

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Tara Buonpensiero, Senior Planner – Policy, MCIP, RPP

DATE: April 9, 2018

REPORT NO.: PLS-2018-0027

RE: Destination Downtown Phase 2 and 3 Status Update

RECOMMENDATION:

That Report No. PLS-2018-0027 dated April 9, 2018 regarding the Destination Downtown Phase 2 and 3 Status Update be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council receive the Draft Background Discussion Paper as summarized in this Report and attached as Schedule A, for information;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse in principle the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles as the basis for the development of a Preferred Planning Alternative for Downtown Georgetown, subject to further refinement based on public input throughout the public engagement process.

BACKGROUND:

In April 2017, Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Downtown Georgetown Planning Study (referred to as Destination Downtown.)

In September 2017, Council approved the retention of a Project Consulting Team led by The Planning Partnership and includes Meridian Planning Consultants, Plan B Natural Heritage, Cole Engineering Group Ltd, Bray Heritage, N. Barry Lyon Consultants Ltd and SCS Consulting Group.

The project is being undertaken through six phases as outlined on Figure 1.

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an update of the work undertaken during Phase 2 and Phase 3 (to date) of the Destination Downtown Project, including:
 - provide a summary of the Visioning Workshop held February 20, 2018
 - provide an overview of the Background Discussion Paper
 - introduce the draft Vision and Guiding Principles for the study
- Seek Council endorsement of the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles; and
- Outline next steps.

Figure 1: Six Phase Planning Process



COMMENTS:

A. Summary of the Project Status including Phase 2 and 3 Deliverables

As mentioned previously, the Terms of Reference for the Destination Downtown Project outlined a six phase planning process for completion of the project and outlined deliverables by Phase. Staff provided an update on the Phase 1 deliverables through a previous report to Council in February 2018 (Report PLS-2008-0011.) The study has now progressed through Phase 2 and is in Phase 3. The deliverables in Phase 2 and Phase 3 (to date) are outlined below and summarized in subsequent sections of this Report:

- Preparation of a Background Discussion Paper
- Public Visioning Session
- Preparation of Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

Phase 3 concluded with two public Design Summit sessions held on April 4, 2018, in which four Downtown Planning Alternatives were used as the basis for interactive design sessions with the public as the foundation for development of a Preferred Planning Alternative in Phase 4 of the project. The results of the Design Summit will be provided in a subsequent report to Council.

Draft Background Discussion Paper

The Draft Background Discussion Paper provides an overview of the current opportunities and potential issues in eight topic areas. The Draft Background Discussion Paper is attached to this Report as Schedule A, and an overview of each section is provided below.

Section 1: Introduction

This introductory section explains why the Downtown Georgetown Planning Study is required, the purpose of the study and outlines the study phases.

Section 2: Policy

The Policy Review section highlights key issues, and outlines:

- Applicable provincial and regional policy directions and requirements;
- Existing Town of Halton Hills Official Plan policies; and,
- Options/policy approaches for addressing the key issues and achieving conformity with provincial and regional policies.

After reviewing the provincial, regional and local policy framework the Draft Background Discussion Paper provides preliminary observations (i.e. key issues and opportunities) for how the Downtown Georgetown Land Use Study could implement these policies. The selection of a preferred approach for any given issue is dependent upon the Town's objectives and goals.

The key issue and opportunities are noted briefly below:

1. **Intensification:** How can the Town best accommodate expected intensification within the Downtown in a fiscally and environmentally sustainable manner?

The Draft Paper notes three principal areas that should be considered: a) establish the environment for change building on the Official Plan; b) reduce the cost of development through intensification; c) reduce the risks of development approvals for intensification development. It is also noted that the relationship between density and height permissions in the Official Plan and Zoning By-law do not match, and should be reconsidered. Finally, the Draft Background Paper suggests that the

strategy for the Downtown should be based on: Protecting key elements of the Downtown; Promoting the Downtown; and Enhancing the Downtown.

2. **Housing:** What policies are needed to further a diversity of housing options in the Downtown that will not only meet the needs of the current population, but the future requirements of an aging population?

A preliminary observation is that major changes are not required in this area, but the Town should consider some strengthening of its housing policies, and the consideration of incentives to provide more affordable housing.

3. **Urban Design:** The development of a built environment that is well designed, compact, and supports people's needs for daily living should include a high quality public realm that is reinforced by urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places.

Preliminary observations include that a clear policy framework should be established to ensure compatible development adjacent to existing neighbourhoods, and establish built forms that achieve intensification without negative impact.

4. **Healthy Communities:** A successful community consciously seeks to improve the health of its citizens by putting public health high on the social and political agenda.

Preliminary observations include that the Town should introduce community design policies that address universal accessibility, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and public art.

5. **Residential and Commercial Activity:** Attracting commercial and residential development to the Downtown is necessary to support economic development, a diversified tax base, and complete communities where residents have access to jobs, goods and services.

Preliminary observations include that the Town must be innovative and respond to the new economy, such as expanding the current Community Improvement Plan program for the Downtown.

6. **Community Infrastructure:** How can the Town best ensure that the land use planning framework supports the expansion of public transit as the community continues to grow and the demographic and economic conditions become more favourable for additional transit expenditures? How can the secondary plan support Complete Streets, an integrated trail/cycling network, and built form throughout the Downtown that provides the opportunity for residents of all ages and abilities to travel safely and conveniently by active modes of transportation?

Preliminary observations include establishing transportation policies building upon the Transit Service Strategy currently underway, as well as establishing a parking strategy for the Downtown, improving connectivity with the GO Station, and developing Complete Streets policies.

7. **Parks and Community Facilities:** What policies are needed to support the Recreation and Parks Strategic Plan, and to ensure the park system, open spaces, trails and recreational facilities continue to support the community for the next 20 years?

Preliminary observations include considering the development of a Public Realm Framework in the Downtown, as well as alternative parks options such as Pocket Parks (i.e. less than 1,000 square metres), Strata Parks (built over below grade structures, such as underground parking), and POPS (privately owned publically accessible spaces).

8. **Natural Heritage System:** How can the natural heritage system be enhanced in the Downtown, and its features and functions protected?

The Scoped NHS Review is not yet completed.

9. **Climate Change and Resiliency:** What policies are needed to start preparing Georgetown residents and the Town's infrastructure for the community mitigation and adaptation changes that will be required in future years to deal with climate change?

Preliminary observations include developing appropriate policies to prepare for climate change under the themes of: energy conservation, water conservation, stormwater management, air quality, urban forest and green buildings/development.

10. **Built and Cultural Heritage:** How can the built heritage and cultural resources of the Downtown be conserved and enhanced to ensure the distinct character of the downtown is preserved and that key buildings remain prominent as intensification occurs?

Preliminary observations include: consideration of a heritage conservation district for a portion of the Downtown, and the development of policies that ensure the integration of heritage buildings in any future development.

Section 3: Downtowns Precedent Review

This section outlines the three downtown areas that were visited by a number of Councillors, Town staff, agency representatives and members of the public that sit on the project Steering Committee on a bus tour held in January 2018. The three downtown areas visited include Guelph, Port Credit (City of Mississauga) and Downtown Oakville. The Draft Background Discussion Paper provides a brief

characterization of each downtown area, summarizes the initiatives undertaken in each of the downtowns that contributes to their success and identifies their respective development characteristics.

Urban Design

With respect to Urban Design, the Draft Background Discussion Paper examined the current Official Plan Urban Design Guidelines for Downtown Georgetown, as well as any urban design briefs prepared in support of previous development proposals in the area. This review helped to establish a framework for updating the guidelines to appropriately guide redevelopment and intensification in Downtown Georgetown. After reviewing the existing urban design documents and undertaking a preliminary analysis of the character in Downtown Georgetown, the Background Paper introduced draft Character Areas (as shown on Figure 1) to be discussed and explored as the study progresses. These draft Character Areas are:

1. Main Street – Retail
2. Main Street – Residential
3. Residential Street – Streets west of Main Street
4. Back Street and
5. Park Avenue

The Urban Design Review outlined a number of potential design opportunities to explore further such as:

- taking advantage of views and vistas to natural areas;
- consider ways to create new gateways into Downtown Georgetown;
- continue to promote the mixed use, local business character in the Downtown;
- look for opportunities for new infill development sites as well as improvements to public areas, such as a central public space; and,
- consider creating a Downtown Walking Loop in downtown which will contribute to place making and well as pedestrian activity.

Land Use

The Land Use Inventory for Downtown Georgetown reviews the existing land uses and provides an overview of development that has occurred in the area to prepare an up-to-date land use inventory. A physical conditions assessment was also undertaken to evaluate the opportunities and constraints to redevelopment in the Downtown area.

This section recognizes that there are two primary opportunities for future development in Downtown Georgetown which are parking lots and a limited number of vacant lots.

Market Analysis

The Market Analysis assesses the potential for land use intensification within the study area. Using a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats analysis framework, the review focused primarily on residential intensification, but also built upon the 2015 Retail Market Demand Study prepared for the Town.

Further, this market analysis considered how the role of an intensified downtown would function in relation to other planned residential and commercial development in the municipality.

The market outlook recognizes the uniqueness of Downtown Georgetown given its range of retail and residential uses within a walkable neighbourhood. Downtown Georgetown is well positioned to accommodate townhouses and mixed use apartment development. The area bound by Main Street, Guelph Street and Mill Street appears to provide the greatest potential for intensification due to the existing lot patterns and built form, with the potential for higher densities to be focused on the Back Street parking lot and lots fronting onto Guelph Street due to proximity to the GO Train station. Prior to considering redevelopment on any parking lots in Downtown Georgetown, preparation of a long term parking strategy is imperative.

Municipal Servicing

The review of existing and future water, wastewater, and stormwater servicing focused on understanding the available capacity implications in Downtown Georgetown and any implications on future development/intensification potential. The review recognized the increased groundwater capacity that will be available as a result of Georgetown South being converted to lake based services in conjunction with the lake based services being provided for Vision Georgetown. The initial report concluded that Downtown Georgetown will be serviced by the existing sanitary sewer infrastructure and the existing waste water treatment plant, but did identify the need for some improvements to support future development in Downtown Georgetown which will be reviewed in more detail in the subsequent phases of analysis.

Parking and Mobility

The Parking and Mobility Background Review included an initial review of existing policies and programs, currently guiding development in Downtown Georgetown. This included a review of policies related to land use development, transportation and parking by-laws applicable to the downtown core and surrounding areas.

The review of the current amount of parking provided in Downtown Georgetown concluded that there are 317 off street public parking spaces and 134 on street parking spaces available in Downtown Georgetown.

Given that this report is a background review, further work will be undertaken as part of this study to complete a parking assessment as well as propose a complete streets plan to support the recommended land use plan for Downtown Georgetown.

Natural Environment

Given that there is an existing Subwatershed Study (Silver Creek) that applies in the study area and also that Downtown Georgetown is urban and largely developed, the work plan required that a scoped Natural Heritage Assessment be prepared as part of preparation of the Secondary Plan.

The Draft Background Discussion Paper provides: a characterization of the existing natural environment conditions; identifies constraints/opportunities associated with potential future intensification in Downtown Georgetown; and outlines the key tasks to be undertaken in the scoped Natural Heritage Assessment.

Built Heritage & Cultural Resources

The Draft Background Discussion Paper provided a preliminary built and cultural heritage resource review through a based on Town resources, local history, historical mapping, and historical photos. The Paper provides a characterization of heritage resources by sector in the Downtown and identifies significant groupings of areas of cultural heritage resources. The next phases of the study will further consider how to conserve significant heritage properties, commemorate the local history and provide input into where opportunities are available for future intensification in the Downtown that address conservation of built heritage resources.

Workshop #1 – Visioning Session

On February 20, 2018 the first engagement session for the Destination Downtown study was held. It was a Visioning Workshop which began with a presentation given by the Planning Partnership, followed by group discussions to brainstorm key words and phrases to help develop the Vision statement and Guiding Principles. The Vision and Guiding Principles will be the building blocks of the Downtown Secondary Plan, and will influence decision making regarding the future of its buildings, public spaces, land uses, streets, parking, trails, and cycling routes.

Input into preparation of the draft Vision and Guiding Principles was provided by the project Technical Advisory Committee, project Steering Committee and public stakeholders. The Technical Advisory Committee is made up of staff representatives from various departments in the Town, Halton Hills Public Library and representatives

for affected agencies such as Credit Valley Conservation, the Region of Halton and Halton Hills Hydro.

The Steering Committee is chaired by Councillor Fogal, and includes Mayor Bonnette, Councillor Johnson and Councillor Kentner, representatives from the Georgetown BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Halton Hills, representatives from committees of Council such as the Active Transportation Committee, Heritage Halton Hills, Town Sustainability Implementation Committee, and appointed residents/business owners in the Downtown.

There was a very good turnout at the evening Visioning Workshop, with approximately 40 public stakeholders in attendance.

A comprehensive summary of what was heard at the Visioning Workshop has been prepared by The Planning Partnership which is attached to this Report as Schedule B. Also included in the What We Heard Summary is the results of the Visual Preference Survey (to date) that was prepared as part of the visioning work. This survey was available at the Visioning Workshop and online.

Other engagement tools were used to obtain input on the Vision and Guiding Principles including a Roving Information Station where a staff member from the Planning Partnership visited a number of locations in Georgetown and asked people what they loved about Downtown Georgetown and what would make it even better. A summary of this input is also provided within Schedule B.

Draft Vision and Guiding Principles

As a result of all of the input provided through the Visioning Workshop and other engagement undertaken to date, Draft Vision and Guiding Principles have been prepared and included in this Report as Figure 2.

The Vision and Guiding Principles are draft and were presented for public review and comment at the Design Summit held on April 4, 2018. Public comments are being sought on the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles and a revised Vision and Guiding Principles will be included in a subsequent report to Council. In order to continue to advance the project, Council is asked to endorse in principle the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles as the basis for the development of a Preferred Planning Alternative for the Downtown. It is recognized that the Draft Vision and Guiding Principles remain subject to further refinement through the public engagement process, and will be brought back to Council for confirmation together with the recommended Preferred Planning Alternative.

Figure 2: Draft Vision and Principles



Draft Vision & Principles

What is missing? What would you add? What would you delete?

Vision

Downtown Georgetown is a vibrant destination that serves the residents of Georgetown and Halton Hills and draws visitors from all corners of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area.

Development will build on the rich natural and cultural heritage that makes Downtown Georgetown unique and so cherished by all who live there and visit.

Through sustainable development and enhanced public realm initiatives, Downtown Georgetown will continue to grow and offer an increasingly diverse range of places to live, work, shop, be entertained, and enjoy community life in a setting that artfully integrates old and new development into a picturesque landscape.

Principles

- 1 Ensure new development celebrates and protects the existing **built heritage character** of the downtown.
- 2 Establish a variety of beautiful **public gathering spaces** to support cultural events, festivals and community life throughout the year.
- 3 Create **vibrant, safe and comfortable pedestrian-oriented streets** that enhance mobility for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers and support existing and future transit.
- 4 Promote a **mix of uses** in a variety of **building forms**, including a range of housing types and opportunities for retail, commercial and community uses.
- 5 Protect and enhance **natural features** while broadening opportunities for public access, enjoyment, education and stewardship.
- 6 Demonstrate **high-quality design** in new development and incorporate best practices that respect and complement the character of Downtown Georgetown and its adjacent neighbourhoods.
- 7 Incorporate **sustainable development and construction practices** to maximize resource conservation.
- 8 _____
- 9 _____

Share your
comments:
tarab@haltonhills.ca

Next Steps:

The next steps for Destination Downtown are as follows:

- 1) Public input received at the Design Summit, as well as on-line, will be analyzed and reported to Council, together with an outline of how the Design Summit was conducted;
- 2) Public input received, together with technical study inputs and public agency comments (I.e. Scoped Natural Heritage System Review, etc.) will be used to develop a draft Preferred Planning Alternative for the Downtown;

- 3) A workshop on the Draft Preferred Planning Alternative will be held with the Technical Advisory Committee, Steering Committee and the public;
- 4) Public input received at the workshop will be presented to Council, and the process to revise and finalize a Draft Preferred Planning Alternative, will be outlined;
- 5) Council will be asked to endorse the Preferred Planning Alternative as the basis for the development of a Secondary Plan for the Downtown through Phase 5 of the project.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Although this Report is only focusing on the work plan and community engagement, Destination Downtown relates to a number of the nine strategic directions outlined in the Town's Strategic Plan. This Study relates extensively to the following Strategic Directions:

- Foster A Healthy Community
- Foster a Prosperous Economy
- Preserve, Protect and Promote Our Distinctive History
- Achieve Sustainable Growth
- Provide Sustainable Infrastructure & Services
- Provide Responsive, Effective Municipal Government

In particular, comments raised by the public so far in the Study reinforce the importance of the following Strategic Objectives:

- C.6** To maintain and enhance our historic downtowns and vibrant commercial areas to provide for shopping, services, cultural amenities and entertainment.
- D.2** To encourage the preservation and enhancement of the historical character of the Town's distinctive neighbourhoods, districts, hamlets and rural settlement areas.
- G.9** To ensure that new population growth takes place by way of identifiable, sustainable, healthy and complete communities and neighbourhoods that reflect excellence in urban design.
- G.10** To promote intensification and affordable housing in appropriate locations within the Town.

Halton Hills Council has also approved the 'Top Eight' 2014-2018 Strategic Action Plan priorities for the 2014-2018 Council term. The 'Top Eight' includes Strategic Action 3 – Planning for Growth, and the following sub-actions:

3. Planning for Growth

- B.** Promote the protection and adaptive re-use of built heritage resources as part of the planning of intensification and new development areas.
- C.** Preserve the established character of stable neighbourhoods by focusing development in identified intensification areas, and utilizing ‘best practices’ in urban design for infill development.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Council has previously approved 2017 Capital Project No. 7100-22-1901 – Georgetown Downtown Secondary Plan with a budget of \$200,000.

CONSULTATION:

The Technical Advisory Committee provided input into the Background Discussion Paper, and participated in the Visioning Workshop. As outlined in a previous section of this report, this Committee is comprised of staff from various departments in the Town, and other affected agencies such as the Region of Halton, Credit Valley Conservation and Halton Hills Hydro.

The Steering Committee participated and provided valuable input at the Visioning Workshop. Members of the Steering Committee are outlined in detail in the section of this report that summarized the Visioning Workshop.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

There has been two public workshops held on the Destination Downtown project to date. The Visioning Workshop was held on February 20, 2018. The results of that workshop are summarized in an earlier section of this report and a detailed account of input we received on the Visioning Workshop is attached to this report as Schedule B.

The second public session, the Design Summit, was held on April 4, 2018. At this meeting, participants worked with a designer from the Planning Partnership to develop a land use alternative for Downtown Georgetown. The results of this public session will be provided in a subsequent report to Council.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Sustainability is central to the Destination Downtown study. Sustainability implications will be evaluated in subsequent recommendation reports to Council.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Upon Council adoption of the recommendations of this report, it will be posted on the project webpage and stakeholders that have requested email notifications of project updates will be advised that the report is available online.

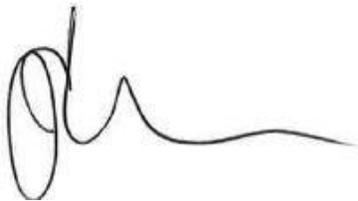
CONCLUSION:

Upon Council adoption of the recommendations of this Report, the Destination Downtown project will continue advancing through Phases 3 and 4 the report and attachments will be made publicly available on the project webpage.

Reviewed and Approved by,



Steve Burke, Manager of Planning Policy



John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability



Brent Marshall, CAO