PLANNING AROUND RAPID TRANSIT STATIONS (PARTS)

URBAN DESIGN BRIEF

Phase 2
2014
Introduction

The ION rapid transit system will link Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge through a central transit corridor (CTC). There are a number of station stops identified in Kitchener. Along with improving access to existing places, the CTC will become the focus for new medium and high density residential, retail, commercial and employment uses and support the concentration of existing and planned residents and jobs. Comprehensive planning around all station areas will be a key to ensuring that new development positively contributes to our urban environment.

Direction for the planning around station areas comes from several higher order policy and strategy documents, as illustrated below. These policies include: Places to Grow, Provincial Policy Statement, Regional Official Plan (ROP), Community Building Strategy (CBS), City of Kitchener Official Plan (OP), and Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS).

This refinement also identified Focus and Influence Areas at each station stop. Focus areas are those lands, which due to their proximity to a station stop will be a significant focus of potential change and thus will require further study in the immediate term (2014-2017). Influence areas are further away from the station stop, but still contribute to the role and function of the station study areas. Influence areas will not be the focus of change, but may provide opportunities for minor infilling where deemed appropriate.
Vision for PARTS

“Together, through a comprehensive and collaborative public planning process, we will build well-connected, innovative, vibrant, inviting and inclusive station areas in which to live, work, shop, study and play.”

This vision builds on the Kitchener Strategic Plan, contributes to the land use vision for the City contained in the new Official Plan and will help guide the Station Study Area Plans.

Goals for PARTS

To articulate this vision, high-level goals specific to Kitchener were created to help guide the Station Study Area Plans. These goals are:

- Manage Growth and Change
- Ensure a Mix of Appropriate Land Uses
- Enhance Transportation Choice and Connectivity
- Enhance Placemaking, Safety, Community Design
- Guide Public and Private Investment

PARTS Urban Design Brief Outline

The vision, goals and general guidelines will provide some consistency across the Station Study Areas as there are many common guidelines. The purpose of this Urban Design Brief is to:

- provide direction for a design-based approach to the preparation of Station Area Plans/Secondary Plans for each Station Area;
- be refined with specific guidelines, standards and streetscape plans through the completion of each Station Area Plan/ Secondary Plan;
- provide additional design direction for conserving stable neighbourhoods; and
- provide further design direction in the review of development applications in these areas.

This Design Brief will apply to all Kitchener Rapid Transit Station Study Areas with the exception of Sportsworld. In the interim, this Brief will not apply to the Mixed Use Corridors or Downtown as those areas already have detailed design briefs which will continue to apply until a future consolidation/Urban Design Manual review.

Corridor-Wide General Guidelines

Manage Growth and Change

Focusing and directing growth within Station Areas reinforces and optimizes public infrastructure investments, builds compact, sustainable and complete communities and encourages transit use.

Density and Development Patterns

Rapid Transit Station Areas will be planned, designed and developed to:

- Accommodate growth.
- Establish new density and development patterns that are related to infrastructure and sustainable development considerations.
- Concentrate new development and highest densities close to the stations. In some instances this may be more appropriate at other key locations within the Focus Area in order to reflect existing conditions, constraints or to reduce conflicts.
- Establish minimum density targets within each Focus Area that reflects the desired urban condition for the area and that considers the range of targets within the entire corridor and the city.
- Transition from higher intensity development in the Focus Area to a less intense development pattern in the Influence Area.
- Permit infill and redevelopment in Influence Areas where the characteristics of the existing neighbourhood is respected including building scale, height, massing, orientation, setback, architectural elements and materials.
Ensure a Mix of Land Uses
The type and mixture of land uses within the Station Areas will help create a sense of place and encourage a shift towards more sustainable modes of transportation and movement.

Station Areas will contain different land uses. Some locations are, and will continue to be, significant areas for employment, residential or other uses. Some areas will evolve into a new range of uses, including mixed use. The evolution of land uses within each Station Area will occur at different rates throughout time.

The transition to an appropriate mix of land uses within each Station Area will help generate transit ridership, reduce personal vehicle trips and contribute to a complete and healthy community.

Enhance Transportation Choice and Connectivity
The success of the rapid transit system and station study areas will be influenced by many factors including the provision of a range of inter-connected transportation options that are efficient, convenient, enjoyable, safe, easily navigable, continuous and barrier-free. Transportation Demand Management measures will be critical.

Street Fabric, Pedestrian Priority and Parking
- New streets, laneways, pedestrian and cycling connections should be provided to achieve a highly connected network that offers route choice and creates new active transportation opportunities.
- Design safe, logical and efficient routes for different modes of transportation, with priority given to pedestrians.
- Use parks and green space to provide pedestrian and cycling links to transit stations to enhance user experience.
- Provide enhanced, convenient pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and amenities. Preference is to facilities that can be maintained year-round.
- Identify locations to have wider than minimum sidewalks in areas of high pedestrian routes/volumes within Station Areas.
- Provide weather protection for transit users and pedestrians where possible.
- Provide clear and consistent way finding elements.
- Minimize vehicle and pedestrian points of conflict.
- Vehicular access points should be controlled to minimize disruption to traffic flow and new development may be required to share common driveways and provide for maneuverability between sites.
- Incorporate pedestrian, cycling, car sharing and carpooling amenities to facilitate the implementation of Transportation Demand Management measures.

Transit Supportive Land Uses
Rapid Transit Station Areas will be planned, designed and built to:
- Locate transit-supportive uses such as high and medium density residential, office and mixed use, within close proximity to the station stop. Uses that are primarily auto-oriented and not conducive to a transit-supportive environment should be discouraged in Focus Areas.
- Include a variety of land uses to create multi-purpose destinations.
- Establish a framework to encourage a mixture of appropriate uses within buildings.
- Provide active, pedestrian-oriented uses at key locations including the ground-floor of buildings.
Establish parking standards that will complement the multi-modal transportation and pedestrian-oriented design objectives, including maximum parking rates where appropriate.

Consider a ‘park once’ environment to encourage walking between activities/uses.

Podium parking above the ground level may be considered provided it includes active uses on the ground level of main public street(s) and is well integrated into the building design through techniques such as vertical and horizontal articulation, canopies, articulated entrances and appropriately scaled landscaping.

Enhance Placemaking, Safety and Community Design

New places, spaces and neighbourhoods will emerge and be shaped in areas around the rapid transit stations. To ensure that each of these is successful and vibrant, the design of station study areas must carefully integrate matters of built form, architecture, public realm, streetscape, place making, safety and universal design. Creating healthy, sustainable communities that reflect our natural heritage and cultural richness will require inspired and high quality design that is functional, diverse and inclusive.

Built Form, Architecture, Views, Vistas and Skyline

Respect natural and cultural heritage resources in the design of built form.

Authentic and high quality design for building morphology, architectural detailing and material use is expected for all projects.

Identify key intersections and sites in Station Areas to concentrate building mass and locate landmark buildings with distinctive design features.

Building height and setback requirements should include both maximums and minimums.

Maximum frontages may be limited to allow views of significant landmarks, natural features, cultural heritage resources, and to improve solar access and pedestrian permeability.

Building design, particularly the ground floor facades, should carefully consider the public realm, include active uses and create a positive pedestrian experience.

Orient buildings in commercial areas to contribute to the streetscape and be easily identifiable, inviting, continuous and permeable.

Large retail tenant frontages should have several retail units interjected into the street frontage.

Façade treatments should increase visual interest.

Building height, built form, massing and architectural detailing should be used to ensure a compatible transition between new development and stable neighbourhoods.

Design infill to be rich in detail and enhance the public realm while responding to the established patterns of the street and neighbourhood.

Encourage bird-friendly design and materials.

Taller buildings should have a clear delineation between podium, middle and top elements through massing, materials and details to ensure towers are distinct, recognizable, and visually appealing.
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- Architectural variety between buildings is encouraged and buildings should inter-relate in order to create complementary urban design.

- Design street-facing residential buildings to include visually distinct units with separate entrances and distinct delineation of public and private space.

- Design at-grade residential units to include measures that provide adequate privacy from the public sidewalk/street so that privacy walls and solid fences will not be required.

- Rear and side facades that have a public view should incorporate architectural detailing and include a quality of building material that is approaching the primary facades.

- Maintain or create view corridors through and between sites to visually link Station Areas to the community, parks and open space systems.

- Create opportunities for sightlines and views to terminate at important features such as the station stops, community buildings, monuments, public art, and natural and cultural heritage resources.

- Create an attractive skyline by providing a variety of design expressions to articulate the top of tall buildings, including articulated rooftop designs with varying heights and setbacks.

Safety, CPTED and Universal Design

- Utilize Universal Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and adhere to Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in Station Area Plans, streetscape plans and development applications.

- Special emphasis on safety and universal design will be applied at key locations near rapid transit stations.

Placemaking and Streetscapes

- Develop a placemaking vision along with Streetscape Master Plans for each Station Area that recognizes character locations, including the heritage aspects of neighbourhoods. Include a coordinated design for street furniture, transit facilities, intersections, lighting, vegetation, way-finding and signage.

- Create a focal point(s) for activity within each Focus Area including features such as parks, plazas and gathering points.

- Integrate an appropriate range of public and private open spaces within each Station Area.

- Concentrate amenities and the provision of street furniture near rapid transit stations and along key access routes.

- Determine if special sign standards are required to respect building scale, architectural features and streetscape objectives.

Sustainable Design

- New development/redevelopment should identify sustainable/“green” building techniques to be implemented in the design and construction of sites and buildings. This shall include, but not limited to, energy and water conservation, waste management, environmental design, air quality benefits, trip reductions, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and other related techniques.

- Buildings should address climate and seasonal changes and consider the use of shade, permeability, colour, light, greenery and natural materials to address both summer and winter conditions.

- Reduce urban heat island effect through landscaping, green/white roofs and other materials that have a high solar reflective index (SRI).
Guide Public and Private Investment

Light Rail Transit is a significant catalyst for shaping the built form and streetscapes of our community into the future. Additional strategic investments in the infrastructure and public realm in the areas beyond the immediate LRT line and stations stops can potentially provide further amenities to leverage an area’s marketability and livability.

- Determine and prioritize capital investments in streetscape improvements to enhance the public realm, connectivity and livability as part of the development catalyst package. Place emphasis on one or two key strategic investments in each Station Area within the first 10 years of LRT.

- Investigate the feasibility of streetscape and connectivity enhancements during the replacement/upgrade of any hard infrastructure (sewers, roads, etc.).

- Strategically locate, design and build new or revised urban and green public spaces, including parks, within each Station Area to provide needed outdoor amenities for development, focal points for gathering and social activity, and to contribute to healthy and complete communities. Utilize semi-public and private urban and green spaces where appropriate to supplement the need for such spaces in Focus Areas for intensification.

- Follow a public and private public art investment strategy to strategically locate art in visible locations within each Station Area. Coordinate with tourism, heritage, way-finding and place-making.

Station Area Design Strategies

This section provides a unique design strategy for each rapid transit Station Area based on specific design objectives and includes detailed standards and streetscape plans. Implementation will occur through municipal and public capital infrastructure projects, the development review process and other partnership or innovative methods.

Central Station Area
- Objectives
- Guidelines/Standards
- Streetscape Master Plans

Midtown Station Area
- Objectives
- Guidelines/Standards
- Streetscape Master Plans

Rockway Station Area
- Objectives
- Guidelines/Standards
- Streetscape Master Plans

Fairway Station Area
- Objectives
- Guidelines/Standards
- Streetscape Master Plans

Block Line Station Area
- Objectives
- Guidelines/Standards
- Streetscape Master Plans