

TOWN OF SMITHS FALLS

# ***DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND WATERFRONT INTEGRATION MASTER PLAN***

FINAL REPORT  
FEBRUARY 2013

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



In coordination with:





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*Rideau Canal Museum Building (left), and Potential Development Site (right)*

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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“A sensational place to live, work, play and do business.”

*-Smiths Falls Community Profile*



1.1 Background and Purpose

Smiths Falls was historically a successful industrial town. In recent years, much of the industry has left, but many historical buildings of the Towns boom periods remain within the downtown area. Small businesses remain and some new ones are beginning to locate there. In recent years, Smiths Falls has also seen an increase of residents and businesses looking to relocate from the City of Ottawa, who are looking for a serene small town atmosphere within proximity of a large city. The downtown is currently in the early stages of a renaissance, a point at which its residents and leaders are eager to ensure proper planning and preparation for the future.

1.1.1 Integrated Planning for Change

The Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan and the Community Improvement Plan for Smiths Falls have been developed as mutually reinforcing documents to ensure that the public and private realm are developed with a consistent vision in mind. These documents provide tools that are intended to guide the redevelopment of the downtown core and re-connection of the waterfront to ultimately make Smiths Falls a sensational place to live, work, shop, socialize and recreate.

1.1.2 Public Realm Revitalization

The revitalization of Beckwith Street, the main street in Smiths Falls, will have a significant impact from an economic development standpoint. In 2010 the economic development department undertook three critical master planning initiatives: Tourism Master Plan, Downtown Master Plan and a Waterfront Re-Development Master Plan. Other initiatives that have been undertaken include an Arts and Culture Visioning Exercise, Beckwith Street Reconstruction Study, Pedestrian Linkages Study (currently underway), as well as hosting a Youth Forum about the future of Smiths Falls. The final outcomes of these initiatives will be integrated into the Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan, incorporating the needs and providing future direction for tourism, business development and overall quality of life in the community.

The purpose of the Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan is to develop a vision, policies, incentives, conceptual design and action planning to encourage growth in appropriate private and public sector development. The Plan is aimed to support principles of sustainability, pedestrian friendliness, heritage preservation, and the creation of vibrant outdoor public spaces.

1.1.3 Community Improvement Plan Provisions

The Town is also undertaking a Community Improvement Plan (CIP), concurrent with this Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan process; the CIP is being completed by Sierra Planning and Management. A Community Improvement Plan is focused on private ownership commercial, industrial and residential stock and is a tool under the Planning Act to help facilitate revitalization efforts in defined target areas.

To carry out CIPs, municipalities can establish grant or loan programs to encourage private sector investment in development efforts that seek to improve and revitalize an area. The CIP process will result in a separate yet complementary document.

Together, these plans will provide a coordinated strategy that includes recommendations for the public realm and privately owned property within the CIP area.



Figure 1: Revitalization Process Diagram

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1.4 Community Improvement Plan Provisions

A mandate for the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is clearly articulated in Section 8.5 of the Town's Official Plan (1993) (currently under review). The Official Plan identifies the entire Town of Smiths Falls as a Community Improvement Policy Area for which Council may "undertake comprehensive and complementary improvement programs within the policy area as financial resources permit" (Town of Smiths Falls Official Plan, Section 8.5.4). More specifically, Section 8.5.5 identifies the Downtown commercial core area as a high priority area for community improvement.

As it relates to community improvement in Downtown Smiths Falls, policy provisions as outlined in Section 8.5.2 of the Official Plan support the following:

(8.5.2 (1)) Foster improvements in residential communities by:

2. Establishing and maintaining the physical infrastructure necessary and appropriate to the various residential communities. This may include the provision of sidewalks, street lighting, storm sewers, road widenings, etc.

3. Ensuring the maintenance of the existing housing stock and encouraging the rehabilitation, renovation, and repair of older dwellings; and where appropriate, supporting the conversion of older, large dwellings into multiple dwelling units to enable the creation of more rental housing.

(8.5.2 (2)) Foster improvements in commercial areas by:

1. Maintaining a vibrant, attractive downtown by providing the necessary physical conditions to create a pleasing shopping environment.

2. Providing and maintaining incentives to support the downtown core, to foster a healthy local economy for area businessmen.

3. Providing and maintaining downtown streets, sidewalks, lighting, benches, parking areas, to ensure that the downtown is accessible to both motorist and pedestrian.

The CIP which is currently being developed as a complementary exercise to this Master Plan focuses on the sustainability of the commercial building stock primarily, with an additional focus on opportunities to enable residential development in the core. The CIP will support appropriate development of multi-tenant housing based on the conversion of large dwellings but only where this comprises the development of legal apartment dwelling units. The CIP will support the development of new multi-unit ownership housing as well as rental housing on vacant, under used or redeveloped sites.

## 1.2 Regional Setting

The Town of Smiths Falls is strategically located at the Heart of the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO world heritage site, in the County of Lanark in Eastern Ontario. Smiths Falls is located within an hour's drive of the City of Ottawa and the City of Kingston, approximately midway between Toronto and Montreal, and within an hour or two of several United States border crossings. The Town acts as a service centre for the surrounding rural areas. While the population of the Town is approximately 9,000 people, the Town serves a regional population of 25,000 people for activities such as employment, shopping, services, and recreational opportunities.

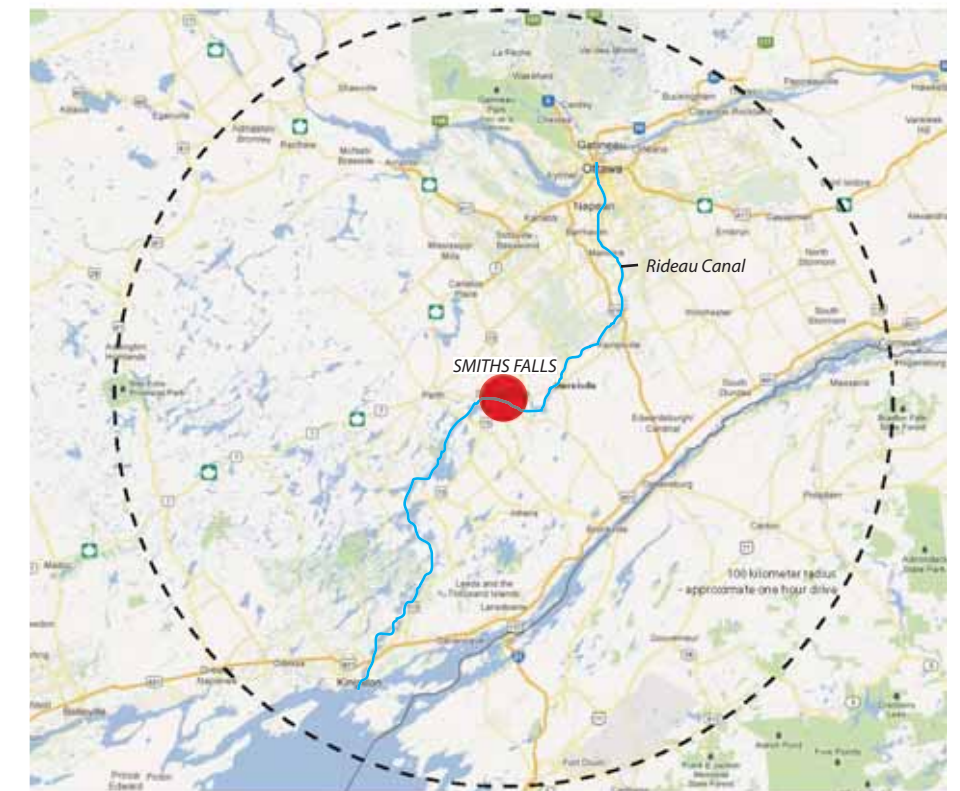


Figure 2: Regional Context Map



1.3 Study Area

The study area for the Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan includes the downtown core area, as well as the influence areas - namely the gateway entrances into Smiths Falls.

The downtown core area is identified in green on the adjacent map, and is defined by Elmsley Street to the northeast, the Rideau Canal to the south, and approximately one or two blocks east of Beckwith Street to the east. The downtown core area also includes a length of Lombard Street between Brockville Street to the west and Abbott Street to the east.

A key corridor within the study area is Beckwith Street, the main commercial / retail street within the downtown. Beckwith Street acts as the central business core within the community. The street right-of-way is 30 metres (99 feet) wide, providing generous angle parking; the street is seen as very unique across the region. Beckwith is also the principle link between the Waterfront/Rideau Canal and municipal waterfront park areas and the downtown business core. The influence areas are identified with purple on the adjacent map.

The proposed Downtown Smiths Falls Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) – that is the geographic area within which the programs of financial support outlined in the CIP will operate / be applied – is co-terminous with the Master Plan study area boundary with the addition of the properties on both sides of River Street. Refer to the Community Improvement Plan document for exact extent of the CIPA.

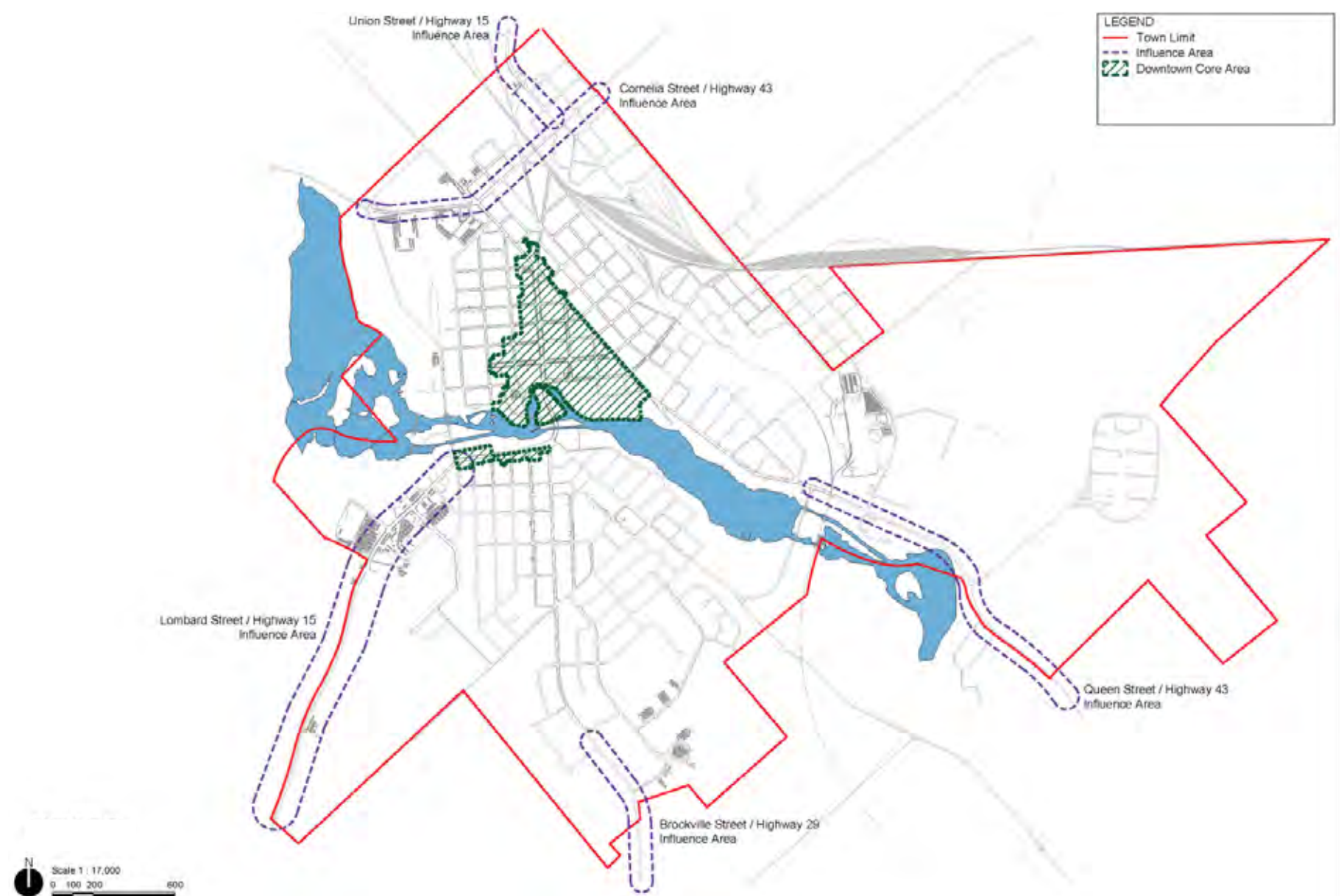


Figure 3: Study Area Context Map

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.4 Existing Challenges

### 1.4.1 Design Challenges

The existing downtown and waterfront areas of Smiths Falls have a number of design challenges that must be overcome and will be addressed through this Master Plan document. Challenges related specifically to the waterfront include the following:

- Reconnect the waterfront with the Town, and the downtown core in particular;
- Create continuous open space and pedestrian linkages along the Canal;
- Potential redevelopment opportunities must be addressed;
- Public accessibility and views to the water and Canal to be preserved, created and/or redefined; and,
- Opportunities (and reasons) for tourists / boaters to stop in Smiths Falls.

Design challenges that are related to the downtown include:

- Defining the downtown core;
- Create spaces throughout the downtown that provide social areas and utilize placemaking techniques;
- Pedestrian connections along Beckwith Street by providing additional crossings to support the retail health of downtown;
- Incorporate complete street principles;
- Maintain convenient parking locations, both on-street and off-street; and,
- Protect and enhance heritage buildings.

### 1.4.2 Market Conditions for Investment

Downtown Smiths Falls is a functioning commercial, residential, shopping and civic hub for the community, however historic disinvestment in parts of the building stock in the Downtown, coupled with the development of less stable commercial uses and in some instances long-term vacancy and dilapidation of buildings present significant opportunities for future property development.

#### Residential Market Opportunities

The local residential housing market in Smiths Falls is geared to first-time buyers as well as move-up buyers and move-down (empty nester) households. Despite much of the residential development in the region occurring on the outskirts of Smiths Falls in neighbouring municipalities such as Montague and Rideau Lakes (the latter having a market of local buyers and developments comprised of single housing family on one acre lots at prices around \$300,000, with higher prices for lake front properties), the potential exists for the Town to tap into broader regional demand for new housing options.

In downtown Smiths Falls the housing market, as well as housing forms, will be different from those observed elsewhere in the Town and surrounding areas. Accordingly, the scale of investment necessary is also higher, particularly if such development is focused on multi-unit residential development.

The locational assets of downtown Smiths Falls, particularly with the water, and the existence of retail at the south end of the Town as well as a range of services in the Downtown itself, provide solid opportunities for appropriate development to be planned for over the medium-term. In achieving this, there is a role to be played by the Town in assisting the development community in realizing residential development – whether it be through conversion of existing properties, new development, potential land assembly and

development of mixed-use buildings through the development of upper floors.

#### Commercial/Mixed-Use Opportunities

Evidence of existing vacant commercial units is principally a concern on the east-west streets either side of Beckwith Street North. This provides a clear indication of where Community Improvement Plan incentive programs should be allocated – to the level of individual buildings which can benefit from building fabric improvements to entice and retain commercial tendencies.

Achieving viable uses on the upper floors which may include residential but also commercial office space, consistent with the role of Downtown as more than a retail environment, should form the basis for individual property projects which can collectively restate and confirm the long-term role of Downtown. Based on the existing profile of Downtown, the opportunity exists to promote the interests of income-generating commercial buildings operating as mixed-use.

#### Commercial/Retail Opportunities

Retail in the Downtown is comprised of a range of durable goods (excluding food store type merchandise), some specialty retail stores (e.g. kitchen supply stores, and computer equipment service stores) and other retail services which provide important local neighbourhood and town-wide services. However, many of these retail establishments are not brand name, multi-location stores which operate as anchors and destinations for shoppers.

While relatively little can be done to determine the precise retail mix and ensure that brand name retailers and larger corporations take retail space, the potential exists to develop the building stock to provide both landlords and prospective tenants more attractive options for long-term investment.

### 1.4.3 Regulatory Framework

A number of background documents were reviewed in order to gain an understanding of the regulations for Smiths Falls. Key points relevant to the development of the Master Plan are provided below.

#### **Town of Smiths Falls Official Plan (Draft), January 2010**

The Draft Official Plan for the Town of Smiths Falls was prepared by DELCAN Corporation in January 2010. The Plan is intended to guide the future development of the Town to its capacity population of approximately 12,000 to 13,000 persons; the population was 8,780 in 2006. Some of the key objectives of the Plan include:

- Maintain and strengthen the role of the downtown core as the primary commercial, civic and cultural centre of the Town and surrounding area.
- Encourage the preservation, restoration and adaptive reuse of the existing building stock throughout the Town.
- Protect and enhance cultural and natural heritage features.
- Recognize the Rideau Canal as the Town's major tourism and recreation asset.
- Develop and maintain sufficient parks and open space areas, and community facilities to meet the needs of all age and socio-economic groups for active and passive recreation activities.

A number of policies specific to the Rideau Canal are identified in the Plan. Those of particular importance to this study include that all (re)development must be consistent with the policies as set out in the Rideau Canal Management Plan, The World Heritage Site Management Plan, Smiths Falls Lower Reach Basin Parkland Study and the Middle Rideau River Watershed Study, in order to protect and enhance the cultural and natural features of the Canal. In addition, special consideration in site plan approval process for rear yards fronting the Canal shall be given to ensure consistency with the above Plans. This is to ensure that these areas are not dominated

by parking, storage, loading areas; if it is necessary to locate these facilities next to the Canal, these areas shall be appropriately buffered, screened and landscaped to minimize visual impact.

The Land Use Designation for the Core Area, including downtown and surrounding area, is intended "to foster a vibrant, mixed-use downtown focused on an economically strong commercial core". Policies related to the Core Area as relevant to this study include:

- Develop coordinated program to improve features of public lands and support improvement of private lands.
- Create pedestrian linkages to the Canal and Town's recreational walking system through development approval process.
- Preserve historic landmarks, buildings and features.
- Encourage continuous pedestrian-oriented shopping district; no further highway commercial or industrial uses are permitted in the Core Area.
- Discourage parking lots fronting on Beckwith Street North.
- Encourage residential uses within the Core Area (mixed-use buildings) to create a vibrant, mixed-use core.
- Consider implementing a long range plan for provision of off-street municipal parking and encourage private sector to provide off-street parking to achieve a more efficient parking supply.

Open Space designation are lands intended for conservation and recreation uses. Relevant policies related to Open Space include:

- Cooperate with other public, quasi-public and private agencies in provision of open space and recreation systems.
- Provide walkways, trails and bicycle paths as part of an overall linked open space system.
- Adequate parking areas shall be established and access points for parking shall be designed to minimize the danger to pedestrians. Facilities such as ramps, walkways, and safe road crossings to enable people to access open space are to be provided.

#### **Town of Smiths Falls Zoning By-Law (Office Consolidation 2010)**

A majority of the Downtown Core Area is designated as General Commercial (C1) zone, meaning that there are numerous non-residential uses permitted as well as residential uses, units on the upper storey of a non-residential building.

#### **Rideau Canal World Heritage Site Management Plan (2005)**

This plan identifies how the world heritage values of the Canal will be protected for present and future generations. It provides a high-level management plan for the Rideau Canal by identifying management commitments and actions that will result in an integrated approach to administering the world heritage site. A number of policies and actions are identified within the plan for the protection of the World Heritage Site; these include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Work with municipalities, landowners, the Province and other stakeholders to ensure that suitable land use policies for adjacent lands are in place to protect the Canal.
- Work with municipalities, empowered to control the development and use of shore lands, to protect the Canal through the maintenance of a buffer zone. Frontages of between 50 m to 75 m for waterfront lots, and a setback of 30 m from the shoreline for all new construction are required.
- Ensure that consideration is given to the conservation management of lands beyond the 30 m buffer, especially where development has the potential to degrade the heritage values of the property.

These policies and actions are adhered to and promoted in the development of the Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan.





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Providing a variety of opportunities for people to access the water's edge is important in creating an integrated downtown and waterfront.



*Canal Walkway, Fairport, New York*

2.1 Draft Vision Statement

A vision statement was prepared for the Smiths Falls Downtown and Waterfront area based on the key directions and outcomes of the community consultation and analysis:

*“The Town of Smiths Falls Downtown and Waterfront core area is envisioned as the ‘Heart of the Rideau’ that will create a cohesive community identity on the Rideau Canal. It strives to protect and enhance the unique natural environment and extensive cultural heritage; provides a strong framework for social interaction, land and water-based recreation and tourism; and encourages mutually supportive investment in the public realm and private development sites.”*

2.2 Guiding Principles

Based on the previous consultation undertaken by the Town and the community session held in September 2012, a number of design principles were formulated based on the aspirations and values of the community. These principles serve as the foundation upon which the Master Plan will be developed for the Smiths Falls Downtown and Waterfront Area.



**Distinct Character Areas**

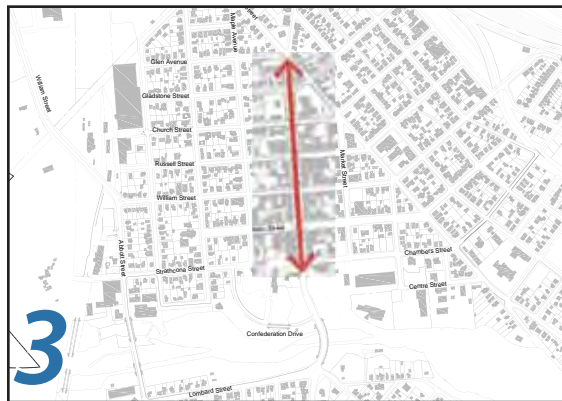
Acknowledge and reinforce the best attributes and qualities of the distinct character areas as a framework for planning and design. The Beckwith Street Downtown Promenade and associated shoulder areas presents opportunities for sensitive infill development, heritage character preservation, streetscape improvements and exciting public spaces. The Waterfront District is currently under-utilized and somewhat disconnected from the downtown. The opportunity exists for key pedestrian and cycling linkages, new public spaces as well as sensitive development along the water’s edge that incorporates accessible public spaces. The Cultural Node, located near the Beckwith and Elmsley intersection, offers the opportunity to link key cultural features within Smiths Falls and develop a special area which highlights these features.



**Protect and Enhance Community Heritage Features**

Smiths Falls is recognized for its unique heritage; protection and enhancement of the key heritage resources within the downtown and waterfront area is important. Key resources to be protected and enhanced include heritage buildings, the Rideau Canal and associated infrastructure, waterfront and other parkland, and historic streetscapes.

## 2.0 VISION + FRAMEWORK



### **Realize the Potential of Beckwith Street as the Downtown Promenade**

Strive to provide a people-friendly environment with amenities, narrow intersection crossings, social spaces, and support for vibrant retail. Capitalizing on the unique slope of the street and establishing exciting gateway features at the top and bottom of Beckwith Street will help to anchor the street within the Town. Providing safe and convenient parking, and creating a distinctive streetscape theme and design will reinforce the street as the downtown promenade, while adequately addressing the Provincial Connector Link designation requirements.



### **Connect Community Cultural Facilities**

This principle highlights the “Top-of-the-Town” Cultural District, which includes the Town Hall, Carnegie Public Library and provides strong linkages to the Station Theatre to the east and the Rail Museum of Eastern Ontario to the west. Developing a Town Square between Library and Town Hall, at the heart of this Cultural District, will provide a public gathering space for events and festivals, as well as everyday socializing and casual gatherings. Establishing a self-guided walking tour that highlights key cultural facilities throughout Smiths Falls while providing interpretive elements along the route is also important.



### **Reconnect with the UNESCO Waterfront Heritage**

Smiths Falls’ strong heritage waterfront is an important feature to highlight and embrace. This guiding principle focusses to enlarge the public interface with the waterfront to ensure all people can easily access the water’s edge. Developing the newly proposed pedestrian /cycle trails is a critical part of this, as is improving vehicular access and providing adequate yet discrete parking for residents, tourists and visitors alike. Connecting the waterfront with key development sites is imperative to the integration of the waterfront with the downtown.



### **Waterfront Development Sites**

This principle focuses on highlighting the opportunities and potential for future waterfront development. Connecting these sites with the urban fabric of the downtown and the waterfront through pedestrian and cycling links as well as vehicular connections will develop a cohesive and permeable core area of Smiths Falls.

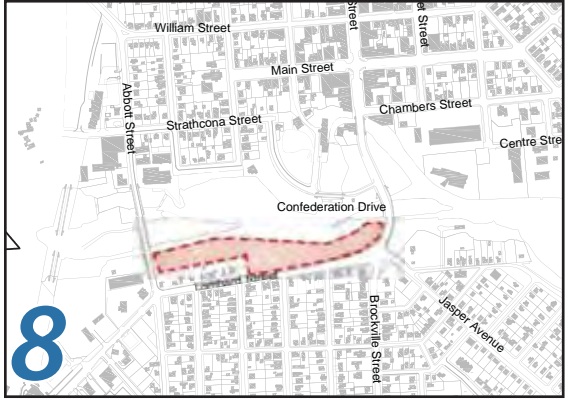




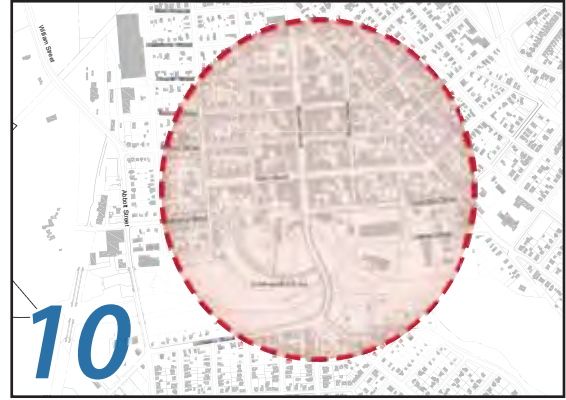
**Enhance Gateway / Influence Areas**  
Enhancing the influence areas and developing them into gateway and entrance areas will provide a positive impression of the Town to visitors before they reach the downtown and waterfront area. For example, the Highway #15 approach from the south is essentially a strip of car dealerships and drive-through fast food restaurants. Enhancement to these areas with a comprehensive streetscape plan that will integrate public and private site and landscape works.



**Develop a CIP to Incentivize Private Sector**  
Develop a CIP to incentivize private sector that is uniquely tailored to the planning priorities and needs of the Town of Smiths Falls to support municipal priorities for a healthy, vibrant, attractive Downtown where people live, work, play and shop.

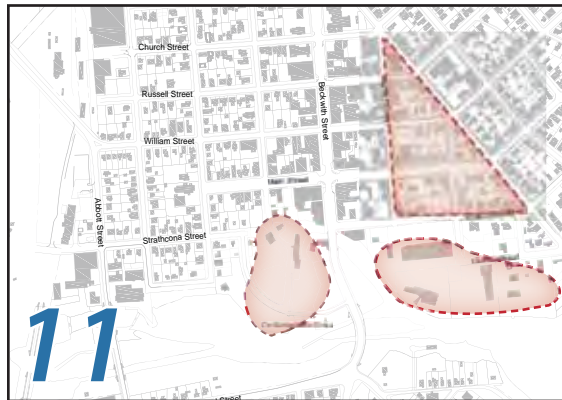


**Reconnect and Strengthen Access to Public Recreation Areas Along the Canal**  
Strengthen pedestrian connections across and around the Rideau Canal waterway, including the south side of the Canal and relocating seasonal camping sites to another suitable area. This will provide the opportunity to develop Victoria Park and surrounding public lands into premier waterfront areas for all people to enjoy.



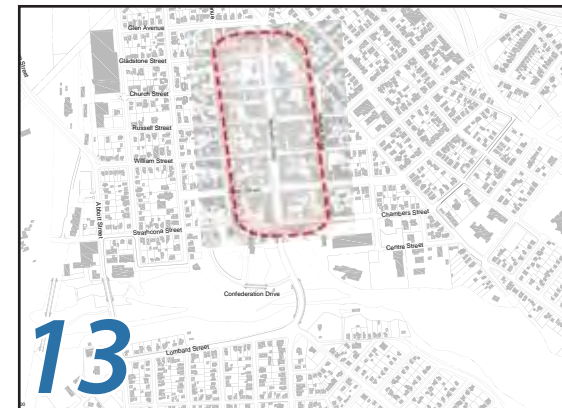
**Create New Population and Services through Progressive Development**  
Appropriate phasing and synchronization of public realm improvements and the Community Improvement Plan will facilitate the gradual and progressive revitalization of the Downtown and Waterfront Area as a vibrant hub of recreational, social and economic activity; attracting new investment in residential, retail and new services in the core – and a new range of residents, users and visitors to the Downtown.

## 2.0 VISION + FRAMEWORK



### **Remove Barriers to Investment by Public Intervention**

Incentivize investment through utilization of the CIP in private residential, commercial and mixed-use properties, removing or reducing the financial costs associated with property rehabilitation and (re)development and other related barriers to investment (e.g. land assembly). Enhance access to development sites as well as the public access and interface with waterfront lands.



### **Improve the Retail Mix**

Achieving an appropriate retail mix is a long-term proposition and aspiration of the Town to achieve higher order retail and specialty stores. This will come in time as Downtown operates as a destination and activity centre for residents. This represents the link between public realm improvements and the CIP which together encompass a plan for regeneration of Downtown via additional amenities, public spaces, walkways, improved waterfront links, street furniture, signage, and property investment incentives/opportunities which together will offer market opportunities for new retail and services.



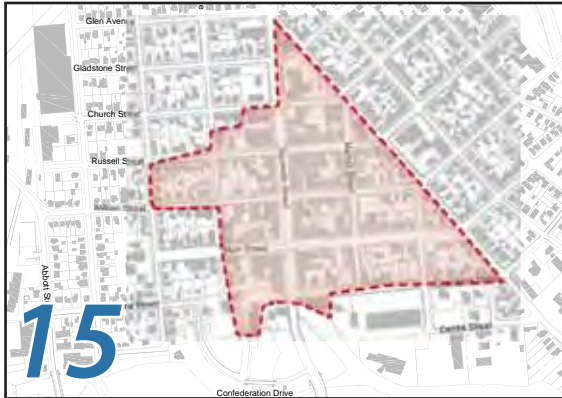
### **Achieve Higher Density in the Downtown**

Achieve higher density in the Downtown Core via new ownership housing in the Downtown (particularly the Waterfront area which represents the most appropriate location for high density forms of residential development) and along the shoulder areas to support the Downtown as a neighbourhood service centre and a place for recreation in addition to its civic, employment and tourism service centre roles.

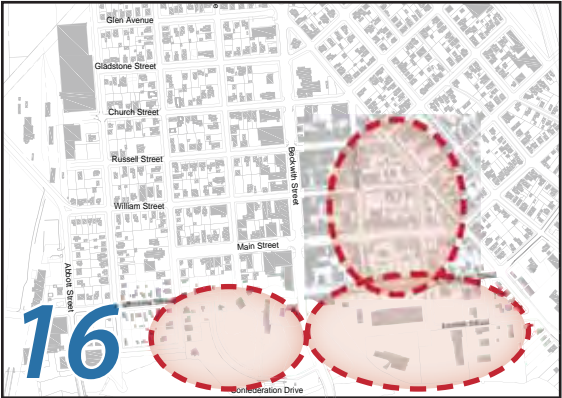


### **Synchronize the CIP with Public Realm Improvements**

The vision for Downtown Waterfront Revitalization is essential to the success of the CIP in achieving long-term reinvestment in Downtown. Incentivizing the development of the Downtown building stock is only part of the work needed to achieve the revitalized role for Downtown as a service centre, tourism destination and activity hub. Synchronizing public realm improvements with private investment in Downtown property development is catalytic in achieving Downtown renewal. The CIP needs to work hand-in-hand with public realm improvements by focusing on private sector opportunities for development and reinvestment in Downtown. Monitoring of the plans – public realm and community improvement over time – is required to ensure that both public and private investment meets the overriding goal of creating improved aesthetics, tourism opportunities, and services to residents and visitors, enabling Downtown to viably operate as a place to live, a place to work, and a place to shop.



***Invest in Existing Building Stock***  
The Downtown represents an older building stock; albeit one that has significant presence, character and potential for long-term use. The Town needs to invest in the building stock to provide the greatest opportunity for sustainable uses and retention of these properties with viable income generating assets for their owners. This is a prima facie rationale for a Community Improvement Plan, goals of which are clearly in the public interest.



***Appropriate Infill Development***  
Downtown does not exist in isolation but is part of a continuum of the urban fabric. The shoulder areas of the Downtown are arguably just as important as the Downtown itself. A focus on infill development, new build to replenish residential neighbourhoods and adaptive reuse of existing but under-used commercial and institutional buildings is important in this regard.

## 2.0 VISION + FRAMEWORK

### 2.3 Structuring Elements

The concept plan for Smiths Falls downtown and waterfront area is based on the findings and values expressed during the community engagement process together with the previous consultation undertaken by the Town, and the technical analysis work completed by the consultants. It recognizes the strategic location of Smiths Falls relative to the Rideau Canal. As such, Smiths Falls is in the midst of a vast “Water/ Land Setting” and is well positioned to serve as a service centre and access point to this significant environmental and recreational resource area. Access to the water is a key element of the plan and serves to link the actual settlement area with the canal system and water-based resources nearby.

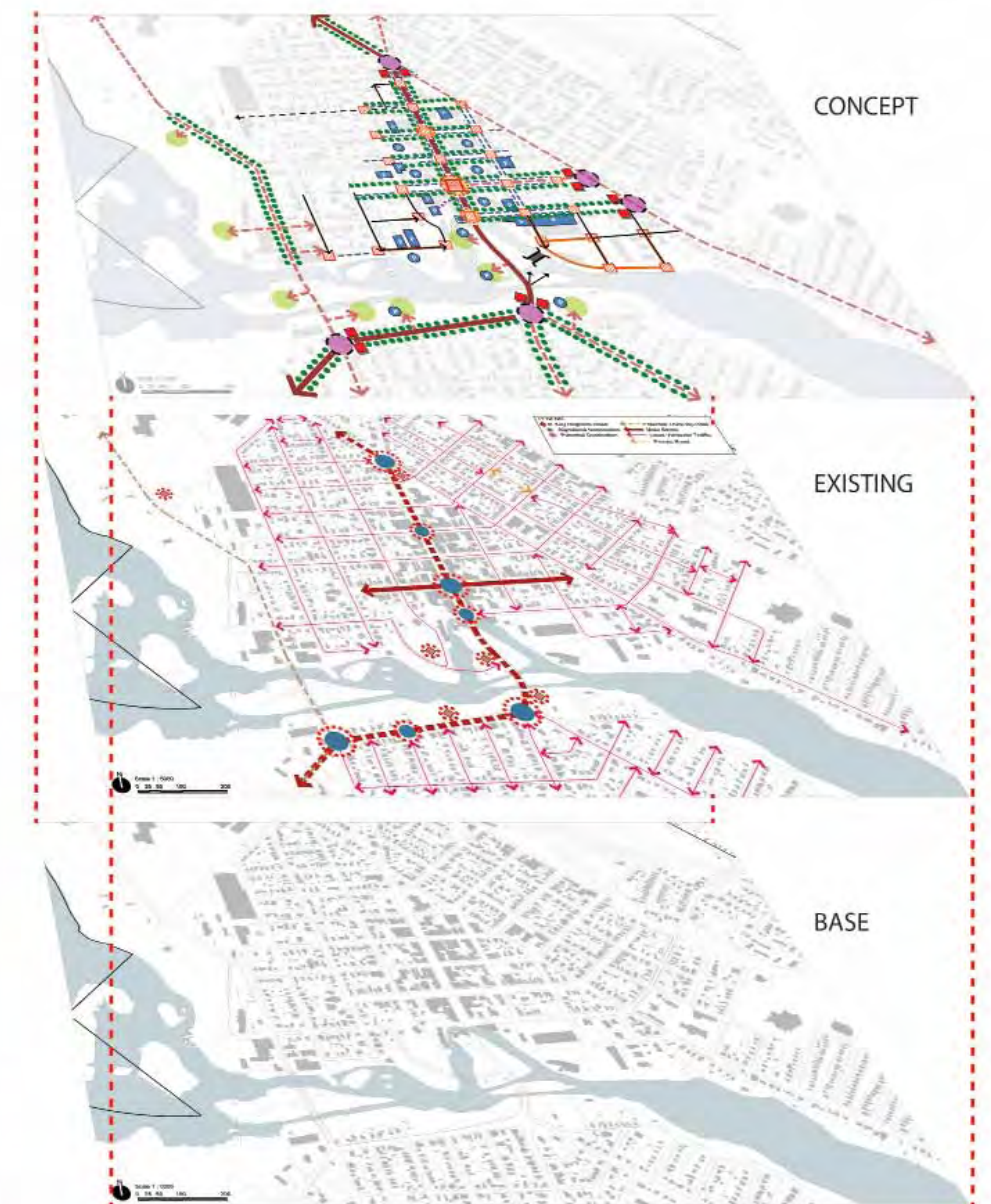
The concept includes several key structuring elements:

- Create a source of community pride and identity;
- Develop cultural richness, tourism and attractions;
- Rediscover and reconnect with the canal and waterfront;
- Reclaim public open space;
- Foster greater connectivity and public access with additional street and trail connections;
- Streetscape enhancements to promote pedestrian activity using complete street principles;
- Reinforce the downtown core area with a strong civic precinct and social space, retail and services;
- Develop a framework for redevelopment; and,
- Provide an efficient quantity and availability of parking.

The adjacent diagrams illustrate the key structuring elements that provide the basis of the concept plan. Open space and circulation are key elements that are imperative to developing a successful concept plan for Smiths Falls downtown and waterfront area.



Conceptual Open Space Structure



Conceptual Circulation Structure



### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

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The Town has an unique opportunity to increase the number of cycling and walking trips in the waterfront area by constructing facilities, such as a pedestrian bridge, that increase connectivity and shorten necessary travel distance to desirable destinations.



*Pedestrian Bridge, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

3.1 Overall Concept Plan

The concept plan for Smiths Falls is based on the findings and values expressed during the community engagement process together with the analysis work completed by the Consulting Team. It recognizes the location of Smiths Falls relative to Highway 401 and the Rideau Canal, as well as its railroad heritage, still apparent today.

Smiths Falls is well positioned to serve as a service centre for those travelling between Highways 401 and 407 and along the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as an access point to the Rideau Canal. Key structuring elements of the concept plan include an inter-connected downtown and waterfront area, enhanced gateway and influence area definition, Beckwith Street streetscape improvements, improved grid road system, pedestrian connections within downtown and along the waterfront, and mixed-use signature waterfront redevelopment sites.

LEGEND

-  Gateway with Arrival Feature
-  Civic Square Opportunity
-  Green Open Space
-  Signalized Intersection Improvements
-  Main Signalized Intersection Improvements
-  Intersection Improvements
-  Streetscape Improvements
-  Existing and Potential Parking Supply
-  On-Street Parking
-  New Road Link
-  Lookout Point
-  Cultural Interest Point
-  Marina Docks
-  New Pedestrian Bridge
-  Trail
-  Interpretive Streetscape Theme (Rail)
-  Potential Development Area
-  Environmentally Sensitive Area
-  Arrival / Enhanced Green Corridors
-  Revitalization Areas
-  Existing Bridge
-  Main Transportation Corridor



Figure 4: Preliminary Concept Plan

## 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

### 3.2 Concept Plan Components

The concept plan is broken down into four components:

- “Top of the Town” Civic Precinct
- Beckwith Centered Downtown Core Revitalization Area
- “Lower Town” Waterfront Redevelopment Area
- UNESCO World Heritage, Rideau Canal and Waterfront Greenway

The components represent unique precincts within a unified downtown core, which includes the waterfront, an integral and vital part of the central area of Smiths Falls. Each of the four components and associated elements are described below, complete with detail plans and precedent imagery.

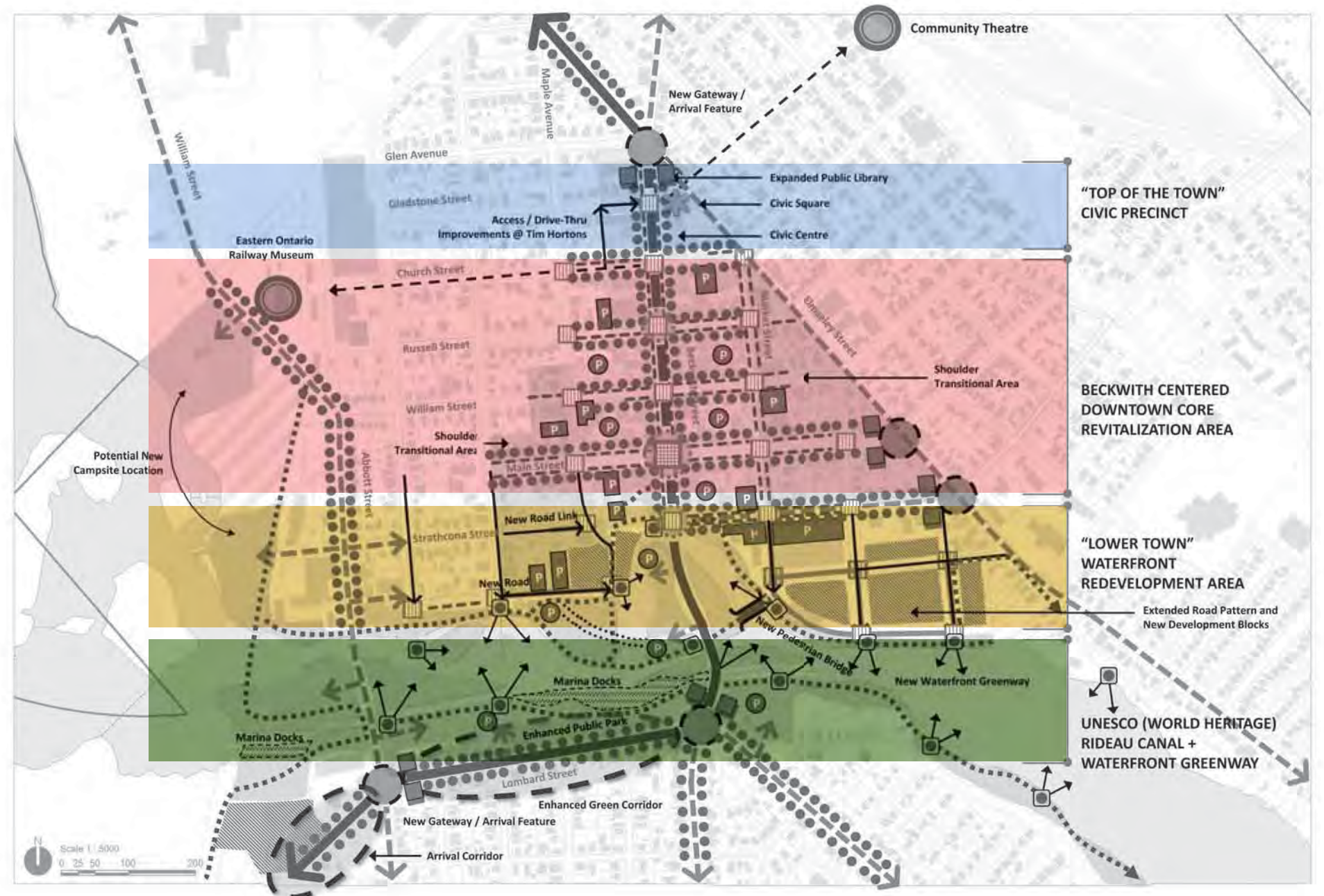


Figure 5: Concept Plan Components Diagram



3.3 "Top of the Town" Civic Precinct

The "Top of the Town" area will provide a strong civic precinct and social space, acting as an anchor at the "top" of Beckwith Street. Closing the section of Daniel Street between Beckwith Street and Elmsley Street, in conjunction with the proposed addition to the Library, will provide the opportunity to develop a public gathering and event space within the downtown core. This space will help to encourage pedestrian activity along Beckwith Street, and offer a source of community pride and identity.

Key features of the Civic Precinct include gateway expression at the north end of Beckwith Street, intersection improvements with enhanced pedestrian crossings, a civic gathering plaza with water feature, streetscape improvements, and opportunities for green space and parkette development.



Key Plan



Precedent Imagery

**LEGEND**

- Gateway with Arrival Feature
- Major Intersection Improvements w/ Pedestrian Crossing
- Civic Plaza
- Vertical Feature
- Water Feature
- Streetscape Improvements
- Roadway Link
- Parking Areas
- Pedestrian Trail/Walkway Connections
- Green Space Opportunities
- Potential Expansion Area
- Green Open Space



Figure 6: "Top of the Town" Civic Precinct Detail Plan Options

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

#### 3.4 Beckwith Centered Downtown Revitalization Area

##### 3.4.1 Concept Objectives

The Beckwith Centered Downtown Core Revitalization Area will provide an enhanced downtown experience with a wide selection of retail, commercial and service oriented businesses. Convenient parking for employees, residents, and shoppers, will be complemented by adequate directional and informational signage. Pedestrian amenities, including street trees, street lighting and furniture, will ensure comfort and safety in all seasons.



Precedent Imagery

The shoulder transitional areas on the east and west limits of the downtown core. These areas provide a reasonable mix of mostly commercial services and residential uses, with on-street parking along many of the streets.

##### 3.4.2 Key Features

The Master Plan calls for a number of improvements to the downtown core area, with many improvements focused along Beckwith Street. These improvements include signalized intersection improvements at Main, Chambers and Russell Street intersections with enhanced pedestrian crossings, street tree plantings, street furniture and amenities; enhanced pedestrian crosswalks at intersections throughout the downtown area; general streetscape improvements including widened boulevards, gathering and seating nodes, street furniture, lighting, and planting; interpretive streetscape theme linking the civic precinct with the Station Theatre and the Railway Museum; gateway signage expression at key entry points to the core area; and identification of off-street and on-street parking amenities.



Key Plan



Figure 7: Beckwith Centered Downtown Revitalization Area

3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Beckwith Street Key Plan

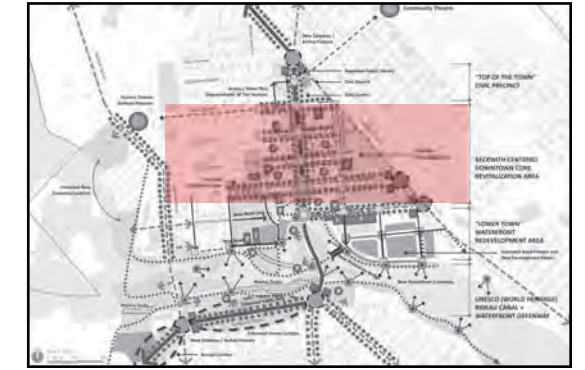


Figure 8: Beckwith Street North Concept Plan



Figure 9: Civic Plaza Detail Area

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Beckwith Street Key Plan

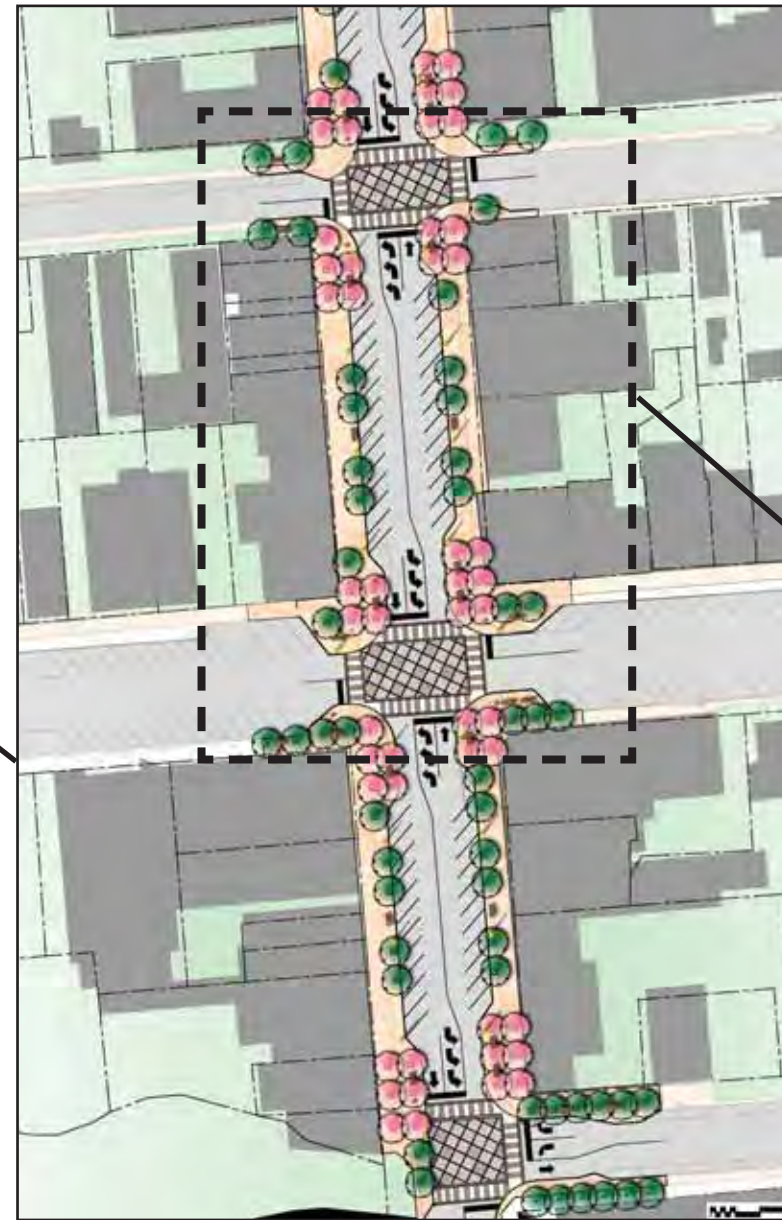


Figure 10: Beckwith Street South Concept Plan

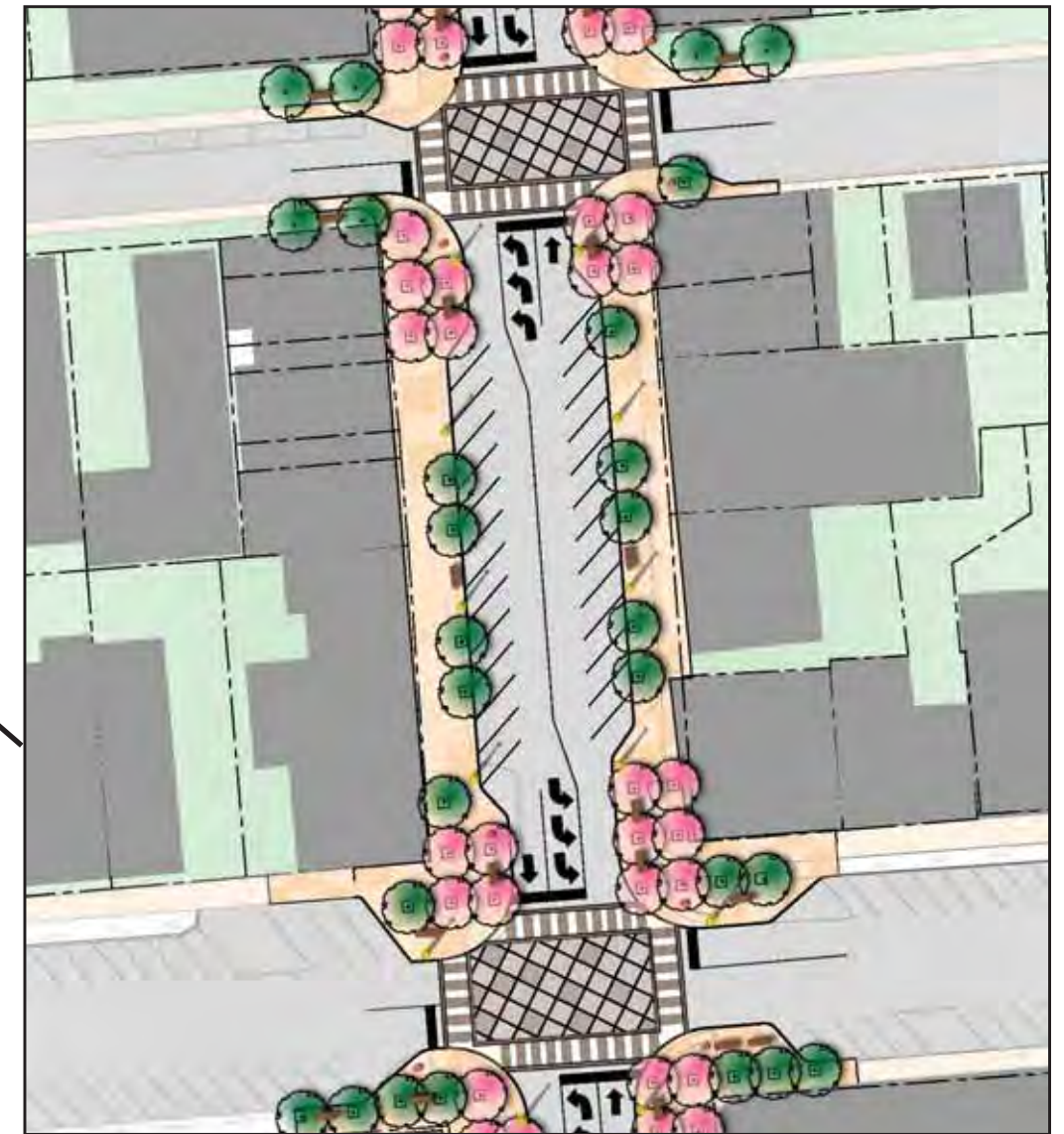


Figure 11: Beckwith Street Typical Block Detail

3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Current Condition of Beckwith Street



Figure 12: Proposed Concept Visualization of Beckwith Street

## 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

### 3.4.3 Downtown Core Parking Strategy

When developing the parking strategy for the downtown core of Smiths Falls a number of key considerations must be looked at:

1. Business Mix
  - Critical mass / downtown
2. Length of stay
  - Short term parking - less than 1 hour
  - Medium term parking - more than 1 hour
  - Long term parking - all day
3. Convenience vs. Cost
  - Most convenient parking locations have the highest cost;
  - Less convenient parking locations have a lower cost; and,
  - Least convenient parking locations have the lowest or no cost.

As can be seen from the adjacent cross-section, Beckwith Street currently dedicates a majority of space to vehicles. Due to the wide right-of-way, the opportunity exists to investigate two alternatives for parking that would provide a wider boulevard in the pedestrian realm; these options are presented on the following page. Further investigation is required to determine the most appropriate parking configuration for Beckwith Street in the long-term.



Key Plan

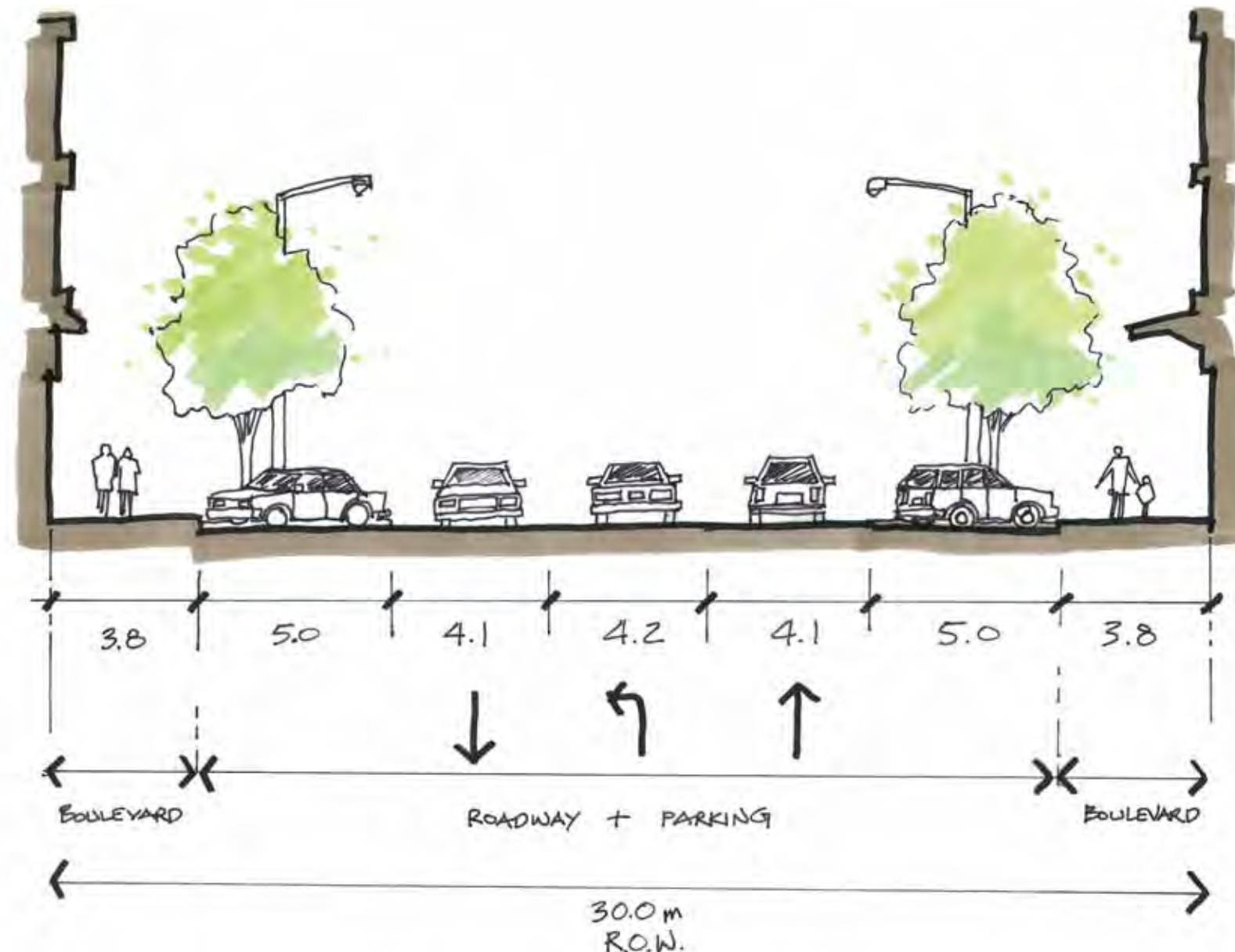


Figure 13: Beckwith Street Existing Cross Section

# 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan

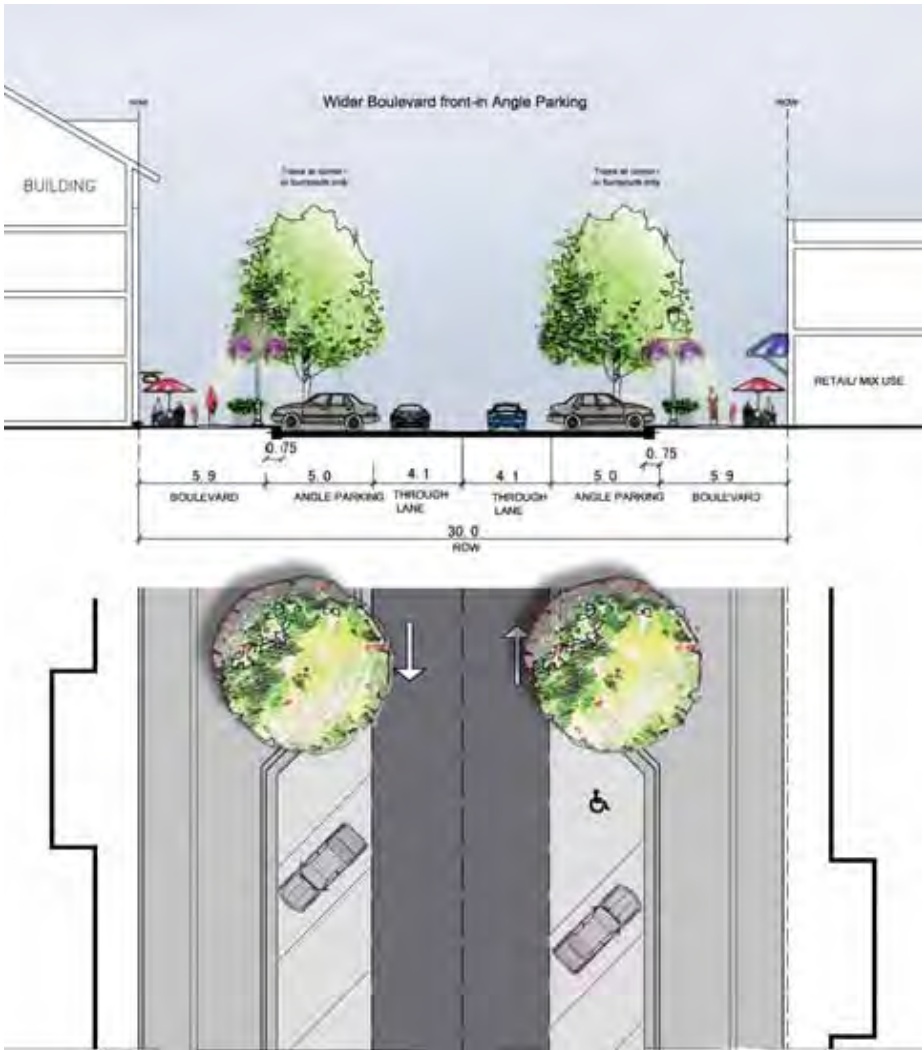


Figure 14: Front-In Angled Parking with Wide Pedestrian Boulevard



Figure 15: Parallel Parking with Wide Pedestrian Boulevard

### Parking Layout Evaluation Matrix

| Parking Layout       | Pros   | Cons  |
|----------------------|--|---|
| 1. Diagonal Front-In | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easy to enter</li> <li>• Greater number of spaces per linear metre of street</li> <li>• Familiarity in town</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harder to exit</li> <li>• Reduced width of sidewalk / people space</li> </ul>        |
| 2. Parallel          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solid buffer between traffic roadway and boulevard</li> <li>• More generous pedestrian space</li> <li>• Familiar to most drivers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harder to enter</li> <li>• Fewer cars per linear metre of street (-25% ±)</li> </ul> |

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

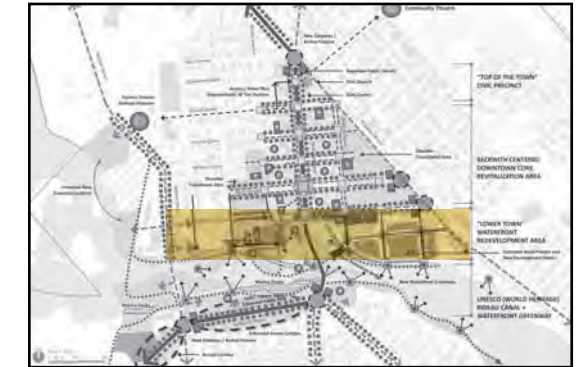
#### 3.5 “Lower Town” Waterfront Redevelopment Area

##### 3.5.1 Concept Objectives

The “Lower Town” waterfront redevelopment area will re-connect the downtown with the heritage waterfront in Smiths Falls. The plan for this area provides a framework for redevelopment of key sites that are critical to the success of an integrated downtown and waterfront. Reclaiming the public space along the water’s edge that have been lost or under-utilized will provide additional recreational space for residents and visitors alike, enabling a waterfront trail and gathering nodes along both the north and south edges of the canal.

##### 3.5.2 Key Features

Key features of the “Lower Town” Waterfront Redevelopment Area include two signature redevelopment sites, reinforced street grid layouts, waterfront interpretive nodes and lookout points, Centennial Park reorganization, and enhanced pedestrian trail connections along waterfront and into downtown core.



Key Plan



Precedent Imagery

#### LEGEND

- |  |  |    |                                      |
|--|--|----|--------------------------------------|
|  | Major Intersection Improvements w/ Pedestrian Crossing |    | Community/Greenway Node              |
|  | Roadways   |    | Pedestrian Trail/Walkway Connections |
|  | Roadway Link   |    | Enhanced Marina/Dock Facilities      |
|  | Parking Areas  |    | Potential Development Area           |
|  | Existing Bridge w/Open Views                           |    | Green Open Space                     |
|  | Small Pedestrian Bridge                                |    |                                      |
|  | Waterfront Interpretive Node/ Lookout Point            | 1. | Continuous Greenway (@±30m width)    |
|  |  | 2. | New Pedestrian Feature Bridge        |
|  |  | 3. | Parks Canada Lock Interpretive Site  |

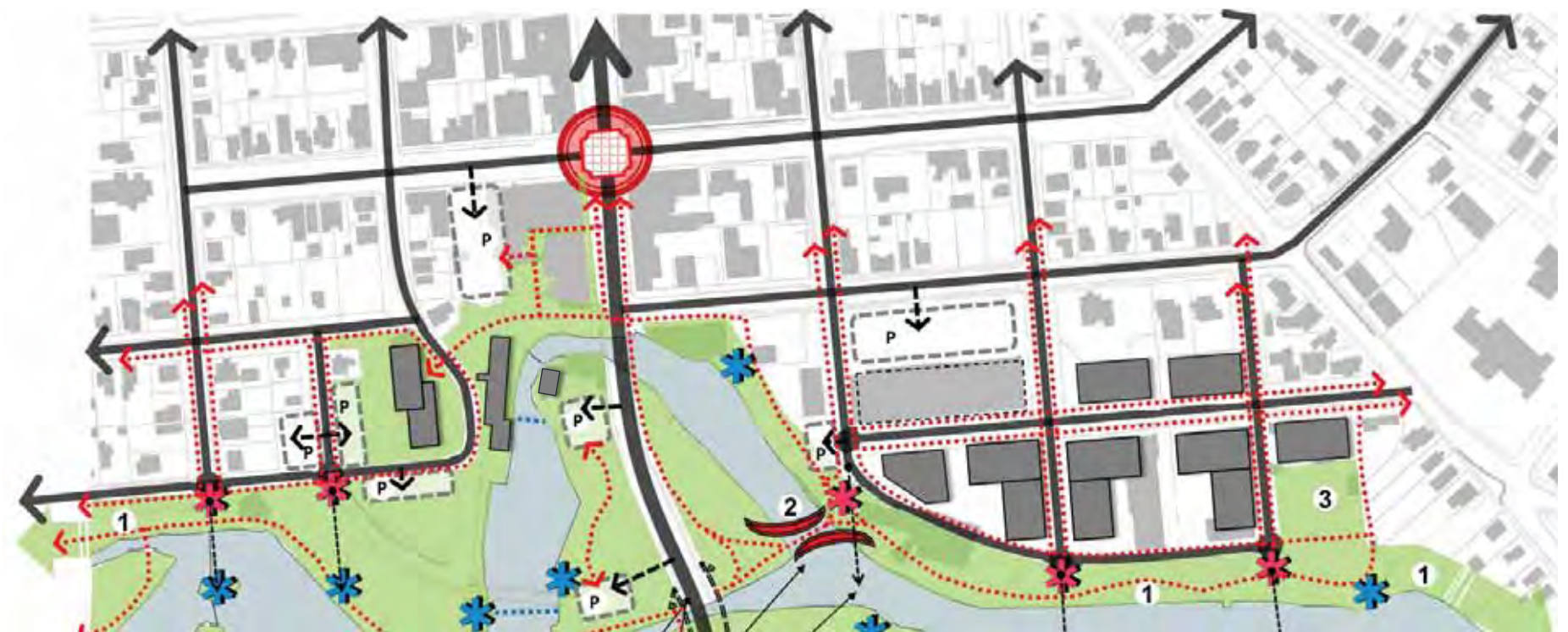


Figure 16: “Lower Town” Waterfront Redevelopment Area



3.5.3 East Signature Development Site

The East Signature Development Site is located along Centre Street and fronts the Rideau Canal. A detailed scheme has been developed for a multi-use waterfront trail that can be implemented in the short-term, once funding becomes available. This short-term project will open up the water's edge for public access, and has the potential to become a catalyst for the redevelopment of this signature site.

The long-term concept plan for this site envisions a waterfront neighbourhood, re-establishing the public street right-of-ways in order to provide access to the appropriately sized development blocks. The concept respects the 30 metre setback required in the Rideau Canal Management Plan with a public greenway and trail along the Canal edge and ultimately a pedestrian bridge across the water, strengthening the pedestrian system and integrating the waterfront with the downtown core. Visual access is strengthened with a continued street grid pattern, providing views to the water from the Town and from the Canal into the Town.

The built form shall address both the street and the waterfront, reorienting existing local retail to address the redefined Centre Street, providing a comfortable pedestrian environment and opportunities for outdoor cafes and patios along the street and the waterfront.



Figure 17: East Signature Development Site - Short Term Plan



Figure 18: East Signature Development Site - Medium Term Plan



Precedent Imagery



Key Plan

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Existing Conditions



Preliminary Concept Sketch



Figure 20: Proposed Concept Visualization - East Signature Waterfront Development

# 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

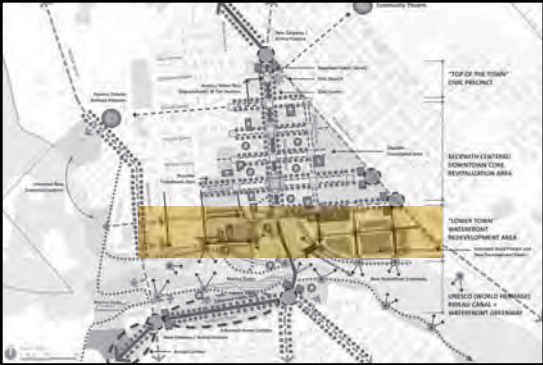
### 3.5.4 West Signature Development Site

The West Signature Development Site is centred along Old Mill Road in the location of the former water treatment plant. The concept envisions an improved street grid network, including new street links extending Park Avenue to the proposed terminus of Confederation Drive and extending Strathcona Street to Old Mill Road.

Developing a mixed-use (commercial retail and residential) focal area to frame Centennial Park and provide increased visual access to the falls areas. The opportunity for street related retail and cafes fronting Centennial Park and the water exists and will provide an enhanced and comfortable pedestrian environment.



Precedent Imagery



Key Plan

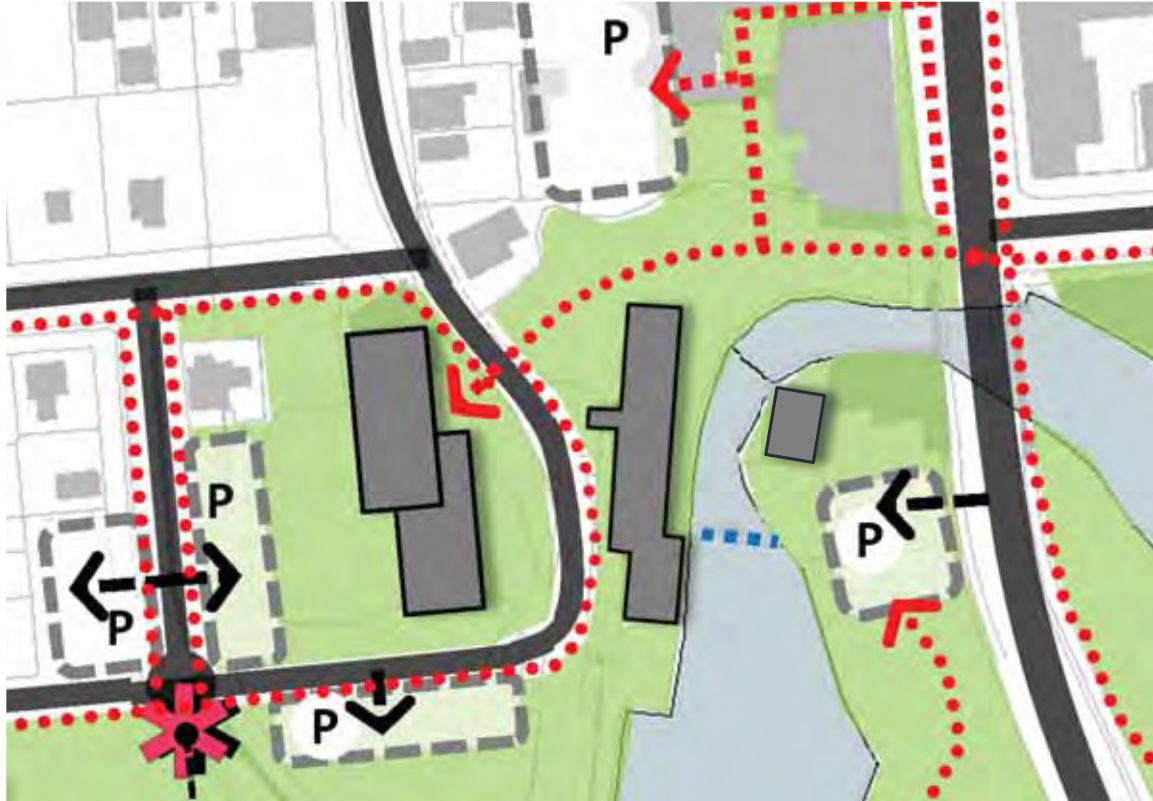


Figure 21: West Signature Development Site

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Existing Conditions



Preliminary Concept Sketch



Figure 22: Proposed Concept Visualization - Waterfront View of West Signature Development Site

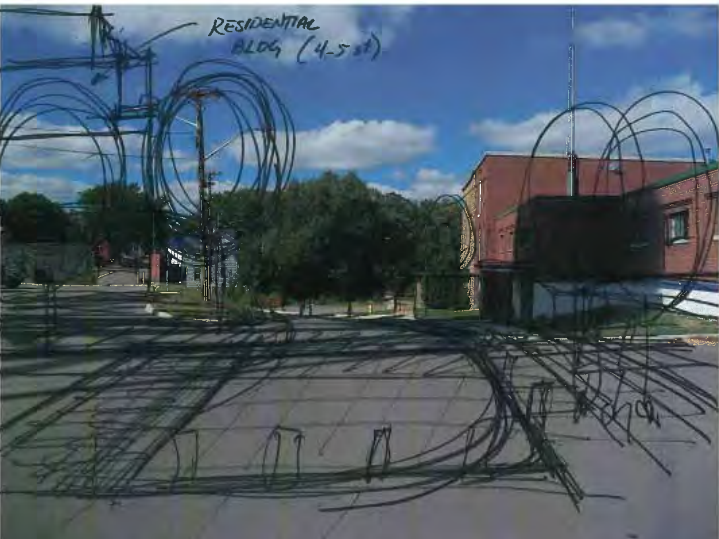
3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Key Plan



Existing Conditions



Preliminary Concept Sketch



Figure 23: Proposed Concept Visualization - Street View of West Signature Development Site

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

#### 3.6 Rideau Canal and Waterfront Greenway

##### 3.6.1 Concept Objectives

The Rideau Canal and Waterfront Greenway concept focuses on developing continuous pedestrian connections along the water's edge, linking key waterfront features with the street network and the downtown core in particular. Providing safe and comfortable space for various types of recreation along the Canal is the key objective for this concept plan.

##### 3.6.2 Key Features

Key features of the Rideau Canal and Waterfront Greenway include redefining two key waterfront open spaces, Centennial Park and Victoria Park; providing complete pedestrian trail connections, adequate marina and docking facilities, interpretive nodes and Canal viewing locations, and adequate parking facilities.

##### 3.6.3 Centennial Park

The concept plan for Centennial Park envisions the closure of a portion of Confederation Drive (between Beckwith Street and the proposed extension of Park Avenue) as well as a portion of Old Mill Road (between Confederation Drive and the proposed extension of Strathcona Street). This would maximize the public green open space fronting the water, and may have the potential of hosting medium to large sized festivals and events. The north-south roads that terminate at Centennial Park would provide great access and views of the Canal and park, with lookout points and interpretive nodes on the water's edge.

##### 3.6.4 Victoria Park

The concept plan for Victoria Park will also maximize the usable public open space by relocating the mobile home park to another suitable location. Victoria Park will transform into a passive recreation area, with naturalized plantings and bio-swales along the portion of the park that fronts Lombard Street. An expanded marina will provide adequate services and a place to stop and explore for those travelling along the Canal.



Precedent Imagery



Key Plan

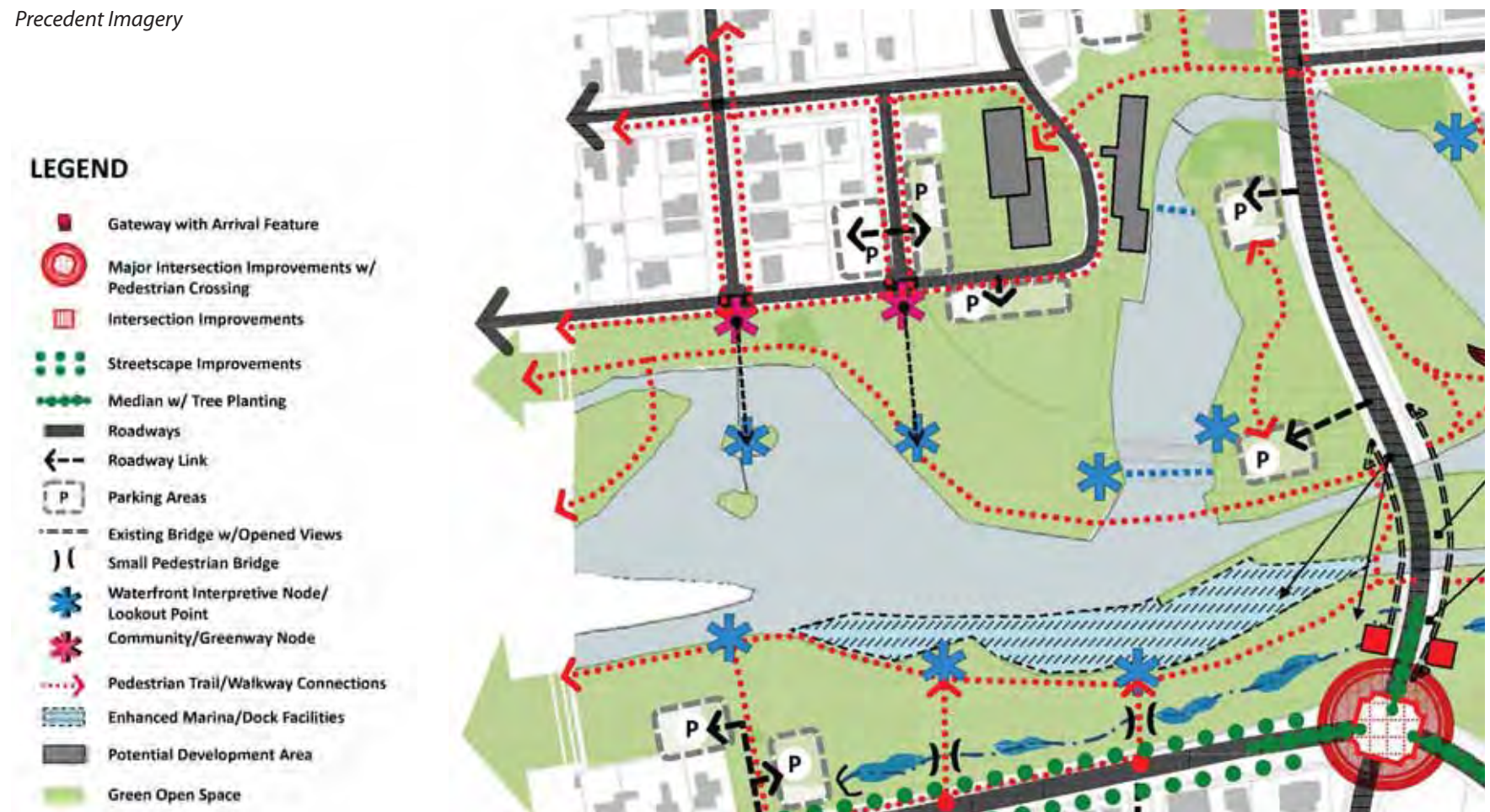


Figure 24: Rideau Canal and Waterfront Greenway



Key Plan

**3.6.5 Gateway Feature at Victoria Park**

Implementing visually appealing gateway features at the key influence areas approaching / in Smiths Falls will provide for an attractive solution to a physical barrier that divides the Town. This will provide arrival points and a sense of place for visitors and residents alike. Features such as speciality intersection paving design, pedestrian crosswalks, identification signage and associated landscaping will clearly define the entrance to Smiths Falls.

The gateway feature at Victoria Park will be prominent when entering Smiths Falls from Highway 15 from the the south. Key features of the gateway include enhanced pedestrian paving, landscape plantings, signage walls, and special intersection design. These features convey the landscape design theme making residents and visitors aware of the unique character of the place.

**LEGEND**

- Gateway with Arrival Feature
  - Major Intersection Improvements w/ Pedestrian Crossing
  - Streetscape Improvements
  - Roadway Link
  - Parking Areas
  - Pedestrian Trail/Walkway Connections
  - Green Space Opportunities
  - Waterfront Interpretive Node/ Lookout Point
  - Green Open Space
  - Vertical Feature
  - Signage Wall
  - Garden Area
1. Open Views to Waterfront Park
  2. Enhanced Intersection w/Special Paving and Vertical Entrance Features
  3. New Gardens and Gateway Connection to Canal/Park
  4. Enhanced Bio-swale Water/Rain Garden
  5. Open Views to Waterway

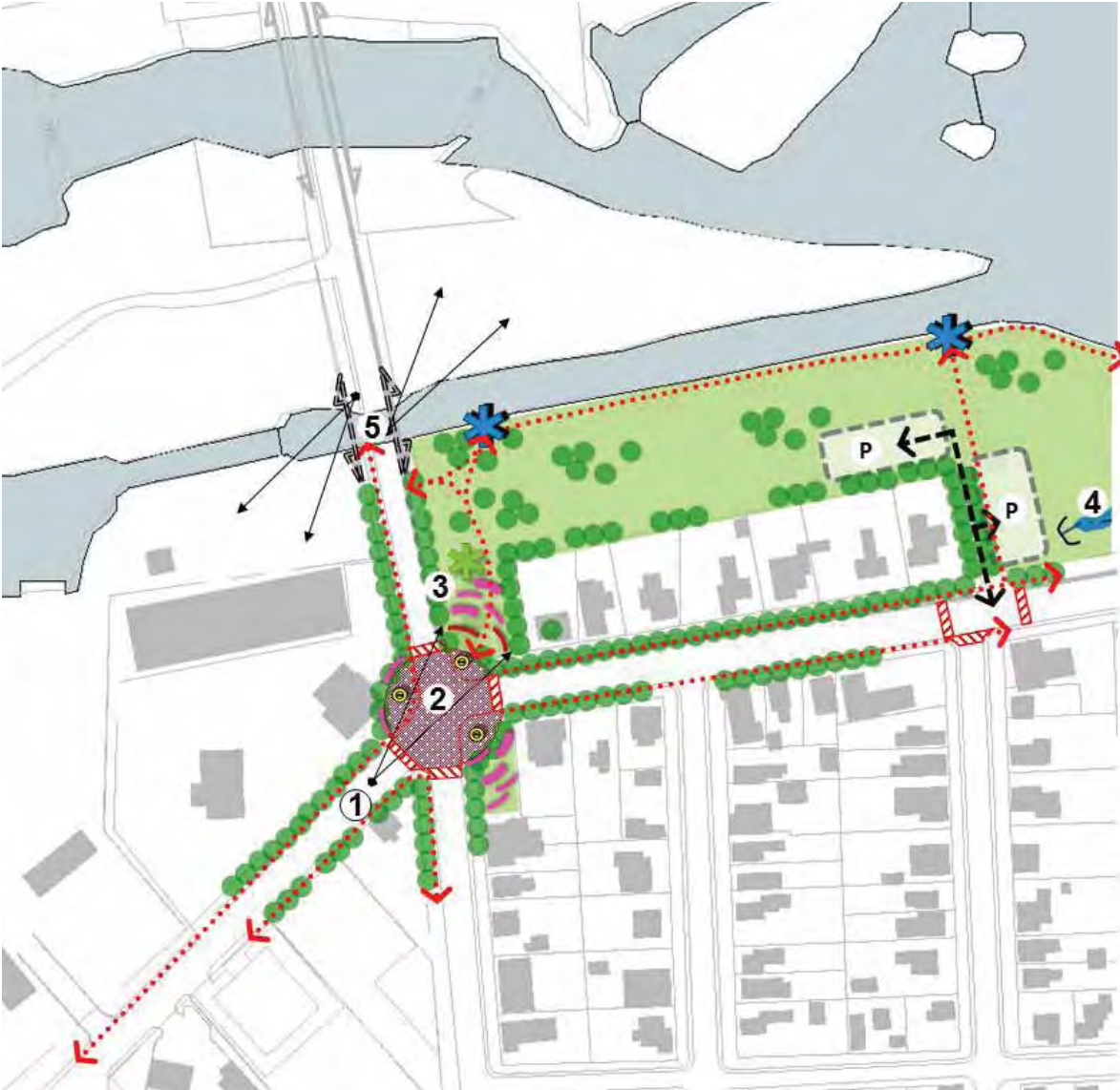


Figure 25: Gateway Feature at Victoria Park

### 3.0 CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



Existing Conditions



Preliminary Concept Sketch



Key Plan



Figure 26: Proposed Concept Visualization of Gateway Feature at Victoria Park





## 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

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Wide pedestrian boulevards will allow adequate space for street furniture, tree planting, patios, and sidewalk display areas.



*Hurontario Street, Collingwood, Ontario*

### 4.1 Design Themes

Design themes that are rooted in the natural and cultural history of the place are the most genuine and valid. Many of these design themes can be found in the local landscape.

Smiths Falls has an extensive cultural history, a beautiful and apparent landscape of water and trees as well as the presence of a growing arts and culture sector.

These design themes will be incorporated into the design guidelines for the downtown and waterfront areas. This will reinforce and enhance the character and identity of the community.

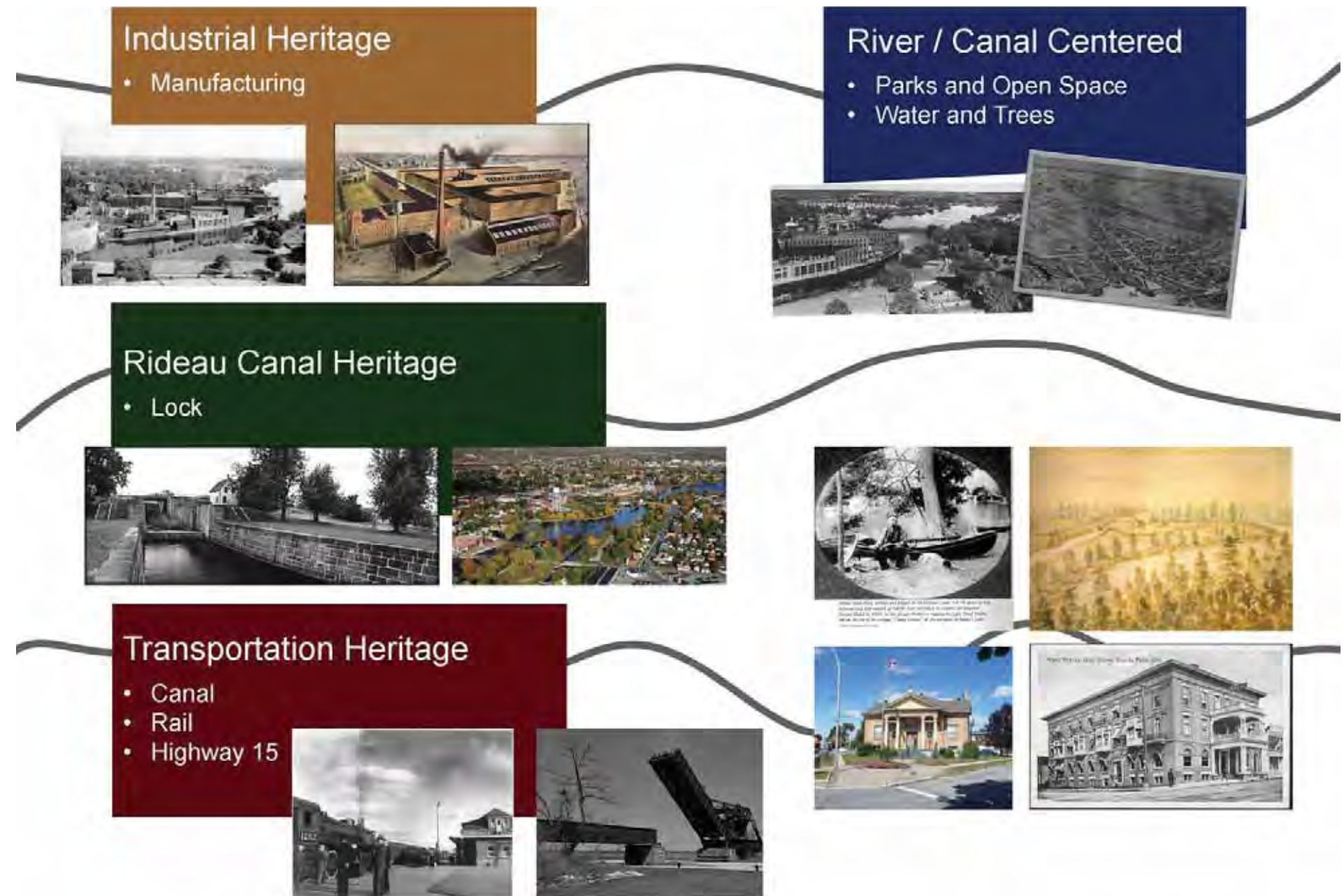


Figure 27: Design Themes

## 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 4.2 Streetscape Design

#### 4.2.1 General Guidelines

Well-designed and attractive streetscapes will reinforce Smiths Falls' road system while enhancing the community's quality of life. These streetscapes can provide enhanced circulation, movement, wayfinding and orientation of both vehicular and non-vehicular traffic, provide public gathering places for the community to interact and socialize, and will promote the image of Smiths Falls as a vibrant and attractive community.

This section of the report will provide general guidelines for all streets within the downtown and waterfront areas of Smiths Falls, discuss various streetscape elements that are an essential part of the street character, and present guidelines for the primary north-south road within the community, Beckwith Street - the provincial connecting link through Smiths Falls, as well as gateway treatments, located at a number of the identified influence areas. The purpose of these streetscape guidelines are to create pedestrian-oriented, attractive and coordinated design that is complementary and compatible with the adjacent land uses and built form.

#### Sidewalks

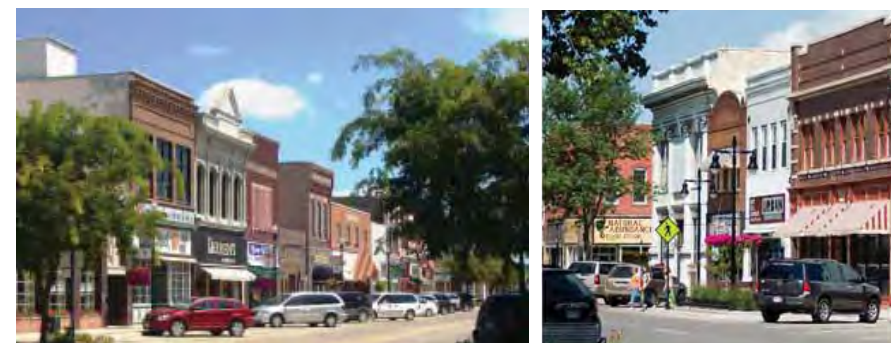
Sidewalks of 3.0 metres minimum width are recommended throughout the Beckwith Centered Downtown Revitalization Area. Sidewalks may increase in width and vary in shape or texture at certain pedestrian activity nodes within Smiths Falls. The use of specialty paving will be provided at important intersections and / or pedestrian crosswalks to delineate the pedestrian realm.

#### Street Trees

Street trees provide both a functional and aesthetic value to the character of the street. They play a unifying role in site development and create distinction among streets.

#### Guidelines:

- Cluster street trees at street corner with tree grates, and mid-block locations planted in pairs at 6-8m on centre in raised planters (seat height), as appropriate. Variations may occur in response to adjacent land uses such as open space, town spaces, focal points, etc. The objective is a grouped canopy at key nodes along the street;
- Preference should be given to hardy native species or other salt-tolerant, high-branching, deciduous varieties;
- Use species that are relatively low maintenance and noninvasive;
- Trees should be planted in groupings, i.e. at special places and intersections, rather than as single specimen.



Clustered trees at corners and mid-block pedestrian crossings.

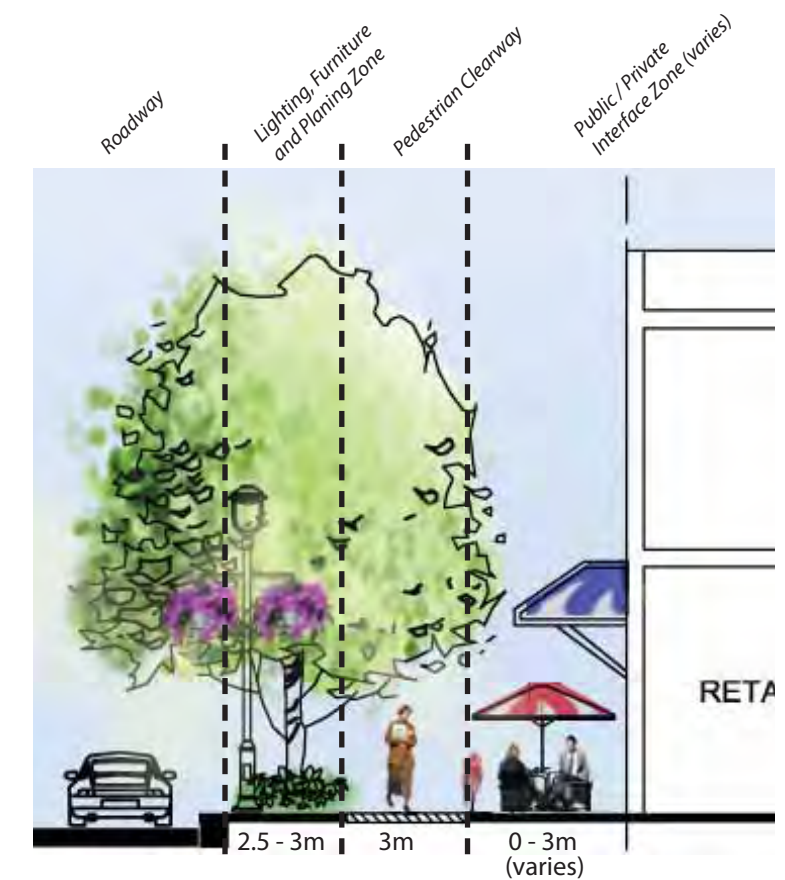


Figure 28: Streetscape Zones

**4.2.2 Streetscape Elements**

The streetscape consists of the zone from a building face to the curb and shall be designed with equal consideration for the elements within the right-of-way and the built form or uses in the adjacent property.

Coordinating streetscape elements is important in conveying the identity of the community, reinforcing its character and ensuring the safety, accessibility and comfort of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Design of streetscape elements should complement one another and be consistent with the design vision for Smiths Falls. Streetscape elements include:

- Street Lighting
- Site Furniture

**Street Lighting**

Lighting provides safety for both vehicles and pedestrians and serves both a functional as well as an aesthetic purpose. The street lighting design shall be consistent with the overall architectural character of Smiths Falls, providing adequate lighting on the roadway as well as on the sidewalks and trails for pedestrians.

*Guidelines:*

- Street lighting should be placed in line with street trees where appropriate;
- Specialty lighting fixtures may be used along Beckwith Street and along the waterfront to highlight these areas; and,
- Light standard types and styles should be coordinated with other street furniture.

*Note: The two light fixtures shown are consistent with those recommended in the Pedestrian Linkage Study.*



*Recommended Light Fixtures for Downtown Core*



*Precedent Imagery*



*Recommended Light Fixtures for Waterfront and Trails*



*Precedent Imagery*

## 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Site Furniture

Street furnishings will be used to unify and enhance landscape elements within the pedestrian realm. These elements will be consistent in design and not only be functional but also coordinate and reinforce the streetscape character. The inclusion and placement of visually attractive site furniture not only enhances the public realm but also improves the use of public space.

#### Guidelines:

- Colours, materials, forms and styles of site furniture should be complementary and consistent with the overall theme of the community;
- Placement and arrangement of site furniture should encourage safe use, reinforce and coordinate with the streetscape design;
- Site furniture shall be located at corners, key mid-block nodes, and other appropriate locations along the street.

#### Criteria:

- Along with other elements of streetscape treatment, furnishings will establish an identity for Smiths Falls;
- Subtle design variations to street furnishings are acceptable for specific spaces such as Beckwith Street and along the waterfront;
- The range of furnishings should be minimized to avoid visual clutter and be tied together by a common theme and colour palette;
- Furnishings should be low maintenance, vandal-resistant and easily replaceable.

#### 1. Benches

*Note: The street furniture shown is consistent with that recommended in the Pedestrian Linkage Study.*

- Durable;
- Benches should be approximately 6 feet in length to accommodate 2 to 3 people comfortably;
- Should have back and arm rests for optimal comfort.

#### 2. Waste Receptacles / Recycling Bins

- Durable waste containers;
- Consistent design style with other site furniture;
- Should be equipped with plastic liners, rain proof tops and be easily accessible for emptying.

#### 3. Bicycle Racks

- Embedment mounting;
- Should be located near points of interest and attractions, as well as at strategic locations along Beckwith Street.

#### 4. Planters

- Consistent design style with benches and waste receptacles;
- Customize plant materials to provide seasonal interest;
- Should be located on sidewalk in commercial areas.



*Recommended Street Furniture for Downtown Core*



*Recommended Site Furniture for Waterfront and Trails*



### 4.2.3 Beckwith Street

#### **Purpose:**

Beckwith Street is the central north-south spine and the primary commercial street within Smiths Falls. This road will be characterized by a single lane of traffic in each direction and front-in angled parking on both sides of the street with a central median with left turn lanes at intersections. Streetscape design should support this vision.

#### **OPTION 1 - Angled Parking**

##### **Features:**

- 30 m right-of-way;
- 2 vehicular through lanes of 4.1 m width;
- 2 front-in angled parking areas of 5.0 m width;
- 1 turning lane / mid-block median of 3.5 m width;
- 4.15 m boulevard on both sides of street;
- Street trees located at corners, intersections and appropriate mid-block locations.

#### **OPTION 2 - Parallel Parking**

##### **Features:**

- 30 m right-of-way;
- 2 vehicular through lanes of 3.5 m width;
- 2 parallel parking lanes of 2.6 m width;
- 1 turning lane / mid-block median of 3.5 m width;
- 7.2 m boulevard on both sides of street;
- Street trees located along length of street where appropriate.

#### **Character:**

- Commercial interface;
- Comfortable for people - shade, wind protection and shelter;
- Sustainable growth environment for trees - large high quality stock, ease of maintenance, sufficient tree rooting area;
- Active pedestrian environment.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Generous sidewalks should be located on both sides of the street and may include commercial display areas;
- Decorative paving should be introduced to delineate the pedestrian realm, particularly at intersections and crosswalks;
- Street trees should be consistent in species along entire length of street;
- Decorative pedestrian-scale street lighting will be incorporated along the entire length of Beckwith Street and coordinated with the street trees to ensure proper placement and spacing;
- Pedestrian level lighting will be integrated with street lighting poles;
- Design, materials, colours and styles shall be consistent with the adjacent architecture; and,
- Consistent building signage.

In addition, it is recommended to investigate a coordinated street and pedestrian lighting system strategy. Due to the width of Beckwith Street, this will provide adequate lighting in a visually appealing and uncluttered manner.

# 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

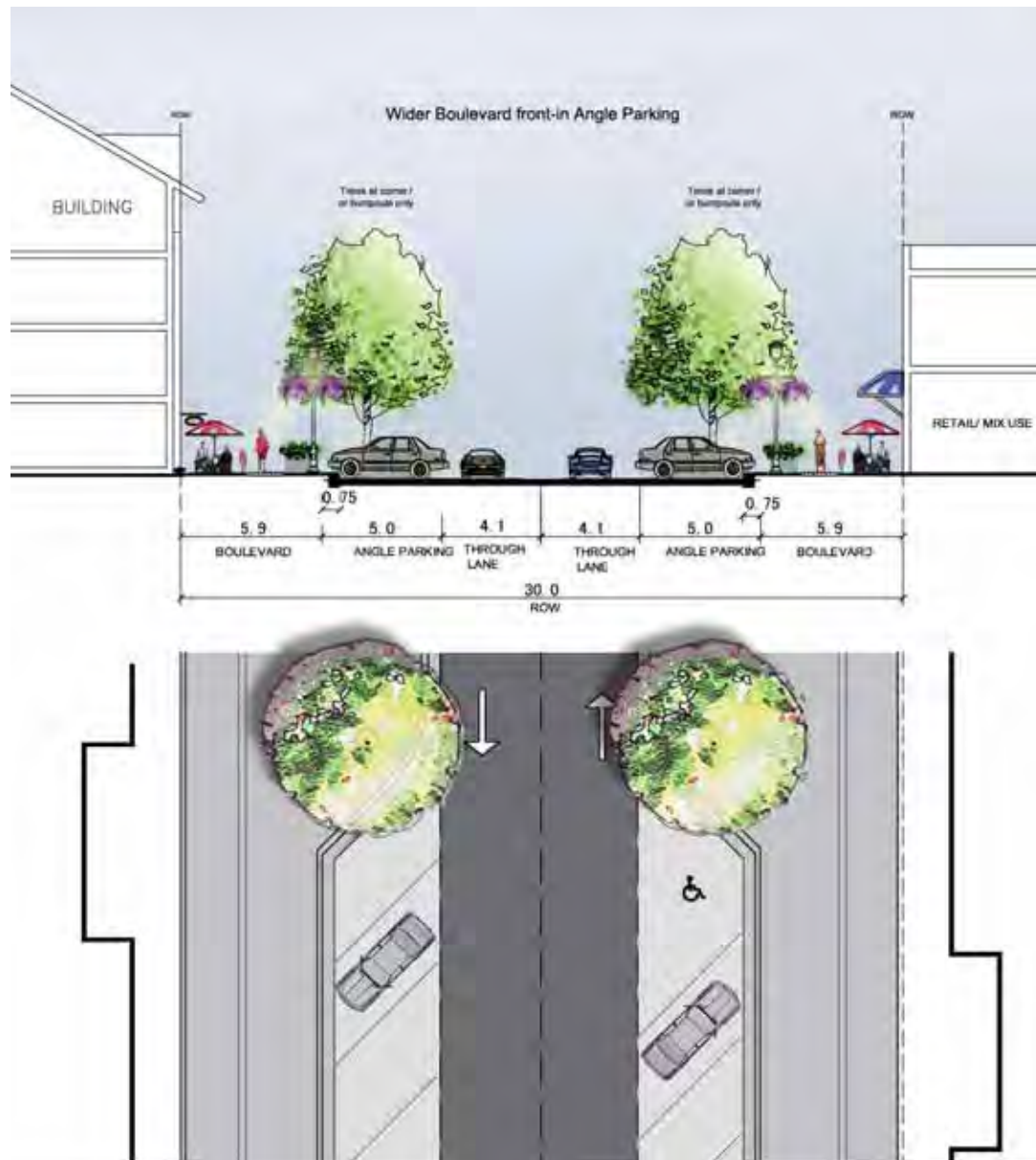


Figure 29: Option 1 - Angled Parking: Typical Cross Section and Plan

Figure 30: Option 2 - Parallel Parking: Typical Cross Section and Plan



4.3 Built Form Guidelines

4.3.1 Existing and Heritage Buildings

The following guidelines for existing and heritage buildings are intended to provide a strong framework for the further creation of a sense of place, identity and attractive character for the Town of Smiths Falls that reflects the heritage themes of the Town. These guidelines will describe the recommended built form for the downtown core area within Smiths Falls, along Beckwith Street and the shoulder areas, to reinforce the commercial core as the main service centre for the Town.

**General Guidelines:**

- Encourage strong architectural tradition upon the original character that the core area was built;
- Encourage consistent design in facades and visual relatedness, to accomplish an integrated and cohesive Beckwith Street;
- Encourage consistency in design and signage while recognizing the importance of creativity and diversity;
- Natural materials in signs with external lighting are preferred, and signs that enhance the architectural characteristics of the building are encouraged;
- Promote the removal of materials such as vinyl or aluminum siding and the restoration of original brick, block or wood facades. Where restoration is not possible, the use of siding of natural materials is encouraged to ensure the form and scale of the original façade is maintained.



Inspirational Building - Frost and Wood Office, 1939 (Photo Credit: Heritage House Museum)



Precedent Imagery - Restored Heritage Building

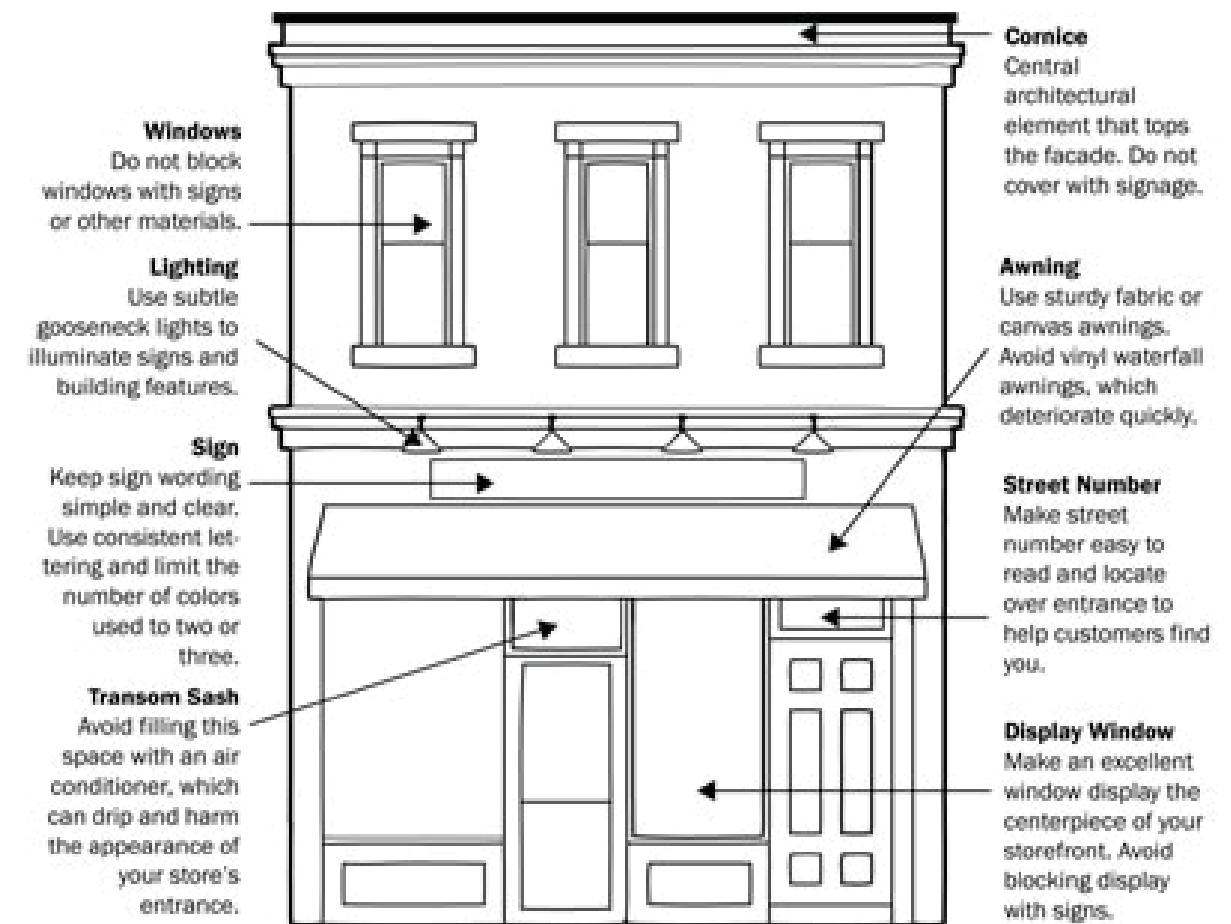


Figure 31: Typical Facade Improvement Guidelines

## 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 4.3.2 New Development

Any new development that occurs in Smiths Falls, especially within the Downtown core or waterfront area shall be compatible with existing built form, respect the local scale and character and promote a comfortable pedestrian environment.

These guidelines utilize the commonly applied 45° visual angular plane. The angular plane is taken from the mid-point of the right-of-way (30 metres on Beckwith Street). The application of these guidelines allow for buildings that provide good sunlight access throughout the day by minimizing shadowing and maximizing sky views.

### General Guidelines:

- Maintain minimum sidewalk widths;
- Contribute to a pedestrian scale, by balancing width of street with height of new buildings;
- Minimum 2 storey street wall shall be established;
- Respect existing and historic built form, on Beckwith Street and on commercial streets in the shoulder areas, by establishing a step-back above a 2 storey podium at the street to help preserve a town atmosphere. 3 storey buildings will not require a 2nd storey step-back at the street wall;
- New infill buildings shall respect and be harmonious with the existing massing and height of the streetscape;
- Along the length of Beckwith Street a minimum of two to a maximum of five storeys is recommended.



Precedent Imagery for Downtown Sites

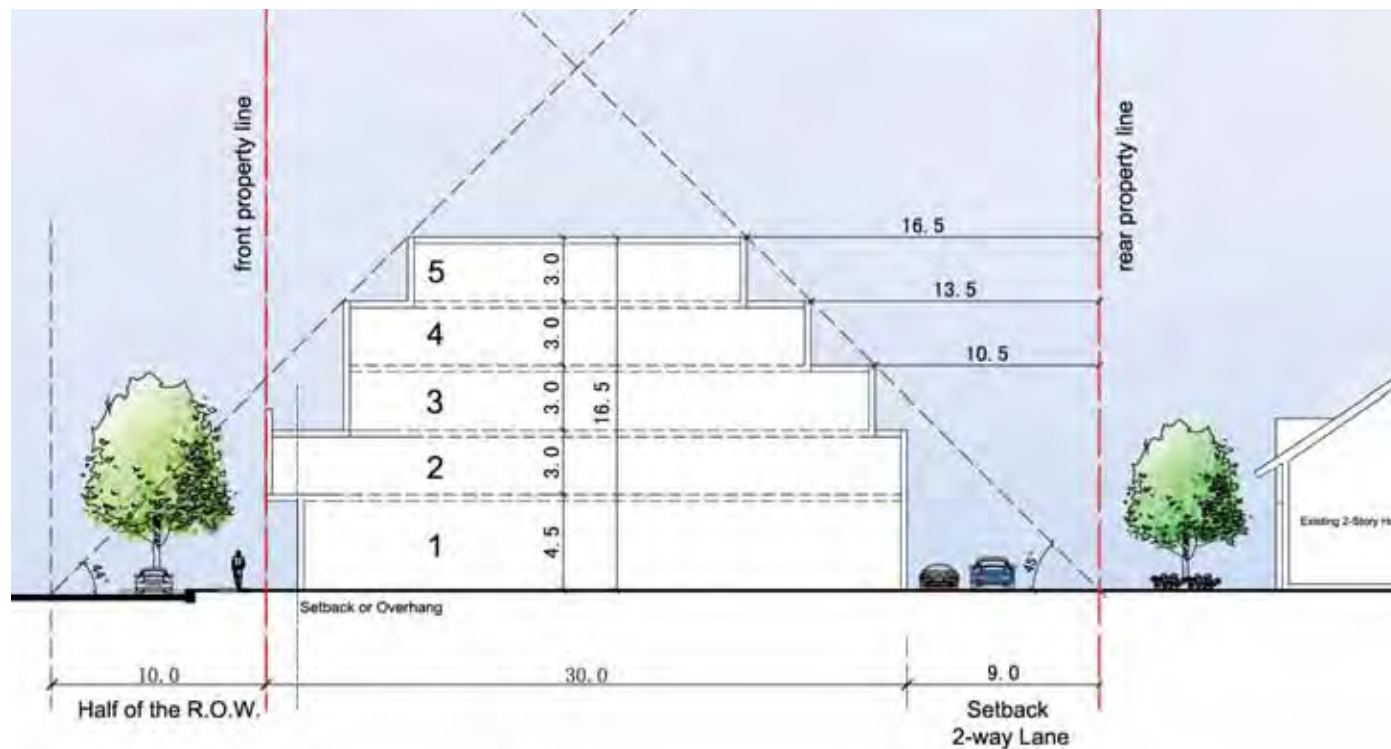


Figure 32: Height and Massing Guidelines for Shoulder Areas

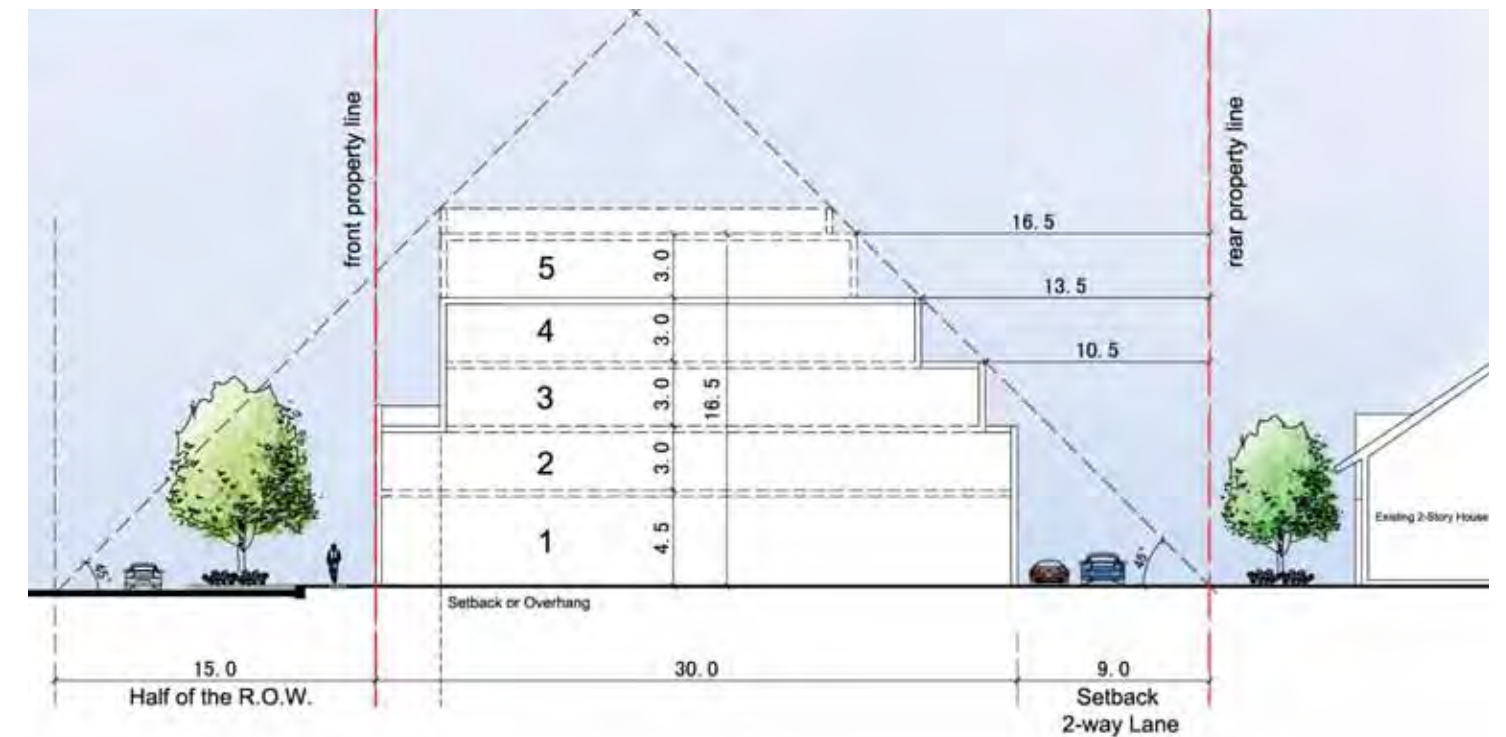


Figure 33: Height and Massing Guidelines for Beckwith Street and Main Street



Precedent Imagery for Waterfront Development Sites

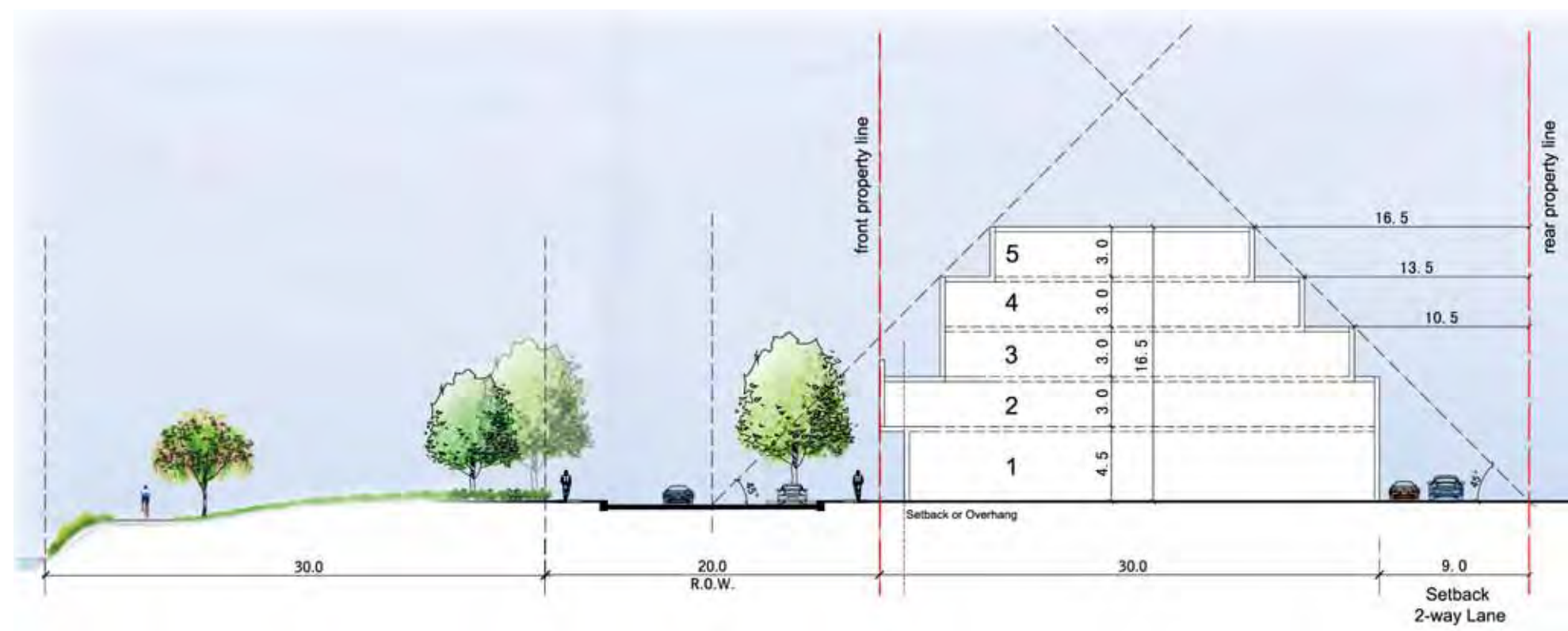


Figure 34: Height and Massing Guidelines for Waterfront Development Sites

## 4.0 DESIGN GUIDELINES

### 4.4 Sustainability Guidelines and Considerations

The sustainable design guidelines for the Smiths Falls Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan encompasses the natural and physical environment, the social environment and the economic environment. Green infrastructure offers a number of benefits including mitigation of urban heat island effects, reduction of energy demands, reduction of stormwater flows, protection from flooding, sequestration of carbon, filtration of air and water pollutants as well as a range of aesthetic improvements, social, community and economic benefits.

Encouraging development that is environmentally sustainable is an important element to achieve the overall vision. There are a number of performance measures and considerations that can be utilized by the Town of Smiths Falls to ensure that any future development adheres to the overall objective of sustainability.

The measures listed below have been adapted from the criteria established by the American Society of Landscape Architects Sustainable Sites Initiative (2009) and are intended to supplement the Canada Green Building Council's LEED Rating System. These measures are as follows:

#### Site Selection Considerations

- Protect floodplain functions and preserve wetlands;
- Ensure the preservation of threatened or endangered species and their habitats by avoiding development of these areas;
- Select brownfields or greyfields for redevelopment to reduce pressure on undeveloped land;
- Encourage site development within existing community to reduce pollution and development impacts, support local economy and improve human health;
- Select sites that encourage non-motorized transportation;

#### Pre-Design Assessment and Planning Considerations

- Conduct a pre-design site assessment and explore opportunities for site sustainability;
- Use a multidisciplinary team to collaborate on the design, construction and maintenance of the site in an integrated process;
- Engage users and other stakeholders in site design process;
- Reduce the use of potable water for landscape irrigation after plant establishment;
- Encourage alternative irrigation methods and water conservation strategies;
- Preserve and enhance riparian, wetland, and shoreline buffers to improve flood control and water quality;
- Rehabilitate the ecosystem functions and values of lost streams, wetlands, and shorelines;

#### Site Design Criteria

- Manage stormwater on-site by restoring the water balance of the site;
- Protect and enhance on-site water resources and receiving water quality;
- Design rainwater / stormwater features to provide a landscape amenity;
- Manage water features to conserve water and other resources;
- Control and manage known invasive plants found on site to limit damage to local ecosystem services;
- Use appropriate, non-invasive plants to improve landscape performance and reduce resource use;
- Develop and communicate a soil management plan prior to construction to limit disturbance and assist soil restoration efforts;

- Minimize soil disturbance in design and construction;
- Identify and preserve all vegetation designated as special status by local, provincial or federal entities;
- Maintain or establish regionally appropriate vegetation biomass to support the ecosystem service benefits provided by vegetation on site;
- Plant appropriate vegetation that is native to the eco-region of the site and preserve and restore existing plant communities native to the eco-region to contribute to regional diversity;
- Place vegetation strategically around buildings to reduce energy consumption and costs associated with indoor climate control;
- Use vegetation and reflective materials to reduce heat islands and minimize effects on microclimate and on human and wildlife habitat;
- Eliminate the use of wood from threatened tree species to minimize negative effects on other ecosystems;
- Utilize existing materials as resources for new site development to reduce costs for new purchased materials;
- Use materials with recycled content to reduce the use of virgin materials and avoid sending useful materials to the landfill;
- Ensure certified lumber is used to encourage exemplary forest management that is environmentally and socially responsible;
- Use regional materials to reduce energy use and support local resources and promote a regional identity;
- Select products in site development that contain reduced amounts of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to reduce harmful health effects associated with air pollution;
- Support sustainable practices in plant production and materials manufacturing by purchasing plants and materials from providers who reduce resource consumption and waste;

### Human Health and Well-Being Criteria

- Promote equitable site development by ensuring that project provides economic or social benefits to local community during construction and end use;
- Interpret on-site features and processes to promote the understanding of sustainability in ways that positively influence user behaviour on site and beyond;
- Protect and maintain cultural and historical locations, attributes and artifacts to enhance a site's sense of place and meaning;
- Provide for optimum site accessibility, safety and wayfinding of outdoor spaces;
- Provide on-site opportunities that encourage outdoor physical activity to improve human health;
- Provide visual and physical connections to the outdoors to optimize the mental health benefits of site users;
- Provide outdoor gathering spaces of various sizes and orientations to accommodate groups to build community and improve social ties;
- Reduce light pollution by minimizing light trespass on site to reduce sky-glow, increase nighttime visibility and minimize negative effects on nocturnal environments and human health;

### Construction Criteria

- Prevent the discharge of construction site pollutants and materials to protect receiving waters, air quality and public safety;
- Restore soils disturbed during construction in all areas that will be re-vegetated and areas of previously disturbed topsoils and subsoils to rebuild site's ability to support healthy plants, biological communities, water storage and infiltration;
- Divert construction and demolition materials generated by site development from disposal;
- Reuse or recycle vegetation, rocks, and soil generated during

construction to achieve a net zero waste site;

- Use construction equipment that minimizes the generation of greenhouse gas emissions and localized air pollutants;

### Monitoring and Innovation Criteria

- Monitor and document sustainable design practices to evaluate their performance over time and improve the body of knowledge on long-term site sustainability;
- Encourage and reward innovative sustainable practices for exceptional performance and / or innovative performance in sustainable sites;

### Operations and Maintenance Criteria

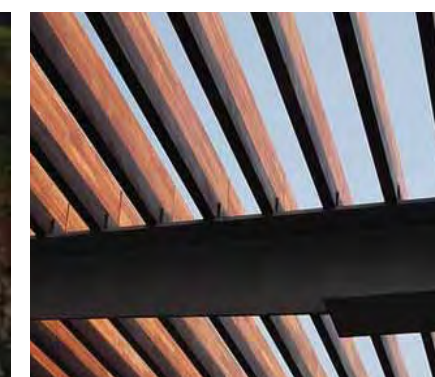
- Prepare a site maintenance plan outlining long-term strategies and short-term actions to achieve sustainable maintenance goals;
- Provide for storage and collection of recyclables in outdoor areas to reduce waste generation;
- Select energy-efficient outdoor fixtures and equipment to reduce energy consumption and costs;
- Use electricity from renewable sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with site operations and minimize air pollution, habitat destruction, and pollution from fossil fuel-based energy production;
- Minimize generation of greenhouse gases and exposure to localized air pollutants during landscape maintenance activities; and,
- Promote the use of vehicles that have reduced emissions and / or high fuel efficiency to reduce pollution and land development impacts from automobile use.



*Integrate stormwater features into landscape design*



*Interpretive sustainability signage*



*Utilize regional materials*





## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

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Creating public gathering spaces within the downtown will provide a unique sense of place for residents and visitors alike.



*City Hall Square, Burlington, Ontario*



5.1 The Community Improvement Plan

The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is intended to promote long-term economic sustainability and quality of life in downtown Smiths Falls and represents part of the broader context of economic development and land use planning supported by the Town.

The Community Improvement Plan supports the aforementioned guiding principles of this Master Plan project – specifically higher density residential development, multi-use commercial/office/residential development within the commercial core as well as improvements of key development zones in Town. Major sites exist for potential development of multi-unit residential and commercial on the south end of the Downtown, both east and west of Beckwith Street South, on the fringes of the Downtown and in the existing residential shoulder areas of the Downtown. Recognition that development opportunities exist beyond the core commercial area will be resolved through the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) definition which, as defined in Section 1.3, encompasses target areas along key gateways and shoulder areas outside on the commercial core.

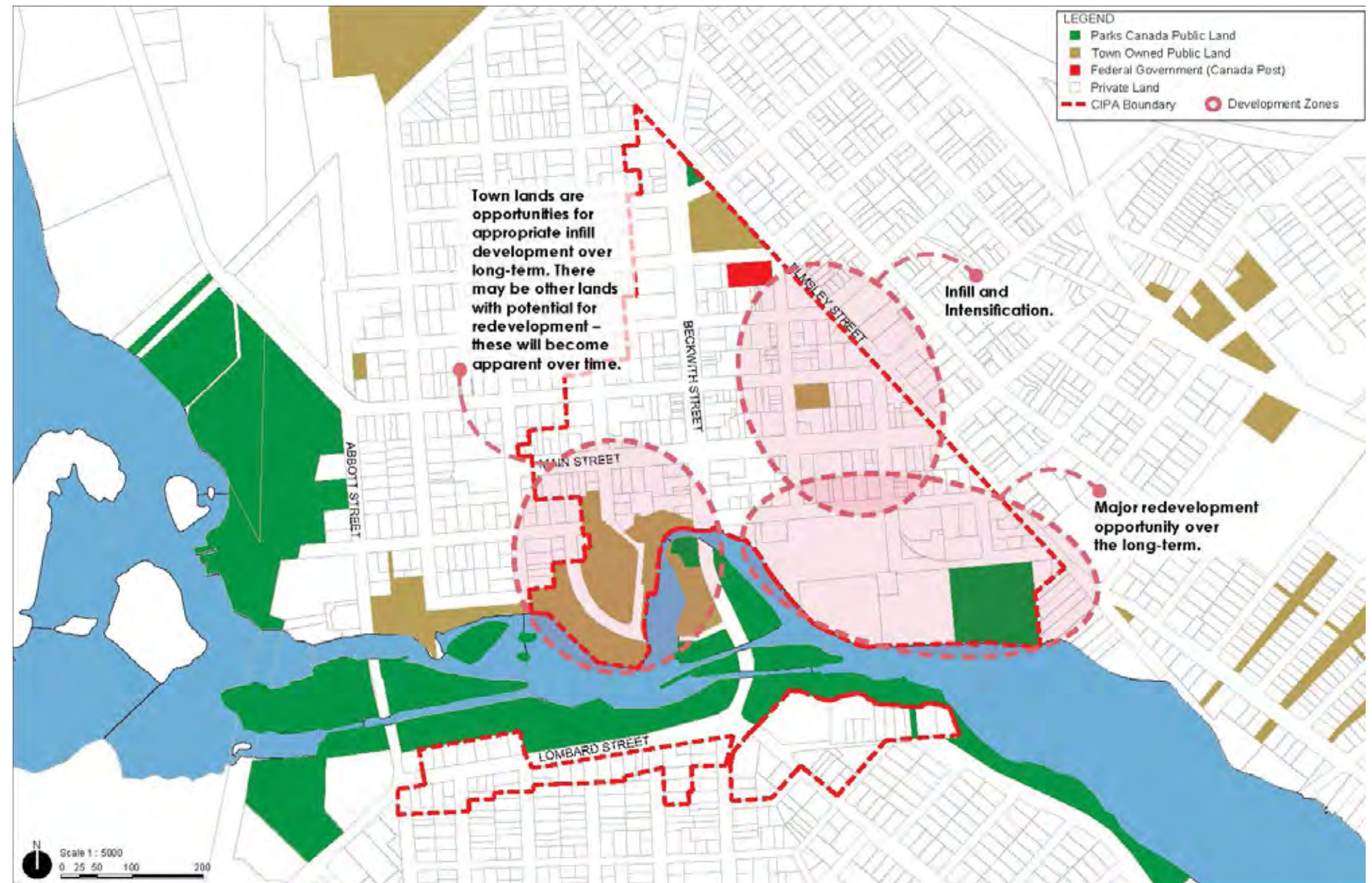


Figure 35: Development Zones Map

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 5.2 Key Recommendations

1. Coordinate public sector revitalization efforts with private sector initiatives where ever possible to ensure mutually supportive programs and optimization of funding.
2. Undertake a complete streetscape redevelopment program on Beckwith Street in concert with underground municipal services upgrades, roadway paving and on-street parking strategy.
3. Undertake streetscape redevelopment within the shoulder areas progressively as underground municipal services upgrades and roadway paving proceed.
4. Pursue development of the Civic Square in the area presently occupied by Daniel Street, between the Library and Town Hall buildings as part of a long term commitment to reinforcing Civic identity.
5. Leverage opportunities created through private development to support initiatives within the public realm such as streetscape and park enhancements.
6. Continue to pursue implementation of the multi-use pedestrian trail system throughout the downtown and waterfront areas to open up access to public spaces along the Rideau Canal and related open spaces.
7. Open up views and visual connections with the Rideau Canal and waterfront areas where ever possible.
8. Continue the grid system of local streets toward and along the waterfront areas both east and west of Beckwith Street to provide enhanced visual connections and public access to the waterfront.
9. While these are long term projects, develop more detailed (secondary) plans for the waterfront redevelopment areas that will identify opportunities and constraints, physical framework and servicing considerations as well as roles and responsibilities of the public sector and private sector to guide future development interest.
10. Implementation of a 5-year Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to encourage private property development in the Downtown and Waterfront area via the following financial incentive programs:
  - Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Grant Program (Tax Increment Grant);
  - Building Restoration and Improvement Grant Program;
  - Façade Improvement and Signage Grant Program;
  - Planning and Development Fees Grant Program; and
  - Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Grant Program.
11. Pursue planning to enable the long-term development of new ownership housing – likely medium to higher density housing in response to market opportunities such as catering to older, active retirees, and first-time buyers.
12. Fund the Community Improvement Plan commencing in late 2013 or in the 2014 fiscal year to a level that will enable effective take-up of the grant programs by those properties owners that can present demonstrable plans to invest in their properties.
13. Institute the necessary monitoring and administrative structure at the Town to enable the successful administration and implementation of the CIP (via the creation of an Evaluation Committee to review and approve program applications under the coordination of a dedicated staff-person assigned to manage the implementation of the CIP, as well as undertaking annual program monitoring and marketing of the CIP to business owners/property owners).
14. Enhance private property improvement opportunities via co-ordination of financial incentive programs of the Smiths Falls CIP with the Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation Façade Improvement Loan Program.

### 5.3 Potential Capital Funding Opportunities

#### 5.3.1 Public Realm Improvements

There is a range of Provincial/Federal infrastructure funding programs available from time to time that every municipality in either a defined area or the Province as a whole may take advantage of. The Town of Smiths Falls should, as part of the implementation mandate for this project, assess the eligibility of the planned improvements for funding under a range of existing programs which may arise.

The Building Canada Fund is one program under the Building Canada Plan (2007-2014) for which \$8.8 billion has been allocated over the 7 year period to fund a range of public infrastructure projects including the development of local roads and bridges. The Building Canada Fund program has two components: 1) the Major Infrastructure Component (MIC) and 2) Communities Component. The MIC supports projects of national/regional importance. The Communities Component (currently closed for applications) funds infrastructure projects in smaller communities like the Town of Smiths Falls (with less than 100,000 in population). Projects are cost shared, with the maximum federal share being limited to one-third for municipal projects (matching contributions are expected from the Province and municipality).

In terms of government-backed financing options, the Infrastructure Ontario Loan Program established in 2006, has funded in excess of \$350 million to municipal corporations as of mid-year 2011. This includes transportation infrastructure projects.

The Gas Tax Fund, initiated by the Paul Martin Government in 2004, has in recent years provided funding for a range of infrastructure projects across Canada. As of 2009, the federal gas tax transfers to the Provinces and Territories in support of municipal infrastructure projects increased to \$2 billion annually. According to the latest

information available from the Government, the Gas Tax Fund (GTF) is to remain at that level up to 2014. By that time, current plans are for the GTF to become a permanent measure of funding for Ontario's municipalities.

The GTF is predicated on capital investments and environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure that improves water and air quality and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. To that end, eligible investments include a range of infrastructure such as water, waste water and solid waste facilities, public transit, community energy systems, and local roads and bridges. In Ontario, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) is party to a bi-lateral agreement with the Federal Government delivers the program to other Ontario municipalities.

Every municipality in Canada receives a portion of the GTF. The GTF allocations determine the Provincial/Territorial level based on a per capita formula. For both the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 fiscal years, a total of \$746,765,000 is allocated to Ontario in each of those years. Since the launch of the fund in 2005, Ontario municipalities have invested more than \$2.1 billion of funding into more than 3,800 infrastructure projects worth over \$6.7 billion.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has an online database of 22 infrastructure projects – some completed and ongoing – in the Town of Smiths Falls since 2007. Of these projects, federal gas tax funding has largely been allocated to asphalt resurfacing, drainage/ sewer projects.

#### 5.3.2 The Community Improvement Plan

The Town of Smith Falls should also explore Provincial and Federal opportunities to help fund the community revitalization goals of the CIP as well as the CIP reserve. In addition to the range of infrastructure funding programs previously described, the Rural Economic Development (RED) Fund (administered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs) serves to assist with the costs associated with a range of community revitalization projects in rural Ontario.

Currently the RED Fund is fully subscribed. If and when additional funding is allocated to the program, the Town of Smiths Falls should explore this opportunity for funding of the CIP. Under the RED Fund, eligible community revitalization projects are cost-shared with the Province (up to 50% in most cases) and eligible project costs relate to the development and distribution of marketing and promotional materials and minor capital costs including renovations necessary for the project.

## 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

### 5.4 Public Realm Development Costs

Through an initial assessment of the concept plans developed for the Downtown Revitalization and Waterfront Integration Master Plan, the Consulting Team has developed order of magnitude development cost estimates for three key projects, the Civic Plaza, Beckwith Street and the Waterfront Trail.

| <b>Project</b>   | <b>Anticipated Cost</b> |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Civic Plaza      | \$1-1.5 M               |
| Beckwith Street  | \$5-6 M                 |
| Waterfront Trail | \$275,000 - 300,000     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>\$6.275 - 7.8 M</b>  |

Note: the above costs do not include design fees, contingency or H.S.T.

### 5.5 Phasing and Project Prioritization

#### 5.5.1 Private Sector Phasing

The CIP will pursue area goals for the development of the Downtown core, shoulder areas as well as signature redevelopment sites simultaneously through the development of individual financial incentive programs which will be tailored to address the specific needs of each of these target areas. For example, the Façade Improvement and Signage Grant Program will be critical in addressing development needs in the Downtown core; likewise the Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Tax Increment Grant Program will be tailored to support residential and major along shoulder areas in the Downtown.

Recognizing that major property development investment is long-term in nature, incremental improvements to the existing core over time is most likely. The phasing/implementation of the CIP may facilitate the gradual revitalization of the Downtown by way of providing an immediate focus on programs such as Façade Improvement and Building Improvement Grants which have the potential to create instant visual impact in the core and generate a critical mass of interest from other property owners.

#### 5.5.2 Public Sector Phasing

##### Downtown

##### 1. Top-of-the-Town Cultural District

This special precinct is located at the upper and most northerly end of Beckwith Street. It contains two key civic facilities - the Town Hall and Library. The sites occupied by these important facilities are separated by Daniel Street. The potential expansion of the library and future improvements to Town Hall provides the opportunity for development of a Civic Square between the two buildings with frontage on Beckwith and Elmsley. This would necessitate the closing of Daniel Street. Planning and design of these buildings and their immediate sites should include the development of the Civic Square when site plans and costing are prepared.

Enhancements are also recommended at the adjacent intersection of Beckwith and Elmsley and should take place as part of the Beckwith Streetscape project outlined below.

##### 2. Beckwith Streetscape

Beckwith Street is the main commercial / retail street in Smiths Falls. As part of Highway 15, it is also a "Connecting Link" road within the Provincial system of highways. Contact has been made with MTO staff during the course of the preparation of this study to coordinate the work on Beckwith relative to the Connecting Link requirements. At the same time, participants in the public meetings and workshops held in Smiths Falls indicated the need for an enhanced streetscape along Beckwith that would support a strong, vibrant retail and pedestrian-friendly environment together with on-street parking.

A preliminary concept design has been developed for Beckwith that illustrates the general intent of the streetscape design and is used as a basis for a preliminary estimate of the likely cost of streetscape works. We also understand that there may also be a need to replace and / or upgrade certain underground municipal services along Beckwith Street. Given the interdependency of these projects, it is recommended that all of the underground works and the streetscape works be undertaken on a coordinated basis. That is, the underground works should be undertaken first, followed by the streetscape enhancements including curb realignments, pedestrian crossings, roadway pavement, pedestrian and roadway lighting, street trees, street furnishings (benches, planters, etc). Investigations into the funding for these projects should also be addressed to explore ways to "piggy-back" sources of funding whenever possible. This may involve a combination of sources of funding, such as those provided for utility upgrades, road improvements, streetscape enhancements, etc. At the time of this report publication, funding in support of the Connecting Link roadway had been recently discontinued.

### 3. Shoulder Areas

The shoulder areas are important components of the Downtown Revitalization Plan. As such, they support Beckwith Street with additional retail and commercial / office spaces. The streets themselves provide much needed on-street parking and access to off street parking where possible. Long term streetscape improvements should be undertaken when funding is available.

#### Waterfront

##### 1a. East Side Redevelopment Area (Short Term Objective)

The east side redevelopment area is located east of Beckwith Street and south of Chambers Street to the Rideau Canal. The short-term objective for this area is to work closely with the property owners to establish an initial waterfront trail (as described in Section XXX of this report). This trail will meet the required Conservation Authority and Parks Canada guidelines and requirements for development adjacent to the canal, providing access to the waterfront for pedestrians and cyclists.

##### 1b. East Side Redevelopment Area (Long Term Objective)

The long-term objective for this six block area will require a confirmation and re-establishment of public realm street fabric to properly service these existing and future development sites. In addition, the establishment of the required 30 m setback along the Rideau Canal and a new, single-loaded public roadway (18-20m ROW) beyond will further define the developable land areas and sites. The 30 m wide setback will provide an important green buffer and public pedestrian access to the waterfront. The design for the initial multi-use trail along this section of the Rideau Canal is already in place. Development of this framework and eventual development of these sites for mixed use, residential and retail / commercial purposes is seen as a long term project that would require a joint public-private approach.

### 2. West Side Redevelopment Area (Short Term Objective)

The west side redevelopment area is located west of Beckwith Street and the canal spillway along Old Mill Road. The area includes the site of the former pumping station, lands adjacent to Confederation Park and part of the existing parking lot. The area around this site is proposed to include roadway framework modifications related to Confederation Park enhancements. The actual development site straddles Old Mill Road and includes frontage on the spillway. This site is the subject of a developer proposal call process.

### 3. Confederation Park Enhancements (Short Term Objective)

The proposed enhancements to Confederation Park are predicated on the closure of the Confederation Bridge to vehicular traffic and the extension of Park Avenue eastward to connect with Old Mill Road. This re-configuration of streets will provide greater public interface with the park and achieve a more contiguous, flexible and useable park space while eliminating Confederation Drive that presently cuts the park space into small disconnected pieces. The enhanced park has the potential to become a vibrant, multi-use park or "Town Green on the Canal". Re-development, street re-alignments and enhancements to Confederation Park should be coordinated with the development of the West Side Redevelopment Area noted above. Implementation of these improvements should consider the cost savings from the improvements to Confederation Bridge that could now be re-allocated to the park redevelopment together with funds from community service organizations and partnerships.

### 4. Victoria Park Enhancements / Gateway Feature (Short Term Objective)

The key move in Victoria Park is the re-location of the existing camp ground to another site in close proximity to the canal and downtown if possible. Two potential alternative locations include the properties owned by Parks Canada located on Lombard Street and William Street West. These and other potential locations for the camp ground should be investigated for feasibility to accommodate this function. This will free-up additional waterfront lands within the Town core / Canal area for broader use by local residents and tourists as well. This strategy, together with improved pedestrian access across Lombard Street, a Town Gateway on the northeast corner of the Abbott Street and Lombard Street intersection and additional park development, walkways, flexible green space and amenities.

#### 5.5.3 Project Prioritization

Through the public engagement process, consultation with Town staff, and recognizing funding requirements, the following projects have been prioritized for implementation.

1. East Redevelopment Signature Site Waterfront Trail
2. Community Improvement Plan (CIP)
3. Cultural Plaza
4. West Redevelopment Signature Site
5. Confederation Park
6. Victoria Park
7. Beckwith Street