

Staff Report



To	City Council
Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Monday, May 9, 2022
Subject	York Road/Elizabeth Street Recommended Urban Design Concepts

Recommendation

1. That the York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concept Plans included as Attachment 1 to the York Road/Elizabeth Street Recommended Urban Design Concepts report dated May 9, 2022, be approved.
 2. That staff be directed to use the York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concepts, Principles and Design Directions to guide the review of future development applications within the York Road/Elizabeth Street area.
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Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

This report provides the recommended York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concept Plans for Council approval and in guiding the review of future development applications.

Key Findings

The York Road/Elizabeth Street Land Use Study and Urban Design Concept project was initiated in January 2020 and had three main tasks: the background report (complete), the land use study (complete) and the urban design concept (current task).

The recommended Urban Design Concepts were informed by the [York Road-Elizabeth Street Recommended Land Use Study](#) which was approved by Council on May 10, 2021.

The draft urban design concepts considered by Council on December 6, 2021 were generally well-received by the public and few changes are proposed between the draft document and the recommended urban design concepts.

Feedback provided through the online survey, at a virtual public open house (held online in January/February 2022), December 6 Committee meeting and at the February 28, 2022 Heritage Guelph meeting has been considered and has informed the recommended urban design concepts.

The recommended urban design concept plans are intended to illustrate a cohesive vision for the future planning and intensification of this area that demonstrates the directions from the York Road/Elizabeth Street Land Use Study.

Specific design directions are given for three key sites to demonstrate potential future development scenarios in the event that redevelopment is proposed.

Financial Implications

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan is funded through the approved capital budget, Capital Account PL0057 Community Land Use Studies, for costs associated with consultant services and community engagement consultations.

Report

Project Background

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept was initiated in January 2020 with report [IDE-2020-02](#).

The project had three main tasks: the background report, the land use study and the urban design concept. The background report was completed in September 2020 with the [York Road-Elizabeth Street Background Report](#). The Land Use Study was approved by Council on May 10, 2021 with the [York Road-Elizabeth Street Recommended Land Use Study](#).

The purpose of the urban design concept document is to illustrate a cohesive vision for future development within this area based on the Council-approved Land Use Study as well as other City policies.

The overall intent is to produce urban design concepts that respect the land use study recommendations and the natural and cultural heritage of the area and is responsive to comments received through engagement.

Draft urban design concepts

The draft urban design concepts were considered by Council on December 6, 2021 with the report titled [York Road-Elizabeth Street Draft Urban Design Concepts](#).

In addition to the Council meeting, community engagement occurred in January/February and included an online presentation and feedback through [Have Your Say Guelph](#).

The draft urban design concepts were considered by Heritage Guelph at their meeting on [February 28](#). At that meeting, Heritage Guelph passed the following motions:

“That Heritage Guelph receive the staff presentation ‘York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concept Plans’; and

That the comments provide by Heritage Guelph members on the ‘York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concept Plans’ be provided to staff and Council for their consideration.”

No comments were received from Heritage Guelph members.

What We Heard

Through the community engagement on the urban design concepts there was general support for the proposed document. Many of the comments received can be categorized as follows:

- Support for improving existing streetscapes and enhancing active transportation infrastructure to increase pedestrian and cycling throughout the study area and connections to other areas of the city;
- Request for additional support for active transportation be added to the document;
- Support for green space and parkland; and,
- Request for additional clarity regarding transition between employment and residential uses.

Based on the feedback received through community engagement, some changes to the urban design concepts are proposed. The changes that are being recommended relate to providing clarity and are detailed below.

Changes to the Recommended Urban Design Concepts

In response to comments received on the draft urban design concepts, the following modifications are proposed in the final recommended document:

- Clarity that buffer strips include existing buffer strips (e.g. where an existing treed buffer strip already exists a new one is not required). Minor errors were corrected.
- Ensure each area includes a Design Direction bullet that addresses Active Transportation in the area. A full discussion of active transportation is included in the approved Land Use Study.
- Recognition that the existing Commercial Mixed-use Centre designation near Victoria Road and York Road permits a maximum height of 10 storeys.

Implementation of This Document

The document establishes general principles and design considerations for development within the York Road/Elizabeth Street study area and, in particular, the key demonstration sites. Once approved by Council, this document will be used to provide guidance for staff to evaluate development applications within the area and to landowners when they are preparing development applications. While market and economic conditions will ultimately determine the timing for the full build-out of the permitted uses and built form vision, the concept plans are intended to provide greater guidance to development proponents and enhance clarity and consistency regarding the City's urban design policies in this area.

The intent is to allow for more timely approvals of development applications that are in-keeping with the document.

Development proposals within the area will be required to demonstrate how the proposal is generally consistent with and reflects the applicable urban design concepts to the satisfaction of staff. Furthermore, the principles established will guide the development of implementation tools (e.g., zoning by-law amendments or updates). This being said, the demonstration plans are conceptual and issues such as building size/placement may be refined and changes proposed through the development process so long as the development is generally consistent with and meets the intent of the document.

In addition to these urban design concepts, other City guidance documents such as the Commercial Built Form Standards and the Built Form Standards for Townhouses and Mid-Rise Buildings would also apply to this area.

Next Steps

This is the last step of this project. The recommendations of the land use study have been included in Shaping Guelph, the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review and Official Plan Review (OPA 80).

Financial Implications

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan is funded through the approved capital budget, Capital Account PL0057 Community Land Use Studies, for costs associated with consultant services and community engagement consultations.

Consultations

Online community engagement took place from January 17 to February 4, 2022. Notice for the engagement was provided through a public notice and mailing/emailing those on the mailing list for this project. Approximately 70 persons viewed the presentation online. Staff also met with those who requested meetings.

Based on the feedback received changes were made to the document as outlined above. No major concerns were raised.

In addition, the urban design concept plans are based on directions from the Council-approved Land Use Study. For the larger York Road / Elizabeth Street project, community and stakeholder engagement occurred in February and March 2021 and included a community survey online through Have Your Say Guelph, the City's online engagement platform and a virtual public open house which included feedback opportunities.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Priority

Building our Future

Directions

- Maintain existing community assets and secure new ones
- Continue to build strong, vibrant, safe and healthy communities that foster resilience in the people who live here
- Help increase the availability of housing that meets community needs.

Alignment

The York Road/Elizabeth Street land use study and urban design concept plan will support the City's existing policies and guidelines by prioritizing policy work that supports the development of new assets. This study will respond to Guelph's growing and changing social, economic and environmental needs.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Recommended York Road/Elizabeth Street Urban Design Concepts

Attachment-2 Staff Presentation - York Road/Elizabeth Street Recommended Urban Design Concepts

Departmental Approval

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