



Elmira Core Urban Design Study

Final Report

July, 2022

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Elmira Core Study Area

1 Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the Elmira Core Urban Design Study is to create a framework plan that will guide the development and enhancement of the Elmira Core Area.

Development and enhancement in the Core Area is to implement the Township's Official Plan Vision and Policies. The Official Plan promotes:

- a 'small town feel' and development that is in keeping with a 'rural-small urban' community;
- a slower, safer and less hectic pace of life;
- the importance of the environment;
- preserving heritage resources;
- providing a range of housing options;
- retaining and expanding existing and new businesses; and,
- active and passive recreation opportunities.

The Urban Design Study includes consideration of the streetscape with a short and longer term concepts to illustrate the Township's preference for enhancements in the Core Area.

Study Area

The Study Area encompasses the parcels within the Official Plan's Core Area designation, the downtown areas zoned for Commercial uses in the zoning by-law, the Downtown Elmira BIA area and the slightly larger Elmira Community Improvement Plan area.

The Study Area stretches from approximately Centre Street to Dunke Street and from Riverside Drive to South Street.

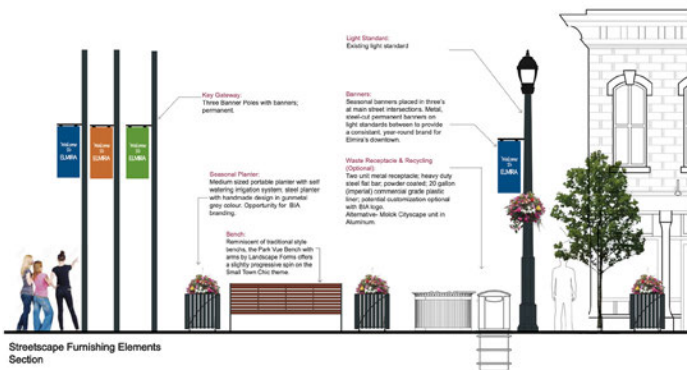
Previous Studies

Downtown Elmira Community Improvement Plan (CIP) (2019)

The Downtown Elmira BIA Community Improvement Plan: “Improving the Public Realm” supports and activates improvements, rehabilitation or renovation of lands, buildings or public spaces within the Community Improvement Project (CIP) Area. The CIP includes six Leadership Programs, and eight Financial Incentive Programs that were informed through several public meetings. The CIP was adopted by Council in September 2019. The CIP included:

- Detailed inventory of streetscape and facade conditions;
- Streetscape guidelines (style guide, guidelines and demonstrations); and,
- Facade guidelines (design considerations, understanding the elements).

The CIP is an essential planning tool to provide assistance to private business owners and direction to the Township for improving public spaces, most notably streets and parks, to stimulate private sector investment and redevelopment. The Urban Design Study builds on the streetscape improvement design guidelines included in the CIP. The CIP also includes detailed facade improvement guidelines. The financial incentive programs each include the purpose, a description and clarification of who is eligible. The application requirements and the role of the Township are clearly set out. The CIP is an essential component for encouraging revitalization and redevelopment in Elmira.



“Somebody Should Do Something” (2019)

On November 14 and 15, 2019 Woolwich Healthy Communities held an event that included a keynote presentation by Doug Griffiths, author of “13 Ways to Kill Your Community”, followed by break out discussions including:

- What are the challenges?
- What are the opportunities?
- What does the future of your community look like?
- What are you going to do this week to make the vision a reality?

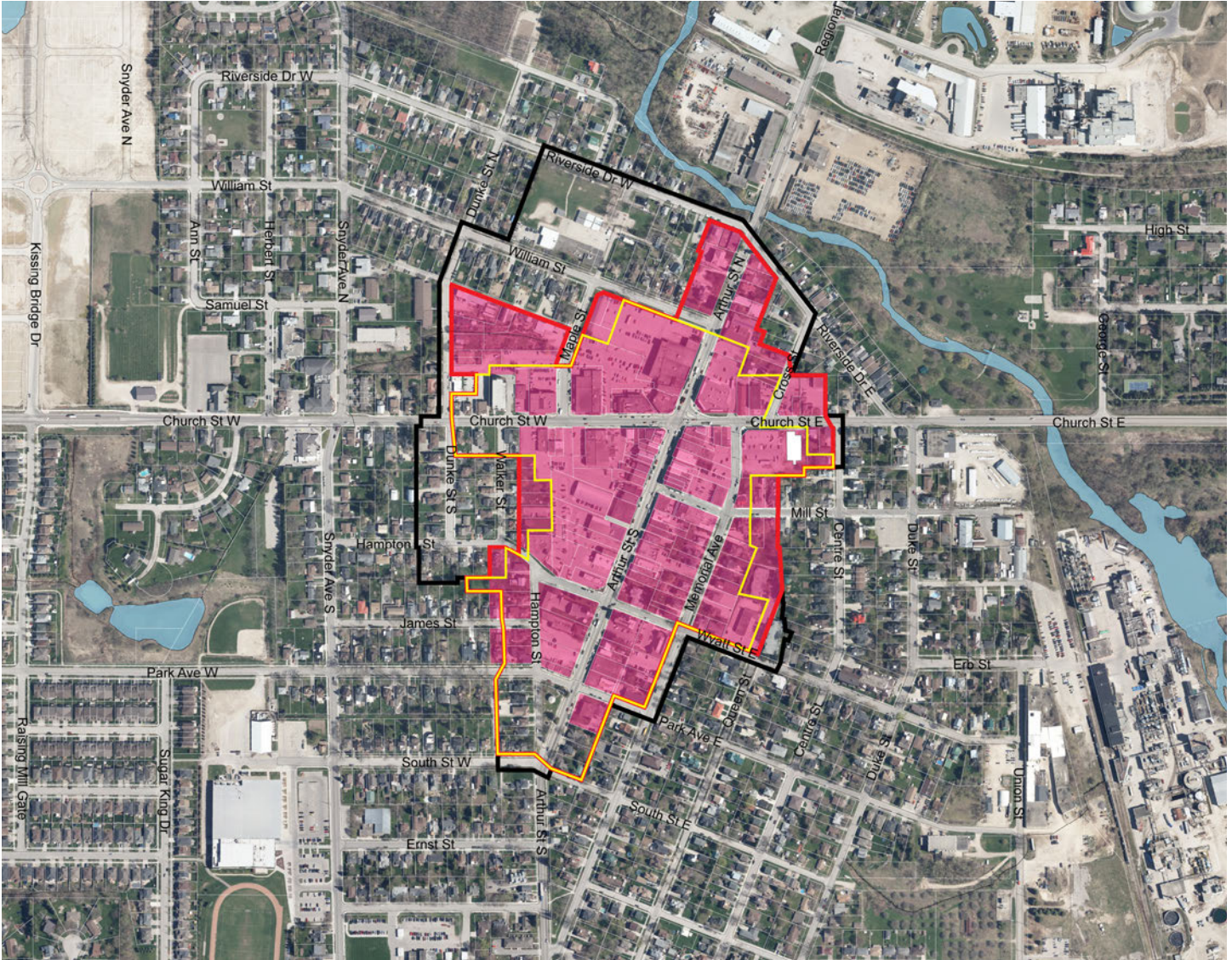
There were four topics, including:

- Main Street and Downtown
- Housing and Livability
- Activities and Aesthetics
- Cooperation and Ownership



2 Context

Study Area Delineation



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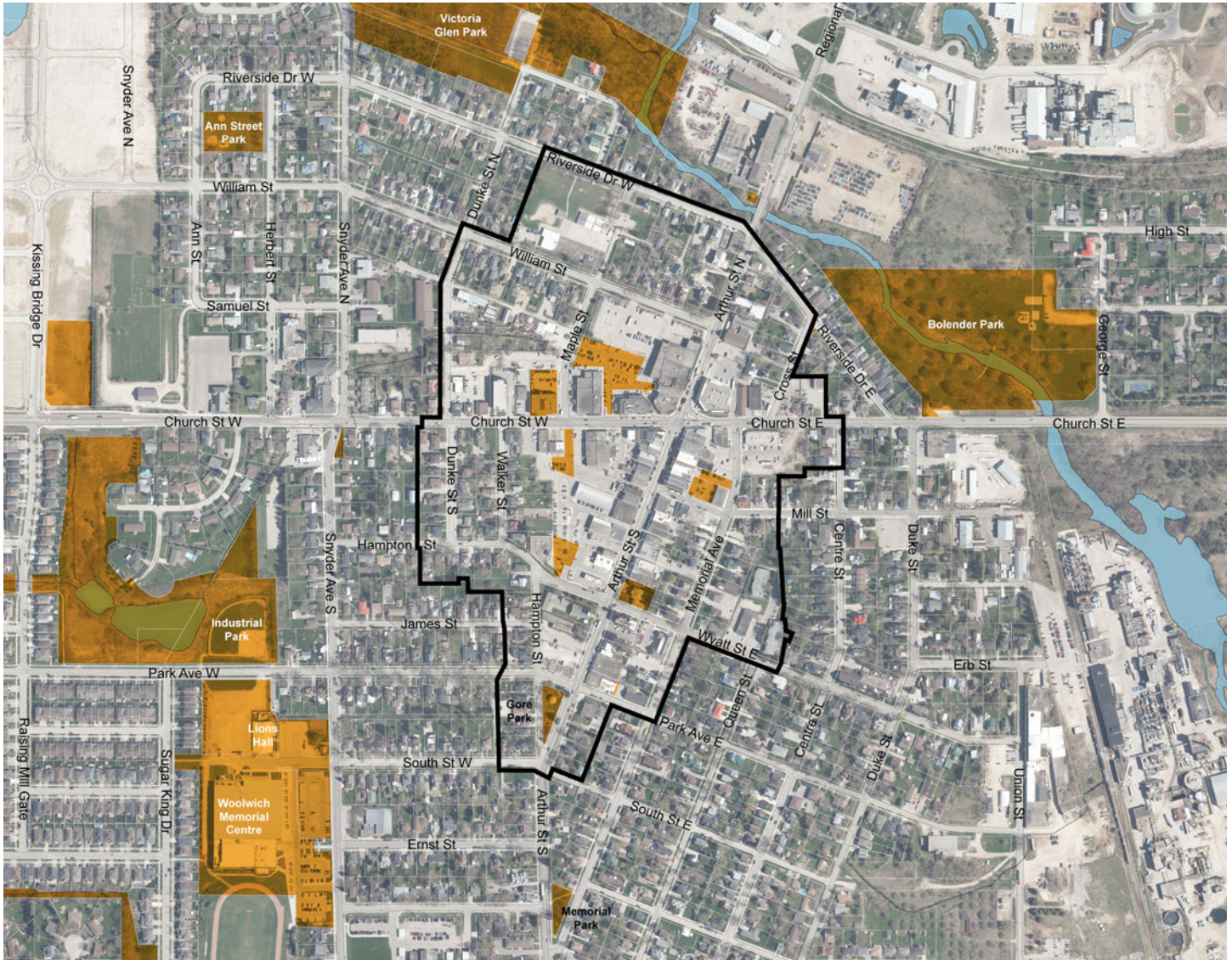
- Parcels within Core Area (Official Plan)
- BIA Boundary
- CIP Boundary
- Study Area

The study area boundary combines the following mapping:

- The Official Plan 'Core Area' designation;
- The Downtown Elmira BIA Area; and,
- The Elmira Community Improvement Plan area.

It also includes the now closed Riverside Public School as a key location for possible residential infill/intensification.

Town- and Publicly-Owned Lands

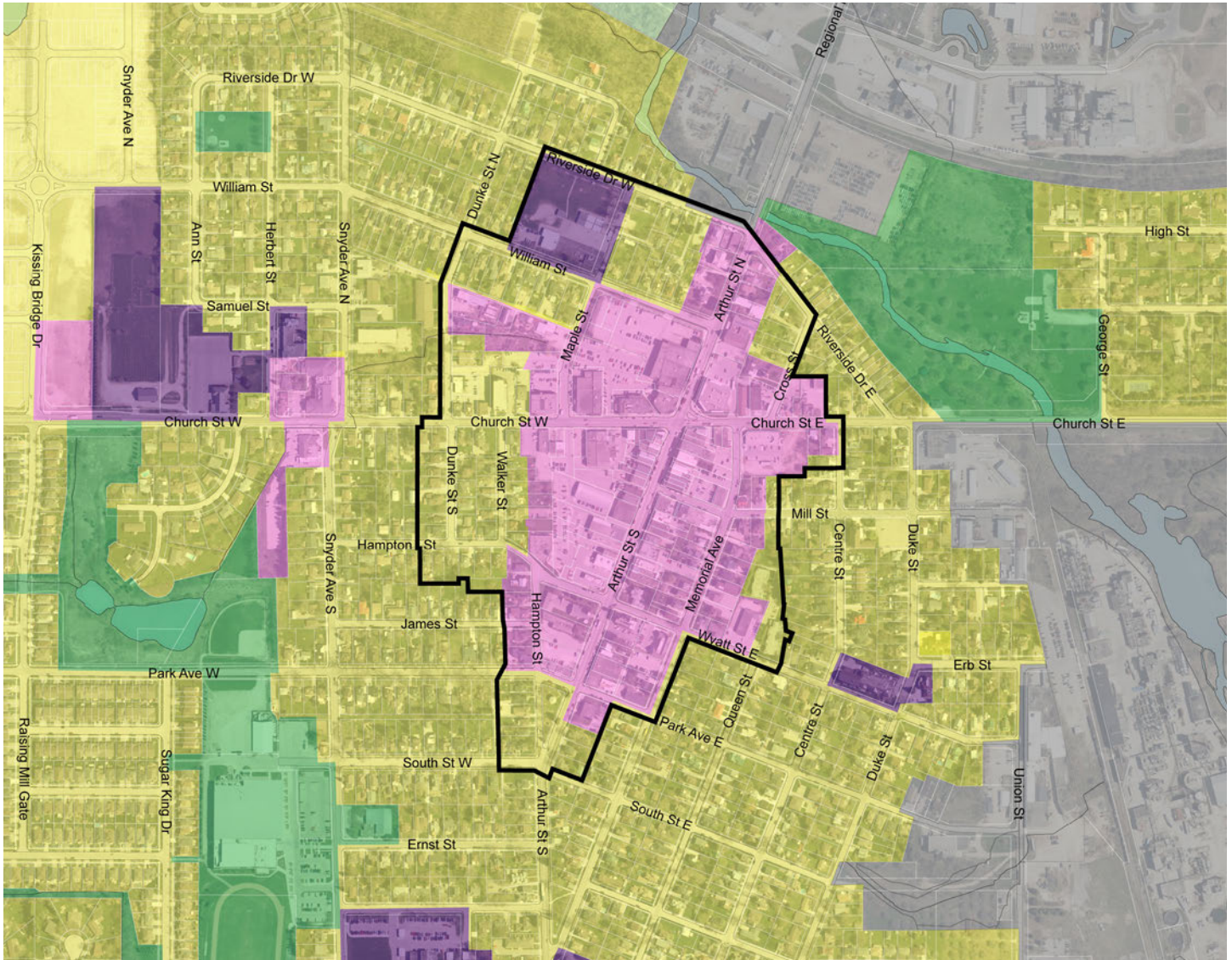


The location of Town- and other publicly-owned parcels of land, along with public parks and streets within the study area are opportunities for development and public realm enhancements.

Legend

- Study Area
- Township Owned Properties

Zoning



Legend

- Study Area
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Residential
- Industrial
- Open Space

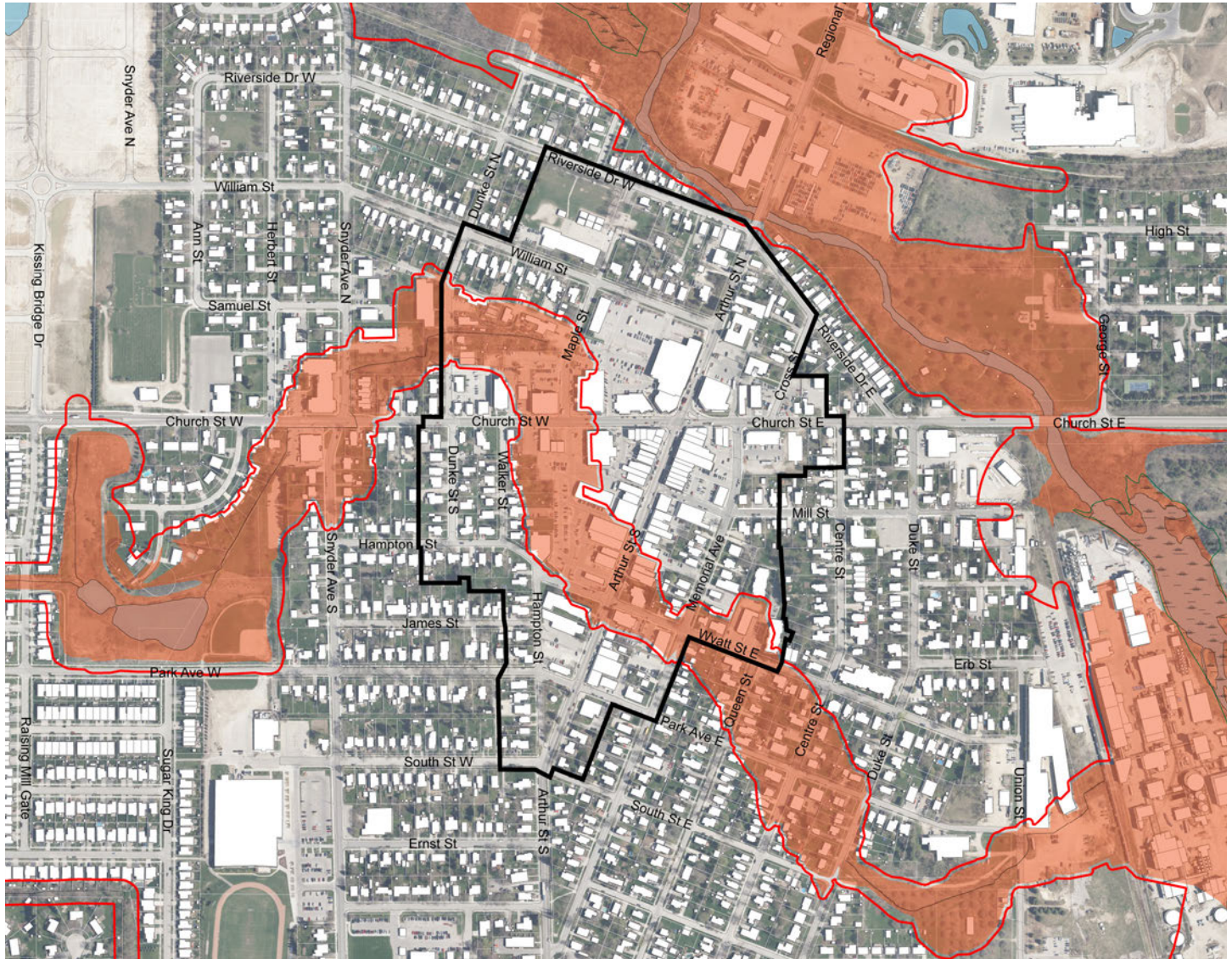
Most of the study area is currently zoned for commercial uses which include:

- retail
- galleries
- clinic
- entertainment
- dental/medical/optical
- nursery school
- financial institution
- hairdresser
- hotel/motel
- office

- seniors centre
- dwelling unit or units in a building, with ground floor permitting commercial or office

The maximum height permitted is 3 storeys. This Urban Design Study recommends changes to existing zone categories to support and encourage revitalization and context sensitive intensification (see Chapter 7).

Floodplain / Hazard Lands



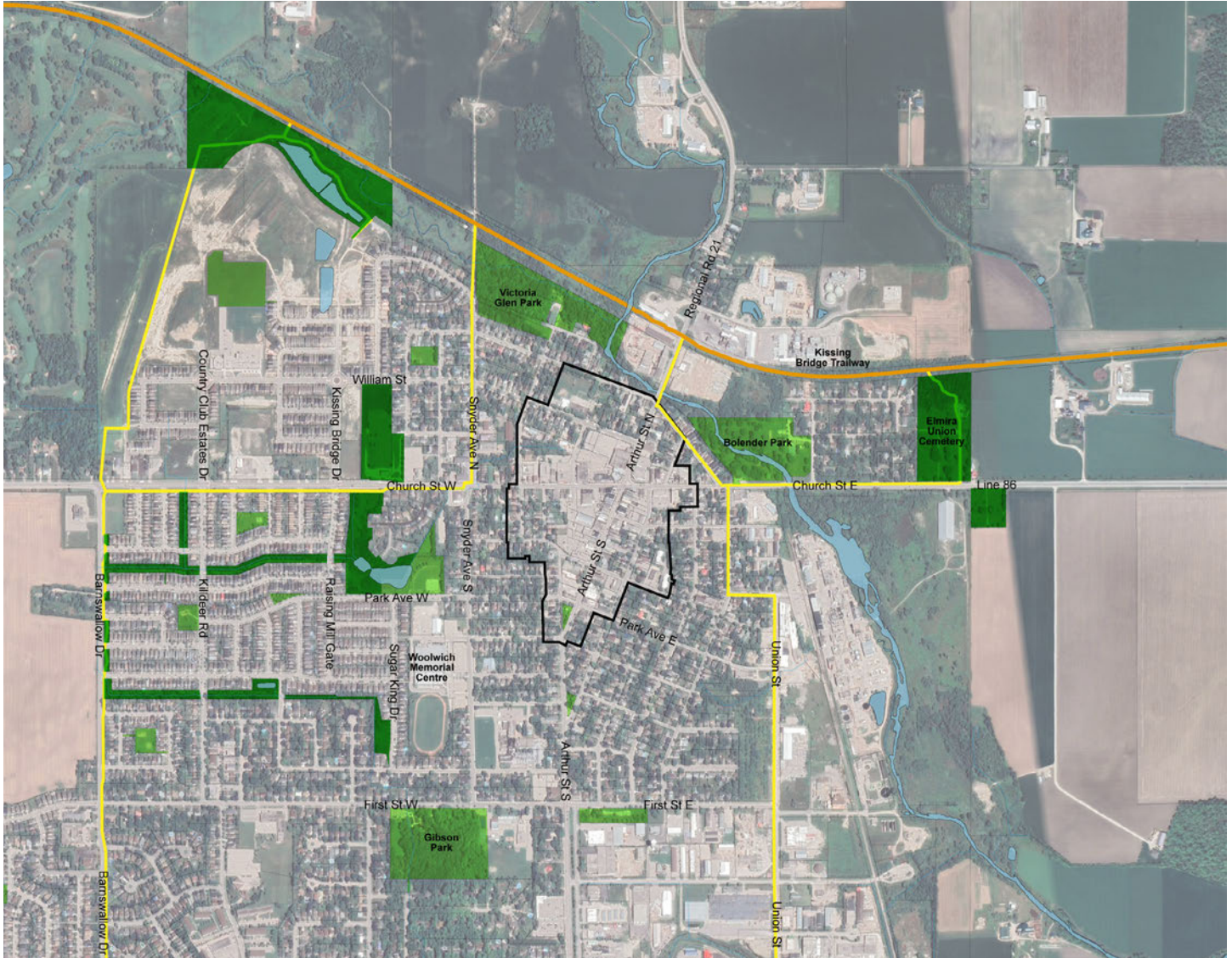
Floodplain / hazard lands cover a significant portion of Downtown Elmira. The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) identifies a Regulation Limit within which they have the responsibility to prevent or restrict development, and a permit is usually required when changes are being made to a site or building in this area.

Development within the regulated Floodplain areas present opportunities to incorporate low impact development standards (L.I.D.S). Low impact development standards include bioswales, use of permeable pavement, rain gardens and green roofs.

Legend

- Study Area
- GRCA Regulation Limit
- GRCA Floodplain
- GRCA Wetlands

Parks, Open Space and Trails

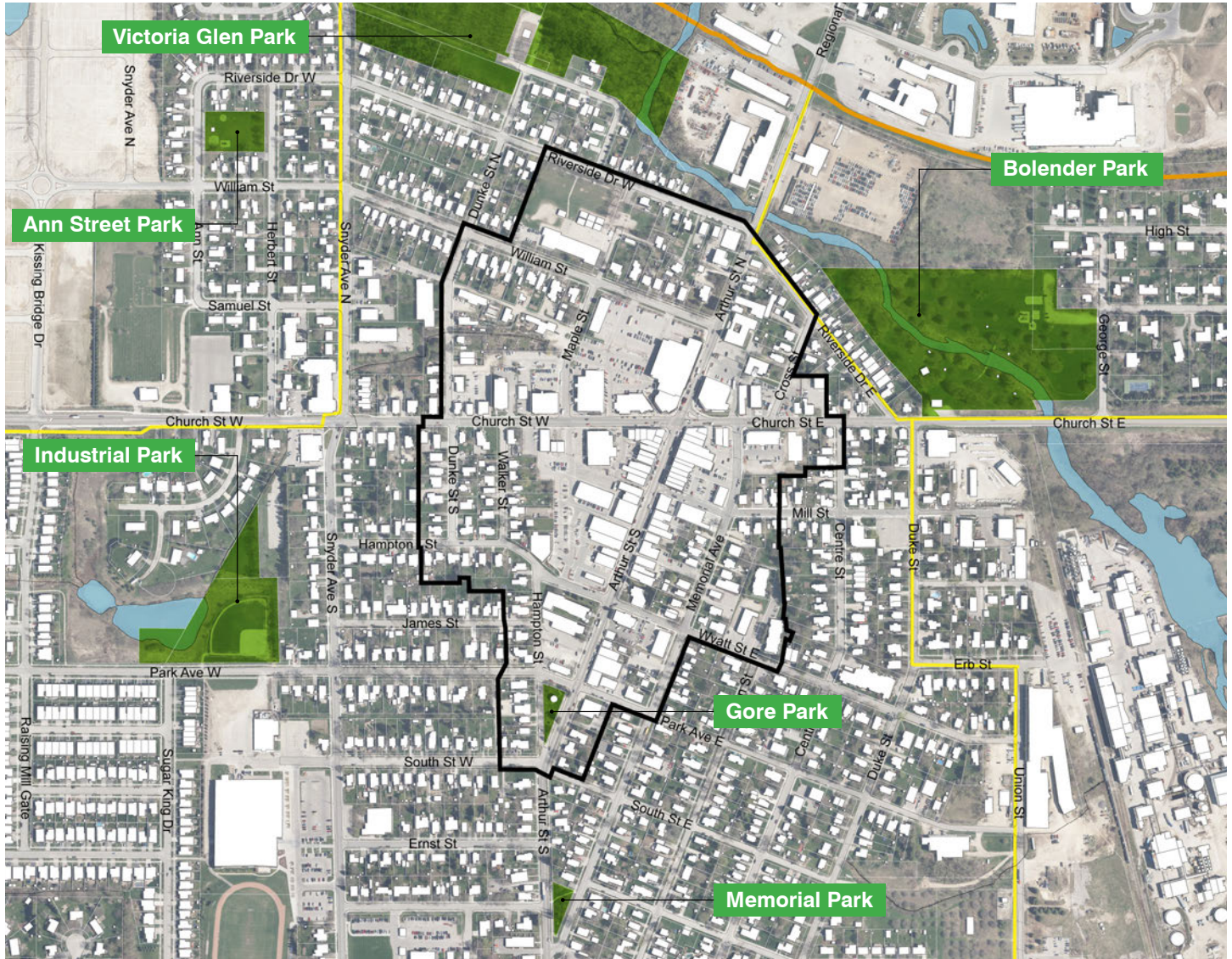


Legend

- Study Area
- Parks
- Other Open Space
- Kissing Bridge Trail (The Great Trail)
- Lions Ring Trail, Elmira

A variety of parks, open spaces and trails are located beyond the study area. The proximity of these features to the Core Area presents a unique opportunity to connect the downtown and its urban landscapes with the surrounding natural landscapes.

Parks, Open Space and Trails : Core Area



Apart from Gore Park, there are virtually no other public parks or open spaces in the Core Area.

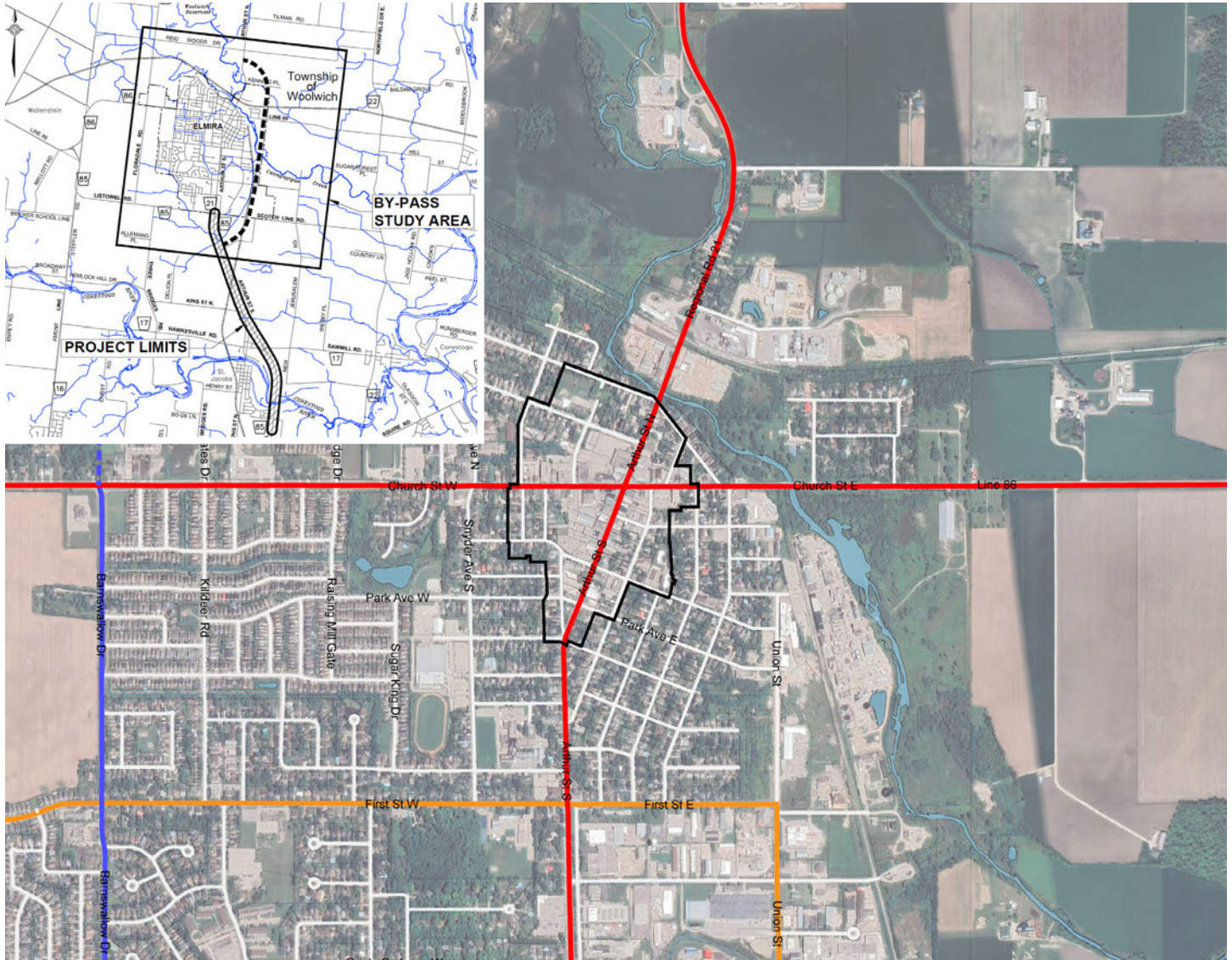
Redevelopment within the Core Area should consider the provision of parkland in a more compact and urban form. This may include smaller parks designed to accommodate a broad range of community focused activities and events (i.e. not active recreation) that support both downtown businesses and residents.

The development and enhancement of the public realm (parks and streets) should also consider urban trails / pedestrian connections that link to the surrounding trails network.

Legend

- Study Area
- Public Park / Open Space
- Kissing Bridge Trail (The Great Trail)
- Lions Ring Trail, Elmira

Roads / Mobility



Legend

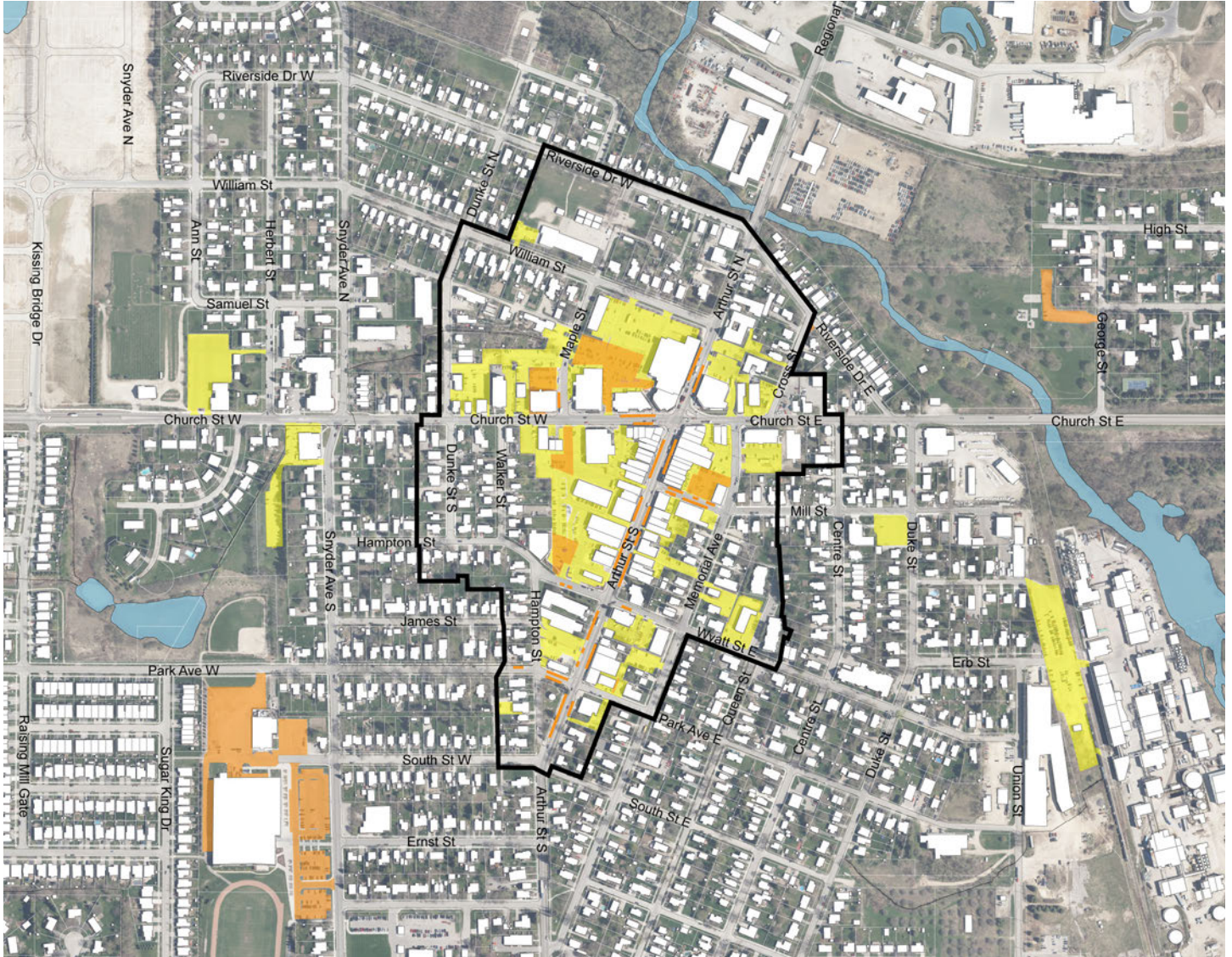
- Study Area
- Primary/Regional Arterial
- Arterial
- Future Arterial
- Collector
- Local Roads

Church Street and Arthur Street are the two primary roads that serve the community; their intersection was the historic cross-roads of downtown Elmira. Both are arterial roads within the jurisdiction of the Regional of Waterloo and thus subject to the Region’s standards for engineering and design.

The Region is planning upgrades to both Church Street and Arthur Street, with construction of the portion of Church Street East, between Arthur Street and Centre Street. At the same time, the Region will also be engaging the public with respect to the design of Arthur Street.

The Region is also planning to initiate the ‘*Elmira By-Pass and Arthur Street Widening Corridor Study*. The study is expected to be conducted as an Environmental Assessment (EA) process and be completion between 2022 and 2023.





Parking



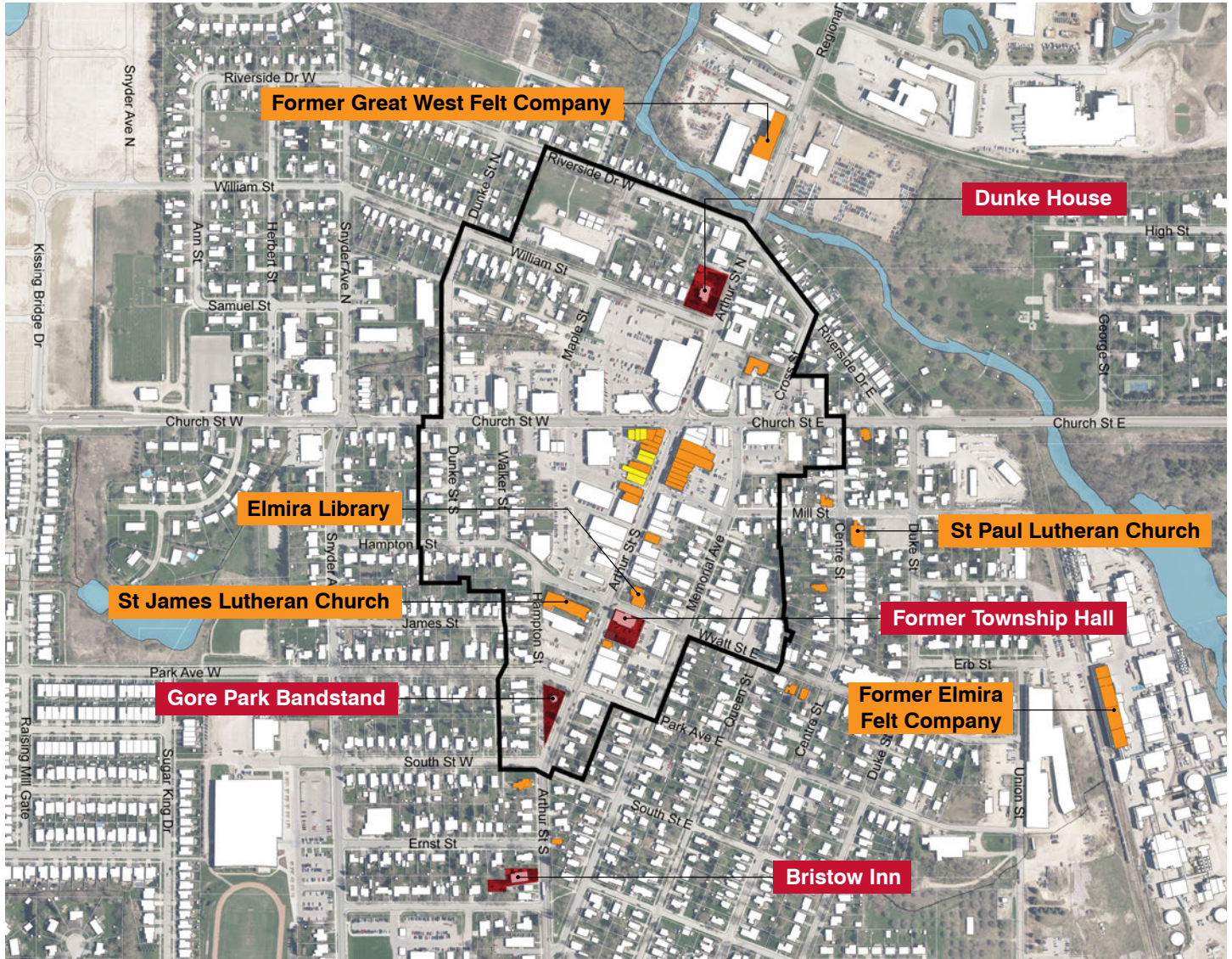
There is a lot of parking available within the Study Area, including:

- 125** Marked On-Street Parking Spaces
- 210** Parking Spaces on Township-Owned Land
- 920** Private Parking Spaces (accessible by general public)

Legend

-  Study Area
-  On-Street Parking (marked)
-  Township-Owned Parking Lot
-  Private Parking Lot (public access)

Heritage Buildings



Legend

- Study Area
- Part IV Designated Heritage Buildings
- Buildings with Apparent Heritage Value
- Modified Buildings with Heritage Value

The downtown Elmira area includes four Part IV designated heritage buildings: Bristow Inn (c.1860), Dunke House (1891), Gore Park Bandstand (1892), and the Former Township Hall (1914).

In addition there are a fair number of buildings with apparent heritage value which are currently unprotected, these include: St Paul's Lutheran Church (1899), St James Evangelical Lutheran Church (1914), Elmira Public Library (1915), the Elmira Felt Company (today Lanxess Chemical Facility, 1901), and the Great West Felt Company (today Walco Equipment, 1911).

Designated (Part IV) Heritage Properties

Former Township Hall - 1914



Gore Park Bandstand - 1892



Dunke House - 1891



Bristow Inn - c.1860



Other Buildings with Apparent Heritage Value (Unprotected)

St James Evangelical Lutheran Church - 1914



Great West Felt Co. - 1911



Elmira Felt Co. - 1901



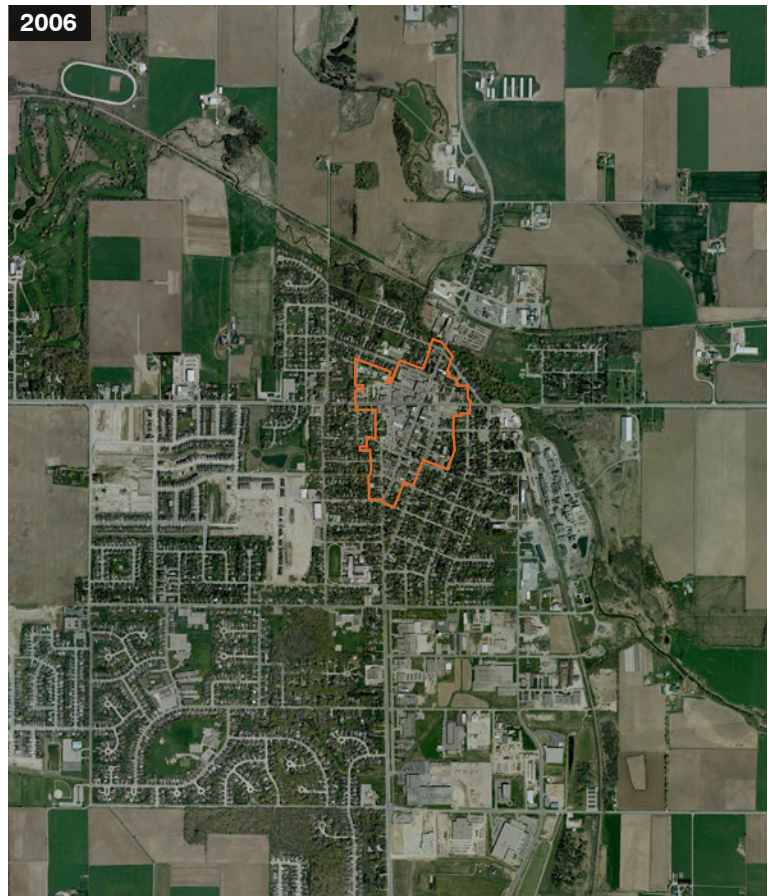
Elmira Public Library - 1915



St Paul's Lutheran Church - 1899



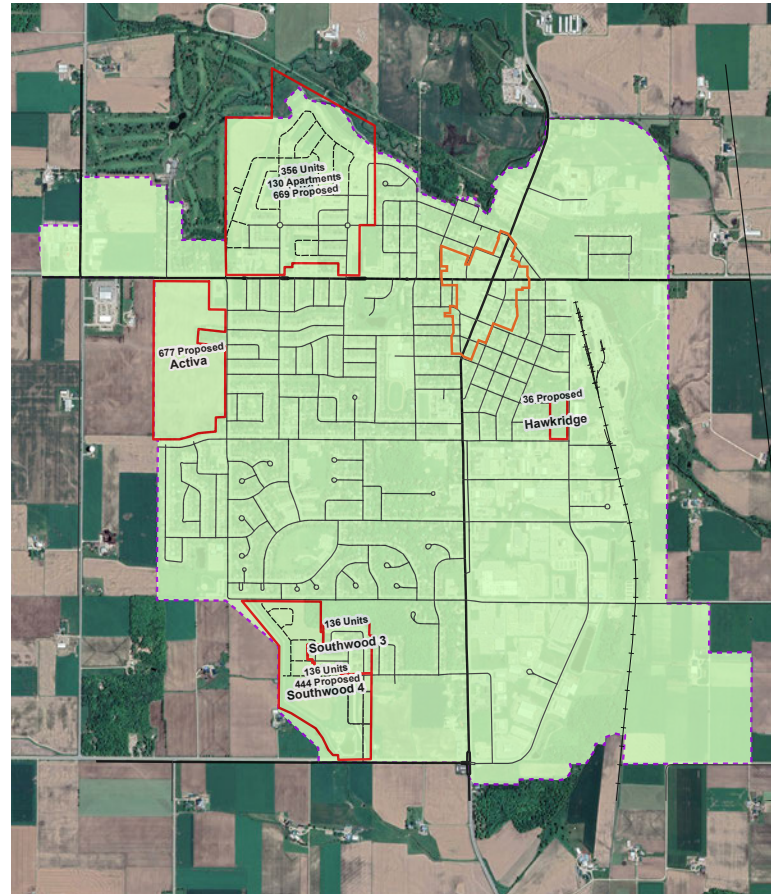
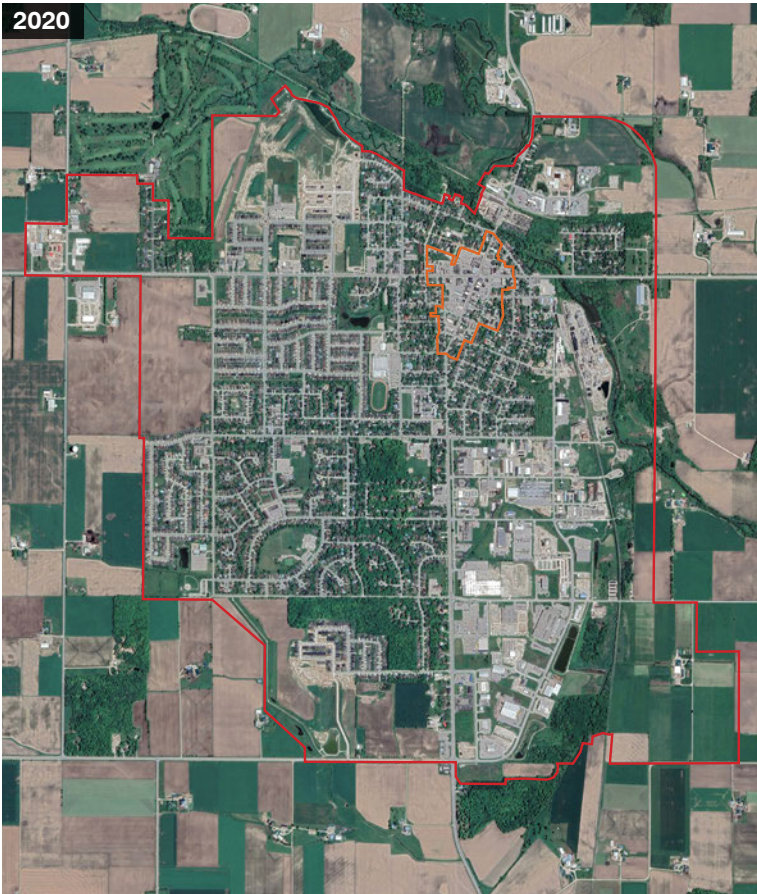
Growth Since 1955



A healthy and thriving community is one that continually grows, evolves and adapts to the needs of its residents.

The Town of Elmira grew significantly between 1955 and 2006, primarily to the south and southwest of the downtown. The planning and design of these neighbourhoods were based upon best practices of the day, and generally characterized by smaller pockets of disconnected residential enclaves spread across large lots.

Current Development Activity



More recent development activity in Elmira is characterized by the trend towards more compact and varied housing forms along with smaller lots. New development proposals include:

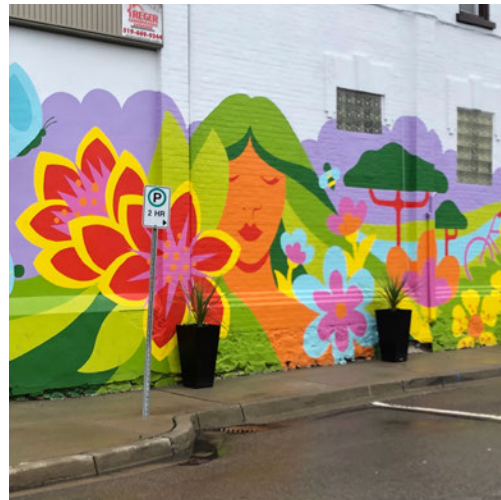
- 356 units and 130 apartments in northwest Elmira.
- 669 proposed units,
- 677 proposed units south of Church Street West (Activa),
- 36 proposed units on Union Street (Hawk Ridge Homes), and off South Parkwood Boulevard:
- 136 units in Southwood 3, 136 units in Southwood 4, and 444 proposed unit in Southwood 4.

3 Key Attributes

The Core Area of Elmira ('Downtown') is a fairly compact and walkable place today and it has several attributes that deserve a closer look and/or re-examination as they relate to making a better downtown. These include:



The library landscape; an opportunity to enhance the public realm and provide outdoor programmable space.



Wall murals; an opportunity to display the 'story' of Elmira, enhance its unique sense of place and promote public art.



Underutilized and vacant lands / sites; opportunities for intensification.



Consistent building edge / street wall along the main streets; opportunity to preserve and reinforce a pedestrian-scaled environment.



Proximity to adjacent neighbourhoods and natural areas; opportunity to promote the development of a more walkable community.



Gore Park; opportunity to develop a 'green' gateway to Downtown.



The merge lane at Arthur/Church Streets; opportunity to re-instate a place/space that prioritizes the pedestrian realm.



Large areas of surface parking lots; opportunities for redevelopment.

4 Summary of Public Engagement

One on One Conversations

One on one conversations were held as an early task in the work program.

First Workshop

A virtual public meeting was held on November 29, 2021 to present observations on the character of Elmira's Core Area streets, parks, buildings and uses, thoughts on key design considerations and important components of healthy/vibrant urban centres. An evening session was held and approximately 85 people attended.

Second Workshop

The second public workshop was held virtually on February 24, 2022 to discuss preliminary directions for downtown Elmira. An afternoon and an evening session were held and approximately 90 people attended.

Online Survey

An online survey was prepared using the content shared at the second public workshop. The survey was posted from March 9, 2022 to March 31, 2022 for participants to provide feedback on the various directions being considered for the Elmira Urban Design Study. The survey was promoted by the Township throughout the survey period.

The survey results are included throughout the report, demonstrating strong support for the urban design and streetscape concepts.

797 people responded to the survey.

The following characterizes who we heard from on the survey:

Age

- 18 and under — <1%
- 19-44 years old — 55%
- 45-60 years old — 28%
- 61 or older — 17%

Household Structure

- Family with young children — 32%
- Family with teenagers — 18%
- Young couple — 13%
- Single — 10%
- Empty Nester — 27%

Place of residence/work location

- Live in Elmira — 62%
- Live and work in Elmira — 25%
- Don't live in Elmira — 7%
- Work in Elmira — 6%

Own a business in Elmira

- Yes — 6%
- No — 94%

The following is a summary of the comments received on the emerging direction of the urban design and streetscape plan through the virtual public session and emails received following the meeting. Comments are organized by topic

Commercial & Residential Uses

- no indication of the type of businesses the plan is trying to attract or what kind of consumers, concern that changing and adding new buildings won't contribute to the success of downtown
- we have retail establishments being taken over by accountants, lawyers and other non-retail businesses
- a downtown should have a open book zoning if you want it to thrive and expand, otherwise the downtown will slowly wilt away as what is happening to Elmira
- especially support the development of mixed-use mid-rise buildings. That is, commercial on the ground floor, with residential above. And heights of 3 or maybe 4 floors at street level, with a few more levels above, but stepped back, as described in the presentation
- some concern about seeing the school property if filled in too densely and with housing that does not fit in visually
- There are schools in London ON being redeveloped into affordable housing leveraging the original buildings. Might be an idea
- Need space dedicated to or encouraging restaurants/entertainment/cultural uses

Mobility

- interested in the opportunity of closing of Wyatt at Hampton, concerned about maintaining access to the buggy shed with the closure of Wyatt Street; perhaps an alternate route would be required, or a "buggies only" route
- moving the Farmers Shed to another location will suggest to many old orders that they are not welcome in Elmira
- consider incorporating more parking at the back and side of the library; without dedicated

library parking, visitors are discouraged from visiting.

- If parking were eliminated off the Main Street, perhaps a dedicated cycling route could still be incorporated
- don't add medians, they are not safe for buggies
- still need to consider bicycle access to the shops, etc. on Arthur Street.
- bike parking off of Arthur where they can cycle down near Arthur, lock their bike and go for a walk down Arthur
- cycling route could be located on other streets parallel to Arthur; bike lanes should be off the main streets. leave more room for walkers/patios/trees and people who are spending time downtown
- I think of Arthur Street as a destination for cyclists, not an active transportation route; personally OK with not having a cycling lane on the road, it's too narrow to ever be safe to cycle on that street.
- Arthur street shops are a GREAT place to cycle to, and reduce the need for car parking.
- is there a near-term (as opposed to longer term) opportunity to eliminate the "porkchop" at the four corners and make that space more pedestrian friendly?
- if horse and buggy parking is kept, there should be no reason the Mennonites will not shop downtown

Public Art

- consider including distinctive public art sculpture, and include something that honours the First Nations, in consultation with a local Indigenous elder
- how could we recognize the community's heritage (while embracing modernity) in public art projects. There are Ontario-wide public art projects like Barn Quilt trails that could connect Elmira artistically to other communities, with a nod to Mennonite visual themes of quilting, agriculture and etc.

Public spaces

- the proposed landscaping (including hardscape) surrounding the library allows for much more effective community use of the area than is currently the case
- since the garden was installed, library staff have received complaints about the weeds and how untidy it looks
- native pollinator attracting plants can be neatly planted and maintained in designated flower beds around the perimeter of the open space in front of the library

Streetscape

- very important to have trees along the street and enhanced building facades
- silva cells should be considered for tree planting
- need bus stop shelters and E-bike rental stations

Implementation

- what supports will staff need to ensure that this plan is not forgotten?
- who is going to be in charge of doing all the maintenance on the painted roads and all the plantings (current medians just got overgrown)?

Elmira Core Area Urban Design Study

Virtual Community Information Session - 6:30pm November 29th

The Township is undertaking an urban design study of Elmira's Core Area and has retained The Planning Partnership to assist them. The Study will help the Township plan for and respond to interest in redevelopment and revitalization. The Study will look at the entire Core Area, focusing on underused land. It will consider public spaces, new buildings with a mix of uses including retail on the ground floor and residential on upper stories, building design, streets and parking. There's an opportunity to protect the historic character of Elmira to serve the residential community and to develop a unique destination to expand its role as a local economic driver for the Township.

As an early step in the process, The Planning Partnership is hosting a virtual meeting to present observations on the character of Elmira's Core Area streets, parks, buildings and uses, thoughts on key design considerations and important components of healthy/vibrant urban centres. The meeting will include time for questions and comments on opportunities for change in Elmira's Core Area.



Please [register on Eventbrite](#) to join the virtual meeting.

November 29, 2021 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

A meeting link will be sent the day before the meeting. The meeting will be recorded and posted to the Township's website.

For more information, please contact:

Jeremy Vink MCIP RPP
 Manager of Planning, Development Services
 Township of Woolwich
 jvink@woolwich.ca
 519-669-6038
 1-877-969-0094 ext. 6038

Notice for first workshop on November 29th, 2021

Elmira Core Area Urban Design Study

Virtual Community Information Session - 2:00 pm OR 6:30 pm February 24, 2022

The Township is undertaking an urban design study of Elmira's Core Area and has retained The Planning Partnership to assist them. The Study will help the Township plan for and respond to interest in redevelopment and revitalization. The Study will look at the entire Core Area, focusing on underused land. It will consider public spaces, new buildings with a mix of uses including retail on the ground floor and residential on upper stories, building design, streets and parking. There's an opportunity to protect the historic character of Elmira to serve the residential community and to develop a unique destination to expand its role as a local economic driver for the Township.

The Planning Partnership is hosting a virtual meeting to present preliminary concepts for the character of Elmira's Core Area streets, parks and buildings. Two identical sessions will be held each including time for questions and comments on the urban design and streetscape concepts being considered for Elmira's Core Area.



Please [register on Eventbrite](#) to join the virtual meeting. Both meetings are the same:

February 24, 2022
 2:00 - 3:30 pm OR
 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm

A meeting link will be sent the day before the meeting. The meeting will be recorded and posted to the Township's website.

For more information, please contact:

Deanne Friess
 Director of Development Services
 Township of Woolwich
 dfriess@woolwich.ca
 1-519-669-1647 ext. 6028

Notice for second workshop on February 24, 2022

2
3
4
5

Components to consider

Tell us if you support the key components of the Urban Design and Streetscape Study

Buildings
○○○○○

Green Space
○○○○○

Streetscape
○○○○○

Parking
○○○

Mobility
○○

Tell us if you support these key directions for new buildings.

Maple Street Infill / New Town Square

Maple Street Infill / New Town Square

Infill development along Maple Street and a new Town Square.



Do you agree with this direction? Thumbs up or thumbs down?

👍
👎

Taller Buildings
○

Street Walls
○

Ground Floor Commercial Uses
○

Gateway Buildings
○

⬇
↻

One of the screens from the Metroquest survey

5 Strategies

The key strategies for Elmira coalesce the context and attributes of the Core Area with ‘what we heard’ and today’s urban design best practices. The key strategies will help inform the Township’s future decisions regarding buildings, streets, open spaces and mobility and parking.

1 Build on the Character & History of the Downtown

This strategy recognizes the potential for future intensification of the Core Area and seeks to acknowledge, preserve and enhance the history of the community in all of its various building blocks. This includes consideration for heritage aspects in the development of new buildings, public spaces, public streets and public art.

- Identify / codify the key heritage attributes of the downtown
- Create a downtown heritage walk (signage, pavement markings, a narrative)
- Link an audio tour to the Town’s website



2 Create a Better Public Realm

This strategy seeks to accommodate cars, pedestrians, cyclists and horse and buggies within shared spaces throughout the Core Area. A better public realm means making it easier, more enjoyable for people to experience what is already there.

- Make the Core Area more pedestrian-oriented, accessible and beautiful
- Create a central public gathering / event space
- Promote shared streets
- Ensure horse and buggies are accommodated
- Create / promote a ‘River Walk’



3 Connect People to Places

This strategy seeks to connect people to other people, to the places around them (natural and built) and to the history of the place.

Developing public places should create community focal points and enhance the sense of place while streetscapes improvements should consider easy, direct and well signed connections to destinations and features in the community such as parks and trails.

The Kissing Bridge Trail is a asset to the community and should be a consistent 'green' corridor, with naturalized landscaping and signage.

The Township should also look for opportunities for other open space and trail connections, for instance, areas to accommodate a River Walk and stronger link between Bolendar and Victoria Glen Parks.

- Provide more / better connections to Kissing Bridge Trailway
- Along Riverside Drive acquire additional lands on the north to complete connections with consistent landscape (i.e. 30m landscaped swath)



4 Promote Context Sensitive Intensification in the Core Area

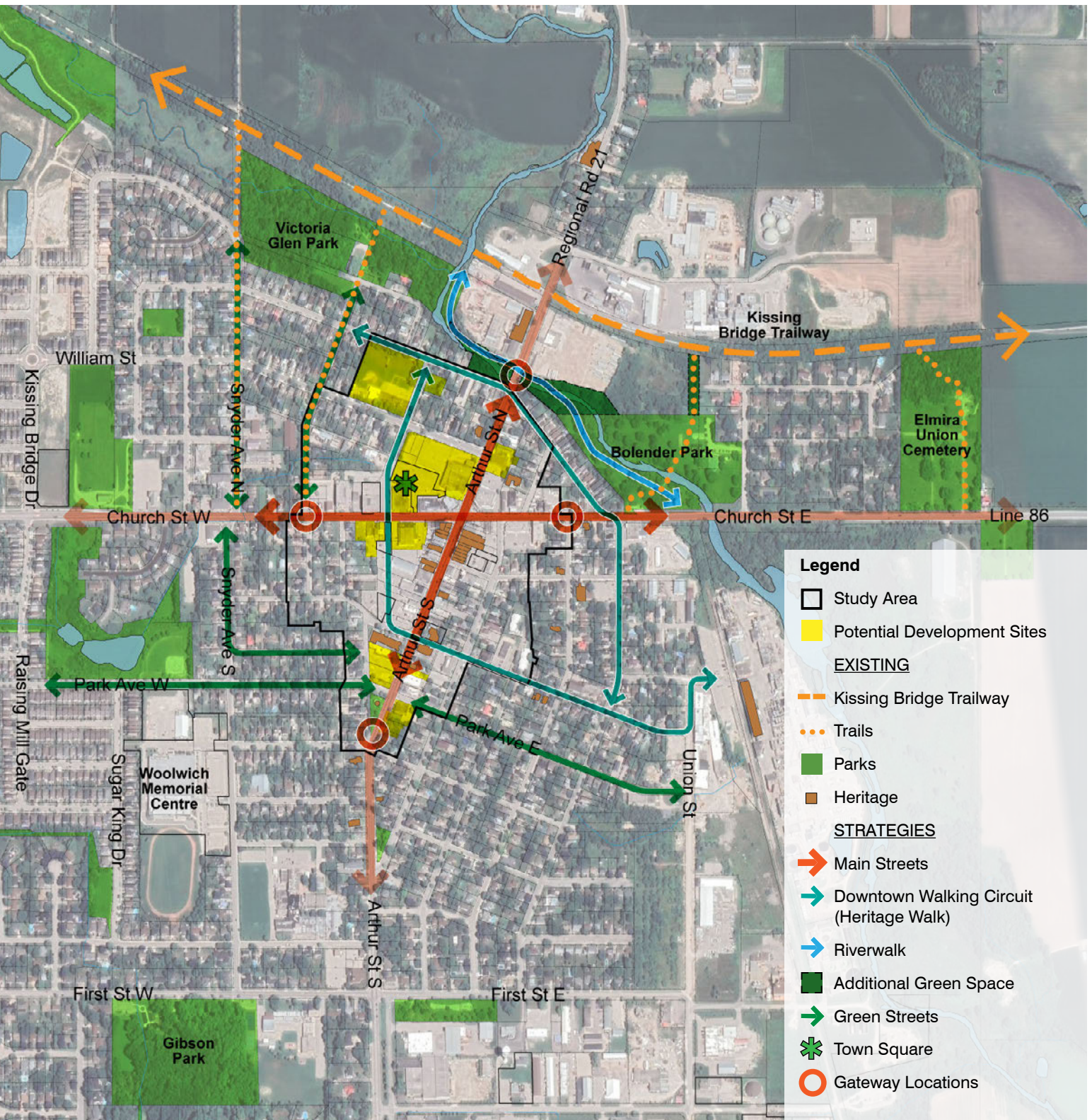
This strategy promotes the arrangement and forms of development that are knitted with the existing fabric of the community. It encourages looking at adjacent forms and uses to help establish new appropriate building forms, streetscapes and public spaces.

- Identify potential development sites - both Town-owned and privately owned (vacant, underutilized sites)
- Implement a contextual approach to height, massing and transition to adjacent neighbourhoods/uses
- Include public spaces in redevelopment scenarios



6 Framework Plan

Framework Plan



The Framework Plan is a high level diagram illustrating how the key strategies may be applied to create a connected and cohesive community fabric that highlights special locations and elements and unifies aspects of public realm and private development sites.

Potential Development Sites

Potential development sites are highlighted in yellow and generally identified sites that are underutilized and/or vacant sites as well as sites that are being considered for redevelopment (by their owners). This includes:

- The existing school property on William Street
- The Beer Store site on Wyatt Street
- Various sites on Arthur Street near Gore Park
- Various site on Church Street

Kissing Bridge Trailway

The Kissing Bridge Trailway travels for 45 km through rural communities, rivers and wetlands of southern Ontario along the right-of-way of a former railway. It connects and spans rural communities, offers a unique view of the adjacent farmland, extends into Mennonite country, and spans rivers and wetlands. The trailway is a tremendous asset in the community located within a 5 to 10 minute walk of the Core Area.

Pedestrian Network / Trails

The existing Lion's Ring Trail is a community trail network that travels along public roads, within trail blocks and through open spaces and generally skirts the Core Area. The framework plan identifies potential expansion of and additions to this trail network that includes both urban and natural components. This includes:

- a Downtown Walking Circuit which is identified as the aqua coloured lines, and travels along the Core Area streets and through the Arthur Street parking lot. The walking circuit is intended to link locations of heritage interest and landscaped public spaces. Interpretive and wayfinding signage is encouraged to be incorporated into the walking circuit.
- a Riverwalk which is identified as the blue coloured lines, and is intended to connect the Town-owned Bolendar Park and Victoria Glen by way of a boardwalk or naturalized promenade within additional green space.

- Green Streets which are identified as the green coloured lines and intended as the key existing local roads that play a role in connecting parks and open space elements in the community. These streets should be the focus and priority for streetscape enhancements, tree planting, cycling routes and the implementation of 'greening' initiatives.

Town Square

A new Town Square, which is identified as a green asterix on the existing municipal offices site is intended to introduce much needed park space in the Core Area. It is anticipated that the new 'urban park' may be created through the redevelopment of the municipal parking lot in conjunction with the redevelopment of the lands on the east side of Maple Street.

Gateway Locations

Gateway Locations, which are identified as red circles mark prominent locations within the community which are intended to be developed as 'landmarks'.

7 Urban Design Concept Plan

Building upon the foundations of the Framework Plan diagram, the Urban Design Concept Plan illustrates a scenario for the physical development of the Core Area and provides a greater degree of articulation with respect to key building blocks such as Buildings, Streetscapes, Parks & Open Space and Mobility and Parking.

Development Scenarios

The Urban Design Concept illustrates potential new buildings on underutilized and/or vacant sites as well as sites that are being considered for redevelopment (by their owners). This includes:

- The existing school property on William Street
- The Beer Store site on Wyatt Street
- Various sites on Arthur Street near Gore Park
- Various site on Church Street

The orange and yellow coloured buildings represent new residential and mixed-use buildings, with the latter containing non-residential (commercial uses) within the ground floor and residential uses on upper floors.

The survey results for the key components are included on the following page indicating support for the key components of the Plan.

- Residential development (Single-detached, Semi-detached and Townhouse forms) provides more housing in the Core Area. The former school is illustrated with homes arranged to provide front doors and porches facing the streets; a potential new park has frontage on the public street and is framed by the new homes.

- Maple Street is extended / connected to Riverside Drive and designed as a pedestrian scaled street with enhanced streetscaping.

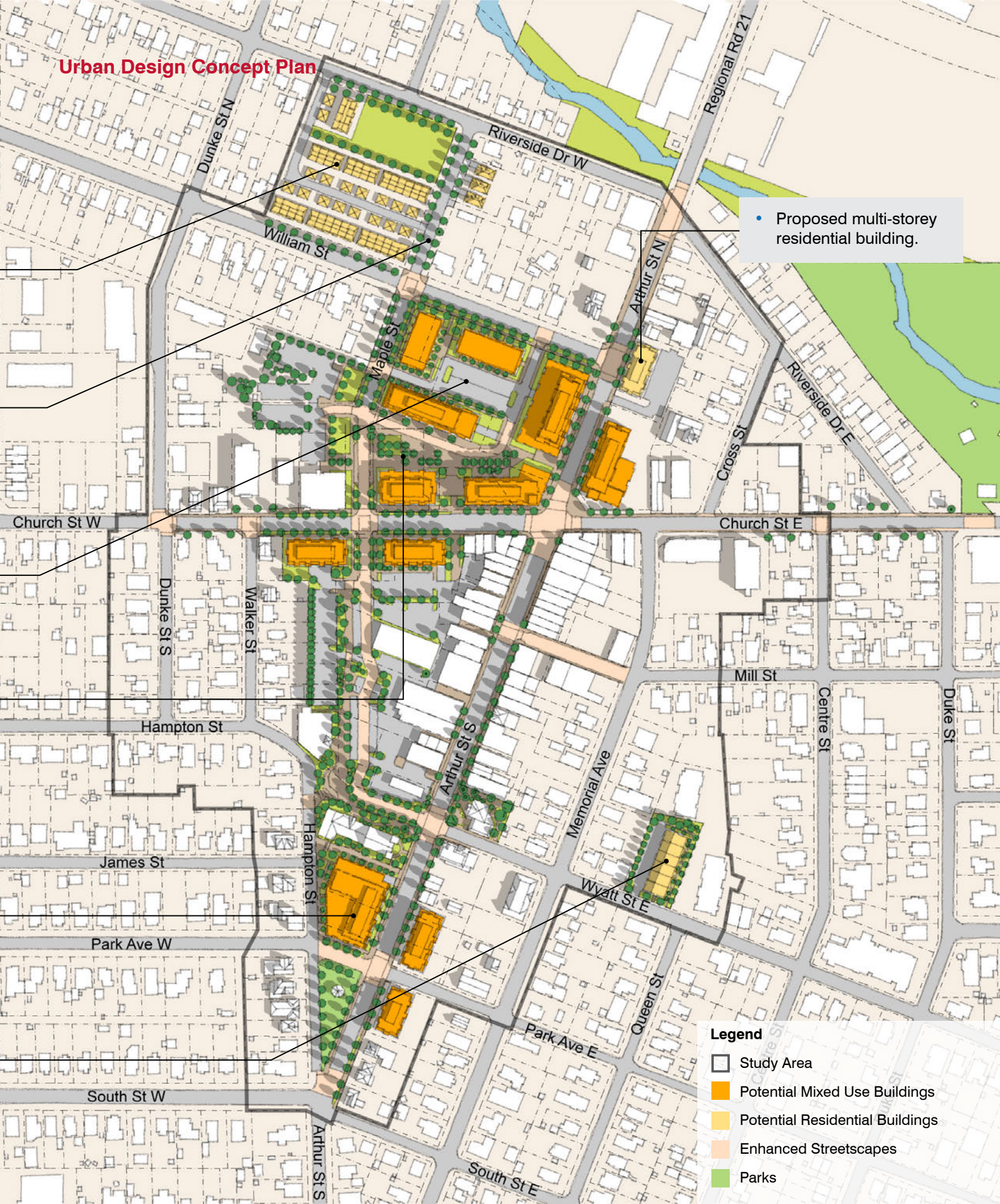
- Mixed-use development (multi-storey buildings) provides more housing and non-residential floor space (i.e. commercial, retail and community uses). Buildings are arranged to provide front doors and active uses along the streets. The ground floor to ceiling height should be 4.5 m to accommodate non-residential uses.

- A potential new park is located on the block, with frontage on Maple Street and active ground floor uses framing the space.

- Mixed-use development (multi-storey building), arranged to create front doors on Hampton Street and Park Avenue and active uses within the ground floor along Arthur Street.

- Residential development (townhouse or stacked townhouses, arranged to face the existing driveway to the east which is re-designed as a tree lined roadway.

Urban Design Concept Plan



• Proposed multi-storey residential building.

- Study Area
- Potential Mixed Use Buildings
- Potential Residential Buildings
- Enhanced Streetscapes
- Parks

New buildings should contribute to a pedestrian-oriented and pedestrian-scaled public realm



Maintain a consistent street wall along Arthur Street and Church Street with taller portions of buildings stepped back



SURVEY



Taller buildings should be focused around Arthur Street and Church Street



SURVEY



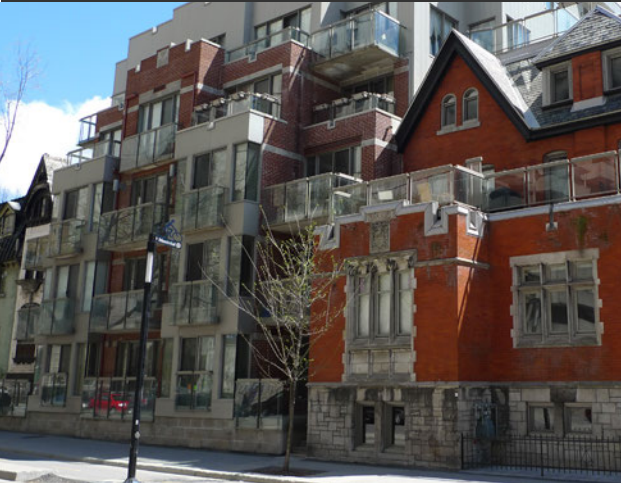
The ground floor of buildings should be designed to accommodate commercial uses (greater floor to ceiling height, open/flexible layout, glass storefronts, etc)



SURVEY



Architectural design should be sympathetic to the existing context



Buildings at gateway locations should have enhanced design, height and massing to create a landmark presence



SURVEY



Plant trees and promote greening opportunities



SURVEY
👍
97%

Create a new town / market square



Create a landscaped pedestrian walkway through the Arthur St. parking lot



SURVEY
👍
82%

Close Wyatt Street at Hampton Street to create a public parkette



SURVEY
👍
69%

Animate lanes / mid-block walkways with decorative paving, public art, special lighting



SURVEY
👍
82%

Make Mill Street shared street with enhanced design and furnishings








8 Urban Design Guidelines

(buildings, streetscapes, parks/open space, mobility/parking)



Legend

-  Study Area
-  Potential Mixed Use Buildings
-  Potential Residential Buildings
-  Enhanced Streetscapes
-  Parks

The survey asked respondents to indicate their support of the concept plan by rating it on a scale of one star (low) to five stars (high). The survey revealed strong support for the overall concept plan with 87% of the respondents rating it with 3 stars or higher.

Buildings

Placement and Orientation

- Locate buildings to front directly onto public streets and other public spaces, in order to clearly define the public realm and create an attractive and safe pedestrian environment.
- Orient buildings to frame the street edge and to create a continuous street wall.
- Site buildings at corner locations to address the intersection and for enhanced visibility, with consideration given to both street frontages.

Height & Massing

- Taller buildings may be focused around the cross roads - Arthur Street and Church Street and at Gateway locations.
- New developments fronting onto Church / Arthur Street should not to exceed 6 to 8 storeys; a step-back of 1.5m should be provided above the 3rd storey.
- Setback buildings to align with the established street wall. In general, the minimum setback allowance should be in accordance with the Town's Zoning By-law so that buildings are located as close to the street as possible to reinforce the street edge and provide a comfortable pedestrian environment.
- Avoid locating parking spaces for buildings/ development fronting onto Arthur Street and Church Street in the front yard setback space, or within the exterior side yard space on corner lots.






Height and Massing

- Allow new developments to exceed the height of existing neighbouring buildings where they achieve the urban design objectives, including the provision of appropriate rear and side transitions.
- Encourage taller buildings at strategic locations such as corner sites and other prominent sites to enhance community structure, sense of place and provide landmarks. Height and massing should provide transition to residential neighbourhoods.
- Buildings at gateway locations should be prominent landmarks and may be enhanced through relatively greater height and massing.
- Set the maximum height of buildings fronting on Arthur Street and Church Street to be no more than 8 storeys or the right-of-way of the street it fronts onto.
- Contain and articulate the massing of the building within the 45° angular planes taken from the opposite side of the right-of-way and the rear property line (project from 7.5m above grade the existing grade).
- Provide appropriate height transition between new buildings and existing buildings (side-by-side condition) by ensuring a maximum height difference of 1.5 storeys or 4.5m for the portion of the new buildings immediately adjacent to the existing building.
- Provide appropriate height and massing transition to established neighbourhoods.

Urban Design Concept Plan



Legend

-  Study Area
-  Potential Mixed Use Buildings
-  Potential Residential Buildings
-  Enhanced Streetscapes
-  Parks

Buildings

Street Wall / Streetscape

- Buildings should have doors and windows that relate to and animate the streets and public spaces.
- Create consistent and pedestrian scaled street walls in the Core Area; any taller portions of new buildings or building additions should be stepped back a minimum of 1.5 metres.
- Include active uses at grade, such as commercial, retail or office uses for buildings fronting onto main streets.
- Maintain a 2- to 3-storey street wall along the main street; taller building portions should be stepped back above the 2- to 3-storeys.
- Maintain a consistent ground floor floor-to-ceiling height along Church Street and Arthur Street (suggest 4.5m) to allow for non-residential uses at the street level, and to visually 'ground' the buildings.
- Provide architectural articulation, including the use of fenestration, bands, columns, and other repeated elements to create a façade rhythm along the streetwall.

Design

- Buildings at gateway locations should be prominent landmarks and may be enhanced through special elements and features.
- New buildings should be sympathetic to their context and character of the existing built form, including heritage buildings.
- New building designs should relate to the façade articulation of adjacent / neighbour buildings with respect to vertical and horizontal elements and the rhythm and proportions of main architectural elements.

Building Sides

- Ensure spaces between buildings (such as alleyways) are well-lit and enhanced through decorative signage, decorative paving and/or public art.
- Use the sides of buildings as signage and mural locations.
- Improve the aesthetics of building sides with creative lighting techniques and well-designed finishes, material, and colour selections.

Shopfront Signage

- Locate and design signage to reflect the heritage character of the streetscape, while allowing for the creativity of individual businesses. Encourage diversity in storefront signage to create shopfronts with "personality".
- Encourage artistic expression and imagination.
- Favour fascia signs, window signs and signs hanging perpendicular to the building façade as the primary types of signage to be used. Sidewalk retailing and portable sidewalk signs are also encouraged to create vibrancy and interest along the streetscape.
- Provide attractive, durable, easy to read signage that complements the overall façade design.
- Design pedestrian scaled signage and signage that is proportionate to the scale of the building.
- Locate signs outside of the pedestrian right-of-way and if located over pedestrian areas, with a minimum clearance of 2.4- to 3.0m from grade.
- Avoid signage that obscures windows, doors or architectural features.

Streetscapes

Streets are far more than just transportation routes; they are unique public spaces that function as both corridors for movement and community living spaces. They are places where much of the social activities, community interactions and wide variety of recreation happen. They are used by cars, bicycles, pedestrians as well as public transportation and different modes of active transportation.

As such, all streets must efficiently serve their role in linking places, accommodate a variety of modes of transportation in a way that is safe and inviting for people of all ages and abilities and be designed as vibrant and safe community spaces.

- Maple Street is extended / connected to Riverside Drive and designed as a pedestrian scaled street with enhanced streetscaping.

- Proposed multi-storey residential building.

- Maple Street redesigned as a pedestrian-friendly street, with enhanced pavement building face to face and enhanced streetscape elements.

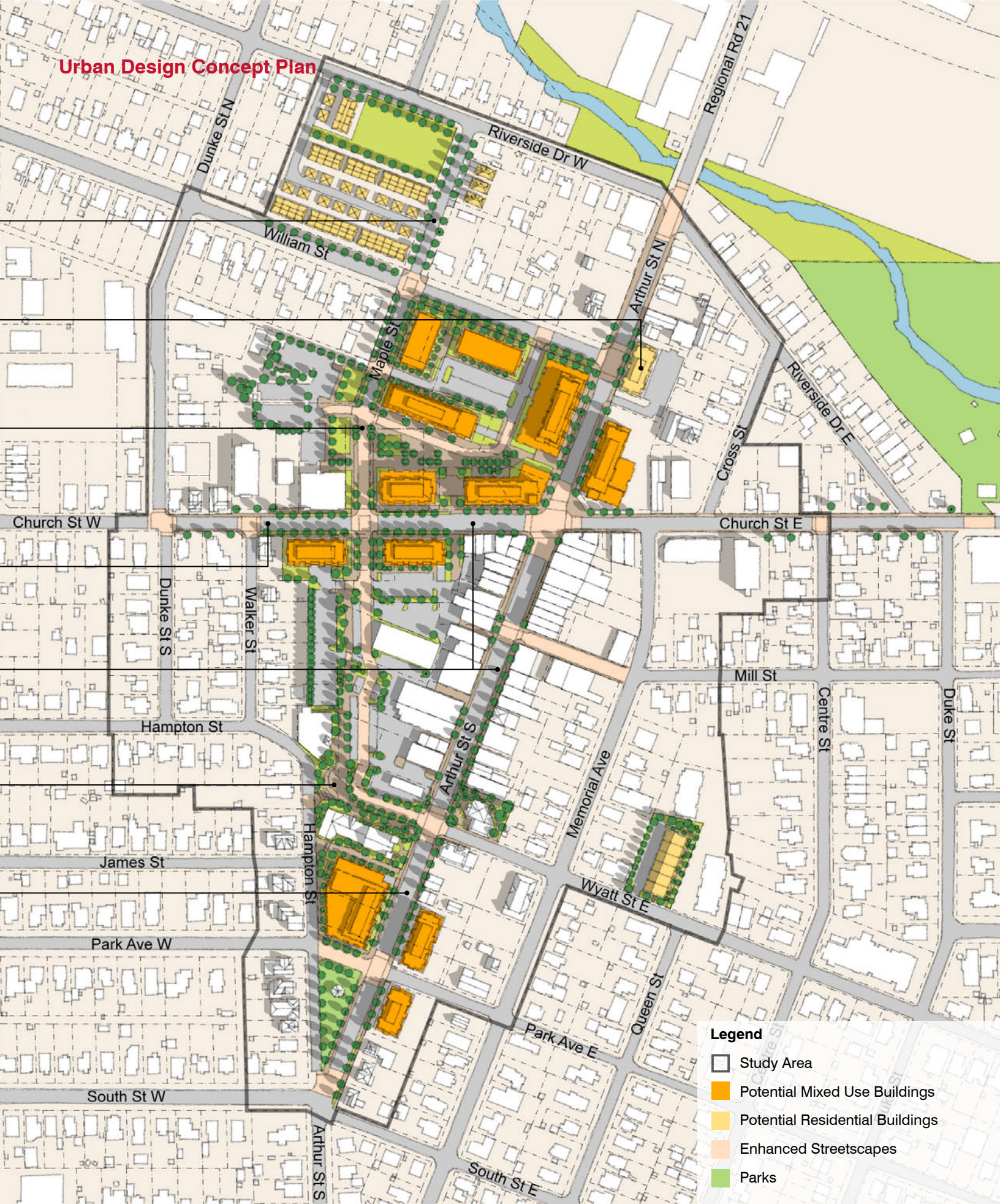
- Planned upgrades to Church Street by the Region will consider public input and the recommendations of this Plan.

- Streetscape enhancements along Arthur Street and Church Street to incorporate a combination of the 10 Key Elements.

- Potential closure of Wyatt Street between Hampton Street and the existing parking lot entrance to create a pedestrian node / open space element.

- Planned upgrades to Arthur Street by the Region will consider public input and the recommendations of this Plan.

Urban Design Concept Plan



- Legend**
- Study Area
 - Potential Mixed Use Buildings
 - Potential Residential Buildings
 - Enhanced Streetscapes
 - Parks

Streetscape Elements



1 Special Treatment at Intersections

- special painting or paving at crosswalks and intersections for traffic calming



2 Flexible zone for parking / patios

- vehicle parking zone paved with distinctive treatment and at same elevation (flush) with sidewalk allows smooth transition to patio/cafes and other uses during events
- sidewalk/flexible zone elevation may be raised from the vehicular elevation with a roll curb, or flush



Special Treatment at Intersections

- Consider special pavement treatments to enhance and highlight key areas in the Core Area, areas of high pedestrian activity, pedestrian crossings, and trail entrances; this may include textured, coloured and raised pavements.
- Encourage narrow pavement widths to promote slower traffic speeds and provide for tighter, more pedestrian friendly environments.
- Encourage bump-out elements that also provide opportunities for expanded sidewalks and landscape areas, particularly at intersections for safer pedestrian crossings.

Flexible Zone for Parking / Patios

- Encourage on-street parking to:
 - Support commercial areas by providing additional parking options;
 - Make streets safer by creating a buffer between travel lanes and sidewalks;
- Provide for additional parking options in residential areas (while discouraging the widening of driveways in front yards).
- Provide on-street parking on at least one-side of collector roads, wherever feasible.

3 Sidewalks

- sidewalks paved with unit pavers emphasize pedestrian priority and placemaking



4 Furnishing and lighting

- use a consistent street furniture and lighting palette



Sidewalks

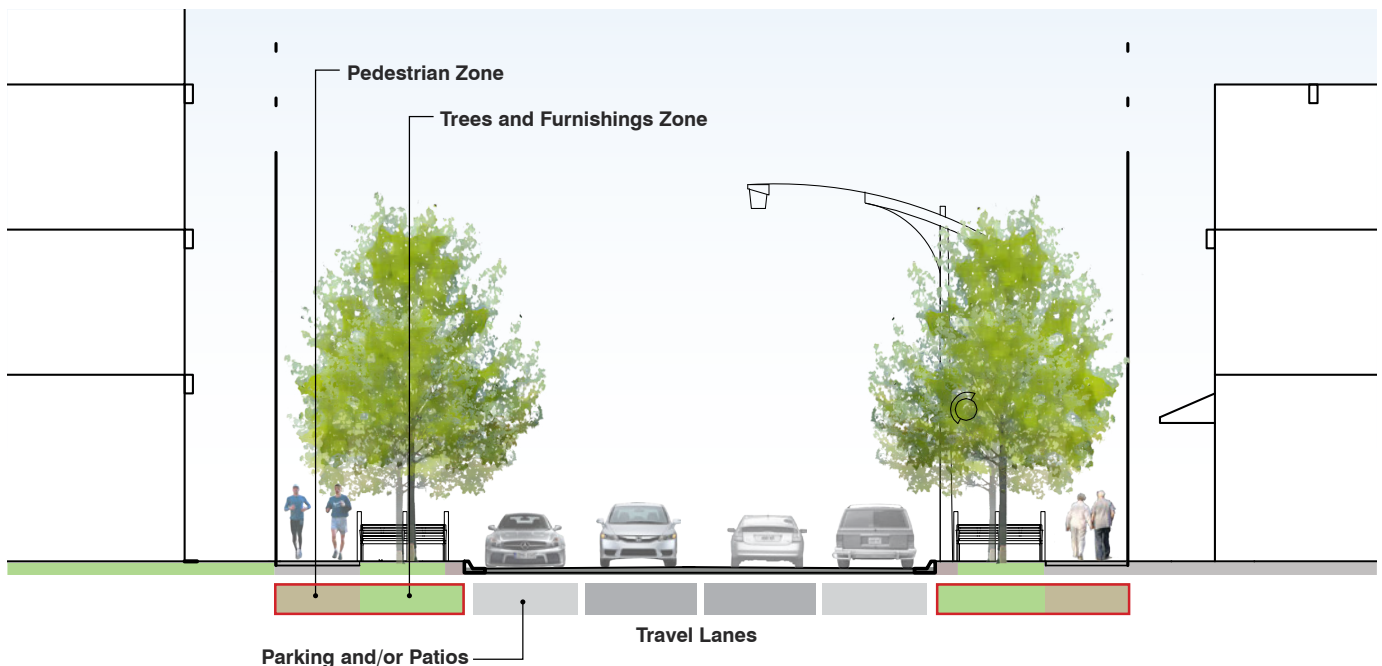
- Provide sidewalks on both sides of the street.
- Sidewalk widths should be:
 - 1.5m wide minimum on local streets
 - 2.1m wide minimum on primary streets
 - 2.4m on main streets in Core Area
- Sidewalks should be barrier-free and include sensory (e.g. audio, tactile or visual) indicators and/ or special paving treatments at major intersections as well as elsewhere in areas regularly frequented by pedestrians.
- For main streets where commercial / retail uses are located in the ground floor of buildings, establish a pedestrian 'clear way' that extends a minimum of 2.0m from the face of the building.

Furnishings and Lighting

- Establish a coordinated and consistent family of street furnishings that includes benches, bicycle lock-ups, waste/recycling receptacles, pedestrian lighting (poles and bollards), traffic bollards.
- While a distinct family of street furnishings should enhance the character of the community, it should

also be contemporary in style, neutral in colour, and consistent in materiality to complement the variety of buildings that make up the community.

- Locate street furniture outside of the established pedestrian clear way, with the street furnishings zone to allow for safe, unencumbered pedestrian movement.
- Street furnishings should be high-quality, durable, easy to maintain and vandal-resistant.
- Incorporate additional elements such as planters, signage and wayfinding elements, as well as seating to enhance pedestrian areas.
- Locate and maintain street furnishings to be accessible all year round; ensure that they are oriented away from traffic and private areas.
- Lighting of public areas shall incorporate Dark Sky lighting standards, principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and mitigate light 'spill over' onto adjacent public and private spaces.
- Pedestrian-scaled lighting elements should be provided in pedestrian areas.



Context Sensitive Regional Transportation Corridor Design Guidelines - Constrained Main Street Condition



5 Proper tree planting

- trees require access to enough non-compacted soil to grow and survive in an urban condition
- trees in urban condition must be planted in structural soil or using soil cells providing 30 cubic metres of soil per tree of soil



6 Gateway at Gore Park

- create a gateway feature with signage, or public art at the south end of Gore Park



Proper Tree Planting

The redevelopment and enhancement of the Core Area presents an opportunity for Town to expand the urban canopy cover and to promote a greener community. This approach should be considered in the detailed design and implementation of the streets, parks and other open spaces throughout the Core Area and be based on an ecological, context responsive approach to planting species that considers species diversity and resilience, canopy form and cover, and pollution, salt and drought tolerance.

- Healthy, mature, tree lined streets should be developed throughout the community.
- All streets should have large canopy deciduous trees planted on both sides of the road within the boulevard, spaced between 6m to 8m apart, wherever possible.
- Street tree species selection shall promote sustainability and resiliency; street trees species shall be native, salt-tolerant, drought-tolerant, and disease and mold resistant.
- Placement and spacing of streets trees shall be coordinated with above and below ground utilities and driveways and accommodate snow storage.
- Appropriate soil conditions, composition and volumes should be provided to support the tree growth and health.

In subsequent stages of detailed design and approvals, the following should be considered:

- Planting areas above any below ground structures will be contained within raised planters that are no higher than 500mm from finished grade, in order to accommodate opportunities for seating.
- Plant smaller form trees in raised planter areas.
- All new streets should be planted with large canopy trees. Planting areas with soil volumes restricted by paving or other hardscaping should incorporate site specific strategies to create connected soil volumes, such as suspended pavement over non-compacted soil, structural soils and root paths. Suspended pavements can be supported by modular systems (“soil cells”), or custom details such

as precast concrete pavement supported by concrete piers. Soil cells and other suspended soil systems should be reviewed and stamped by a professional engineer.

- Typically, consolidated planting areas are preferred as they provide more resources to trees than individual tree pits.

Gateway at Gore Park

The prominent and strategic location of the existing park provides the opportunity to create a gateway feature in this location and the following should be considered:

- Create a double allee of trees along the Arthur Street frontage.
- Introduce special pavement / pavement markings within the roadway of the Arthur Street frontage
- Introduce a public art component at the south end of the park (the tip of the triangle).

9 Wayfinding & Signage

- create a standardized sign system throughout the downtown
- wayfinding kiosks at key places - town square, library square, etc.



10 Parking

- include signs to parking at every intersection
- introduce clear signage for public parking with standardized signs for public and owner/tenant parking
- print maps of parking and have maps available in every store and at Municipal Office



Wayfinding & Signage

Wayfinding and signage helps to orient people to key destinations (such as parks, Core Areas, historic sites), parking and amenities (such as washrooms) using maps, directional signs, identifier signs and interpretive panels. This is imperative to ensure enjoyable visitor experiences where people are comfortable to explore all that Elmira has to offer walking, driving, or cycling. Wayfinding and signage is based on an intent to:

- Support local business;
- Enhance awareness of key destinations; and,
- Facilitate clarity and ease of movement among key destinations.

A hierarchy of wayfinding could include:

- Consolidating the direction to multiple destinations in Directional Signs for motorists and pedestrians.
- Providing a collection of information such as a map showing parking, key destinations and walking radius in an Information Kiosk or on a pedestal.
- Providing information on historic, cultural or environmental features on Interpretive Signs at key destinations.
- Identifying key destinations such as parks, and municipal buildings in a Destination Sign.

Parking

Parking is one of many elements that is needed for retail commercial areas to thrive. Finding the right balance will be critical to informing decisions on streetscape improvements, specifically whether to use the very limited space in the right-of-way to make space for cars, or pedestrians or to accommodate increased tree planting and landscape.





- Large expanses of surface parking should be broken up with buildings and landscaping to reduce their visual prominence. \
- Provide at least one active frontage containing a high proportion of clear glazing to building edges that face surface parking areas.
- Where existing parking areas are adjacent to the sidewalk, a landscaped area should be located between parking spaces and the sidewalk, providing a clear sight lines at eye level.
- Include pedestrian-scaled lighting, walkways,

landscaping, and signage to enhance pedestrian safety, movement and comfort through parking lots to the adjacent sidewalks.

- Ensure parking areas are adequately lit at night. Prohibit light spill from these areas to adjacent residential areas.
- Parking areas should be shared between adjoining facilities.
- Provide multiple entry and exit points from streets to off-street surface parking.
- Locate service bays, site storage and access points for waste collection out of sight from public spaces, streets and residential areas. Use measures to provide buffers such as appropriate landscaping to reduce the visual impacts on adjoining sensitive uses.
- Lighting of loading and storage areas should be designed so that there is no light that spills, glares or casts over adjacent residential areas.
- To maximize space efficiencies, service and utility areas should be shared between different users within a single building, or, wherever possible, between different buildings.
- Continue to accept cash-in-lieu of parking, consolidate funds and provide parking when opportunities arise.
- Encourage shared parking in private off street parking areas and improve the design and layout of spaces to maximize parking.
- Enhance wayfinding and signage to identify the direction to and location of public parking, the surrounding amenities and walking distance.
- Provide well placed maps to identify the location of parking, nearby amenities and attractions and walking distances.
- Provide maps showing parking available in all businesses.
- Provide information to explain a priority given to pedestrians, healthy active living and generally encouraging walking.
- Identify opportunities to secure public parking when redevelopment of larger parcels occurs by working in partnership with private developers and property owners.

Arthur Street Streetscape

Legend

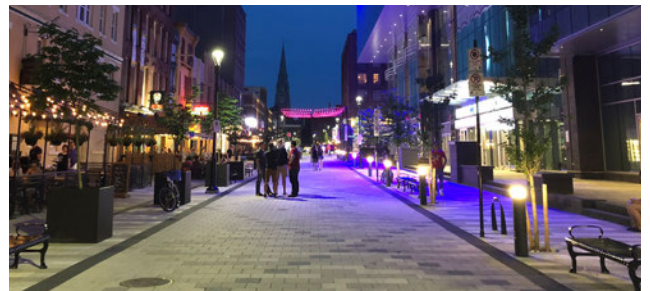
-  Special Roadway Treatment
-  Pedestrian/Flex Zones
-  Soft Landscaping
-  Street Trees

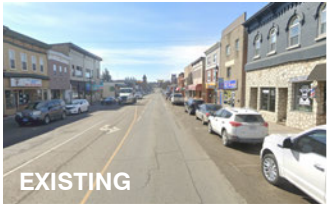


The ultimate reconstruction of Arthur Street by the Region will provide the opportunity to create an enhanced streetscape and pedestrian zone. The Region's preliminary concepts identify the addition of bike lanes on either side of the roadway adjacent to on-street parking areas. Although it is acknowledged that bike lanes are an important component of active transportation, their addition to the downtown takes away from the ability to create an enhanced streetscape and pedestrian zone. Therefore, this study recommends that the proposed bike lanes are relocated to an alternate route through the downtown, where main street activities are not focused and where potential cyclist / pedestrian conflict may be minimized.

Instead, the following are recommended:

- Create bump-out areas in key locations (requires re-design of the on-street parking spaces), to allow for tree planting areas. In combination with a narrower roadway, the pedestrian sidewalk may be widened to accommodate a pedestrian clearway as well as areas for seating and street furnishings.
- Designs should allow the on-street parking spaces and adjacent pedestrian zones to accommodate options for seasonal and/or permanent patios.
- Design Mill Street as a permanent shared street with the introduction of special paving, pavement markings, landscaping, lighting, furnishings and public art, while still allowing traffic flow.
- Plant street trees in significant boulevard areas, on both sides of the street (bump out areas) where minimum volumes of soil can be achieved (30 cubic meters per tree).
- Design key intersections and portions of streets (within both the roadway and pedestrian areas) with special paving.





Arthur Street Streetscape (Short Term)

The reconstruction of Arthur Street will provide the opportunity to create an enhanced streetscape. However, in the intervening period the street zone along Arthur Street can also be made more beautiful and functional with interim streetscape enhancements. Subject to the Town, the BIA and the Region, these may include:



- Patios / spill out space built over existing on-street parking spaces; this could include wood decking or painted paving defined by planters and/or other barriers.

- Movable planters and seating (muskoka chairs) placed along blank building walls and/or arranged to create patios in key locations and where space permits.

- Special paving designs at key intersection which could include the roadway portion of the intersection as well as the above curb pedestrian sidewalk. For example, designs could be created using coloured paint on top of the existing paving material, stamped pattern on top of the existing roadway asphalt or a patterned thermalplastic inlay into the existing roadway asphalt.

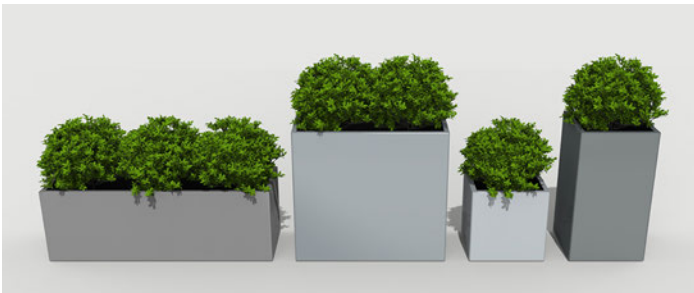
Legend

- Special Roadway Treatment
- Pedestrian/Flex Zones
- Soft Landscaping
- Street Trees

Patios / spill out space



Planters and movable seating



Special roadway treatment



Parks / Open Space

A connected network of Parks, Open Space, Trails and Natural Areas contribute significantly to creating healthy, livable communities. These features and amenities enhance ecological sustainability and resiliency and provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction and active transportation.

- Parkette - a new public open space created through the redevelopment of the former school site.

- Riverwalk - a paved and landscaped boardwalk or pathway linking Bolender Park with Victoria Glen.

- Town Square / Farmer's Market - a new public open space created through the redesign of the existing municipal parking lot and replacement of parking elsewhere in the vicinity.

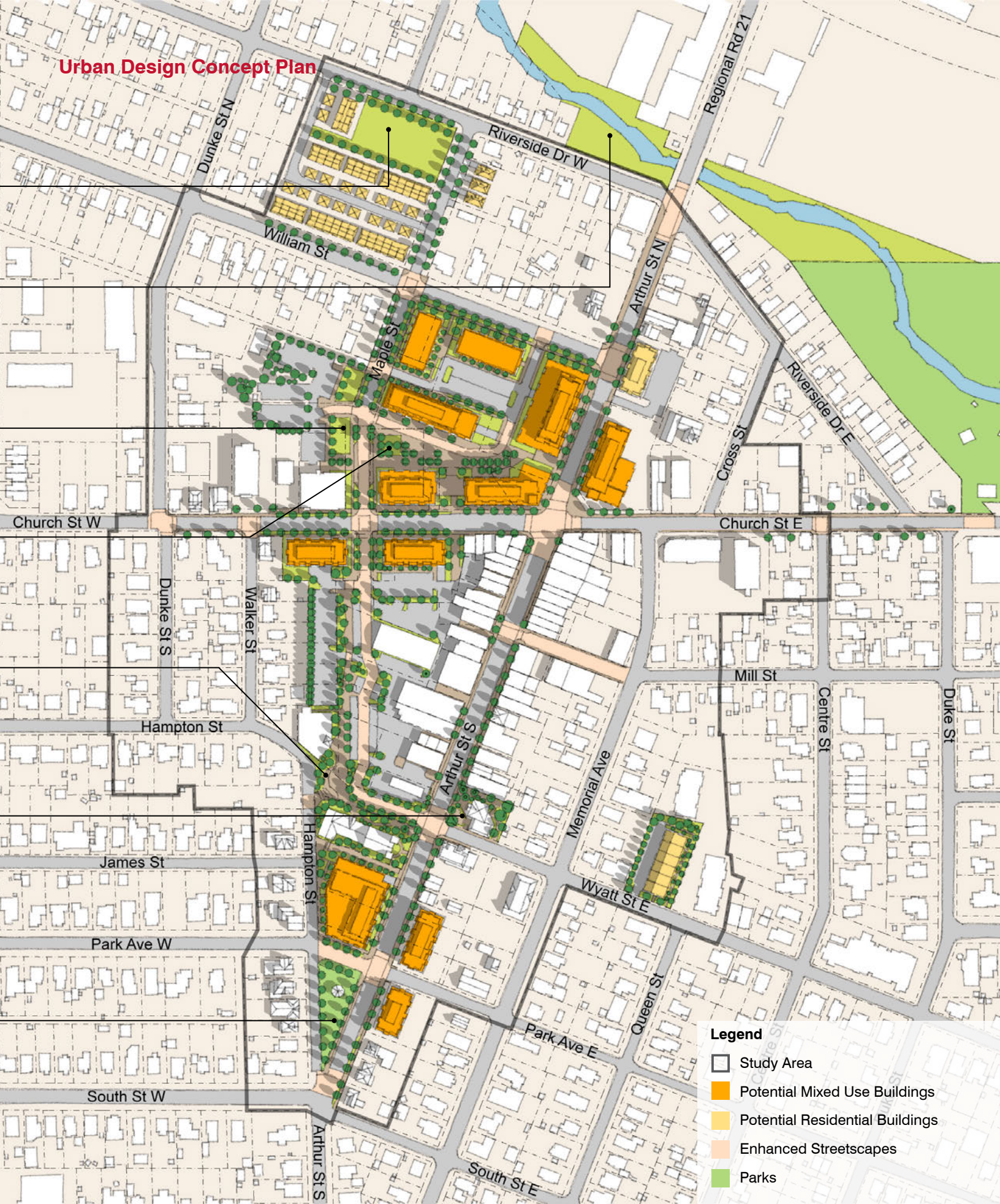
- Urban Parkette - a new public open space created through the development of the block.

- 'The Steps' - a new public space created through the permanent closure of a portion of Wyatt Street East.

- Library Square - an existing public space that may be re-imagined as an urban square.

- Gore Park - a revitalized existing park.

Urban Design Concept Plan



Riverwalk / Promenade

- Create a paved and accessible link between Bolender Park and Victoria Glen alongside the river and connect it to the surrounding streets and open space areas.
- Connect the Riverwalk to the Kissing Bridge Trail via existing trails.
- Provide buffers along the Riverwalk that align with watercourses, woodlots or other sensitive natural areas and features.
- Provide trail entrances at the intersections of Riverwalk with the street R.O.W and consider incorporating site furniture enhanced streetscaping in these locations.
- Avoid locating trails in low-lying areas. Where they do occur implement boardwalks, bridges, culverts and swales as support systems.
- The Riverwalk should be a fully paved pathway of a minimum 3.0m wide and incorporate:
 - Trail signage at the entrances.
 - Rest stops, interpretive signage and seating.
 - Naturalized landscaping including shade trees and native plantings.



• Locate parking along one side of the Town Square to accommodate vehicles for events such as the Farmer’s Market, food and music festivals, etc.

• Create a large, flexible open area that can accommodate a variety of daily activities as well as special events.

• Provide generous paved walkways connected to sidewalks and building entrances.

• Special paving treatment that extends across the street (pedestrian and vehicular areas), to enhanced the ‘shared’ use of the space.

• Reconfigure and potentially expand the existing parking lot.

• Design Maple Street as a ‘shared’ street.

• Align the intersection north and south of Church Street.

Town Square



The creation of a new Town Square (approximately 800 square metres / 0.08 hectares / 0.2 acres in size) on the Municipal property would provide much needed public gathering / event space in the Core Area. The concept plan and rendering illustrates a possible comprehensive design for the space that includes Maple Street and the block on the east side.

- Potential additional park space.
- New park space on the existing Municipal property.

Library Square

The redesign of the existing space in front of the library would create more usable and programmable space for the library and enhance the public realm in the Core Area.

The concept plan and rendering illustrates a possible design for the space. This would include:

- Create an open paved plaza area that can accommodate a variety of programmed activities as well as special events.

- Preserve existing mature trees.

- Introduce special paving treatment that extends across the street (pedestrian and vehicular areas).





- Provide movable outdoor furniture (tables and chairs) in the space to encourage visitors to use the space more organically.

- Delineate the space with low planters wall that can also function as seat walls.

- Connect the front and back spaces with a walkway

- Create a outdoor room / amphitheatre with places to sit and gather and an accessible ramp to the lower level. Weave the stepped seating with planted terraces.



Parkette

Parkettes are less than 1.0 hectare in size, serve sub-neighbourhoods and are generally accessible within a 5-minute walk (400m max.). The potential redevelopment of the school site may include a small park. In that scenario, the park design should consider:

- Framing the parkette with streets or front doors and porches of dwellings to create visually attractive 'edges' and provide eyes-on the park.
- Ensuring that there is public street frontage along at least two sides of the space.
- Ensuring a seamless and coordinated design with the abutting streetscape. This may include ensuring that sidewalks / walkways are not duplicated, street trees and park trees work together to create a regular rhythm of shade for pedestrians, entrances and pathways respond to desire lines.

Urban Parkette

Urban Parkettes are small urban spaces located within more densely developed areas and are generally less than 0.5 hectares in size; these are intended to serve visitors and businesses within a 2 to 5 minute walk. The following should be considered:

- Locate and design urban parkettes to support and enhance surrounding uses.
- Arrange the adjacent built form to frame and animate the space with active ground floor uses, doors and windows.
- Provide mid-block pedestrian connections and landscape walkways to link to urban parkettes.



Mobility / Parking

Parking is always the first item to come up in any conversation about an urban area. There is never enough parking and there's never enough in the "right" location. Finding the correct balance of parking is the challenge as choices are required in determining the best allocation of the limited space for pedestrians, landscape planting and cars. The Project for Public Spaces is a central hub of global place-making connecting people to ideas and resources. For 40 years they have helped to transform places in 3,000 communities in 47 countries. Project for Public Spaces says:

"nobody goes to a place because it has parking" ; and

"the current obsession with parking is one of the biggest obstacles to achieving livable cities and towns"

There are choices to be made in Elmira as streets are improved in the coming years and redevelopment of key areas occurs.

The Urban Design Study aims to put pedestrians first in the Elmira Core. There is no question that parking supports business, but it is also important to consider the role of safe pedestrian routes, and public space for families and friends to meet in supporting business as well.

Streets are far more than just transportation routes; they are unique public spaces that function as both corridors for movement and community living spaces. They are places where much of the social activities, community interactions and wide variety of recreation happen. They are used by cars, bicycles, pedestrians as well as public transportation and different modes of active transportation.

As such, all streets must efficiently serve their role in linking places, accommodate a variety of modes of transportation in a way that is safe and inviting for people of all ages and abilities and be designed as vibrant and safe community spaces.

Finding the right balance will be critical to informing decisions on streetscape improvements, specifically whether to use the very limited space

in the right-of-way to make space for cars, or pedestrians and increased tree planting and landscape.

The Elmira Core area currently has a total of about 920 parking spaces on private land that are accessible by the general public, as well as 210 parking spaces on Township-owned land and 125 marked on-street parking spaces, for a total of over 1,250 spaces. This is comparable to some other smaller Ontario urban centres that experience high tourist activity.

	Parking Spots	Parking Spots per Acre
Elmira	1,250	18.7
Port Dover	1,389	23
Stratford	1,096	27
Port Credit	2,209	24
Huntsville	895	24
Kincardine	1,144	18
Cobourg	2,238	18
Listowel	1,064	17.5
Georgetown	524	15.5

Comparison of parking in smaller Ontario urban centres

Introduce traffic calming elements in the Core Area



SURVEY



Limit surface parking lots along the main streets



SURVEY



Shift the dedicated cycling route off of Arthur Street



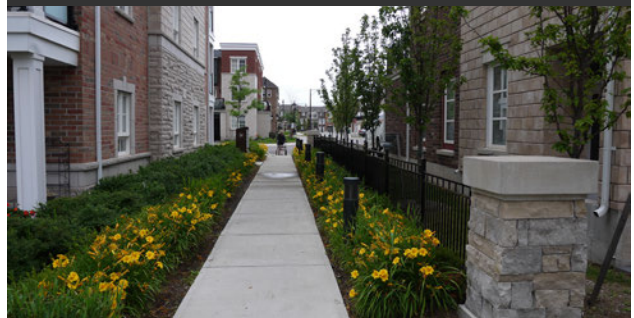
Provide a mix of parking options



SURVEY



Large sites should provide mid-block pedestrian connections

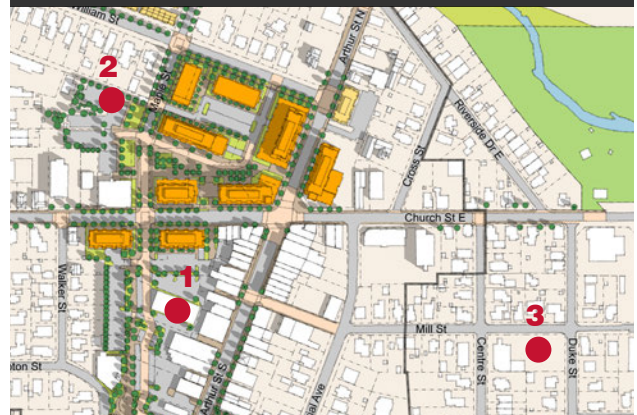


SURVEY



Provide for horse & buggy parking:

- 1) maintain existing structure in the Arthur Street lot
- 2) consider opportunity for a new structure north of the municipal site
- 3) consider opportunity to dedicate the Mill St. and Duke St. lot to horse & buggy parking only



Mobility / Parking

The urban design concept illustrates approximately 360 public parking spaces comprised of 90 on-street parking spaces, 165 spaces in the central lot (with potential to expand by 15 spaces with acquisition of adjacent properties), and approximately 60 spaces in the Municipal lot (with potential to expand by approximately 30 spaces). Redevelopment will be required to provide parking when there may be the potential to secure additional public parking. Parking and storage for horses and buggies must continue to be provided in the Core Area.

The parking strategy is comprised of a number of initiatives:

- 1 Continue to provide on and off street parking distributed across the Elmira Core, with accessible parking spaces clearly marked.
- 2 Encourage shared parking in private off street parking areas and improve the design and layout of spaces to maximize parking.
- 3 Enhance wayfinding and signage to identify the direction to and location of public parking, the surrounding amenities and walking distance.
- 4 Provide well placed maps in the Elmira Core to identify the location of parking, nearby amenities and attractions and walking distances.
- 5 Provide maps showing parking available in all businesses.
- 6 Provide information to explain that priority is given to pedestrians, healthy active living and generally encouraging walking.
- 7 Identify opportunities to secure public parking when redevelopment of larger parcels occurs by working in partnership with private developers and property owners.
- 8 Identify areas that could be used for temporary/event parking on the relatively few days when car parking is in high demand.
- 9 Accept cash-in-lieu of parking, consolidate funds and provide parking when opportunities arise.
- 10 Enhance awareness of parking apps, such as Rover, that enable residents to rent out parking spaces on their driveways.

- Consider rear-lane accessed garages / parking for low-rise housing forms.

- New developments are required to provide and contain parking for residential and non-residential uses on site. building.

- Municipal parking lot to be redesigned to accommodate a new Town Square; any loss of parking should be replaced in the area.

- Mid-Block pedestrian connections should be provided on larger blocks.

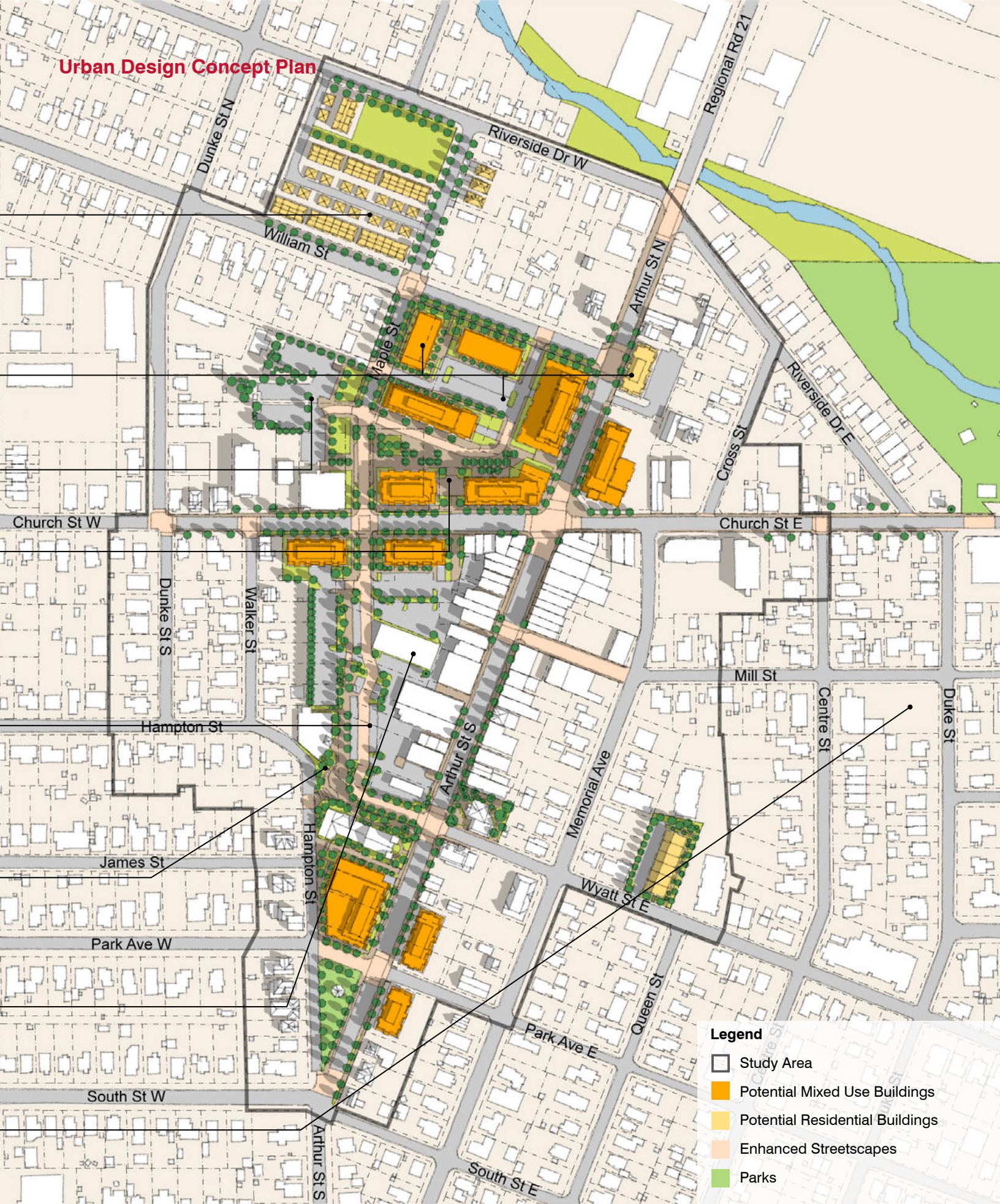
- The Arthur Street parking lot is made up of various private and publicly leased parking spaces behind the main street businesses. Consider redesigning this area to provide a continuous landscaped pedestrian link connecting Wyatt Street and Maple Street. This could include introducing permeable paving, bioswales and landscaping.

- Permanently close a portion of Wyatt Street to facilitate the creation of the pedestrian link and create a small public space with terraced seating that takes advantage of the grade change and promotes vistas of the library intersection.

- Existing horse and buggy parking / storage.

- Convert existing municipal parking lot to potentially provide horse and buggy parking / storage.

Urban Design Concept Plan



- Study Area
- Potential Mixed Use Buildings
- Potential Residential Buildings
- Enhanced Streetscapes
- Parks

7 Policy & Zoning Considerations

The Township of Woolwich Official Plan (2012) has specific policies for the Elmira Settlement Area. The Settlement Area includes a large area and includes the Core Area, generally in the north east portion. While the policies are directing growth only to 2016, many provide the framework for the Urban Design Study of Downtown Elmira.

One of the goals of the policy is to integrate future development in a way that ensures that proposals contribute to a desirable community form and structure, which maintains the traditional development pattern of a small Ontario town, with minimal disruption to existing residents. Goals also speak to the intention to create a healthy community, promote sustainable urban development, encourage multiple uses of land where different uses can exist harmoniously, and to conserve heritage and natural features.

Objectives address the intention to accommodate residential intensification through infill, conversion and redevelopment. The Core Area is to be promoted as the commercial and service focus through development, redevelopment and expansion to accommodate higher order commercial uses and services. Across the Settlement Area, an integrated open space system is to be encouraged with the development of a linear parks system with pedestrian and cycling paths to link parks and other open spaces. Priority is to be given to the maintenance and enhancement of natural features and environmental systems.

The Commercial policies identify specific direction for the Core Area. It is to be the primary commercial, service and office area for the Elmira Settlement Area. Mixed residential and commercial development is to be encouraged, along with streetscape and façade improvements to achieve an enhanced landscape, sidewalks, lighting, signage and seating. Policies allow for cash-in-lieu of parking. Policies provide direction

that through Site Plan Approval, the Township will require that street level commercial buildings include elements to encourage pedestrian oriented design with:

- a clearly defined entrance to the street,
- 30% of the ground level façade and side on public streets comprising windows and doors
- handicapped accessibility
- Corner buildings facing Arthur Street or Church Street.

Elmira's Core Area is an excellent location for the provision of higher density housing in a mixed use form with retail and service commercial at grade. With more people living in the Core Area, will come the demand for more commercial and retail uses, and the potential for a thriving main street.

It is important to understand how appropriate design responses can be "encouraged" as set out in the policy.

There is no single activity or factor that will ensure Elmira's success in achieving desired change. Intensification is an inherently complex process, carried out over many years by many actors, both public and private. However, experience in other jurisdictions suggests that sustaining a successful evolution requires that the Township lead the way. The private sector will respond only when a clear and substantial level of commitment is established by the public sector. There are typically three crucial elements of public sector commitment that are required. The following diagram illustrates a "turbine of change" requiring three distinct actions: establish the environment for change, reduce the cost of new development/redevelopment and reduce the risk of the development approval process.

Establish the Environment for Change

Establishing the environment for change begins by having a clearly stated and supported vision for what the Township is seeking to achieve. This Urban Design Study will help to fulfill this role, along with other municipal documents, such as the Community Improvement Plan, Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

Public sector investment in the Core Area with respect to streetscape improvements, park spaces and the building or improvement of public buildings/facilities sends an important message of commitment to the development industry.

A supportive administrative structure and strong political will are also important in helping to remove confusion, and in supporting the

environment for change – the Urban Design Study sets a long-term direction that will span multiple council terms.

It is critical to plan for public sector improvements that reinforce the collective vision and achieve specific goals along the way. Public sector improvements can be a catalyst for private sector investment.

Importantly, and while the Township can take the lead, the achievement of future success is a shared responsibility. The Region of Waterloo, Business Improvement Association, local business owners and property owners must all work together to ensure that Township-led initiatives result in an appropriate response from all of the community stakeholders.



Diagram illustrating a "turbine of change"

Reduce the Risk

Reducing the risks of the planning approvals process is necessary because the development industry is typically conservative, and averse to risk. The public sector needs to promote and champion private sector development that achieves the vision for Elmira's Core Area. The private sector must understand the Township's direction, and be confident that their projects – when in conformity with the Township's direction – can and will be approved quickly. As part of this, it is important to get all Township departments on one page: planning, engineering, public works, environment - so the private sector gets the same message from everyone.

A key element needed to achieve this is ensuring that the Official Plan and Zoning By-law facilitate the desired forms of development. The Township must focus on facilitation, rather than a highly regulatory approach. This means more flexibility in policies and procedures so long as the vision is achieved.

More precision in defining the desired built forms, transition elements and mix of land uses within the Core Area would:

- Clarify the built form (height and density) and transitional/interface (setbacks, stepbacks, angular planes and landscaping) objectives of the Township and establish a definitive environment for change; and,
- Pre-zone for appropriate forms of development in the implementing Zoning By-law to reduce the risk of the development approval process.

Even more so, as-of-right planning approvals, created and promoted by the public sector, will reduce the time and risk of the planning approvals process by limiting application review, processing and public consultation processes, and will be seen as a key development incentive. In this way, the burden of risk is at least partially taken on by the Township, rather than the developer. A developer, where they comply with the regulations, should expect only to participate in the site plan approval process and get a building permit.

Overall, the Township should consider a more comprehensive commitment to establishing the Core Area as a fully mixed-use district. Permission for a range of residential dwellings in townhouse and apartment built forms should be considered. The promotion of mixed-use and live-work buildings should be considered.

Within both the Commercial zone, the height limitation of 10 metres should be amended. Consideration of taller buildings (up to 20 metres) is appropriate, as long as sensitive transitions to abutting stable neighbourhoods are included (enhanced setback and stepbacks, increased landscape requirements, application of an angular plane).

The school site could be redesignated as Residential and Ancillary Use, and rezoned as Residential - Multiple/Design Guidelines/Mixed Use. With the school now closed, the site offers an ideal location for residential intensification and infill on the perimeter of the Core Area.

The Township should consider pre-zoning all of the Core Area to promote sensitive redevelopment and attract new investment.

A proposed amendment to the Zoning By-law is included in the Appendix.

Reduce the Cost of Development

Reducing the costs of private development is required because in many instances, existing planning and fiscal policy makes redevelopment costly. Using tools and incentives to reduce the cost to the private sector when they develop in accordance with the key directions for Core Area can be enormously beneficial, especially when desired development forms are more complex or provide a higher benefit than what is typical. This Urban Design Study will play a crucial role in achieving this objective, by providing clear direction for development that meets the guidelines. However, some strategies for reducing costs can also be implemented, such as reducing parking and parkland requirements.

The Official Plan should add further details for important urban parkland elements, appropriate for inclusion in the Core Area. Parkland dedication requirements for development/redevelopment in the Core Area should be reduced to specifically reduce the cost of urban development/redevelopment.

The cash-in-lieu of parking requirements for development/redevelopment in the Official Plan is an appropriate policy directive, and will further serve to reduce the cost of urban development/redevelopment in the Core Area.

The Community Improvement Plan (2019) sets out a number of financial incentive programs for businesses including:

- facade improvement;
- signage;
- landscape improvement;
- building improvement;
- energy efficiency retrofit;
- design and study;
- accessibility; and,
- public art.

The Community Improvement Plan anticipated that program funding would be provided through the annual budget and approved by Council. This is an important initiative that will reduce the cost to businesses.

Appendix

Suggested Amendment to the Zoning Bylaw

The Corporation of the Township of Woolwich

Proposed amendment to Zoning By-law 55-86

Item 1 Amend Section 16 – Zone C-1: Core Commercial -Urban as follows:

Permit residential uses in the Core Commercial - Urban as per Zone R-7: Residential – Multiple/ Design Guidelines/Mixed Use zone to allow:

- Residential Building- Apartment
- Group Multiple Housing Development
- Live / Work Building

Row houses and back to back townhouses would not be permitted.

Item 2 Amend the regulations for Residential Building – Apartment included in Section 15B.3 as follows:

Maximum Lot Coverage - All Buildings: 60% of Lot Area

Item 3 Amend Section 16 – Zone C-1: Core Commercial -Urban Additional Regulations as follows:

16.3.2 Maximum Building Height - Main Building
change from 10.5 metres to 30 m – 8 storeys

Add new regulations:

- A step back of 1.5 m between the 3rd and 4th storeys
- Angular plane for all buildings
An Angular Plane is to be implemented on any rear or interior side lot line that abuts an R-5, R-6 or R-4 Zone. An angular plane means a flat surface extending from a lot line and projecting over a lot, at a specified angle measured up from the horizontal, through which no part of a structure on the lot may penetrate. The Angular Plane is to be measured from a point at grade on the identified lot line, and then a 45 degree plane is established over the subject lot.
- Minimum ceiling height on main floor to floor of 4.25 m
- Require active, non-residential land uses on the ground floor for buildings fronting onto Church Street and Arthur Street



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