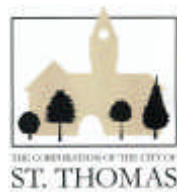




URBAN DESIGN STUDY

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN



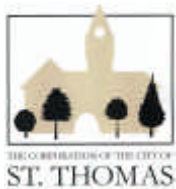
October 27, 2003

ENVision – The Hough Group
Joseph Bogdan Associates Inc.
Clara Consulting



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Executive Summary

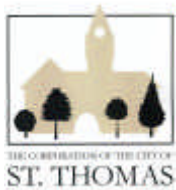
The City of St. Thomas' commitment to the revitalization of the urban area has been demonstrated through the implementation of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and through numerous initiatives to stimulate economic activity. The CIP provides the planning context for revitalizing the City, and this study provides some of the creative tools for implementing the Plan.

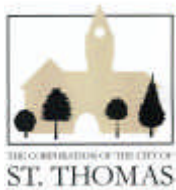
Recently, several downtown renewal initiatives emerged to further define the requirements for an Urban Design Study. These included the City's discussions with the railways regarding the disposition of the CASO Lands, the City's commitment to construct a new arena within the CASO Lands, and the City's purchase of the MTO lands and related north-south railway right of way. At the same time, On Track, a community based volunteer organization had commissioned a detailed feasibility study to restore the Canada Southern Railway Station; the Downtown Development Board proposed a "Main Street Program"; and the St. Thomas Elgin Tourism Association was developing proposals to update the tourism node in Old St. Thomas. It became evident that an Urban Design Study was needed to establish a cohesive approach that would assist to integrate and coordinate these and future initiatives.

This study proposes an Urban Design Framework that first identifies design principles; second, describes how each district fits into an overall strategy; and finally, recommends themes and design elements to unify the urban area (lighting, signage, pedestrian pavements, street furniture). Building on the Urban Design Framework, Design Guidelines present more detailed direction for:

- *Built heritage;*
- *Façade improvement; and*
- *Streetscape revitalization.*

At the outset of the study, in consultation with the community, Design Principles were established for the three main districts in the study area. These principles included:





Old St. Thomas

- Enhance and protect the “look and feel” Old St. Thomas’ heritage buildings and streetscapes;
- Support tourism by identifying the heritage area of “Old St. Thomas”;
- Support commercial activity in the area west of William Street, north of Centre Street;
- Improve multi-use linkages to the Downtown and CASO Lands; and
- Improve the connections from Old St. Thomas to the surrounding open space system.

Downtown

- Strengthen “Main Street” attributes;
- Focus on the pedestrian shopping experience along Central Talbot Street;
- Establish a comprehensive streetscape design theme for Talbot Street that recognizes three different districts (west, central, east);
- Use design guidelines to improve the visual character of the Downtown;
- Improve linkages to other districts; and
- Improve signage and wayfinding.

CASO Lands

- Create a “heritage railway district” in an open space setting;
- Establish a new major open space to support community events;
- Maintain tracks to support tourism activities;
- Improve the CASO Station’s relationship with Talbot Street;
- Maximize the opportunities for tourism related commercial redevelopment; and
- Create multiple access points that connect to the existing street system.

The Urban Design Framework was created to implement the principles and to guide future planning and design initiatives. This framework identified a hierarchy of urban design elements including a comprehensive strategy that established a series of gateways, delineated districts, and identified open space connections, landmarks, redevelopment nodes and streetscapes needing improvement.

The second phase of the Urban Design Study created Design Guidelines to provide more detailed direction for building improvements and streetscape beautification projects in conjunction with the CIP incentive programs. The Design Guidelines are written to be a flexible tool, to encourage owners to maintain and improve their properties within a broad definition of “restoration” and “heritage”. The Guidelines also recognize that new construction is important to the City’s growth. In this light, they support new construction that demonstrates regard for the themes and site planning design principles that reflect the heritage character of the City.

Recommendations

Old St. Thomas

Old St. Thomas is a unique “heritage area” that contributes to the overall attractiveness and tourism appeal of St. Thomas. The area’s heritage “look and feel” should be preserved. To support this recommendation the City should consider:

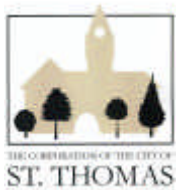
- *Establishing a special policy area that delineates the Old St. Thomas “heritage area”;*
- *Identifying the “tourism core” within the “special policy area” where tourism related commercial uses may be expanded (west of William Street, north of Centre Street); and*
- *Expanding the Façade Program to include residential buildings in Old St. Thomas that are part of the City’s Heritage Building Inventory.*

The Design Guidelines are essential to assist the City in setting standards that ensure that improvements and restoration efforts are undertaken in accordance with the overall objectives of the urban design study. To implement the guidelines the City should consider:

- *Undertaking an Official Plan Amendment to establish an Old St. Thomas “special policy area”;*
- *Reviewing zoning by-laws for conformity with Urban Design study;*
- *Reviewing current policies related to residential intensification and infilling to determine if they conform to the Urban Design Study; and*
- *Implementing site plan control as a tool to review projects within the “special policy area”;* and
- *Establishing a committee to review applications and make recommendations to Council.*

In support of the Municipal Heritage Committee, the City should consider:

- *Obtaining professional advisors to assist staff and the Committee in reviewing applications for structures that have been identified as having heritage values (designated and listed on the municipal inventory);*
- *Ensuring that the Committee is a sounding board for reviewing built heritage issues and that the recommendations to Council represent a joint effort between staff and advisors.*



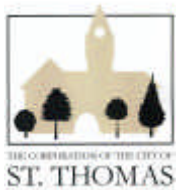
Downtown

Downtown St. Thomas has three distinct precincts that require different planning tools to implement the Urban Design Framework and Design Guidelines. To reinforce the boundaries and distinctive characteristics of the Downtown, the City should consider:

- *Undertaking an Official Plan Amendment to refine the boundaries of the downtown districts (West, Central, and East) along Talbot Street;*
- *Refocusing retail uses in the Central district (Metcalfe-Pearl to Alma);*
- *Undertaking traffic calming and streetscaping measures to support retail uses in the Central district;*
- *Encouraging residential intensification in the West district (Stanley to Metcalf-Pearl);*
- *Reviewing overall Downtown district boundaries as they relate to cross streets and depth of the district;*
- *Reviewing the designation of retail uses along Curtis Street;*
- *Reviewing zoning by-laws for conformity with Urban Design Study, such as maximum height and rear, ground floor residential occupancies; and*
- *Reviewing current policies related to residential intensification and infilling to determine if they conform to the Urban Design Study.*

To support the Urban Design Framework and Design Guidelines the City should implement a sign by-law that recognizes the special characteristics of each district and identifies the types of signs that are appropriate for each district in the Downtown. The City should implement:

- *A sign by-law that encourages retail signs along Central Talbot to promote and improve the pedestrian experience; and*
- *A municipal identification strategy that includes an attractive “family of signs” to mark major gateways, key civic buildings and wayfinding.*



CASO Lands

The CASO lands represent a special opportunity for urban renewal and economic revitalization in St. Thomas. This district has heritage resources of national significance and future development must be sensitive to protection and enhancement of these resources. The City should consider:

- *In the vicinity of the railway station, museum and rail yards (heritage railway complex) encouraging tourism uses that build on the "Railway Capital of Canada" theme;*
- *Maintaining functioning tracks and yards in support of the heritage railway complex;*
- *Ensuring that the "heritage railway complex" has a civic or open space setting;*
- *Improving vehicular and pedestrian access to the CASO lands with multiple roadway linkages to increase street frontage;*
- *Undertaking a traffic study to identify the need for and location of any arterial road connection;*
- *Ensuring that sightlines and visibility to the train station are maintained and enhanced;*
- *Supporting the restoration of the CASO station and On Track's Phase 2 planning activities; and*
- *Supporting a comprehensive development plan that integrates the commercial potential of the proposed arena project.*

The purchase of the MTO north-south rail corridor has created redevelopment opportunities that should support the objectives of the urban design study. The City should consider:

- *Amending the Official Plan to remove industrial uses from the corridor;*
- *Considering residential infill and open space uses;*
- *Considering office, commercial or tourism uses in the Centre Street node to support the CASO lands redevelopment.*

Streetscapes and Greenways

Streetscape revitalization is an important component of the Urban Design Framework. The implementation of public realm improvements can include infrastructure upgrading such as lighting, pedestrian walkways, and landscaping (street trees, screening buffers). Other more decorative elements include site furnishings, flower displays, and banners. The City should take lead when implementing infrastructure upgrades since these improvements are most efficiently implemented during municipal servicing or road reconstruction. The City should consider:

- *Undertaking a detailed streetscape design plan for the improvements along Talbot Street;*
- *Ensuring that there is an overall design that is consistent across all three districts (lighting, walkways, signage, street tree planting);*
- *Focusing on pedestrian improvements to Central Talbot and linking the CASO lands and proposed arena;*
- *Preparing capital budgets for implementation over a five year time frame; and*
- *Seeking funding partners from senior government and the community.*

St. Thomas has an outstanding cultural landscape that is represented by the large number of mature and designated heritage trees. To protect the “green character” of the community the City should consider:

- *Implementing a tree cutting by-law to protect mature trees, woodlots and forested ravines;*
- *Establishing a street tree-planting program to replace lost street trees or to establish new streetscapes along major downtown streets.*

The City has a number of parks, open spaces, natural areas and trails. To make better use of these amenities the City should consider:

- *Undertaking a comprehensive parks and trails system study to evaluate how these amenities could be more effectively accessed, linked and utilized;*
- *Reviewing cycling routes and the provision of “on road” cycle systems;*
- *Identifying the location and program for a major public open space/civic space in the vicinity of Talbot Street, the proposed arena, and the CASO Lands.*



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Planning Context

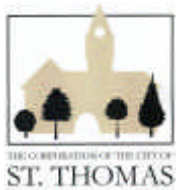


In 1990, the City of St. Thomas established a Community Improvement Project Area and Plan for the purposes of making various infrastructure improvements in the older commercial and residential areas of the City. According to Section 28(1) of the Planning Act, a community improvement project area is defined as “an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty management, unsuitability of buildings or for any other reason”. For the purposes of carrying out a community improvement plan a municipality may:

- *Acquire, hold clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;*
- *Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan;*
- *Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan;*
- *Make grants or loans to registered or assessed owners to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the community improvement plan;*
- *Enter into agreements for the carrying out of studies and the preparation and implementation of plans and programs for the development and improvement of the municipality.*

In 1999 it was anticipated that growth within the residential and industrial areas of the City of St. Thomas and the Municipality of Central Elgin would trigger new demands for commercial growth within the area in coming years. To be prepared, the City of St. Thomas and the Municipality of Central Elgin undertook a joint study of the Regional Commercial System to develop a “Regional Commercial Systems Strategy” (RCSS).

The study was designed as a proactive measure to examine changing demographics, consumer trends and spending patterns, and the impacts that the changing dynamics in the retail industry, including changing retail strategies and the emergence of new formats for retailing, would have on the area. The study was viewed as a necessary initiative to reinforce the past efforts of the City and Central Elgin to secure growth and further support the economic future of the area.



The three main components to the Regional Commercial Systems Study were to:

- *Build community awareness;*
- *Analyze retail market demand; and*
- *Amend the Official Plan and develop a Downtown Action Plan.*

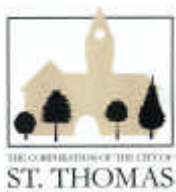
The Community Awareness Process was a proactive initiative that focused discussion on how changing trends and dynamics in the retail and tourism industries are increasing the pressure for economic restructuring and the introduction of some new formats in retail.

The Retail Market Demand Analysis was completed as a freestanding report entitled "Retail Market Demand Analysis, Regional Commercial Systems Study, City of St. Thomas & Municipality of Central Elgin". The intent of the study was to preserve and strengthen the historic St. Thomas Downtown and the Port Stanley and Belmont Village Cores, while at the same time responding to emerging retail commercial trends and more fully satisfying the shopping needs of permanent residents, visitors and tourists.

The strategic review undertaken as part of the Retail Market Demand Analysis recognized the increased demand for new commercial growth and increasing pressure at the municipal level to allow the development of non-conventional retail sites and the adaptive reuse of vacant retail space.

The Downtown Action Plan outlined a process to coordinate public and private efforts on different fronts and to improve the physical and economic climates of downtown St. Thomas in a comprehensive and proactive manner. The Downtown Action Plan was designed to be an economic development and planning tool that provided direction to the municipality, the business community and the public in order to capitalize on emerging retail commercial development opportunities.

In 2002, City Council directed staff to prepare a new Community Improvement Plan for a designated part of the City that included the Downtown area along Talbot Street. The Plan was completed following extensive public consultation and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in May 2003. The Plan provided the basis for new revitalization and redevelopment projects including public and private sector initiatives. The initiatives and programs are detailed in Appendix A. The Planning Act, through the Community Improvement Plan, also provides municipalities with extraordinary power to implement community improvement initiatives. The Community Improvement Plan reflected the stakeholders' vision for Downtown St. Thomas and the recommendations of the Retail Market Demand



Analysis. The Plan identified all the necessary actions required for the revitalization of Downtown including:

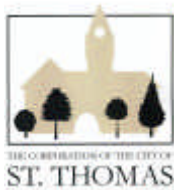
- *Urban design and development guidelines;*
- *Streetscape improvement plan;*
- *Signage program;*
- *Heritage preservation;*
- *Facade improvement programs;*
- *Financial incentive programs;*
- *Residential intensification/redevelopment programs and incentives;*
- *Public/private sector initiatives; and*
- *Implementation of a railway action plan.*

1.2 Urban Design Study Background and Objectives

Recently, several Downtown renewal initiatives emerged to further define the requirements for an Urban Design Study. These included the City's commitment to construct a new twin pad arena within the CASO Lands, and the City's purchase of the MTO lands and related north-south railway right of way. At the same time, On Track, a community based volunteer organization, commissioned a detailed feasibility study to restore the Canada Southern Railway Station. The report titled *Feasibility Study Summary Report – The Canadian Southern Railway Station St. Thomas Ontario*, January 2003, evaluated the feasibility of restoring and redeveloping the building and recommended an action plan for proceeding with the implementation of the project.

Concurrently, the City proceeded with Phase 1 of the implementation that resulted in:

- *Establishing a Partnership Committee composed of Council members and community representatives responsible for overseeing implementation of the Plan;*
- *Establishing a Technical Committee composed of senior City staff, responsible for development of incentive programs and providing technical and financial advice to City Council and the Partnership Committee;*
- *Developing a program application package for six incentive programs;*
- *Developing a community consultation plan to support Phase 2 of the implementation.*



Phase 2 of the CIP implementation contemplated:

- *Completing an Urban Design Study*
- *Designing and launching the remaining two incentive programs:*
Façade Improvement Program
Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program
- *Develop action plans for three of the six priority project areas*
Old St. Thomas
The Downtown
CASO District

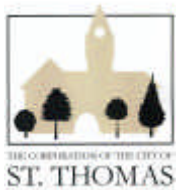
The next step in the implementation was the preparation of an Urban Design Study that would produce a framework that would assist the City to realize its vision and goals *for a vibrant and fun 'people place' where residents and visitors live, work and play.*

The focus of the work was to develop design themes that can be utilized to provide direction for future development. The objective of the study was to support the following components of the Community Improvement plan:

- *Provide heritage design themes and guidance for implementation of the Heritage Tax Relief and Heritage Design Programs;*
- *Provide design guidelines for the Façade Improvement Program and Property Tax Increment Equivalent Program;*
- *Provide guidance to the Downtown Development Board who are establishing the Main Street Program for the Downtown;*
- *Provide design strategies for the CASO Lands and Old. St. Thomas.*

The overall objectives of the Urban Design Study were to:

- *Preserve and promote cultural heritage through appropriate design themes and streetscape elements;*
- *Support streetscape beautification that will trigger private sector investment;*
- *Make recommendations and prepare guidelines for facade improvements and design enhancements that generally upgrade the aesthetics of the City;*
- *Promote intensification of residential and retail land uses along Talbot Street in order to animate the streetscapes;*
- *Promote the City's railway heritage;*
- *Promote linkages to the CASO Lands and proposed arena;*



- *Improve physical and visual linkages to the City's open space and trails system;*
- *Highlight the natural features with the study area and ensure that the open space is an integral part of the urban fabric.*

1.3 Project Approach

The Community Improvement Plan was established to encourage growth in economic activity and to see increased tourism in the Downtown. The Community Improvement Plan provides the planning context for revitalizing the City, and the Urban Design Study provides some of the creative tools for implementing the Plan. The community has demonstrated their support for the objectives of the Plan and has voiced their commitment to working with the City to ensure that the implementation tools are relevant and work for the community.

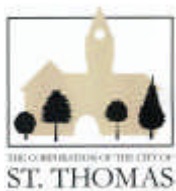
The Phase 1 work plan established design principles and proposed a comprehensive framework for more detailed planning decisions in Phase 2. The Urban Design Framework identified the “big moves”, identified how each district relates to the overall study area, and identified the elements that should remain constant (lighting, signage, pedestrian pavements, street furniture) throughout the study area. Phase 2 addressed site-specific guidelines and design tools for Old St. Thomas, Downtown, and the CASO Lands.

The design guidelines build on the Urban Design Framework established in Phase 1, and address more specific needs of Old St. Thomas, Downtown and the CASO Lands. Each district has a distinct character and role in the City. The design guidelines build on these strengths and ensure that each district reflects the comprehensive objectives of the Urban Design Framework.

1.4 Community Ideas and Public Consultation

Community consultation has been an important component of the Urban Design Study. The Study Team has worked closely with the Partnership Committee throughout the Study. Community outreach has been ongoing. In addition to the notices that have taken place prior to every community consultation event, additional outreach activities have occurred:

- *Development and distribution of two newsletters to all Downtown Development Board (DDB) members and to residents and property owners in Old St. Thomas;*



- *Mailings to the community contact list; and*
- *Posting notices on the City's web site.*

In Phase 1 of the Study, two consultation events occurred:

Focus Groups were held with key community organizations on July 29th. Stakeholders who had been active participants in the development of the Community Improvement Plan were invited to meet with the Study Team to discuss:

- *Key assets to be protected and enhanced;*
- *Limiting features to be improved or redeveloped;*
- *Connectivity between the subject areas and the rest of the City;*
- *Ideas for change and improvement;*
- *Current initiatives; and*
- *Opportunities and constraints for using cultural, heritage and natural resources for enhancing tourism and retailing.*

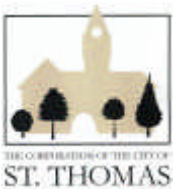
Written submissions were received from St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association, SOLRS and Duncan McKillop.

A Design Workshop was held on August 12th, 2003. In addition to the Study Team's field research, the findings from the earlier Focus Groups provided the foundation for the workshop. Thirty-one people attended and participated in workshop discussions and design efforts. Working in small groups, community representatives created plans for the study area in both words and drawings. The plans address several key opportunities and challenges:

- *Development of a western gateway in Old St. Thomas;*
- *Signage;*
- *Protection and enhancement of heritage assets and areas;*
- *Enhancement of linkages among the districts within the study area and to the rest of the City;*
- *Façade and streetscaping improvements; and*
- *Railway heritage themed tourism opportunities.*



Design Workshop Session, August 12, 2003



In Phase 2, a third community consultation event took place. An open house and public meeting were held on September 9th, 2003 to present the urban design framework developed by the Study Team. The framework was well received by the 28 persons in attendance. The Partnership Committee adopted the urban design framework and the Study Team was directed to proceed with development of design guidelines for each of the study area districts (3).

Summaries of all three events are found in Appendix B.

On October 6th, the design team presented draft Design Guidelines for Built Heritage, Façade Improvement and Streetscape Revitalization to the Partnership Committee. The final draft of the Urban Design Study report was presented at a public meeting and to City Council on October 20th, 2003.

1.5 Acknowledgements

The Study team thanks the committee members, stakeholders and members of the community who attended the focus group meetings, workshop and presentations. Their input was essential to creating a design framework, principles and guidelines that reflect the unique heritage of St.Thomas.

PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jeff Kohler, Mayor

Sharon Crosby, Alderman

Tom Johnson, Alderman

Gord Campbell, Alderman

Terry Shackelton, Alderman

Marie Turvey – Chair, Alderman

Joe Preston, Downtown Development Board

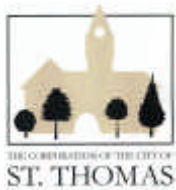
Jim Miller, Municipal Heritage Committee

Charles Beckett, Elgin County Railway Museum

Dan Vernack, Port Stanley Terminal Railway

Dave McAdams, St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association

Lori Chamberlain, Member at Large



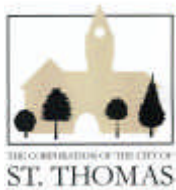
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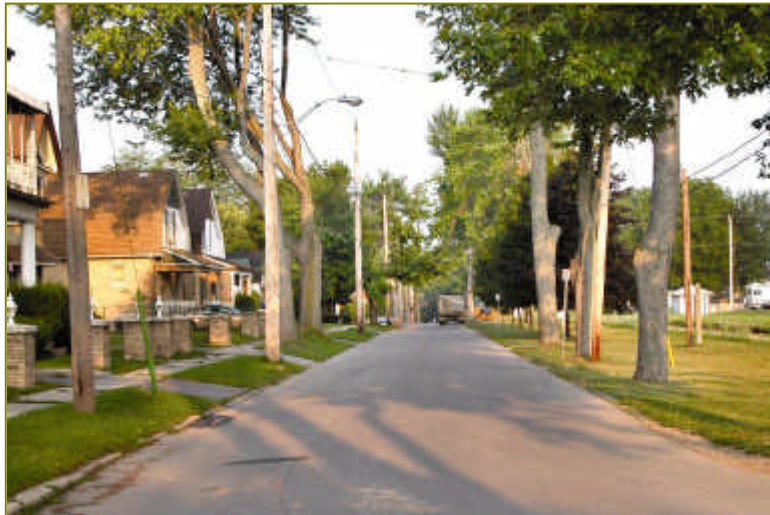
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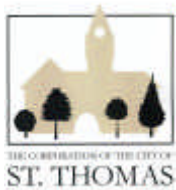




Commercial Tourism Along Talbot Road



Centre Street in Old St. Thomas



2.0 Community Context

2.1 Historic Foundations

St Thomas has a rich, multi-faceted history that is evident along the City's streetscapes. The community has grown from its origins as an early pioneer settlement and later a railway hub for southwestern Ontario. The cultural heritage of St. Thomas can be found in numerous significant buildings, lot fabric and settlement pattern in the downtown and the cultural landscape along residential streets. The integrity and richness of the City's past plays an important role in defining the urban design character for the future, and provides the foundation for built heritage, façade improvement and streetscape revitalization guidelines.

2.1.1 OLD ST. THOMAS

Old St. Thomas is described as being located on the "hill", located along the rim of the Kettle Creek Valley at the western boundary to the City. The community grew from Port Talbot, the pioneer settlement established by Colonel Thomas Talbot 1803. Talbot Road east was laid out in 1809 and pioneers were granted 200-acre lots by Talbot to clear and farm the land.

Originally, Old St. Thomas was built along a narrow road hugging the Kettle Creek Valley and is considered to be the area west of Stanley Street. The village included Church Street, Center Street, Pleasant Street and Walnut Street. Old St. Thomas expanded eastward with the construction of stately homes, inns, shops, mills, a distillery, schools and churches. A number of significant historic civic landmarks are present in Old St. Thomas including the St. Thomas Church (circa 1822), the Wellington Street Courthouse (circa 1853), and the Wellington Street School (circa 1898). These buildings are complimented by a number of exceptional heritage streetscapes and residences.

A small commercial precinct is located on old Talbot Road and is comprised of shops, restaurants and museums and is supported by the monument to Jumbo the African Elephant. This monument was unveiled in 1985 on the 100th anniversary of the fatal collision of a Grand Trunk locomotive and Barnum and Bailey's circus star. The St. Thomas Elgin Tourist Association is preparing concepts to update the streetscape and improve parking around the monument.

2.1.2 DOWNTOWN

St. Thomas' downtown is located along Talbot Street and extends from Stanley Street in the east to First Avenue in the west. Talbot Street functions as both a thoroughfare (intended to move traffic) and as the main commercial area. The street developed in a linear fashion (parallel to the main east - west Railway corridor) in support of growing railway activities. A number of commercial buildings have heritage values and are supported by several notable civic buildings such as the City Hall (circa 1899), Holy Angels Church (circa 1911) and the Southern Loan Building (circa 1899).

Talbot Street can be characterized as having three districts. West Talbot Street connects Old St. Thomas to the commercial core. Very few buildings have heritage values and the streetscape is fragmented with vacant lots. Central Talbot Street is the City's "Main Street" shopping area with a number of commercial buildings that have heritage value. East Talbot Street is characterized as a space extensive commercial area (drive through food outlets, etc.).

The Downtown Development Board is currently responsible for coordinating and programming activities that support business in the downtown core. Programs include an annual flower display and decorative banners. The DDB has also initiated a Main Streets Program, to coordinate business and embark on physical improvement projects. A number of festivals are held annually including the Iron Horse Festival celebrating the City's railway heritage, the Holiday Fantasy of Lights that includes a Christmas parade and the St. Thomas Fire Muster Days in support of the Professional Fire Fighters Association.



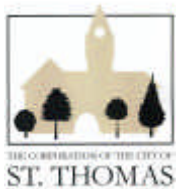
Downtown St. Thomas



Elgin County Railway Museum

2.1.3 CASO LANDS

The CASO Lands are the site of the former Canada Southern Railway yards, associated buildings and adjacent lands. St. Thomas is known as the "Railway Capital of Canada" because of the City's Railway history which dates back to 1856 and the commencement of service on the London and Port Stanley Railway. St. Thomas grew to become the railway hub of southwestern Ontario when the Canada Southern Railway constructed the CASO Station (circa 1873) to serve as the company's administrative headquarters. The American controlled railway established its main yards and locomotive repair complex in St. Thomas because of the strategic location on the main Railway corridor connecting Chicago, Detroit, Windsor, Niagara Falls, Buffalo and New York City. The CASO station is a large and impressive Italianate-style structure and has recently been the subject of a feasibility study to restore and revitalize this asset as a regional tourism attraction. The station is one of six original stations designated under the Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.



The integrity and commemorative significance of the station is due to its architectural design, its association with the growth of the community, its position relative to Talbot Street and the complex of associated machine shops and Railway yards. The Elgin County Railway Museum is located in the former Michigan Central Railway machine shop. Founded in 1988, the railway museum features an extensive collection of rolling stock and artifacts.

The Port Stanley Terminal Railway (PSTR) operates a 7-mile scenic excursion along the former London and Port Stanley line between the Lake Erie village and St. Thomas. With the recent acquisition of the Talbot Spur (MTO right of way) from the Province of Ontario, it will be possible to bring the PSTR to the CASO station. The Southern Ontario Locomotive Restoration Society (SOLRS) operates a restored steam powered tourist train and runs excursion around the region including special tours during festivals.

In order to jump start economic development on these lands the City has committed to building a new twin pad arena facility and has acquired the MTO railway spur to ensure more comprehensive redevelopment of these lands.

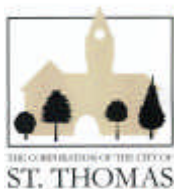
2.2 Establishing Appropriate Design Themes

St. Thomas' unique and layered history provides the basis for several design themes that reflect the origins of the community. The recent 200th anniversary celebration of the Talbot settlement provides a rich palette of cultural heritage themes, including:

- *Pioneer life for European and American settlers and the First Nations*
- *Role in the War of 1812 and the rebellion of 1837*
- *Terminus of the underground railway*

Old St. Thomas has outstanding examples of significant architectural buildings with interesting stories. Themes could include:

- *Celebrating St. Thomas' built heritage*
- *Interpreting the cultural landscape through heritage streetscapes*



The downtown area and CASO Lands reflect the affluence and growth of the City in the late 1800's and the influence that the railways had on settlement patterns and general prosperity. Themes could include:

- *Architectural heritage of small - town Ontario (circa 1872 – 1892)*
- *Railway capital of Ontario*

St. Thomas has a number of significant natural heritage amenities including the Kettle Creek Valley and Dodds Creek. The area has an abundance of Carolinian forests and a network of regional trails including the Trans Canada Trail and the Elgin Hiking Trail. Other amenities include farmers markets and folk arts and crafts markets. Natural heritage themes could include:

- *Bounty of St. Thomas and Elgin County*
- *Trails and regional greenways*

2.3 Current Planning and Design Approaches

2.3.1 MAIN STREET PROGRAMS

Across North America, smaller cities, towns and commercial districts within larger cities have been undergoing revitalization by participating in Main Street Programs. Generally, Main Street Programs are a comprehensive planning, finance and urban design tool designed to assist communities to improve their downtown commercial streets. These programs have been utilized by a wide variety of communities across Canada as a means of civic revitalization. Their efforts are recognized and commended through documentation in numerous publications.

Since 1980, the National Main Street Center has been working with communities across the nation to revitalize their historic or traditional commercial areas. Based in historic preservation, the Main Street approach was developed to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of American communities' built environment, but has become a powerful economic development tool as well.

The Main Street programs are designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to Main Street's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and expanding parking. Building



on downtown's inherent assets – rich architecture, personal service and traditional values, and most of all, a sense of place – the Main Street approach has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. These programs have earned recognition as practical strategies that are appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions.

“Program Overview, National Mainstreets Program

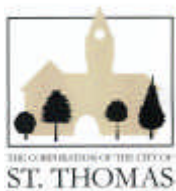
2.3.2 RECENT DOWNTOWN + STREETScape REVITALIZATION ACROSS ONTARIO

In step with North American Main Streets Program, many communities in Ontario have implemented successful façade and streetscape improvement programs. Communities such as London and Owen Sound have implemented programs tailored to their unique needs. The strategies range from improving signage, reconstructing commercial facades, restoring historic buildings to complete streetscape reconstruction. Some of these downtown areas have been designated as part of Heritage Conservation Districts. Although not essential for downtown revitalization, this designation through the Ontario Heritage Act gives properties and areas special status that recognizes and protects features of heritage value.

2.3.3 BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

As industrial uses move away from downtown sites, there is a widespread appreciation for the value of these centrally located areas as opportunities for redevelopment projects that support existing nearby development and benefit from proximity to existing infrastructure. The CASO Lands and the lands adjacent to the MTO Railway corridor are examples of sites that have excellent redevelopment potential and can become catalysts for further economic development. Brownfield sites often require environmental assessment and remedial activity to address issues related to site contamination.

Award programs for industrial site redevelopment have been instituted to recognize and promote creative and economically viable projects. In Canada, The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) currently is undertaking a series of discussions on redevelopment of contaminated sites, and The Canadian Urban Institute's Annual Brownie Awards program “recognizes leadership, innovation and environmental sustainability in Brownfield redevelopment across Canada.”

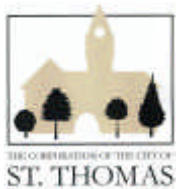


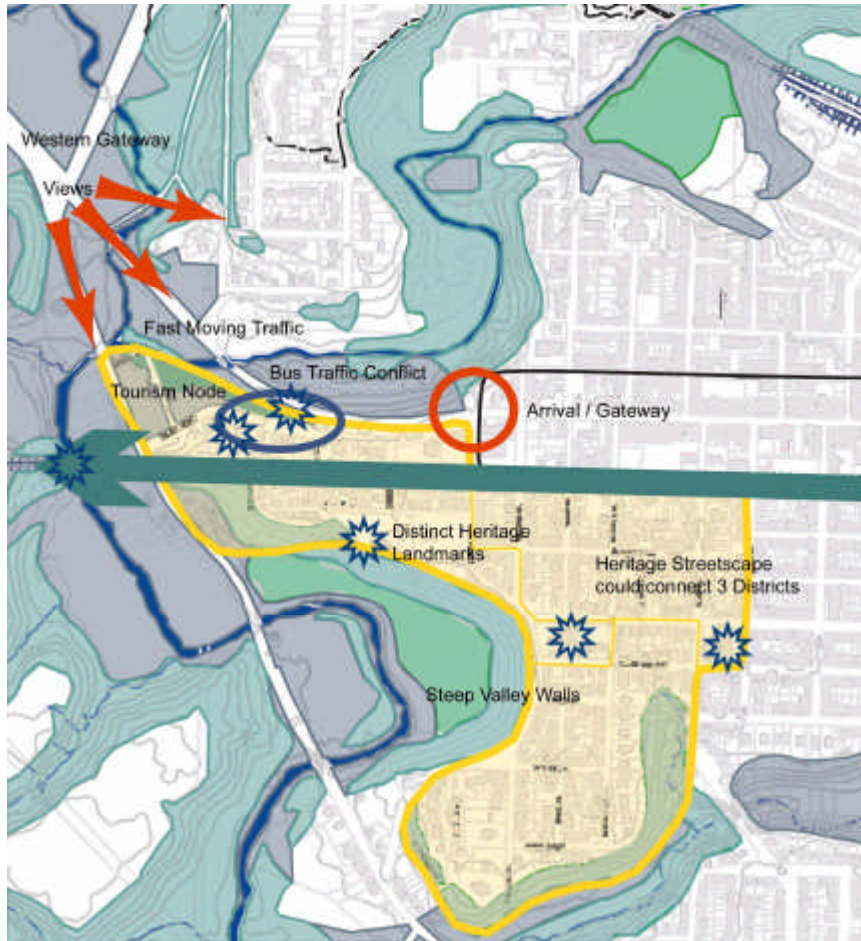
2.3.4 SMART GROWTH AND LEED

Principles of Smart Growth have been adopted by municipalities across the province and have been comprehensively documented within the last few years. In the United States, the Green Building Council has instituted a set of building practices and a rating system to identify and evaluate the level to which a project incorporates energy efficient and sustainable building practices. The LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design) embodies many of the Smart Growth principles, from site selection and sustainable use of resources to re-use of building components. These sustainable practices can be applied to all types of building projects, from large developments to single buildings and renovations. While still in its infancy for city-wide initiatives, revitalization of existing buildings and streets, urban intensification and redevelopment of abandoned industrial sites can provide opportunities for innovative new planning and environmentally sensitive building practices.

2.3.5 LIVE / WORK

In conjunction with Main Street programs and Smart Growth Principles, buildings that combine living and working in one unit have started to appear in mixed use, street-related development. This development concept places retail or office units at the street front, with associated residential units to the rear or on upper floors. This style of development is suited to infill as well as two and three story townhouse buildings and converted warehouses or commercial “lofts”.





Old St. Thomas Features & Opportunities

3.0 Analysis and Opportunities

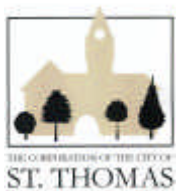
3.1 Old St. Thomas

Old St. Thomas is located up on the hill near the western gateway to the City. Old St. Thomas forms part of the western gateway to the City. The area is bound to the west and to the south by the Kettle Creek valley lands and to the east, Denison and Hincks Street. The intersection that acts as the gateway to St. Thomas is Talbot Street and Stanley Street. Stanley Street at Talbot Street is marked by apartment buildings that are not indicative of the character of 'Old St. Thomas'. There is an opportunity to direct traffic, travelling specifically to visit Old St. Thomas, to the intersection of Sunset Drive and Talbot Street. This route could be identified as a newly defined gateway, west of the split between Sunset Drive and Talbot Street. Marking this entrance as the gateway to Old St. Thomas allows visitors to experience the old trestle bridge and heritage homes from the outset of their visit.

Old St. Thomas is recognized as the City's heritage residential core and is characterized by a wide variation of lot configurations, open space, streetscapes, building types and styles. The properties to the west of Stanley Street are the oldest in St. Thomas and originated as part of the first settlement of the town. Along Talbot Road at the top of the hill are several small commercial uses that remain today as a node for tourism. Original buildings have been adapted for use as a bed & breakfast, restaurant, shops and museums. This commercial area is an integral part of Old St. Thomas, distinct from the City's main commercial street, Talbot Street. Its current function as a tourist node is a unique opportunity that should be reinforced as part of developing Old St. Thomas as a tourist destination.

The architectural styles of Old St. Thomas fall under several major categories: Georgian, Gothic, Italianate, Queen Anne. Many of the houses are also characterized by a mixture of two or more architectural styles, often modified by NeoClassical features. The variety of styles and well-maintained quality of these homes has been likened to Colonial Williamsburg. Streetscapes are also a strong reminder of St. Thomas' history, as they range from narrow roads to scenic drives along the valley lands.

Old St. Thomas is home to Jumbo the Elephant, a significant figure in St. Thomas' past. The monument of Jumbo is situated at the top of the hill facing east. Located beside Jumbo is the tourism information centre, which is housed in an old caboose. Other tourist attractions are located in the





View from the Jumbo tourist Site on the Hill Overlooking Highway 4

same area include the Pioneer Museum, the Military Museum, and speciality shops. All of these attractions have very limited parking making it difficult to accommodate larger groups and buses in the area.

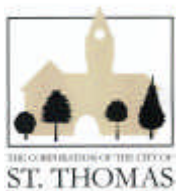
The St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association has developed a proposal for redeveloping the Old St. Thomas area to better accommodate tourism activities. This proposal should continue to be developed and refined to reflect the urban design study and guidelines.

Old St. Thomas is situated on the edge of an extensive valley system. Currently there are informal pathways leading into the valley from Old St. Thomas to open space associated with Kettle Creek and Dodds Creek. Opportunities should be sought to create a safe linkage/entrance to the valley and to formalize the pathways that connect to St. Thomas' greater trail network.

Old St. Thomas is directly linked to the Downtown and CASO Lands by the east/west Railway line. This Railway line provides an opportunity to improve connections by creating a multi-use trail and green corridor to facilitate pedestrian movement between the City's commercial and tourism attractions

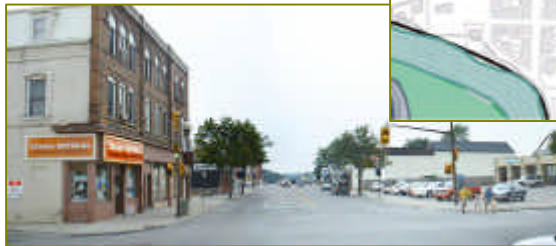
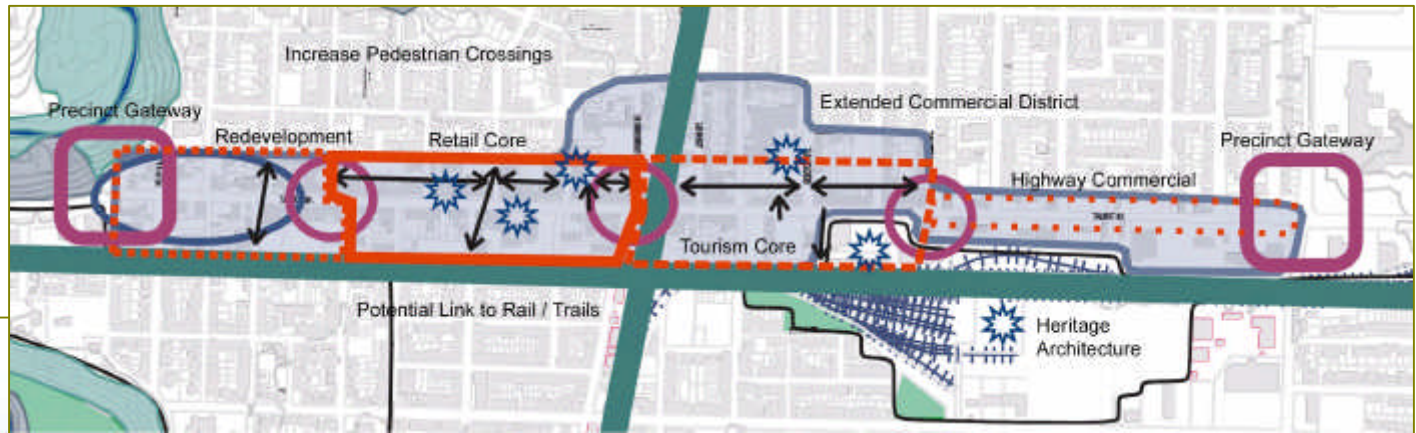


Apartment buildings at the Entry Point of Old St. Thomas



3.2 Downtown

Currently St. Thomas' downtown is characterized by active businesses interspersed with vacant retail space. In order to create a better-defined pedestrian oriented commercial area, opportunities could be sought to focus retail activity in the vicinity of the City's civic buildings. The boundaries for the Downtown Features & Opportunities



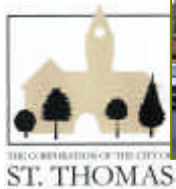
Above: Downtown Features & Opportunities Left: Talbot St. West Gateway Perspective (Inconsistent Building Form and Use)

Below: Active Street-related Retail on Talbot Central



Talbot Street consists of four travel lanes (two lanes accommodate on-street parking in places), with narrow sidewalks and very few pedestrian crossings. The role of Talbot Street has primarily been as a transportation route with ancillary retail and commercial uses. In order to reverse this perception opportunities could be sought to widen the sidewalks at intersections and create safe mid-block crossings to provide a friendlier pedestrian space and slow traffic down.

The consistency of street-related building form at the west portion of Talbot Street (Stanley Street – East Street) begins to break down with the presence of vacant buildings and vacant lots. These sites could be in-filled with new uses or utilized as parking areas to support Old St. Thomas commercial core.



Between Ross Street and Alma Street the architectural rhythm on the south side of Talbot Street begins to break down with the presence of empty lots and big box stores, while the north side of the street has a strong retail edge. Infill of retail buildings that front on Talbot Street should be encouraged in the future. New streetscape measures used in Talbot Central should extend into this area. In the short term, a strong streetscape will reinforce this portion of Talbot Street and link it to the Downtown.

The section of Talbot Street to the east of Alma Street has become well-established area with space extensive commercial users. The transition between this section and the commercial core of Talbot Street could be improved by using the same heritage style streetscape elements such as lighting, signage, and banners as proposed for central Talbot Street.

Parking is available in rear lots of the commercial core, but is poorly marked for vehicles travelling along Talbot Street. Signage needs to be provided to highlight these parking opportunities to visitors. Connections to off-street parking lots from Talbot Street could be highlighted with improved signage and lighting. The safety and comfort of the pedestrian environment of these parking areas can also be improved by upgrading rear building facades: creating rear entrances, signage and lighting.

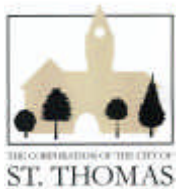
The MTO corridor acquired by the City that runs north-south through Central Talbot has the potential to become a multi-use green corridor connecting to open space systems to the north and south of the commercial core.

The Canada Southern Railway (CASO) Station's visibility to Talbot Street should be enhanced. Currently, retail development blocks the view and access from Talbot Street. If an opportunity arises to acquire these properties, a large greenspace and/or plaza should be developed in front of the Station to improve its presence to Talbot Street and enhance the greenspace in the Downtown.

The Station's architectural history, quality and uniqueness has been well researched by various interest groups and documented in a comprehensive feasibility study, commissioned by OnTrack and prepared by Commonwealth Historic Resource Management Limited. Constructed between 1871 and 1873, this station has been documented as one of the most unique Railway buildings in Canada. The recommendations of the feasibility should be followed through as they present viable ways to rehabilitate this building as one of St. Thomas' primary tourist attractions and a unique part of its urban fabric.



View of CASO Station from Talbot Street

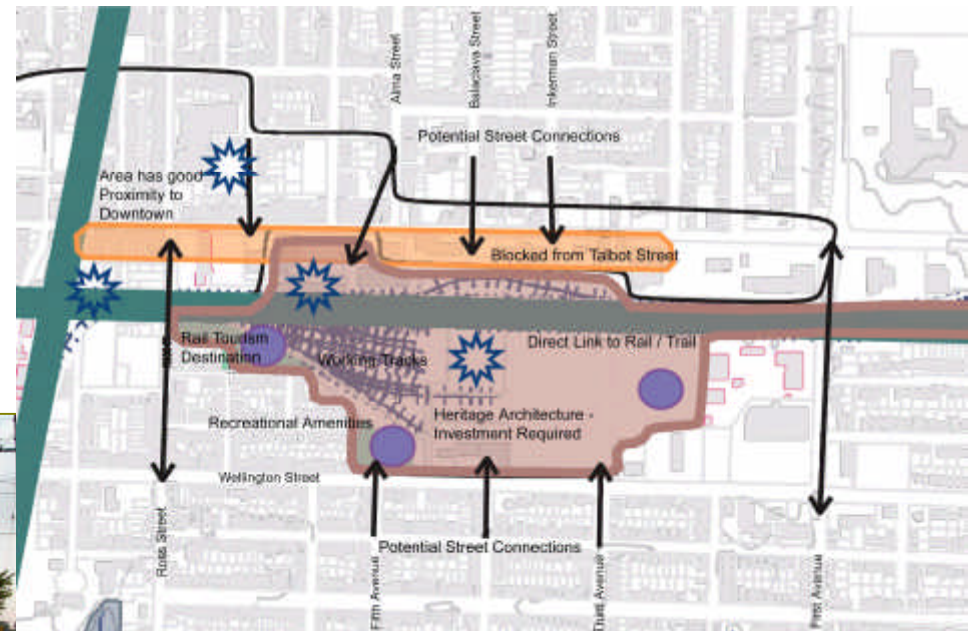


3.3 CASO Lands

The CASO Lands are the home of some of the most significant historical structures in St. Thomas; the Station and the Railway Museum.



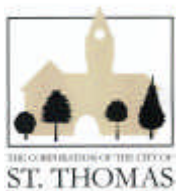
View of the CASO Lands from the South



CASO Lands Features & Opportunities

There are a large number of railway tracks that are currently not being used on the CASO lands. Some tracks are required for the operation of the Railway Museum and the future operation of the station. It should be determined which tracks are essential for the continuation of the Rail related operations and visiting trains. Pulling up the surplus tracks would allow for the development of additional greenspace amenities on these lands and better connection within the heritage railway complex and proposed arena.

Similar to the study undertaken for the Station, the Railway Museum would benefit from a comprehensive and documented building condition survey. Recommendations and budgets should be defined for its maintaining, preserving its unique features and functions and suggesting ways that it can



be developed as an integral part of a Railway heritage tourism district. The Railway Museum has a distinct function that could be enhanced through its inclusion in a development plan for the CASO lands.

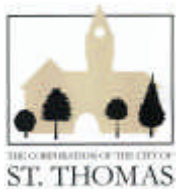
The CASO lands have a good proximity to the Downtown, but are currently blocked from Talbot Street by private developments. The Railway Station's proximity to Talbot Street should be enhanced by expanding its boundaries onto Talbot Street.

The City has made a commitment to build a twin pad arena within the CASO Lands. This twin pad arena will begin to link these lands to the Downtown and help to create an economic climate that will encourage new redevelopment initiatives.

Other potential access points to the CASO lands from Talbot Street are available at the intersection of Manitoba Street, Balclava Street, and Inkerman Street. Access from Wellington Street should be investigated at either Fifth Avenue or Third Avenue. Although the CASO lands are a large block with great tourism potential, care should be taken not to bisect the heritage railway complex of the Railway Museum, the CASO Station and the active tracks. A transportation study should be undertaken to evaluate the new roads network. Care should be taken in the planning of the CASO Lands to create an internal road network that is sensitive to the existing Railway uses.

The baseball field currently located on the CASO lands is outdated, has poor orientation, and lacks parking. An opportunity exists to relocate the ball diamond to a more suitable location. This provides the opportunity to consolidate open space along the Rails-to-Trails greenway and to redevelop along the Wellington Street frontage.

The BX Tower is a designated building under the Heritage Act that should be integrated into future plans. The Tower could potentially serve as a tourism information centre on the north-south greenway corridor.



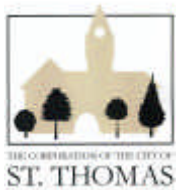


Two Views Along the MTO Corridor

3.4 Related Development Nodes

The potential exists to redevelop a number of properties adjacent to the MTO greenspace corridor recently acquired by the City. These properties include Alma College and properties along Princess Street and Station Street (identified on the Conceptual Plan). These properties are currently in light industrial and institutional use.

The close proximity of these lands to the tourism, residential and commercial core will create an important catalyst in St. Thomas. The future planning of the adjacent lands should therefore be sensitive to this new role. Appropriate land uses may include residential infill and commercial development that should focus on Railway-related tourism activities.



4.0 Urban Design Framework

4.1 Objectives of the Framework

The focus group sessions identified a number of objectives that became contributing directives for the development of the Urban Design Framework Plan (Figure 1). These are:

Preserve and enhance St. Thomas' heritage of built and natural features, including:

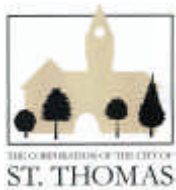
- *Railway heritage: Railway Museum and Station buildings, the BX Tower, bridges and tracks*
- *Character of Old St. Thomas: Residential homes and streetscapes*
- *Heritage character of Talbot Street commercial centre: commercial facades*
- *Open Space: natural heritage of Kettle Creek and Dodd's Creek*

Make St. Thomas an enjoyable and attractive place to live and a destination that can attract regional tourism and business

Develop a vision or image of the City that all parties can embrace and work towards as a common goal



Old St. Thomas Landmark – Elgin County Courthouse



4.2 Principles and Strategies of the Framework

The design workshop session provided a forum for discussion of the opportunities and possible obstacles to achieving goals, and led to the definition of some broad principles and strategies for civic improvement and a better integration.

Identify St. Thomas as a destination for business and tourism:

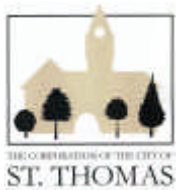
- Create western and eastern gateways to mark the arrival into St. Thomas
- Develop existing signage into a unified “family of signs”
- Use the gateways to reinforce the special character of the various areas:
 - Active Railway heritage of the CASO lands
 - Downtown heritage main street pedestrian shopping
 - Old St. Thomas heritage district and Jumbo
- Develop common streetscape themes and wayfinding symbols throughout the city
- Consider a heritage identity tourism theme for Old St. Thomas, such as ‘Old St. Thomas-on-the-Hill’



Potential Location for a Western Gateway at Sunset Drive

Encourage diversity in the scale of redevelopment

- Redevelop underutilized buildings and uses that are incompatible with a revitalized downtown image
- Encourage development of the CASO lands with the focal point as Railway-related tourism, supported by other major commercial projects
- Support the need for a new, large open space for city-wide events, preferably at the former park site in front of the CASO station
- Amend zoning designations to reflect changes in use and to encourage development



Create better connections through the community

- *Develop recognizable streetscape treatments that visually link the parts of the city*
- *Develop the Railway corridor as a green, multi-use trail that connects the city from east to west and to the valley lands; enhance the Trans Canada Trail experience*
- *Improve accessibility to the CASO lands*



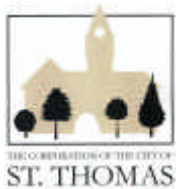
Talbot West – Potential for Infill Redevelopment



Potential for Better Connections Between Talbot Street and the CASO Lands

Create a more pleasurable pedestrian experience in the Downtown:

- *Create a clearly defined heritage shopping area – Talbot Central*
- *Improve the building facades and streetscape in Talbot West*
- *Beautify the street through streetscape and building improvements*
- *Make shopping in the Downtown more comfortable and convenient through road and sidewalk improvements*
- *Improve parking in certain areas along Talbot Street and in Old St. Thomas*
- *Encourage street-related retail to fill in vacancies*



4.3 Principles and Strategies for Old St. Thomas, Downtown and the CASO Lands

Based on input provided in the focus groups and design workshop, ways in which each of the three areas could contribute to the overall principles of the Framework were identified with specific strategies. The guidelines for implementing these strategies are presented in the Façade Improvement Guidelines, the Built Heritage Guidelines and the Streetscape Revitalization Guidelines.



Tree-lined Streets in Old St. Thomas

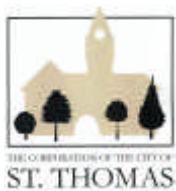
4.3.1 OLD ST. THOMAS

Protect and enhance the “look” and “feel” of Old St. Thomas

- *Establish site planning and built form guidelines to direct building improvements and new construction to reflect existing heritage architecture and building details*
- *Propose streetscape treatments that reflect the informal quality and “maintain the integrity” of Old St. Thomas streets*
- *Develop ways to recognize improvement efforts through plaques and/or publication*

Define the boundaries of Old St. Thomas

- *Broaden the boundaries of Old St. Thomas as defined in the CIP to include the areas of the City’s three historic periods of architecture. These include:*
 - West of Stanley Street*
 - South of Wellington to Prince Albert and the houses along the east side of Metcalfe Street*
 - East of Stanley Street*





Potential to Improve Old St. Thomas to Talbot Street

- Consider defining these areas as a special policy area with respect to planning policy
- Create more pedestrian friendly streets
- Implement streetscapes with cross sections that are sensitive to the heritage of Old St. Thomas

Improve the attraction of area for tourists

- Explore “Old. St. Thomas on the Hill” as a tourism identity for the area
- Delineate a “heritage streetscape” route that connects the three walking tours and incorporates aspects of the Elgin County Tourism Board’s streetscape master plan
- Establish a family of themed wayfinding signs
- Develop themed street signs
- Improve integration of the Jumbo Tourist attraction in Old. St. Thomas

Support the commercial node

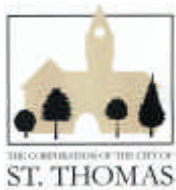
- Define the boundary as west of Stanley Street
- Undertake a detailed property review of the area to determine where convenient parking areas can be established
- Facilitate the ability for small-scale commercial businesses that are compatible with the heritage theme to operate from residences west of William Street, north of Central Street

Improve trail and open space connections to Kettle Creek and Dodds Creek

- Create a prominent trail entrance that is along the “heritage streetscape” route
- Delineate permitted parking areas at trail heads
- Create a safe path/trail down the valley wall

Improve multi-use linkages to Downtown and CASO Lands

- Develop the Railway corridor as a landscaped route across the city to the CASO lands
- Establish perpendicular connections at cross streets to link the trail/corridor to Talbot Street
- Explore the viability of a shuttle-bus or heritage themed public transportation route to Talbot Street shopping and the CASO lands





Talbot Central Area of the Downtown

4.3.2 DOWNTOWN – TALBOT STREET

Establish Talbot Central as the commercial focus for Talbot Street

- Consolidate and intensify retail activity towards Talbot Central
- Develop different strategies of streetscape revitalization for Talbot West, Talbot Central and Talbot East, such as:
 - Talbot West ~ infill and redevelopment; paving, lighting and tree planting*
 - Talbot Central ~ restoration and renovation; paving, lighting, tree planting, expanded sidewalks, furniture; building illumination; heritage district themed signage*
 - Talbot East ~ streetscape beautification; lighting, tree planting, landscaping at parking; themed St. Thomas signage or banners*

Strengthen main street shopping experience of Talbot Street

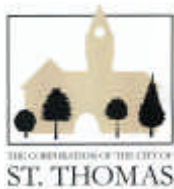
- Encourage improvement of Talbot Street buildings through façade improvement and redevelopment
- Undertake streetscape improvements, including:
 - Improved paving, lighting, pedestrian crossings*
 - tree planting, maintenance and other landscaping features*
 - introduction of street furniture*
- Develop a comprehensive lighting strategy for the public realm (the Great White Way)

Make Talbot Street a place to stop and shop as opposed to a traffic thoroughfare

- Introduce traffic calming measures
- Expand the sidewalk at certain locations to facilitate pedestrian street crossings and create well-defined street parking zones
- Improve wayfinding and access to rear parking lots
- Support rear access to ground floor retail

Preserve and enhance the heritage character of downtown commercial buildings

- Create guidelines for improvements to facades and storefronts that restore heritage features or guide renovations to be compatible with heritage values
- Create guidelines for new development to be compatible with the scale and proportions of heritage commercial facades
- Support mixed uses
- Review planning policies to support design guidelines



4.3.3 CASO LANDS

Create a “Railway Heritage” themed destination tourism attraction

- Support the initiatives of the Railway and station groups to preserve and redevelop the architectural potential of the Station and Railway Museum
- Maintain tracks to support the Railway district within a multi-use /trail green space corridor
- Maximize the tourism and development potential of the CASO lands by building on existing initiatives – arena, museum, station, tourist train lines
- Improve the train station’s relationship to Talbot Street, both physically and visually

Create major community green spaces that facilitate events and linkages to Talbot Street and Old St. Thomas

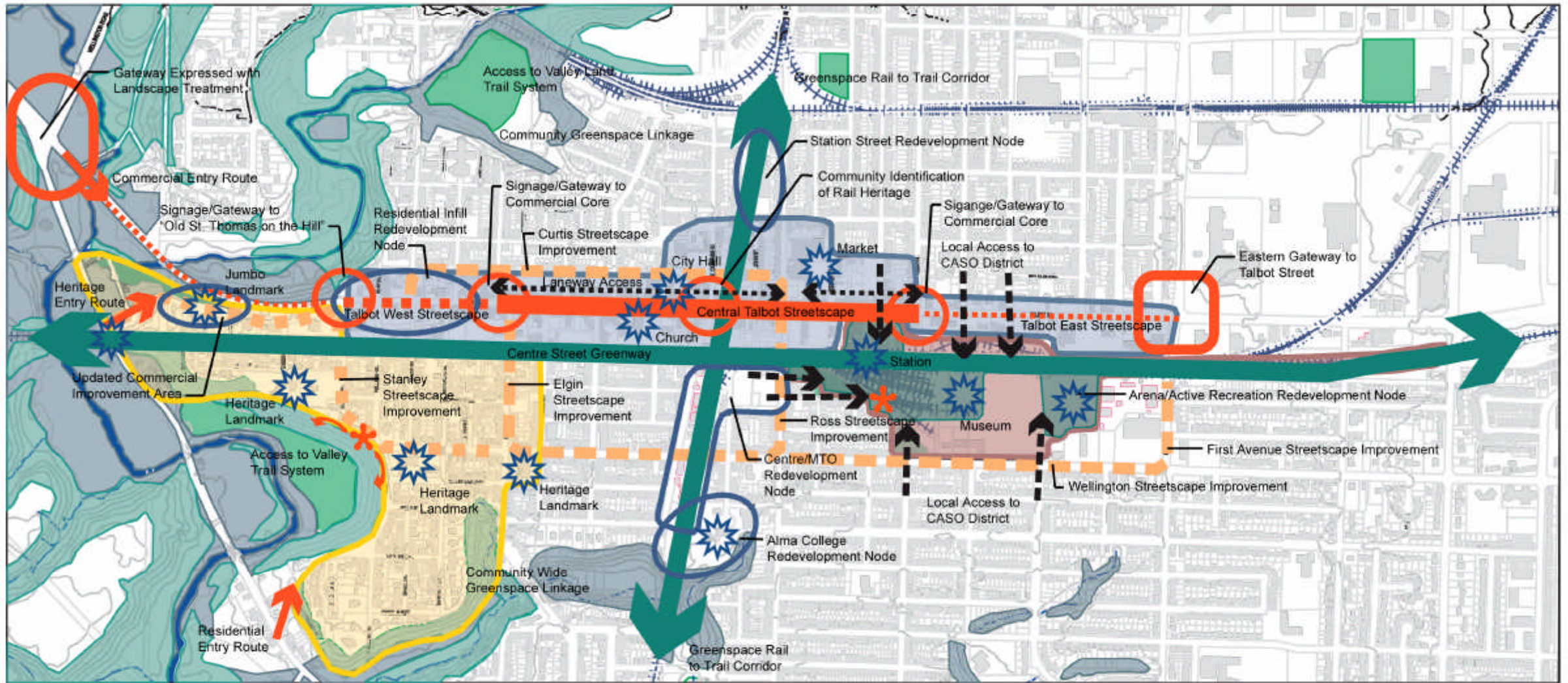
- Establish a new major open space area to support community events
- Establish a multi-use /trail green space corridor, enhancing the Trans Canada Trail, along the tracks
- Establish links to the proposed arena to enhance recreation node

Improve access to the CASO lands to maximize future development opportunities

- Create multiple vehicular access opportunities by building on the existing network of adjacent streets
- Create streetscaped, pedestrian routes to the CASO lands from Talbot Street



View of the CASO Station and Tracks – Potential for an Integrated Railway District and Multi-Use Green Space



Urban Design Framework Plan

5.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Phase 2 of the Design Study provides design guidelines for preservation and enhancement of St. Thomas' key heritage areas. To be eligible for support from the CIP Programs, projects are required to utilize the approaches and specific strategies presented in the guidelines. These guidelines are broken down into the following categories: Built Heritage Guidelines, Façade Improvement Guidelines, and Streetscape Revitalization Guidelines.

The broad goals of the City's revitalization and beautification initiatives should underlie the intent of the work. Stated in the CIP the primary goal is:

Achieve the community vision for St. Thomas as a "vibrant and fun people place where residents and visitors live, work, shop and play."

For heritage residential improvements in Old St. Thomas, specific goals for improvement work are:

- *Preserve and promote St. Thomas' cultural heritage.*
- *Promote increased tourist activity highlighting St. Thomas' cultural heritage.*

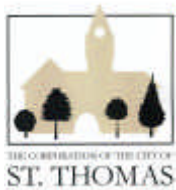
For commercial buildings in the Downtown, the specific goals for improvement work are:

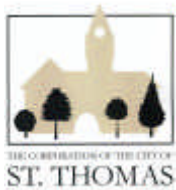
- *Use existing commercial buildings to create new residential units.*
- *Rehabilitate vacant residential units.*
- *Bring existing occupied residential units up to code standard.*
- *Create new residential units through addition of new building space to an existing building.*
- *Demolish existing buildings, where appropriate, and replace with new construction that contains residential units and is designed to integrate into the local urban fabric.*

The programs of the CIP that relate directly to building improvements are summarized below:

Heritage Tax Relief Program – Restoration

- *Assistance for the restoration of buildings that have been designated by the municipal by-law as having "historic or architectural value".*
- *The program applies to buildings throughout the CIP area.*
- *The proposed restoration project has been approved by the Municipal Heritage Committee.*





Heritage Design Program

- Assistance for the preparation of a design study for the restoration and preservation of a building designated by the municipal by-law or listed by the Municipal Heritage Committee as having "historic or architectural value".
- The program applies to buildings throughout the CIP area.

Building Revitalization Programs

- Assistance for the increase or improvement of the supply of existing residential units throughout the CIP area.
- The program applies to buildings throughout the CIP area; however, properties in the commercial area along Talbot Street will receive program priority.

Façade Improvement Program

- Assistance for improvement of façades for commercial buildings in Downtown and Old St. Thomas that are consistent with the design guidelines for their project areas.
- Projects in the Downtown would utilize the Façade Improvement Guidelines and projects in Old St. Thomas would utilize the Built Heritage Guidelines.

5.1 Built Heritage Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Guidelines

The guidelines are written as a tool to assist property owners with an approach to repair, refurbishment and renovation of their properties so that the appearance of building improvements are in keeping with the residential heritage character of Old St. Thomas. The guidelines are intended to be flexible, to encourage owners to maintain and improve their properties within a broad definition of "restoration" and "heritage".

Restoration and New Construction

Many of the guidelines are directed to the repair and minor alterations of existing structures to assure preservation of existing heritage details which contribute to Old St. Thomas' heritage character. However, as building improvements also include renovation or new construction, guidelines are also proposed for such projects.

New structures need not be built according to a precise historical style; however, their design should be in general conformance with the principles of site planning, massing, proportion, design detail and materials of adjacent

buildings as well as the overall character of the area. This study recommends that the City review its planning policy to ensure that planning policy and these Guidelines are in conformance.

Implementation of the Guidelines

The Built Heritage Guidelines apply to the Old St. Thomas project area. Where buildings in Old St. Thomas contain commercial or personal service occupancies and an application is being made to the Façade Improvement Program, these Built Heritage Guidelines should be referenced. Specifically, the guidelines including, but not limited to, walls, windows, entrances, projections and roof details would be applicable to improvements to the exterior front walls of buildings in Old St. Thomas.

All restoration or alteration work on designated or listed buildings will require review by staff, and the Municipal Heritage Committee prior to receipt of CIP funding. For improvement projects that are not making applications for funding, it is, nevertheless, strongly recommended that these Guidelines and the review Committee be consulted to ensure that the work carried out is supportive of the goals of “maintaining the heritage feel of Old St. Thomas”. The efforts of each individual project contribute to achieving St. Thomas’ revitalization and beautification mandates.

Restoration and repair to historic buildings should be undertaken with the assistance of qualified professionals familiar with the area, heritage buildings and local building practices. These include local builders, craftspeople, architects, members of the Municipal Heritage Committee, Planning Department personnel and other members of the community.

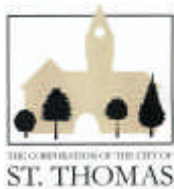
In addition to local resources, practices and research, a most informative and locally applicable guide to restoration is the Ontario Heritage Foundation’s publication, “Well-Preserved: the Ontario Heritage Foundations Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation” by Mark Fram.

5.1.1 OLD ST. THOMAS AND ITS BUILDING TRADITIONS

Old St. Thomas, located at the western entry to the City, is recognized as the City’s heritage residential core, and is characterized as a charming neighbourhood with wide variation in lot configurations and building styles. The area is bounded to the west and to the south by the Kettle Creek valley lands, and to the east by Denison Street and Hincks Street.

As an alternative, this study recommends that the City consider identifying Old St. Thomas as a “special policy area”. The properties to the west of Stanley Street are the oldest in St. Thomas and one means to ensure their preservation that has been discussed would be to designate the area as a Heritage District. Further consultations with the Ontario Heritage Foundation are recommended to confirm if designation is appropriate, what the process would be, and the implications of a particular designation for the future of the area and owners.

St. Thomas’ Municipal Heritage Committee has undertaken a comprehensive Heritage Building Inventory which documents the physical characteristics, age and ownership for Old St. Thomas homes, built between the 1830s to



1950s. These buildings have been evaluated on their state of preservation and architectural merit, based on the extent to which the building's original features have been retained or altered.



Roseberry Place, Old St. Thomas

Residents perceive the entire area as contributing to St. Thomas' "heritage" identity and being integral to the success of Old St. Thomas as a tourist destination. Building and property improvements in this area should therefore be encouraged in the spirit of preservation and celebration of St. Thomas' heritage character.

"The conservation of our heritage properties, places and districts is a means of making our municipalities and communities more attractive and more liveable. Places considered "liveable" are appealing places to do business and to promote as tourist destinations. It's worth the investment!"
"Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties." (See References at end of document)

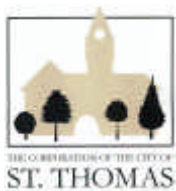
For more information on a comprehensive approach to evaluating and preserving original structures and details, refer to the above noted document, *"Eight Guiding Principles in the Conservation of Historic Properties,"* Ontario Ministry of Culture

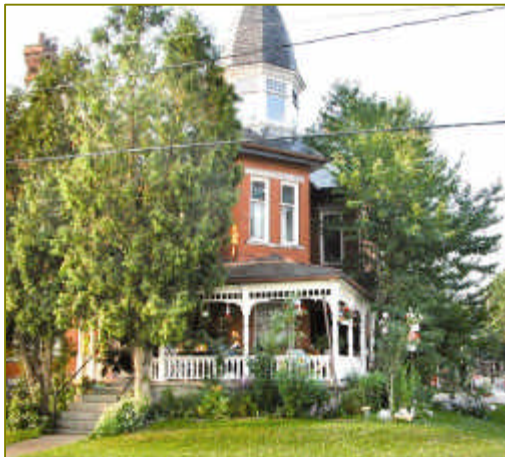
Most dwellings within Old St. Thomas are designed with elements of Georgian, Gothic, Italianate or Queen Anne styles. Many homes feature a mixture of two or more architectural styles, often modified by neoclassical features.

For a comprehensive summary of residential building styles modified by Ontario tradition, refer to *"Well-Preserved – the Ontario Heritage Foundation's manual of principles and practice for architectural conservation"*, by Mark Fram.



Early Neoclassical – 6 St. Anne's Place





Eclectic Queen Anne - 66 Centre St.

Some of the characteristics of particular styles that are manifested in Old St. Thomas homes include:

Georgian Features (Old St. Thomas houses date from 1842-1907)

- *simple “box-like” form*
- *simple pitched roofs*
- *white brick or clapboard*
- *front façade divided into bays expressed by simple, rectangular window apertures*
- *entry doors with fanlights and/or sidelights*

Gothic Features (Old St. Thomas houses date from 1860-1912)

- *steeply pitched, gabled roofs*
- *clearly expressed bays or full height projections*
- *gothic arched windows*
- *light-coloured brick or clapboard siding*
- *shutters*
- *elaborate roof eave details*

Italianate Features (Old St. Thomas houses date from 1860-1908)

- *pitched and hip roofs*
- *doors with sidelights*
- *projecting bays*
- *elaborate stone or wood eave brackets*
- *arched windows*
- *grey or light brick*

Queen Anne Features (Old St. Thomas houses date from 1871-1905)

- *steeply pitched roofs and turrets*
- *irregular plan form*
- *many window projections and bays*
- *bracket details under eaves*
- *variety of window forms: half-moon, keyhole, ¼ circle and circular*
- *columns at porches*

NeoClassical Features (Old St. Thomas houses date from 1842-1875)

- *simple “colonial” style, similar to Georgian*
- *hip roofs*
- *undecorated eaves*
- *entry doors with sidelights*
- *simple, rectangular window apertures*



Front Yard Setback Grouping

5.1.2 GUIDELINES

Setbacks

Front Yards

Throughout Old St. Thomas, the distance from the front wall of buildings to the sidewalk varies; some homes are built at or very near the property line, close to the sidewalk or street edge, while others are set further back, allowing for a generous front porch and garden. This variation in setback contributes to Old St. Thomas' heritage "feel", reflecting the individual character of each house.

Along some streets, front yard setbacks occur in groupings, where several adjacent houses may share a common setback. When the setback changes, it is generally by a small amount and remains consistent for the next grouping of homes before changing again.

Abrupt changes in front yard setback also occur in a few locations.

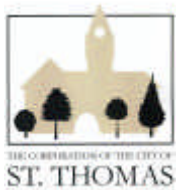


Close Separation Between Dwellings

Side Yards

Houses in groupings sharing a common front yard setback generally have side yard separations of two to eight feet. The close separation between dwellings creates a continuity of building mass, giving definition to the street edge.

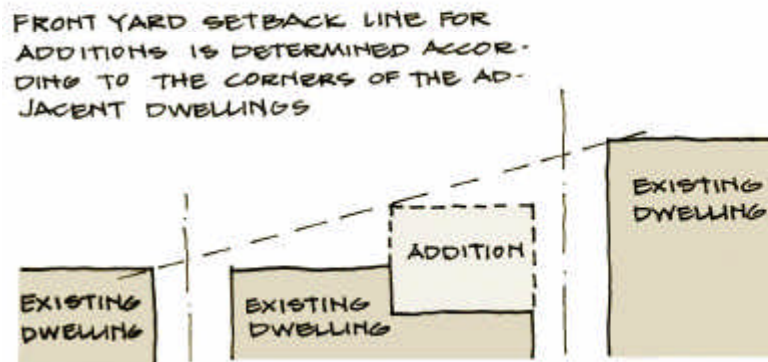
Larger side yards generally occur where buildings are located on large single or double lots.



Side elevations of corner lot dwellings that are visible from the public realm are generally punctuated with window openings and have a design quality consistent with that of the front façade. This contributes to the architectural charm of the dwelling and the quality of the streetscape as seen from the public realm.

Guidelines:

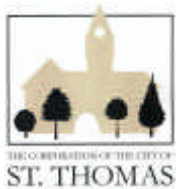
- Existing front and side yard setbacks should be preserved.
- Additions or alterations to the front or side of a dwelling should not be located beyond a line projected between the front corner of the dwelling and the nearest front corner of the adjacent dwelling.
- For new dwellings, the minimum front setback should be the lesser of the setbacks of adjacent dwellings.
- Abrupt changes in setbacks between adjacent dwellings should be avoided.
- Side yard setbacks for any new structure should be consistent with the side yard setbacks of its existing adjacent dwellings.
- The design of additions, alterations or new construction having sidewalls exposed to the public realm should include massing, roof lines, apertures, detailing and materials that complement the design of the front of the house and contribute to the visual interest of the street.



Front Lot Setbacks for Additions or Alterations



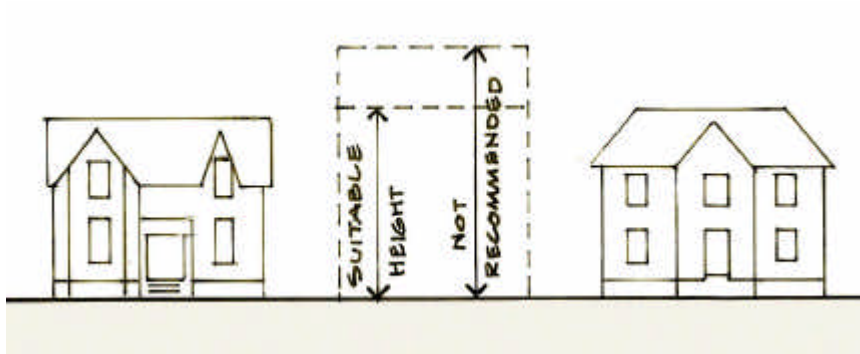
Minimum Front Lot Setback for New Dwellings



Proportion, Height and Massing

The neighbourhood is characterized by its eclectic mix of dwellings having a variety of heights, proportion and massing, according to their architectural style. Houses of generally similar massing and height occur in groups along the street. Most groups are of 1-1/2 or 2 storey dwellings, and may also include some single storey cottage types or bungalows as well as larger, three storey homes. The distinctively larger homes tend to be isolated on larger lots and have minimal relationships to adjacent dwellings.

Houses noted in the Heritage Building Inventory as being 1-1/2 storeys have a full height ground floor level and an upper level with sloping walls which occupies a portion of the attic space within the roof. The upper level has dormer windows within the roof slope. This variation in dormer and roof design creates a diversity of roof forms within the neighbourhood. Two storey homes typically have a full height second level below the roof. Roof forms for two storey dwellings also vary.



New Construction Height Compatible with Adjacent Dwellings

Guidelines:

- Alterations and additions to a dwelling should be consistent with the form of the dwelling and with the massing and heights of adjacent buildings.
- Abrupt changes in massing and height between properties should be avoided.
- New construction should be compatible with the massing and heights of adjacent buildings and should contribute to the character of the streetscape.

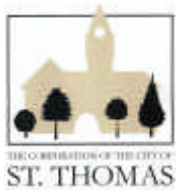
Roofs

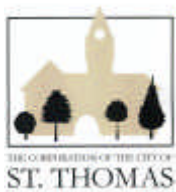
The predominant roof form in Old St. Thomas is pitched, occurring in the majority of all residential heritage architectural styles. Its form and orientation varies, including gable ends or sloped roofs that face the street and shallow hip roofs. Dormer windows and gable end windows are common. The great variation in roof forms contributes to the variety and visual interest of the streetscape.

The roof may be a steeply pitched gable or a shallower hip roof depending on the architectural style. Many roofs have elaborate detailing according to the architectural style of the building and may include elements such as stone brackets or finely carved woodwork filigree in gable ends. Similarly, the eaves may be simple, fitted with a common, residential eavestrough and soffit, or constructed with a more elaborate projecting eave, supported with stone or brick brackets.



Georgian / Neoclassic – 77 Metcalfe St.





Guidelines:

- *Where a roof is being repaired or restored, its original form should be retained, and the original roofing material should be reused where feasible (in the case of slate for example) or replaced with a matching material (wood shingles or shakes for example).*
- *Where a roof is being repaired or restored and the re-use of original roofing materials is not feasible, asphalt shingles are acceptable, provided their colour is compatible with the dwelling and consistent with the roof colour of the adjacent dwellings.*
- *Where the roof is altered to accommodate an addition or alteration, the new form should be compatible with the main roof form of the dwelling.*
- *Original detailing at eaves and gable ends should be properly maintained and preserved. Where such detailing is removed or damaged during construction, repair or maintenance, it should be replaced or refurbished to match its original appearance.*
- *Contemporary elements within the roof area such as skylights, air conditioners and roof vents should be located so they are not visible from the public realm or detailed to suit their historical context.*

Exterior Walls

Brick and clapboard siding are the predominant exterior wall materials of Old St. Thomas residences. In many cases, the original clapboard has been clad with vinyl or aluminum siding or the brick surface has been painted. While re-cladding with synthetic materials is not preferred, the Heritage Building Inventory notes that in some cases, the re-cladding has been executed in an acceptable manner that reflects the orientation of the original clapboard siding.

Guidelines:

- *Prior to exterior wall repair or replacement, research on the original materials and appearance of the house should be undertaken. Consultation with a local builder or architect is recommended to determine, within the program and budget of the property owner, how best to perform the work according to the heritage character of the building.*
- *Where repair or replacement to an original exterior wall finish is required, the new material should match the original in colour and detailing.*
- *Where matching of new material to the original finish is not feasible, the use of exterior materials that are complementary to the predominant materials of the main house is recommended.*
- *The preferred exterior wall finish materials are brick and wood siding. Other durable materials such as stone cladding or stucco may be considered as alternatives, however, these are less desirable as they are not materials original to Old St. Thomas buildings.*
- *The use of synthetic building materials such as aluminum or vinyl siding and plastic wood siding sheets is not recommended.*

Windows

Resulting from the neighbourhood's variety of architectural styles and, in some cases, the mixture of several styles in one building, there is a wide variety of window types in Old St. Thomas.

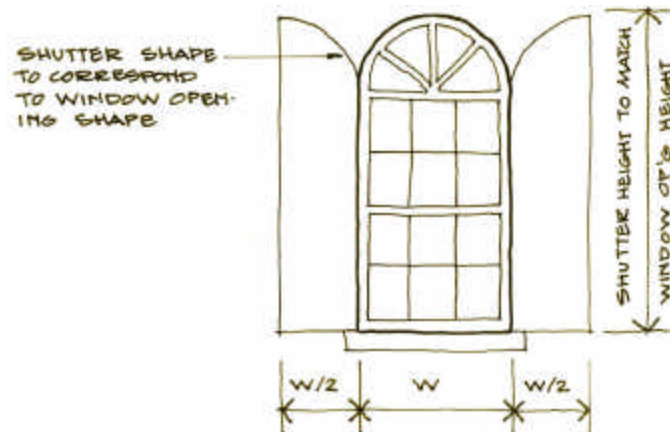
On street-facing facades, windows are generally well proportioned and arranged in an orderly, symmetrical fashion, to present a visually attractive elevation. Side walls generally have multiple window openings that are less carefully proportioned and placed more according to the needs of the interior plan, having less regard to their placement as seen from the exterior. Where sidewalls are exposed to the public realm at locations such as corner lot dwellings, the window apertures may be more well proportioned and arranged in a more orderly manner, similar to the primary street-facing elevation of the dwelling.

Dwellings typically have a greater proportion of wall surface to openings. Window sizes range from small, decorative features, to larger, main floor windows that are well proportioned according to the style of the dwelling. Overly large windows extending to the floor generally do not occur.

Sash windows are predominantly equal in division, meaning that the upper, fixed sash is the same size as the lower, operable sash. In many instances, the sash is subdivided with muntins and mullions into smaller panes. In some cases, both the upper and lower sash have similar subdivisions. ("6/6" means there are six pane division above, and six below). In other cases the upper, fixed sash is subdivided and the lower, operable sash is not.

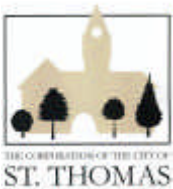
Arched windows occur frequently and the type of arch generally follows the architectural style of the house. Arch types include semi-circular brick arches, gothic pointed arches, shallow arches and applied architraves of a different material, such as stone. Other window details include freize boards above windows, decorative casings, sills and shutters.

Some windows have been altered through the addition of aluminum storm windows. Some windows have been replaced with vinyl or aluminum and by the installation of new windows that do not fit the original opening.



Guidelines:

- *When an existing window is removed, its replacement should have a wood frame and match the original in appearance as closely as possible. Features of an original window that should be matched include:*
 - *Type – fixed, operable or decorative*
 - *Casement or vertical slider*
 - *Frame and sill material*
 - *Window pane divisions (mullions & muntins)*
 - *Size and shape to suit original opening*
 - *Colour or finish to match existing*





Projecting Elements Which Add Visual Interest

- *When an existing subdivided window is removed, its replacement should have similar subdivision, using wood mullions and muntins made with individually sealed units for each lite within the mullion pattern, where possible. The use of removeable wooden muntin grilles applied to the inside face of the sash is also acceptable. "Stick-on" or applied plastic muntin bars to represent small pane divisions are not recommended.*
- *Window area details such as casings, sills, freize boards and shutters that may be damaged or removed during the window replacement process should be refurbished or rebuilt to their original appearance.*
- *New or replacement shutters should be shaped according to the window opening shape, the full height of the window opening and no less than half its width.*
- *New and replacement windows should be sealed, double glazing in wood frames wherever possible. Refer to the attached appendix for the Ontario Heritage Foundation's comment on wood replacement windows as the most desirable means of preservation, improvement and future maintenance. "Dave's Top Five Reasons to Conserve Historic Wood Windows", Ontario Conservation Note #11, Ontario Heritage Foundation.*
- *Where replacement with wood frame windows is not feasible, simple vinyl frame windows are recommended in a colour that either matches existing windows or is compatible with the dwelling when all existing windows are being replaced.*

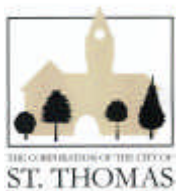
Projecting Elements

Bays and other building projections occur frequently within the neighbourhood; their architectural expression is generally according to the architectural style of the house. Projecting elements contribute to the overall building form and to the visual interest of both the dwelling and the streetscape.

Bays occur as single storey or multi-storey elements, in rectangular or angled form. These projections may be flat roofed behind parapet walls, or sloped, and in some cases both the slope and materials match the main roof of the house. Other projections include chimneys, projecting cornices and roof eaves, creating variety along the streetscape.

Guidelines:

- *Repairs to a projecting bay should preserve its original form and materials.*
- *Where alterations to a dwelling include addition or alteration of a projecting bay, its design should be consistent with the architectural style of the dwelling, complement the proportions of the house and harmonize visually with the exterior elevation and building form.*



Entrances, Porches and Doors

The street facing elevation of the house generally addresses the lot frontage and streetscape, providing a clear identification of the street address and conveying the individual character of the house. The front entrance is a focal element, with architectural elements that include front porch or portico, door and surround, sidelights and transom or fanlight.

Entrances are typically designed according to the architectural style of the dwelling yet in an individual manner for each, which contributes to their identity. The rhythm of attractively designed entrances enhances the streetscape and contributes to the pleasurable, intimate atmosphere of the pedestrian environment.

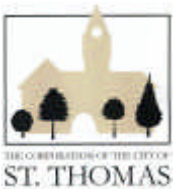
Many houses have front porches covered with a sloped roof. Some porches are original to the building and some are later additions. While porch materials and form vary from dwelling to dwelling, they are generally compatible with the main form and materials of the house.

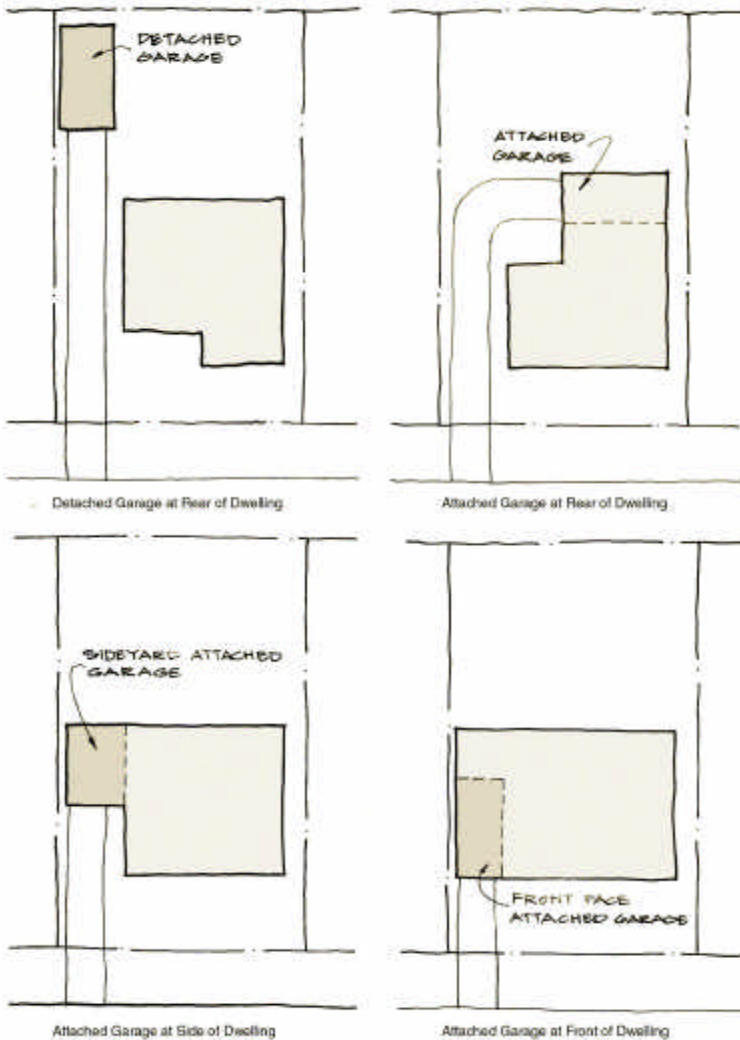
Doors occur in a wide variety of types and may include heritage details such as glazed vision panels or sidelights. Aluminum storm doors have been added at many front entries.



Front Porches with Sloped Roofs

The relationship of the house to grade is important to create a sense of arrival and entry while maintaining a connection to the streetscape. The front porch and main floor are generally raised above grade by three to five steps to achieve this.





Guidelines:

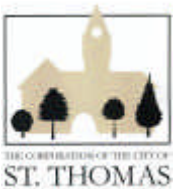
- Alterations to a dwelling’s front entry should reinforce its importance as a focal element of the front elevation and preserve or enhance its architectural style, detail and character.
- Where an existing main entry door is removed, the replacement door should be similar in style to the original and complementary to the architectural style of the dwelling.
- Screen or storm doors should be compatible with the main entry door and made of wood rather than aluminium.
- The enclosure of either existing or newly constructed porches is not recommended.
- When an existing porch is repaired, the original materials should be retained or reused as much as possible. Where new materials are used, they should match existing.
- A porch may be added to a dwelling, provided its design is consistent with the architectural style of the dwelling, complementary to the proportions of the house and harmonizes visually with the exterior elevation and building form.
- Existing porches and main entries should not be raised beyond their original elevation. If the interior floor elevation must be altered due to special circumstances, its altered height should be no more than one step above or below the floor level of the adjacent houses, and the porch floor height should be adjusted by a similar amount.
- Walkways from the entrance to the street are encouraged as a means of linking street and property at a pedestrian scale. Paving materials for walkways should be other than the sidewalk paving. Natural stone or brick pavers are recommended.

Garages and Driveways

Garages are generally accessed from street-oriented driveways. They are set well back from the street, located at the rear of the premises or well integrated into the design of the dwelling and thus have minimal negative impact on the streetscape.

Guidelines:

- Existing garages should remain in their present locations.
- New garages should be accessed from street-oriented driveways, and either located at the rear of the premises or well integrated into the design of the dwelling with no part projecting beyond the street-facing elevation of the dwelling.



5.2 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Guidelines

The Guidelines are written as a tool to guide public and private building improvement efforts, to encourage investment for the upgrading of commercial facades that support mandates of the CIP:

- *Achieve the community vision for the Downtown as a “vibrant and fun people place where residents and visitors live, work, shop and play”*
- *Preservation and promotion of St. Thomas’ cultural heritage*
- *Beautification of the Downtown and revitalization of retailing*
- *Residential conversion, rehabilitation and intensification*

These Guidelines should be referred to when existing buildings are being refurbished or renovated and when redevelopment of an existing property or group of properties along Talbot Street is being undertaken. Specifically, projects that have made funding applications for the Façade Improvement Program and/or the Building Revitalization Program will be required to demonstrate that the proposed upgrades and any new design have incorporated the Guideline recommendations.

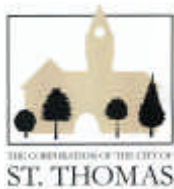
The Façade Improvement Guidelines apply to the Downtown project area along Talbot Street. This does not preclude the eligibility of improvements for the Façade Improvement Program for buildings in Old St. Thomas. Such building improvement projects should make reference to the Built Heritage Guidelines in Section 5.1.

Renovation

The Guidelines encourage the uncovering and retention of heritage features as the most direct way of preserving and maintaining St. Thomas’ unique architectural characteristics along Talbot Street. The Guidelines recognize, however, that these approaches are not always viable and alternative approaches to new construction with design that is compatible with heritage character are also presented.

New Construction

Refurbishment or replacement of existing facades is presented as the primary means of “façade improvement”. With the anticipation that infill and redevelopment will also occur, primarily in the Talbot West area, the Guidelines also provide direction on site planning issues and façade development for new construction.



The underlying principles of these Guidelines for new construction are to “preserve and maintain the heritage character of the Downtown” through creating new commercial facades that are complementary to heritage architecture. New construction is not intended to mimic heritage facades, but to respect the form and patterns of heritage buildings that combine to create Talbot Street’s characteristic streetscape.

Additional Information

To augment these Guidelines, all building projects should be undertaken with consultation with skilled and technical professionals and builders to design and realize the project. Additional research on the history of the property, consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee, the Planning Department and the Downtown Development Board is recommended.



View along Talbot Street at Princess Ave/St. Catherine Street looking west

5.2.1 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES FOR TALBOT STREET BUILDING FRONTAGES: TALBOT WEST, TALBOT CENTRAL AND TALBOT EAST

Introduction

In Ontario, storefronts are the distinguishing feature of the main streets in our towns. "Main Street" was often part of a transportation route constructed through the wilderness, for incoming settlers. Along this road, commercial buildings were constructed, usually in a cluster at an intersection, which later became the centre of a town. The main street's commercial facades were designed as rows of attached buildings, often in stone or brick, in a similar fashion to storefronts in large cities. The solidity of these two- and three-storey buildings enclosed the street and made it an identifiable and defined space. With concentrations of buildings containing grocery stores, barber shops, clothing stores, hotels, the town hall and the post office, the main street became the heart and soul of the town. In Ontario, many of our main street storefronts date from the middle of the 19th century.

“Architectural Conservation Note #8: The Conservation and Maintenance of Storefronts, Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Talbot Street is a main commercial street with the majority of its heritage buildings built in the latter years of the 19th century and has many of the characteristics described above. Heritage buildings range from groups of well proportioned, two and three storey brick buildings with elaborate brick detailing at window apertures and roof lines, to stately, stone municipal buildings with arched entranceways, large window apertures and classical architectural detailing. Shops are located on the ground floor and the upper floors are occupied with residential units or are unoccupied.

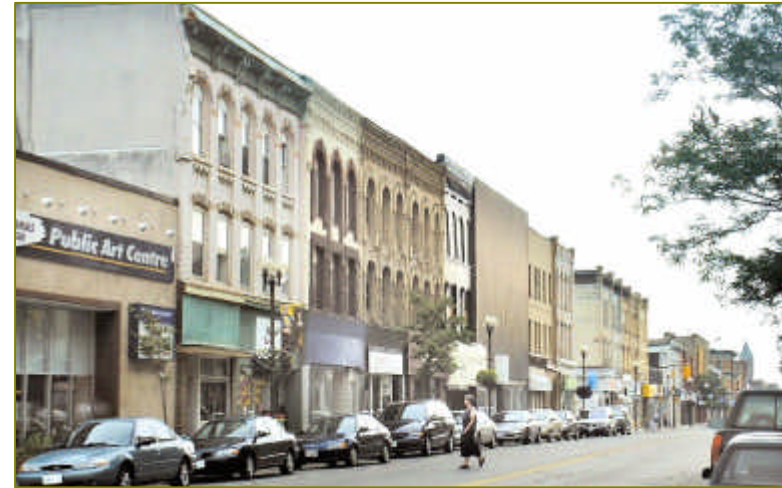
The street has evolved over time, evidenced by:

- *heritage buildings that have been fully or partially restored*
- *heritage buildings that have been refurbished through various means of stabilizing a deteriorating façade, ranging from painting the brick to application of metal cladding*
- *replacement of demolished buildings with single storey uses, some with parking lots at the street frontage*



Talbot Street Building Frontage – Talbot West, Talbot Central and Talbot East

Talbot Street is almost 2.5 kilometers in length, extending from Stanley Street at the western gateway to First Avenue in the east. Such a distance, stretched over nineteen blocks, is an unusual characteristic for an Ontario Main Street and is one of St. Thomas' Downtown's primary obstacles to consistent development and economic vitality.



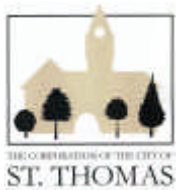
View along Talbot Street near Pearl Street, looking east

In recognition of the changes in character of the street along its length, the Official Plan divides the Downtown area into three areas: Talbot West, Talbot Central and Talbot East. As a result of the current appearance of their streetscapes and building form, different strategies for building revitalization for each of these areas have been recommended.

Talbot West – Stanley Street to Metcalfe-Pearl Streets

Talbot West is described in the Official Plan as a "transition zone", with some space extensive commercial uses and some underutilized retail and residential uses. It is proposed as the area for intensified residential redevelopment with ground floor commercial uses. The Guidelines that make reference to new construction should be referenced for projects in this area.

The strategy for this area is to reinforce the street frontage at the sidewalk edge through encouraging mixed-use development with residential uses at upper storeys and street-related commercial uses. Multi-storey

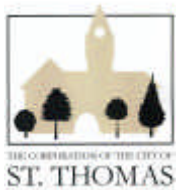


development is encouraged up to a height of four storeys. Dwelling units located at the rear of buildings could also be considered in this zone. Redevelopment strategies are:

- *Infill development at vacant lots*
- *Redevelopment of properties with uses that are currently incompatible with a mixed-use main street, such as space extensive commercial and automotive uses*
- *Redevelopment or renovation of existing underutilized or vacant commercial buildings into mixed use buildings (street-related commercial and residential above)*
- *Dwelling units at the rear of properties can be explored as a means to increase the number of residential units and efficient use of the lot depth of commercial properties.*



View Along Talbot Street at Talbot West





View Along Talbot Central – Potential for a Pedestrian Focused Shopping Retail Area

Talbot Central – Metcalfe-Pearl Streets to Alma Street

The “core” of Talbot Central extends from Metcalfe-Pearl Streets to St. Catherine Street. These blocks are the most active retail blocks of Talbot Street, augmented by civic buildings and small parkettes. The Official Plan notes that the upper storeys in this zone have suffered deterioration or retrofit that has obscured the heritage façade of the buildings themselves and resulting in an appearance that is incompatible with surrounding heritage building facades.

The eastern portion of Talbot Central, from St. Catherine Street to Alma Street consists of commercial buildings on the north side of Talbot Street with industrial and space extensive commercial properties on the south. The Official Plan recognizes that this area does not generate as much pedestrian traffic as Talbot Central; however, there is healthy retail activity which should not be discouraged.

The strategy for the entire length of Talbot Central is to reinforce its commercial vitality through streetscape beautification and preservation of the heritage quality of the buildings. The intent of these efforts is to “intensify” the retail core and to create a pedestrian oriented Downtown.

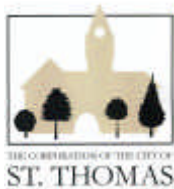
Strategies for building improvements for this area are:

For all street-related commercial buildings,

- *Restore and renovate existing commercial buildings to preserve their heritage character*
- *Improve the sidewalk experience through improvements for storefronts and signage*
- *Encourage improvement and/or addition of residential units in the upper storeys*
- *Encourage redevelopment of single storey buildings to mixed-use, multi-storey buildings that re-establish the form and pattern of heritage buildings*
- *Implement a sign by-law for retail signage to reinforce the pedestrian scale and pleasurable shopping experience of Talbot Central.*

For the existing south side properties from St. Catherine Street to Alma Street,

- *Encourage redevelopment to reinforce the existing commercial buildings on the north side, and eventually, to create a strong pedestrian and streetscape connection from the Downtown to the CASO Station.*



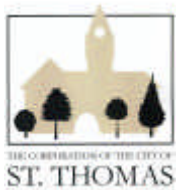
Talbot East – Alma Street to First Avenue

This area is characterized by space extensive commercial and fast food uses, with parking at the Talbot Street frontage and the buildings set behind parking. When arriving in St. Thomas from the east, the presence of the heritage Downtown shopping area is not evident and the components of the streetscape, such as lighting and landscaping are inconsistent.

It is anticipated that existing sites will remain with associated parking in front. Therefore, guidelines for façade improvement and building revitalization are not applicable to these buildings. Rather, the strategy for this area is streetscape beautification, the guidelines for which are detailed in the Streetscape Revitalization Guidelines.



View of Extensive Commercial Space Along Talbot East.



5.2.2 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES

Site Planning and Built Form: Characteristics and Guidelines

There are a number of built form elements that contribute to the character – both heritage and urban – of the buildings along St. Thomas' commercial main street. All of these elements combined create the streetscape, which defines the character of Talbot Street itself.

The following sections first identify the defining elements for Talbot Street's buildings followed with design guidelines for enhancement, renovation or redevelopment.

Lot Sizes and Building Setbacks

- *Talbot Street fronting properties are generally about 33m (100') deep.*
- *The front faces of buildings are predominantly located at the edge of the property line, with no setback from the street right-of-way.*
- *Building faces at grade are generally continuous. Storefront recesses do occur with varying depths.*
- *Building depths vary greatly; some extend the full property depth; others do not, often allowing sufficient lot depth for potential parking at the rear of the premises. The treatment of rear facades affects the quality of spaces behind buildings, which in many cases, are exposed to rear parking lots.*

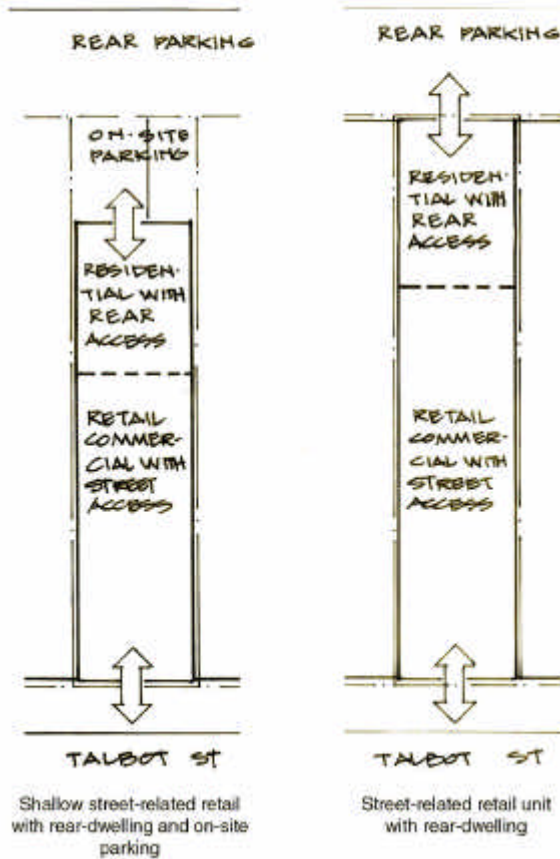
Guidelines:

- *For alteration, renovation or new construction, the existing at-street front lot setbacks should be retained.*
- *Storefront windows should follow the line of the front face of the building; deep recesses are discouraged.*
- *Where rear facades abut public spaces such as streets and parking areas, facades should be upgraded so that they are attractive and well-lit, to create a safe and comfortable pedestrian environment.*

Land Use

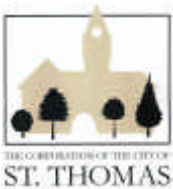
- *Retail commercial uses occur at the street level.*
- *Upper floors have different uses including commercial offices, residential and unused or vacant areas.*
- *Current planning policy permits commercial, office and personal services space, and retail uses along Curtis Street.*
- *Current planning policy permits residential uses at grade provided they are a minimum of 25m from Talbot Street frontage. There has been comment that 25m may be too deep for some retail shops to use effectively, resulting in under-utilized ground floor space.*





Guidelines:

- The City should consider reviewing the retail category along Curtis Street, in the context of the priorities established for Talbot Street, namely, to create an economically viable and pleasurable downtown and to “shorten and intensify” the pedestrian retail focus of Talbot Street. Commercial, office and personal service uses along Curtis Street should be maintained; however retail uses should be encouraged to locate along Talbot Street frontage.
- The refurbishing of existing upper floors for residential use, in accordance with planning policy for improvement and increasing the supply of residential units in the Downtown is encouraged.
- To support new residential uses, permission of rear-lot, ground floor residential occupancy that may occur closer to the Talbot Street frontage than the current 25m should be considered, where building configuration and site planning permits. Ground floor, rear residential occupancy could be achieved through the following configurations:
 - For buildings that occupy the full-depth of the lot:
Ground floor residential occupancy at the rear of the building may be accessed from existing rear parking and/or streets. The project would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with respect to the depth of the ground floor residential unit(s) in proportion to the retail use at the building’s frontage, the residential unit’s other features, and the overall project configuration.
 - For buildings that do not occupy the full-depth of the lot:
Ground floor residential occupancy at the rear of the building may be accessed from existing rear parking and/or streets. In this case, the provision of on-site parking should be explored and will be encouraged, where feasible.
- Where a property is redeveloped to include multi-unit residential use, a residential entrance lobby providing access to the residential floors above grade may be permitted at the front of the building. Its design should be well integrated into the design of the ground floor plan and the street facing elevation of the building.
- It is anticipated that additions and new residential development would more likely occur in the Talbot West area, as opposed to Talbot Central. Buildings in Talbot Central may undergo improvement of existing residential units, but it is expected that few projects that create additional units or storeys would occur. The types of residential development that could be envisioned for Talbot West, are rental, co-op or condominium units on the upper floors, with street-related commercial, office and personal service uses at the ground floor. Live/work development is also a viable form of residential intensification; however, ground floor residential units along Talbot Street frontage are not recommended. Opportunities for parking should be encouraged through exploring building forms with less depth, thereby allowing the remaining lot depth to be utilized for on-site parking spaces.
- At Talbot West, commercial, office and personal services space is encouraged at the ground floor frontage; retail should be encouraged to locate in the Talbot Central Area.





Three Storey Heritage Facades

Because of the individual conditions of sites, the size and scale of building configurations and adjacent development along Talbot Street, it is recommended that proposed development for additions and new construction be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Site plan approval may be employed by the City as an effective tool to review how a project addresses provisions such as parking and amenity space.

Height

- Buildings on the north side of the street are between 1 and 3 storeys; most are 2 or 3 storeys in height.
- Buildings on the south side of the street are generally 1 to 2 storeys in height, with some 3-storey buildings. The south side generally presents a lower scale than the north side.
- Floor to floor heights of the heritage buildings are generally consistent with Victorian design standards which encouraged lofty ceilings; these heights are greater than current residential standards.



Abrupt Change in Height Reflecting Current Height Allowances



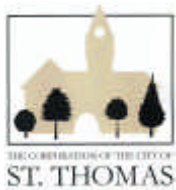
Mixture of 2 & 3 Buildings on the North Side of Talbot Street

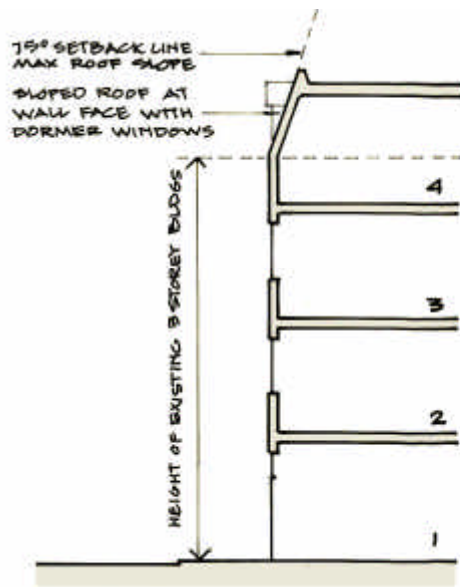


Mixture of 1 & 2 Storey Buildings on the South Side of Talbot Street

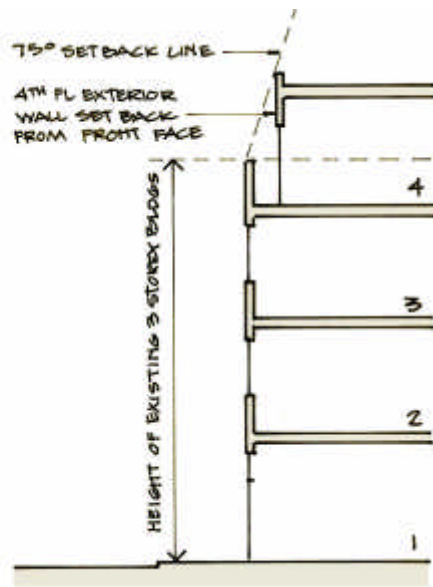
Guidelines:

- The maximum building height at the property line along Talbot Street should be compatible with the existing three storey buildings.
- The maximum building height of 15 storeys presently permitted along Talbot Street should be reviewed in the context of the other recommendations of this study that reinforce maintaining and enhancing Talbot Street's heritage "main street" commercial architecture. The vertical tower which this zoning encourages is a building form with great height and low lot coverage (small footprint). This configuration is not compatible with the lower height, high lot coverage (big footprint) buildings typical of the Talbot Street area. To reinforce the primary intent of intensification along Talbot Street, particularly along Talbot West, other building forms that can achieve target densities in lesser height, which are more similar to the existing fabric should be encouraged. The following massing for building heights recommended:





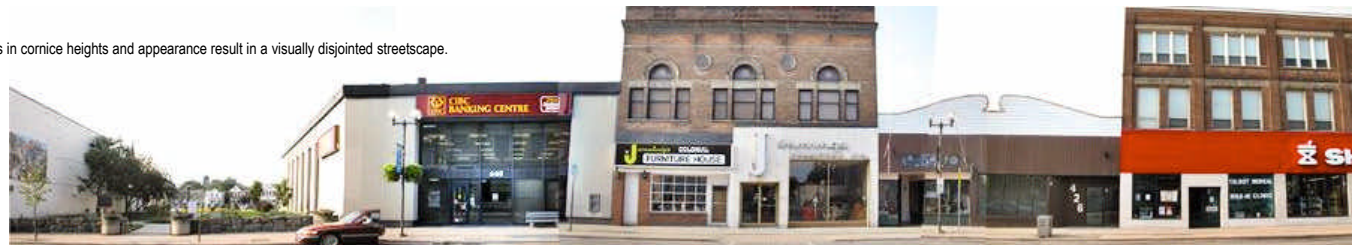
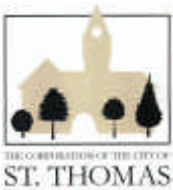
4th storey with angled roof and dormers

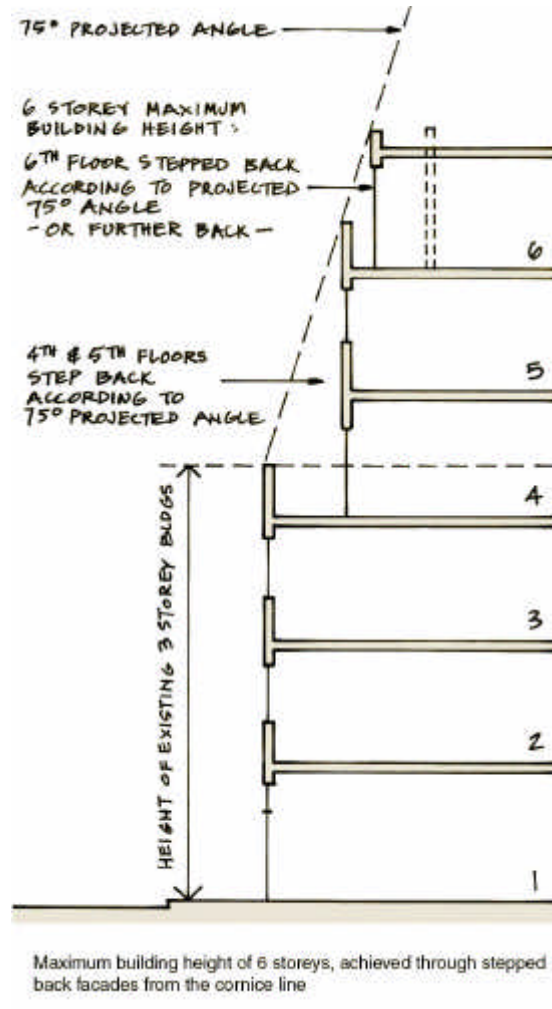


4th storey stepped back within 75 degree projected line

- **Talbot Central and Talbot West:**
Where new development is one floor greater in height than the existing three storey buildings, it should have a parapet at the existing three storey building height line and the additional height required to achieve the fourth storey should be accommodated within either of the following:
 - stepping the 4th floor exterior wall back according to a minimum projected angle of 75 degrees from the front face of the building at the cornice.
 - a sloped roof at the wall face of maximum 75 degrees, with dormers.
- **Talbot West:**
Where a development is proposed that provides a substantial increase in the supply of residential units, the preferred building height of 4 storeys, as described above, could be increased to up to 6 storeys, provided that the upper storeys are stepped back. For example:
 - a parapet at the existing three storey building height line, and
 - stepping the exterior wall of the 4th and 5th and back according to a minimum projected angle of 75 degrees from the front face of the building at the cornice, and
 - stepping the exterior wall of the 6th floor back according to a minimum projected angle of 75 degrees from the front face of the building at the cornice, or further.
- Development projects that propose additional height, and new construction projects would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Other aspects of the project, such as individual site characteristics, site access, adjacent site conditions and neighbouring buildings would also be taken into consideration.
- **General Height Guidelines:**
 - The height of additions or new construction should match adjacent building heights, where possible, to maintain the visual continuity of the streetscape.
 - Where new development is fewer storeys in height than the adjacent buildings, methods to increase its height should be considered such as, increasing the floor to floor height of each storey or introducing a tall parapet with a strong cornice line.
 - The use of false fronts or false upper storeys to present the appearance of a building a full storey or greater than its actual height from the street, is discouraged.

Great variations in cornice heights and appearance result in a visually disjointed streetscape.



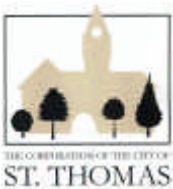


Cornice Lines and Roof Forms

- Many buildings have rooflines or parapets accentuated with distinctive, well detailed cornices.
- The roofs of most buildings are flat, with parapet walls that extend above the roof, thereby increasing the scale of the façade.
- Parapet walls are frequently detailed with elaborate brickwork, sometimes with stone insets.

Guidelines

- Renovation, alteration or addition to an existing building's exterior should include repair or restoration of the existing cornice.
- New construction or refurbished buildings should be configured with flat roofs and parapet walls, as a means to complement the predominant roof forms along Talbot Street.
- New construction should incorporate a cornice at the roof or parapet to visually accent the upper limit of the façade, in a manner consistent with the cornice on nearby or adjacent heritage buildings.





Vertical division within building facades



A proposed reconstructed façade that restores the vertical divisions of the façade through the reintroduction of windows and piers.



Facades, Mass and Proportion

- The facades of many commercial buildings are designed using the regular repetition of key elements such as window or door apertures and ornament, decorative brickwork and cornices arranged vertically within façade modules, such as structural bays. These bays are usually defined on the façade by vertical piers of stone or masonry spaced according to structural requirements and repeated along its length. The repeating rhythm of modules subdivides the mass of the building face into lesser units, creating a smaller or more human scale and more attractive façade for the streetscape.
- On both sides of the street, some buildings have been clad in metal siding that has concealed window groupings, resulting in the facade appearing as an unbroken, windowless mass along the street. The result is both unattractive and inconsistent with the well articulated, vertical bay structure of the unaltered heritage buildings along Talbot Street.
- The original building piers between storefronts have been covered by metal siding or masked by other materials in many cases, creating a disjointed separation between the ground floor and the upper floors. As a result, there is little evidence of the building's original bay divisions and materials at street level.

Guidelines

- Where facades have been clad with metal siding, the cladding should be removed to reveal the windows and other concealed façade elements. The wall face and apertures should be repaired or restored according to the original design, using the original materials of the façade or materials consistent with the facades of neighbouring heritage buildings.
- Where the original facade and materials cannot be reasonably rehabilitated, use other means of restoration and repair that allow for window apertures on the upper levels. The design of such façade alterations should address the proportion of façade elements, their groupings and materials in a manner similar in scale and character to neighbouring facades along Talbot Street.
- Cladding not original to the building should be removed to expose the full length of the original piers, enhancing the building's architectural rhythm and creating a more human scale and individuality within the streetscape.
- Exposed piers should be restored to their original appearance using the original materials, or alternate materials compatible with the façade.
- Where exposed piers are in poor condition, they should be re-clad them in materials such as stone, brick or other material compatible with the facade.
- Where new facades are constructed, the wall area should be designed to reflect the rhythmic divisions of heritage facades that may be adjacent or near the project area. These divisions should extend to grade, to maintain the smaller scale at the sidewalk level.



Variety of Window Treatments



Upper Window Openings

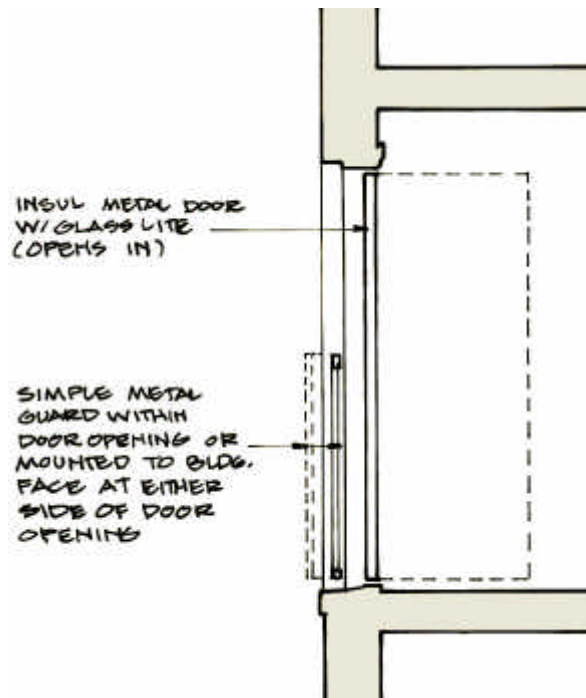
- Within their bay structure, (described above), the facades of heritage buildings have regular window aperture patterns in the upper storeys, often occurring in groups of 2, 3 or 4 openings sharing a distinctive size, shape or proportion. These groupings are frequently unified by surface detailing such as a large archway over all the apertures or horizontal brick accent banding of a different colour or pattern.
- The upper floors of the heritage buildings along Talbot Street present a consistently flat wall surface with no projecting balconies and few upper window awnings. Brick detailing, cornices and parapets create minor projections only.
- Where a building facade has been altered, window materials and forms frequently have been altered or added in a manner usually unrelated and incompatible with the regular window patterns of the original heritage facade. Examples include windows that have been blocked up, covered by metal siding and window apertures that have been added in a manner inconsistent with the order of the original openings.

Guidelines

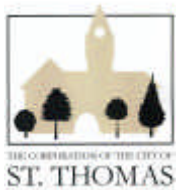
- Where walls have been clad with metal siding, the cladding should be removed to expose the original window pattern beneath; the exposed wall and windows should be repaired according to the original design.
- When replacing upper level windows, the new window should fill the full extent of the original opening and its operable sash should be the same as the original window (vertical slider in the case of most Victorian style windows). The replacement window should have muntins and mullions in a pattern consistent with the original window, made with individually sealed units for each lite within the mullion pattern, where possible. The use of removeable wooden muntin grilles applied to the inside face of the sash is also acceptable. "Stick-on" or applied plastic muntin bars to represent small pane divisions are not recommended.
- Where it may be too difficult or costly to create new windows for unusually shaped window openings, another material, such as an insulated wood or metal panel may be used, provided that the panel and window design are well integrated and create a harmonious whole within the window opening. The glazed portion should be the dominant element within the opening.
- Replacement windows should use the same material as the original window materials (such as wood frames), where possible.
- Where it is not feasible to use replacement frame material matching the existing window frames, new frames in an alternate material may be used but should be simple in profile and of a subtle colour complementary to the façade.
- Where new residential uses are added to upper floors, or existing residential uses are renovated, the introduction of projecting balconies should be avoided.
- Where an existing façade is being upgraded for residential use, windows within existing and new apertures should contain operable sections.



Variety of Treatment at Retail Display Windows and Entrances



Proposed Treatment at Full Height Openings



- Where new facades are constructed, the proportion and arrangement of windows should reflect the pattern of heritage facades that may be adjacent or near the project area.
- While full height apertures for doors or very large windows do not occur above street level in the Downtown, large openings or doors may be a desirable feature in a newly constructed dwelling unit. Door apertures within the façade above street level should be permitted in newly constructed buildings, provided they are well integrated into the facade design and include a simple railing and guard set flush with the opening. Elaborately designed railings are not recommended.
- The use of upper window awnings or shutters should be avoided.

Display Windows and Doors

The appearance of shop fronts at the street is crucial for the success of a retail street and its enjoyment by pedestrians. An inviting display window and well-marked entrance are a retailer's primary communication to passersby. Display windows with an historic or period design reinforce the heritage character of the streetscape.

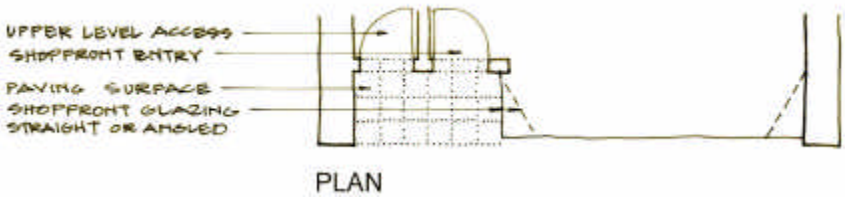
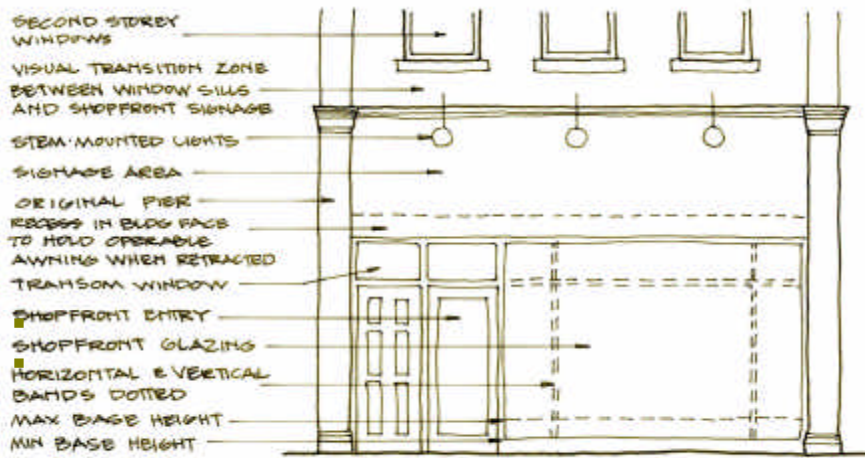
- Many shop windows along Talbot Street have been altered extensively, removing all traces of their heritage origins. These modifications include painted metal siding above the window, single glazed aluminum frames with multiple vertical mullions, or replacement of the original shop window with a solid wall or smaller window and high sill.
- Many doors are recessed from the rest of the building face, allowing the door to open toward the street without encroaching on the sidewalk. However, some of these doorways appear dark and narrow.
- Entry recesses original to the buildings generally have different paving materials at the doorway. These recesses are typically deeper, yet wider and more inviting than the newer single door recesses.

Guidelines

Display Windows:

- Storefront windows should be repaired or replaced to increase the amount of glazing and "open up" display windows to the street.
- Where the original display window is in place but in poor condition, it should be repaired using matching or compatible materials.
- Non-original cladding should be removed and the original shopfront wall and display window(s) should be exposed, if possible. If the exposed, original wall is in poor condition, it should be replaced with a durable exterior material such as stone panel or stucco, in a colour and finish complementary with the façade materials, to create a transition between the ground floor and the upper storey façade.
- Where a solid wall currently occurs within the former location of a display window, the solid wall should be removed and the display window restored.
- Shopfront glazing may be subdivided with horizontal bands and/or mullions aligned with the base, door head or other similar architectural element of the ground floor façade.

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- In keeping with traditional storefront design and to protect the lower portion of the frame and glass from water, snow, dirt or damage, shopfront window glazing should rest on a sill, base or curb at least 8 inches (200 mm) above grade.
- The window sill, base or curb should be clad in an attractive, durable material such as stone, tile or brick.
- New storefronts should contain double glazed, thermally broken panes as display windows. Either wood or aluminum frames are acceptable. The colour of the frames should be compatible with the façade materials. Frames should be compatible with heritage storefronts. For example, simple profiles that are no thicker than a standard wood frame of 2" are preferred. Structural members can be wider and deeper but should not be oversized.

Retail Entrances:

- Where the original recessed door opening exists, it should be preserved and incorporated into a new storefront design.
- New doorways should occur within a recess wide enough to include a sidelight or portion of the display window. Narrow, single door recesses should be avoided.
- Doorways should be illuminated.
- An attractive paving surface other than concrete should be used to highlight the store entrance area.
- Although not mandatory as a renovation project, the installation of barrier-free door controls is recommended as good design practice.
- Replacement shop entry doors should be of the same material and general design as the original, where possible.
- Where a replacement shop entry door is of a different design than the original, it should be coordinated with the design of the display windows.
- The overall storefront design should be compatible with the architectural style of the building.

Signage

- Retail signage along Talbot Street varies widely, with examples both pleasing and disruptive. The result is a visually inconsistent and disordered streetscape.
- Some signage detracts from the heritage features of the buildings on which it is mounted. Where signage occurs which is compatible with a heritage theme, or is complementary to the building, its pleasing qualities are often diminished by unattractive adjacent signage that is oversized or illuminated.

Guidelines:

- Signage must accommodate marketing and retailing needs in the context of Downtown beautification.
- Signage control and coordination should encourage individuality and creative expression within a graphic framework appropriate to the heritage character of the district.
- Any existing heritage signs or wall paintings should be restored.



The Beanery signage is compatible with the heritage façade above.

When retailers' signage is to be replaced, its design should incorporate the following:

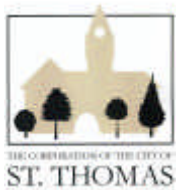
- *Subtle and durable treatment of the mounting surface.*
- *Painted letters on the sign board, or*
- *Individual block letters or pin-mounted wood or metal letters.*
- *Illumination should be discrete – such as exterior stem-mounted fixtures or controlled flood lights.*
- *Backlit sign boxes spanning the width of the storefront should be avoided.*
- *Signage design must be submitted to the Planning Department for approval and will be reviewed in accordance with these Guidelines.*

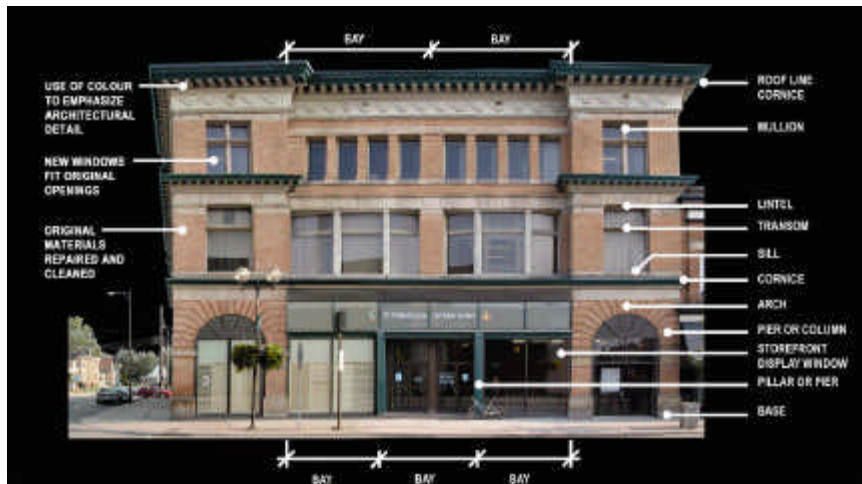
Awnings

- *Most of the awnings used along Talbot Street at street level are fixed awnings with shallow projections, some of which are illuminated. These types of awnings, which also occur at upper storey windows serve more as a surface for signage than to provide protection for pedestrians over the sidewalk. In many cases, the unattractive underside of the awning and its metal support structure is visible from the sidewalk.*

Guidelines

- *Where awnings are used, they should be simple, sloped awnings projecting far enough over the sidewalk to provide shade or rain protection for pedestrians.*
- *Awning colours should be compatible and complementary to the building.*
- *Signage should be placed on the building front, above the awning. Some signage may be permitted on the awning if it is of appropriate scale and its graphic design is complementary to the design of the shopfront.*
- *Operable awnings are preferred, as their extension beyond the building face can be varied and they provide greater visual interest to the streetscape.*
- *Where operable awnings are used, they should be located directly beneath the shopfront sign. They should be mounted in a recess in the wall to accommodate operating hardware or the awning when not in use. This recess should also be located beneath the sign.*
- *Awning width should be no greater than the width of the shopfront display window; a width no greater than the overall building width may also be permitted.*





Architectural Details

- Architectural details used in facades along Talbot Street include but are not limited to:
 - Piers
 - Arches
 - Keystones
 - Cornices
 - Friezes
 - Brackets
 - Decorative masonry
- Many of the heritage building facades exhibit an eclectic mix of styles and details. The overall visual effect is a diverse streetscape of architecturally interesting historic buildings, each with its own individual characteristics and features. Preserving such existing details will help retain St. Thomas' heritage character.

Guidelines

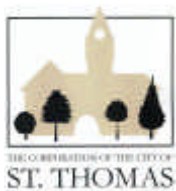
- Repair, restore and preserve original façade details where possible.
- Where faithful restoration or repair of such details is not possible, the restoration of the affected area should have a simplified version of the original design using a matching material, such as a simple stone band in lieu of a stone cornice or simple brick banding in lieu of elaborate brick coursing.
- Where new construction occurs, façade design should demonstrate rhythm, proportion, level of detail and use of materials which are consistent with the design characteristics of neighbouring heritage buildings and contribute an additional layer of visual interest to the facade.
- New construction need not replicate the historic facades and details of its heritage neighbours. However, it should complement adjacent heritage buildings through design features that make reference to their design and details.

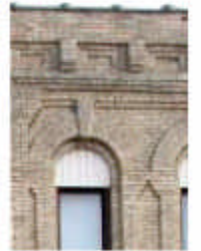
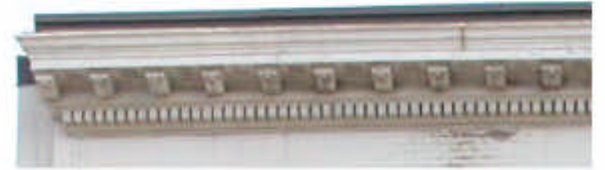
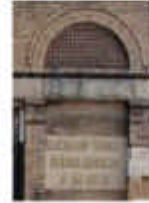
Lighting

Well designed illumination can dramatically enhance the appearance of a building and the shopping experience. Well-illuminated buildings have a warmer, more inviting presence, which attracts shoppers and enhances the streetscape, especially in late winter afternoons.

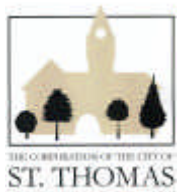
Guidelines

- Where a façade or building improvement occurs, exterior illumination should be considered for the following areas:
 - Shopfront signage
 - Entrances and doorways
 - Unique features of the façade



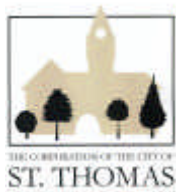


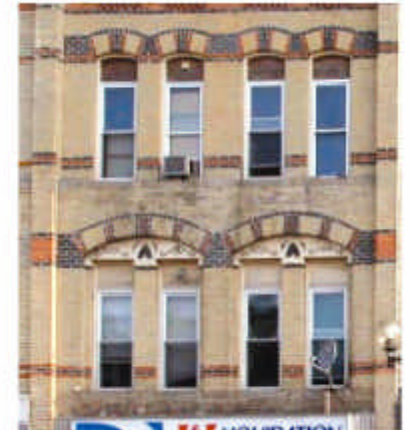
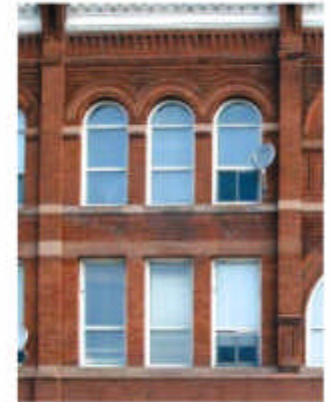
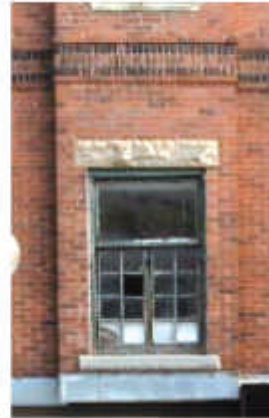
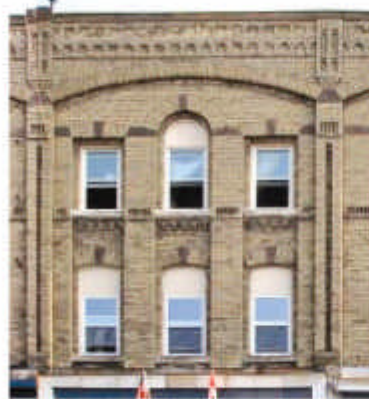
Heritage Details 01 - Cornices



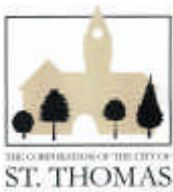


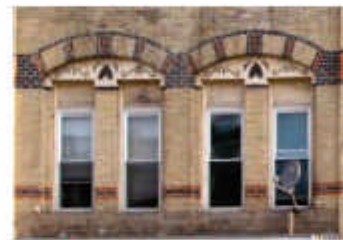
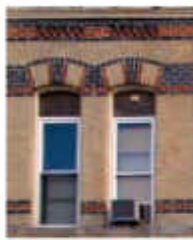
Heritage Details 02 - Piers



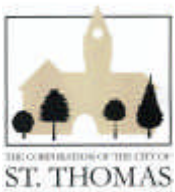


Heritage Details 03 - Apertures





Heritage Details 04 - Ornamental Masonry



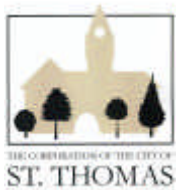
- *Consider the use of exterior lights mounted within the paving surface as an attractive alternative to exterior surface mounting.*
- *Fixtures that are discrete in form and colour and do not over-illuminate the façade or obscure signage should be selected and carefully placed on the façade.*
- *The intensity and dispersion of the illumination should be controlled. Avoid “spillover” of light onto adjacent facades or upper storey windows.*
- *Lighting should be controlled by a light sensor or photocell to ensure that facades and the streetscape are illuminated during times of transition light levels, such as dusk and winter afternoons.*

Parking and the Pedestrian

Creating an attractive pedestrian environment along Talbot Street is a primary goal of streetscape and building revitalization. Convenient and comfortable access to parking is one of the most important factors for encouraging people to shop downtown.

St. Thomas’ urban fabric benefits from small parking lots located at the rear of many Talbot Street buildings. In addition, free, on street-parking along Talbot Street offers convenience to shoppers, slows traffic speeds and contributes to the character of Talbot as an active, retail-oriented street. While many communities struggle with inadequate parking supply in their downtown, for St. Thomas the issue is how best to take advantage of the available parking resource.

- *Well defined, attractive pedestrian links, for example, between Talbot Street and off-street parking at the rear of retailers premises should be encouraged to reinforce the connection.*



5.3 STREETScape REVITALIZATION GUIDELINES

5.3.1 OLD ST. THOMAS

It is the intent of these streetscape guidelines to preserve the unique heritage character of Old St. Thomas, while strengthening its link to Talbot Street and the CASO Lands through enhanced streetscape elements. The approach for streets such as Stanley Street should be soft, maintaining the residential feel of the curb-less road and full street tree canopy. On streets such as Wellington the emphasis should be on enhancing the pedestrian realm, creating a safer and more inviting sidewalk environment that will act as a link between residential Old St. Thomas and the Downtown and CASO Lands. Tourism opportunities should be developed around Jumbo and the Museums, with regard for the heritage character of the streetscape and low-density development.

Lighting

- *The lighting in Old St. Thomas should have a heritage character and “feel” that coordinates with the lighting chosen for the Downtown and CASO Lands.*
- *A single street light fixture on a decorative pole is recommended for the residential streets in Old St. Thomas.*
- *Where shops and tourism operations are developed in Old St. Thomas, a combination of a street light fixture and a pedestrian light fixture on a decorative pole is recommended. These poles should be equipped with banner arms, hanging basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.*
- *Specific spacing of poles should be considered after lighting design levels are determined.*
- *Place lights a minimum of 0.75 m back from the street edge to allow for car bumpers and doors.*

Walkways

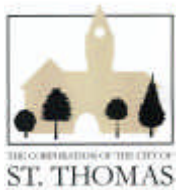
- *Sidewalks in Old St. Thomas should be constructed of materials such as concrete rather than asphalt, concrete pavers, or impressed concrete, which can have an overly contemporary appearance.*
- *Walkways connecting home entrances to the sidewalk should be constructed of materials traditionally found within Old St. Thomas.*

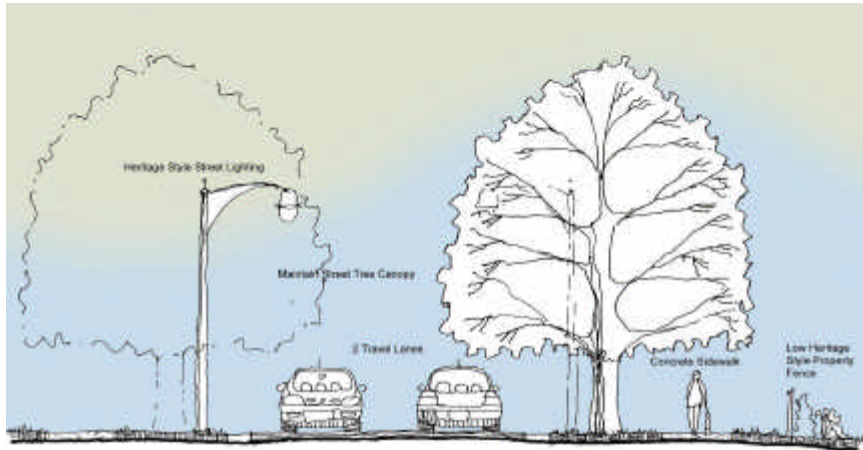
Fencing

- *Fencing should be limited to side yards.*
- *Should have a height no higher than 1.2m.*
- *Should be built of a material that is sensitive to the heritage character of Old St. Thomas.*



Example of walkways using heritage sensitive materials





Typical Cross-section of proposed Old St. Thomas Streetscape

Street Trees and Horticultural Plantings

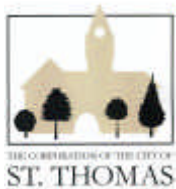
- Within Old St. Thomas the street canopy should be maintained, and gaps avoided, by planting companion trees. Companion trees are planted adjacent to over-mature trees to serve as well-established replacements should the mature trees begin to fail.
- To support tree protection the City should consider implementing a tree preservation by-law for mature trees, woodlots and forested ravines.
- The tree species chosen should be indigenous and historically accurate, traditionally found within the heritage area and known to be urban tolerant and disease resistant.
- Use the same species of tree on each side of the street. Plant in groupings where an area is to be unified. Avoid random changes in species.
- Trees planted in front of grade-related retail should be high branching with a light, transparent canopy in order to allow for safe pedestrian movement underneath and maintain visibility to the storefront and signage.
- Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow and develop without conflicting with other building or sidewalk elements.
- Street trees should generally be planted at a spacing of between 8 and 12 metres on-centre. Where possible locate trees between properties and avoid placement of trees in front of doorways.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Wayfinding (Signage)

- Streets throughout Old St. Thomas should have interpretative sign components within the streetscape, such as historic styled street signage and heritage plaques or markers that tell the story of the City and highlight past events and accomplishments of the City's residents.
- The wayfinding signage should be part of a "family of signs" that is developed by the City of St. Thomas (see section 5.3.2).

Traffic Calming

- Any road upgrades within Old St. Thomas should retain a historic appearance by using materials sensitive to the heritage character, and by refraining from widening of the existing pavement and road allowances. Existing informal road edges such as grassed verges and ditches, and the absence of curbs and gutters, are traditional features that should be conserved, if possible.
- If curbs are found to be necessary for street maintenance (i.e. directing surface drainage and discouraging parking on the grassed boulevards) it is recommended that a very low roll curb is used and that the road width be kept to the minimum possible to maintain safe vehicular travel.



Street Furniture

- *The street furniture chosen should be consistent and complement the style and colour of the other streetscape elements chosen, such as the decorative paving and light standards.*
- *The family of street furniture should include benches, garbage receptacles, bike racks, bollards, bicycle racks and tree grates. These furnishings should be clustered together to avoid a cluttered sidewalk appearance and located with regard for pedestrian circulation.*
- *The furniture selected should be low-maintenance, vandal-resistant, and easily replaceable.*
- *Avoid placing trash receptacles directly adjacent to benches to avoid conflicts with wasps and bees. Priority placements for trash receptacle should be at corners and close to eating establishments and near benches.*
- *Avoid placing bicycle racks where they will conflict with pedestrians and cyclists. If possible, racks should be visible from the inside of buildings.*

Public Space

- *Parks and open spaces should be linked to one another with a continuous and universally accessible and safe network for pedestrians and cyclists.*
- *Open spaces and connecting corridors should be visible and accessible for surveillance.*
- *Streets should be included in the network of connecting corridors in order to link the open space system with a number of circuits and loops. Where these paths connect with vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists should be directed to a corner and/or controlled crossing point.*
- *The City should consider undertaking a comprehensive parks and trail system study to evaluate how these activities could be more effectively utilized.*



Example of screened at-grade parking

Parking

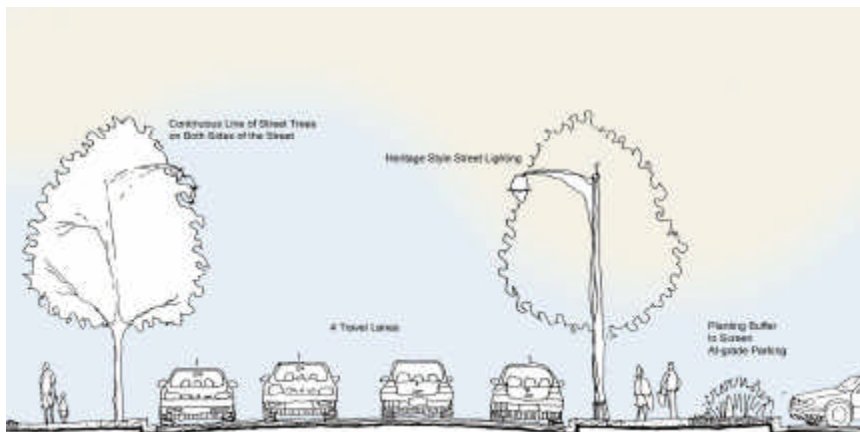
- *Parking lots should be provided for businesses and tourist attractions.*
- *Features found in parking lots should be consistent with those chosen for the Downtown (i.e. light fixtures, signage, garbage receptacles etc.)*
- *Roadside at-grade parking areas should be screened to help define pedestrian space. Screening can be accomplished with plant material of sufficient height and density to block views to parked cars, while remaining porous enough to allow sightlines for pedestrian safety.*
- *Appropriate plant material for screening parking includes medium height (0.75 m – 1.2m) shrub material, which is effective at screening parked cars while permitting views to the lot.*
- *Undesirable views can be effectively screened by combining shade trees (branching height of 1.5 m minimum) and shrubs. The width of planting beds can vary, but a minimum of 2.0 metres of continuous soil provides sufficient area for healthy plant growth.*

For effective screening throughout the year, the selection of plant materials should include some evergreen species. Screening planting should be accommodated in continuous planting pits.

- All parking lots should have trees planted within them to provide shade and screening. These trees should be planted in curbed islands.

5.3.2 DOWNTOWN

The intent of the guidelines for the Downtown are to enhance the pedestrian realm along Talbot Street and to create a hierarchy of streetscapes that help to announce and define the active pedestrian commercial area. The streetscape hierarchy will be established through the consistent use of a well-defined set of lighting and streetscape elements, at varying intensities along the streetscape. Talbot Street, east and west of the central area, will have a lighter density of streetscape elements, while central Talbot Street will have the widest array of elements, including banners and floral basket displays, thereby establishing the secondary gateways and a sense of arrival in the Downtown. Widening the sidewalk will improve the pedestrian experience with 'bump-outs' at intersections and mid-block crossings. These 'bump-outs' will be located with sensitivity to the need for on-street parking, while recognizing that where spaces are lost, signage for rear lot parking should be added. The increased sidewalk width created by these 'bump-outs' offers opportunities for pedestrians to gather, businesses to create outdoor displays, and they provide a safe refuge for pedestrians waiting to cross traffic.



Typical Cross-section of proposed Talbot East Streetscape



Lighting

- It is recommended that the street lighting in the Downtown have a heritage character using a teardrop fixture.
- On Talbot Central, street light fixtures and a pedestrian fixture should use the same decorative pole. These poles should be equipped with banner arms, basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.
- On Talbot West a single street light fixture on a decorative pole is recommended. These poles should be equipped with banner arms, basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.
- Good site lighting is essential for a viable commercial area. It is recommended that the retail area of Talbot Street be illuminated to between 2 and 3 - foot candles. This illumination level will improve foot traffic, a sense of shopper comfort and safety, and stimulate business visitation.
- Most urban areas are adopting the use of metal halide lamps for pedestrian oriented lighting because the light source provides a more accurate colour rendition. Metal halide pedestrian lights can be used in conjunction with high-pressure sodium roadway lights.
- Specific pole spacing should be reviewed after the lighting design has been determined.
- Place street light poles a minimum of 0.75 m back from the curb to allow for car bumpers and doors.
- Where lighting of civic buildings is desired, mount floodlights on the streetlight poles where they can be directed to illuminate these buildings in the evenings.



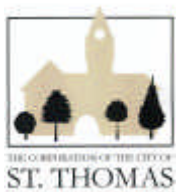
Example of delineated walkway and repetition of elements

Walkways

- *In order to widen the pedestrian realm, sidewalk “bump-outs” should be located strategically and in association with intersections, mid-block crossings, and special areas where seating and events may take place in the future.*
- *Decorative pavement should be placed in widened sidewalk areas, and in a maintenance band formation along all street curb edges. In these areas, nest furniture in groupings and provide elements such as light poles, banners, grouping of floral pots, bike racks and directional signage.*
- *The application of decorative streetscape treatments needs to remain flexible with respect to location, width and pattern. It is, however, essential that a colour palette and family of materials be developed.*
- *Feature area streetscape treatments include decorative paving materials consisting of coloured concrete unit pavers or impressed coloured concrete. Unit paving materials should be installed on a concrete base to eliminate uneven settlement.*

Street Trees and Horticultural Plantings

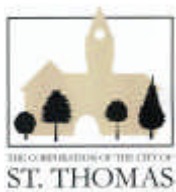
- *Planting street trees in a contiguous planting bed is encouraged wherever possible as their health and survival are greatly increased.*
- *Providing planting bed areas are often the limiting factor and usually require taking advantage of sidewalk widening where possible. Where no room is available for a contiguous planting bed, an irrigated and drained tree pit with structural soil is recommended.*



- *Where planting beds are feasible, a groundcover should be planted at the base of the trees to create a consistent carpet of plant material. These planting beds are not appropriate places to mix species to create a planting display. Floral displays should be made in planting pots or gateway feature planting beds.*
- *Where trees are planted in pits, install tree grates to avoid soil compaction over the root ball.*
- *It is important that hardy indigenous trees and plants are chosen for the streetscape. Trees and plants chosen for the streetscape should be salt tolerant.*
- *Trees planted in front of retail storefronts should be high branching with a light canopy in order to allow for safe pedestrian movement underneath and maintain visibility to the storefront and signage. A list of suitable trees is appended.*
- *Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow and develop without conflicting with lighting, buildings or sidewalk elements.*
- *Street trees should generally be planted at a spacing of between 8 and 12 metres on-centre.*



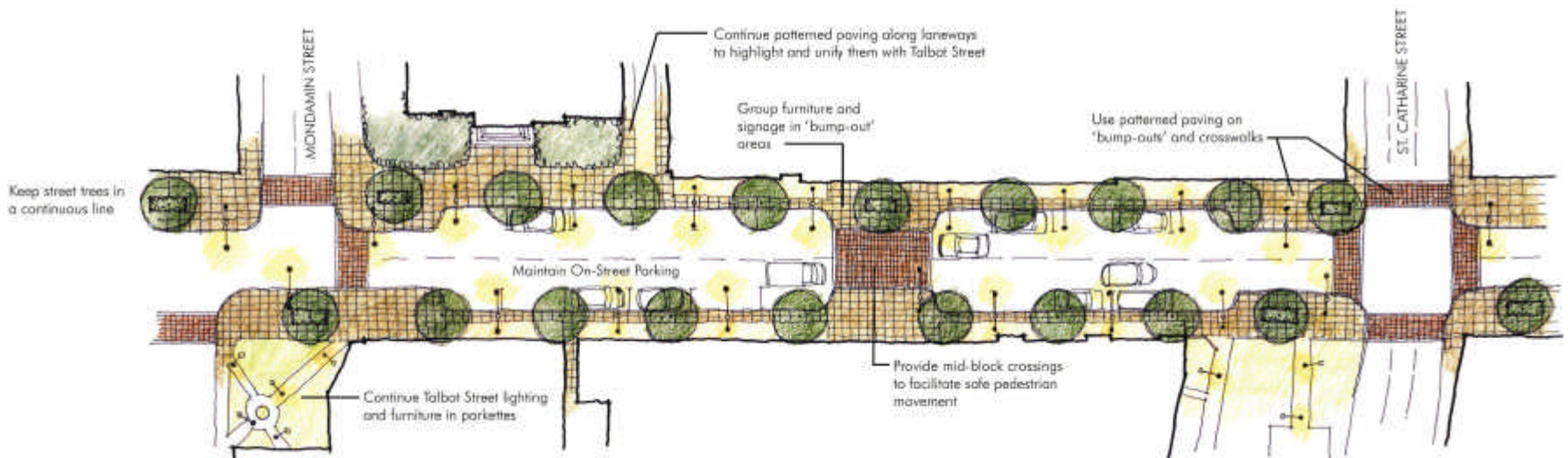
Example of continuous planting bed - Owen Sound





Right: Example of 'signage family' - Collingwood

Below: Plan view of Talbot Central with proposed 'bump-outs' and upgrades

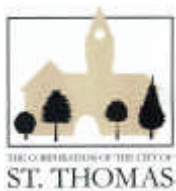


Pedestrian and Vehicular Wayfinding (Signage)

- Signs should reinforce the overall character of St. Thomas and be consistent through the City. They should also co-ordinate with the site furniture and lighting.
- Streetscape signage should be designed to form a consistent visual message. A standard should be set that determines the background colour, the text colour and the supporting structure. A specific graphic design should also be determined along with a logo/graphic.
- Posts and poles should be arranged to avoid clutter. Signs should be organized with multiple messages as well as be located strategically for easy viewing and orientation. Signage should be developed for road viewing from a car, and pedestrian viewing
- Street signage and signalling elements for traffic and intersections should be separated.
- Consider a format that is adaptable to changes and additions over time.
- Standards should be set for public informational, educational and directional signage.
- A discrete logo sign system should be developed for the various trails and walking routes in the City – biking, walking, and heritage.
- In the commercial core encourage the use of signs that are oriented toward pedestrians.

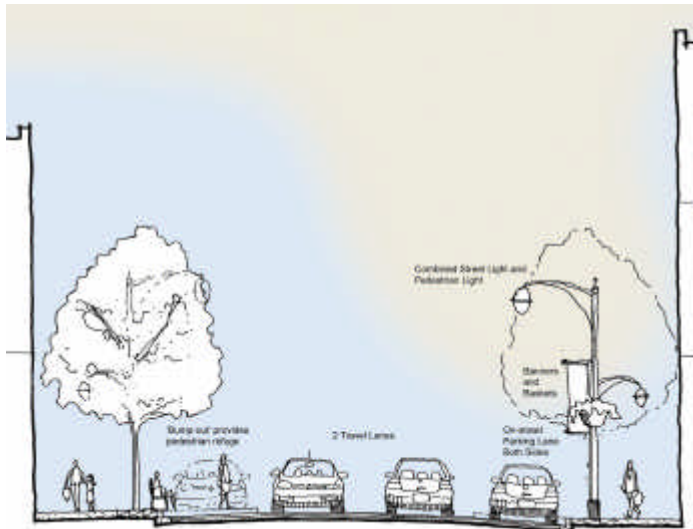
Traffic Calming

- The introduction of visual cues such as trees, lighting, banners, and colourful floral displays into the realm of the motorist has been shown to be an effective method of slowing and calming traffic. One way to bring these elements closer to the motorist's sight line is to create sidewalk 'bump-outs' which serve to limit the lanes of moving traffic, and provide a safe refuge for pedestrians waiting to cross the street.

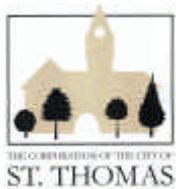




Example of 'bump-out' with furniture elements clustered together



Typical Cross-section of proposed Talbot Central Streetscape



Street Furniture

- The street furniture chosen should be consistent throughout the City of St. Thomas and complement the style and colour of the other streetscape elements chosen, such as the decorative paving and light standards.
- The family of street furniture should include benches, garbage receptacles, bike racks, bollards, bicycle racks and tree grates. These furnishings should be clustered together to avoid a cluttered sidewalk appearance and located with regard for pedestrian circulation.
- The furniture selected should be low-maintenance, vandal-resistant, and easily replaceable.
- Avoid placing trash receptacles directly adjacent to benches to avoid conflicts with wasps and bees. Priority placements for trash receptacle should be at corners and close to eating establishments and near benches.
- Avoid placing bicycle racks where they will conflict with pedestrians and cyclists. If possible, racks should be visible from the inside of buildings.
- The design of the tree grates selected should be expandable to allow for tree growth and should be pedestrian safe.

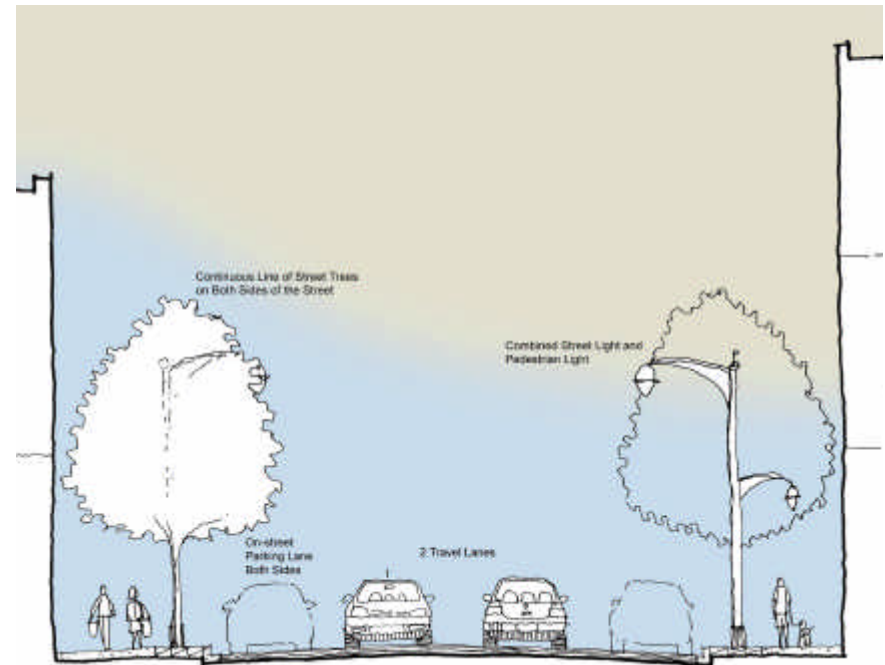
Public Space

- Parks and open spaces should be linked to one another providing a continuous and universally accessible and safe network for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Open spaces and connecting corridors should be visible and accessible for safety. Streetscapes should be included in the network of connecting corridors in order to create a linked system with a number of circuits and loops.
- Where these paths connect with vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists should be directed to a corner and/or controlled crossing point.
- Parkettes within the commercial core should be open to the street, well lit and furnished with the same benches, receptacles and lighting used on Talbot Street.

Parking

- Amenities in parking lots should be consistent with those found on Talbot Street (i.e. lighting, signage, garbage receptacles, etc.)
- Directional signage to rear lot parking should be improved to cue drivers in timely fashion.
- Improve parking lots adjacent to rear entrances and alleyways. Connections to the street should be highlighted at the streetscape level with adequate signage and lighting.
- At-grade parking areas should be screened from pedestrian walkways to help define pedestrian space as separate from parking space. Screening can be accomplished with plant material of sufficient height and

- density to block views to parked cars, while remaining porous enough to allow sightlines for pedestrian safety.
- Appropriate plant material for screening parking includes medium height (0.75 m – 1.0m) shrub material, which is effective at screening parked cars while permitting views to the lot. Undesirable views can be effectively screened by combining shade trees (branching height of 1.5 m minimum) and shrubs. The width of planting beds can vary, but a minimum of 2.0 metres of continuous soil provides sufficient area for healthy plant growth.
- For effective screening throughout the year, the selection of plant materials should include some evergreen species. Screening planting should be accommodated in continuous planting pits.
- All parking lots should have trees planted within them to provide shade and screening. These trees should be planted in curbed islands.
- In the future, parking lots should be avoided at the sidewalk edge as they break the continuity of retail on the street.



Typical Cross-section of proposed Talbot West Streetscape

5.3.3 CASO LANDS

It is the intent of these streetscape guidelines to provide direction for the future development of the CASO Lands. The framework principles identify the broad planning and design approach to the district. The guidelines provide more detail with respect to key design elements. The approach for new streets and streetscapes is to ensure that CASO Lands becomes as porous as possible with many points for vehicular and pedestrian access. The streets need to be pedestrian friendly and create a safe walking environment. The strong architectural influence of the Train Station and Museum should be reflected in both the scale and materials of nearby buildings.

Maintaining sightlines to the heritage buildings and ensuring that viewsheds to Talbot Street are protected are significant goals for the design guidelines. New buildings need to have regard for the heritage character of the district and need to respond to the existing scale and character of the areas railway heritage.

Lighting

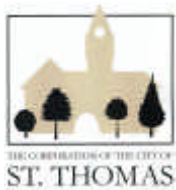
- *The lighting in CASO Lands should have a heritage character and “feel” that coordinates with the lighting chosen for the Downtown and CASO Lands.*
- *In redevelopment blocks combination of a street light fixture and a pedestrian light fixture on a decorative pole is recommended. These poles should be equipped with banner arms, hanging basket brackets and electrical outlets for seasonal displays.*
- *Specific spacing of poles should be considered after lighting design levels are determined.*
- *Place lights a minimum of 0.75 m back from the street edge to allow for car bumpers and doors.*

Walkways

- *Sidewalks in the CASO Lands should be constructed of materials such as concrete rather than asphalt, concrete pavers, or impressed concrete, which can have an overly contemporary appearance.*

Street Trees and Horticultural Plantings

- *Within the CASO Lands the tree species chosen should be indigenous and historically accurate, traditionally found within the heritage area and known to be urban tolerant and disease resistant.*
- *Trees planted in front of commercial properties should be high branching with a light, transparent canopy in order to allow for safe pedestrian movement underneath and maintain visibility to the storefront and signage.*
- *Allow sufficient room for tree canopies to grow and develop without conflicting with other building or sidewalk elements.*
- *Street trees should generally be planted at a spacing of between 8 and 12 metres on-centre.*



Pedestrian and Vehicular Wayfinding (Signage)

- Streets throughout the CASO Lands should have street signage that reflects rail heritage.
- The wayfinding signage should be part of a "family of signs" that is developed for the City of St. Thomas (see section 5.3.2).

Street Furniture

- The street furniture chosen should be consistent and complement the style and colour of the other streetscape elements chosen, such as the decorative paving and light standards.
- The family of street furniture should include benches, garbage receptacles, bike racks, bollards, bicycle racks and tree grates. These furnishings should be clustered together to avoid a cluttered sidewalk appearance and located with regard for pedestrian circulation.
- The furniture selected should be low-maintenance, vandal-resistant, and easily replaceable.

Public Space

- Parks and open spaces should be created to heighten the visibility of the heritage buildings in the district.
- A major public/civic space should be established as the setting for the Train Station and Museum. This open space should be positioned with a presence on Talbot Street.
- The major public/civic space should accommodate multiple purposes including festivals, celebrations and passive recreation.
- Streetscapes and greenway trail systems should be included in the network of connecting corridors in order to build the open space system.

Parking

- Parking areas should be provided for businesses and tourist attractions.
- Features found in parking lots should be consistent with those chosen for the Downtown District (i.e. light fixtures, signage, garbage receptacles etc.)
- Roadside at-grade parking areas should be screened to help define pedestrian space. Screening can be accomplished with plant material of sufficient height and density to block views to parked cars, while remaining porous enough to allow sightlines for pedestrian safety.
- Appropriate plant material for screening parking includes medium height (0.75 m – 1.2m) shrub material, which is effective at screening parked cars while permitting views to the lot.
- Undesirable views can be effectively screened by combining shade trees (branching height of 1.5 m minimum) and shrubs. The width of planting beds can vary, but a minimum of 2.0 metres of continuous soil provides sufficient area for healthy plant growth.

For effective screening throughout the year, the selection of plant materials should include some evergreen species. Screening planting should be accommodated in continuous planting pits.

- All parking lots should have trees planted within them to provide shade and screening. These trees should be planted in curbed islands.



Example of Gateway Signage - Windsor

5.4 General Guidelines

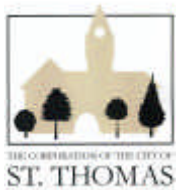
COMMUNITY GATEWAYS

- Well-defined gateways create both a symbolic and physical entrance to the City of St. Thomas, create an identity, and mark the transitions between the City's districts. Gateways can be indicated with enhanced landscape planting, intensified lighting and signage.
- Scale and proportion are important factors in the design of a gateway. The elements of the gateway should relate to the street width, the size of buildings, be legible at the pedestrian and vehicular scale, and indicate the hierarchy of the gateway.

RELATED DEVELOPMENT NODES

The city's acquisition of the MTO north-south rail corridor has created opportunities for the lands adjacent to the corridor to be redeveloped. Because these lands benefit from their location adjacent to existing, established development and in close proximity to the pedestrian-focused area of Talbot Central, they have the potential for development that can be both compatible with their surrounding context and supportive of the intensification and revitalization of Talbot Street.

- To facilitate this transition, the City should consider amending the Official Plan to remove industrial uses and support new residential, commercial or mixed-uses;
- New uses should be compatible with existing, neighbouring non-industrial uses;
- Designs for new development should incorporate the green space amenity of the corridor;
- Major retail uses in these development nodes is not recommended, to ensure that retail remains focused along the Talbot Central district of the Downtown;
- Because of the existing surrounding uses, different types of development would be appropriate for the different nodes. For example:
 - To the north of Talbot Street, at Station Street, residential infill such as townhouse development may be appropriate;
 - To the south of Talbot Street, along Princess Street, office and/or live/work development may be suitable, reflecting both the area's proximity to the Downtown and the residential uses along the west side of Princess Street.



6.0 Implementation

6.1 Recommendations for Old St. Thomas

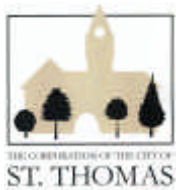
Old St. Thomas is a unique “heritage area” that contributes to the overall attractiveness and tourism appeal of St. Thomas. The area’s heritage “look and feel” should be preserved. To support this recommendation the City should consider:

- *Establishing a special policy area that delineates the Old St. Thomas “heritage area”;*
- *Undertaking an Official Plan Amendment to establish this as an Old St. Thomas “special policy area”;*
- *Implementing a site plan control process as a total to review projects within the “special policy area”;*
- *Identifying the “tourism core” within the “special policy area” where tourism related commercial uses may be expanded (west of William Street, north of Centre Street);*
- *Expanding the Façade Improvement Program of the CIP to include residential buildings in Old St. Thomas that are part of the City’s Heritage Building Inventory;*
- *Reviewing zoning by-laws for conformity with Built Heritage Design Guidelines;*
- *Reviewing current policies related to new development to determine if they conform to the Urban Design Study;*
- *Establishing heritage streetscape routes in Old St. Thomas;*
- *Establishing heritage themed street signs for Old St. Thomas; and*
- *Establishing a committee to review applications and make recommendations to Council.*

6.2 Recommendations for the Downtown

Downtown St. Thomas has three distinct districts that require different planning tools to implement the Urban Design Framework and Design Guidelines. To reinforce the boundaries and distinctive characteristics of the Downtown, the City should consider:

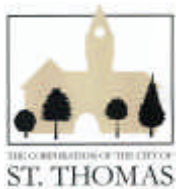
- *Reviewing zoning by-laws for conformity with Urban Design Study, such as maximum height and rear, ground floor residential occupancies;*
- *Reviewing current planning policies related to residential intensification and infilling to determine if they conform to the Urban Design Study;*



- *Undertaking an Official Plan Amendment to refine the boundaries of the downtown districts (West, Central and East) along Talbot Street;*
- *Encouraging residential intensification in the West district (Stanley to Metcalfe-Pearl Streets);*
- *Refocusing retail uses in the Central district (Metcalfe-Pearl to Alma);*
- *Reviewing overall Downtown district boundaries as they relate to cross streets and the depth of the district;*
- *Reviewing the designation of retail uses along Curtis Street;*
- *Establishing a committee to review applications and make recommendations to Council;*
- *Undertaking a detailed streetscape design plan for the improvements along Talbot Street;*
- *Ensuring that there is a overall design that is consistent across all three districts (lighting, walkways, signage, street tree planting);*
- *Undertaking traffic calming and streetscaping measures to support retail uses in the Central district;*
- *Focusing on pedestrian improvements to Central Talbot and linking the CASO lands and proposed arena;*
- *A sign by-law that encourages retail signs along Central Talbot to promote and improve the pedestrian scale experience; and*
- *Develop a signage strategy that identifies the special characteristics of Talbot West, Talbot Central and Talbot East.*



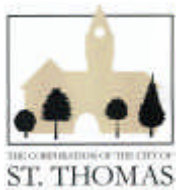
Façade and Storefront Improvements Along Talbot Street



6.3 Recommendations for the CASO Lands

The CASO lands represent a special opportunity for urban renewal and economic revitalization in St. Thomas. This district has heritage resources of national significance and future development must be sensitive to protection and enhancement of these resources. The City should consider:

- *In the vicinity of the railway station, museum and rail yards (heritage railway complex) encourage tourism uses that build on the "Railway Capital of Canada" theme;*
- *Develop signage that recognizes and identifies the heritage railway theme of the CASO Lands;*
- *Maintaining functioning tracks and yards in support of the heritage railway complex;*
- *Ensuring that the "heritage railway complex" has a civic or open space setting;*
- *Supporting the restoration of the CASO station and On Track's Phase 2 planning activities;*
- *Supporting a comprehensive development plan that integrates the commercial potential of the proposed arena project;*
- *Supporting a development plan of the CASO Lands that is based on an interconnected vehicular and pedestrian system to create integrated development blocks; one that incorporates the site planning of the proposed arena development and one that facilitates the sharing of resources and amenities between development parcels;*
- *Undertaking a traffic study to identify the need for and location of any arterial road connection;*
- *Improving vehicular and pedestrian access to the CASO lands with multiple roadway linkages to improve street frontage;*
- *Improving the connection of the CASO Lands to Central Talbot through pedestrian improvements;*
- *Ensuring that sightlines and visibility to the train station are maintained and enhanced;*
and
- *Reviewing zoning by-laws that support future integrated development.*



6.4 Recommendations for Open Space and Landscape Features

The City has a number of parks, open spaces, natural areas and trails. Better use of these amenities could be made through improved connections and location of some open space elements. To further enhance the open space system, St. Thomas has an outstanding cultural landscape that is represented by the large number of mature and designated heritage trees. To protect and enhance the “green character” of the community the City should consider:

- *Implementing a tree cutting by-law to protect mature trees, woodlots and forested ravines;*
- *Establishing a street tree-planting program to replace lost street trees or to establish new streetscapes along major downtown streets.*
- *Undertaking a comprehensive parks and trails system study to evaluate how these amenities could be more effectively accessed, linked and utilized;*
- *Reviewing cycling routes and the provision of “on road” cycle systems; and*
- *Identifying the location and program for a major public open space/civic space in the vicinity of Talbot and the proposed arena and CASO lands.*

6.5 General Design Study Recommendations

6.5.1 STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Streetscape revitalization is an important component of the Urban Design Framework and Guidelines. The implementation of public realm improvements can include infrastructure upgrading such as lighting, pedestrian walkways, and landscaping (street trees, screening buffers). Other more decorative elements include site furnishings, flower displays, and banners. The City should take lead when implementing infrastructure upgrades since these improvements are most efficiently implemented during municipal servicing or road reconstruction. As a means of implementing the streetscape improvements recommended for each of the three districts, the City should consider:

- *Preparing capital budgets for implementation over a five year time frame;*
- *Seeking funding partners from senior government and the community.*





6.5.2 THE REVIEW PROCESS

In support of the Municipal Heritage Committee, the City should consider:

- *Obtaining professional advisors to assist staff and the Committee in reviewing applications for structures that have been identified as having heritage values (designated and listed on the municipal inventory); and*
- *Ensuring that the Committee is a sounding board for reviewing built heritage issues and that the recommendations to Council represent a joint effort between staff and advisors.*

6.5.3 CITY-WIDE SIGNAGE

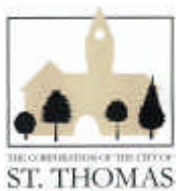
In addition to the specific signage recommendations for the three Study districts, the City should consider:

- *Implementing a municipal identification strategy that includes an attractive “family of signs” to mark major gateways, key civic buildings and wayfinding.*

6.6 Recommendations for Related Development Nodes

The purchase of the MTO north-south rail corridor has created redevelopment opportunities that should support the objectives of the Urban Design Study. The City should consider:

- *Amending the Official Plan and related planning policy to explore the removal of industrial uses from the corridor, in order to facilitate future development, such as commercial and residential, that is more compatible with current adjacent uses;*
- *Exploring the potential for residential infill and open space uses along the Station Street portion of the MTO corridor;*
- *Supporting the development of office, commercial or tourism-related uses in the Centre Street node to support the Downtown; and*
- *Supporting development that could incorporate the Alma College site, thereby re-establishing a connection of Alma College to the Downtown.*

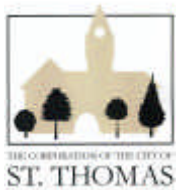


6.7 Funding Sources and Partnerships

Although there are only a few funding sources available to municipalities for urban renewal and heritage restoration, there are initiatives available for funding economic development/tourism activities.

Some funding programs that may be applicable include:

- Historic Places Initiative (HPI) may be better suited to longer term funding but is worth monitoring. This is a major project that has been spearheaded by the Federal Government. Announced in 2001, it is just in its initial stages and is currently in the process of developing a national historic places registry and guidelines. This registry and guidelines are to form the framework and criteria for what projects will be granted funding by the federal government in future phases. The 2003 federal budget announced \$10 million in funding through this project that was to be allocated to provide financial incentives to the private sector for the restoration of heritage buildings, however, at the present time there does not appear to be a formal process in place for distributing these funds.
- Canadian Arts and Heritage Sustainability Program was announced in May of 2001, and is a federal funding program consisting of several components. The Endowment Incentives criteria would likely be most appropriate for the St. Thomas railway restoration project. This program matches government funding to private donations to an arts organization's endowment fund.
- Cultural Tourism Marketing Fund is a provincial initiative announced in July of 2003. The purpose of the fund is to provide enhanced marketing assistance to Ontario 'cultural attractions, events and festivals'.
- Although not a source of funding, a useful resource may be the Preservation Works! programme through the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario. This program can provide advice/evaluations for conservation projects for a nominal fee (\$250 for a non-profit organization or \$750 for a municipality). One of the areas they will provide advice on is a fundraising strategy for projects and appropriateness of a development proposal or municipal project.
- Ontario Small Town and Rural Development (OSTAR) is a provincial fund that provides economic support for the development of rural communities and towns that involve a partnership of some

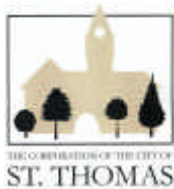


- sort. If the project can be shown to be tourism-based or generating economic development for the community, it may qualify for up to 50% of the costs of the project. It should be noted that
- These funds are not to be used towards infrastructure or land acquisition. There is a deadline of March 2004 for applications under this program.
- Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund is another federal initiative announced in 2001. This particular source of funding may not be appropriate, however, it is worthwhile exploring further depending on the perceived significance of the project. The funds are to be focused on projects of major national and regional significance for projects that are vital to sustaining economic growth. One of the categories covered by this fund is tourism or urban development infrastructure, as noted:

“Investments may be made in large scale projects that promote Canada as a leading destination for tourists or which promote urban development. This will ensure that tourism continues to contribute to the economic well being of Canadians and to serve as a bridge between Canada and the world.”

The Canada Strategic Infrastructure fund will contribute up to 50% of the costs of a project, which is approved.

- Canada-Ontario Infrastructure Program (COIP) is a joint funding initiative by both the provincial and federal government with priority given to projects that include cultural and recreational infrastructure and tourism. Partnering with another municipality is encouraged and this program will provide up to one third of the project cost by the federal government with the province generally matching federal funds. It should be noted that you cannot apply for other federal funding in conjunction with COIP, and applications must be received by April 1, 2005.



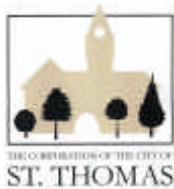
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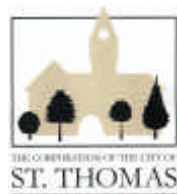
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URBAN DESIGN STUDY

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Appendix A

Community Improvement Plan Program Details

APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRAM DETAILS

A total of ten projects form part of the Community Improvement Plan. It is anticipated that work will begin as quickly as is possible on the first six projects that are described below. The four other projects will proceed as time and resources permit.

The Downtown - explore means of improving the ability of the Downtown Development Board and its partners to establish and sustain a Main Street program that addresses: Design - facilitate a Design Study and prepare Design Guidelines to guide public and/or private investment in facade improvement, signage, streetscaping and beautification and traffic management (i.e., traffic calming).

Marketing/Business Retention & Attraction - build on heritage and railway themes; attract residents and visitors; and, support and promote business development.

Economic Restructuring - inventory buildings and space; promote residential conversion, rehabilitation and intensification; and, develop distinct approaches for the development of various parts of the Downtown.

Old St. Thomas - build upon the heritage and tourism strengths of the area and offer a western gateway to the City for tourists interested in exploring our cultural and natural heritage. The area will retain a mix of residential, commercial and tourist-related sites and uses. Access to and views of Kettle Creek and its scenic ravines will be enhanced. To ensure that future development is consistent with the Goals of this Plan, undertake an Area Study and prepare an Area Plan for Old St. Thomas to guide public and/or private investment.

CASO Lands & Related East-West Railway Tracks and Right-of-Way - secure these lands for community use. These assets are considered central to revitalization of the Downtown and promotion of tourism. The CASO site accommodates a number of important railway assets including the historic train station, steam train and the railway museum. Decommissioning of soils may be necessary, dependent upon proposed development. The City has made a commitment to develop a new \$7.5m arena complex on lands located within the CASO project site shown on Schedule A. The acquisition of this land and the City's investment in a major recreational facility will be the catalyst for further development of much needed uses like a full service hotel and community facility.

MTO Lands & Related North-South Railway Right-of-Way - secure these lands for community use. The MTO Lands also are critical to development of heritage railway activities in the community and promotion of tourism. Improvements such as train stops and viewing areas will be encouraged and opportunity exists for creation of further walking/cycling trails. Municipal ownership of these lands facilitates future infrastructure improvements. The City has made a commitment to this project by approving an offer to purchase from the Ministry of Transportation for this important rail alignment which strategically connects the existing tourist train operated by Port Stanley Terminal Rail to the former CASO Train Station in the downtown and the Railway Museum. This acquisition has the potential of extending rail connection to the CN Main Line and will provide an opportunity to develop a pivotal north south walkway that will connect with the Trans Canada Trail.

First Avenue Bridge - is a major infrastructure project identified in the City of St. Thomas Transportation Master Plan. An improved crossing, appropriate for future

transportation needs - north-south vehicular movement and east-west railway traffic - is recommended.

Alma College - is a cultural heritage asset that the community wishes to see retained. To the greatest extent possible, the existing heritage buildings should be preserved and integrated into development plans for the site. Financial incentives can assist with retention of the heritage buildings.

Implementation Programs

The City may offer technical support and financial incentives to those undertaking projects consistent with the Goals of the Plan. These incentives are intended to stimulate matching private investment in revitalization efforts. The City may offer the following incentive programs:

Heritage Tax Relief Program - as allowed under the Ontario Heritage Act, the City may offer property owners, of designated heritage buildings throughout the Community Improvement Project Area, tax relief from the municipal portion of property taxes where approved restoration and preservation work has been successfully completed. Relief will be offered to the property owner following successful completion of the approved work.

Heritage Design Program - may offer property owners, of designated or listed heritage buildings throughout the Community Improvement Project Area, a grant for preparation of a design study for restoration and preservation work. The grant is made when the work has been successfully completed. The grant will be paid to the property owner when the restoration/preservation work is successfully completed.

Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation & Intensification Program - may offer assistance to property owners throughout the Community Improvement Project Area who are increasing or improving the supply of residential units. (NOTE: Downtown properties are a program priority and will be given preference if demand exceeds program resources.) The program has two components: an interest-free loan and a grant. The grant will be paid to the property owner when the approved work is successfully completed.

Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program - may offer assistance to property owners who are improving buildings or redeveloping lands in the project areas described in Section 3.0 - Scope of Plan, consistent with the Goals of the Plan. The program offers an grant equivalent to the eligible incremental increase in the municipal portion of property taxes resulting from the improvements to the property. The grant will be offered to the property owner following successful completion of the approved work.

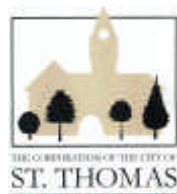
Facade Improvement Program - may offer assistance to property owners in the Downtown and Old St. Thomas who are undertaking commercial facade improvements consistent with design guidelines established for the project areas. The program has two components: an interest-free loan and a grant. The grant will be paid to the property owner when the approved work is successfully completed.

Planning & Building Fees Rebate Program - may offer rebates to property owners undertaking building improvements under the Heritage Tax Relief, Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation & Intensification, Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant

and Facade Improvement Programs and to property owners who are improving buildings or redeveloping lands in the project areas described in Section 3.0 - Scope of Plan, consistent with the Goals of the Plan. A rebate of fees is made following successful completion of approved work.

Development Charges Rebate Program - may offer a rebate to property owners adding new residential units through the Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation & Intensification Program or Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program and to property owners who are redeveloping lands in the project areas described in Section 3.0 - Scope of Plan, consistent with the Goals of the Plan. A rebate of charges is made following successful completion of approved work. The City will undertake the necessary amendments to its Development Charges Study and By-law in support of this program as part of its detailed implementation strategy. A rebate of charges is made following successful completion of approved work.

Parkland Dedication Exemption Program - may offer an exemption, from the requirements for Parkland dedication pursuant to Sections 42 and 51.1 of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990, as amended, to property owners adding new residential units through the Residential Conversion, Rehabilitation & Intensification Program or Property Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program. The requirement for park land dedication or cash-in-lieu is waived following successful completion of approved work.



URBAN DESIGN STUDY

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Appendix B

Public Consultation Summaries

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN URBAN DESIGN STUDY

Focus Groups

July 29th, 2003

The City of St. Thomas has undertaken an Urban Design Study which will create a design framework to guide future development in the Downtown, Old St. Thomas and the CASO Railway Lands. The Community Improvement Plan envisages the Downtown as a vibrant and fun people place and the Study will suggest ways of achieving the vision.

The Urban Design Study is important to the implementation of the Downtown Development Board's Main Street Program and will set the design guidelines for several of the City's financial incentive programs:

Heritage Tax Relief Program
Facade Improvement Program
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program

The Study will be completed in two phases with the first phase completed by early September with presentation of the design framework to the CIP Partnership Committee and the public. The second phase will produce design guidelines for each of the five districts within the study area - Old St. Thomas, Talbot Street West, Talbot Street Central, Talbot Street East and CASO Railway Lands.

Community consultation is a key component of the Study and began with a series of focus group sessions held on July 29th, 2003. Attendance was good.

Old St. Thomas	16 community members present
The Downtown	11
CASO Railway Lands	19

Two written submissions were received - St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association and SOLRS.

Stakeholders, who had been active participants in the development of the Community Improvement Plan, were invited to meet with the Study Team to discuss:

- key assets to be protected and enhanced
- limiting features to be improved or redeveloped
- connectivity between the subject areas and with the rest of the City
- ideas for change and improvement
- current initiatives
- opportunities and constraints for using cultural, heritage and natural resources for enhancing tourism and retailing.

Summary of Comments

1. Old St. Thomas Session

- Key asset to protect and enhance is the heritage look of the buildings
- There is a mix of architecture and periods of construction in the area that needs to be maintained
- Municipal Heritage Committee suggests designation of the area as a Heritage District
- The boundaries of the area were discussed and there was general agreement that the area west of Stanley Street that was established before 1830 is the primary heritage area
- St. Thomas-Elgin Tourist Association submitted their proposal for the Old St. Thomas area which highlights: heritage and railway themes; railway and trail connections to the Downtown and CASO Lands; western gateway; and development of the proposal in >modules=
- Other suggestions included:
 - development of a pedestrian mall for the area between Talbot Road and the railway lines
 - establishment of tram bus service
- To be addressed are parking and traffic issues
- Attention is needed in the area of transition from Talbot Road to Talbot Street and the Downtown - some existing uses are considered detrimental to the area and signage and the appearance of the gateway can be enhanced
- The future location of the Elgin County Pioneer Museum was discussed approximately 20,000 sq. ft is needed for both museum space and archives
- The Military Museum intends to remain in Old St. Thomas
- Concern was expressed about future infill and redevelopment projects and ensuring that they are in keeping with the heritage theme of the area in architecture and density
- The commercial area is an asset to be enhanced based on heritage themes
- Jumbo may be inconsistent with the main themes of the area but is so well established in the area that moving it is not feasible or desirable
- It was suggested that the design recommendations not remove or change too much but enhance the area's many assets
- It was suggested that the area be marketed as 'Old St. Thomas on the Hill'
- Suggested priority outcomes are:
 - make connections with parkland associated with Kettle Creek and Todds Creek
 - archeological features should be identified and featured
 - establish heritage district
 - make regional tourism connections and integrate with marketing
 - ensure that the following are jointly achieved by any plans: City realizes economic benefit; residents' lifestyle is enhanced; and, local businesses realize increased sales, etc.

2. The Downtown Session

- Need to be clear about the function of Talbot Street - a thoroughfare intended to move traffic quickly through the City or a main street promoting commerce and community life
- Key assets include the heritage buildings (circa 1872-1892)
- Need to encourage and support heritage restorations and redevelopments that are sensitive to the heritage theme
- Talbot Street is the 'Great White Way' with its long straight street of lights; can build on this theme
- DDB wants to upgrade/update streetscaping including lights, sidewalks, etc
- Need to look at green spaces and public spaces
- Generally, there was agreement on planning for three distinct districts within the Downtown with the central area being the commercial node
- Need to look at how to accommodate office uses and increase residential space within the Downtown

- Discussion of the depth of the Downtown along Talbot Street took place
- The Downtown has excellent parking lots which can promote:
 - reuse of parking spaces on Talbot Street for other purposes
 - improvement of rear of building for direct customer access (ensure that facade Program will support improvements where rear entrances exist or are being created)
- Shouldn't plan bump-outs and sidewalk widenings based on current retail in those locations
- It was suggested that increasing taxes on derelict buildings might be an incentive for restoring them

3. CASO Railway Lands

- SOLRS letter was received which emphasized retention of railway lands and assets that allow for railroad operations on the CASO Lands and on the east-west railway track by SOLRS and Port Stanley Terminal Railway
- Assets to maintain include: east-west tracks in the City and beyond to ensure effective connections to regional track system; marshalling yard/tracks; bridges and intersection crossings; connections to station and museum buildings
- Need to recreate parkland between station and Talbot Street
- Continue to enhance Trans Canada Trail and connections
- Need bus parking and better access routes
- Extending north-south streets through the site is considered problematic by the groups present
- Moving the softball diamond may not be well received
- Guidelines need to be set for the character of infill development

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

URBAN DESIGN STUDY

Design Workshop

August 12th, 2003

The Urban Design Study is progressing. The Study Team has completed a substantial amount of field research and, in July, held a series of focus groups with key stakeholder groups. Findings from these activities provided the foundation for a design workshop held August 12th.

The workshop was publicly advertised and several community organizations and individuals assisted in distributing workshop notices among residents, property and business owners. Attendance was good with 31 persons participating in workshop discussions and design efforts.

In addition to the comments summarized below, ideas were graphically captured.

1. OLD ST. THOMAS

- Signage for St. Thomas from the 401 is lacking
- Create west gateway at wetland/flats
- Prompt traffic at this point:
 - Commercial Route B use Talbot Street
 - Heritage Route B use Talbot Road
 - Residential Route B use Stanley Street
- The gateway should be expressed through landscape treatment that enhances the natural heritage of the valley and flats
- Stanley Street not the best entrance to Old St. Thomas because of the apartment buildings
- Reinforce the 'heritage/scenic drive'
- Better 'wayfinding' signage is necessary
- Signs should be thematic
- Family of signage = history plaques about settlement patterns and homes (could be linked to façade improvement incentives)
- Directional signage should indicate location of tourist information
 - The BX Tower would be a more central location for tourist information
- Jumbo may not be in the best location, but he serves as a landmark for tourist information and the museums
- Make a loop connection to railway 'The St. Thomas Rail Loop'
- Green link between Old St. Thomas and CASO district could alleviate the need for parking at Jumbo and Museums
- A tram could travel between the two areas along the commercial core of Talbot Street
- Improve connections to the valley and Sponds Flats
- Important to spark the interest of residents first, then focus on tourists
- Investors need a reason to do something NOW rather than something that will profit 10 years from now
- In general, parking is inadequate in terms of number of spaces and location
- Identify that this area is designated as a heritage district by branding it with banners and such

2. DOWNTOWN

West Talbot Street:

- If residential infill is to happen here it should not be done in such a way that storefront windows become living room windows.
- Some buildings on the south side of Talbot have little architectural or adaptive re-use value (i.e. strip club). If they were removed the space could be used for parking that would serve both Old St. Thomas and downtown shoppers.
- The façade on the existing mall should match the heritage style.
- Some felt that if the commercial core became stronger that these properties would be necessary for expansion of the commercial core in the future.

Central Talbot Street:

- Commercial core should be pedestrian friendly and accommodate multi-use. There is no need for 4 lanes of traffic.
- Order of magnitude should be: pedestrian, cyclist, vehicle
- Signage needs to be improved to signal parking off Talbot and to signal laneways between buildings to rear parking.
- Crosswalks need to be more frequent and more distinct. Could be made to look like railroad crossings.
- Consider closing commercial core of Talbot Street to vehicular traffic during certain weekend hours.
- Businesses should keep some lights on to make street inviting and to encourage window shopping and return visits.
- Public buildings should be lit at night.
- Select tree species that do not cover signage and lights.
- Strong need for more pedestrian focus.
- Make space available for a variety of activities (i.e. festivals)
- Need to focus on renovations, not redevelopment
- St. Thomas must develop economic self-sufficiency “I want to spend my money in St. Thomas and never have to go to London”
- Public washrooms are lacking.
- There are a lot of seniors who would benefit from sidewalk benches B these benches require widening of the sidewalks.

3. CASO RAILWAY LANDS

- CASO should be developed as a green space, cultural/recreational core.
- The park in front of the Station should be a durable surface that can accommodate festivals and parking.
- The market should be moved to the new green space in front of the Station.
- Ensure that traffic rushes from the Arena can be accommodated and that access to all facilities is easy.
- The baseball diamond needs a safer location and adequate parking.
- It is essential that working rails be kept for travel south (to Port Stanley), and one east-west line.
- The transfer table is significant, and should stay.
- Redevelopment of these lands should create a positive economic impact to St. Thomas
- The uses and locations of the Station and the Museum should be connected/compatible.
- The pedestrian environment on the south side of Talbot Street through this area should be improved.
- First Street and Ross Street can bring traffic from the south and in along Wellington. Fifth and Third Streets would not be necessary.
- An eastern gateway needs to be developed to signal historic and main street attractions. Car dealership

- at Ross and Talbot should be relocated. Industrial should be developed as residential.
- There should be exit signage 'Thank you for visiting St. Thomas'

ST. THOMAS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
URBAN DESIGN STUDY

**Public Information Centre
Partnership Committee Meeting**
September 9th, 2003

On September 9th, 2003, the Partnership Committee hosted an open house and public meeting. The Study Team presented the Urban Design Framework.

The event was publicly advertised and community outreach continued to encourage community organizations and interested individuals to attend. Attendance was good with 28 persons present.

Comments focused on the more detailed design guidelines now under development by the Study Team.

Summary of Comments

- Need guidelines to ensure that redevelopment or infill projects are well designed - do not want a repeat of the Grand Central development.
- Since we going to have a Façade Improvement Program, can't we be more specific about the design requirements? For a project to be eligible for funding, the project should meet guidelines that reflect the desires of the community as shown in the Design Framework.
- Want more attention to the part of the CASO Railway Lands associated with the shops/museum with more comment on the rail lines and maintaining rail access both east and west
- Is it possible for the Study Team to provide more direction on the future of railway assets such as the rail lines? (NOTE: It was pointed out that the future disposition of railway lines was beyond the mandate of the Urban Design Study Team but that the Team, in developing the Framework, was attempting to accommodate the various likely scenarios for future railway lines in the area.)

The Framework was well received and, at its meeting following the public meeting, was adopted by the Partnership Committee.

Partnership Committee Meeting

Members Present: Chairman Marie Turvey, Mayor Jeff Kohler, Joe Preston, Charles Beckett, Jim Miller, Dan Vernackt

Moved by Joe Preston Seconded by Jim Miller

THAT the Partnership Committee adopt the Urban Design Framework, as presented by the Study Team on September 9th, 2003 and direct the Team to proceed with development of design guidelines.

Carried.