 Urban Centre, Neighbourhood Centres, and segments of Urban Corridors to establish a more detailed policy regime prior to proceeding with mixed use development.
- Considering relocating policies from the Major Retail Area section of the Official Plan for “Employment Commercial” to the Employment Lands section of the Official Plan.
- Examining the “Mixed Use Corridor-Employment” designations to determine whether they should be re-designated as Urban Corridors, or moved from the Mixed Use Activity Areas section of the Official Plan to the Employment Lands section of the Official Plan.
- Replacing Major Retail Areas from Schedule A (Settlement Pattern) with Mixed Use Activity Areas, and updating Schedule B (Comprehensive Land Use Plan) to reflect changes in the designations.

B. Permit Small-Scale Convenience Stores and Specialty Food Stores in Residential Areas

The Burlington Official Plan does not currently permit commercial uses in Residential Areas, which can negatively impact the walkability of neighbourhoods and people’s access to services and goods. To achieve the goal of creating more complete communities, the Report recommends:

- Permitting small-scale convenience/specialty food stores as-of-right in residential areas.
- Adopting size restrictions and locational criteria for permitting these uses.
- Amending site specific policies to reflect the new commercial permissions in Residential Areas.
- Amending Downtown Mixed Use Centre and Uptown Mixed Use Centre policies to permit convenience/specialty food stores in the various residential designations, subject to size restrictions and locational criteria.
- Amending site specific policies under the residential policy section to reflect the new commercial permissions in Residential Areas.

C. Limit the scale of Commercial Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas

The Burlington Official Plan currently includes restriction on the size and concentration of retail uses in Major Retail and Mixed Use Activity Areas. In order to support the transition of traditional commercial areas into mixed use centres and corridors, the Report recommends that caps on the maximum size of any retail outlet be extended across the mixed use designations, and that existing area-based caps and goals for the concentration of retail and service commercial uses in commercial/mixed use centres be replaced with a more nuanced approach to monitoring and evaluating development proposals according to the objectives for mixed use areas. This objective can be achieved by:

- Adopting caps on the maximum size of any individual retail use and the maximum size of the floor plate at grade where new retail and service commercial uses are proposed:
 - In Urban Centres and Urban Corridors, the maximum gross floor area of any individual business shall not exceed 5,600 sq. m. and the maximum floor plate at grade shall not exceed 2,800 sq. m., except as permitted under site and area specific policies.
 - In Neighbourhood Centres and Neighbourhood Corridors, the maximum gross floor area of any individual business shall not exceed 500 sq. m., except as permitted under site and area specific policies.
 - Food-retail shall not be subject to the aforementioned size restrictions.

D. Integrate commercial spaces along Urban Corridors

Commercial land policies must ensure they facilitate the development of functional commercial spaces that truly meet the needs of local residents, and contribute achieving walkable, transit supportive and complete communities. To achieve this vision, the Report recommends:

- Adopting more flexible commercial building form policies to accommodate retail and service commercial uses at-grade, below grade and on the second storey of mixed use buildings that are located along Urban Corridors and where retail and/or service commercial uses are permitted in the Uptown Centre and Brant-403 Future Urban Centre.
- Permitting neighbourhood and community serving retail and service commercial uses within stand-alone buildings along Urban Corridors as an interim use, subject to site plan approval and criteria.
- Providing direction for how restaurants and bars should be integrated along Urban Corridors to support the development of these vibrant

pedestrian-oriented uses while protecting residents in mixed use buildings.

- Enabling the City to require commercial grade design and retail and service commercial uses at-grade in areas along Urban Corridors that are best suited for commercial uses.
- Enabling the City to require minimum commercial unit sizes on large development sites where there is a need for a greater mix of commercial uses to serve the day-to-day and weekly shopping and entertainment needs of local residents within Urban Corridors.

E. Adopt criteria for permitting places of worship in Mixed Use Activity Areas

Places of worship are identified as an institutional use that is already permitted in all land use designations. The City is interested in further exploring policy approaches to better integrate small and large scale places of worship into mixed use communities, including former commercial areas that are being redeveloped and intensified as community hubs. The Report recommends:

- Adopting policies in the general policies for all Mixed Use Activity Areas that establish criteria for the location of small-scale places of worship within mixed use buildings.
- Adopting policies in the general policies for all Mixed Use Activity Areas that establish criteria for the location of stand-alone places of worship.
- Including places of worship in the list of permitted land uses for each Mixed Use Activity Area.

F. Better manage auto-related Uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas

To better promote and support a transition to a more pedestrian-oriented built form and streetscape in Mixed Use Activity Areas, specific guidance is needed for where auto-related land uses such as drive-throughs, car washes, gas stations, and car dealerships can locate and how they are designed. To achieve this objective, the Report recommends:

- Providing direction for where drive-throughs can be located within Mixed Use Activity Areas and how they are to be designed.
- Providing direction for where gas stations and car washes can be located within Mixed Use Activity Areas and how they are to be designed.

- Ensuring any new motor vehicle dealership, where permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas, achieve a compact urban form, and meet site plan considerations for development.
- Adopting policies to better manage any expansion and/or upgrade of existing motor vehicle dealerships, where permitted in Mixed Use Activity Areas.

G. Right-size the parking supply

In addition to detailed design guidance for parking lot design in all Mixed Use Activity Areas, the Report states that transportation demand management should be encouraged and parking standards should be reviewed to create compact, pedestrian-oriented and transit-supportive places. To achieve this objective, the Report recommends:

- Encouraging the use of transportation demand management measures, including but not limited to shared parking in all Mixed Use Activity Areas.
- Permitting reduced parking standards in Mixed Use Activity Areas where it is demonstrated that the projected demand is less than the standard parking requirement.
- Requiring the implementing Zoning-by-Law to include appropriate parking standards for Mixed Use Activity Areas that reflect the objective of creating compact, pedestrian-oriented and transit supportive places.
- Identifying maximum parking standards for retail uses that reflect the day-to-day needs of commercial land uses through a Parking Study.
- Identifying bicycle parking standards for all non-residential uses and multi-unit residential uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas through a Parking Study.

H. Direct the Location of Parking

The Burlington Official Plan currently provides guidance for the location of parking areas in Mixed Use Activity Areas. Policies can be strengthened to guide the location of parking away from the street edge, to the side or rear of buildings, and/or in above or below grade structures. To achieve this objective, the Report recommends:

- Extending the current requirement to locate parking at the side or rear of buildings to all Mixed Use Activity Areas.
- Encouraging the provision of on-street parking in Mixed Use Activity Areas as traffic calming measure and amenity for street-related commercial uses.

I. Reinforce the building's primary entrance onto the street

Existing Official Plan policies provide support for orienting buildings toward the street in Urban Centres and Urban Corridors, but do not require the primary building entrance to face the street. To support the transition towards a more pedestrian-oriented built form in the Mixed Use Activity Areas, a stronger policy and design framework is needed to ensure buildings are truly oriented towards the street with a functional entrance, while also providing an accessible entrance from parking lots. To achieve this objective, the Report recommends:

- Amending or adopting site plan considerations for all Mixed Use Activity Areas that require buildings to face the street with a functional entrance.
- Providing direction within the Official Plan for the Zoning By-Law and Property Standards By-Law to include standards that require buildings to functionally and visually face the street.
- Assessing opportunities to introduce on-street parking in Mixed Use Activity Areas to support street-oriented buildings and uses through the Transportation Master Plan.

J. Promote Transitions in Scale and Intensity in Mixed Use Activity Areas

The proposed Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas provide guidance with regard to transitions in scale and intensity between adjacent uses and streetscapes. These guidelines are intended to inform the preparation and evaluation of design plans submitted as part of a development application. To achieve this objective, the Report recommends:

- Requiring design plans submitted as part of the development application to demonstrate a transition in scale and intensity between high, medium and low density areas.
- Adopting policies under the site plan considerations for each Mixed Use Activity Area designation to require transitions between high, medium and low density areas.

K. Monitoring and Application Review

A monitoring and evaluation framework can be used to track development applications for new commercial development to ensure there is an appropriate supply of commercial lands and that approvals do not compromise the viability of the Mixed Use Activity Areas. Recommendations are also provided for the implementation of the updated commercial /mixed use planning framework:

- Ensure the projected capacity for 350,000 sq. f. of new commercial GFA is allocated to designated Mixed Use Activity Areas, and areas, such as Aldershot, with a shortfall of local serving retail facilities.
- As the new supply of commercial lands approaches or exceeds 350,000 sq. f., new commercial designations outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas should not be permitted.
- Track the amount of new commercial space resulting from re-designations and re-zoning and the amount of space lost from re-designations, re-zoning and other developments.
- Require market studies for:
 - Applications for new designations or re-zonings outside of Mixed Use Activity Areas involving a net addition of over 1,500 sq. m. of retail/service space.
 - Applications for new designations or re-zonings within a Mixed Use Activity Area resulting in a net addition of over 5,000 sq. m. of retail/service space.

L. Definitions

The Report recommends updating or deleting some of the existing definitions included in the City's Official Plan and adding new definitions to provide consistency with the proposed policy framework.

Downtown Recommendations

A. Introduce a New Retail Structure

The City's Official Plan currently identifies the mixed use nature of the Downtown, and promotes a unique alternative shopping experience. To improve the long-term success and attractiveness of the Downtown as a complete community, and enhance its character and function, greater consideration is needed for where different types of retail and service commercial uses should be located throughout the Downtown. The Report recommends:

- Removing retail and service commercial requirements from the Precinct-level policies.
- Introducing new retail street policies to reflect the type of retail and character along Main Street Retail Streets, Mixed Use Major Streets, and General Mixed Use Streets.
- Permitting convenience / specialty food store on any street within the Downtown Urban Centre, subject to size and location restrictions.

- Requiring residential development along General Mixed Use Streets to include commercial-grade design at-grade study, including a minimum floor-to-ceiling height of at least 4.5 m.
- Requiring a Noise and Vibration Study if development proposal includes residential uses above non-residential uses.
- Administering Disclosure Agreements for any condominium units located above non-residential units notifying future residents of potential impacts associated with residing above a non-residential use.
- Adopting a retail street overlay to Schedule E Downtown Mixed Use Centre Land Use Plan.

B. Introduce Enhanced Design Guidelines for Commercial Uses

The Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas introduce specific design strategies for commercial functions which can contribute to improving the quality of the public realm and creating distinct places that are attractive and comfortable for the pedestrian in the Downtown. The UDGs for MUAAs do not apply to the Downtown, but may be considered in updating the Downtown UDG for commercial uses. The Report recommends:

- Updating the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines with additional design guidance for commercial development in the Downtown, including area-specific retail guidelines, retail format type guidelines, and optimal retail design guidelines.

Implementation

The Study has been prepared to identify amendments to the Official plan. In addition, recommendations may also require amendments to the Zoning By-Law to be considered during the upcoming Zoning-By-Law review, and the Property Standards By-Law.

Recommendations that address parking and transportation issues will require further consideration under the Parking Study and the Transportation Master Plan.

The implementation of a number of recommendations is intended to be informed by the Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed-Use Activity Areas.

The City should proactively undertake comprehensive local area planning (e.g. Secondary Plans, Neighbourhood/Tertiary/Precinct Plans) and/or area-specific design guidelines to establish area-specific policy frameworks and demonstration plans.

Efforts to build understanding and capacity among local stakeholders will be important to support the implementation of the proposed policy recommendations and urban design guidelines, and the demonstration of best practices can play a role in building capacity and supporting the uptake of the new mixed use policy and design framework. City-led developments are a strategic opportunity to contribute to the transition of commercial areas into mixed-use people places.

3.1.2. Phase 3: Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas

The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas is to establish guiding principles for the redevelopment of these areas and to provide specific site planning, built form design and landscape design.

These guidelines are intended to support the City's urban growth objectives with respect to creating complete and walkable communities and to guide the development or redevelopment of commercial uses and their contribution towards achieving complete communities. Accordingly, a key objective for existing commercial areas is their transition from car-oriented, single-use areas into appealing, pedestrian and transit supportive mixed-use urban environments. In doing so, growth can be supported within existing urban areas while protecting and serving the surrounding established residential neighbourhoods.

Component of the Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas

Below is an outline of the components contained within the design guidelines document:

- Guiding principles for mixed-use activity areas
- Guidelines for mixed-use activity areas
- Convenience stores in residential areas
- Building typologies

Highlights of the Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas

Guiding Principles for Mixed-Use Activity Areas

This section introduces four principles that are intended to serve as the design framework redeveloping and transforming commercial uses in Mixed Use Activity Areas:

- Promote pedestrian-oriented development;
- Create destinations within neighbourhood that have a sense of place;
- Ensure compatibility with adjacent land uses,
- Elevate the quality of urban design in the City of Burlington, and

- Incorporate sustainable design strategies.

Guidelines for Mixed-Use Activity Areas

This section includes area-specific guidelines for each of the Mixed Use Activity Areas and their role as part of the commercial network. From greatest intensity and scale to least, the Mixed-Use Activity Areas are identified as Urban Centres, Urban Corridors, Neighbourhood Centres, and Neighbourhood Corridors. The section states the existing conditions and the vision, including their intended function and character, and introduces key urban design objectives, appropriate building types, and a set of specific and general guidelines for these areas.

Guidelines for the Mixed Use Activity Areas include considerations for:

- Building location / Orientation;
- Building setbacks;
- Transitions;
- Height and massing;
- Angular planes;
- Step backs;
- Corner locations;
- Parking / service and loading;
- Public open space;
- Street / Block pattern;
- Pedestrian connections;
- Existing streets; and
- Streetscape design / Public realm interface.

General guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas include considerations for:

- Façade treatment;
- Signage;
- Surface parking / service and loading areas; and
- Landscaping.

Convenience/Specialty food stores in residential areas

This section addresses the intended function and character of convenience / specialty food stores in residential areas, and introduces key urban design objectives, appropriate building types, and a set of specific and general guidelines for convenience stores in residential area.

Guidelines for Convenience Stores in residential areas include considerations for:

- Height and massing;
- Building corners;
- Building setbacks;
- Streetscape design / Public realm interface; and
- Parking

Building typologies

This section provides a description of a variety of building forms that may be anticipated in the Mixed Use Activity Areas. It includes the following building typologies:

- Stand Alone Small-Scale and Medium-Scale Formats;
- Commercial Complexes, Strip Retail and Office Block ;
- Mixed-Use Low, Medium and High Rise;
- Buildings with Drive-Throughs.

4.0 Strategy/Process

The Consultants' Commercial Policy Recommendations Report and Proposed Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas provide technical background information and expert opinion based on commercial market and demand analysis and a review of current commercial policies and trends in community planning. The result has been a set of policy and commercial urban design recommendations. The policy recommendations and proposed schedules presented in the consultants' reports do not represent the final outcome of the Official Plan Review.

Upon receipt of the Consultants' report, staff will consider the recommendations of the consulting team to generate staff recommendations on policy directions to Council. Subject to Council endorsement of the policy directions, staff will commence the preparation of draft policy as part of the proposed statutory amendment to the Official Plan.

As other Directions Reports are produced, staff will consider the findings of the Commercial Study in the context of other OPR studies including Employment Lands Study, Mobility Hubs Opportunities and Constraints Study, and the technical review of nodes and corridors as part of the work plan.

The Urban Design Guidelines have been developed to complement the policy framework proposed within this report. The implementation of these Design Guidelines can be initiated upon statutory approval of the Official Plan pending any minor refinements required to them.

5.0 Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact: (N/A)

Source of Funding

Funds for the Commercial Strategy Study have been previously approved as part of staff report PB-53-12 (Comprehensive Work Plan) and are being drawn from the Council Approved OPR Capital Budget (OP0009).

Other Resource Impacts: (N/A)

6.0 Public Engagement Matters:

6.1 Completed Consultation

The Terms of Reference for the Study contemplated public and stakeholder consultation sessions to solicit areas of concern and opportunities, to identify potential policies and actions, and to provide feedback on the study findings and recommendations. Strategic recommendations identified by the consultants during Phase 1 were explored in consultation with staff, stakeholders, the public, and Council. Public consultation in Phase 1 included, a telephone survey of Burlington Residents, an on-line survey of Burlington residents, in-person downtown interviews, downtown workshops, and other staff, stakeholder, public and Council consultation.

Input from this process has guided the consultant's work during Phases 2 and 3.

The following public engagement strategies were carried out in Phases 2 and 3 of the assignment:

Online forum "Transforming Commercial Areas in Burlington"

With the introduction of www.letstalkburlington.com, a new tool for public engagement using *MindMixer* Technology, an online forum about the future of commercial land use planning in Burlington was made available from June 14 to September 1, 2013. The purpose of the forum was to collect ideas and comments that would inform Phase 2 of the Commercial Study. A variety of advertising methods were used for the online forum. These methods included:

- Newspaper add to inform and engage the general public (City Update, June 13, 2013);
- Postcard mail drop-in to commercial businesses throughout the city;
- Advertising through the city's website www.burlington.ca and the Official Plan Review website www.burlington.ca/opreview.

- E-mail updates through the Official Plan Review contact list; and
- City of Burlington's social media.

Eight (8) topics were consulted, and a total of 202 visits to the consultation website were reported. 20 participants raised the following themes were identified through this consultation:

- Supporting small –scale commercial uses in proximity to where people live is desirable to reduce car dependency and promote walkability;
- Considering the size of retail units to accommodate larger retail that will not negatively impact the residential character;
- Adding mixed use components to new residential developments;
- Making commercial areas more pedestrian and bicycle friendly;
- Locating buildings closer to the street and parking at the rear or side;
- Placing more emphasis on public transit, the pedestrian, the cyclist, and the disabled in designing parking lots;
- Planning better transit and pedestrian and bike friendly streets;
- Restricting and/or better planning drive throughs.

Stakeholder Meetings

In September 12, 2013 two meetings were held to solicit feedback from the business community on the preliminary research findings, policy directions and design recommendations with regard to the City's network of commercial areas and the Downtown. Ten and five people attended the city-wide and downtown meetings, respectively.

The issues that emerged from the facilitated session on the City-wide strategic recommendations included:

- Concern that smaller format retail would not work in Burlington;
- Walkability is achievable in downtown, but how will walkability work in urban corridors?
- How will local convenience retail units work in residential areas?
- Current size restrictions that establish a GFA cap are not an issue on smaller sites but are too small for larger sites;
- Need to assess total requirements for parking spaces relating to mixed use development;
- Multi-storey car parking is expensive to provide;
- Why is office desired downtown if the QEW corridor is where office development is occurring?
- There is confusion about the definition of automotive oriented uses;
- Car dealers are still a retailer and require visibility too. They want to be in a retail area;

- There is a need for larger retail parking spaces, which impacts the number and cost of spaces that can be developed;
- General support for bicycle parking but concern about added GFA;
- Urban Design Guidelines can represent additional costs to the developer, and are not always consistent with retail tenant requirements;
- Need to faster processing of development applications and zoning issues.

The issues that emerged from the facilitated session on the downtown strategic recommendations included:

- Has a traffic study been prepared to look at these new categories and their impact?
- Parking standards may need to be revisited as a result of these designations.
- Concern about existing retail function as well as future retail.
- Mixing office and residential on the one site can be challenging from a site design perspective
- Difficult to attract office to downtown area when competing with QEW corridor – additional costs of locating downtown are numerous and ongoing.
- Transit to downtown workplaces is key, particularly for young people who cannot afford a downtown condominium.
- The size of the retail space could be flexible when combined with residential uses above.
- Concern that the downtown may need more residential density in order to create vibrancy.
- It is a struggle to find uses that are suitable for live-work units.
- Institutional and office uses are considered.

Burlington Automobile Dealers Meetings

Two separate meetings were held with a group of car dealership owners. The first meeting was requested by this group to discuss their interests and concerns that related to the Commercial study. It was held on July 15, 2013, with the presence of members of Council and City staff. Ten people attended the meeting.

A second meeting was scheduled on October 18, 2013, to follow up the initial discussion. A presentation by the consultant addressed the potential recommendations of the Commercial Study as it related to motor vehicle sales, leasing and rental land uses. The presentation was followed by a discussion on the opportunities and constraints of intensification strategies when applied to this land use. Six people attended the meeting.

The following themes were identified:

- The definition of auto-oriented uses needs further clarification to better differentiate car dealerships from other uses;
- Interest in continuing to permit existing dealerships in intensification area, and encouraging the dealerships as they transition over time to make more efficient use of land (e.g. reduced vehicle storage, enhanced design multi-storey format);
- Consider BC (Business Corridor) zoning;
- Car dealerships can be accommodated following site and building design requirements;
- Manufacturer's standards play an important role in their decisions.
- Outside storage is a major consideration;
- Consider separating some functions of dealership to other locations.
- Storage facilities can be located elsewhere (subject to land availability, manufacturers' standards and sales restrictions in site);
- The creation of an auto mall is not of interest to the dealerships.

Burlington Regional Commercial Shopping Malls Meetings

A meeting with representatives from Mapleview Shopping Mall was held in October 2013 to this regional commercial site located along an intensification corridor and current issues and opportunities with respect to future redevelopment/intensification of the site. A meeting with representative of the Burlington Mall is scheduled for Q2 2014.

Study Website

Access to the Commercial Strategy Study is provided through the Official Plan Review website. The Study website was created to enable interested parties to obtain information and learn about the study. It provides information about the public engagement, links to various reports, presentations, feedback forms and staff reports.

6.2 Future Consultation

The public and stakeholders will have the opportunity to be engaged in the process as part of the Policy Directions Report prepared by staff and proposed amendments to the Official Plan process.

7.0 Conclusion:

The consultants have met the Council approved terms of reference in producing the Commercial Strategy Study. The Phases 2 and 3 deliverables provide technical background information and the consultants' expert opinion.

Staff is recommending receipt of the Phases 2 and 3 deliverables of the Official Plan Review Commercial Study. Stakeholder consultation, and internal staff review will provide the feedback and analysis to assist in the formulation of policy directions.

City staff will bring forward a series of recommended directions to the current commercial policies for consideration by Council.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Commercial Policy Recommendations Report (March 2014)
- B. Appendix A: Land Use Re-Designation Summary
- C. Urban Design Guidelines for Mixed Use Activity Areas (March 2014)

Notifications: (after Council decision)

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