

# Downtown Cobourg Master Plan



February 2016



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The Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox

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# Executive Summary

The Downtown Master Plan provides detailed and strategic direction for the revitalization of Downtown Cobourg by building on the overarching policies outlined in the existing Official Plan and a number of other strategies and economic development initiatives developed for the Downtown over the years. The Master Plan contains a downtown strategy, urban design guidelines, and implementation tools to assist the Town in guiding new development, investment and community building initiatives in Downtown Cobourg for the next 10 to 20 years.

The Master Plan responds to the distinctive Downtown Cobourg context and the needs of existing and future citizens. The Plan addresses key challenges and opportunities to ensure that future change can be effectively managed to positively contribute to the health, beauty and vitality of the Downtown. The Master Plan is a strategic document that will be used by the Town, local residents and businesses as a tool to communicate the vision, goals, and direction to the public, external agencies, and investors. The Master Plan is consistent with the intent of the provisions of the Official Plan, providing more details regarding the built form, public realm and development parameters consistent with the distinctive Downtown characteristics and community aspirations. In doing so, the Master Plan provides greater certainty and clarity about the future development of the Downtown.

This Master Plan also includes the Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox, a development manual summarizing relevant policies, development permit and approval processes, financial incentives, as well as appropriate municipal contacts and links to important documents and application forms. The Master Plan is an essential tool to guide and implement development, infrastructure and public realm improvements and to promote Downtown revitalization and economic development.

## This document:

- Creates a detailed framework to guide planning and development decisions in a manner that is compatible with the local context and respectful of the broad community interests.
- Builds on the community's existing unique assets and opportunities.
- Responds to unique circumstances and contemporary realities facing Cobourg.
- Creates opportunities to increase the diversity of housing types within the Downtown, attractive to seniors, families, and a wide range of household types.
- Creates opportunities to increase economic development opportunities within the Downtown through encouraging mixed use infill development and other redevelopment opportunities.
- Establishes design guidelines and strategies specific to character areas that will inform the design details of site specific development applications.
- Describes opportunities for public realm and infrastructure improvements.
- Provides a range of implementation strategies to help encourage and promote development.

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# Part 1 BACKGROUND AND VISION

Introduction and  
Background

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## 1.1 Introduction

The Town of Cobourg is no stranger to change. The Town has progressed through a number of different development periods that have positively impacted the town as a whole. New residential development, business growth, a new hospital, recreation and cultural centres, and new civic offices have helped to enhance the sense of community in Cobourg.

### A Commitment to Downtown Vitalization

Downtown Cobourg has been one of the key focus areas in the evolution of the town. A number of civic projects such as the Waterfront redevelopment, the Marina, Rotary Waterfront Park, Victoria Square, road infrastructure and general downtown beautification provide the underpinnings for a high quality public realm and healthy community. These projects have attracted a number of high quality residential developments, and building improvements. However, there is more work to be done in achieving the full potential of Downtown Cobourg.

Downtown is a key priority for Town Council. Implementing the Downtown Master Plan will help to bring forward the ambition for making the Downtown a vibrant and successful place for all, as outlined in the [Downtown Vitalization Action Plan](#), which was recently approved by Council. The Master Plan project presents one of the various strategic elements outlined in the Action Plan, which focuses on revitalizing Downtown Cobourg, and identifies actions for vitalization and economic development in the Downtown.

### The Master Plan and Community Improvement Plan

The Master Plan has an overarching goal to set a clear vision and strategy for built form, open space, and development. To achieve a healthy outcome, economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability must be inherent in the growth of Downtown Cobourg.

This Master Plan is being developed with a corresponding Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP provides financial incentives and

programs to encourage revitalization and support private and public realm improvements in the Downtown. Appendix A includes the [Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox](#), which is a one-stop development toolbox, that includes a summary of the CIP as well as other helpful information related to Downtown revitalization.

## 1.2 Objectives

The Downtown Master Plan and CIP is a collaborative effort and partnership between the project team, the Town, the Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee, and other stakeholders. The Master Plan is the culmination of a consultative planning process and sets out a broad, long-term vision for the Downtown and guidelines for both private development and public investment. Equally important, it also identifies strategic directions to be pursued over the next 20 years, including key private and public initiatives.

The Master Plan solidifies the Vision for the Downtown as defined in the Vitalization Action Plan. This Master Plan will be used as a tool to help develop, guide and implement future development projects and public realm improvements across Downtown Cobourg. The Master Plan is also intended to be an economic development and business attraction toolbox which can be used by the Municipality to promote and market the Downtown and to elicit interest by developers, business and other investors.

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## 1.3 Plan Structure

This document includes the following:

1. **Part 1- Background and Vision:** Introduces the study and provides a background review, analysis, and the Vision for Downtown.
2. **Part 2- Guidelines for Future Development:** Provides general design guidelines, implementation recommendations and sequencing of Action Items.
3. **Appendix A - The Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox:** Includes a summary of relevant documents, policies, municipal contacts and provides a “one-stop shop” resource related to Downtown development.
4. **Appendix B - Glossary of Terms:** Contains a glossary of key terms to assist with the implementation and interpretation of the Master Plan.

Force reported back with a number of priorities for moving forward with downtown vitalization including; the creation of a Downtown Master Plan; a Heritage Master Plan; 3D Model; Engineering Survey; Virtual Tour; Feasibility Study; and Development Financing.

The Master Plan process unfolded through the following stages of work.

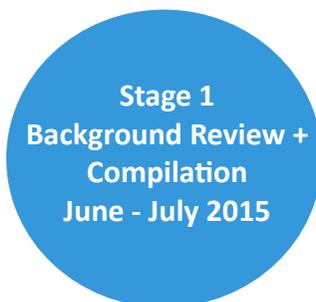
Stage 1 (June 2015 - July 2015) included a review and compilation of relevant background documents, studies, and policies. In addition, a Design Workshop was held in June 2015, which engaged stakeholders in discussions about the Downtown and in a design exercise and incentives discussion

Stage 2 (August 2015 - October 2015) included development of a demonstration plan; standards development; 3D visualizations; and draft incentive programs.

Stage 3 (October 2015 - February 2016) included preparation of the Draft and Final Master Plan report and Community Improvement Plan, as well as a number of public meetings.

## 1.4 The Master Plan Process

The Downtown Vitalization Action Plan project commenced in 2012 with a series of surveys, conversations, and meetings led by the Downtown Vitalization Task Force and Town staff with local stakeholders. The purpose of the discussions was to engage the community about their desires, interests, and criticisms of the Downtown and to discuss the issues and opportunities. The Task



- Background Compilation
- Downtown Vision Forum + CIP Workshop



- Design Vision Plan
- Standards Development
- Draft Incentive Programs
- Steering Committee Meeting
- 3D Model/Visualization



- Draft/Final Master Plan Report
- Draft/Final CIP Report
- Steering Committee Meeting
- Public Meeting: Draft Plan Presentation
- Council Presentation - Draft Plan
- Council Presentation - Final Approval
- Statutory Public Meeting - CIP

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## 1.5 The Study Area

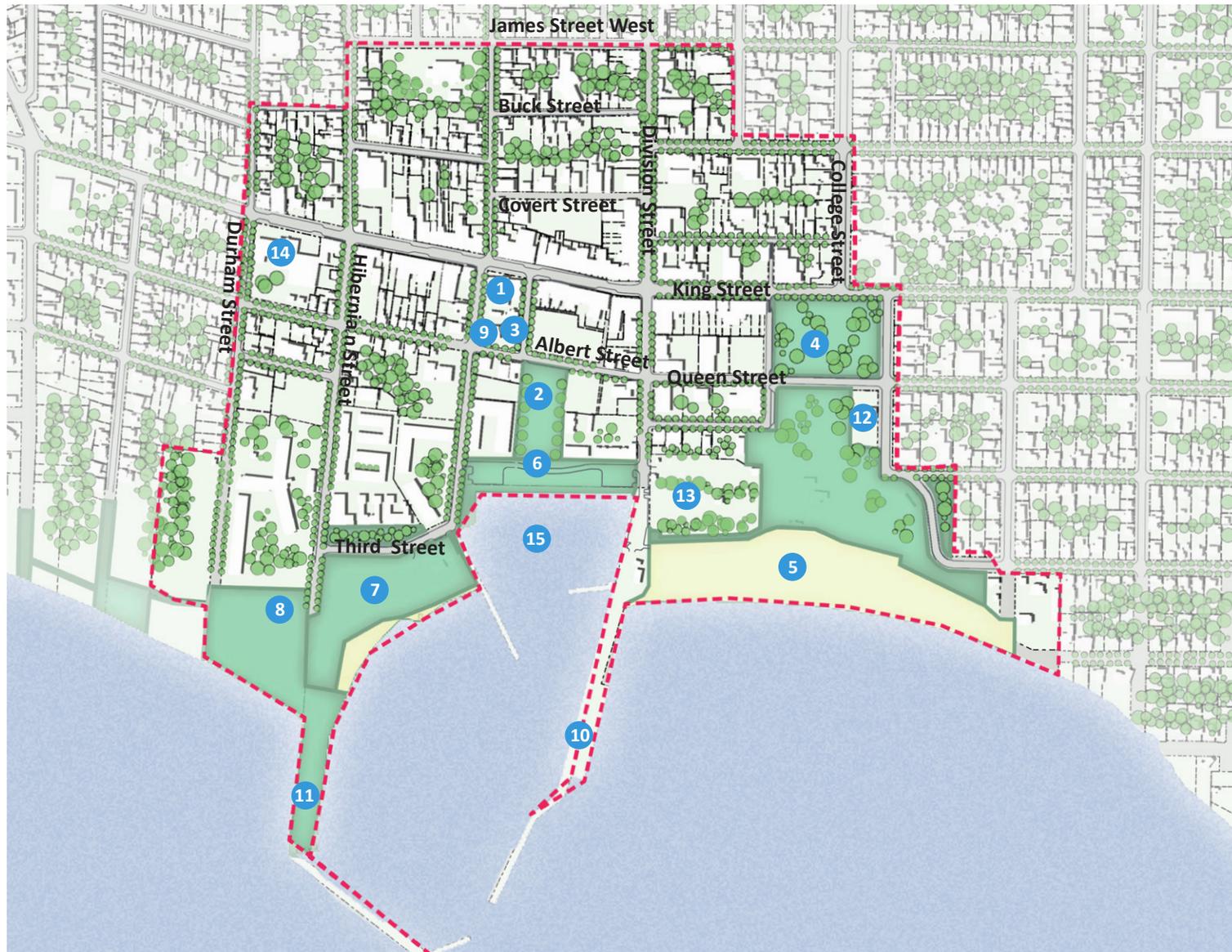
The Study Area is identified below. It includes the entire Downtown core bound by Durham Street to the west, College Street to the east, and James Street West to the north. Along its southern edge, the Study Area includes the beautiful Cobourg Waterfront and Marina.

Key features of the Study Area include:

- 1 Victoria Hall
- 2 Rotary Park
- 3 Victoria Square

- 4 Victoria Park
- 5 Cobourg Beach
- 6 The Esplanade
- 7 The Marina and Yacht Club
- 8 Nature Park
- 9 The Market
- 10 Eastern Pier
- 11 West Headland
- 12 Lawn Bowling Club
- 13 Trailer Park
- 14 Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West
- 15 Cobourg Marina

Downtown Cobourg Master Plan Study Area



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## 1.6 What We Heard

The Downtown Vision and CIP Workshop was held in Cobourg at Victoria Hall on June 23, 2015. The Downtown Vision Workshop kicked-off the project with stakeholders to review existing conditions, present opportunities and a fresh eyes analysis, and to report on best practices. The second half of the event included a CIP workshop, which included a presentation on community improvement plans and precedent examples as they relate to Cobourg.

Over the course of the afternoon, participants from the Town, the Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee, property owners, business owners, the Friends of Downtown, the Downtown Business Improvement Area and other interested parties converged to explore opportunities for the long-term success of Downtown Cobourg. The objectives of this event included: introducing the consultants and the study process, providing an opportunity for input and feedback, engaging stakeholders in defining the principles, 'big moves' and confirming a Vision to guide the development of the area for the future. This section summarizes the outcomes of the Workshop.



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## Workshop Summary

During the workshop participants were asked to engage in a two-part activity. Part 1 included discussing the Principles and the Vision developed as part of the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan. Sample questions included: How is Downtown characterized? How do people live in the Downtown? What makes the Downtown unique? What is it known for? Part 2 encouraged participants to come up with some ideas about potential 'Big Moves' for the Downtown.

Below is a summary of the Part 1 discussion:

### Principles to apply to Downtown Cobourg

- An attractive and friendly environment.
- Promote active lifestyles, recreation, and cycling.
- Reinforce the downtown as a cultural destination.
- Create a 'Cobourg' identity through high quality urban design and planning.
- Enhance and promote the unique characteristics of the special character areas in the Downtown.
- Reinforce a cohesive palette of urban design materials, paving, and wayfinding.
- Encourage intensification that provides a range of uses that fits with the existing context and heritage character.

- Improve physical and visual connections to the East end businesses.
- Provide more programming in parks and open spaces.
- Encourage a four-season destination.

### How is Downtown characterized?

- Downtown is the historic heart and cultural center of Cobourg and the larger region.
- Downtown is a walkable, pedestrian-scaled environment with high quality open spaces and natural areas.
- Downtown is bustling. The sidewalks are well used but at times can feel a bit congested. There are multiple users on the sidewalks including pedestrians, scooters and cyclists as well as patio activities that spill out into the sidewalk.
- Some buildings façades could be improved.

### What makes Downtown unique?

- Rich in heritage, parks, and open space.
- The beach and waterfront are key amenities.
- The East Pier provides an opportunity for a public use.
- Victoria Hall.
- Vistas into Downtown.
- Trailer park is a unique element.
- A walkable, pedestrian environment.
- Rink / Fountain.

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Part 2 encouraged participants to come up with some ideas about potential 'Big Moves' for the Downtown, and to help guide the development of a physical vision plan. Below are summaries from the discussion that transpired.

## Long List of Ideas for Downtown Cobourg

- Redevelop the trailer park. Uses could include: Hotel, Conference Centre, Spa etc., functioning as a 4 season tourism generator.
- Revitalize the Eastern Pier so it can become a tourist amenity and a destination for local residents, and linear park on the waterfront.
- Revisit and complete the Victoria Square Plan, finish/revitalize the parking lot. Intensification, public use four season permanent farmers market / Christmas Market.
- Revitalizing Rotary Park, making it more inviting with better public realm. Add more pedestrian used facilities and programming.
- Use a consistent palette of materials in the public realm. Seamless connectivity between the Waterfront and the Downtown.
- Upgrade rear façades on both the north and south sides of King Street.
- Enhance the northern parking lot behind the storefronts on King Street and provide more landscaping, trees, sidewalks, and seating.
- The Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West site could be re-purposed to include a community use or mixed use development.
- Develop the Cobourg Yacht Club building into a public restaurant. Retain some private facilities for CYC members.
- Attract new businesses and owners to the Downtown.
- Encourage local commercial amenity uses such as a grocery store, butcher, produce market, and extend the farmers market operating hours
- Support live work opportunities. Increase residential living downtown. Encourage ground floor residential where commercial tenants haven't moved in.
- Invest in a free Downtown Internet (public WiFi).
- Introduce a HWY 401 sign to direct travelers to Downtown Cobourg.
- Intensify land uses and enhanced streetscapes at the nodes (East/West).
- Revitalize the Park Theatre as an anchor (store / other use).
- Draw people from the Waterfront to visit and use the core Downtown area. Strengthen north-south linkages to the Beach and open up Second Street for enhanced connectivity.
- Encourage longer store and service hours for an enhanced night life and a lively downtown vibe.
- Provide year-round amenities such as cafés/ restaurants, and tourist-based destinations on the waterfront.
- Provide for sports tourism events.
- Locate a post-secondary institution in Cobourg for youth retention and job creation.
- Provide a year round light show on Victoria Hall.
- Additional large-scale events and music programming.

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## Interactive Handouts

During the event, participants were provided with handouts that included a range of precedent images and ideas regarding downtowns, and were encouraged to identify the most desirable images that resonated with them.

### Handout Question

*What do you think about public spaces and streets in the Downtown?*

Comments included:

- Underutilized public spaces. Trailer park is not the best use for such a high profile waterfront site.
- Canada is a winter country. Thought needs to be given to creating outdoor space that works in winter. Comfortable seating, natural wind breaks, sunny spots to enjoy winter as much as summer is desired.
- Downtown is attractive. More consistent and unique materials should be used to identify pedestrian walkways between the Downtown and the Waterfront.

### Handout Question

*What do you think about buildings, land uses and new development in the Downtown?*

Comments included:

- Trailer park is not the highest and best use.
- Enhance the overall park experience through more facilities and programming.
- Encourage mixed-use development intensification that is sensitive to heritage, massing, and the historic streetscape to can help to encourage more people to live Downtown
- Retail streets could incorporate winterized pedestrian facilities to enhance pedestrian comfort during the winter or poor weather conditions.

## CIP Workshop Summary

The second half of the workshop focused on the Community Improvement Plan (CIP), which included a presentation and discussion on the relevant incentives for Cobourg. This section summarizes the outcomes.

### 1) Critical Community Improvement Needs?

- Need to get more people living in the upper stories of buildings. Also important to get some businesses on the upper stories.
- Important to get residential density on vacant lots/sites.
- Improve non-heritage façades to be consistent with the historic character and encourage a diversity of new businesses.

### 2) Types of Financial Incentives that could work best in Downtown Cobourg?

- Tax Increment Grant (TIG) Program, e.g., see London TIG.
- Grant/loan program for residential intensification on upper stories of existing buildings – should include accessibility, e.g., elevators.
- Façade improvement grant – should include accessibility.
- Urban design study grant.
- Planning and building fee grant/waiver.

### 3) Other Suggestions for Community Improvement?

- Town provided advisory design services for applicants.
- Reduced commercial tax rate as it is currently too high.



Downtown  
Cobourg Today

2.0

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## 2.1 An Evolving Downtown

The Town of Cobourg is a mid-sized community of approximately 20,000 residents but has a relatively large downtown built on the shores of Lake Ontario. Located about 95 kilometers east of Toronto, Cobourg is the County seat in Northumberland County. The town has excellent access along Highway 401, a revitalized waterfront, and a healthy downtown community.

Historically, Cobourg functioned as a regional centre due to its harbour, natural setting, and cultural amenities that attracted tourists, economic development, and residents. In the 19th and early 20th century wealthy Americans came to Cobourg to benefit from its natural setting and cultural offering, and built large summer homes. Some are still part of Downtown Cobourg today. From the early 1900s to 1952 ferry service was provided from Rochester to Cobourg providing cargo and passage for tourists, which helped to attract investment and affluence to the region. As recently as the 1980s the town relied on rail and the harbour to serve industrial sectors, such as iron ore, oil and coal, with storage facilities dominating portions of the waterfront area.

Since the 1980s, Downtown Cobourg and its waterfront has shifted from a busy industrial port, with the Town investing heavily in the Waterfront. In the early 1990s the Town engaged in a large waterfront revitalization project to help fill waterfront lands for redevelopment. This effort was supported by growing real estate demand, increased government spending in community services, and included investments in a high quality public realm and unique residential development.

Most recently, the Town is working to generate increased employment opportunities targeting new economic sectors and industries.

### Cobourg Today

As with so many other communities, traditional retail and employment sectors formerly based Downtown have shifted to suburban settings. This shift was largely due to reduced development costs, the availability of larger development parcels, and other logistical conveniences of suburban areas.

However, in light of these shifts, the Town has been able to direct municipal priorities towards making a transformation of Downtown Cobourg. Over the last 10-15 years investment in the Waterfront has increased. Much of this investment has been shared between government and the private sector. This included new parks, public realm and other community facilities and private redevelopment that has attracted interest in Downtown, creating an ideal setting for further growth and investment.

The Town has been a key leader in guiding new public realm improvements including, roadway infrastructure upgrades and beautification in the Downtown/Waterfront area. The Town will continue to lead revitalization by providing development guidance, financial incentives, and through implementing this Master Plan.

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## 2.2 Attributes of Downtown Cobourg

Downtown Cobourg has a number of features that help to position it for success. A high proportion of heritage resources, many cultural events and facilities, pedestrian-scaled and walkable streets, a high quality waterfront, among other features makes Cobourg an attractive destination for residents and tourists.

### Historic Downtown

Downtown Cobourg has a large number of heritage resources that shape the character of the Downtown. For example, Victoria Hall, a national historic site, is surrounded by historic commercial and residential buildings that define a sense of place unique to Cobourg, and should be part of its evolution.

### Recreation and Leisure Destination

Downtown is set off by a pleasant waterfront with a connected array of pedestrian promenades, paths, parks, and marina that provides recreation and leisure opportunities to boaters, cyclists, and users year-round. The Downtown also includes a high proportion of parks and plazas such as Victoria Park, the Market, the Lawn Bowling Club, and Rotary Waterfront Park, which are used by residents and visitors alike.

### High Quality Neighbourhoods

The Downtown is supported by historic residential areas and more recent high quality infill development fitting appropriately within the existing historic character of the area. However, more housing is needed to encourage additional residents such as families and youth to live Downtown and to support amenities and local businesses.

### Community and Cultural Centre

In addition to being a centre for recreation and leisure, the Downtown is a community and cultural hub within the region. It has museums, theaters, galleries, and is an important hub for major regional festivals and events.

### Active Retail Streets

Although the Town and stakeholders have identified the need to attract more businesses and employment to Downtown, Cobourg is endowed with great retail streets. The high percentage of heritage commercial buildings along King Street, and Division Street creates a unique retail axis that draws visitors through Downtown and towards the Waterfront. The success of these streets is their pedestrian-scale built form and mix of residential and commercial uses.

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*Victoria Hall, Town of Cobourg*



*Street festival on King Street, Town of Cobourg.*



*View of Rotary Waterfront Park, Town of Cobourg.*

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## 2.3 Physical Analysis and Existing Conditions

To produce a viable master plan it is important to understand the critical physical and policy components of influence. An understanding of these conditions is the starting point for preparing responsive recommendations for how an area should evolve in the future.

The following is an overview of the Downtown's physical components that define both its character and its opportunities. Understanding these elements is the starting point for analysis of the physical form of the area.

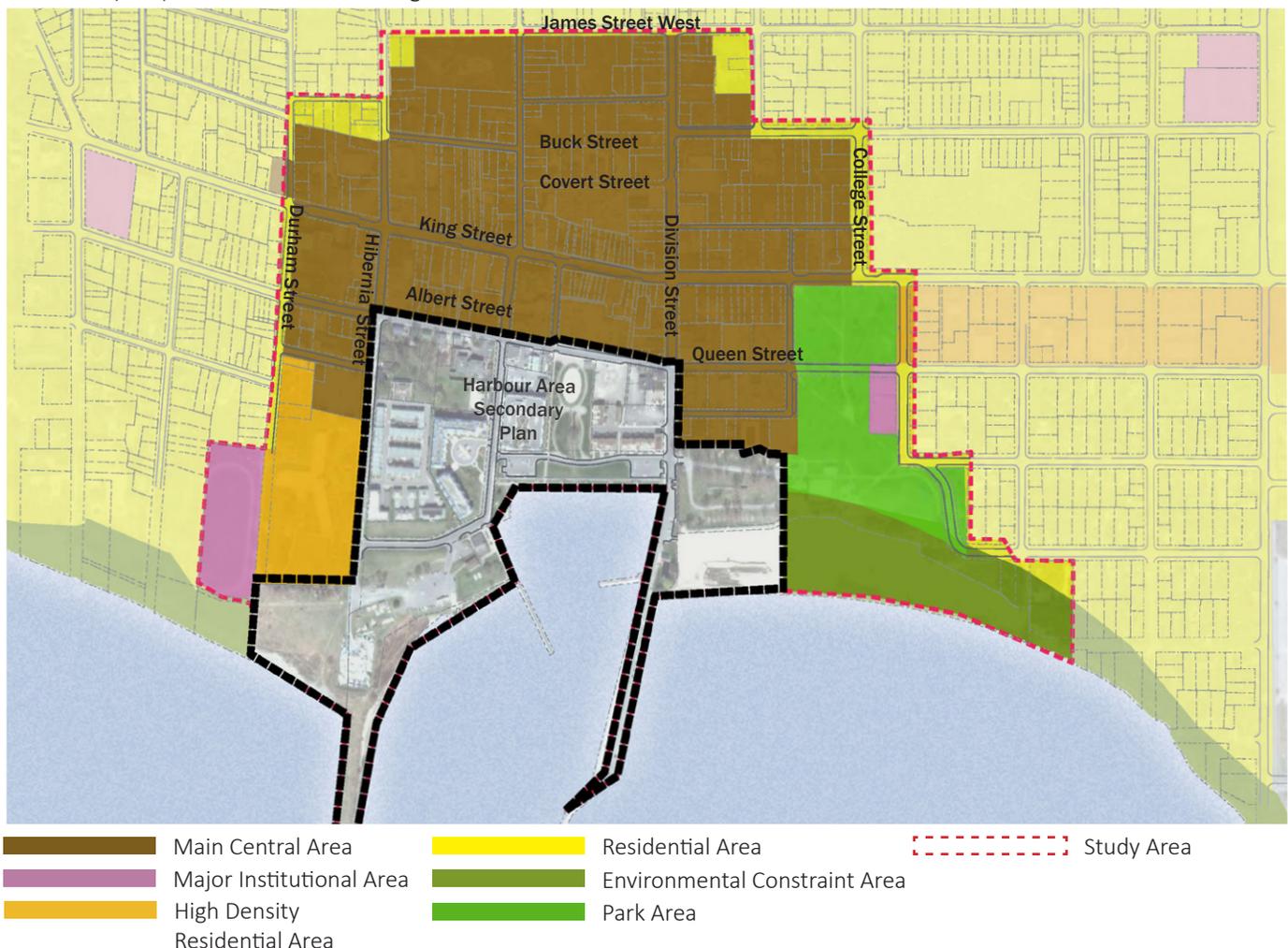
### 2.3.1 Land Use

Downtown Cobourg is a truly mixed-use destination and encompasses a broad mix of uses, including retail, office, arts and culture, civic, recreation, community and institutional. The edges of the Downtown are dominated by residential uses that knit together the historic core with the surrounding

neighbourhoods, while the retail, institutional and commercial uses are clustered along King Street and Division Street. There is a lower intensity of destination-focused enterprises such as restaurants, tourist, and bed and breakfasts clustered around the general waterfront area.

The Downtown possesses a number of ingredients that make for a successful town centre including a growing mix of residential uses, main street retail, recreation and cultural activities. However, it appears deficient in some key areas such as office spaces, tourist, community, and retail amenities and a more diverse population to help

Land Use Map adapted from the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.



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encourage a successful regeneration Downtown. Jobs, amenities, and residents are some of the key elements that help to create vibrancy. Providing a diversity of people who live, work and play Downtown will help to expand the type of retail, services, and amenities that are viable over the long-term.

In addition to the underlying land uses, the Downtown hosts a number of events, festivals, and markets throughout the year that create a vibrant town centre. However, a larger population of Downtown residents would provide significant benefits, including a more stable downtown, greater localized spending, an expanded tax base and more people on the streets helping to create a 'downtown vibe'.

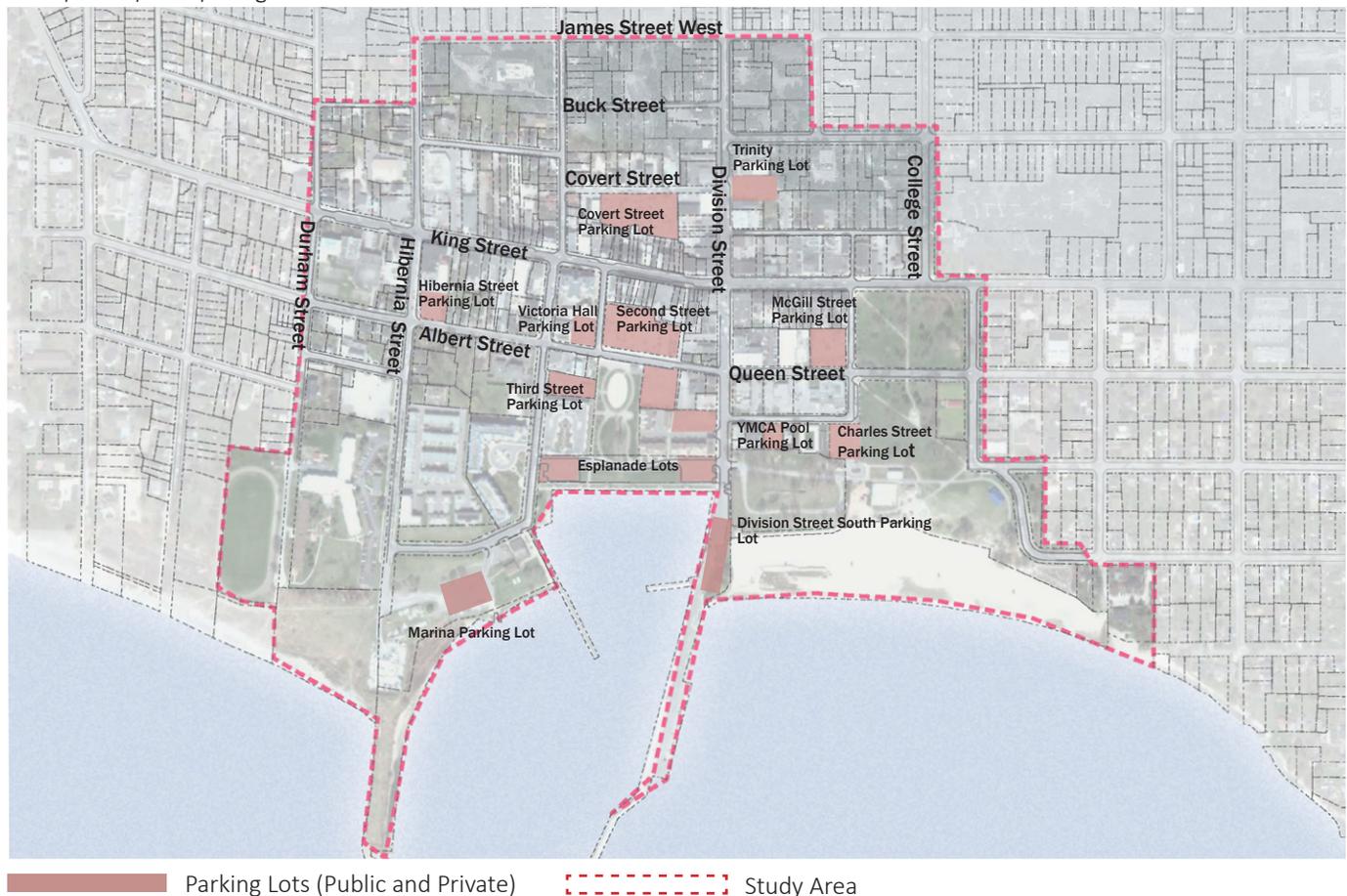
However, a number of sites are vacant or used for parking, which creates gaps and inconsistencies in this urban fabric.

The Downtown Cobourg Parking Study (2014) found that nearly 2,238 off-street and on-street parking spaces serve the Downtown. This includes approximately 418 on-street and 755 public off-street parking, and 1,065 parking spaces on privately owned land. The Study further concluded that the overall parking supply was sufficient to meet demands. Given existing land availability, some of the properties in the Downtown may offer new development opportunities. However, future development proposals will need to comply with the Town's parking policies to ensure that the parking supply is maintained for all users in the Downtown.

## 2.3.2 Voids and Parking Lots

Downtown Cobourg has a healthy mix of existing historic built form with some more recent contemporary development along the waterfront.

Municipal and private parking lot locations



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## 2.3.3 Public Ownership

Most of the land within the Study Area boundary is privately owned. However, the Town and other government bodies own a number of properties that could provide opportunities for development.

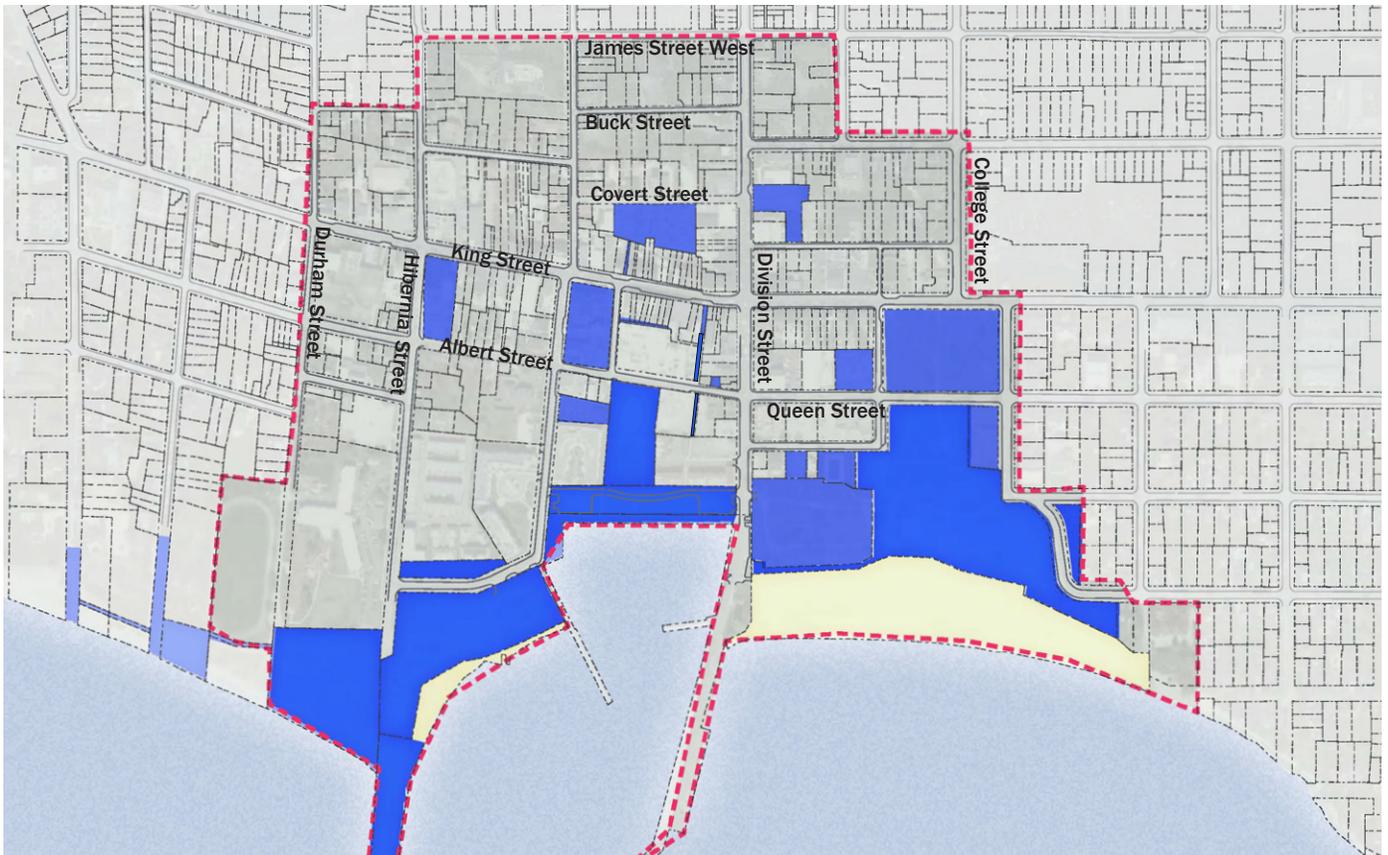
The following is a list of Town owned lands.

- Cobourg Police Services Building
- Victoria Hall
- Victoria Park Trailer Camp
- Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club Grounds
- Parking lots on Third Street, Covert Street, Division Street and Queen Street

The Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West sites represents one of the key properties that can continue to be a positive contributor to the on-going evolution of the Downtown through building enhancements and public realm improvements. In general, these properties provide opportunities for partnerships between the public and private sector to create catalyst sites for future development.

Other key sites include a number of privately owned underdeveloped parcels. Some of these lands come with a mix of development challenges, and in some cases owners have struggled to put together development programs. However, a lot of successful development has occurred Downtown, which provides lessons learned for improving the style and type of development appropriate for Downtown Cobourg.

Municipal owned land



■ Municipal Owned Land    - - - - - Study Area

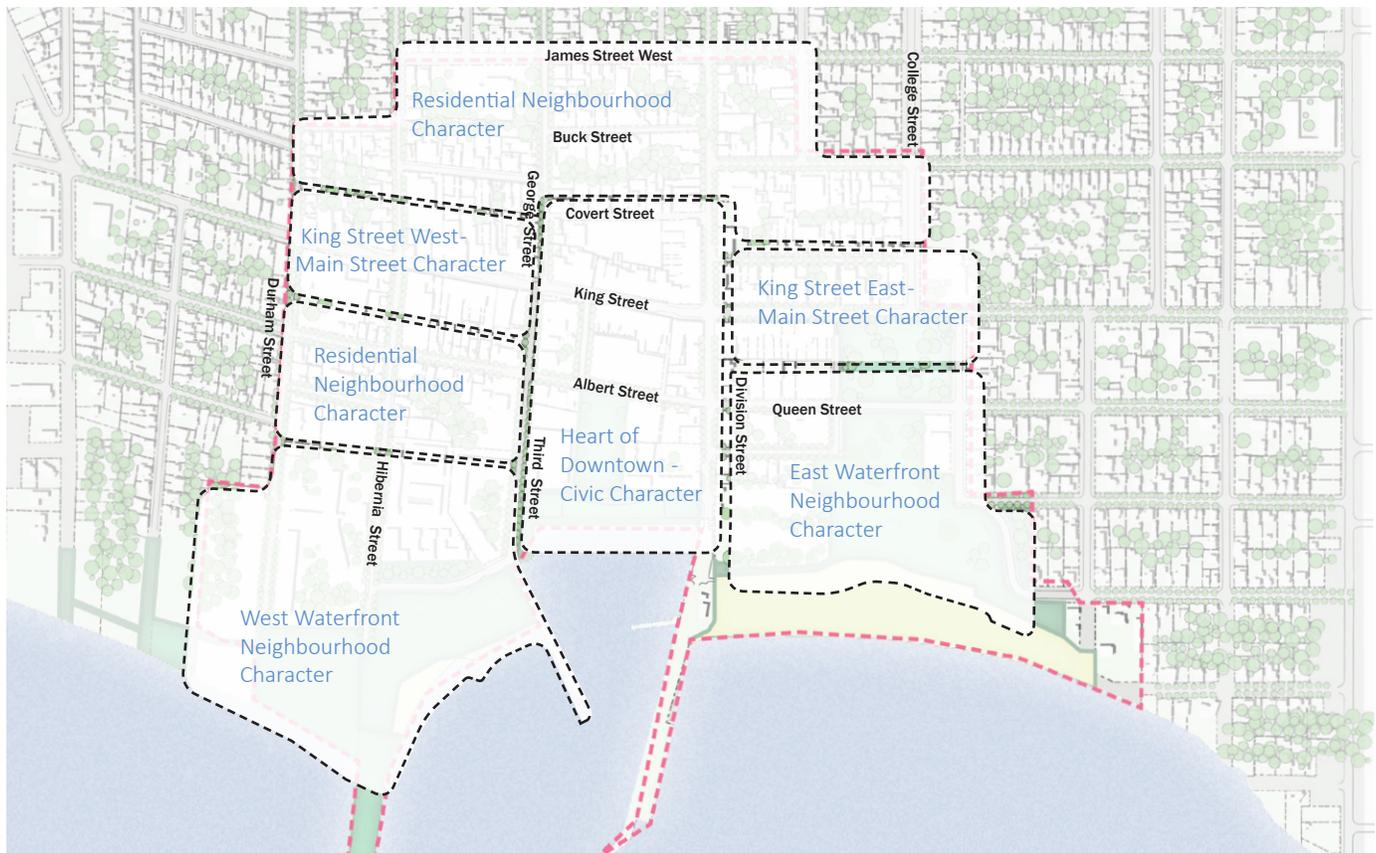
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## 2.3.4 Clusters of Activity and Character Areas

Downtown Cobourg is comprised of a series of sub-areas, each playing a different role and supporting a distinct character. The **King Street Areas (East and West)** encompass the core retail street in the Downtown. This traditional main street is a key shopping, entertainment, and dining destination. The **Heart of Downtown** is anchored by Victoria Hall and includes the Farmers Market and Fire Hall Theatre, Rotary Waterfront Park and provides a strong civic presence and focus for Downtown activity. The **Residential Neighbourhoods** include low-rise stable residential areas predominately north of King Street and south of Albert Street. The **East and West Waterfront Neighbourhoods** include a mix of more recent residential development, some retail uses, parks, and are models for how former industrial lands can be transformed to provide a positive public-private amenity for the community.

Each of these areas have their own activity nodes, and in some cases are activity nodes themselves. Although these areas are prevalent in the Downtown, they tend to be somewhat fragmented, and hindered from attaining a critical mass of activity. Achieving a critical mass of activity will occur incrementally over time by filling in the gaps with appropriate development, providing the right amount of community and retail amenities, and by providing a high quality public realm.

Existing destinations also need to be woven more tightly together to help create a coherent sense of place for Downtown Cobourg. Securing effective pedestrian linkages and consistent public realm design treatments throughout the Downtown is one of the ambitions of this Master Plan. A high quality public realm has important functional consequences for the attractiveness and level of investment potential for the Downtown. It will also help to enhance the Downtown as a destination and a place people want to go to with “things to do and see”.



Character Areas

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## 2.3.5 Heritage

Much of the Downtown is designated under a Heritage Conservation District Plan (HCD) and is one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Northumberland County, with a large number of intact heritage buildings. A HCD Plan provides detailed policies and guidelines related to managing and preserving heritage resources.

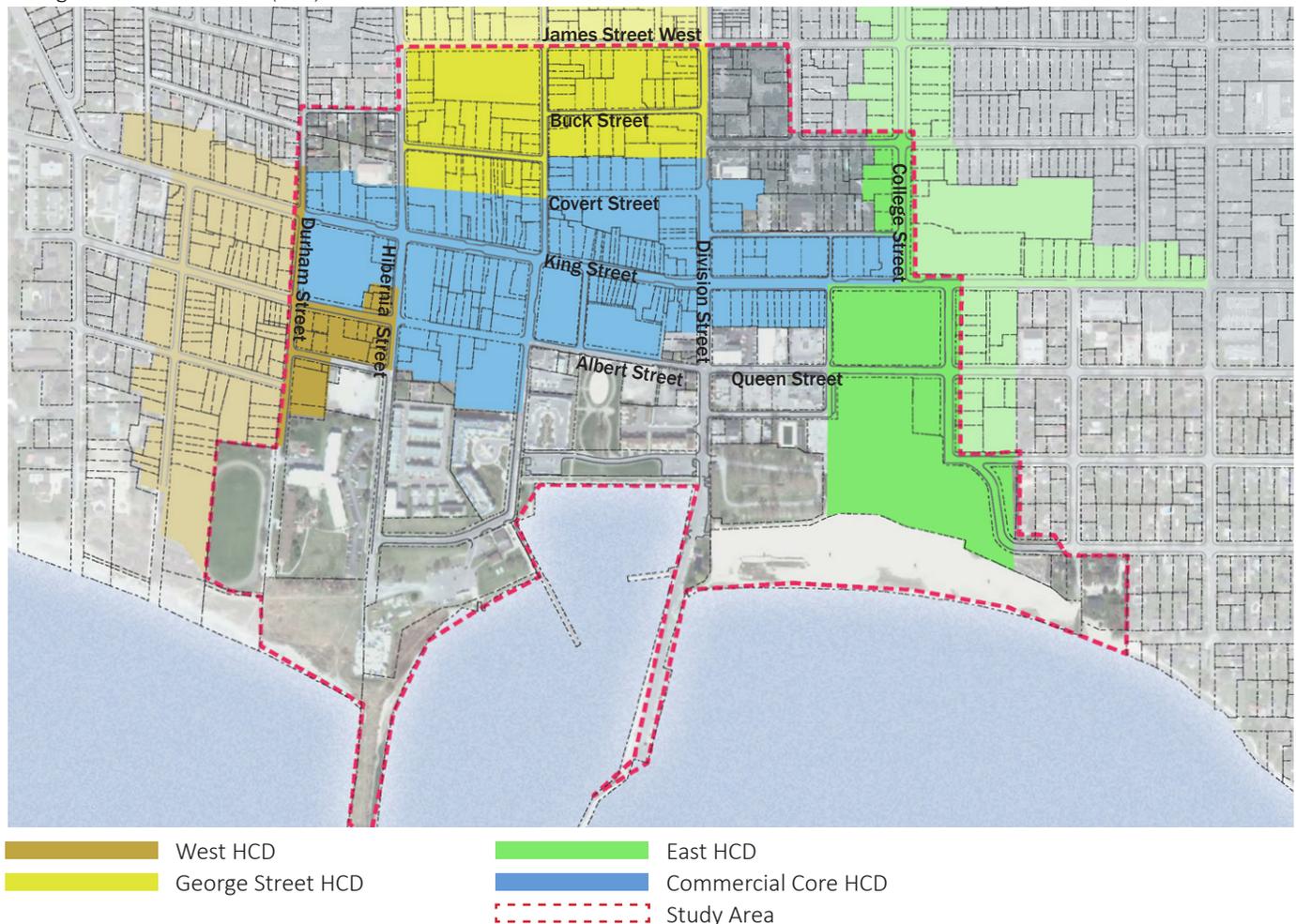
Cobourg is well-known as one of Ontario's most treasured historic downtowns and has a rich history as a vibrant destination. The presence of a historic environment, whether it is buildings, monuments or landscapes, helps to create a unique sense of place and local identity. In many communities, historic buildings and places have played a central role in driving economic development objectives, sustained growth, regeneration and cultural development. Well maintained, historic environments can deliver a range of benefits, including:

- Creating a sense of place.
- Attracting visitors, activities and investments to the Downtown.
- Playing a central role in repopulating core areas by providing character driven housing.
- Providing a supportive pedestrian environment.
- Offering a focus for leisure facilities, such as the arts, art galleries, studios, restaurants and bars.

Much of the original architectural details and heritage resources are prevalent within Downtown Cobourg but some buildings are in need of preservation and repair. Many buildings have been renovated over the years, and for some buildings, the nature of the alterations has obscured the original design.

The special historic character of Cobourg's two main streets should be noted as key form makers for the Downtown. Both King Street and Division Street are the historic commercial streets in the Downtown and are anchored by a high proportion of historic commercial buildings that help to

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD)



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characterize the look and feel of Downtown Cobourg. Currently, the Cobourg Heritage Master Plan and Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plans provide guidance for managing heritage resources in the town.

## 2.3.6 Public Realm

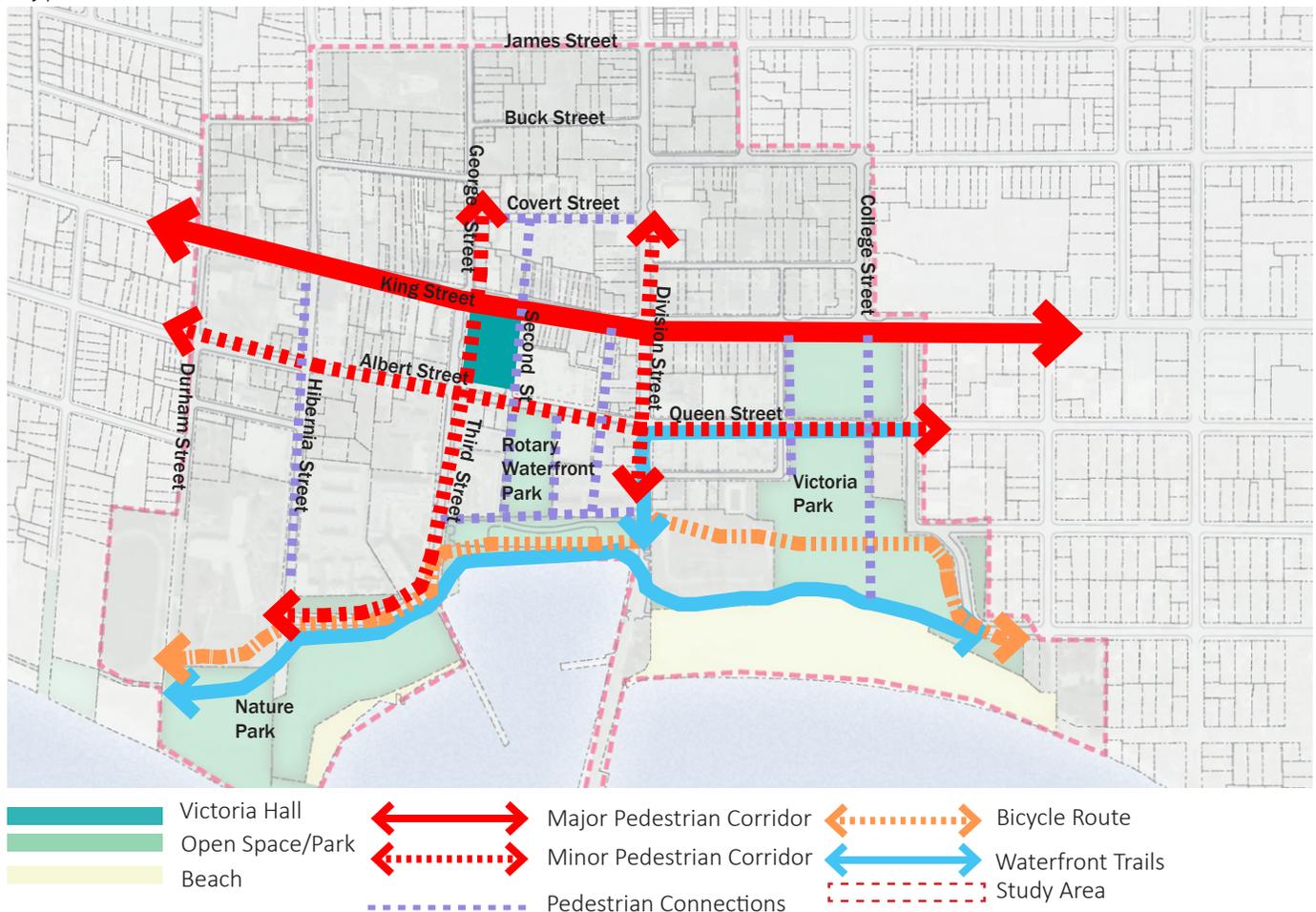
Successful downtowns are walkable urban places built around vibrant streets that support a mix of uses, open spaces, and building types. A successful downtown is also one that enhances the overall pedestrian experience and comfort in both the private and public realms. In Downtown Cobourg, there is a notable abundance of parks and open space. In addition, the Downtown is a highly walkable environment. The human-scale built form and a number of recently developed public spaces and pedestrian paths contribute to the high quality nature of the public realm. In addition, a high proportion of parks including Rotary Waterfront Park, Victoria Park, the Nature Park and the Waterfront provide ample leisure and recreation opportunities throughout the year.

on-street bicycle lane on Third Street, there are no other dedicated on-street bicycle facilities connecting the paths and trail system to the Downtown. Some areas surrounding the Downtown and along the Waterfront benefit from dedicated cycling routes and walking trails, however many of these terminate when they enter in proximity to Downtown. Given the highly pedestrian and human-scale form of development anticipated for the Downtown in the future, providing additional on-street cycling lanes would help to improve connectivity and reduce potential conflicts between cyclists and cars.

The Downtown has the potential for significantly enhanced connections with the surrounding areas and waterfront recreational pathway system. The Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013) described later on in this report provides a number of additional recommendations for improved pedestrian connectivity and enhanced open spaces and provides a reference for future public realm enhancements in the Downtown. The diagram below identifies existing pedestrian and open space facilities in Downtown Cobourg.

With respect to cycling, with the exception of the

Key public realm elements





## 2.4 Policy Framework

The Downtown Cobourg Master Plan operates within an existing planning and policy framework. This section provides a summary of the general intent of this framework with regard to the future of Downtown Cobourg. For a description of the source policies please refer to the parent policy document identified.

### 2.4.1 Provincial Policy Framework

#### **Provincial Policy Statement, 2014**

The current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on April 30, 2014. The PPS provides the broad policy direction for Provincial interest in land use planning.

The Provincial Policy Statement provides for the combination of an appropriate range and mix of residential, employment (including office, commercial and institutional uses), recreational and open space uses to meet long-term needs. The Downtown Master Plan accommodates this policy and will assist Cobourg in meeting the full range of current and future land needs for its residents.

#### **Places to Grow Act, 2005**

The Places to Grow Act (Bill 136) reflects the government's plan for population growth, economic expansion and the protection of the environment, agricultural lands, and other valuable resources in a coordinated strategic way. The legislation enabled the creation of regional Growth Plans in any part of Ontario. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is such a Plan, as detailed below.

#### **Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006**

The Growth Plan (2006) was prepared and approved under the Places to Grow Act, 2005, and took effect on June 16, 2006. The Growth Plan aims to:

- Revitalize downtowns, including Cobourg, to become vibrant and convenient centres.
- Create complete communities that offer more options for living, working, shopping and playing
- Provide greater choice in housing to meet the

- needs of people during all stages of life.
- Curb sprawl and protect farmland and green spaces.
- Reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices.

### 2.4.2 Local Policy Framework

It is essential that directions flowing from the Master Plan are able to operate effectively within Cobourg's existing planning framework including the Town's Official Plan, the Heritage Master Plan and Heritage Conservation District Plans, and the Zoning By-law. In addition, this Master Plan supports other strategic initiatives, such as the Parks Master Plan and the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan, amongst others. Offered below is a summary of the general intent and ambitions of each.

#### **Town of Cobourg Official Plan 2010 Five Year Review Consolidation (May 2010)**

The Town of Cobourg Official Plan provides a vision for Cobourg's future growth and a policy framework to guide its physical development. It documents the objectives and policies for the short-term and long-term physical development of all lands within the town. The policies presented in the Official Plan set parameters for development and provide for orderly growth and compatibility between the many different uses of land within Cobourg. The overall purpose of the Official Plan provides:

- An overall vision for the community.
- Policies for the maintenance and enhancement of the existing community structure, as well as the management of future change.
- Policies to ensure that the level of services provided is consistent with the financial capabilities and resources of the municipality as established by Council.
- A framework to guide the municipality in

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carrying out more detailed steps in the planning process (e.g. zoning, site plan control).

Through the Official Plan review process, specific areas of consideration have been updated and expanded. Modifications to the goals and objectives of the Official Plan for growth management, and a focus on the Downtown reflect shifting civic priorities and consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement and other policy initiatives.

The Downtown Master Plan supports the goals of the Official Plan, particularly by offering an enhanced focus on the role of heritage, culture, growth management and, the Downtown on the town as whole.

Within the Official Plan, much of the Downtown between James Street and Albert Street is designated as the “Main Central Area” and lands south of Albert Street to Lake Ontario are within the Harbour Area Secondary Plan. Much of the

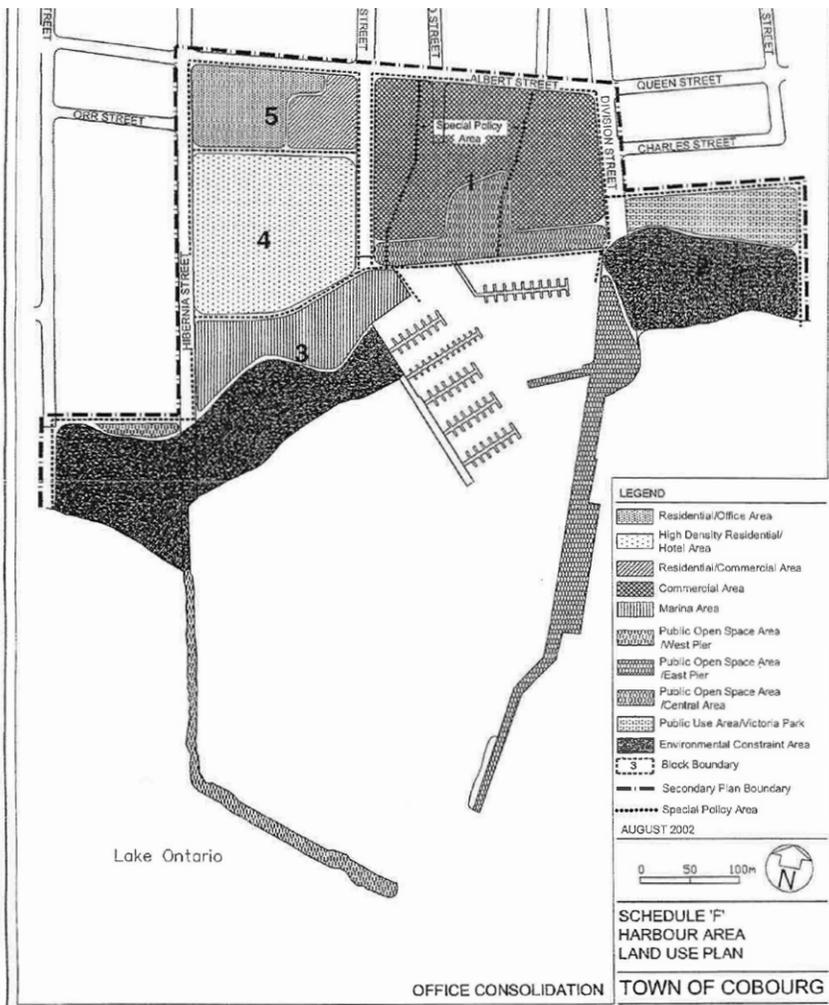
Downtown outside of the Harbour Area Secondary Plan area is part of a Heritage Conservation District and is subject to Heritage Conservation District Guidelines, while the Harbour Area is subject to detailed policies of the Harbour Area Secondary Plan. Intensification potential is extremely limited and subject to specific policies which reflect the special context of these important areas of the community. For detailed land use policy information please refer to the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.

## Harbour Area Secondary Plan

The Harbour Area Secondary Plan is applicable to lands bounded by Albert Street, Division Street, Lake Ontario and Hibernia Street, as identified on the opposite page. Much of the lands have undergone development with the exception of the Trailer Park area and existing parcels along the north-west and north-east areas of the Secondary Plan boundary. Key goals of the Secondary Plan include:

- Ensuring that all development which is permitted in the Harbour Area will enhance the quality of life in the Town on a year-round basis.
- Maintaining and enhancing public access to the waterfront, particularly by pedestrians and bicycles, on a year round basis, as well as boaters on a seasonal basis.
- Promoting development in the Harbour Area at a scale which is supportive of the total Main Central Area, both in terms of design, and from market perspective.
- Strengthening the physical connections with the rest of the Main Central Area and encourage a positive awareness of the Harbour Area as a vital part of Cobourg’s downtown.
- Ensuring that the open space areas within the Harbour Area become a key focus within the Town’s continuous “link-node” open space system.
- Ensuring that development proceeds in the manner which recognizes the environmental constraints which affect the Harbour Area.
- Ensuring that development only proceeds when adequate services are available.

Harbour Area Secondary Plan extracted from the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.



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- Creating and encouraging development of facilities and spaces which will enhance Cobourg's tourism economy and general economy.

The land use policies for the Harbour Area identified below establish the general pattern of future development, and include:

- **Residential/Office Area:** limited to the use of the existing dwellings for single detached, duplex, semi-detached, triplex or quadraplex residential uses, or the conversion of such dwellings completely or partially to office uses. However, uses permitted within the High Density Residential/Hotel Area would be allowed for comprehensive development proposals, which include a conglomeration of the existing parcels.
- **High Density Residential/Hotel Area:** Permitted uses are limited to higher density forms of residential development such as apartment buildings and/or a hotel/convention complex. Building heights as defined in the applicable zoning by-law does not exceed 13.7 metres for those lands between Hibernia St., and the mid-point of the block and 10.7 m (35 ft.) for those lands between Third Street and the midpoint of the block. However, subject to the bonusing provisions of Section 11.12.2, consideration could be given to an increase in height of 3.6 m (12 ft.) for a hotel use located in the block.
- **Residential/Commercial Area:** A full array of retail, office, financial, personal service, institutional, cultural and recreational open space facilities are permitted. In addition, high density residential development shall be permitted in conjunction with the permitted commercial forms of development. Building height, as defined in the applicable zoning by-law regulations, does not exceed 10.7 metres (35 ft.).
- **Commercial Area:** The permitted uses in the Commercial Area in Block 1 shall comprise the full range of retail, office, financial, service, institutional, cultural, recreational and open space uses. Mixed use buildings shall be encouraged, as well as tourist-related commercial uses, in particular, development of a hotel/convention complex. Residential uses shall be permitted as part of a mixed use development. Building heights are restricted by a 89.9 metre geodetic datum at sea level, which provides for approximately 3 stories as per the policies of the OP and Zoning Bylaw.
- **Special Policy Area:** The Special Policy Area designation is an overlay designation applicable to those lands along the Midtown Creek in Block 1 which are located below the regulatory Flood line. These areas would generally experience flooding, but only to a shallow depth. As a consequence, rather than prohibiting development, building would be permitted subject to certain flood proofing measures. Permitted uses shall be those uses permitted in the underlying land use.
- **Marina Area:** The main permitted uses in the Marina Area comprise those related to the marina and other boating activities, including a yacht club, boater recreation centre with facilities such as a reception hall, meeting rooms and the harbour master's office, public parking areas, boat storage areas and boat launching ramps. In addition, other public uses and public open space uses, particularly those related to boat and water activities may be permitted including a pedestrian/bicycle pathway system which links to the urban promenade, a playground, a public plaza, a visitors bureau and the customs office.
- **Environmental Constraint Area:** The Environmental Constraint Area designation includes lands with inherent environmental hazards such as flood or erosion susceptibility, poor drainage, organic soils, instability or any other similar physical characteristic or limitation.
- **Public Use Area:** The permitted uses in the Public Use Area/Victoria Park in Block 2 shall comprise the existing trailer park and any public use such as a cultural centre, library, art gallery, museum or theatre which will serve as an activity centre within the Harbour Area. The existing trailer park may remain until an alternate use is developed for the Public Use Area designation and the Zoning By-law will recognize it as a permitted use. The Town will actively investigate options for relocation of this use and the development of the lands for recreation related or other public uses.
- **Public Open Space Area:** Permitted uses include public open space related uses, promenade,

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plazas, parks, gardens, other pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Within the East Pier Area, certain limited private uses, secondary to the main public uses may also be permitted. Such uses would be supportive of the public uses in attracting people to the pier and could include a refreshment booth and the sale or rental of fishing or other recreation equipment. In addition, the use of a vessel beside the pier for a restaurant, museum or other similar use may be permitted, together with limited accessory shore-based uses.

## The Heritage Master Plan (2016)

The Town of Cobourg Heritage Master Plan is currently being developed. The Heritage Master Plan will update and replace the existing General Heritage Guidelines for the Town of Cobourg Heritage Conservation Districts with individual Heritage District Plans including policies and guidelines for urban design and infill development

The Study Area overlaps with four Heritage Conservation Districts, including the West District, the George Street District, the East District and the Commercial Core District (See Heritage conservation Districts map on page 15). Within the Study Area, there are numerous heritage properties that help to reinforce the history and character if Downtown.

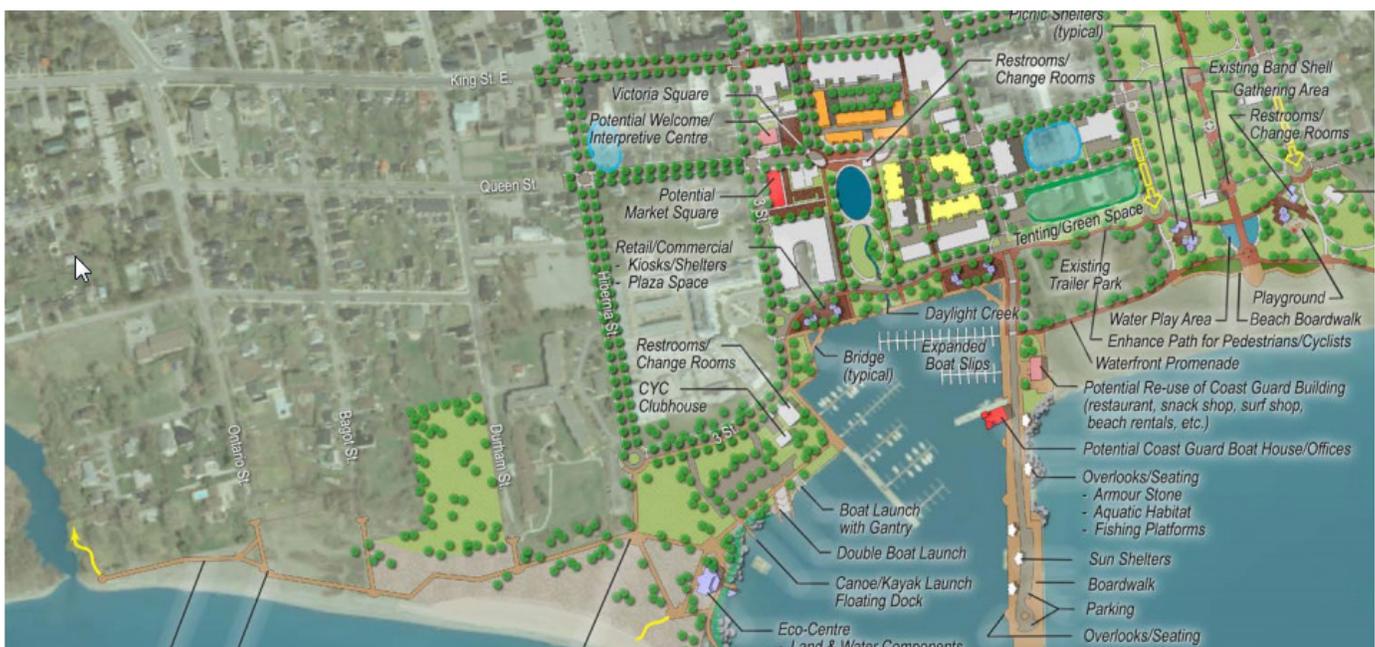
## Town of Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013)

The Parks Master Plan (PMP) was completed in 2013 for the Town of Cobourg as a strategy for achieving the Town's vision for a strong, livable and healthy community. The Plan recognizes the importance of parks and their role in building healthy communities and developing green infrastructure. Part of the PMP includes a Concept Plan for the Waterfront, which encompasses most of the Downtown Study Area south of King Street. The Concept Plan identifies a number of physical design interventions and a long-term design vision.

## Urban & Landscape Design Guidelines (2010)

The Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines provide a town-wide tool to review and assess development proposals in both the public and private realm.

The guidelines are structured to provide an overall vision, principles, and provide detailed examples and recommendations for designing the public and private realms, including streetscapes, building typologies, and landscaping, amongst others. The Downtown Master Plan will reference relevant sections of the Guidelines to help illustrate the design vision for the Downtown and to ensure relevant policies are considered.



Waterfront Parks Concept Plan extract from the Town of Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013)

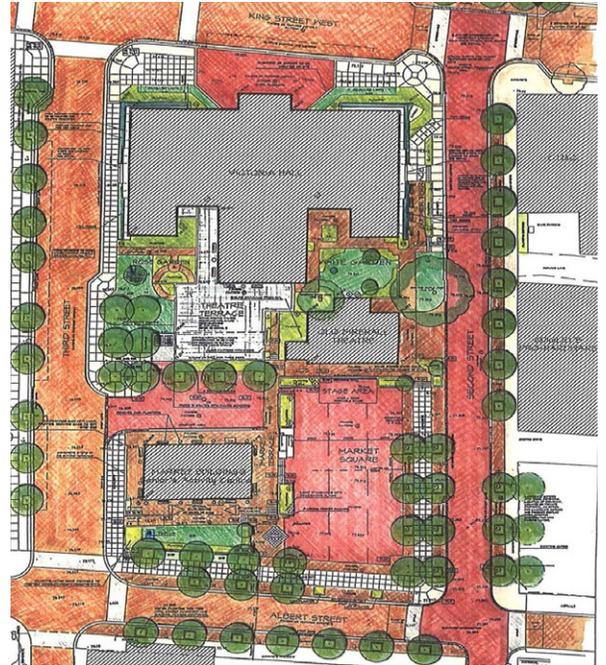
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## The Victoria Square Plan (1999)

The Plan for Victoria Square includes a report, conceptual plan, programming, and visualizations. The Plan identifies Victoria Hall as the heart of Cobourg and Victoria Square as the key gateway to the Waterfront and harbour and a significant factor in downtown revitalization.

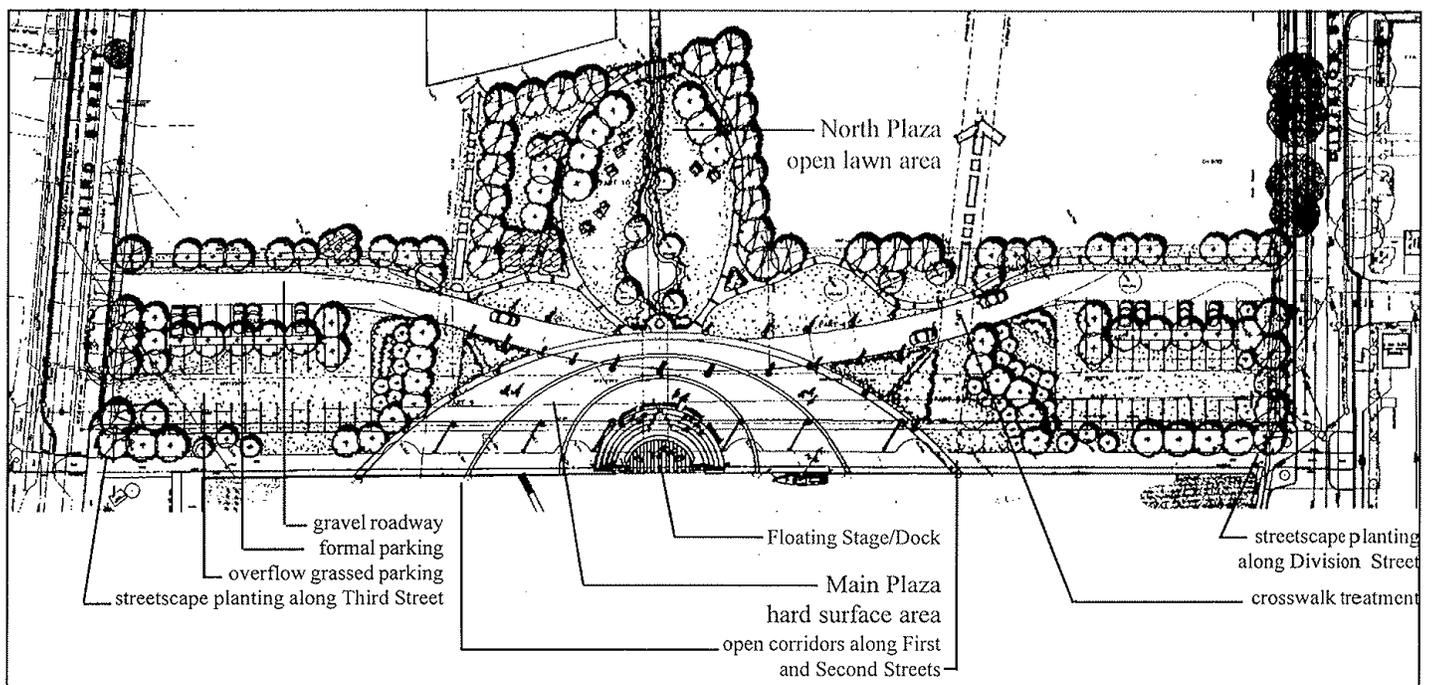
## The Cobourg Harbour Land Design Concept (1997)

The Harbour Design Concept includes a Plan for Town owned lands along the northern edge of the Harbour walkway between Third Street to the west and Division Street to the east. The park concept is designed to provide passive green space, an active hard surface plaza area, a floating stage/dock, and other related public space features.



Concept Plan extract from the Town of Cobourg Victoria Square Design Report (1999)

Concept Plan extract from the Cobourg Harbour Land Design Concept (1997)



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## **Town of Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Action Plan (2013)**

The Downtown Vitalization Action Plan (DVAP) is a strategy, vision statement, and a set of recommendations for revitalizing the Downtown. The DVAP includes a number of background reports, workshops, and resident surveys to help guide the formulation of key issues, opportunities, and actions to encourage downtown vitalization and growth. Key priorities includes:

- The creation of a Downtown Master Plan.
- Municipal Heritage Master Plan.
- Development of a 3D Model.
- Undertaking an engineering survey.
- Producing a 3D virtual tour of the Downtown.
- A Tourism Asset Study.
- A Community Improvement Venture Initiative

In order to implement these key priorities, the DVAP identified a number of strategic elements to provide a focus for vitalization. These include:

- Engage the public and stakeholders.
- Identify and establish a cornerstone business or businesses.
- Establish a motivating, consistent Cobourg position/brand and statement.
- Funding for resources.

- Establish criteria for new downtown business categories and attractions.
- Create strategies for a sustainable, educated workforce, including a youth strategy.
- Facilitate physical improvement/beautification of downtown buildings and effective design of public spaces.
- Establish key performance indicators to measure the future success or program on an ongoing basis.
- Enhance the cultural significance of Downtown.

This Master Plan draws inspiration and guidance from these directives in developing a Vision for Downtown Cobourg.

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View of the Central Marina, Cobourg, Ontario



The Downtown Strategy **3.0**

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## 3.1 The Vision

The Vision for Downtown Cobourg is the basis for the recommendations of the Vitalization Action Plan. It celebrates landmark buildings and valued open spaces and imagines new legacies. It extends the historic walkable pattern of streets and open spaces to the Waterfront. It includes new places to enjoy the Lake and Downtown's cultural, recreational, and retail amenities.

**Downtown Cobourg** is Ontario's foremost cultural and recreational small town destination forged from a beautifully preserved historic community on the waterfront.

As the economic hub of Northumberland County, it will deliver accessible experiences and opportunities generated from local agriculture, environmental consciousness and active, health-centered living.

Downtown Cobourg is....

- A meeting place for business and recreation, and a cultural centre of activity, entertainment, and knowledge.
- A place where visitors and residents experience an historic past and celebrate what Cobourg has

to offer today and in the future.

- Designed for walking and anchored by its historic buildings, the Downtown is both a place to live and a regional destination.
- As the heart of Cobourg, it is a gathering place with unique amenities and supported by great festivals and events.

### 3.1.1 Demonstration Plan

The following is a Demonstration Plan of the Vision and provides a long-term development concept for Downtown Cobourg and is intended as guide to help direct development based on the Vision. The Demonstration Plan illustrates a number of private development and public realm actions and recommendations. Each of these elements are described in more detail in Section 3.1.2.



Demonstration Plan

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## 3.1.2 Key Elements of the Vision

### HEART OF DOWNTOWN COBOURG

- 1 The 'Heart of Downtown Cobourg' - includes implementing the Victoria Square Plan and expansion of the market. (Assumes the space is multi-functional and can transition between a parking lot and public space.)
- 2 Create a new pedestrian connection between Rotary Waterfront Park and Third Street and provide landscaping enhancements to the existing Third Street parking lot for an improved pedestrian environment.
- 3 Enhance the existing buildings to create a retail, café, restaurant or community cluster that interfaces seamlessly with the surrounding public realm.
- 4 Opportunity to convert Second Street as a pedestrian street that permits limited vehicular circulation to be used for public events and as an expansion of Victoria Square.
- 5 Opportunity to re-design the existing Covert Street parking lot in the short-term to provide enhanced pedestrian facilities such as pathways, landscaping and lighting. Encourage the long-term development of the site that is supported by an above-grade structured parking facility.

### EASTERN GATEWAY

- 6 Revitalize commercial frontages and enhance streetscape design, promote an outdoor café and restaurant space as an interface to Victoria Park and as an additional amenity that serves park users.
- 7 Redevelop the existing Park Theatre building as a key entertainment destination in the Downtown. Potential to enhance the whole block between McGill Street and College Street as a cohesive mixed-use development. Provide a small square/ parkette on the corner to provide an entryway into the Downtown.

### WESTERN GATEWAY

- 8 Opportunity to redevelop the former Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West site as a community hub and 'urban magnet' for the Downtown. Integrate appropriately-scaled residential development.
- 9 For the north side of King Street between Ball Street and Spring Street, enhance the existing heritage structures and redevelop the remaining block fronting onto King Street. Create a gateway design statement and parkette at the north-west corner of King Street and Spring Street to help frame the entryway into the Downtown and to create a sense of place.

### THE WATERFRONT

- 10 Enhance the trailer park site as a key downtown amenity that could provide a regional destination draw through future redevelopment (hotel, restaurant, community amenity etc). Possible uses could include a hotel 'pavilion in the park' or a spa/restaurant focused on health and recreation in a landscaped park setting.
- 11 Revisit the Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2011) for recommendations regarding enhancing the existing boardwalk, and preservation of natural heritage features.
- 12 Revisit the Central Harbour Lands Concept (1997) that provided design recommendations and a schematic design for a public plaza along the central promenade wall.
- 13 Revisit the Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2011) for recommendations regarding redesigning the Eastern Pier with potential redevelopment of the Coast Guard building (restaurant, snack shop, rentals, etc.), overlook seating and enhanced boardwalk.

### INTENSIFICATION

- 14 Redevelop the existing parcels to sequence existing condo/town home and waterfront development north with a predominate mixed-use frontage along Albert Street. Frame the Park with townhouses similar to the development directly to the south.
- 15 Encourage the redevelopment of the Albert Street/ Second Street parking area into a mixed-use residential development. Encourage at-grade retail uses along the Albert Street and Second Street frontages.
- 16 Encourage the redevelopment of the existing vacant parcel as a new mid-rise mixed-use residential development and provide a new pedestrian connection between Third Street and Hibernia Street.
- 17 New medium-density mixed-use residential development on the Canada Post site. Encourage at-grade retail uses along the McGill Street frontage as a new interface with Victoria Park.
- 18 Provide limited infill development of the Legion Village site with compatible residential typologies, enhanced open spaces and other amenities. Provide new pedestrian connections set around ample green space and connectivity with the Nature Park and Ecology Garden.
- 19 Redevelop the Cobourg Collegiate Institute West playing field site with a range of high quality townhouse and condominium typologies. Provide a new public open space that interfaces with the development and Waterfront and provide a gathering place for residents.

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## PROMINENT GREEN STREETS AND KEY PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS

- 20 Develop the First Street Pedestrian connection, as identified on the Demonstration Plan, that provides a link between the Waterfront and King Street.
- 21 Enhance the Henley Arcade pedestrian connection as a point of entry between the Covert Street parking lot and King Street. Pedestrian enhancements could include a sidewalk expansion that encircles the parking lot and provides an interface for retail uses.
- 22 Green street treatment with enhanced streetscaping and street trees, as identified on the Demonstration Plan.
- 23 Provide a consistent design palette along King Street including landscaping, street trees, cross-walks and street furniture from Church Street to Durham Street.
- 24 Provide a pedestrian path that connects Third Street with Hibernia Street.



3D visualization of the Demonstration Plan

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## 3.2 Guiding Development Principles for Downtown Cobourg

Downtown Cobourg is defined by its tree-lined streets, intimate pedestrian-scaled atmosphere, low-rise development, comfortable walkable streets, and a wealth of heritage resources. A strong sense of place and a remarkable waterfront and landscape setting create a distinctive Downtown.

Articulating the direction in which change can occur is important for preserving the distinctive quality of the Downtown today. The following [Guiding Principles](#) provide direction and support for the Vision and represent the fundamental objectives that must be considered when making planning related decisions. Through the public consultation process and analysis, the following guiding principles have been derived to ensure the successful development of the Downtown.



View south of Waterfront Rotary Park from Albert Street, Cobourg, Ontario



## Maintain and Enhance the Heritage Character of Downtown Cobourg

Most of Downtown Cobourg is designated as a Heritage Conservation District. Heritage structures, landscapes, and symbols of Cobourg's past should be retained and celebrated. Whole individual buildings and properties are important to be conserved as well as the broader character of the streetscape and neighbourhoods. This will contribute to an authentic and marketable identity for the Downtown.

In addition, the Heritage Master Plan (HMP) provides the following Vision that should be considered.

*“Cultural heritage resources within Downtown Cobourg should be conserved and enhanced, while managing change so that the Downtown can continue to grow in keeping with the heritage character of Cobourg while preserving the vibrant small-town feel.”(Paraphrased from pg. 5 - HMP Vision)*

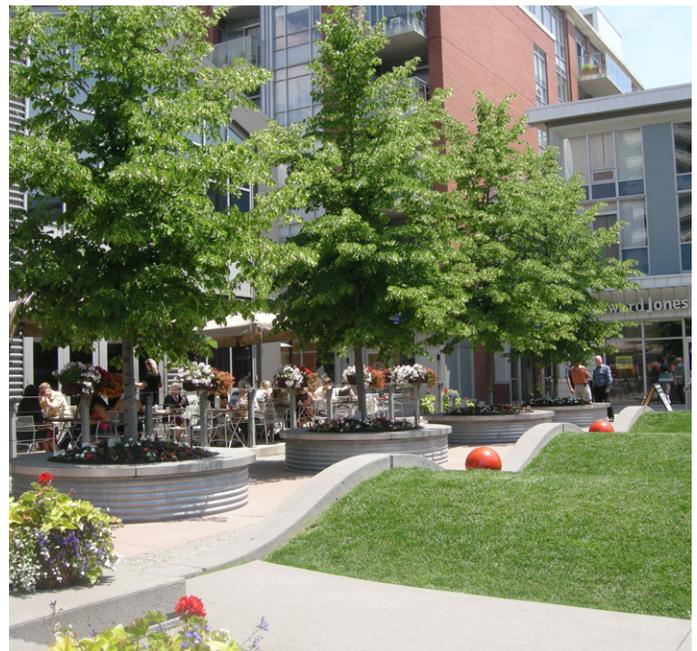


Victoria Hall, Cobourg, Ontario.



## Encourage High Quality Architecture and Public Realm Design

The physical improvement of Downtown is perhaps the most critical influence on future investment potential. This involves aesthetic improvements and urban design enhancements as well as improving the pedestrian environment. If Downtown Cobourg is to be successfully re-branded as a desirable target for residential and commercial investment, all new building and public realm development must incorporate the highest quality design possible, contribute to sustainable development and inspire an authentic sense of place. Augmenting existing open spaces with new parkland, development of Victoria Square, Second Street pedestrian enhancements, and publicly accessible private amenity spaces will strengthen civic and recreational opportunities within the Downtown and help to improve its attractiveness.



Public plaza, Port Credit, Ontario.

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## Diversity of Uses

Provide a diverse mix of uses to draw and support a broad demographic, including youth and seniors. Ensure visitors have places to stay and provide shoppers with interesting, unique retail and locally produced products. Modestly increase the range of residential land uses to provide a diversity of housing forms to meet the needs of the population, seniors and young families. Live work opportunities may be provided whereby residents and workers will have the opportunity to live, work and shop in the Downtown. Encourage mixed building typologies and higher density residential uses in close proximity to parkland and open space areas and/or as permitted within commercial areas to support a vibrant community.

Promoting mixed use commercial and low impact tourism development will serve the broader community, while meeting the needs of the local population and enhance day to day community life.



## Strengthen Existing Neighbourhoods

Downtown Cobourg includes a healthy residential neighbourhood structure with a number of low-rise single family areas, seniors residences, private condominiums/apartments, and local retail amenities. Future growth Downtown will require an appropriate level of additional retail and other community amenities to support the existing and future residents.

In addition, new development must respect and enhance the character of the Downtown with compatible development. Existing historic buildings should be conserved and enhanced. While, infill development needs to be compatible with Heritage Conservation District Plans that set out goals and objectives for conservation in addition to policies and guidelines for managing change to existing buildings.



*At-grade retail and sidewalk cafés, Orenco, Oregon.*



*A mix of housing types, Vancouver, British Columbia.*

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## Economic Development

A key objective of the Master Plan is to create a high quality setting for people to live, work, and play. Together with attracting new economic activities, this will help to establish Downtown Cobourg as a centre for business and investment. In addition, the Downtown should be the most vibrant, interesting, and active part of town, and arguably, of the larger region.

Tourism, hospitality, institutional, and other catalyst-type projects should be encouraged to help promote the development of more Downtown destinations. In addition, the Plan encourages the promotion of a range of improvements including new uses, public realm enhancements, and amenities to help promote economic growth Downtown.



## A Vibrant and Creative Downtown

Cobourg is distinguished by a wealth of natural and built features. Conservation lands, parks, and natural heritage elements are structuring elements within the Downtown and provide important recreation and ecosystem functions. Additionally, there are a number of cultural elements and events significant in the Downtown that are rooted in a long and celebrated history important throughout the region including: Victoria Hall; the Cobourg Farmers' Market; the East Pier; Lighthouse; the Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre; St. Peter's Church; the Park Theatre; Dressler House; and the Art Gallery of Northumberland. These resources need to be conserved and celebrated.

Downtown has become a place to enjoy for an afternoon or a day or two but also a place to live. Many have moved to Cobourg's core to be near the Waterfront, King Street, and the cultural attractions and amenities offered. To enhance Downtown as a major cultural destination and to meet the needs of future residents, there must be a diverse range of services, facilities, and destinations provided. These uses could include entertainment, cultural/recreation, hospitality/lodging amenities, and these should remain centrally located.



Marina Boardwalk, Cobourg, Ontario.



Cobourg Sandcastle Festival.

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## Sustainable Development and Natural Systems

The Downtown Master Plan encourages the protection, restoration and enhancement of ground water, surface water, natural features, and habitat. Natural features identified through guiding policy such as the Town of Cobourg Official Plan, and the Northumberland County Official Plan - Provincially Significant Wetlands and Areas of Natural Scientific Interest are protected and managed in a manner that promotes long-term environmental sustainability in Downtown.

The Town's system of natural features has a significant role to play in ensuring a healthy environment. This Master Plan encourages environmental sustainability through protection and enhancement of surface/ground water quality, protection of natural areas, establishment of an urban canopy, habitat management, environmental stewardship and education, and low impact development. In addition, natural features will be

protected and enhanced and cultural heritage will be interpreted so that all can understand and appreciate this area's rich history.

Downtown Cobourg's fine grained streets, natural environmental features, public spaces and historic built form are the envy of many communities. It provides a demonstration of enduring design principles that should inform the planning of newly developing or redeveloping areas. Development in the Downtown presents an opportunity to demonstrate the best practices in sustainable and high quality development, urban design, architecture, and natural and cultural heritage preservation and enhancement. The Downtown Master Plan also seeks to revitalize established neighbourhoods by providing enhanced parks and connections, and protecting the natural and cultural heritage resources for the benefit of the entire town and the region.



Nature Park, Cobourg, Ontario.

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## 3.3 Key Directions for Character Areas

Downtown is defined by several distinct character areas. Each character area has a unique context, built form, and public realm elements that contribute to creating a distinct development pattern and sense of place.

The **King Street East & West - Main Street Character** areas are centered along King Street. This traditional main street acts as the key shopping, entertainment, and dining destination area in the Downtown. The **Heart of Downtown - Civic Character** area is stitched together by Victoria Hall, the Farmers Market, Victoria Square, Rotary Waterfront Park, and the Central Waterfront and Esplanade and is a key defining area of the Downtown. The **Residential Neighbourhood Character** areas include the low-rise stable residential areas predominately to the north of King Street, and areas south of Albert Street.

The **West & East Waterfront Neighbourhood Character** areas represents unique mixed-use areas that include high quality residential uses, retail, parks, recreation, and connects Downtown to the Waterfront.

Each of these areas provide a framework for helping to guide the form and type of development potential within each area. The diagram below identifies each of these areas.



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Victoria Hall, Cobourg, Ontario.



Townhouse development along the Cobourg Waterfront

## Heart of Downtown - Civic Character

This area functions as an activity node and the key center for civic activity and gathering, and commercial heart of Downtown. Victoria Hall appropriately acts as the civic centre of Downtown, and is a dominating built feature. New development should respect Victoria Hall and be subordinate to its prominence. The intent is to maintain the heritage character built around Victoria Hall and Rotary Waterfront Park as primary public spaces for gathering and community events. Compatible infill development, streetscape, and public realm improvements will support a walkable and pedestrian friendly environment.

The Market area should be enhanced by executing the Victoria Square Plan that envisions expansion of the Market and pedestrianization of Second Street between King and Albert Streets. The completion

of Victoria Square will advance the creation of an improved public realm and civic function of the area. New mixed use infill development and boutique retail will help to create a busier and more vibrant Downtown. New infill development along Albert Street will fill in the gaps of vacant lots and create a new address to support retail activity in the area. In addition, new pedestrian connections along First Street from the Esplanade to King Street, and mid-block connections through new development parcels will enhance walkability and provide places for people to sit and stroll.

Albert Street, Division Street, and Third Street also need to be beautified. More intense use of the Covert Street parking lot in the future could include a mixed-use development and a parking structure to optimize the use of this municipal property.

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Pedestrian realm enhancements to the Third Street parking lot and neighboring properties would further enhance the area and be consistent with Victoria Square, Rotary Waterfront Park, and other public realm projects in the Downtown. This could include restaurant or café uses and a pedestrian path from Rotary Waterfront Park to Third Street.

## Key Private Realm Directions

- Redevelop vacant parcels along Albert Street with 3-4 storey mixed-use townhouse or apartment typologies.
- Require a portion of the street frontage for retail or public uses on the ground floors of buildings on Albert Street, Division Street, and Third Street.
- Parking and servicing should not be permitted in the front of buildings.
- Frame Rotary Waterfront Park with townhouses similar to the development directly to the south.
- Building heights within the Civic area shall be according to the Official Plan and applicable Zoning By-law and as identified in this Plan.
- Building improvements and new infill development within or adjacent to the Heritage Conservation Districts shall be consistent with the Heritage Conservation District Plans.

## Key Public Realm Directions

- The Victoria Square Plaza design should be implemented according to the Victoria Square Plan.
- Provide a clear separation of vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist movement.
- Use appropriate pedestrian-scale lighting and park furniture from a selected palette of street furniture.
- Expand Victoria Square with the pedestrianization of Second Street between King Street and Albert Street, permitting limited vehicular access.
- For all public realm enhancements, paving, cobble stone, colours, planting, and street furniture should be consistent with the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines and appropriate Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- Streetscape improvements to Albert Street, Division Street, and Third Street should maintain healthy trees and on-street parking while widening the pedestrian zones and upgrading curbs and distinctive paving.
- A new pedestrian path should be provided between Rotary Waterfront Park and Third Street along the southern boundary of the Third Street parking lot. A landscaped area with seating and lighting should be provided to enhance pedestrian comfort and use of the area.

3D Visualization of the Heart of Downtown Character Area looking north from the Marina.



# Final Draft

## King Street

King Street is the ‘main street’ of Cobourg and meeting place for the surrounding neighbourhoods. Its role is extremely important in terms of revitalizing the area, as it reflects the first impression of the character, rhythm, and identity of place in Downtown Cobourg. One of the key objectives of this Plan is to bring King Street to life by encouraging more retail, office, amenity, and residential uses and creating a welcoming, high quality environment. It is envisioned with a high quality street profile that accommodates:

- Generous sidewalks and café spill-over space.
- Street trees along the entire length of the street.
- A furnishing and planting zone for pedestrian scaled lighting, signage, seating, and street service furnishings.
- Enhanced paving and traffic calming at intersections and key pedestrian areas.

King Street is a place for events and celebration, structured to accommodate street closures and provide areas for flexible event activity. It

is animated by 3-4 storey mixed-use built form fronting the street with parking at the rear, supporting retail-at-grade, with café sitting areas, colourful awnings, and a high level of building transparency.

Each end of King Street is demarcated with gateway development opportunities such as enhanced streetscapes, parkettes, and new mixed-use development to create a sense of arrival. Each gateway development is meant to create a comfortable, pedestrian friendly and “human scale” environment.

## King Street West - Main Street Character

The King Street West area is the western gateway into the Downtown. This area is bound by Durham Street and Third Street and is anchored by the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West to the west and Victoria Hall to the east. Much of the south and north sides of King Street between Third Street and Hibernia Street includes stable historic built form with some recent building improvements and façade upgrades. Blocks between Hibernia Street and Durham Street are marked by the



3D visualization looking east along King Street towards Spring Street with the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute parking lot on the right side of the image.

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Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West property, and low-rise retail uses to the north. This area could be redesigned as a gateway to provide a sense of arrival and entry into the Downtown. This western gateway could be visually defined through using a variety of streetscape features, signage, hard and soft landscaping, and other pedestrian street furniture and public spaces.

An additional objective for this area is for the redevelopment of parcels between Hibernia Street and Durham Street along the north side of King Street with appropriate built form and other public open space enhancements.

## Key Private Realm Directions

- The area should accommodate a broad mix of uses, including institutional, residential, office and commercial.
- The Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West site should be retained as a public use and community hub with limited residential development for the southern portion of the property.
- Future development of the block between Spring Street and Ball Street, north of King Street, should be configured to support a historic main street environment. Buildings should address the street while framing internal plazas and courtyards. Surface parking and servicing areas should be minimized and located to the rear of the lot.
- New development shall have retail at-grade uses and be designed with a similar rhyme, scale, and openings as the surrounding development. Future development shall be compatible with Downtown Cobourg's heritage character as identified in the Heritage Conservation District Plans.
- The historic single family house located behind the row of one storey commercial buildings between 142-144 King Street should be redeveloped to expose and preserve this heritage building. The site should be redesigned to enhance the existing heritage structure to contribute positively to the public realm and historic main street fabric.

## Key Public Realm Directions

- A new plaza/parkette should be designed at the north-west corner of King Street and Spring Street for an enhanced sense of place for the gateway.
- Streetscape features should be added to the block to be reflective of the design features currently applied along King Street.



View of King Street West, Cobourg, Ontario.



# Final Draft



## King Street East - Main Street Character

The King Street East area is the eastern gateway into the Downtown and is bound by College Street and Division Street and is anchored by Victoria Park to the east. Much of the south and north sides of King Street includes stable historic built fabric with some opportunities for limited redevelopment and enhancement. The Park Theatre block includes a number of low density retail uses that break the relatively consistent historic streetwall along King Street. This block provides an opportunity for redevelopment with the Park Theatre as a catalyst development feature.

### Key Private Realm Directions

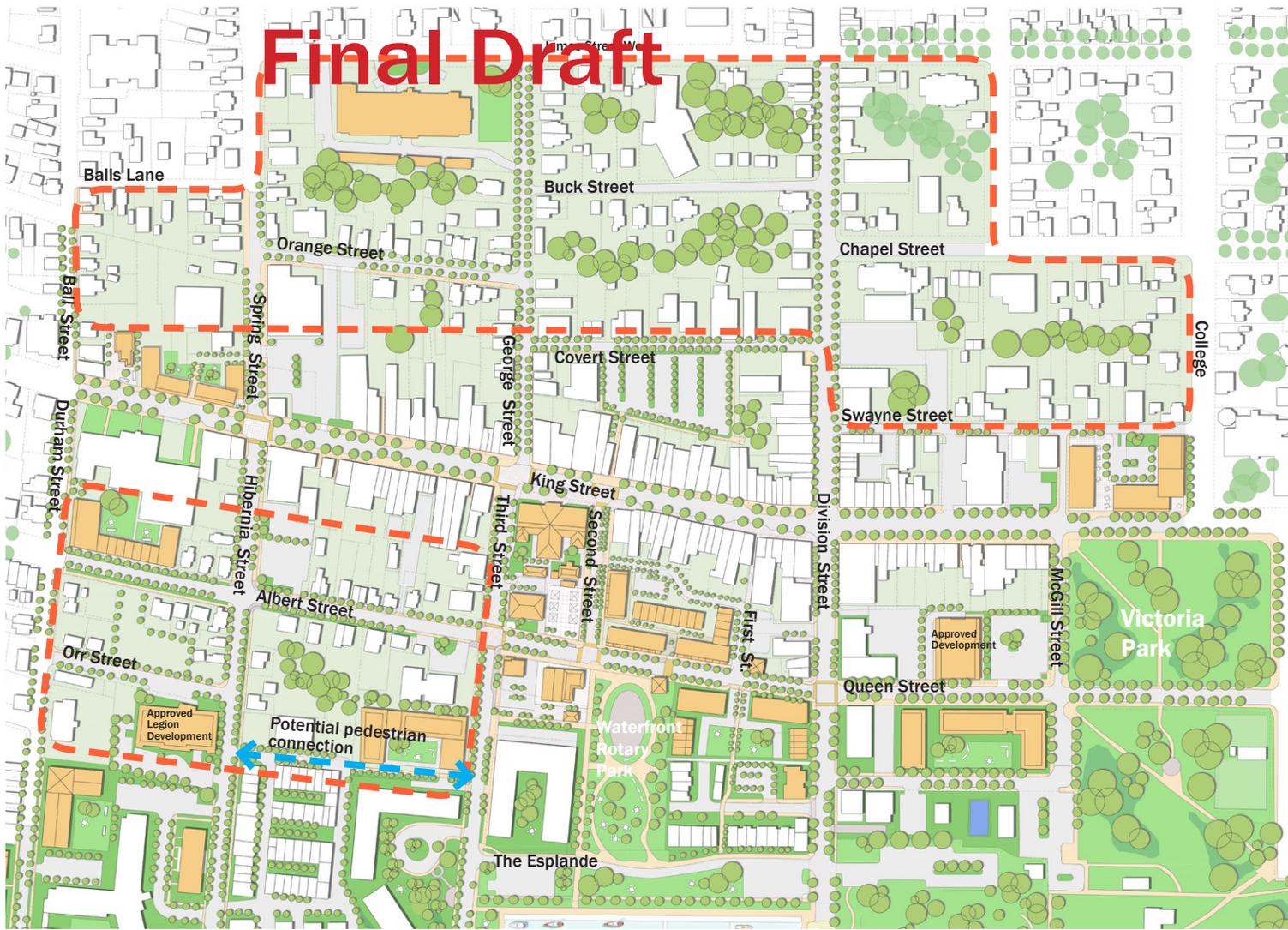
- The area should accommodate a broad mix of uses, including community, residential, office and commercial.
- Opportunity to revitalize the commercial frontage and enhance the streetscape at the McGill Street/King Street intersection with outdoor café and restaurant uses as an interface to Victoria Park and as an additional amenity that serves park users.
- Redevelop the existing Park Theatre block as a revived entertainment destination in Downtown. Potential to enhance the eastern area of the site with a mixed-use development and parkette/plaza feature on the corner to provide an entryway into the Downtown. The Theatre could be redesigned to support film, live theatre, music and other functions.

### Key Public Realm Directions

- Provide a new corner plaza/parkette at the north-east corner of College Street and King Street as a placemaking feature for the gateway.
- Punctuate the Park Theatre block with a mid-block connection to Swayne Street. The connection could provide an expanded public open space for gathering, theater-related events and spill-over retail uses.
- New development shall have retail at-grade uses and be designed with a similar rhythm and scale, and be representative of Cobourg's historic character.
- Streetscape features should be added to the block and be reflective of the design features currently applied along King Street.



View west along King Street, Cobourg, Ontario.



## Residential Neighbourhood Character

A significant portion of the Downtown is designated as a Heritage Conservation District. These areas consist of stable neighbourhoods that provide a critical mass of residents and a local business community that makes Downtown Cobourg a vibrant and healthy town centre. The dynamic nature of Downtown Cobourg provides a positive environment for revitalization and intensification that can support a more diverse community and a high standard of local amenities.

The vision for these residential areas includes enhancing the existing built form and strengthening a sense of place and neighbourhood identity through appropriate infill development that contributes positively to the public realm.

New residential development intensification such as townhouses and garden style low-rise apartments are envisioned. Future development should integrate new pedestrian connections and open spaces and courtyards to create a unique, compact and green residential environment.

## Key Private Realm Directions

- The neighbourhood should be primarily residential and designed and massed to reduce impacts on surrounding properties.
- Mixed-use, commercial uses are appropriate on key commercial streets such as Second Street, Third Street, Spring Street, Albert Street, Covert Street, Division Street, and George Street.
- Redevelopment of the vacant areas of the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West property for additional institutional uses, and compatible low-rise infill residential or seniors housing should be encouraged.
- Allow modest residential infill for underutilized and vacant sites with development that is compatible with the Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- All new buildings should frame adjacent streets and create a frontage condition consistent with the surrounding development, where appropriate.
- Private parking should be directed internal to the block. Parking for new apartment buildings should be integrated within the building, or located to the rear of the lot.

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- Building heights shall be consistent with the Town of Cobourg Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Heritage Conservation District Plan, as applicable.

## Key Public Realm Directions

- Street trees, lighting, and other pedestrian street furniture should be included and be consistent with the respective Heritage Conservation District Plans and the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines.
- Internal parking areas should be landscaped, provided with safe pedestrian circulation, and appropriate lighting.
- A new pedestrian connection should be encouraged along the northern boundary of 145 Third Street.



3D visualization looking north over the Legion Village from the Nature Park.



West Waterfront Neighbourhood Character Area.

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View north towards Rotary Waterfront Park, Cobourg, Ontario.



Precedent example of low rise residential development with grade related units

## West Waterfront Neighbourhood

The West Waterfront Neighbourhood Character area includes a number of key elements, including the Legion Village, the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West sports fields, the Ecology Garden, Nature Park, Cobourg Marina, and recent condominium and townhouse development. These developments are a positive addition to the Waterfront community and provide a diversity of housing and new residents in the Downtown.

Future development of compatible townhouse and garden style low-rise apartments are envisioned for this area. New development will be supported by public open spaces, courtyards, and pedestrian paths to help create a safe and comfortable public realm, a green residential environment, and enhanced connectivity with the Waterfront.

In addition to the directions provided in this Plan, detailed planning and consultation with residents should be undertaken to determine the future servicing, transportation, and public realm improvements required to serve this area.

### Key Private Realm Directions

- Permit limited infill development of the Legion Village site with compatible residential typologies, enhanced open spaces and other amenities.
- Redesign the southern area of the lands as an

urban village set around ample green space and provide pedestrian paths to connect with the Waterfront and Nature Park.

- Redevelop the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West sports field site with a range of high quality townhouse and condominium typologies.
- All development should be set close to the street and provide a consistent setback and landscaped frontage.
- Parking and servicing shall be located to the rear of the building. For new apartments, parking should be integrated within the building.
- There should be a diversity of housing options provided, including low-rise townhouses, low-rise condominium, and rental apartments of different sizes.

### Key Public Realm Directions

- Provide a new public open space within the southern portion of the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West site to provide a central gathering place for residents and to give an interface between the development and Waterfront.
- Ensure that future redevelopment considers and provides adequate pedestrian connectivity through the site, and human-scale lighting and landscaping to improve safety and circulation.
- Revisit the Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2011) for recommendations regarding enhancing the

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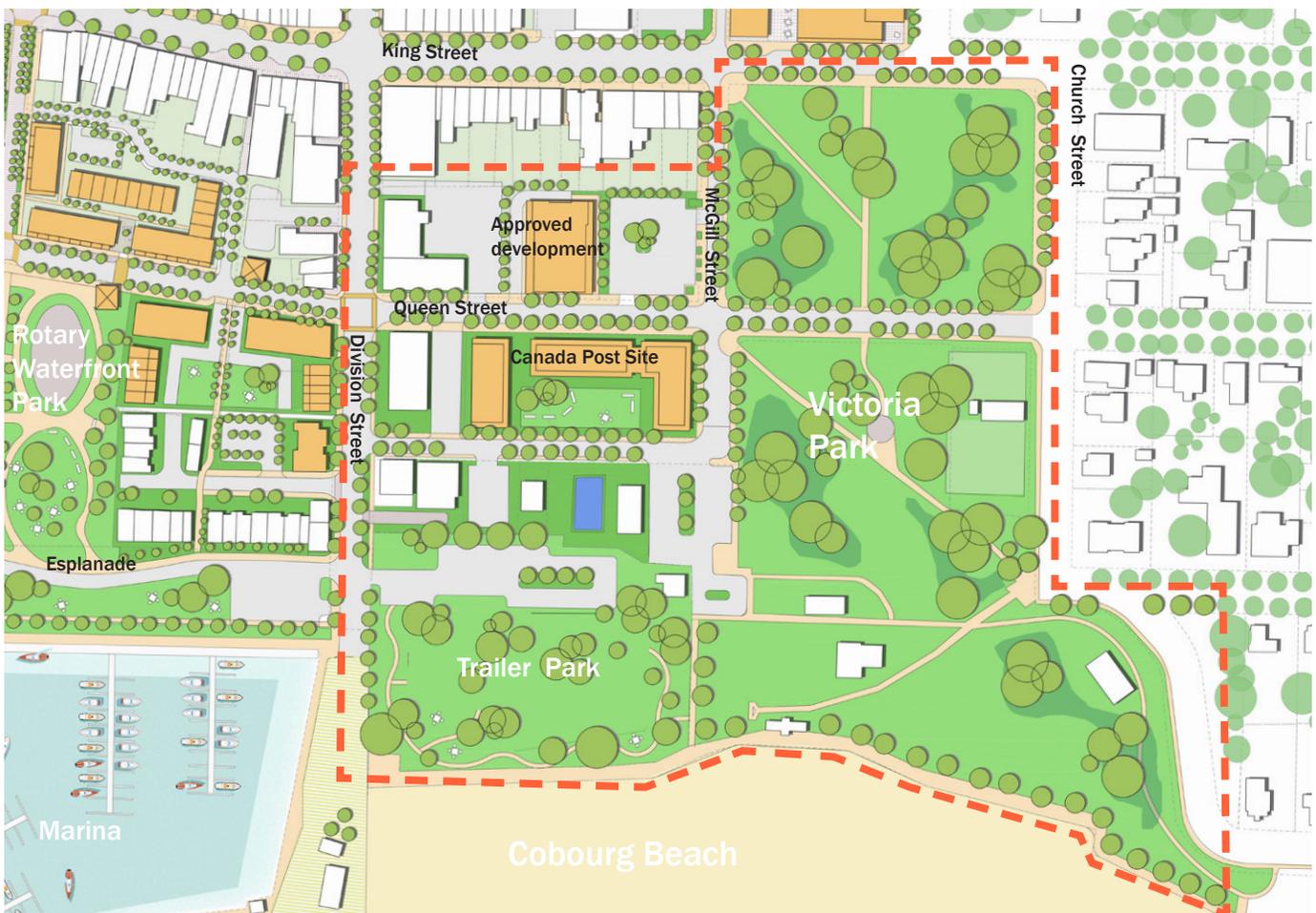
existing boardwalk, shoreline habitat creation, pavilions and overlook areas, boat launches, and other structures and landscaping.

## East Waterfront Neighbourhood

Victoria Park and the Cobourg Beach are prominent features of this area, and they provide important recreation and leisure assets for the Downtown. The lower end of Division Street and McGill Street south of King Street provide an opportunity to create an active retail frontage that leads visitors and residents to the Waterfront, with cafés and restaurants. Redevelopment of underutilized parcels between Queen Street and Charles Street can add more residents to Downtown, improve the public realm, and enhance the overall development potential of the area. There is also an opportunity for future enhancement of the Cobourg Trailer Park site.

## Key Private Realm Directions

- Opportunity to promote neighbourhood repair through medium-density mixed-use residential development on the Canada Post site. Encourage at-grade retail uses along the McGill Street frontage as a new interface with Victoria Park.
- Enhance the trailer park site as a key downtown amenity and destination that could provide a regional destination. Revisit the Tourism Asset Feasibility Study for additional guidance.
- All development should be set close to the street and provide a consistent setback and landscaped frontage.



East Waterfront Neighbourhood Character Area.

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*Precedent example of a green street with low-rise apartments.*



*Precedent example of outdoor café area in a park setting.*

- Parking and servicing shall be located to the rear of the building. For new apartments, parking should be integrated within the building.
- There should be a diversity of housing options including low-rise townhouses, low-rise condominium, and rental apartments of different sizes.

## **Key Public Realm Directions**

- All streets should be designed with appropriate street trees, landscaping, and street furniture consistent with the Heritage Conservation District Plan and the Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines.
- Ensure that future redevelopment considers adequate pedestrian connectivity through the blocks, and human-scale lighting and landscaping to improve safety and circulation.
- Any future redevelopment of the Trailer Park site shall include public pedestrian access through the site for public access and connectivity to the Waterfront. This should include pathways, street furniture, and pedestrian-scale lighting and landscaping features.
- Revisit the Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2011) for recommendations regarding redesigning the Eastern Pier with potential redevelopment of the Coast Guard Building (restaurant, snack shop, rentals, etc.), overlook seating and enhanced boardwalk.

# Final Draft Part 2 GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



GENERAL URBAN  
DESIGN DIRECTION **4.0**

# Final Draft

## 4.1 Introduction

The Town of Cobourg has a number of overarching guidelines and objectives for the Downtown. In addition to the Guidelines provided in this document, refer to the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines and the Heritage Conservation District Plans, as applicable.

This Plan provides a number of supplemental guidelines that offer a general approach to design and are therefore flexible in interpretation. However, the intent of these guidelines is to provide direction for Downtown development. When applied, they will facilitate the development of a high quality built environment.

The emphasis in this section is to develop a general approach for improving the character of Downtown Cobourg. This could involve enhancing existing building façades and sensitive design of new infill buildings over time. The overriding objective is to improve what is already good about the Downtown environment and ensure new development will not detract from this. In this way the Downtown can grow to realize its full potential without sacrificing its character.

The guidelines presented are categorized as follows:

- Built Form and Infill Development
- Public Realm Structure
- Movement

### **Built Form and Infill Development**

These guidelines provide recommendations related to physical development and built form and relate to appropriate building orientation and massing, building heights, setbacks, façade design, signage, and infill development.

### **Public Realm Structure**

The Public Realm Structure guidelines provide recommendations for open space improvements, which build upon the existing public realm in Downtown Cobourg. The objective is to provide a framework to help guide the development of an attractive and green environment, and to enhance pedestrian safety and wayfinding.

### **Movement**

The Movement guidelines provide a framework for creating an accessible and connected environment, to improve connectivity, and highlight the role of movement within the Downtown for all users (pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers).

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## 4.2 Built Form and Infill Development

The way one experiences a place is conveyed largely through the architecture of the built form and the way buildings and the public realm look and feel.

As Downtown Cobourg continues to evolve each new or refurbished building must be given careful consideration with respect to how it contributes to the overall image of Downtown.

Buildings should reflect Cobourg's existing historic character, while illustrating contemporary design ideas and contributing to a sense of place and visual coherence. New development must be mindful of the impact on the environment, the local context, heritage, and the overall image and Downtown brand.

The following guidelines should be considered for new Downtown buildings:

- Encourage architectural diversity to create a dynamic, contemporary image of the Downtown.
- Provide an opportunity for the integration of public art with a building - as part of the structure or its public realm.
- A mix of materials and colour should be encouraged to provide design variation.
- Promote buildings of enduring quality.

### 4.2.1 Heights and Massing

Height restrictions protect pedestrian areas from shade and shadow and are key to maintaining a sense of human scale that enhances the quality of the streetscape and the 'village' character of Downtown Cobourg.

Much of Downtown Cobourg is governed by strict height policies in order to protect significant sight lines, views, and historic character. It's recommended that these height limits (currently two - four storeys) be retained in order to protect the existing heritage character of the area and to maintain the visual prominence of buildings such as Victoria Hall. However, in some locations, there are opportunities for additional height, at the discretion of the Town, as per the Official Plan and Zoning By-law. The height diagram on the next page is adapted from the Town of Cobourg Official Plan. For specific direction regarding permitted heights, please refer to the appropriate Heritage Conservation District Plan, Zoning By-Law 85-2003, and the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.



*Precedent example of a newly renovated historic mixed use building.*



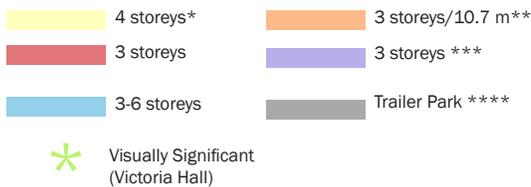
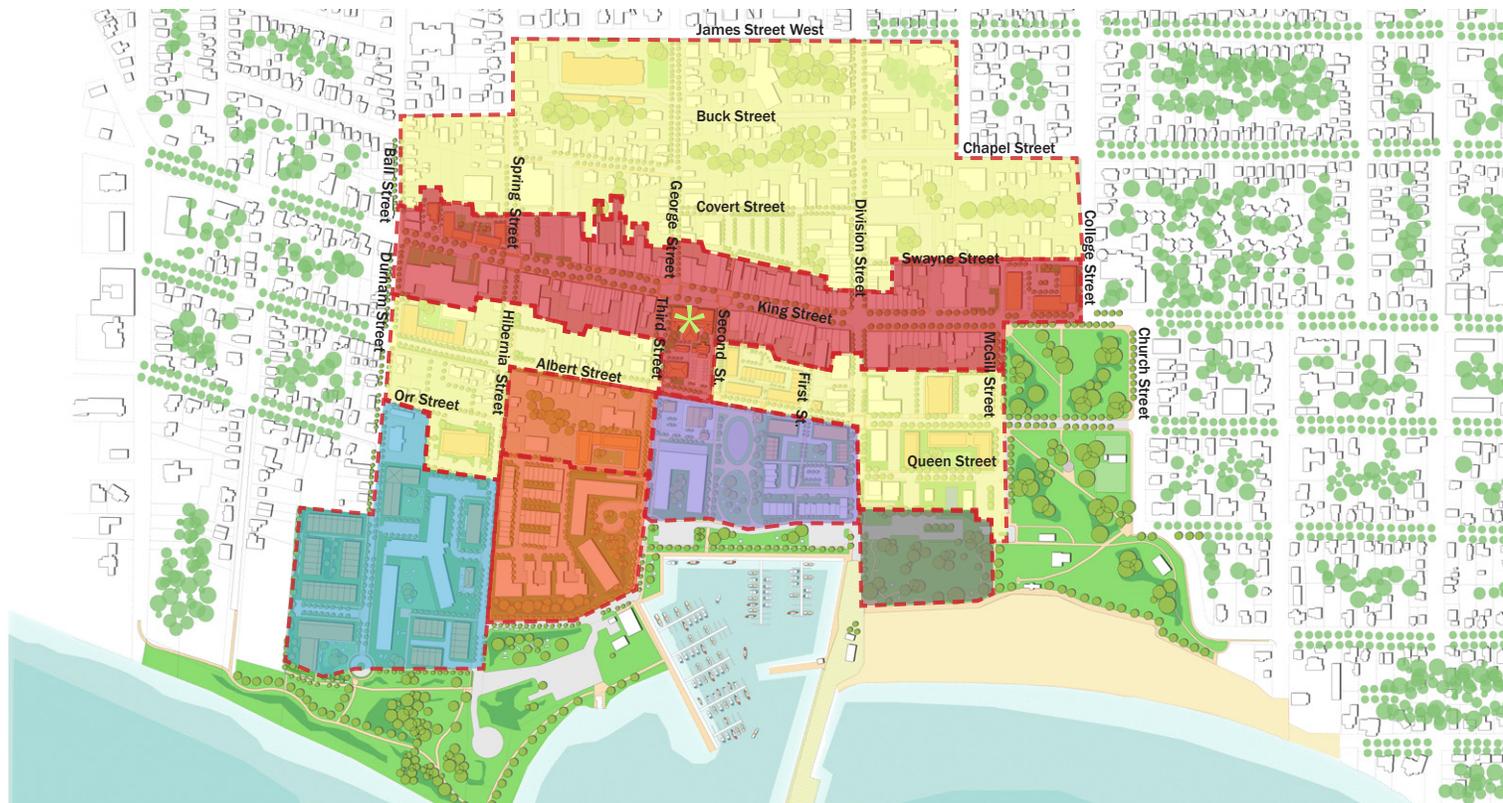
*Precedent example of human-scale massing.*



*Precedent example of a townhouse development integrated with high quality public open space, Cobourg, Ontario.*

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Height Diagram adapted from the Town of Cobourg Official Plan.



\* Development may be permitted to a maximum of 6 storeys subject to detailed examination and at the discretion of the Town, and subject to the respective Heritage Conservation District Plan, Zoning By-law, and the Official Plan.

\*\* Maximum 13.7 metre height is permitted for development between Hibernia St., and the mid-point of the block south of Roberts Row. Subject to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law, an additional 3.7 metres would be permitted for a hotel use.

\*\*\* Not to exceed 89.5 metres c.g.d (geodetic datum at sea level).

\*\*\*\* The existing trailer park may remain until an alternate public use is developed for the site. The Town will investigate options for relocation of this use and the development of the lands for recreation related or other public uses.

## Massing and Orientation

Generally, buildings orient toward the street in order to clearly define the public realm, create a consistent streetscape, and a safe and attractive pedestrian environment.

- Buildings situated on private streets or lanes will be sited and oriented as if located on a public street to clearly define the public realm and create an attractive environment for pedestrians.
- Buildings located on corner lots should have well developed façades on both street frontages.
- All corner lot buildings should express features of architectural interest including wrap around porches, bay windows, etc, to enhance the

visual prominence and identity of these important properties.

- Building setbacks are defined by land use designations as per the Town of Cobourg Official Plan and related Urban Design Policies.

In addition to the policies of the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines, the Official Plan, and Heritage Conservation District Plan, the following should be considered for new development.

## Residential Typologies

- Development should be massed to reflect and complement the scale and mass of existing residential neighbourhoods.

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Precedent examples of a variety of low-rise residential typologies.

- Front yard gardens with low fences or hedges should be provided for each at-grade dwelling unit.
- All new residential units should be provided with private outdoor amenity space, either exclusive to an individual unit or as a common amenity available to all units within a development.
- The development of residential front yard garages is not encouraged, but is permitted for single family units provided that the front car garage is setback behind the principal building, and does not exceed 50% of the width of the principal building.
- Buildings should be designed with low profile roofs with distinctive features such as gables and dormers.
- Primary entrances of a building should be from the public street or private street system.
- All buildings shall have windows facing the public street or private street system.
- Façades fronting the public street or private street system and especially corner buildings should be well designed with appropriate articulation, openings, and materials.
- Mixed-use or apartment buildings at key intersections should be designed to address the street corners and reinforce the prominence of these locations through massing, building projections, recessed entrances, and ground level transparency. Open space treatments such as special paving should be considered to reinforce the built form in making these areas visually distinct.
- Exterior materials employed should be similar to those in the Downtown, including clapboard siding, stone and clay brick.
- The use of wood windows and wood or stone lintels and sills is encouraged.

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## Mixed-Use / Commercial Typologies

- The ground floor of new development should be transparent to establish a strong visual connection to the street and create a welcoming and comfortable pedestrian environment.
- To reinforce the character of a “traditional main street” along commercial streets, all new and renovated buildings should incorporate articulated façades to reinforce a rhythm of fine-grain “main street” style commercial frontage. The ground floor of the building should be articulated in a manner that distinguishes it from all upper levels.
- The ground floor of commercial frontages should be reserved for street-related commercial and/or community uses, including stores, restaurants, business and personal services, and/or professional offices.
- A high quality “store front” design is recommended for commercial frontages.
- The second floor of commercial uses should express a regular articulation of windows and vertical relief elements to add visual interest to this section of the building.
- Awnings or other weather protection are encouraged on commercial frontages.
- Prominent corner or visual terminus sites should incorporate modest architectural design features in keeping with the character of the area to accentuate the visual prominence of the site.
- Exterior stucco as the principal exterior cladding is not encouraged on commercial buildings.



*Provide opportunities for mixed-use residential development.*



*Clearly articulate entrances and storefronts.*



*Maintain a consistent built form pattern along commercial streets - view along King Street West, Cobourg.*

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## 4.2.2 Heritage Considerations

Much of Downtown is designated under a Heritage Conservation District Plan, which provides guiding policy regulating the renovation and development of buildings, structures, and other features.

Downtown Cobourg has a high concentration of cultural heritage resources. The preservation of these resources ensures Cobourg remains connected with its past, contributes to its current character and helps shape and influence its form, function and aesthetic quality.

Some buildings have been positively altered over the years and have added to the historic character of Downtown, while other buildings are in need of repair to reset the original architectural detail and façade treatment. It is acknowledged that changes to structures in Downtown will occur over time and, it is also important that these changes do not adversely impact the historic fabric and character of the streetscape. Heritage resources and features must be maintained to preserve the historic character of the area.

Any building renovation or alteration within a Heritage Conservation District or a heritage designated building or resource must retain the overall design integrity of the structure by protecting the original features and materials, as per the prevailing Heritage Conservation District Policies. As such, the Heritage Conservation District Policies should be consulted and take precedent over this document with regards to development within a Heritage Conservation District.

For renovations and redevelopment, special consideration shall be give to the following.

- Preservation of traditional façade elements found on existing buildings creates patterns along the face of the block that contributes to the overall character of the area.
- The character of the existing heritage buildings in Downtown is well established. Future redevelopment areas should look to the elements within the existing buildings to inform the design character or proportion of development.
- The original design and materials of the building should be considered.
- New development must be sympathetic to the existing heritage character in a way that does not



Mixed-use "Main Street" built form, Cobourg, Ontario.



View towards Victoria Hall, Cobourg, Ontario.



Example of historic façade pattern.

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detract, hide from view, or impose in a negative way, on existing heritage contributing resources.

- The historic setbacks of heritage buildings should be maintained and should not be relocated to a new setback line. New buildings must be sympathetic to the setbacks of adjacent contributing buildings.

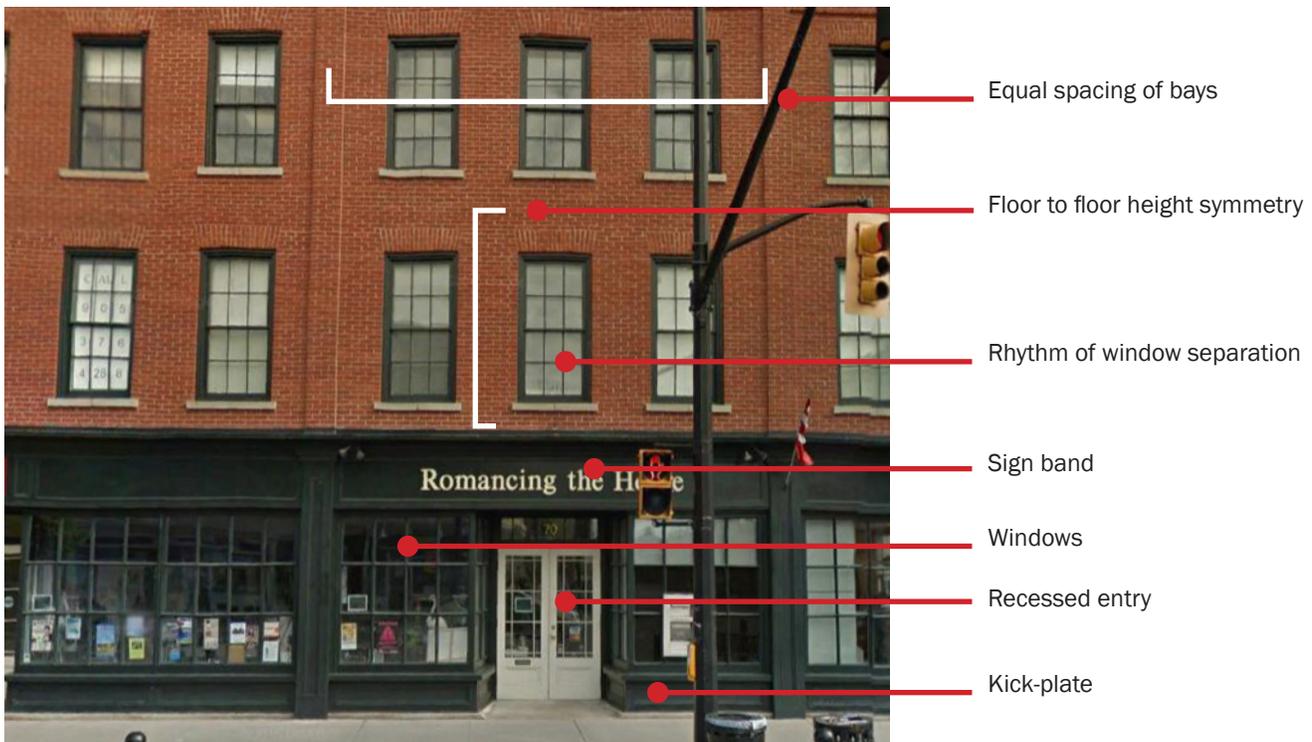
## Façades

Preservation of traditional façade elements on existing buildings creates patterns along the face of the block that contribute to the overall character of the area. The design objective for façades within Downtown Cobourg is to enhance, and restore where necessary, the fine-grained, pedestrian-scaled façades. New construction should complement the character of the historic pattern found in the Downtown, as per the Heritage Conservation District Plan and the Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines.

Façade improvements should aim to follow the existing façade scale and proportions, while allowing creativity for materials, colours and other details.

For façade renovations and redevelopment, special consideration shall be give to the following.

- The original design and materials of the building should be respected.
- Vertical and horizontal rhythm and spacing of façade elements such as windows, doors, and openings, and floor-to-floor heights shall be consistent from one building to the next within the overall streetscape.
- Existing architectural details, such as ground floor cornice and signboard, shall be retained and rehabilitated.
- Preservation or restoration of ornamental cornices is particularly encouraged. Other important façade elements include belt courses, pilasters, windows, window arches and frames.
- For the side and rear elevations that are publicly visible, design in a similar fashion to the front elevation in terms of material use and treatment in relation to façade proportions and horizontal and vertical divisions.

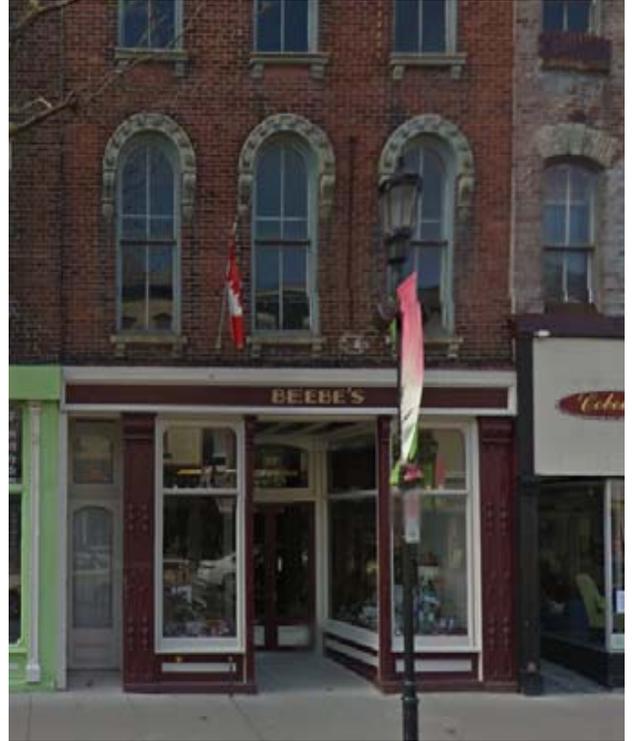


Example of a building façade in Downtown Cobourg, Ontario.

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As discussed in Section 1.0, this Master Plan has been developed with an accompanying Community Improvement Plan that has a number of incentive programs related to façade and other improvements to encourage businesses and property owners to enhance and promote the Downtown's unique character and identity. Please refer to the Downtown Cobourg Community Improvement Plan for specific program eligibility requirements and details.

Generally, façade improvements may include elements such as improvement to signage placement and treatment; design of door and windows and location; awning and canopy installation; façade materials; roof-line design and treatment; and pedestrian-oriented lighting.



*Maintain a consistent built form pattern along commercial streets - view of Beebe's retail store on King Street, Cobourg, Ontario.*



*Example of consistent façade design and articulation along a commercial main street.*

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## Storefront Signage

Downtown commercial streets are human-scaled and walkable environments. They reflect a distinct character, and include a range of historic façades, commercial signage, and other built form elements.

Signage in particular provides identification and a marketing element for businesses and is highly visible from the street. Traditional “main street” signage is an important part of the built environment and historical reference of Cobourg, and should reinforce the historical sense of place and theme of the area.

Appropriate signage should be balanced with the needs of the business, and be in keeping with the design character of the Downtown. In addition to the HCD Policies and the provisions of the Cobourg Sign By-law, as amended, the following should be considered.

- The size of signage should be scaled and oriented to pedestrians.
- Signs should be architecturally compatible with the building they are physically attached to

- through materials, colour, scale and character.
- Signage should be consistent in location, and the primary signage should be located on the ground floor.
- Signs should promote the heritage character of the area and allow for unobstructed views into the storefront display.
- Signage must never be back lit, only lit externally.
- Avoid obscuring or covering façade features, including windows, doors, storefronts, building entrances, cornices, and columns,
- Use lettering colours that provide an accent to the overall façade and that enhances legibility of the sign relative to the base colour of the sign.
- Use lettering and images on signs that provide depth, such as raised or individually cut or carved lettering.
- Attach storefront signage so that it is parallel and flush with the building wall and is not angled from the façade.



Signage should not overwhelm the storefront and should blend-in to the overall design pattern established in the Downtown. Signage should not dominate the storefront and be located within the original signboard area, where possible.

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## 4.2.3 Infill Development

Downtown Cobourg has numerous heritage structures that contribute to its identity. New development should be respectful and make every attempt to enhance the overall historic character and integrate with the surrounding areas. This does not preclude a contemporary approach to design and architecture, but requires that the scale, massing, and design be sensitive to adjacent buildings.

Downtown Cobourg has a number of vacant and underutilized sites. Some of these properties are very large residential lots with disproportionately small development coverages. Other locations simply have not been built-out to their full potential.

As indicated previously in this document, there are a number of opportunities for infill development in the Downtown. Some of these sites have current development proposals or are under development, while others present an opportunity to act catalyst development sites. Once fully realized, these sites will help to increase the resident population and encourage business activity, leading to a more vibrant Downtown.

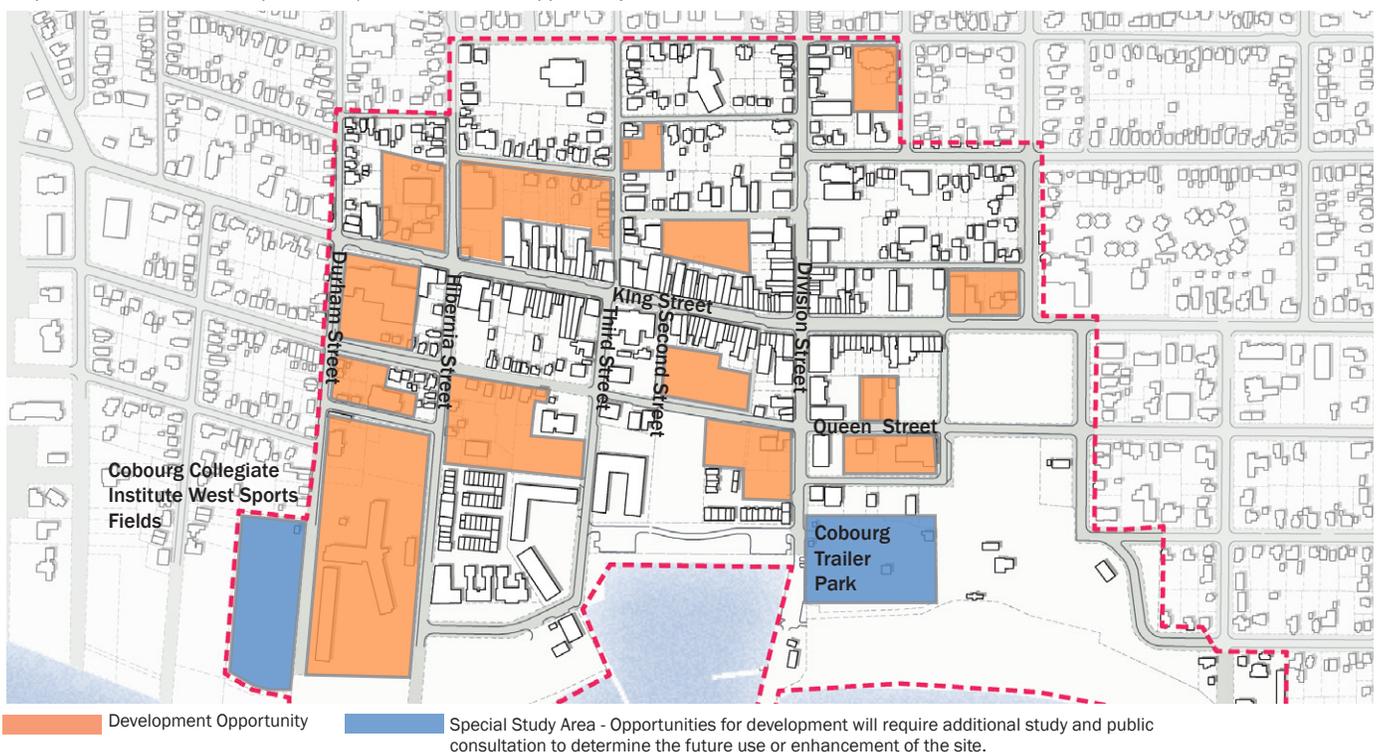
Potential development opportunities:

- Expansion of uses for the Cobourg District Collegiate Institute West site.
- Mixed-use developments including rental housing and dedicated housing for seniors and families.
- Park Theatre development.
- Providing a community centre.
- Boutique hotel.
- Arts & cultural facilities (museums, gallery space, flexible arts space, etc).
- New office space.
- Structured parking.
- Retail and commercial space.

The purpose of this section is to highlight key elements that should be considered in the design of infill development sites in order to retain the historic context of the area.

New building design is expected to reflect the character of its own time, thereby making Downtown a continuously evolving district. However, it is also important to respect the traditional quality that makes the Downtown unique. These qualities include massing, scale, and consistency with adjoining buildings, storefront detailing and choice of materials.

Map of Potential Infill Development and/or Intensification Opportunity Sites



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Contemporary architecture should not be discouraged but rather be approved at the discretion of Town staff on a site specific basis, and should be compatible with the heritage character of the district and conform to the appropriate Heritage Conservation District Plan.

The general intent is to ensure that infill development retains the overall design integrity of the Downtown. In particular, by protecting the original character of the area through the use of appropriate architectural features and materials and respecting traditional design elements.

- The height of the primary façade should be in scale with the surrounding character, and buildings should align with the existing setback conditions.

- New infill buildings should conform to the design principles established by the surrounding context and should enhance the best qualities and character of the area.
- New buildings shall adhere to the height recommendations established by the Town.
- Buildings should include a cornice that aligns with neighboring buildings. In addition, façade materials and colours should consider the existing context and be consistent with the existing design palette.



*Design the ground and upper floors to be compatible with surrounding storefronts and buildings, with a high proportion of openings, windows, symmetry and articulation.*

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North view of Rotary Waterfront Park

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## 4.3 Public Realm Structure

Parks and open space are significant components of a healthy public realm, providing opportunities for recreation and social interaction. The purpose of this section is to provide guidance for parks and public space in Downtown Cobourg.

### 4.3.1 Existing Parks and Public Spaces

Key components of the existing public space network in Downtown Cobourg include the Western Waterfront, Cobourg Beach and Eastern Pier, Victoria Park, Rotary Waterfront Park, and other elements.

**The Western Waterfront** is located to the south west of the Downtown and is comprised of the West Beach Lands, Boardwalk and the Marina. This portion of the open space network is primarily focused towards the enjoyment of the natural environment and the Lake, and includes the Nature Park. Facilities that currently provided include open space, trails, parking facilities, and the Marina.

**Cobourg Beach and Eastern Pier** is located along the south east of Downtown. The Beach is a major destination and draws tourists and local users throughout the summer months. This beach is classified as a Landmark Park in the Town of Cobourg's Parks Master Plan. The Eastern Pier is used by boaters, and as a passive space for pedestrians.

**Victoria Park** is located north of the beach, on the eastern edge of the Downtown. It includes ornamental plantings, park walkways, seating, pavilions, waterplay, play courts, snack bar and a promenade. Victoria Park is also the home of the Cobourg Lawn Bowling Club. This park is classified as a Cultural Park in the Town's Park Master Plan. This park possess historic/heritage qualities distinct to Cobourg and accommodates community celebrations and special events.

**Rotary Waterfront Park** is located just north of the harbour. It contains pedestrian walkways, seating, lighting, a fountain, landscaping, and skating pad. This park is also classified as a Cultural Park.

This Plan provides recommendations for additional public spaces and pedestrian connections in Downtown Cobourg to enhance the existing public space network. Additionally, the Town of Cobourg Parks Master Plan and Official Plan provides Town-wide parks policies and strategies that should be also be consulted.



Victoria Park



Cobourg Beach

# Final Draft

## 4.3.2 Natural Open Spaces

Downtown Cobourg has a number of natural open space features including the Waterfront and shoreline, the Nature Park, Ecology Garden, Midtown Creek and associated riparian buffer areas. These features provide significant environmental benefits, wildlife habitat and corridors, and open space functions for the community. The Cobourg Official Plan, Parks Master Plan and Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines contain guidance with respect to the protection and enhancement of the Town's Greenlands System, including the natural environment and open spaces.

This Plan encourages development that aims to protect and improve key natural features:

- To minimize habitat disruption and disturbance in sensitive natural areas, consideration should be given to closing informal trails and trail re-location. Closed trails should be allowed to regenerate naturally.
- Supporting the corridor linkage function and enhance of the shoreline, Nature Park, and

Midtown Creek area through a combination of native plantings and habitat enhancement and expansion.

- In the built up areas, consideration should be given to green roof/building technology and enhanced streetscape plantings to provide a source of food, cover and shelter for migrant and summer resident birds.
- Parks and open spaces along the water's edge should consider opportunities for naturalization with native species.



View along the Nature Park boardwalk, Cobourg, Ontario.

# Final Draft

## 4.3.3 Public Spaces

The vision for the public realm of Downtown Cobourg is to strengthen and enhance pedestrian connections, and develop new public spaces. This Master Plan also envisions an improved pedestrian experience by encouraging improvements to the streetscape including sidewalks, street furnishings, landscaping, and wayfinding signage.

The full build-out of the open space network will create an attractive setting for private investment and provide the Downtown with a distinctive public realm identity. The open space network includes:

- **Large formal spaces**, such as Victoria Park, Rotary Waterfront Park, and Cobourg Beach that act as key destinations and a focus for recreation and leisure.
- **Smaller public spaces and squares**, such as Victoria Square, the Farmers Market, the Esplanade, and the public spaces proposed in this Plan, provide local landscaped areas and gathering places.
- **Dedicated pedestrian connections**, such as

Henley Arcade, First Street pedestrian path, and other proposed connections in this Plan provide greater permeability and encourages walking in the Downtown.

- **The Waterfront** area which includes the Nature Park, Ecology Garden, the Marina, East Pier, the West Headland, and the Cobourg Beach.

The Public Realm Structure Map below identifies the existing and proposed public spaces with specific details provided on the next pages.



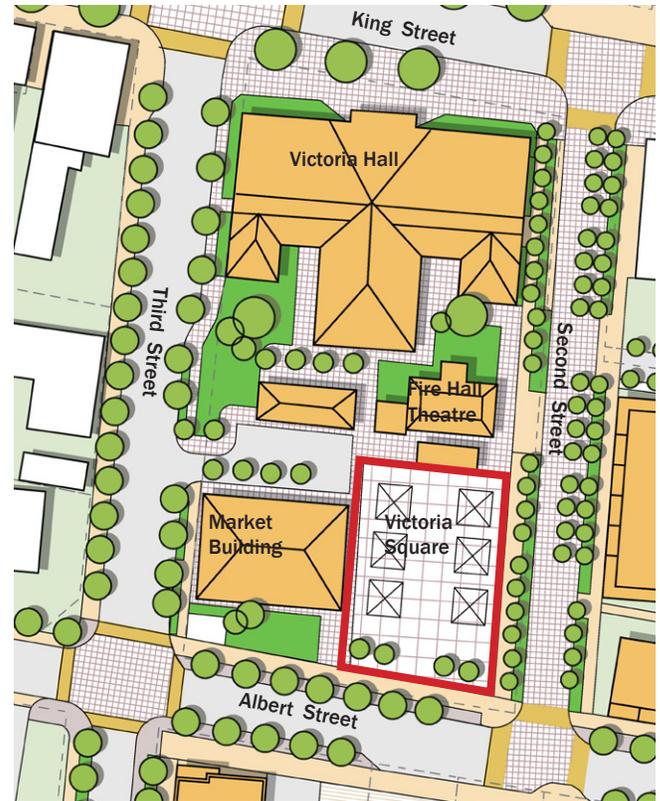
# Final Draft

## Victoria Square

Victoria Square is located south of and adjacent to Victoria Hall. It currently functions as a shared Farmers Market and surface parking area with little landscaping detail or pedestrian facilities. This Plan encourages revisiting the Victoria Square Plan in creating a formally designed plaza at this location.

Key recommendations of the Victoria Square Plan include:

- The development of a plaza that can be shared for community events, parking, and as a market.
- Landscape design treatments including new ornamental paving, seating, lighting, landscaping and other design features.

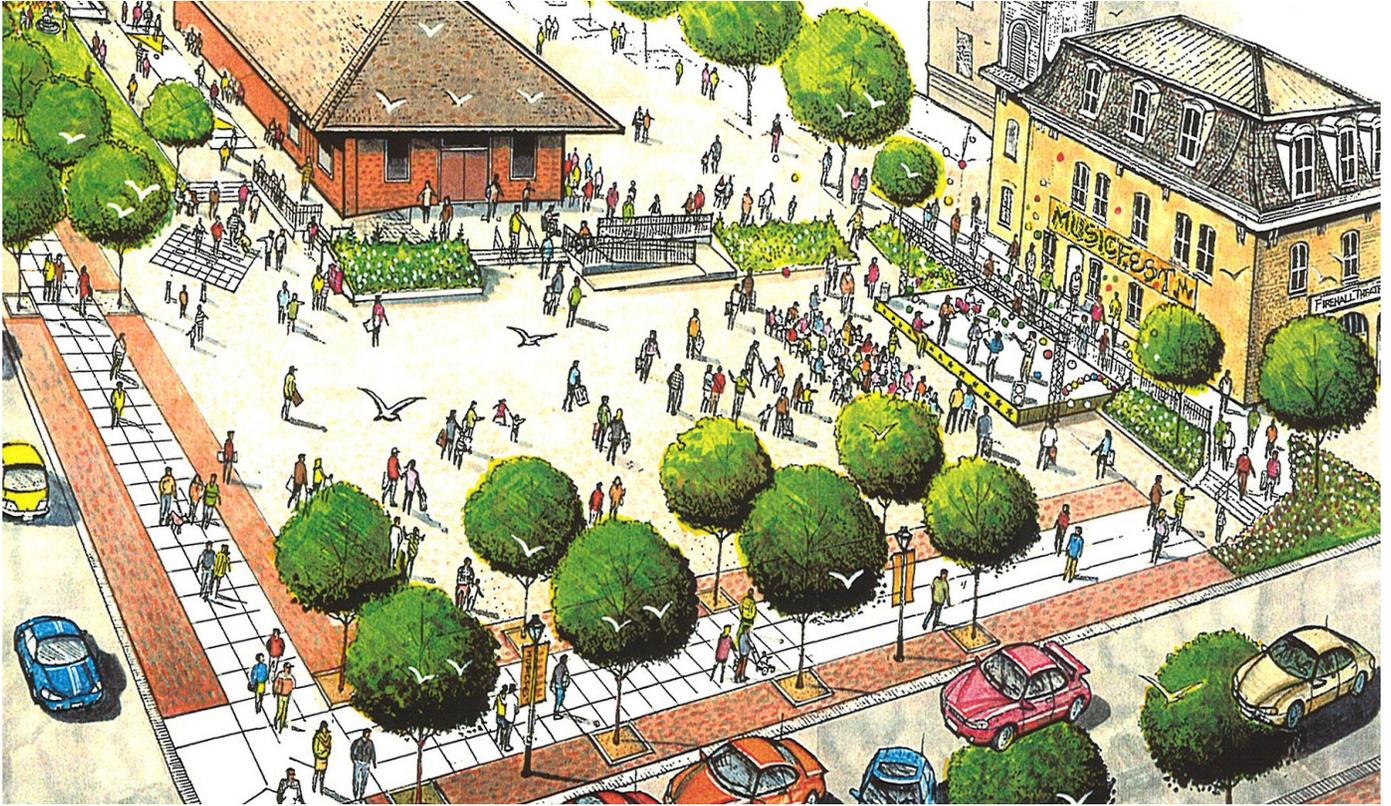


Victoria Square Concept Plan.



3D visualization of Victoria Square and surrounding area.

# Final Draft



Excerpt from the Victoria Square Plan (1999) produced by Miriam L.R. Mutton, J.E Doubt, Robert D.Mikel.

# Final Draft

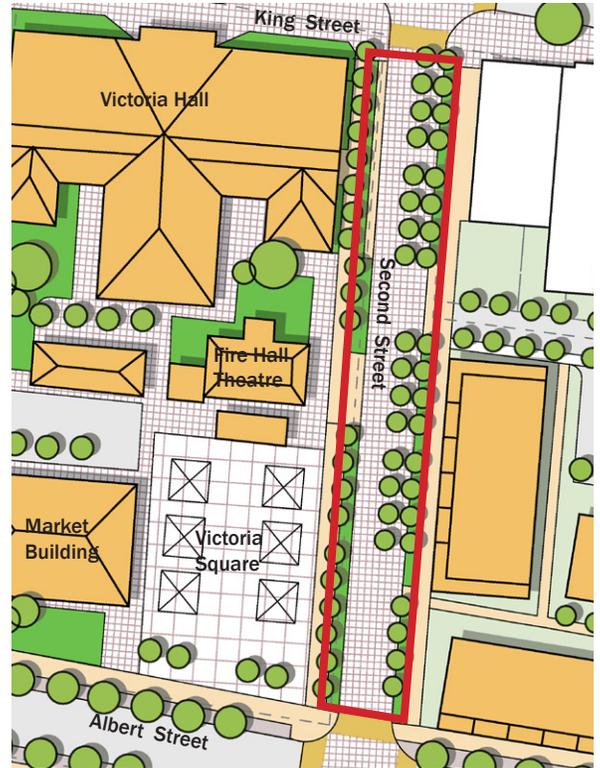
## Second Street “Flexible” Street

Second Street is an important visual corridor from King Street towards the Waterfront. This area presents a unique opportunity to create a pedestrian-focused street where pedestrians are the priority and automobiles have limited access.

A **Flexible Street** does away with curbs and sidewalks, creating one large expanse that can be used for public use, creating a gathering place within the street. Its construction creates a seamless environment that allows vehicles and people to effectively share the same space, and has physical design characteristics similar to that of a public square.

It is recommended that a streetscape and urban design study be undertaken to determine the details and design options. The following considerations are preliminary and are intended to provide general design recommendations.

- This street should be designed with a palette similar to Victoria Square.
- The space may permit limited vehicular access to allow for additional spillover space for larger events and festivals occurring in Victoria Square.
- Flexible street details such as bollards, planters, and lighting can be used to identify and demarcate pedestrian and vehicular areas.



Proposed “Flexible Street” for Second Street.



Conceptual visualization of a Flexible Street looking north along Second Street from Albert Street.

# Final Draft



Flexible Street, Brighton, UK.



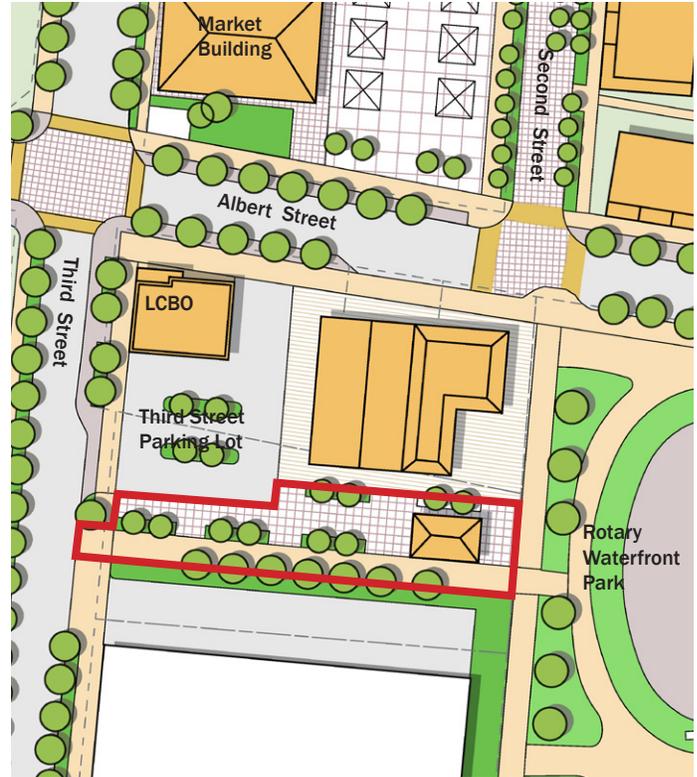
Flexible Street, Charlottesville, Virginia.

# Final Draft

## Rotary Waterfront Park Pedestrian Path

Rotary Waterfront Park Pedestrian Path is proposed to provide connectivity between Third Street and the Park. Currently, this space is a parking area associated with the existing Third Street parking lot. The addition of this path will help to increase the permeability of Downtown blocks and allow for greater access and movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

The pedestrian path should feature specialized paving treatments, plantings and seating that does not impact the adjacent parking area. The parking lot could be enhanced with subtle landscaping treatments to enhance pedestrian comfort and provide a more visually pleasing environment.



Rotary Waterfront Park  
Pedestrian Path



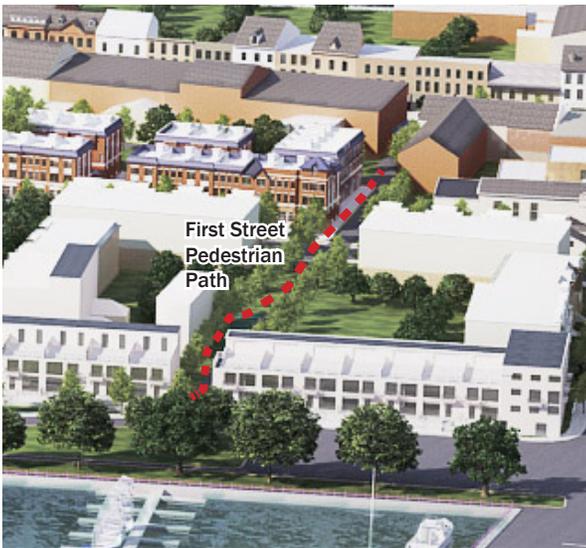
Example of a public pedestrian path associated with private development, Oakville, Ontario.

# Final Draft

## First Street Pedestrian Path

The First Street Pedestrian Path is proposed as a key connector between King Street and the Waterfront. In addition to providing an important pedestrian pathway to the Waterfront, it can integrate historic references of significance through interpretive signage to tell the history of the area. This path will enhance pedestrian permeability and encourage walking between the Waterfront and King Street.

The path can be designed as a 3 metre multi-functional connection with appropriate landscaping, lighting and other facilities such



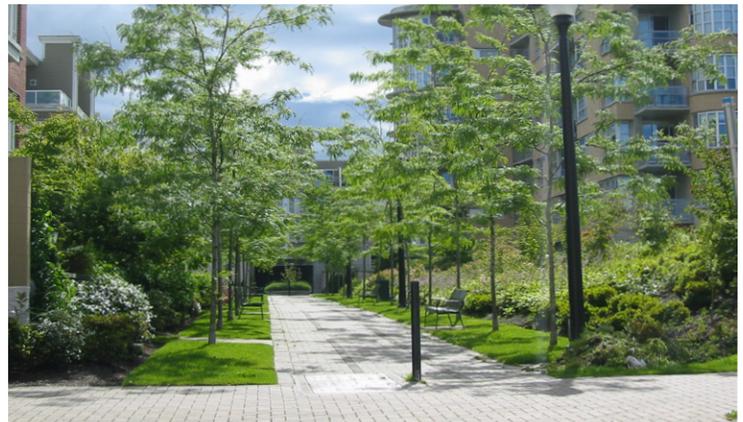
3D visualization of the First Street Pedestrian Path from the Esplanade.



North view of the existing First Street Path from the Esplanade.



First Street Pedestrian Path.

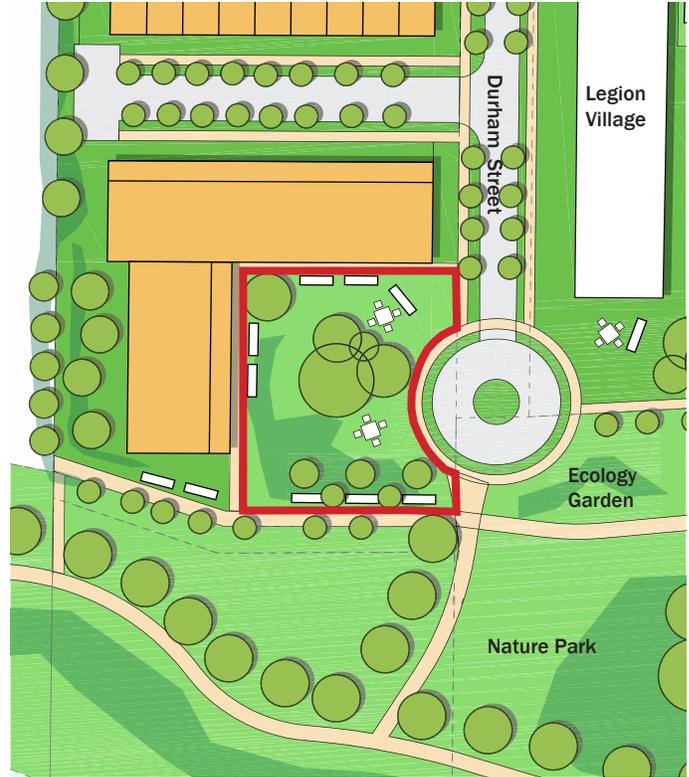


Provide landscaping, pedestrian furniture, and lighting for a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.

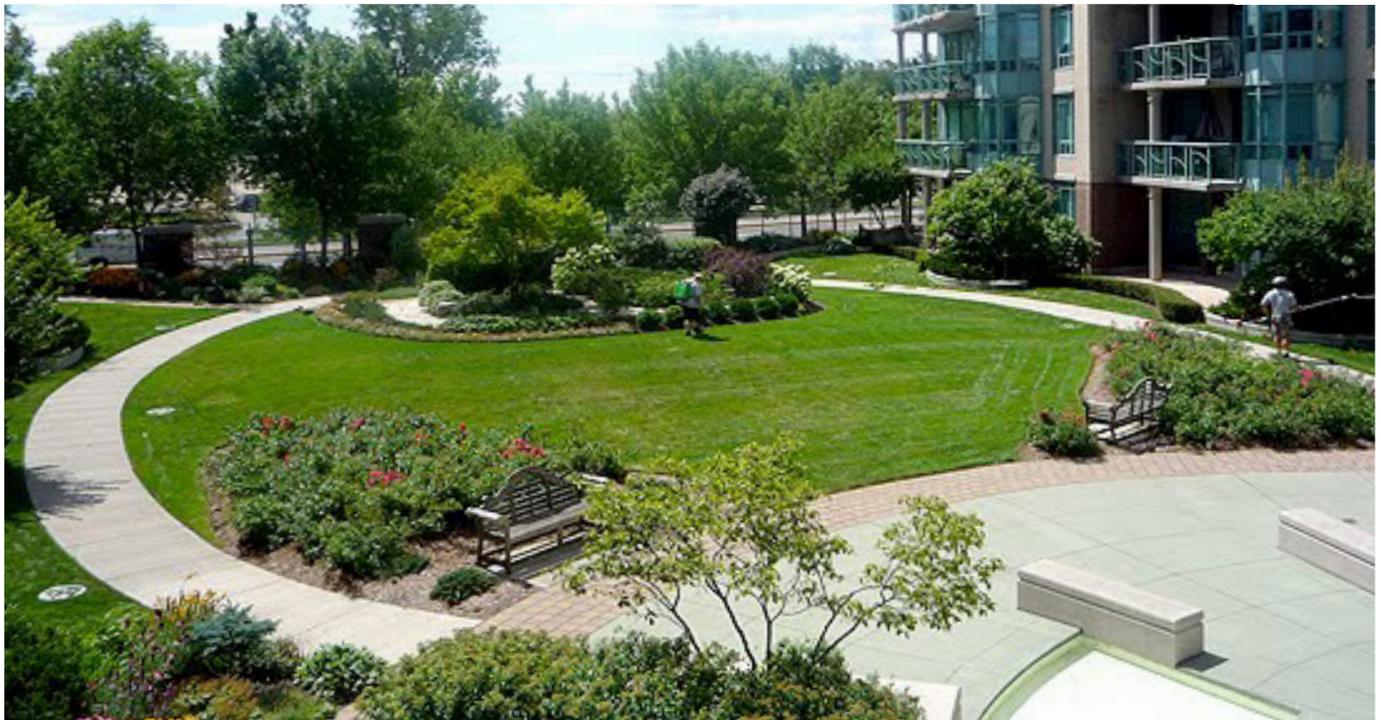
# Final Draft

## Waterfront West Park

The Waterfront West Park is proposed to provide local neighbourhood open space within the West Waterfront neighbourhood. This Park is intended to provide outdoor recreation and leisure opportunities at the neighbourhood level, and should be designed, programmed, and furnished to meet the day-to-day open space needs of residents. In general, the Park could include landscaped and green areas, seating, lighting, and other elements that serve a wide range of demographics. The park is envisioned as a neighbourhood focal point providing a public space within close proximity to local residents.



Waterfront West Park



Example of a local park integrated within a development block.

# Final Draft

## Park Theatre Arcade and East Gateway Square

The Park Theatre has the potential to become a key icon and cultural destination in Downtown Cobourg. Redevelopment of the larger block between College Street and McGill Street can form part of a larger mixed-use/entertainment cluster in relation to enhancing the Park Theatre site.

New public spaces such as an expanded mid-block connection (Park Theatre Arcade) related to the Park Theatre building could accommodate gathering, theater-related events, café and retail activity. The north-west corner of College Street and King Street should include a small public square to accentuate this site as a gateway and entry into the Downtown.



Proposed Park Theatre Arcade and East Gateway Square.



Example of theatre spillover plaza, Oakville, Ontario.

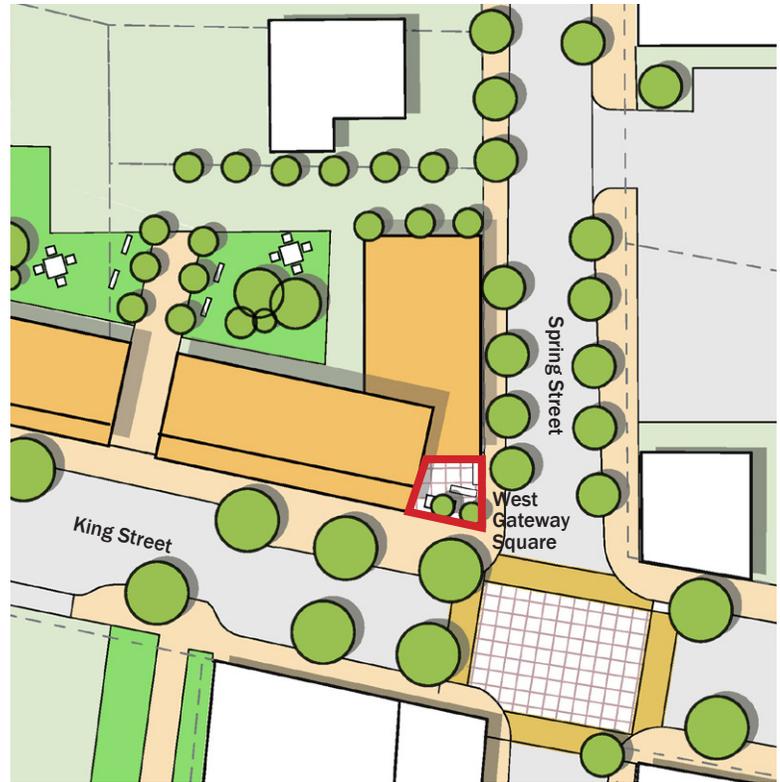


Conceptual visualization of the East Gateway at the corner of College Street and King Street looking west.

# Final Draft

## West Gateway Square

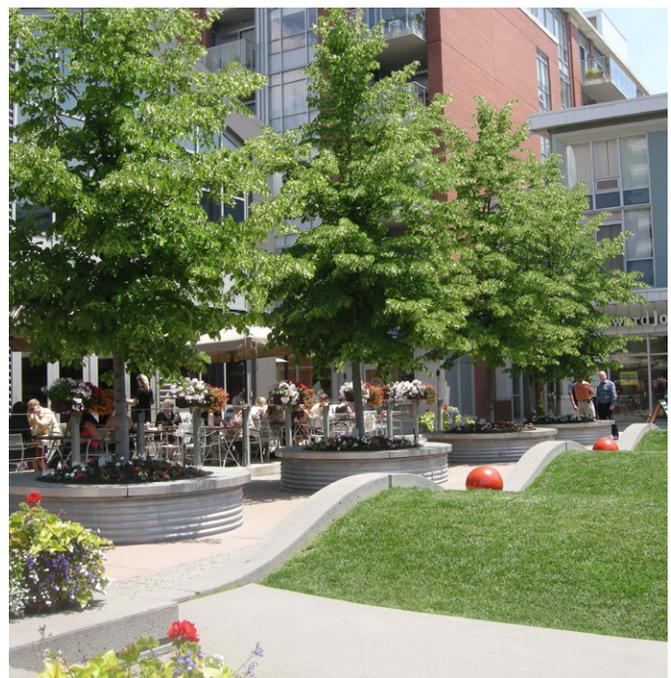
Within the West Gateway block between Spring Street and Ball Street there are a few heritage structures that help to define the built form of this area. This Plan recognizes the Spring Street and King Street intersection as a gateway into the Downtown. This intersection provides an opportunity for enhanced landscaping and pedestrian facilities to draw attention to this area. Future development should incorporate a public square or parkette on the north-west intersection of Spring Street and King Street to further strengthen the public realm and sense of place for this gateway.



Proposed West Gateway Square.



Example of a small public square that creates a sense of place and gathering space with retail uses, pedestrian seating, and street furniture.



Public square, Port Credit, Ontario.

# Final Draft

## Waterfront Parks

As identified previously in this document, the Cobourg Parks Master Plan provides a number of recommendations and concept designs for the Waterfront. It is recommended that the Parks Master Plan be revisited as a reference for guiding the development of new open space, amenities, and pedestrian facilities within the Waterfront area.

The Parks Master Plan provides the following key design recommendations:

### Western Waterfront

- That the existing Western Beach boardwalk receive enhancements including interpretive areas, naturalized landscaping and areas to watch local bird life.
- Improvements to existing facilities, and a new nature boardwalk should be developed along the West Headland along the Harbour's edge with shoreline habitat creation.
- Opportunities for improvements at the marina

including an eco-centre for visitors and an expanded use boating area such as canoe/kayak launch docks and boat launches.

### Cobourg Beach and Eastern Pier

- Reuse of the Coast Guard building as a beach use, relocation of the Coast Guard, and pier enhancements such as creation of a boardwalk, sun shelters, and seating etc.

### Victoria Park:

- Beach front amenities such as a new playground, water play, waterfront promenade, beach boardwalk, and the addition of a centralized linear pathway from King Street to the beach.

For more specific details refer to the Waterfront Strategy within the Cobourg Parks Master Plan.



Town of Cobourg Parks Master Plan: Waterfront Strategy Map.

# Final Draft

## 4.3.4 Street Furniture

A consistent palette of street furniture provides visual identity, a defining aesthetic, and can help to enhance pedestrian comfort on the street. Street furniture includes all outdoor streetscape features and equipment located within the right-of-way.

Cobourg has a defined palette of street furnishings which can be applied throughout the Downtown. The palette allows for contemporary design innovation while building on what is already in use and ensures that materials are suitable, durable, easy to maintain, compatible with the local climate, efficient and sustainable. Typical street furniture includes:

- Signage
- Bench seating
- Pedestrian light standards
- Waste receptacles
- Planters
- Tree grates and guards
- Bicycle racks/rings
- Bus shelters

For further guidance refer to the Town of Cobourg's Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines Section 3.4.3 and the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District Plan. In addition, the following recommendations should be considered in the design and placement of street furniture.

- Make streets more pedestrian friendly, enhance public circulation and safety, and promote a positive image.
- Be of a consistent style that is appropriate in a contemporary or historic setting as per the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- Be of a high quality (attractive, durable, weather resistant, vandal proof, etc.).
- Avoid cluttering of space and barriers inhibiting pedestrian movement.



Typical Street Furniture and Lighting along King Street., Cobourg, Ontario

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The following images are examples of street furniture including signage, benches, planters, tree protection, waste bins, cycling racks, and bollards. A detailed streetscape study should be undertaken to determine the specific family of street furniture appropriate for Cobourg.



# Final Draft

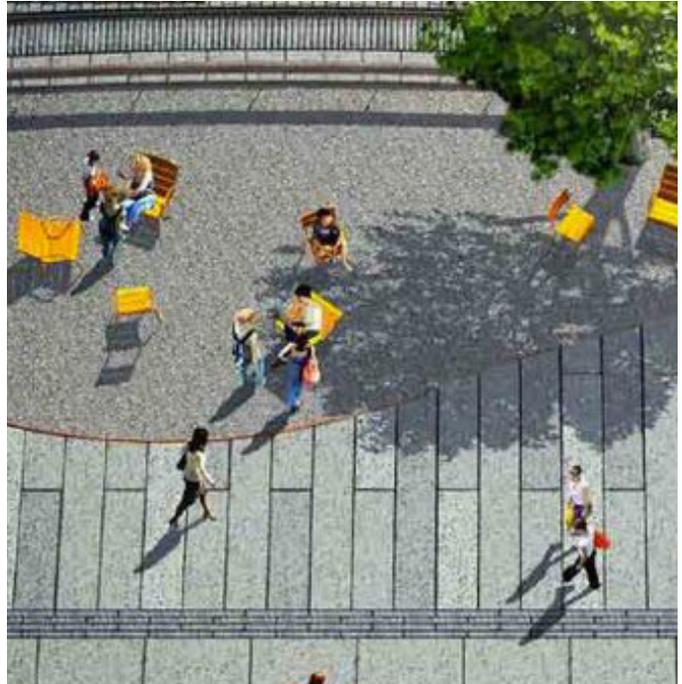
## 4.3.5 Urban Braille & Paving

Urban braille including paving, pavers, cobble and other materials help to delineate the ground plane of areas of significance, enhance accessibility, identify transition and edge areas, and provide visual focus between pedestrian circulation and vehicular traffic.

A variety of urban braille and differentiation of pavement materials and colours should be used to highlight gateways, crosswalks, transition areas, and public spaces. Designs should be simple and use tones reflective of the historic character of the Downtown.

It is recommended that poured in place concrete comprise the majority of the walking surfaces, as per the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District Plan. This can be augmented with a textured paved band along the less traveled portions of the sidewalk. Granite, clay brick or concrete unit paving are all possible candidates. Durability, longevity, attractiveness and cost will factor into the preference of one over another. The impact of freeze and thaw cycles should be considered in material selection.

Textured and coloured pavement should be incorporated into the design of streetscapes to improve legibility and universal accessibility for all users.



*Use variation in materials to provide a focus for gathering and to identify walking areas.*



*Use consistent materials along the street for a greater sense of place.*



*Provide design differentiation for crosswalks.*



*Delineate the street edge from the walkway area of the boulevard for improved safety and visual appeal.*

# Final Draft

## 4.3.6 Planting and Street Trees

Streetscape planting and street trees are an important way to enhance the visual appeal of the public realm. Street trees also improve runoff and filtration, provide shade, and provide a means for increasing the tree canopy and habitat for animals.

Providing more trees and landscaping will help to increase the urban tree canopy and visual appeal of Downtown. Street trees also have a positive impact on pedestrian comfort by providing shade in the summer reducing wind and wind-chill effects in the winter.

Tree spacing, the provision of adequate soil volume and the use of alternative soil infrastructure technologies will promote plant health and longevity. Trees should generally be spaced six to

nine metres apart depending on their mature size and should be 1.5 metres offset from the curb to accommodate snow storage. Existing street trees be preserved and replanted with new trees where needed in order to maintain continuity. In addition to street trees, streetscape landscaping and the use of rain-gardens will help to maximize stormwater infiltration and filter runoff before it reaches stormwater facilities.

Rain gardens should be considered where appropriate as well as within parking lots. For additional design guidance refer to the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines Section 3.1 (Sustainability) and 3.4.1.5 (The Role of Green Streets)

*Provide appropriate spacing between trees and provide unobstructed walkway space.*



*Provide sufficient planter area to allow the healthy growth of trees to maturity.*



*Bioswales or rain gardens can be used to reduce surface runoff and provide a transition area between pedestrians and vehicles.*



*Where possible, integrate planters into the sidewalk to reduce barriers to pedestrian movement.*

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## 4.3.7 Lighting

In addition to providing pedestrian safety and illuminating dark areas at night, lighting can be used to draw attention to gathering spaces and illuminate building façades.

Within the Downtown, high activity pedestrian areas should be illuminated with pedestrian-scaled, low impact and low energy lighting. Where feasible, solar powered lighting should be considered for parks, parking lots, transit shelters, and other facilities. Other considerations include using light sensors for brightness and control of duration, and road reflectors.

Areas such as gateways, roads or pedestrian paths that lead to key destinations should have specially designed light standards or elements. In general,

lighting standards should also be used to illuminate building façades, particularly along King Street, Division Street, and Victoria Square. Lighting in these areas will contribute to the nighttime ambiance as well as improve the visual interest of the Downtown. In addition, lanes and pedestrian paths should be lit thereby adding to their safety and security.

For more details refer to the Town of Cobourg Urban Design Guidelines Section 3.4.3.4 Lighting.



*Use illumination to draw attention to key historic sites and buildings.*



*Provide variation in lighting and colours to add visual appeal.*



*Provide pedestrian-scale lighting that doesn't overwhelm the public realm.*

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## 4.3.8 Key Gateways

Gateways help to establish a sense of arrival into an area. This can be achieved through using architectural features, planting, special paving, lighting, and subtle urban design treatment to draw attention to a location.

Key Gateways have been identified in this Master Plan at important entrances to the Downtown. Gateways should also include special design attention, landscaping features, lighting, pavement, wayfinding signage, and other details to help create a sense of place for the space.

Design considerations for gateways include:

- An expanded public realm component to allow for gathering, signage, and street furniture.
- Public art, landscaping, paving, and other design features to draw attention and a sense of arrival and enhanced sense of place.
- Creating a comfortable, pedestrian friendly, and human-scale environment.



 Key Gateways

# Final Draft

## 4.3.9 Signage and Wayfinding

Signage and wayfinding help to orient users of all abilities to navigate through private and public spaces and to draw attention to and provide information about local destinations.

Ideally, signage and wayfinding orient users so to move with ease and confidence through an environment. All elements of the public realm and built environment have the potential to contribute to wayfinding. Wayfinding tools can include signage and mapping, streetscape elements, streetscape design, and building design such as gateway or landmark elements. All tools should work together to ensure that routes are easily understood and navigable, that destinations are identified, and the public realm can be easily maneuvered.

Signage is an important element not only for wayfinding, but also in branding and promoting a identity, character and uniqueness. Wayfinding signage should conform to the overall design strategy and convey a desired character of place.

In general, the design approach to wayfinding should be coordinated and include a family of signs and placement guidelines. Recently, the Town

developed a set of wayfinding signs to be applied in Downtown Cobourg (Refer to the Town of Cobourg Wayfinding Signage and Gateway design concepts produced by the GSP Group) and the Town of Cobourg Urban Design and Landscape Guidelines Section 3.4.3.6.

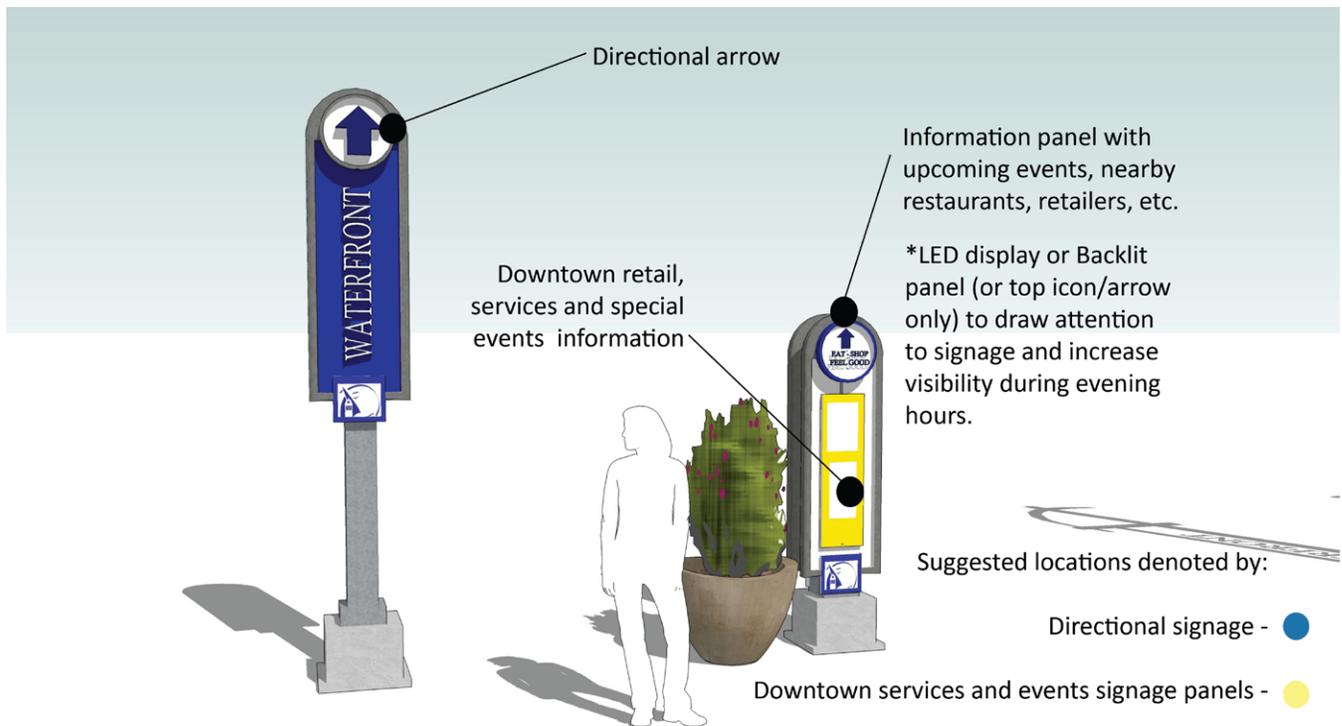
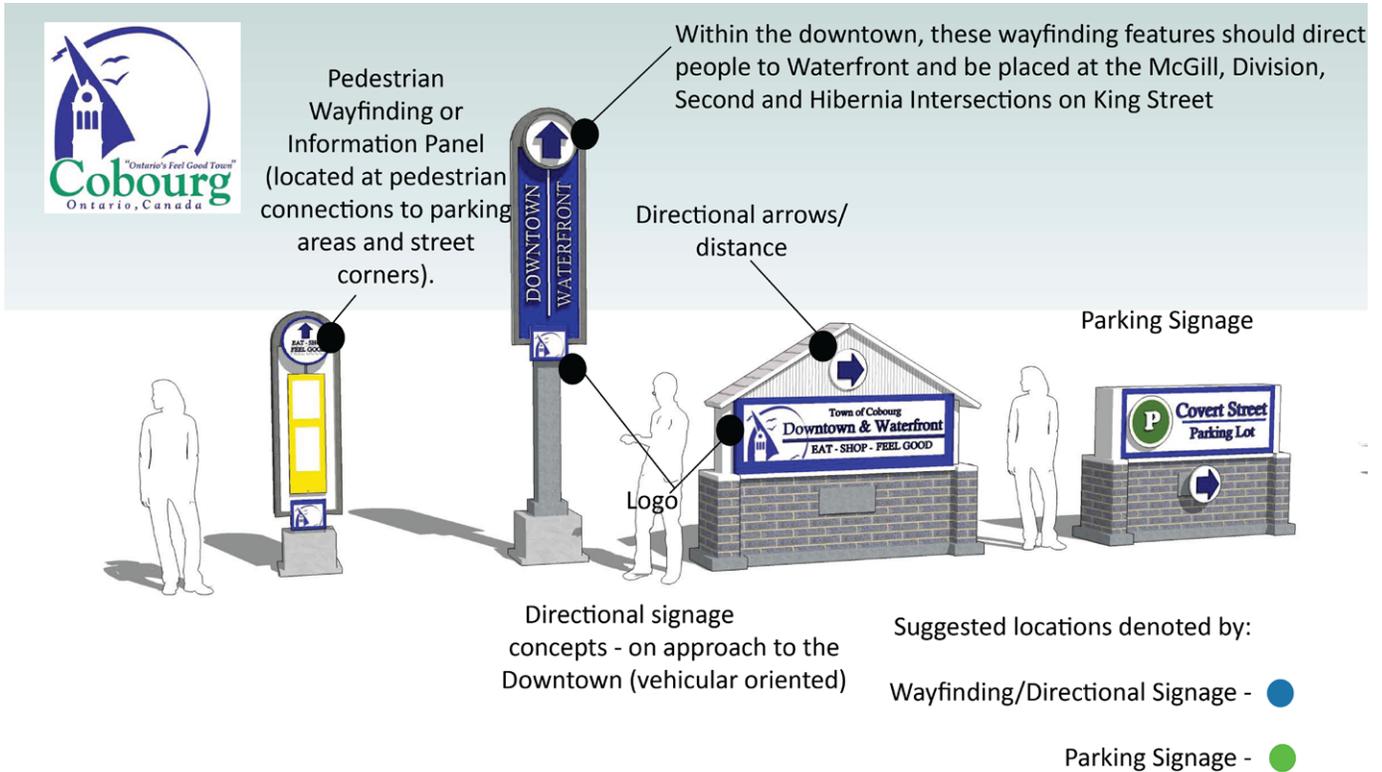
Key considerations for wayfinding signage.

- Be adaptable to all areas of Cobourg.
- Be legible and accessible and use clear graphics to be easily understood by all.
- Include placement guidelines for the range of signs, focused along key gateway/arrival points, commercial streets, and civic areas.
- Provide direction to key destinations.
- Help direct movement and inform users and be designed as part of the overall Downtown identity.
- Provide interpretive information on local history, and natural and cultural heritage.
- Not compete with the street, regulatory or storefront signs for the attention of the motorist/pedestrian.
- Planned and designed using a consistent set of standards.

*Suggested wayfinding signage locations.*

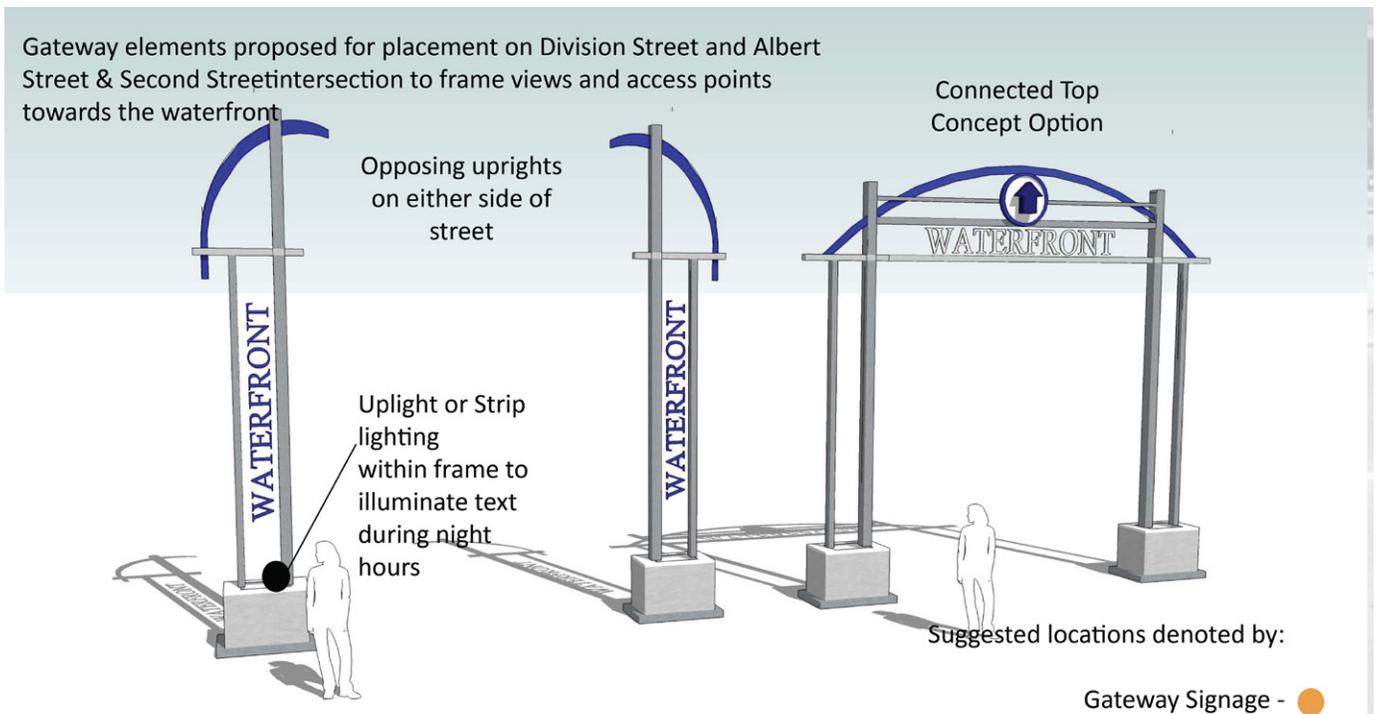
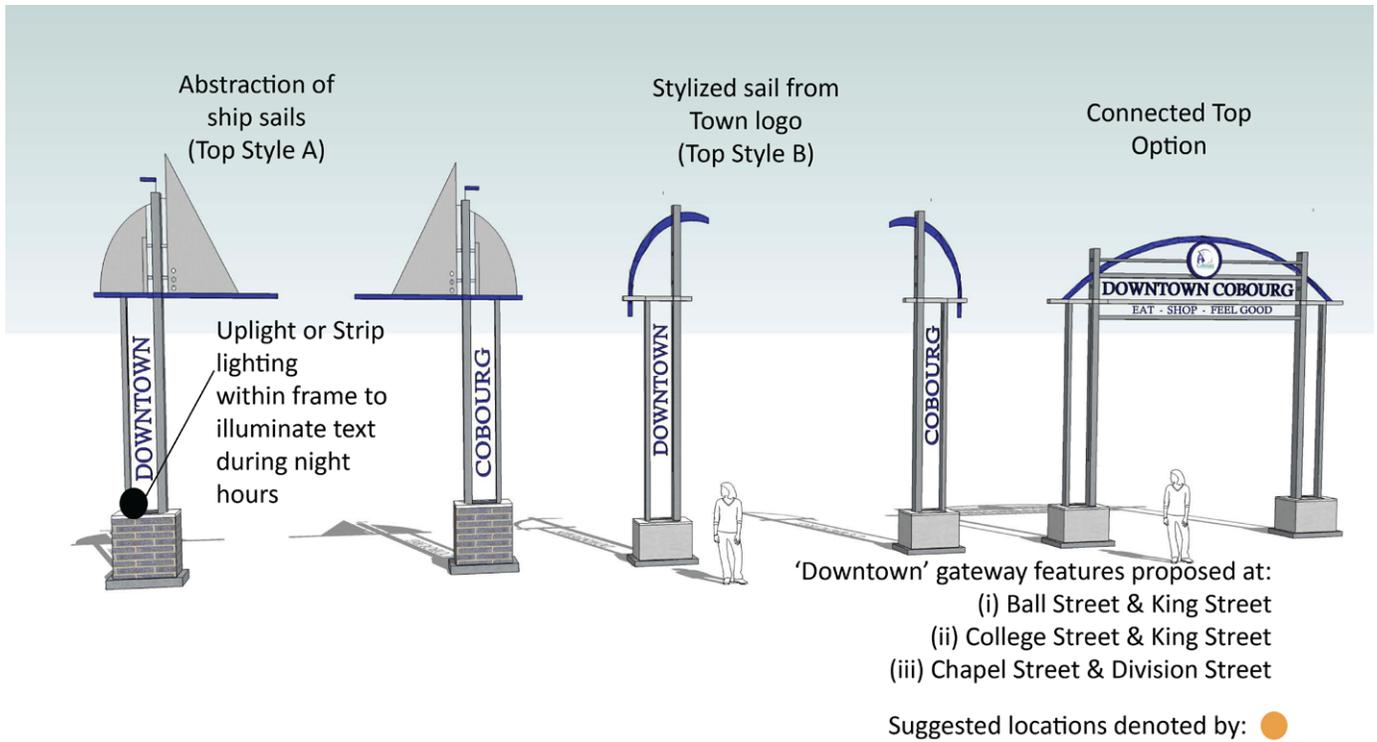


# Final Draft



Town of Cobourg Wayfinding Signage and Gateway design concepts produced by the GSP Group.

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# Final Draft

## 4.4 Movement

This Master Plan encourages and promotes pedestrian movement and comfort as a priority in the Downtown, as well as the ease of movement for vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Downtown Cobourg has a balanced movement network between vehicular traffic, transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. This Master Plan encourages increased connectivity and proposes new pedestrian connections. Streets throughout the Downtown area should be beautiful, comfortable, safe, and multi-functional components of the public realm.

### 4.4.1 Street Hierarchy

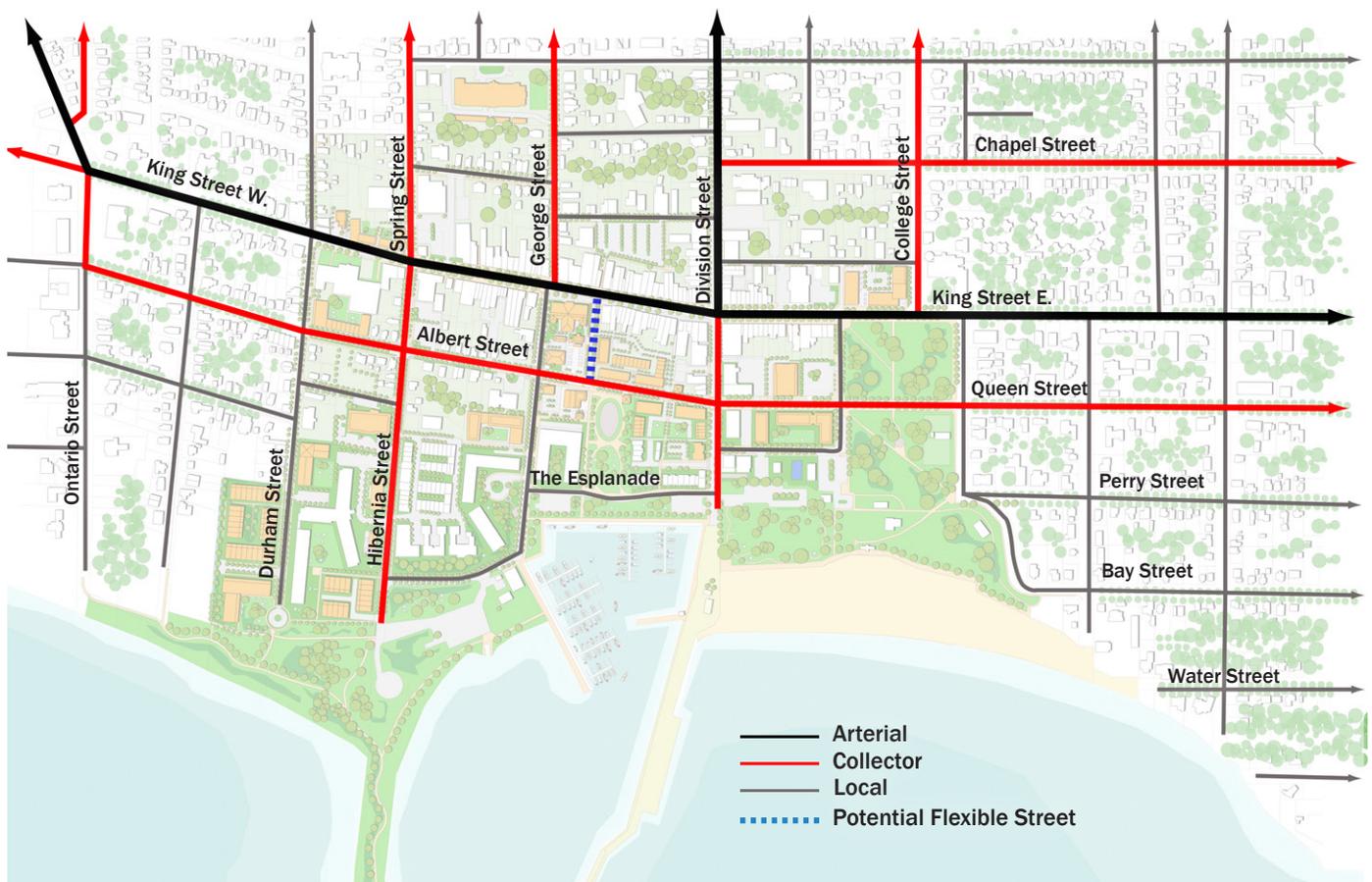
Cobourg's downtown is comprised of three kinds of streets as defined by the Town's Street Hierarchy, including arterial roads, collector roads and local roads. For more details refer to the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines Section 3.4.1, and the Transportation Master Plan 2011.

**Arterial roads** - King Street and Division Street are the Downtown's major commercial streets. As the

Town evolves, it would be beneficial to see these streets transition into a character that is more urban with a mix of uses to support transit and provide an inviting public realm.

**Collector roads** - Spring Street, George Street, College Street, Chapel Street, Albert Street, Queen Street and Hibernia Street all support medium levels of transportation, and connect surrounding neighbourhoods.

**Local roads** - The remaining roads in Downtown are compact and provide connectivity within neighbourhoods. Local roads support reduced speeds, walking, cycling and transit access as well as mature boulevard tree growth within the right-of-way.



Street Hierarchy Map adapted from the Cobourg Transportation Master Plan (2011).

# Final Draft

## 4.4.2 Transit

With increased development intensification and a focus on providing more economic opportunities and services within the Downtown, the importance of transit will be greater in the future. The Downtown Transit Terminal is a focal point for local transit within the Town and should maintain local connections and regional linkages.

The Cobourg VIA Station is also an important transportation node providing inter-modal connectivity opportunities for regional travel.

Key recommendations of this master plan include:

- Integrating wayfinding signage with the Town of Cobourg Transit signage to help promote walking and transit ridership.
- Improving the pedestrian environment within and around the Downtown Transit Terminal, including bike racks, streetscaping, and other elements to improve the pedestrian experience.
- Incorporating sufficient streetscape elements to provide safe and comfortable transit stop areas.



Downtown Transit Map adapted from the Town of Cobourg Transit Route Map (2011).

# Final Draft

## 4.4.3 Paths and Cycling

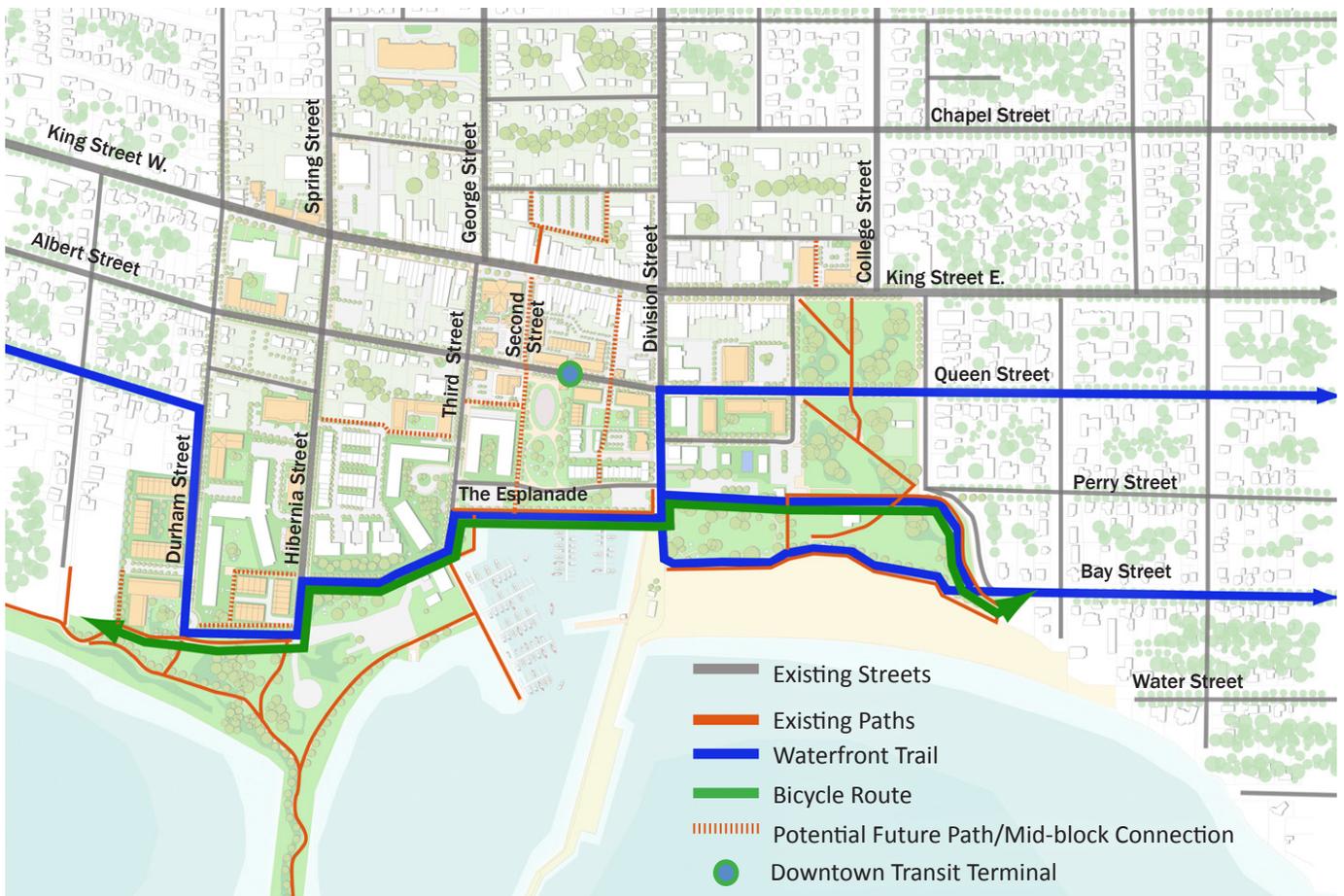
Promoting active transportation in Downtown Cobourg will help to increase pedestrian movement. It will also encourage walking and recreation, and help to increase foot traffic to support local retail activity.

Downtown Cobourg has a range of pedestrian paths, cycling lanes, and mid-block connections that support recreation and leisure activities. However, there are a number of connectivity enhancements that can improve pedestrian circulation, including:

- All streets should be designed with a public boulevard to accommodate a sidewalk, landscaping and lighting.
- New trails or pedestrian paths should connect into the existing network, where possible.
- Pathway design should incorporate design features reflective of the historic character of Cobourg, while allowing flexibility for contemporary design.

- Trails should be accessible and visible from the street or adjacent public areas to enhance the safety of the trail.
- Provide pedestrian paths through new development parcels to link key retail streets within the Waterfront (e.g., King Street, Albert Street, Queen Street etc).
- In the short-term the Town should consider implementation and enhancing the existing Share the Road program, and provide sharrows and signage throughout Downtown.
- Undertake a study to expand the existing cycling network and build new cycling infrastructure in Downtown.

For more specific details regarding pedestrian and bicycle circulation please refer to the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines Section 3.4.2.

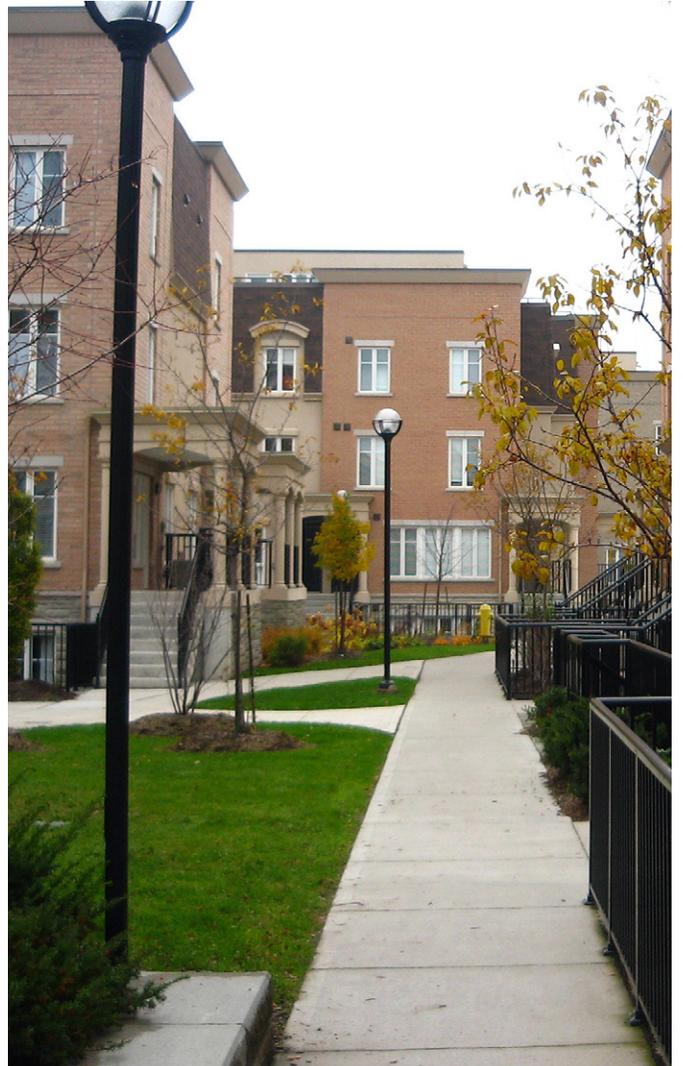


Paths and Cycling Map

# Final Draft



# Final Draft



Examples of high quality pedestrian and cycling paths.

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## 4.4.4 Parking

As Downtown evolves it will be necessary to consider parking facilities and locations that are accessible and efficient for residents, businesses, and tourists.

The location of parking lots, access, and loading entrances must be carefully considered. Parking and servicing should have the least possible impact on the public realm. In addition to surface parking lots, on-street parking and structured parking are appropriate to support development and uses within Downtown.

In addition, electric vehicle charging stations and spaces for car sharing services (e.g. autoshare) should be considered for new and existing parking areas to help encourage more sustainable forms of transportation.

### Surface Parking

As Downtown evolves it will become a more dense and vibrant place, which will generate more traffic and demand for parking. This will include both municipal parking as well as private parking to support new development.

The Downtown Cobourg Parking Study (2014) indicated that nearly 2,238 off-street and on-street parking spaces serve the Downtown. This includes, approximately 418 on-street and 755 public off-street parking, and 1,065 private parking spaces. The Study also concluded that the overall parking capacity is sufficient to meet parking demands.

In addition to the Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines, the following should be considered:

- All surface parking lots should be designed for safe pedestrian passage, use and comfort, and include elements such as lighting, trees and landscaping, walkways, and wayfinding signage,



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Parking area that integrates pedestrian paths, lighting, and landscaping.



Use landscaping and other streetscape features to provide a buffer between surface parking areas and pedestrians.

where appropriate.

- Surface parking lots should be located in the interior or rear of a block to allow buildings and other structures to remain the dominant visual element in the public realm and to ensure that sidewalks and building façades effectively define the street edge.
- To the extent possible, surface parking areas should be permeable to reduce runoff, and use permeable materials with sufficient drainage to reduce demand for stormwater sewers.
- Where existing parking areas are adjacent to the sidewalk, a landscaped buffer should be located between parked vehicles and the sidewalk. This buffer should be located within the private realm to avoid reduction of the total sidewalk width.

safety, be attractive and complementary to adjacent built form, and create a welcoming and comfortable street environment.

- Vehicular access to parking structures should be located to the rear and/or side of the building, and should be incorporated in the overall building façade design.
- Pedestrian entrances for the parking structures should be located adjacent to primary building entrances, public streets or other highly visible locations.
- Pedestrian access to all parking structures must be clearly marked, highly visible, and incorporated into the overall design of the building or development.

## Structured Parking

As intensification occurs in Downtown, locations for structured parking should be considered.

- The potential for structured parking within all new higher density development should be explored. New development should integrate parking within the building and should be hidden from public view.
- Structured parking with a street frontage along a commercial street must be developed with some active uses at grade to animate and provide continuity along the street. The building façade design must enhance pedestrian

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*Integrate retail uses within the at-grade frontage of structured parking facilities.*

Final Draft



THE ROAD AHEAD 5.0



# Final Draft

## 5.1 Implementation Strategy

This section presents recommendations on how the Master Plan can be brought forward by the Town in partnership with its stakeholders. The Implementation Strategy presents key considerations as well as public and private realm actions over the short, medium, and long-term.

### 5.1.1 Key Considerations

#### Drive Downtown Change

The Town along with its stakeholders, such as the Downtown Coalition Advisory Committee (Downtown Coalition) have been instrumental in leading the Downtown revitalization effort. The implementation of this Master Plan will require continuous attention to follow-up on the recommendations made in this document in order to realize the Vision. This will include private and public investment and negotiating amongst various interests to initiate the recommendations in the Master Plan.

This leadership role is one which is entrusted to the Downtown Coalition. However, Downtown revitalization will require participation between the Town, its stakeholders and the private sector to make things happen. Together with Town Council and Staff, the Coalition's focus must also be on making adjustments over time to ensure the Plan is current and achieves what's desired by all stakeholders. This Master Plan is just one step to help guide Downtown revitalization.

#### Competitive Advantage

Downtown Cobourg has a number of strengths and unique attributes. A rich historic fabric, high quality public realm and waterfront, pedestrian-scale retail, vibrant cultural amenities and activities, and a residential community makes Downtown Cobourg a 'complete' community. Most downtowns aspire to have these elements. Building on these success factors will help to attract more investment and activity to Downtown.

#### Monitoring and Adjustments

This Master Plan has been developed through engagement with the Town and its stakeholders, lead by the Downtown Coalition and represents the long term vision for Downtown. However, the Plan should be viewed as a guide for future growth

and development as the Downtown will evolve and emerge over time. As the Downtown evolves, it may become necessary to accommodate changing needs, while implementing the objectives and vision of the Plan.

#### Incentives

As identified previously in this Document, an accompanying Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for Downtown Cobourg has been prepared to help encourage implementation of the Vision and the objectives of the Plan. Public and private realm enhancements, financial incentives and programs within the Downtown will involve private and public investment. Both the Master Plan and the CIP should be used as tools to support the overall Downtown revitalization objectives.

The specific programs of the CIP may be offered at the discretion of Council and may be established or rescinded by Council without an amendment to this Master Plan. In addition, it will be essential for the Town to monitor the progress of development and renovations in the Downtown in order to ensure that the relevant incentives are appropriate to specific needs over time.

#### The Need for Partnerships

Overall Downtown revitalization can only be realized through partnerships among stakeholders, and the public and private sectors.

Such partnerships allow pooling of ideas and the sharing of responsibilities. Examples include the Downtown Coalition, Downtown Business Improvement Area (DBIA), and the Heritage Committee that are engaged in improving and preserving Downtown. Other regional agencies and private sector partners should also be engaged to help develop valued partnerships, and potential new projects in Downtown Cobourg.

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## 5.1.2 General Sequence of Projects

A key component of implementation is to identify the action items which will bring the Plan from vision to reality. In this regard, putting in place the structures and programs necessary to manage change, such as the Community Improvement Venture Initiative (CIVI), which is an arms length organization proposed by the Town to help streamline and facilitate development and revitalization projects, and appropriate municipal staff and resources, will help to manage applications and long-term planning.

Enhancements to Downtown Cobourg will occur through implementing private sector development and publicly led and funded public realm projects. Market conditions will dictate exactly when private development will occur, while initiating public realm improvements will help to create a positive environment to attract investment more rapidly.

The following general sequence of interventions are recommended according to the actions that could have the most impact rather than the quickest. As such, projects are distributed among short, medium, and long-term time frames based on when the project should ideally be initiated. This is a recognition that any priority list is by nature preliminary until all projects are identified and discussed through the Town's capital and program planning process. As such, the timelines are guidelines only and may be revisited and or modified at the discretion of Town Council.

The following Action Item list is intended to be a general guide to assist preparation of a long-term capital program for the identified improvements in Downtown Cobourg, which will provide more detail in terms of specific costs, phasing and priorities.

### Short Term (1- 3 years)

Projects identified as short term are ones that are considered to have a high degree of impact on Downtown revitalization and generally include the construction of larger public realm facilities, private development projects, or implementing streetscape or wayfinding signage throughout the Downtown. These projects are considered to have more global Downtown-wide impacts.

### Medium Term (4-7 years)

Medium term projects include projects that are considered to have a medium level of impact on the public and private realm and may include smaller public spaces, pedestrian paths, or other public spaces associated with future development projects.

### Long Term (8+ years)

Long term projects include those that are important to Downtown revitalization but would not have a significant impact on their own. These generally include enhancements to parking lots or minor pedestrian paths.

•

ACTION ITEMS	TYPE	IMPACT*	COST**
<b>Short Term (0-3 years)</b>			
Establish the Community Improvement Venture Initiative (CIVI) as an arm’s length development and marketing body to co-ordinate and facilitate downtown revitalization and improvement.	Public/Private Realm – Implementation, Business Attraction, Marketing	High	High
Actively promote and implement the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and associated incentives as a stimulus for downtown revitalization (also an <i>Ongoing Action Item</i> ).	Public/Private Realm – Implementation, Business Attraction, Communication, Marketing, Education	High	Low-Moderate
Implement Downtown Wayfinding and Directional signage (GSP Group), finalize designs, placement and costing.	Public Realm – Implementation	High	Moderate
Revisit and implement the Victoria Square Plan to create a convertible & accessible landscaped public square and civic gathering space for community events, the Farmer’s Market and parking, and include the conversion of Second Street into a “Flex Street” concept and designs for the First Street and Rotary Waterfront Park-Third Pedestrian Paths; finalize designs and costing .	Public Realm – Design Study, Consultation, Implementation	High	Moderate-High
Complete the Heritage Master Plan and associated Heritage Conservation District Plans and develop an Implementation Plan.	Public Realm – Design Study	High	Low
Continue to implement programming of Second Street for community events and public gatherings.	Public Realm – Implementation, Programming	Moderate	Low
Undertake a detailed Streetscape & Landscape Design Study to identify specific areas of the public realm in need of additional landscaping, street trees, pedestrian-scale furniture, lighting, signage, pedestrian/cycling/accessibility enhancements and other features – include municipal parking lots (Covert Street, Third Street, Trinity) and the First Street Pedestrian Path corridor; finalize designs and costing.	Public Realm – Design Study, Consultation	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Implement interim enhancements to the First Street Pedestrian Path, including an asphalt path connection south of Albert Street and related signage.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Low
Implement the Rotary Waterfront Park Pedestrian Path to Third Street, with parking lot enhancements, landscaping and signage.	Public Realm – Implementation	Low-Moderate	Low-Moderate
Investigate the business case for renovating/re-developing the Park Theatre as a key cultural/entertainment destination in the Downtown***.	Public/Private Realm – Study	High	Low
Revisit the Parks Master Plan, Central Harbour Lands Concept and West Harbour Development Plan for the waterfront area, including the development of an Implementation Plan which examines new and enhanced active transportation connections, public open spaces/gathering places, marina facilities, natural heritage features, furniture, and the East Pier and Western Headland areas.	Public Realm – Study, Consultation	Moderate-High	Low
Undertake a process to engage stakeholders on the future of the Trailer Park site.	Public Realm – Consultation	Low-High	Low
Investigate/encourage the future re-use of the CDCI West main school site as a community hub with intensification opportunities in accordance with this Master Plan***.	Public/Private Realm – Facility Re-development Opportunity	High	Low
Encourage the re-development/adaptive re-use of major private landholdings, including the Park Theatre, King Street East and West Gateways, in accordance with this Master Plan***.	Public/Private Realm – Re-development Opportunity, Consultation	High	Low
<b>Medium Term (4-7 years)</b>			
Implement the First Street Pedestrian Path final design in concert with abutting development in accordance with this Master Plan***.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Implement the Third Street – Hibernia Street Pedestrian Path in concert with abutting development***.	Public/Private Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Low-Moderate
Implement recommendations of the Streetscape and Landscape Design Study, including landscaping, street trees, pathways, accessibility enhancements, signage, furniture and other features.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Moderate
Implement strategic actions of the Heritage Master Plan for the Downtown and actively promote benefits of heritage preservation to downtown property owners and businesses (also an <i>Ongoing Action Item</i> ).	Public Realm – Implementation, Communication, Marketing, Education	High	Low-Moderate
Complete the installation of heritage streetlights, signs and interpretive displays.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Moderate-High
Implement the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan review relating to the waterfront, including enhanced trail/boardwalk connections, landscaping, furniture, signage, interpretive areas, active use facilities and other amenities.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate-High	High
Re-develop the Park Theatre building as a key cultural/entertainment destination in the downtown, with potential to incorporate a cohesive mixed use development in the College-McGill block, with public plaza/arcade use in accordance with this Master Plan***.	Public/Private Realm – Re-development Opportunity	High	High
<b>Long Term (8+ years)</b>			
Re-examine the need & timing for a structured parking facility on the Covert Street parking lot.	Public Realm – Study, Consultation	Moderate	Moderate
Revisit the Downtown Gateway signage (GSP Group) concepts.	Public Realm – Implementation	Moderate	Moderate
Examine the future use of the CDCI West sports field site***.	Public/Private Realm – Re-development Opportunity, Consultation	Moderate	Low
<b>Ongoing</b>			
Engage private businesses, development interests, DBIA, Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to encourage diversity of uses, re-development and intensification in accordance with this Master Plan and the CIP.	Public/Private Realm – Communication, Consultation, Business Attraction, Marketing, Promotion, Re-development/Intensification Opportunities	High	Low
Provide a stronger focus on tourism and cultural opportunities in the Downtown through the Tourism Department and other staff resources.	Public Realm – Implementation, Marketing, Branding	High	Low
Ensure that open spaces identified in this Master Plan are acquired/secured through development approvals, and that private amenity spaces adjacent to the public realm are treated as publicly accessible***	Public/Private Realm – Implementation, Development Opportunities	High	Low-Moderate
Continue to enhance major Downtown attractors and opportunities, such as the Farmer’s Market, Victoria Square, waterfront open spaces, festivals, community events and Marina.	Public Realm – Implementation, Marketing, Branding	High	Low
Communicate with Downtown property owners, businesses and DBIA to foster the maintenance, improvement and/or enhancement of buildings/storefronts, utilizing the CIVI and/or CIP incentive programs and, where appropriate, the Property Standards By-law and/or Fire Code to effect positive physical change.	Public/Private Realm – Communication, Consultation, Marketing, Implementation, Inspection, Enforcement	High	Low-Moderate
Actively promote and implement the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and associated incentives as a stimulus for revitalization.	Public/Private Realm – Implementation, Business Attraction, Communication, Marketing, Education	High	Low-Moderate
Implement strategic actions of the Heritage Master Plan for the downtown and actively promote benefits of heritage preservation to downtown property owners and businesses.	Public/Private Realm – Implementation, Communication, Marketing, Education	High	Low-Moderate

\* *Impact refers to a general measurement or degree of significance that a particular action or project may have on Downtown revitalization (ie. on people, places, the local economy, etc.)*

\*\* *General Cost Estimate Ranges: Low = \$0 - \$20,000; Moderate = \$20,000 - \$100,000; High = \$100,000+*

\*\*\* *Implementation is largely dependent on circumstances outside of the public realm, such as the nature/timing of private development/investment, opportunities for public/private partnerships, etc.*

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## 5.1.3 Plan Monitoring

As the Downtown evolves through development and improvements, the Master Plan and associated documents will need to be updated periodically. The Town of Cobourg shall conduct periodic reviews of the programs and activities relating to community improvement and Downtown revitalization to determine their relevance and effectiveness over time. The Town may amend this Plan as is necessary to ensure that the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan are achieved. For example, as infill becomes more prevalent, additional direction may be required to address emerging issues that are not evident at this time.

As development progresses, it is recommended that regular public information sessions form part of Council's review process to keep the community up to date on the progress of development and the implementation of the Plan as needed. A general file should be kept including a summary of projects, proposed work plan, and any issues or challenges with implementation.

Future monitoring of the Plan will require tracking different elements, which may include the following indicators:

- Number of restored buildings and renovations.
- Number of street trees planted and other streetscape enhancements.
- Area of new public spaces created.
- BIA membership level.
- Number of new businesses registered in the Downtown.
- Census count for new residents in the Downtown.
- Increase in families living Downtown.
- Number of events held in the Downtown.
- Building permits issued.

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## 5.2 Downtown Incentives and Assistance

The Town of Cobourg offers a variety of incentives and tools to enhance the Downtown and promote revitalization. In addition, there are a number of planning documents, policies, and strategies that need to be consulted before engaging in a development project. In order to provide a “user-friendly” approach for Downtown development projects, the Town has created a Downtown Vitalization Toolbox.

The [Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox](#) is provided in Appendix A, and is structured as a one-stop shop for developers, businesses and other private investors, which outlines:

- Applicable strategies
- Policies and regulations
- Incentives
- Municipal contacts
- Development Permit and Approval Processes

### Who's involved?

Downtown revitalization will occur over many years and involve participation with the Town and private sector. As indicated previously in this document, the Town has proposed the creation of the [Community Improvement Venture Initiative \(CIVI\)](#) to help streamline and facilitate development and revitalization projects in the Downtown.

### The Community Improvement Plan

This Plan has been developed concurrently with a [Community Improvement Plan \(CIP\)](#) to help encourage public realm and private development projects in Downtown Cobourg.

Developing the recommendations set out in this Plan will require funding mechanisms for the Town of Cobourg, as well as financial incentives to help attract development within the Downtown. The Town has committed millions of dollars to the revitalization of heritage buildings, waterfront revitalization, and new public open spaces and other projects. This level of commitment to the Downtown should be continued and enhanced to the extent possible.

The background analysis undertaken in the development of the CIP identified the following areas in need:

- More people living Downtown – renovate and upgrade existing upper storey apartments, convert vacant and underutilized space in upper storeys of commercial and mixed use buildings for residential use, and build new higher density residential buildings on vacant lots.
- Encourage new development and investment in vacant buildings, underutilized buildings and vacant infill sites across the Downtown.
- Building remediation and redevelop former industrial properties (potential brownfield sites).
- Develop vacant and underutilized lands near the Waterfront.
- Transform and improve the condition and appearance of front, side and rear building façades (especially non-heritage façades) and the quality and attractiveness of commercial signage and storefronts/display areas.
- Repair, renovate and improve the condition of commercial and mixed use building exteriors and interiors.
- Promote and ensure heritage buildings are maintained, restored and improved.
- Encourage more businesses along the upper stories of mixed use buildings (where appropriate and accessible).
- More services and shops to allow residents access to groceries, hardware, and other local essentials.
- The need to encourage “catalyst projects” that are well designed, sustainable, and will have a significant positive impact on the Downtown.

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## Key Incentives

There are a number of financial incentive programs identified to address the critical needs for Downtown Cobourg that are not fully identified in this Master Plan document. Once approved, potential CIP incentive programs may include:

- Study Grant
- Façade Improvement Grant/Loan
- Building Improvement Grant/ Loan Program
- Residential Grant/Loan Program
- Vitalization Tax Increment Grant Program
- Brownfields Tax Assistance Program
- Vitalization Development

For complete program details, refer to the Downtown Cobourg Community Improvement Plan.

# Final Draft



View from the Cobourg Waterfront, Photo source: <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/originals/60/e0/b2/60e0b240155782e7aa4d2247402077df.jpg>



# Appendix A

## The Cobourg Downtown Vitalization Toolbox

This Toolbox includes a summary of relevant documents, policies, and provides contacts to help you with your development project. Brief descriptions of relevant vitalization strategies, policies and regulations, application processes are provided below. In addition, website links to information and relevant contacts are located at the end of this document.

1

## Economic Development Strategies

The Town has a number of strategic directions and actions for revitalizing Downtown Cobourg including the following:

### Downtown Vitalization Action Plan (2013)

The Action Plan recommended the following priorities for downtown vitalization:

1. The creation of a Heritage Master Plan.
2. The development of a Downtown Master Plan.
3. The development of a 3D Virtual Tour and Model of the Downtown.
4. Undertaking a Building Asset Inventory.
5. Undertaking a Tourism Asset Feasibility Study.
6. Establishing a Community Improvement Venture Initiative and improvement financing plan.

[www.cobourg.ca/images/Downtown\\_Vitalization/ACTIONPLAN111513.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/Downtown_Vitalization/ACTIONPLAN111513.pdf)

### Downtown Marketing Partnership (2015)

This partnership includes the Town of Cobourg, the Downtown Business Improvement Area, the Northumberland Central Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Advisory Centre of Northumberland. This group has a mandate to create a marketing plan for the attraction of new business and consumers to Downtown Cobourg from 2015-2018.

### Community Improvement Venture Initiative Business Plan (2015)

A Community Improvement Venture Initiative (CIVI) was one of six central recommendations in the Downtown Vitalization Action Plan to lead redevelopment through the provision of gap financing, mortgages and loan guarantees for small and medium-size projects.

[www.cobourginternet.com/images/2015/CIVI%20Interim\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cobourginternet.com/images/2015/CIVI%20Interim_FINAL.pdf)

## Contacts

For more information or questions about any of the information in this Toolbox please contact:

Town Of Cobourg  
Economic Development  
Dressler House  
212 King Street West  
Cobourg, ON K9A 2N1  
Wendy Gibson  
Email: [wgibson@cobourg.ca](mailto:wgibson@cobourg.ca)  
Phone: 905-372-5481  
[www.cobourg.ca](http://www.cobourg.ca)

## 2

### Planning & Development Framework

The following policies are used by the Town to inform and assess development and redevelopment. Each policy or document applies to the Downtown and covers a range of development forms. All proposals in the Downtown must ensure that project proposals conform to these policies.

#### Provincial Policy Statement (2014)

The current Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and came into effect on April 30, 2014. The PPS provides the broad policy direction for Provincial interest in land use planning. The Provincial Policy Statement provides for the combination of an appropriate range and mix of residential, employment, recreational and open space uses to meet long-term needs. The Downtown Master Plan accommodates this general policy and will assist Cobourg in meeting the full range of current and future land needs for its residents.  
[www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10463](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10463)

#### Places to Grow Act (2005)

The Places to Grow Act (Bill 136) reflects the government's plan for population growth, economic expansion and the protection of the environment, agricultural lands, and other valuable resources in a coordinated strategic way. The legislation enabled the creation of regional Growth Plans in any part of Ontario. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is such a Plan, as detailed below.  
[www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=9](http://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=9)

#### Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

The Growth Plan, 2006, was prepared and approved under the Places to Grow Act, 2005, and took effect on June 16, 2006. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, aims to:

- Revitalize downtowns, including Cobourg, to become vibrant and convenient centres.
- Create complete communities that offer more options for living, working, shopping and playing.
- Provide greater choice in housing types to meet the needs of people at all stages of life.
- Curb sprawl and protect farmland and green spaces.
- Reduce traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices.

[www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=9&Itemid=14](http://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9&Itemid=14)

#### Town of Cobourg Official Plan 2010 Five Year Review Consolidation (May 2010)

The Town of Cobourg Official Plan provides a vision of Cobourg's future growth and a policy framework to guide its physical development. It documents the objectives and policies that guide the physical development of all lands within the town. Downtown Cobourg has specific land use policies that must be considered to ensure your project conforms with the Plan. The Town Planning Department can provide more information with respect to the Official Plan and required applications. For development applications, please refer to the Town of Cobourg Development Approvals Guide to Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments.

[www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/GUIDE-DEV.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/GUIDE-DEV.pdf)

## Toolbox

### Heritage Master Plan and Conservation District Plans (2016)

A Heritage Master Plan is a strategic document for managing all heritage resources within the Town. In addition, the Town has a number of **Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plans** that provide more detailed policies related to properties and structures within each HCD. The Study Area overlaps with four HCDs.

All development, redevelopment, demolition or exterior alterations of a building or structure within a HCD requires a **heritage permit** that is issued by the Town. The Town has created the Heritage Guideline and Permit Resource Guide to help navigate the heritage permit process. You can get a copy of this Guide at the Planning and Development Department and Heritage Department [www.cobourg.ca/about-heritage-permits.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/about-heritage-permits.html)

### Building Permit and Property Standards

A building permit is your formal permission to begin construction or demolition. It means that the Town of Cobourg has reviewed the plans for any new structure, addition or renovation. Plans must comply with the Ontario Building Code, Zoning By-law, and other applicable regulations and policies. For more information please refer to the **Cobourg Home Owner's Guide to Building Permits** [www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/Home\\_Owners\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/Home_Owners_Guide.pdf)

In addition, the Town has a **Property Standards By-law 18-99** [www.cobourg.ca/property-standards.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/property-standards.html) that sets out the minimum standards for building and property maintenance within the town. Standards prescribed in these by-laws are intended to outline the reasonable maintenance and upkeep of yards, buildings and properties with particular attention to conservation of heritage attributes of designated buildings and property.

### Zoning By-Law #85-2003

Zoning by-law 85-2003 regulates the use of lands and the character, location, parking, and the use of buildings and structures in the Town. The Planning Department can provide more detailed zoning information regarding a particular property and if a variance or amendment would be required for your project [www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/Full\\_Zoning\\_By-law.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/Leona/Full_Zoning_By-law.pdf)

### Paint and Signs

Heritage Planning Staff provide approval of Heritage Permits with respect to signage and paint colour applications according to the **Cobourg Heritage Colour Palette, Sign By-law, and Guidelines for Signage on Commercial Properties** [www.cobourg.ca/paint-and-signs.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/paint-and-signs.html)

### Site Plan Control

Site Plan Control is a tool utilized by the Municipality to ensure that specific development proposals meet the Official Plan and Zoning By-law objectives. Site Plan approval is typically the last planning approval necessary before a Building Permit is issued.

The Planning Department has prepared **The Citizen's Guide to Site Plan Review** to assist applicants with a Site Plan or Site Plan Amendment application. The Guide also provides a list of application and study requirements [www.cobourg.ca/planning-and-development3/site-plan-control.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/planning-and-development3/site-plan-control.html)

### Town of Cobourg Urban and Landscape Design Guidelines (2010)

Design guidelines are a tool used to inform and assess development and redevelopment. The guidelines themselves are general and high-level and apply to both the private and public realm, covering a range of forms, including residential, commercial and industrial developments.

[www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/OP\\_Review/Urban\\_Design\\_Guidelines\\_FINAL\\_Sept\\_2010.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/stories/docs/OP_Review/Urban_Design_Guidelines_FINAL_Sept_2010.pdf)

## Toolbox

### Victoria Square Plan (1999)

The Victoria Square Plan was produced in 1999 for lands at the north west intersection of Albert Street and Second Street. Highlights of the Plan include pedestrian enhancements around the Market Building, a Market Square for public events, a stage area, and other landscaping and street furniture upgrades. When complete, Victoria Square will be the central public space and gathering point in the Town.

### The CAUSE Report 2000 - Community Assist for an Urban Study Effort (2000)

A study team of professionals, architects, designers and students conducted a study for the Town of Cobourg in the Fall of 2000 to survey and examine the community's downtown, waterfront and surrounding areas. The community driven study produced a report that highlighted a series of guidelines and recommendations for improvements to the public and private realm. The CAUSE report and Advisory Committee Final Report are available in the Planning Department.

### Contacts

For more information or questions about any of the information in this Toolbox please contact:

#### Town of Cobourg

Building and Planning Departments  
Victoria Hall  
55 King Street West  
Second Floor, East Wing  
Cobourg, ON K9A 2M2  
Phone: 905-372-1005

#### Director of Planning & Development

Glenn McGlashon  
Email: [gmcglashon@cobourg.ca](mailto:gmcglashon@cobourg.ca)  
Phone: 905-372-1005

#### Chief Building Official

Frank Lukes  
Email: [flukes@cobourg.ca](mailto:flukes@cobourg.ca)  
Phone 905-372-1005

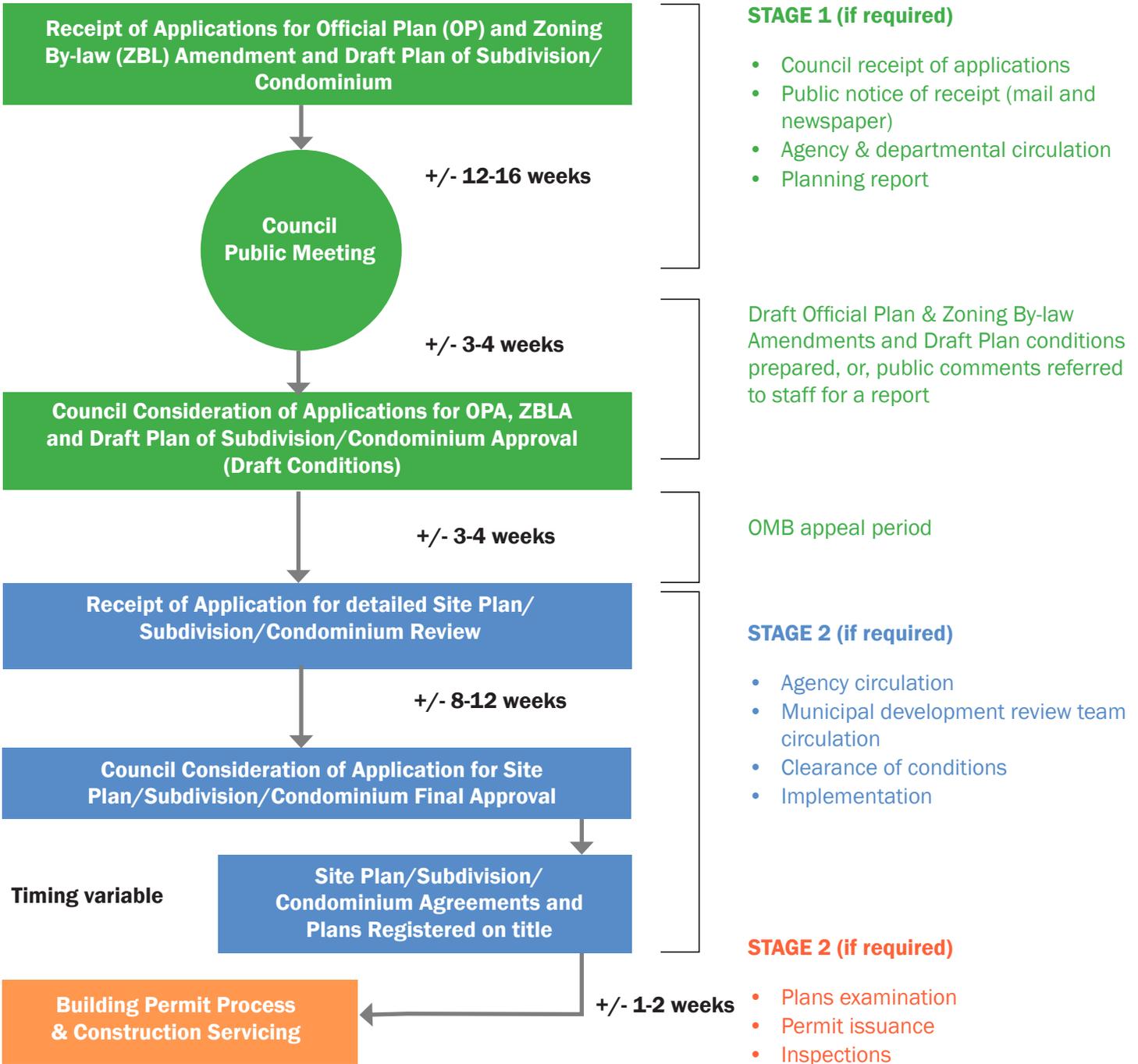
#### Heritage Planning Services

Alison Torrie-Lapaire  
Email: [atorrie@cobourg.ca](mailto:atorrie@cobourg.ca)  
Phone: 905-372-1005

## Toolbox

### Development Process & Permitting Flow Charts

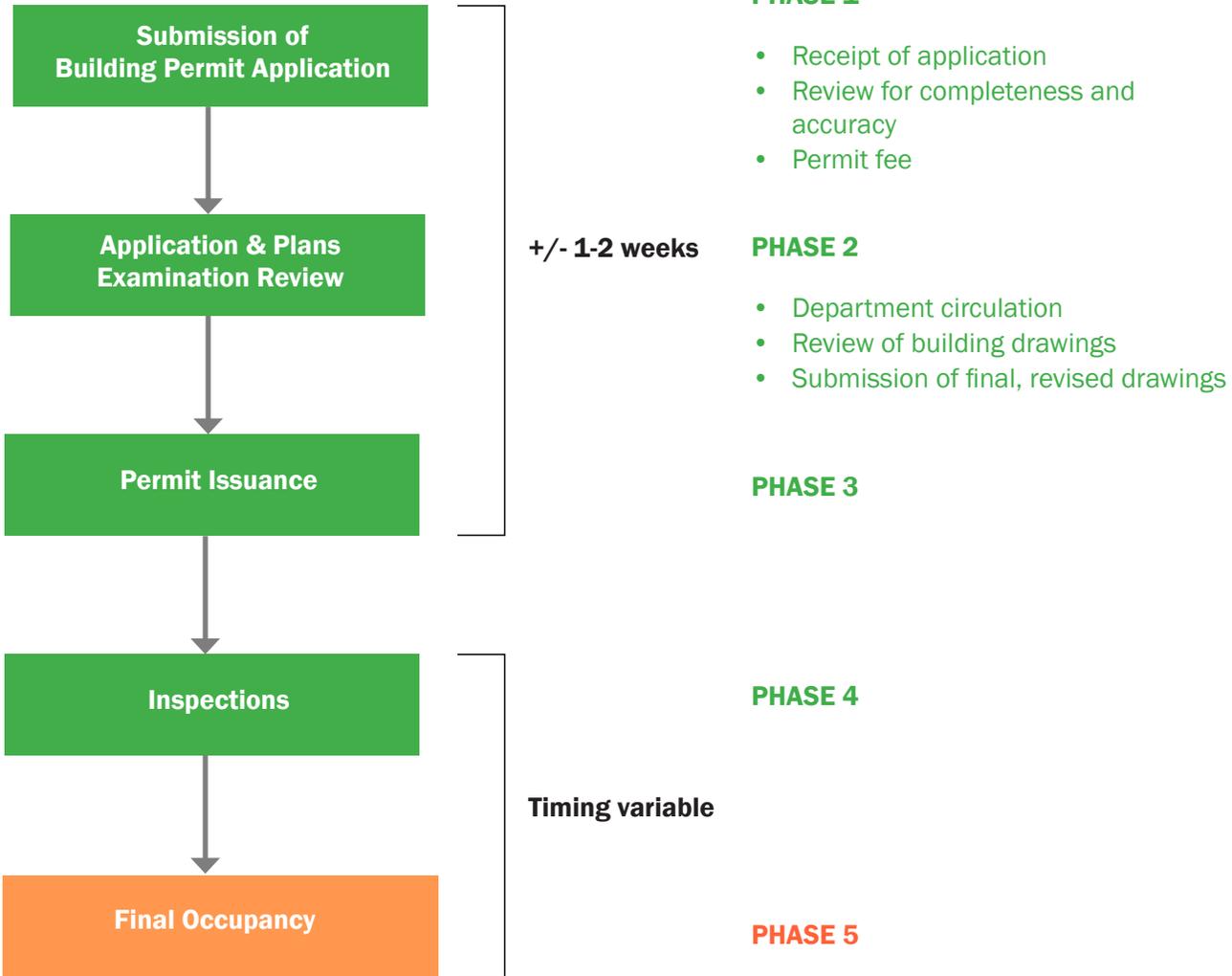
Development Applications General Process Flowchart



# Toolbox

## Development Process & Permitting Flow Charts

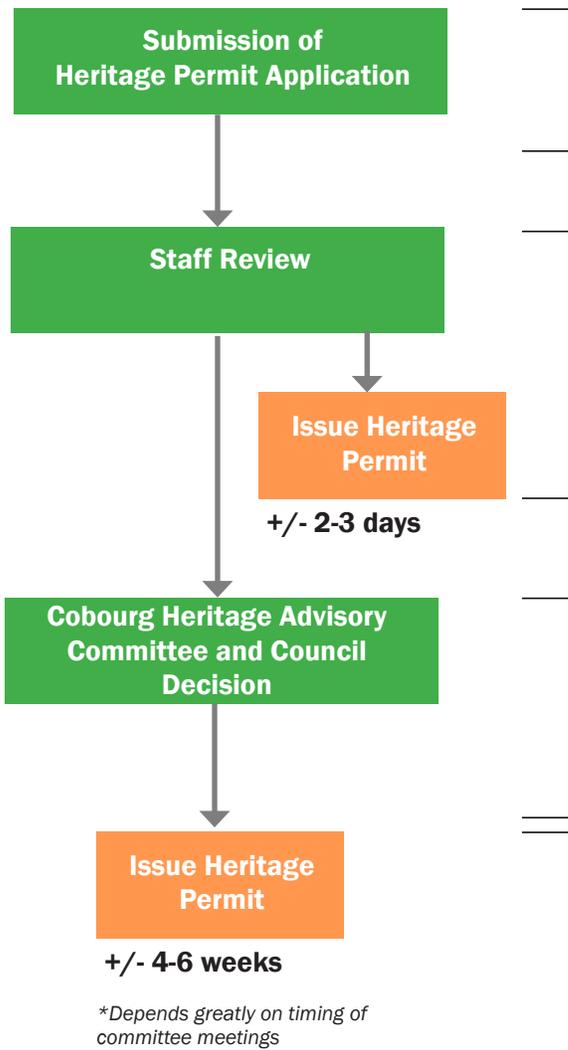
Building Permit Application General Process Flowchart



## Toolbox

### Development Process & Permitting Flow Charts

Heritage Permit Application General Process Flowchart



#### PHASE 1

- Pre-consultation with Heritage Staff
- Receipt of application
- Review for completeness and accuracy

#### PHASE 2

- Staff review of application and drawings
- Determine if application meets heritage requirements and is considered minor in nature (approval may be given by staff)
- Issue Staff Approval Permit or refer to Cobourg Heritage Committee (CHC) for Decision

#### PHASE 3

- Staff report and recommendation
- Cobourg Heritage Committee Meeting
- (Applicant must attend)
- Committee decision and recommendation
- Council review and final decision

#### PHASE 4

- Finalization of details with Heritage Planning Staff, if required (e.g. approval conditions)
- Issue Heritage Permit

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## Other Important Studies

In addition to economic development and planning policies, the Town has developed a number of specific studies that should also be reviewed before engaging in a project in the Downtown.

### Transportation Master Plan (2011)

The Transportation Master Plan guides the development of Cobourg's long-term transportation network including roads, transit, and active transportation. [www.cobourg.ca/cobourg-transportation-master-plan.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/cobourg-transportation-master-plan.html)

### Town of Cobourg Parking Study (2014)

The Downtown Parking Study provides a strategy aimed at managing future parking demands in the Downtown. [www.cobourg.ca/images/Final\\_Draft\\_Parking\\_Report\\_20\\_11\\_13.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/Final_Draft_Parking_Report_20_11_13.pdf)

### Town of Cobourg Parks Master Plan (2013)

The Cobourg Parks Master Plan (PMP) was completed in 2013 for the Town of Cobourg as a strategy for achieving the Town's vision for a strong, livable and healthy community. The PMP identifies a number of recommendations for public space, parks, and paths for Downtown Cobourg that should be considered when proposing development with the Downtown. [www.cobourg.ca/parks-master-plan.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/parks-master-plan.html)

### Victoria Park Master Plan (2002)

The Victoria Park Master Plan was a collaborative undertaking with the Town and stakeholders and involved extensive consultation with the community. The Plan includes a detailed park program and concept plan that is based on rehabilitation of the park's features and qualities and includes a series of design guidelines, improved facilities, and site layout.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the Master Plan please contact the Town of Cobourg Public Works Department.

### Cobourg Engineering Design Guidelines (2006)

The Engineering Design Guidelines provide direction related to functional engineering standards and requirements for all development. The Guidelines cover areas such as roadways, entrance ways, sanitary sewers and connections, storm drainage and connections, water mains, lot grading, signs, street tree planting, lighting, as well as other site plan requirements. For additional information contact Engineering and Environmental Services.

### Cobourg Municipal Tree By-law 020-2006

The Tree Preservation By-law helps protect trees within the Town of Cobourg and requires any person who makes a planning application to the Town's Planning Department shall be required to submit a landscaping and street furniture plan for approval. The By-law also contains Tree Preservation Guidelines for all development projects.

## Contacts

For more information and questions about any of the information in this Toolbox, please contact:

### Town Of Cobourg

#### Public Works Division - Public Works Yard

390 King Street West  
Cobourg, ON K9A 2N7  
Phone: 905-372-9971

#### Director of Public Works

Bill Watson  
Email: [bwatson@cobourg.ca](mailto:bwatson@cobourg.ca)  
Phone: 905-372-9971

#### Deputy Director of Public Works

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# Toolbox

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### Incentive Programs

Please see the Town of Cobourg website or the Tax Office for general information regarding commercial or residential property values or tax assessments [www.cobourg.ca/tax-information/general-tax-information.html](http://www.cobourg.ca/tax-information/general-tax-information.html)

#### Downtown Cobourg Community Improvement Plan (2016)

The Downtown Cobourg Community Improvement Plan (CIP) provides a set of financial incentive programs aimed at encouraging revitalization to support private and public realm improvements, and to promote the conservation of heritage resources.

The following is a list of incentive programs offered through the Community Improvement Plan.

- Study Grant Program
- Facade Improvement Grant/Loan Program
- Building Improvement Grant/Loan Program
- Residential Grant/Loan Program
- Vitalization Tax Increment Grant Program
- Brownfields Tax Assistance Program
- Vitalization Development Charge Grant Program
- Fees Grant Program

In Addition, other financial incentives are also offered through a range of different programs. For more information regarding the CIP, specific incentive program, or application requirements please contact the Planning and Building Department or the Finance Department.

### Heritage Financial Incentives

Cobourg provides several financial incentives to promote the conservation of heritage resources. These funding opportunities are administered directly by Planning and Building staff and the Finance Department. People interested in applying for any of the municipal incentive programs as detailed below must submit a complete heritage financial incentives application form to the Building and Planning Department. All projects must be consistent with both the Town's Heritage District Guidelines and Parks Canada Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Sites.

In addition to the programs within the CIP, there are several sources of restoration project funding and tax incentive programs for properties designated under Part IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act:

#### Permit Fee Program

This program waives building and planning fees for restoration, renovation and reconstruction initiatives in the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District (both interior and exterior works) with a 50% discount on permit fees outside the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District. This program does not apply to new construction (new developments or additions).

#### Heritage Loan Program

This program provides funding for exterior restoration projects on designated heritage buildings that receive heritage approval to a maximum of \$15,000.00 per project per property. This program is intended to provide additional incentives for both residential and commercial property owners to restore, upgrade or maintain those properties protected under the Ontario Heritage Act.

## Toolbox

### Heritage Tax Incentive Program (Commercial Core Only)

This program grants money to building owners in the Commercial Core Heritage Conservation District for restoration or redevelopment projects that receive heritage approval. The grant is equal to the annual increase in the town portion of the property taxes resulting from an increase in assessment as a direct result of the project. This is credited against the property taxes annually for a maximum period of ten consecutive years.

### Development Charges Credit on Existing Buildings Program

The Town of Cobourg has passed an amendment to the Development Charges By-law to provide for greater flexibility in allowing credits for all redevelopment projects which utilize existing buildings. This program is not specifically for heritage purposes and it is available for all redevelopment in the Town of Cobourg. For heritage properties, this could be a change-of-use credit based upon the floor area of the former use versus the new use.

For more information on the heritage incentives programs please contact Heritage Planning Services or the Finance Department.

[www.cobourg.ca/images/Heritage/2014\\_Financial\\_Incentives\\_Guide\\_and\\_Form.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/Heritage/2014_Financial_Incentives_Guide_and_Form.pdf)

### Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) Grants Program

The Cobourg Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario has a program designed to accommodate smaller restoration and repair projects. For more information download the ACO Grant Application Form from the Town's website or contact the Cobourg Branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. [www.cobourg.ca/images/Heritage/acofundapplication.pdf](http://www.cobourg.ca/images/Heritage/acofundapplication.pdf)

### Contacts

For more information or questions about any of the information in this Toolbox please contact:

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# Appendix B

## Glossary of Terms

## Glossary of Terms

**Articulation:** refers to the layout or pattern of building elements, including walls, doors, roofs, windows and decorative elements, such as cornices and belt-courses.

**Complete communities:** places where residents can live, work and play in their local neighbourhood; provide a range of housing options, from single family homes to higher density apartment complexes; and be designed to encourage residents to walk and use public transportation instead of car.

**Cluster:** smaller areas within cities and towns that have their own set of defining characteristics but are common throughout the area.

**Character area:** specific geographic or neighbourhood areas that have unique or special characteristics, have the potential to evolve into a unique area when provided specific and intentional guidance, or require special attention due to unique development issues.

**Design guidelines:** the criteria established to guide development toward a desired level of quality through the design of the physical environment, typically applied on a discretionary basis relative to the context of development.

**Façade:** the exterior wall of a building exposed to public view or the walls viewed by persons outside the building.

**Gateway:** the design of a building, site or landscape to symbolize an entrance or arrival to a special district.

**Human scale:** the quality of the physical environment which reflects a sympathetic proportional relationship to human dimensions and which contributes to the citizen's perception and comprehension of the size, scale, height, bulk and/or massing of buildings or other features of the built environment.

**Infill development:** the placement of new buildings into established built-up urban areas, which usually results in an increase in the existing building stock.

**Intensification:** means the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- infill development; and
- the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

(Source: *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*)

**Landmarks:** buildings, structures and spaces which create distinct visual orientation points that provide a sense of location to the observer within a neighbourhood or district, such as those created by a significant natural feature or by an architectural form which is highly distinctive relative to its surrounding environment.

**Massing:** the combination of the three dimensions of length, height, and depth which give a building its overall shape; a building is often composed of many masses, hence the term massing, which is often used to describe the form or shape of structures.

**Mixed Use:** a development or area comprised of mixed land uses either in the same building or in separate buildings on either the same lot or on separate lots or, at a larger scale, in nodes.

**Pedestrian-oriented:** an environment designed to make movement by pedestrians easy, attractive and comfortable for various ages and abilities; considerations include separation of pedestrian and auto circulation, street furniture, clear directional and informational signage, safety, visibility, shade, lighting, surface materials, trees, sidewalk width, intersection treatment, curb cuts, ramps and landscaping.

**Public realm:** the public and semi-public spaces of the municipality, especially the street spaces from the building face to the opposite building face (including the façade, front yard, sidewalk and streets) and open space such as parks and squares.

**Redevelopment:** means the creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield sites.

(Source: *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014*)

**Rhythm and pattern:** relating to materials, styles, shapes and spacing of building elements and the buildings themselves, the predominance of one material or shape, and its patterns of recurrence.

**Right-of-way:** the part of a street that is publicly owned and lies between the property lines.

**Sense of place:** the feeling associated with a location, based on a unique identity and other memorable qualities.

**Setback:** the horizontal distance from the property line to the face of a building or from natural features to a building.

**Street furniture:** municipal equipment placed along streets, including light fixtures, fire hydrants, telephones, trash receptacles, signs, benches, mailboxes, newspaper boxes and kiosks.

**Streetscape:** the distinguishing elements and character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, pedestrian amenities and setback and form of surrounding buildings.

**Streetwall:** the condition of enclosure along a street created by the fronts of buildings, and enhanced by the continuity and height of the enclosing buildings.

**Typology:** a classification of characteristics found in buildings and urban places according to their association with different categories, such as intensity of development and patterns. Single family detached, semi-detached, townhouses, and apartment buildings are all specific housing typology categories.

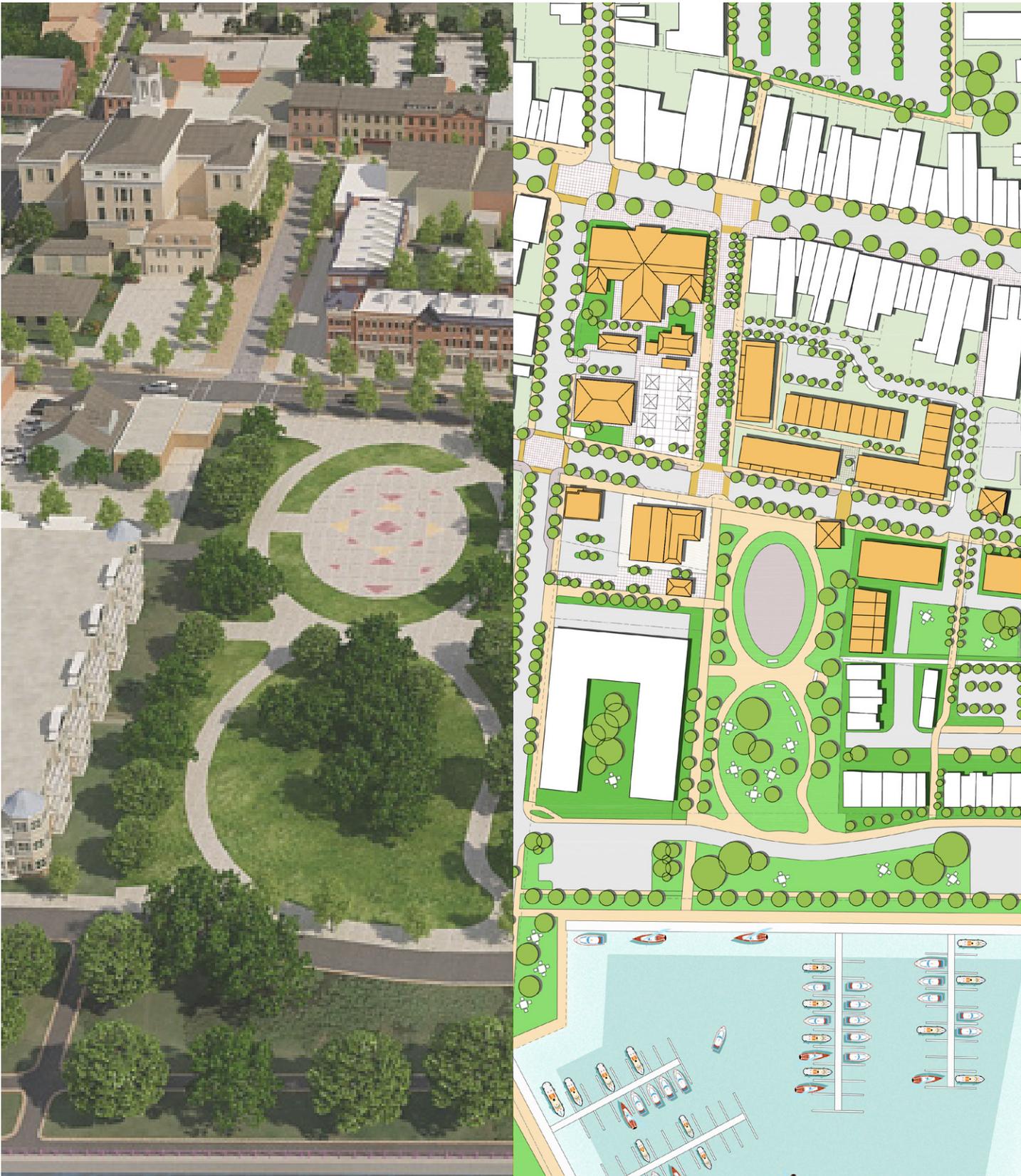
**Urban braille:** an accessible sidewalk and public space system and is based on barrier-free design principles, and is designed to serve the needs of the blind, the visually impaired, the elderly, the infirm, users of mobility devices such as wheelchairs and motorized scooters, the parent with a stroller, in addition to the general public.

**Urban design:** the planning and design of urban places focusing on the three dimension form and function of public and publicly accessible space.

**Urban fabric:** the organization, layout, and pattern of buildings, blocks, streets, and open space in an urban area. Downtown main streets are typically characterized by narrow building façades and are

organized in a compact manner, facing the street and are referred to as having a “fine-grain urban fabric”. Typical suburban areas are characterized by wider streets, larger lots, and have a “spacious urban fabric” pattern.

**Wayfinding:** generally refers to information available to help people find their way around the city or town in the form of verbal, graphic, architectural and spatial information. Typically refers to signage systems used to help direct, inform, and guide people through urban environments.



Prepared By:

