

Attachment-5 Policies and Studies Background Summary

For information that influences streetscaping decisions

Introduction

This section of the report provides information related to streetscaping from the following approved City plans and strategies:

- [Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#)
- [Official Plan / Downtown Secondary Plan](#)
- [2014 Streetscape Manual](#)
- [Urban Forest Management Plan / Tree Technical Manual](#)
- [Transportation Master Plan](#)
- [Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#)
- [Transit Future Ready Action Plan](#)
- [Solid Waste Management Master Plan / Downtown Waste Project](#)
- [Urban Design Action Plan](#)
- [Cultural Heritage Action Plan](#)
- [Natural Heritage Action Plan](#)

Future Guelph: Strategic Plan 2024-2027

The [Strategic Plan](#) sets out an objective for the City to “make Downtown a vibrant place for everyone” and guides us to “create a beautiful community space through the Downtown Renewal project.” The Downtown Renewal project “will replace and improve our aging infrastructure and upgrade our utility services including modernizing and upgrading the streetscape.”

Official Plan - Downtown Secondary Plan (OP - DSP)

The [Downtown Secondary Plan](#) (DSP) sets a vision for Downtown Guelph to be a distinct and vital urban centre with an enhanced public realm where people will live, work, shop, dine, play and celebrate. The main streets of Macdonell and Wyndham should be more beautiful and friendlier to pedestrians and cyclists.

Build Beautifully – The DSP sets out several Principles to guide development. Most relevant to the current discussion is Principle 8: Build Beautifully, which among other things provides direction to design our Downtown streets and public spaces to the highest standards as attractive and high-quality urban environments, as well as integrate public art into the design of buildings, streetscapes, and open spaces.

Public Realm – With respect to the overall public realm, the DSP identifies that Downtown’s public realm is fundamental to the attractiveness and livability of the core and the entire city. Downtown’s many beautiful buildings should be matched by beautiful public spaces including trees and landscaping.

Streetscaping – The DSP provides detailed guidance on streetscaping, including the direction to prepare the 2014 Streetscape Manual (described below). Generally, the Downtown Secondary Plan outlines that the primary streetscapes should be lined with consistently-spaced trees that help to frame the street and views to Downtown, and generally beautify the approaches to Downtown. The pedestrian zones should be generous and comprised of high quality, durable materials. Crosswalks or entire intersections should have distinct paving, that’s different in texture and colour from the roadway, to add interest to the streetscape and signal to drivers and cyclists the likely presence of pedestrians.

Wyndham and Macdonell – The DSP also identifies Wyndham Street, Macdonell Street and Quebec Street as the main commercial streets Downtown and therefore should be considered pedestrian and transit priority streets with the following characteristics:

- The zones for pedestrians on these streets should be a minimum of six metres wide on both sides, where possible, except Quebec Street which will be approximately three and a half metres;
- On-street parking should be permitted on Downtown Main Streets north of Carden Street to support local business and provide a buffer between pedestrians and moving traffic;
- Dedicated bike facilities should be accommodated on Macdonell Street and Wyndham Street where necessary based on the function of the roadway.

The DSP further identifies that Wyndham Street and Macdonell Street should be priorities for streetscape improvements, indicating that both streets shall be redesigned and rebuilt to enhance the pedestrian realm and generally beautify these signature main streets with landscaping. The streets’ boulevards should have space to accommodate restaurant patios, a clear area for pedestrians, trees and potentially planters, and street furnishings. In the context of a Downtown Parking Strategy, the replacement of angled parking on Macdonell Street with parallel parking may be considered to allow for wider boulevards and bicycle lanes. Travel lanes should be designed for high volumes of bus traffic and reserved areas for single-unit delivery trucks should be considered. Street trees generally should be planted six to eight metres apart.

Finance – The DSP does recognize that the implementation of the policies is subject to the capital budget and financial policies and procedures approved by City Council, as well as the availability of funding from other levels of government.

2014 Streetscape Manual

Over 16 months in 2013-2014, the City undertook a collaborative, community-based process to develop design documents to implement the DSP. The [Streetscape Manual](#) provides design direction for City-run projects Downtown and are meant to guide the Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program.

The Streetscape Manual implements a flexible street approach on key Downtown streets, and creates streets that provide an attractive, accessible and safe environment which adopts a more equitable allocation of space for all modes of transportation (walking, cycling, vehicular). The Streetscape Manual plans for the significant renewal of Downtown Guelph to create a more socially and economically vibrant place, and to reinforce its role as a major destination and an emerging urban neighbourhood.



Flexible Streets

Curbless streets seamlessly transform segregation of pedestrians and vehicles to a more integrated and flexible street

Wyndham Street, Macdonell Street, Quebec Street, Douglas Street, as well as Baker Street and Carden Street are all classified as “Downtown Main Streets (Flexible Streets)” in the Streetscape Manual. These streets as flexible streets are intended to create a network of unique and highly programmable public spaces. As flexible streets, these streets should meet the following criteria:

- Have two vehicular travel lanes (one lane in each direction)
- be Transit Priority Streets
- have a significant pedestrian realm
- have dedicated bicycle facilities (Wyndham and Macdonell)



Flexible streets slow vehicles and intentionally blur the boundary between pedestrian and vehicle space, allowing the boulevard and roadway to read as one space and adapt to a variety of conditions. In contrast to traditional streets – which utilize a conventional raised curb and gutter – flexible streets place all users and elements of the street at the same level, allowing for unrestricted movement between roadway and boulevard zones. Flexible streets also increase safety for pedestrians and cyclists as they inherently require that vehicles move slowly through them.

As intensification occurs in Guelph, the character of Downtown will change as more people choose to visit, work, and live here. Flexible streets offer numerous advantages over traditional streets, as they:

- Increase pedestrian safety when all modes of transportation move at a similar speed
- Are planned with design speed equaling operating speed (30 km/h recommended)
- Are adaptable to the many functions of the street (e.g., day-to-day use vs. events)
- Provide safe travel options for all modes (modal equality) including pedestrians, transit, cyclists and automobiles
- Balance high quality public spaces (destination) with the requirements of the transportation network (function)
- Reinforce a “sense of place” and enhance the unique identity of Downtown Guelph
- Create new places for play, rest and gathering within the municipal right-of-way
- The barrier-free street profile promotes active lifestyles for people of all ages and ability levels
- Seamlessly transform into a social/gathering space during events
- Promote traffic flow (e.g., less dependence on traffic lights) while slowing vehicles down through an integrated blend of traffic-calming measures, including:
 - Gateways to denote the beginning/end of shared space
 - Curbless boulevards, so all users are at the same level
 - Side friction – narrow the perceived width of the street through on-street parking, and pedestrian amenities (lighting, benches, bollards, planting, etc.)
- Supports the vision and guiding principles of the DSP

Wyndham Street North

Wyndham Street, north of Carden, is classified in the DSP as a Downtown Main Street as it is a principle commercial street in Downtown. The Streetscape Manual intends for Wyndham Street to become a signature street in Downtown Guelph, offering opportunity for day-to-day and event users to seamlessly use the street as public space. Given its width, Wyndham Street offers an opportunity to greatly enhance the public realm and give equal prioritization to all modes of transportation.

While the Streetscape Manual had recommended an asymmetrical design for Wyndham Street, which included angled parking on one side, the approved cross-section includes separated cycle tracks and parallel parking on each side of the street in accordance with the approved Transportation Master Plan.

Space for trees and furnishings needs to be prioritized on both sides of the street, as well as a clearly denoted pedestrian clearway. The Streetscape Manual recommends the use of precast concrete unit paving for on-street parking stalls to not only differentiate it from the asphalt roadway, but also to better blend the transition between the boulevard and roadway.

Details of street design

Unit Paving Pattern



The Streetscape Manual intends for a 'pixelated' unit paving pattern, using a colour palette of three neutral greys, to be used on Downtown streets to add visual interest to the street and boulevard. When applied to all streets over time, the pattern provides material continuity and identity throughout Downtown. This pattern has the added benefit of easy reconstitution after disturbance. Areas of unit paving occur in three places: the planting and furnishing zone on flexible and traditional streets; the on-street parking lane for flexible streets; and on Douglas Street.

The Pedestrian Clearway

The pedestrian clearway is a key portion of the boulevard that is dedicated to pedestrians. It is typically located directly adjacent to the building frontage, property line or setback, depending on the street classifications.

Objectives – The pedestrian clearway is the main space for pedestrian movement. All Downtown streets should include the pedestrian clearway to achieve goals of creating complete, walkable communities. In active urban areas, the pedestrian clearway should be as wide as possible within the boulevard. It must also meet accessibility standards and should remain clear of obstructions, horizontally and vertically at all times.



Marketing Zone

The marketing zone is located between the pedestrian clearway and the building frontage or property line.

Objectives – The marketing zone demarcates the transition from public to private realm and can serve different uses depending on the adjacent land use and street classification. It is particularly important in urban areas, where street-related retail and pedestrian activity is common and encouraged. This zone should be designed to add to the character and activity of the street by introducing the potential for patios and spill-out retail to the street.



Planting and Furnishing Zone



The Planting and Furnishing Zone is located between the sidewalk and the edge zone, and provides a location for site furnishings, waste storage systems and street trees, as well as a buffer between vehicles and pedestrians.

Furnishing Objectives – Provide space for street amenities that activate the street and are easily accessible to pedestrians.

Planting Objectives – Provide space to create optimal growing conditions for street trees to ensure a healthy and robust urban forest that provides shade and adds to the character of the street.

Cycle Track

Cycle tracks are off-street bicycle facilities that provide additional safety and comfort for cyclists over on-street bike lanes or shared facilities. They are located within the boulevard, are vertically separated from vehicle traffic, and are designated for the exclusive use of cyclists.

Objectives – The purpose of cycle tracks is to provide additional safety for cyclists riding on busy roads. As a result of their separated design, they appeal to a wider range of cyclists, including those who are not comfortable riding in mixed traffic, and they provide safer cycling conditions on wide, busy roads. They are also intended to reduce the risk of bike-vehicle conflicts such as 'dooring.'



Low-Impact Development



Low-Impact Development (LID) is an approach to managing storm water run-off at the source by replicating natural watershed functions. It uses simple, cost-effective landscape elements to capture, detain and treat storm water where it falls.

Objectives – LID involves the use of landscape features to manage rainfall at the source and protect and enhance water quality by replicating the function of natural watersheds. LID options will not be appropriate in all cases but should be considered on a project-by-project basis for both new and existing streets. They play a critical role in improving water retention and should be designed to protect the quality of the City’s groundwater and watersheds. They can also be designed to enhance the streetscape, protect animal habitats, and provide additional landscaped space in the boulevard that is both functional and aesthetic. When LIDs are implemented in the road right-of-way, other municipalities generally experience reduced operations and maintenance costs when compared with traditional storm water management systems.

Transit Facilities

Transit facilities include all the amenities associated with provision of transit, including seating, shelters, waste receptacles, lighting, and route information. They should be located in the Planting and Site Furnishing Zone or in bump outs/curb extensions, where applicable.

Objectives – Safe and comfortable transit facilities are critical to encouraging transit ridership. The design of transit facilities should emphasize connections with alternative modes of movement to provide seamless and convenient transfers from one mode to another. Well-designed transit facilities that are barrier-free and do not interfere with the pedestrian clearway will also minimize user conflicts and facilitate convenient pedestrian access.

Pedestrian Lighting

Decorative lighting may be installed in addition to standard lighting fixtures to enhance pedestrian experience and safety. Lighting features should be located in the Planting and Street Furnishing Zone and installed on light poles or directly on buildings.

Objectives – Decorative lighting plays a key role in animating streets and sidewalks, enhancing safety, and emphasizing streetscape character. Its design should reflect its context and the surrounding cultural environment. Lighting can also be used to highlight special features like heritage buildings, character areas or landscaping, and public art features.

Public Vehicle Loading Zones

Public Vehicle Loading Zones support business function and facilitate economic growth in the Downtown by providing conveniently located areas for the exclusive use of commercial delivery vehicles.

Objectives – Public Vehicle Loading Zones should be strategically located to provide reliable, convenient, and proximate access for supply and delivery vehicles serving Downtown businesses during normal business operating hours. These loading zones could be either permanently dedicated or time restricted to allow for on-street parking during non-restricted times. They should not create conflict with pedestrian or cycling facilities.

Urban Forest Management Plan/Tree Technical Manual

Guelph's [Urban Forest Management Plan](#) aims to ensure that Guelph has a sustainable urban forest which provides environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits as our community continues to grow.

The City's urban forest is comprised of all trees within its boundary, including street trees. All of these trees form part of the City's green infrastructure, which sustains the community by filtering air pollution, providing shade, contributing to flood control, reducing local energy use, sequestering carbon, increasing the aesthetic value of neighbourhoods, and bringing nature to the City. These services are well documented, and trees are known to save municipalities millions of dollars in air pollution control and storm water management. Natural tree cover also provides a wide range of human social, mental, spiritual, and physical benefits that have yet to be fully valued.

The urban forest is a vital part of Guelph's green infrastructure and as of 2020, it was estimated that:

- Guelph's urban forest canopy cover is 23.3 per cent;
- The total number of trees in Guelph is approximately 2,973,000;
- The replacement value of Guelph's urban forest is \$803 million; and,
- The replacement value of Guelph's street trees is \$105.6 million.

It is also estimated that the urban forest as a whole produces \$5.3 million per year in ecosystem services that benefit Guelph's residents, visitors and businesses (Urban Forest Study Report 2019).

Tree Technical Manual

The City's [Tree Technical Manual](#) outlines guidelines and specifications for the provision of adequate below-ground rooting habitat, including soil volume and quality. Adequate available soil volume is a critical factor for the development of root structure, nutrient availability, water storage, tree growth, and long-term viability.

Trees are an important part of Downtown streetscapes. In addition to the benefits listed above, they also contribute to achieving our placemaking goals. For street trees to survive and reach full growth potential in hardscape areas, such as Downtown Guelph, cities are adopting techniques and technologies to provide

enhanced rooting environments such as soil cells, while maintaining the ability to provide core municipal services such as sidewalks and utilities.

The objective of implementing any enhanced rooting environment technology is to provide the greatest amount of good quality soil suited to the tree species planted and the local drainage regime.

Due to the costs associated with enhanced rooting environment technology, these approaches are typically restricted to built-up areas where there are very limited or no opportunities for integrating trees with adequate areas of undisturbed soils, and where there is adequate community use to justify the additional expense.

Transportation Master Plan/Complete Street Design Guidelines

The [Transportation Master Plan \(2022\)](#) identifies Downtown as part of the Pedestrian Priority Network. As defined in the glossary and policies, the Pedestrian Priority Network includes features such as wide sidewalks and high-quality walking environments in areas of highest pedestrian activity in the city, such as Downtown Guelph, designed to support and encourage walking for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy 2.2.1 states that the City will maintain its commitment to improving the pedestrian design of main streets in mixed use nodes and intensification areas, and in the Downtown core by prioritizing the following design elements:

- a) Limiting block sizes;
- b) Introducing midblock crossings, where appropriate;
- c) Providing buffers between the pedestrian walkways and road;
- d) Providing quality street furniture;
- e) Including street trees; and
- f) Upgrading pedestrian lighting.

Policy 1.1.1 references the development of a Complete Street Design Guideline that integrates the street classifications of the Downtown Secondary Plan, and that also:

- b) Continue[s] to ensure that the design of roads incorporate streetscape and design elements determined through the road design process that are consistent with the Urban Design policies of existing plans, where appropriate, based on the planned function of the road. The City will continue to be guided by the street, mid-block, intersection, and public transit facilities design guidelines found in the following resources, which will continue to evolve over time.

Economic Development and Tourism Strategy

The City's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy aims to enhance economic conditions in Guelph, support resilience and help local businesses find innovative solutions to their challenges. The [2022-2026 Economic Development and Tourism Strategy](#) sets the stage to direct the City's efforts and supports the functions of economic development, tourism and the Guelph Junction Railway.

The Economic Development and Tourism Strategy identifies that placemaking brings together planning, urban design and asset management practices with the intention of creating public spaces that improve user experience and promotes well-being. Investment in placemaking assets can be a distinguishing factor to drive investment into our economy and attract talent and visitors. For Guelph, the transformation of the Downtown is a fundamental component of Guelph's overall long-term sustainable city-building vision.

The Economic Development and Tourism Strategy further identifies that more investment into placemaking is needed to enhance the experience of Guelph for visitors and residents. Among other things, Guelph can leverage our Downtown to drive growth in tourism. Priority 5.3 from the strategy guides us to enhance placemaking throughout the city, including Downtown.

Transit Future Ready Action Plan

On November 15, 2021, Council approved the [Guelph Transit Future Ready Action Plan](#), a blended model of transit hubs, express routes and routes that follow the city's spine in a grid pattern as well as outer perimeter. It's designed to get people where they want to go with more route types (e.g., core, base, university express, on-demand and industrial express), faster travel times, frequent service and service reliability. It is intended to deliver a more competitive, convenient and reliable transit system that meets the community's needs today and beyond. It moves us closer to meeting goals set out in the City's Strategic Plan by improving connectivity of the whole transportation system—making it easy for people to travel within city limits.

The design of our Downtown streets need to provide flexibility for bus stops and bus shelters to be provided to meet the goals of the Transit Future Ready Action Plan.

Solid Waste Management Master Plan/DT Waste Project

Downtown Guelph's unique historic character includes many smaller, mixed-use properties with challenges for waste storage and collection compared to what would be required through Site Plan Approval for new multi-tenant buildings or as accommodated by outdoor storage in low-density neighbourhoods. As a result, waste is currently set out in a mix of carts assigned to specified properties and public space containers which also serve the pedestrian realm.

In response to issues of crowding of the streetscape with containers, overfilling, odour, pests, poor aesthetics, and poor diversion, the City studied ways to improve Downtown waste collection through the 2021 [Solid Waste Management Master Plan](#) Downtown Services Review and completed further engagement and analysis through the 2023 Downtown Waste Project.

To improve waste management Downtown, appropriate temporary storage capacity for waste from properties needs to be created while preserving flexibility and accessibility of the streetscape. Communal underground containers are considered to be the preferred option to achieve this balance, while expansion and enforcement of the existing cart-based collection program provides a backstop where communal underground containers cannot be accommodated. New public

space containers that comply with best practices and encourage use by pedestrians only are recommended to be phased in as well.

Staff anticipate bringing forward options for Council consideration in July on potential integration with DTIRP construction, service levels offerings in relation to the Blue Box Transition, and alternative funding models in alignment with the Value for Money audit.

Urban Design Action Plan

Urban design excellence requires coordinated efforts from the public and private sectors to maximize the benefits of development. Collaborative urban design adds significant value to a project, a community, and the city as a whole.

The City's role should go beyond regulating development, providing infrastructure and operating community facilities and should include promoting urban design excellence through public projects, ongoing communications, and educational initiatives.

For Downtown, the [Urban Design Manual](#) outlines that "in the public realm replacing deficient infrastructure creates the opportunity to think about the future design of these public spaces. Infrastructure can also be strategically aligned with private development to continue to foster growth. In addition, the public realm creates space for everyone. The public realm decisions in Downtown must also support local business while celebrating and building on Guelph's unique community identity. Creating a place where people want to meet, watch the scene and interact with a range of people reinforces that Downtown is itself part of the destination.

The Urban Design Manual further states that the "value of trees to a city, not just in natural heritage areas but everywhere, cannot be overstated. Increasing urbanization and climate change necessitates closer monitoring of tree health and maintenance. Besides protecting existing mature trees, planting more trees on public land is one of the most cost-effective investments the City can make to improve its urban design".

Cultural Heritage Action Plan/Downtown Heritage Conservation District Study

The [Cultural Heritage Action Plan](#) (CHAP), approved by Council in January 2021, identified cultural heritage landscapes (CHL) within the city, both those that have been designated, as well as those that are potential candidates for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The CHAP was informed by the work conducted by City staff with input from Heritage Guelph for the Downtown Streetscape Manual and Built Form Standards.

The Chap identifies "Old Downtown" as a candidate cultural heritage landscape (CCHL-18) which means that it has the characteristics of a cultural heritage landscape but without being fully defined geographically.

Development in the "Old Downtown" is already guided by the Downtown Secondary Plan, the Downtown Streetscape Manual and Built Form Standards as well as the Site Plan Review Process. This overarching policy framework provides a high-level

format for the City to begin to conserve this complex cultural heritage landscape. To facilitate the Implementation Strategy for the Downtown Secondary Plan, the CHAP recommended an immediate action item that an in-depth study be carried out to consider the boundary of the Old Downtown candidate cultural heritage landscape area and how its component heritage character areas could be conserved within one or more heritage conservation districts.

A heritage conservation district study is being undertaken for the historic Downtown of Guelph. The Study is evaluating cultural heritage resources in the Downtown to determine if the area, or parts of it, merit designation under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The purpose of a heritage conservation district is to conserve significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes, and to provide guidelines for new development.

Natural Heritage Action Plan

The [Natural Heritage Action Plan](#) (NHAP), approved in 2018, represents the City's implementation framework to support the Strategic Plan and Official Plan policies for the natural heritage system and watershed planning by prioritizing goals, policies, guidelines and actions designed to manage (e.g., protect, maintain, restore and improve) our natural heritage system.

The NHAP presents a mission, principles, and actions for supporting the policies and objectives for the natural heritage system and water resources as established in the City's Official Plan. This plan, together with the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, Stormwater Management Master Plan, Water Supply Master Plan and Water Efficiency Strategy, Water and Wastewater Servicing Master Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Active Transportation Network Study and the Guelph Trails Master Plan, guides the City's efforts in managing the natural heritage system and water resources while allowing for compatible development and growth. If managed well, healthy and resilient ecosystems can enhance the high quality of life for which Guelph is known.

Resilient and healthy ecosystems are able to respond to the pressures of urbanization. Infill and redevelopment are increasing density in established areas, and greenfield developments are accommodating higher densities than ever before. With increased densities, more pressure is placed on the natural heritage system. For example, an increase in impervious area generates more runoff and how we manage increased storm water runoff is crucial to protecting ecosystems.

Green Infrastructure

The natural heritage system and water resources are part of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is a broad term that includes natural assets, as well as landscaped and engineered assets. The inclusion of the natural heritage system and water resources as part of green infrastructure should be embraced as it will ensure that ecological goods and services that support our community's well-being are available for future generations.

Green infrastructure means "natural and human made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure can include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands,

stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces and green roofs.”

Green infrastructure

