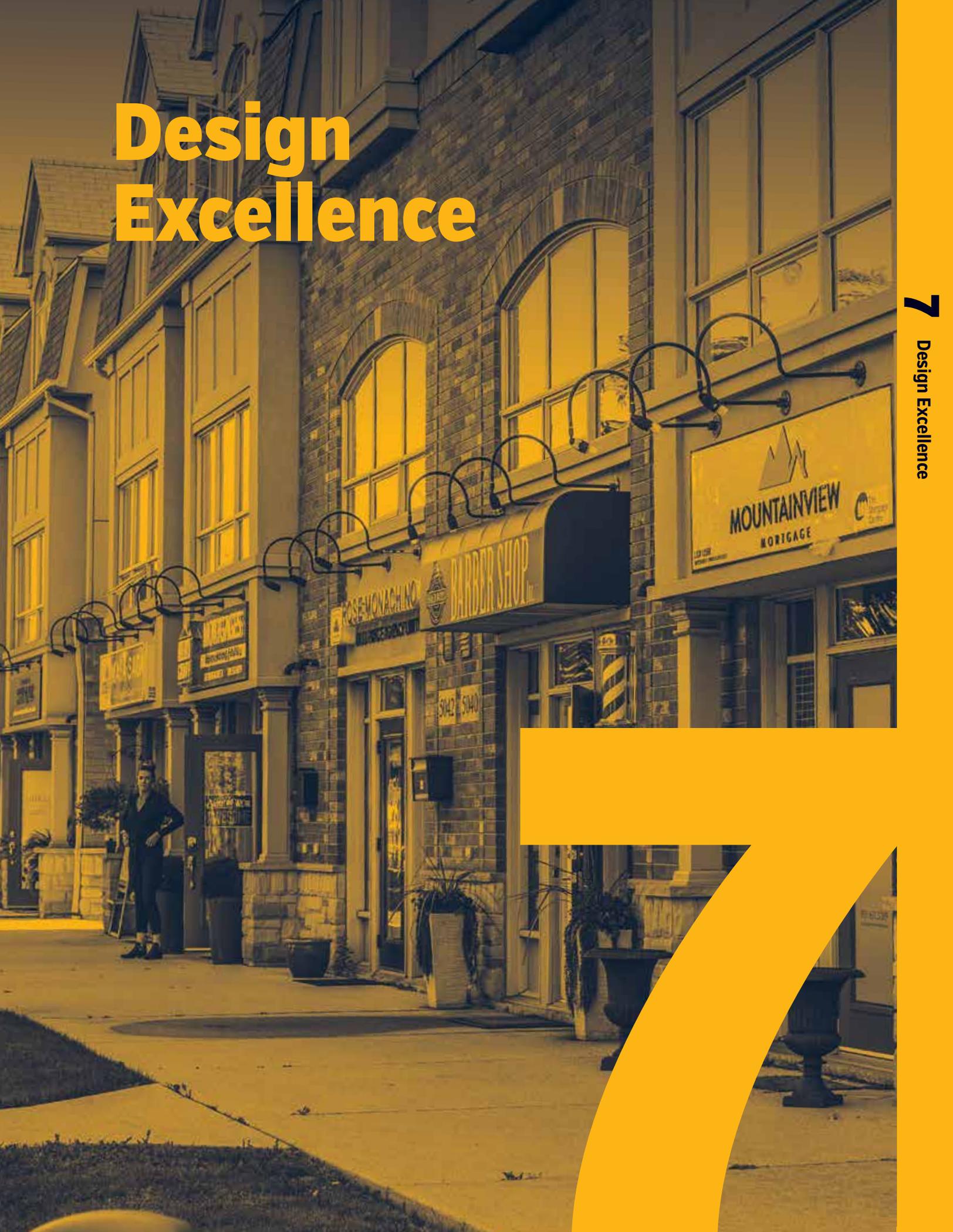


Design Excellence

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7.1 URBAN DESIGN

The practice of urban design involves the arrangement and design of buildings; public spaces; *modes* of transportation; services and amenities at various scales, including the site, the neighbourhood and the City as a whole. It is about facilitating connections between people and places, movement and urban form, and nature and buildings.

The *City* recognizes that a superior urban design is important to the creation of productive, *sustainable* and socially active places where people will want to live, work, visit and enjoy. With a more engaged public, and as *re-development* and *intensification* become more prominent in urban life in Burlington, design takes on a more important feature in the planning and *development* of the City. Council, *City* staff and the public expect a high standard of design in the public and private realms and will pay more attention to the relationships among them, both in new *development* and in *re-development*.

The design policies emphasize a high quality environment, *encourage* innovative design in capital works projects and private *developments* and recognize land use *compatibility* through design. To this end, the *City* is committed to achieve excellence in design and will bring this through the approval process for *development applications*.

In addition to the design policies contained in this chapter, specific site and building design and *development* considerations are contained in Chapter 8, Land Use Policies – Urban Area, for certain land uses designations to ensure *compatibility* between the *development* and adjacent land uses, particularly residential. *Development* proponents *shall* implement the policies of this chapter and the detailed design policies that seek to achieve the *City's* objectives for the specific land use designations, where these apply.

7.1.1 OBJECTIVES

- a) To ensure that the design of the built environment integrates with its natural setting, respects natural processes, preserves, enhances and connects the Natural Heritage System, and contributes to environmental *sustainability*.
- b) To ensure that the design of the built environment respects and enhances *cultural heritage resources*.
- c) To ensure that the design of the built environment contributes to the sense of place by strengthening and enhancing the character of existing distinctive

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locations and neighbourhoods, and that proposals for *re-development* and infill within existing neighbourhoods are designed to be *compatible* to the surrounding residential areas, based on principles of good urban design practice.

- d) To ensure that the design of the built environment contributes to creating places that are well served by public transit, and by attractive and well-developed pedestrian environments.
- e) To achieve a high quality of design within the *public realm*.
- f) To promote and achieve a high quality of design with respect to building form.
- g) To ensure consistency, *compatibility* and quality in the built environment while allowing for a diverse design expression.
- h) To integrate urban design into the full range of decision-making activities to assist in achieving the design objectives of this Plan.
- i) To prepare and adopt *design guidelines* and standards for specific types of *developments*, for specific areas of the City or for the entire City.
- j) To ensure that buildings and open spaces are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

7.1.2 GENERAL 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.
- b) Zoning By-law regulations *shall* be reviewed from a design perspective and *shall require* innovations that achieve the *City's* design objectives.
- c) Existing municipal *development* engineering standards, design standards and design manuals *shall* be reviewed from a design perspective and *shall* achieve 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 facilities, buildings, facilities and open spaces.
- d) The preparation of *design guidelines* *may* be developed for certain types of building forms or specific areas in the City and *shall* be required as part of the consideration of major site or area-specific *development* proposals, including *Area-Specific Plans*, in order to investigate and recommend solutions to issues such as *compatibility*, transit use, micro-climate effects, pedestrian

safety, noise abatement and issues of human scale and views. Any *City*-approved *design guidelines* are considered *City* policy and *shall* be utilized in the review and evaluation of *development applications*. A list of *City*-approved *Design Guidelines* is included for reference purposes in Appendix A of this Plan, and *may* be updated from time to time without requiring an amendment to this Plan through a *City* Council resolution.

- 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. *Urban design briefs shall* reference lands adjacent to and within the vicinity of the proposed *development* site and *may* be used to guide site *development*. The specific requirements of the *urban design brief shall* be reflective of individual *development applications* and determined on a case by case basis.
- f) An interdisciplinary staff committee, an outside advisory body of design professionals, or other means *shall* be established by the *City* to advise 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 *shall* be established to celebrate design excellence in the *City*. Membership and review rules and procedures will be set out in Terms of Reference established by the *City*.
- h) Senior orders of government, *public authorities* and public utilities *shall* implement the design objectives contained in this Plan.

7.1.3 COMMUNITY DESIGN

- a) The design of new communities *shall* serve to maintain and support existing physical character, create and promote the evolution of the character in areas where transformations are appropriate and planned, or in some cases the development of a new distinct character as a result of an *area specific plan*.
- b) Neighbourhoods or communities with distinctive and recognizable designs *may* be identified by the *City* and design measures *may* be required in these areas to maintain their identity, quality and sense of place.
- c) The *City shall* identify certain locations as gateways into the *City* or into parts of the *City*, through appropriate studies, and *shall* require distinctive design forms at these locations. Design requirements for gateways that contribute towards a distinctive or recognizable character and sense of arrival will be

identified through the *development application* review process, and *may* be detailed in urban *design guidelines*.

- d) Community design *shall* achieve more compact forms of *development* that support higher densities, be pedestrian oriented and *encourage* increased use of public transit and cycling.
- e) The *City shall* identify locations, particularly at entrances into established communities, through appropriate studies, as having landmark significance and *shall* ensure that these are retained and enhanced through design measures.
- f) Residential neighbourhoods *shall* be designed to allow freedom of public access and the *development* of ‘gated’ residential communities, which restrict public access and circulation through neighbourhoods by means of security gates, walls or similar barriers, *shall* be avoided.

7.1.4 PUBLIC REALM

- a) Design that enhances the quality of the *public realm shall* be required as a part of the design of all municipal undertakings, including public parks and buildings, public streets, natural areas and all municipal engineering projects related to public spaces.
- b) Improvements to existing *streetscapes*, including pedestrian-scale lighting, bicycle facilities, street furniture, signage, landscaping, and enhanced *active transportation, shall* be required when reconstruction occurs and *shall* be implemented in accordance with *City-approved urban design guidelines*.
- c) Landscaping design *shall* promote a human *scale*, create an attractive and comfortable environment for pedestrian movement while preserving and complementing the existing natural landscape.
- d) The *City shall* place particular emphasis on the design of intersections of Major Arterial and Multi Purpose Arterial Streets, Urban Avenues and Main Streets in the City, as marking major entrances into nearby neighbourhoods, and *may* require design measures that define these intersections.
- e) The *City shall* ensure that new *development* is planned to create, maintain and enhance public views and vistas of significant components of the Natural Heritage System and built features, where appropriate. The *City shall* develop an inventory of significant views and vistas and recommend strategies for their protection and enhancement.
- f) Existing streets and roads *shall* be examined for their qualities as pedestrian and cycling spaces and visual links as well as carriers of *multi-modal* traffic, and guidelines *may* be adopted to enhance these qualities.

- g) Transportation facilities *shall* be designed to perform their diverse roles, balancing the spatial needs of people of all ages and abilities.
- h) Design opportunities to introduce or improve links where existing areas are inadequately connected to each other or between important public areas will be *encouraged*.
- i) The design of the *public realm shall* recognize and promote 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.
- j) *Infrastructure shall* be designed to be safe, reliable and cost-effective and innovative design to minimize their visual *impact* will be *encouraged*.
- k) Street lighting *shall* be designed with regard for vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian requirements so that the size, height and style of lighting reflect the hierarchy of the street.

7.1.5 SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN

- a) The density, scale, *massing, floor area ratio*, height, siting, setbacks and lot coverage of *development shall be compatible* with the existing *development* pattern in the surrounding area.
- b) The *compatibility* of adjacent residential and non-residential *development* will be achieved through site and building design and buffering measures, including landscape screening and fencing.
- c) Building design *should* provide appropriate transition, setbacks and stepping back of heights from adjacent properties and the *public realm*, provide pedestrian comfort and human *scale* at the street level, and reduce the *adverse impacts* of shadowing. The Zoning By-law *may* include angular plane requirements to set out proper transition and stepping back of heights.
- d) New *development shall* be located and oriented to frame and reinforce a street line, composed of existing and planned *development* to provide definition to the *public realm*.
- e) Uses located at-grade, including ground-level residential uses, that front a public right-of-way *should* locate unit entrances so that they are accessible from the public sidewalk.
- f) Buildings located on corner sites *shall* address both *streetscapes* through building massing, location of entrances, landscaping and/or architectural elements.

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- g) Attention *shall* be given to building on terminus lots to enhance the view from the *public realm*.
- h) Blank facades *shall* be avoided and *shall* not face a public street or public open space.
- i) Site and building design *shall* take into account of the visual effect of varying topography and existing and proposed vegetation.
- j) The provision of well-designed landscaped open space in setback areas *should* be required to create attractive transitions from the private to the *public realm*.
- k) Site and building design *shall* recognize and promote 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.
- l) New public and private facilities *shall* be designed in accordance with The Accessibility for Ontarians with *Disabilities Act* and other applicable Provincial legislation.
- m) The needs of persons of all ages and abilities *shall* be considered in each *development*, and in all new and renovated buildings, parking lots and open spaces through the application of the *Principles of Universal Design*.
- n) All *developments shall* be designed to connect to public transit and related facilities.
- o) The creation of a continuous and harmonious *streetscape* environment *shall* be *encouraged* with emphasis on maintaining the continuity of grade-related activity areas, both inside and outside of buildings.
- p) Site design *shall* provide publicly accessible open space at grade that complement and connect the existing network of public streets, parks, and open space, where feasible.
- q) Reverse frontage lotting patterns and the use of acoustical walls next to Major and Multi-Purpose Arterial Streets, Urban Avenues, Main Streets and Neighbourhood Connectors *shall* be avoided.
- r) Side and end elevations of buildings facing Major and Multi-Purpose Arterial Streets, Urban Avenues, Main Streets and Neighbourhood Connectors *shall* be designed with an upgraded level of architectural treatment.
- s) Signage *shall* be *compatible* with its surroundings and designed and used in a manner that the aesthetic qualities and visual character of the City are protected and enhanced. The *City* will regulate exterior signs and other exterior advertising devices in accordance with the consolidated Sign By-law.

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- t) The location, amount, position and design of parking areas *shall* be reviewed to provide convenient and direct pedestrian access to major pedestrian destinations, minimize their potential to erode the qualities of the public *streetscape*, and to lessen their *adverse visual impacts*. The *City may* require landscaped islands, pedestrian walkways and screening in the design of parking lots.
- u) Underground parking, internal parking or above-grade parking structures *shall* be required where feasible. A high level of design *shall* be required for above-grade parking structures in public view. The design of above-grade parking structures *shall* integrate with building design and include active ground floor uses adjacent to streets, parks and/or open spaces, where appropriate.
- v) Bicycle parking facilities *shall* be located as close as possible to the entry points of buildings and *shall* not obstruct pedestrian circulation. A variety of bicycle parking formats, such as sheltered racks and lockers, catering to both employees and visitors *shall* be required, where appropriate.
- w) The *adverse* functional and visual *impacts* of site servicing, loading, air conditioning and ventilation equipment and waste handling facilities *shall* be minimized, by integrating them into the building mass, by screening or by locating them away from the *public realm* and public view.
- x) The placement of outdoor lighting *shall* complement site and building design.
- y) The *City shall* review and adopt lighting standards for City streets and facilities in order to minimize sky-glow while not compromising public safety. The *adverse impacts* of lighting associated with new *development shall* be reviewed to minimize the intrusion and *adverse impacts* of unwanted lighting into adjacent properties and to minimize sky glow.
- z) *Development should* be positioned to take advantage of solar heat, wherever possible and appropriate.
- aa) The use of design features such as building orientation, location of open spaces and vegetation relative to noise sources and other external or internal measures, *shall* minimize noise levels in the urban environment.
- bb) Site and building design shall ensure that new *development* enhances and protects *cultural heritage resources*.
- cc) The adaptive reuse of buildings through innovative design will be *encouraged*.

7.1.5.1 MID-RISE BUILDINGS

- a) The *City shall* ensure that *mid-rise buildings* fit within their surrounding context, limit potential *adverse impacts* and achieve design excellence.
- b) *Mid-rise buildings shall* be massed to contribute to the spatial enclosure of all adjacent streets and open spaces and be *compatible* with adjacent residential areas.
- c) *Mid-rise buildings* over six (6) storeys in height *should* be designed with a pedestrian-scale *podium* or other appropriate architectural articulation to enhance the building design and emphasize human scale. The *podium should* have a height that is no less than two (2) storeys.
- d) Building elements above the *podium may* step back from the *podium* along all public street frontages to reduce the *adverse* visual and environmental *impacts* for the pedestrian environment.
- e) In order to provide appropriate privacy and daylight/sunlight conditions for adjacent uses, *mid-rise buildings shall* be set back from the property line, in accordance with the implementing Zoning By-Law, and *should* be contained within an angular plane provision established in Design Guidelines.
- f) The design of the first floor of *mid-rise buildings should* generally correspond to existing or planned at-grade uses and street character and promote pedestrian activity to animate the *public realm*. The Zoning By-law *shall* establish the minimum floor-to ceiling height at grade, where applicable.
- g) Roof top mechanical equipment *shall* be integrated within the overall composition of the building.

7.1.5.2 TALL BUILDINGS

- a) *Tall building* policies are applicable across the entire City, but it is anticipated that the majority of new *tall buildings* will be developed in Primary Growth Areas, where feasible, and other areas in which they are permitted by an *Area-Specific Plan*, a comprehensive Zoning By-law or site-specific policies in effect as of the approval date of this Plan.
- b) The *City shall* ensure that *tall buildings* fit within their surrounding context, limit potential *adverse impacts* and achieve design excellence.
- c) *Tall building* elements *shall* step back from the *podium* along all public street frontages to reduce the *adverse* visual and environmental *impacts* for the pedestrian environment such as sunshading.

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- d) *Tall buildings should* be composed of three distinct and integrated elements: *podium*, middle tower and top section, and *should* be subject to the following design considerations:
- (i) the *podium* or base *shall* contribute to a pedestrian environment and emphasize human scale and *shall* frame the edges of streets, parks and open spaces at an appropriate scale;
 - (ii) the *podium* or base *should* frame the edges of streets, parks and open spaces at an appropriate scale in relation to the street width and tower component and *should* integrate with adjacent buildings;
 - (iii) the height of the tower, and its location on the building base, *shall* provide a gradual and appropriate transition in height to adjacent uses;
 - (iv) where *tall buildings* are proposed adjacent to existing *tall buildings*, or where multiple *tall buildings* are proposed on the same property, sufficient separation distance *shall* be provided between towers in order to maintain privacy and preserve access to light and views of the sky;
 - (v) *tall buildings shall* provide top floors and roof design that complements the overall building design and contributes to the skyline character; and
 - (vi) roof top mechanical equipment *shall* be integrated within the overall composition of the building.
- e) The design of the first floor of *tall buildings shall* generally correspond to existing or planned at-grade uses and street character and promote pedestrian activity to animate the *public realm*. The Zoning By-law *shall* establish the minimum floor-to ceiling height at grade, where applicable.
- f) *Tall buildings shall* be designed to minimize *adverse impacts* of wind channeling, shadowing and the interruption of sunlight on the *streetscape*, neighbouring properties, parks and open spaces and natural areas.
- g) The *City* recognizes that not all sites are appropriate for *tall buildings*. The suitability of a *tall building shall* be considered on a site-by-site basis considering, among other factors, site dimensions, adjacent uses, access to transit, and physical character of the area.

7.2 SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

A *sustainable* building and *development* approach balances environmental, economic and social considerations in the design, construction and operation of buildings and sites. *Sustainable* design helps to reduce *infrastructure* 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 shall* promote *sustainable* design approaches through the implementation of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines.

7.2.1 OBJECTIVES

- a) 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 and reduce climate change *adverse impacts*.

7.2.2 POLICIES

- a) Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments and site plan applications for high and medium density residential, mixed use, commercial, *industrial*, *office* and *institutional* buildings *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 access to public transit where available;
 - (iii) on-site bicycle facilities;
 - (iv) measures to reduce reflected/waste light;
 - (v) parking lot design and landscaping to minimize the *urban heat island effect*;

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- (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 and drainage measures, in accordance with Subsection 4.4.3 of this Plan;
 - (viii) identification of appropriate snow storage areas to reduce the *adverse impacts* of salt and de-icing practices;
 - (ix) waste management facilities in accordance with the Region’s requirements; and
 - (x) bird-friendly design measures for glass buildings and 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 and passive design measures and renewable energy sources;
 - (ii) potable water conservation;
 - (iii) innovative storm water management techniques such as *Low Impact Development* measures;
 - (iv) *sustainable* transportation measures such as electric vehicle charging stations;
 - (v) *sustainable* building materials and resources;
 - (vi) indoor environmental 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 7.2.2 a) and b) of this Plan, if it meets the requirements of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines adopted by the *City*.

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- d) The *City may* provide non-financial incentives as part of the implementation of Subsection 7.2.2 c) of this Plan, to *encourage* the voluntary components of the Sustainable Building and Development Guidelines.
- e) The *City may* provide financial incentives as part of the implementation of Subsection 7.2.2 c) 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) Specific *sustainable* building, site and neighbourhood design measures *shall* be identified and required through *Area-Specific Plans*.
- h) 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.