

CHAPTER 3 CITY FORM

The City of Waterloo will be planned to accommodate a population of 185,000 (excluding post-secondary students who reside temporarily in the Region) and employment of 114,900 jobs by the year 2051. Waterloo's urban area has almost reached its municipal boundaries and there is limited undeveloped land remaining to accommodate the forecasted population and employment growth. The majority of growth will be accommodated through *intensification* of the urban area, with smaller amounts of growth directed to remaining *Designated Growth Areas* and existing neighbourhoods.

To support this direction, this Plan establishes priority areas for growth comprised of designated Nodes, Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas, shown on Schedule 'B' - City Structure as well as minimum density targets to be achieved in the urban area, the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, and Major Transit Station Areas. *Designated Growth Areas* are planned to achieve minimum densities that are transit-supportive and make efficient use of land. The balance of the City's forecasted growth will occur in existing neighbourhoods through context-sensitive *intensification*.

The objectives and policies of this Plan support the development or transition of Nodes, Corridors, Major Transit Station Areas and *Designated Growth Areas* to *complete communities* that include a range of housing and transportation options, as well as commercial, employment, community, recreational, cultural and educational opportunities that meet residents' needs throughout their lifetime.

Development to accommodate planned growth is also expected to achieve a high standard of urban design for public and private development guided by the policies of this Plan and urban design standards and guidelines in the City's Urban Design Manual. It is anticipated that the interpretation and implementation of the policies within this chapter will lead to a series of well- designed, vibrant, accessible and well-connected neighbourhoods and developments.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

It is the Objective of the City to:

- (1) Plan for growth that:
 - (a) Accommodates future population and employment within the existing Urban Area Boundary through *intensification* primarily within designated Nodes and Corridors, including the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, Major Transit Station Areas and through the development of appropriate vacant lands, including *Designated Growth Areas*;
 - (b) Supports *complete communities*, where possible, that feature a diverse mix of land uses in close proximity; provides a diverse range and mix of housing options, including *affordable* housing, and provides a compact, transit-supportive built form with convenient access to a range of transportation options, including active transportation.

- (c) Fosters high quality, human scale architecture and built form, and vibrant public realms and open spaces.
 - (d) Mitigates and adapts to the impacts of a changing climate by planning for more environmentally sustainable, resilient communities and infrastructure by advancing Waterloo's energy transition off of fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - (e) Advancing transformational climate action by supporting a more energy-efficient, compact built form that enables a modal shift to most trips being made by walking, cycling, and rolling
 - (f) Integrating and respecting Indigenous values, history and cultures in planning for growth and change through respect, trust, and meaningful dialogue; and
 - (g) Planning in a manner that improves social equity and overall quality of life, including human health, for people of all ages, abilities and incomes.
- (2) Develop an urban form that:
- (a) Provides for an appropriate mix of land uses in close proximity to one another, increasing the opportunity for people to walk, bike or take public transit to where they work, shop, learn and play;
 - (b) Provides for compact urban growth to facilitate reduced reliance on the automobile while supporting transit and promoting walking and cycling as active forms of movement;
 - (c) Accommodates all people at all stages of life;
 - (d) Promotes high quality architecture and landscape;
 - (e) Provides for a community of unique neighbourhoods that offer a range of safe, comfortable, lively and accessible spaces for people to interact;
 - (f) Supports efforts to manage the impact of our community on the natural environment;
 - (g) Retains significant elements of the City's natural, built and cultural heritage;
 - (h) Respects historical patterns, precedents, and boundaries;
 - (i) Provides for a high level of connectivity, facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people and goods between destinations within and around the community, particularly by sustainable transportation modes;
 - (j) Fosters a sense of community and belonging; and,
 - (k) Reflects that accessibility considerations are part of all City decisions respecting planning, growth, development and operations.
- (3) The City's urban design objectives are:
- (a) To promote a high standard of urban design that results in an attractive, human-scale city.
 - (b) To respect site context and enhance *sense of place* that results in compatible development and fosters a sense of identity.
 - (c) To promote connectivity and interaction that provides universal access for all citizens and emphasizes pedestrian accessibility, safety and comfort across the city.
 - (d) To promote creativity and innovation that results in interesting streetscapes,

- building design and architecture, amenity spaces and landmarks in the city.
- (e) To promote *sustainable design* that results in more efficient use of resources and energy, reduces heat island effects and reduce the reliance on the automobile.
- (4) Plan for a vibrant Uptown Waterloo by:
- (a) Maintaining Uptown Waterloo as a major focus of economic, social, cultural, residential and administrative activities.
 - (b) Promoting Uptown Waterloo as a community destination as well as a great place to live, work, learn, shop, and play through the development of a broad range of land uses.
 - (c) Protecting, conserving, and reusing existing built heritage and building upon the architectural integrity of buildings within the Uptown Area.
 - (d) Promoting convenient travel by all modes with an emphasis on enhancing *active transportation* modes and reducing reliance on the automobile.
- (5) Ensure that environmental considerations are part of all City decisions respecting planning, growth, development and operations.

3.2 POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

The City will plan for and accommodate forecasted population and employment growth. The population and employment forecasts outlined in this Plan have been determined for the City of Waterloo by the Region of Waterloo. The forecasts are intended to guide planning for the provision of housing and employment opportunities as well as the *infrastructure*, services, facilities and amenities needed to support, where appropriate, transitions to *complete communities*. Future updates to forecasted population and employment growth will be informed by Ontario Population Projections published by the Ministry of Finance.

- (1) The City of Waterloo shall plan to accommodate a population of 185,000 people (excluding post-secondary students who reside temporarily in the City) and employment of 114,900 jobs by the year 2051, as outlined in the Regional Official Plan. The City will coordinate with the Province to generate population and employment estimates in the future based on changing trends and the City's unique growth characteristics.
- (2) The City shall account for post-secondary students who reside temporarily in the City in addition to the population forecast noted in policy 3.2 (1). The estimated number of off-campus students will continue to be monitored and evaluated to ensure that this population is accounted for in planning processes, and opportunities to retain the talent of these students is promoted.
- (3) The population and employment growth of the City will be monitored on a yearly basis. The City will plan for and approve appropriate levels of population and employment growth that is in keeping with the City's financial and physical ability to

provide all necessary infrastructure, facilities, services and amenities, and is consistent with the methodology associated with the population forecast outlined in policy 3.2 (1).

- (4) Longer term forecasts beyond the 2051 planning horizon may be used for infrastructure planning studies undertaken by or for the City.
- (5) Where the Urban Area Boundary coincides with the Protected Countryside as shown on Schedule 'B' - City Structure, the Urban Area Boundary will be considered a permanent boundary.

3.2.1 Population and Growth Targets

Population and growth targets are used in this Plan to ensure specific areas of the City are planned to achieve *development* that is consistent with the goals and objectives of this Plan. Population and growth targets will also be applied to strategic areas of the City to ensure conformity with Provincial requirements. Population and growth targets for strategic areas of the City are outlined in Table 3-1:

Table 3-1: Population and Growth Targets

Target Type	Minimum Target	Area Subject to Target
Uptown Waterloo Primary Node Density	200 residents and jobs per hectare by 2031 or earlier	Uptown Waterloo Primary Node (See Schedule 'B')
Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) Density	95 residents and jobs per hectare for the Laurier-Waterloo Park MTSA 160 residents and jobs per hectare for all other MTSAs except for MTSAs located within of the Uptown Primary Node	Major Transit Station Areas (See Schedule B)
Urban Area Intensification	83% of residential development to occur within Urban Area annually	Urban Area
Designated Growth Areas	55 persons and jobs per hectare (measured over the entirety of the designated growth area)	<i>Designated Growth Areas</i>
New Housing Units	15,232 units by 2031 23,755 units by 2051	City-wide

3.3 RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION

Development within the City will predominately consist of *Intensification*, as the amount of

undeveloped *Designated Growth Areas* is limited. *Intensification* allows for efficient use of community *infrastructure* and limits the outward expansion of the urban area into the countryside. *Intensification* also provides opportunities for the introduction of a greater range of housing options, *transit supportive development*, and a mix of uses to support the development of *complete communities*.

Within the city's urban area, *intensification* will occur, for the most part, within *strategic growth areas* such as Nodes, Corridors and specific areas within Major Transit Station Areas described further in policy 3.5.3 of this chapter and referred to throughout this Plan. Low rise neighbourhoods outside of these *strategic growth areas* will support gradual and context-sensitive *development* and *intensification*, such as *missing middle housing*, in accordance with the built form and land use policies of this Plan.

To achieve an efficient and attractive urban form through residential *intensification*, the City will:

- (1) Plan for *intensification* opportunities within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, other designated Nodes and Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas. *Intensification* opportunities will be planned for within these locations as set out in policies 3.5.4 of this chapter. Minimum residential densities may be applied as set out in Section 3.4 of this Plan;
- (2) Recognize the strong interdependence between transportation and land use, plan for a transportation system that complements the planned land use patterns;
- (3) Place a high priority on encouraging *active transportation* and, over the long-term, strengthening the *active transportation* network, as set out in Section 6.5.1 of this Plan;
- (4) Plan for a transportation network and land use pattern that supports the Region of Waterloo in the provision of an efficient and effective public transit system, as set out in Section 6.5.2 of this Plan;
- (5) Require a high standard of urban design and context sensitive *development* that includes community *infrastructure*, amenities and facilities;
- (6) Providing a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including land use designations that contemplate residential *intensification*, as set out in Chapter 10 of this Plan; and,
- (7) Monitor growth within developed areas and in *Designated Growth Areas* and, if necessary, stage the development of *Designated Growth Areas* to ensure that growth within developed areas appropriately supports the achievement of the *intensification* objectives of this Plan.

3.4 BUILT FORM

To manage growth and intensification, plan for *infrastructure* needs and create a compact, liveable city that aligns with the City's built form objectives, **Schedule B1 – Built Form** outlines the maximum permitted heights in order to guide built form within Waterloo's varied neighbourhoods. The intent of the height categories is to standardize permitted heights throughout the City in order to provide predictability for all stakeholders on the heights that can be anticipated.

- (1) The categories of permitted heights are:
 - (a) Main Street, with a minimum height of 2 storeys, and a maximum height of 4 storeys, subject to policy 3.6.1 (4);
 - (b) Low Rise, with a maximum height of 4 storeys;
 - (c) Medium Rise, with a maximum height of 6 storeys;
 - (d) Medium Rise Employment, with a maximum height of 9 storeys;
 - (e) Medium High Rise, with a maximum height of 12 storeys;
 - (f) Medium High Rise Employment, with a maximum height of 12 storeys;
 - (g) High Rise, with a maximum height of 25 storeys; and
 - (h) High Rise Employment, with a maximum height of 25 storeys.
- (2) Notwithstanding policy 3.4 (1) (g), for lands identified as High Rise, 25 storeys on Schedule 'B1' – Built Form, a maximum height up to 30 storeys may be permitted within a Major Transit Station Area or the Primary Node, as shown on Schedule 'B' – City Structure.
- (3) Where the Official Plan permits residential uses within a land use designation, a minimum and/or maximum density may be established in the implementing Zoning By-law. Density provisions may be based on considerations that are unique to individual sites or areas. No maximum density is set out in this Plan.
- (4) Residential density shall be measured using a gross density calculation after all road widenings and other land conveyances. All portions of the site that permit residential uses shall be used to calculate adherence to such gross density regulations.
- (5) Minimum and maximum residential densities may be further defined or restricted through Secondary Plans, District Plans, Zoning By-laws or other area-specific planning documents, provided the densities are in conformity with the policies of this Plan.

Requests for Increased Heights

- (6) Development applications proposing heights above the maximums contemplated in this section, any applicable land use designation, or any area-specific planning document, will be considered based on the following and any other consideration deemed appropriate by the City:

- (a) Lands are located within a designated Node, Corridor or Major Transit Station Area and satisfy all relevant policies of the City Form Chapter;
- (b) The proposed built form is deemed appropriate for the site and neighbourhood, has minimal impact on neighbouring land uses, and achieves an appropriate built form transition and buffer from lands designated Low Rise Residential;
- (c) There is a demonstrated benefit to the surrounding community associated with granting the increase in building height beyond that of accommodating additional population in the context of Waterloo's population forecast and the supply / capacity of lands within existing designated Nodes, Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas;
 - i. positive benefits noted in 3.4(6)(c) may include but are not limited to a broader mix of multi-*bedroom* units, enhanced *active transportation* connections, *conservation* of cultural heritage, enhanced sustainable design, increased parkland, and sustainable building features;
- (d) There are limited adverse impacts to the surrounding area(s) in relation to sun, shadow, wind, significant views, transportation, compatibility, and emissions (including noise);
- (e) The site is well served by existing or planned transit;
- (f) The proposal does not require significant relief from standard regulations including landscaping, amenity space and other site-specific requirements;
- (g) Surface parking is minimized in favour of more intensive forms of parking, including underground parking where feasible;
- (h) *Cultural heritage resources* are *conserved*;
- (i) The proposal demonstrates a high standard of urban design in accordance with the City's Urban Design standards and guidelines and any other relevant urban design policies set out in this Plan;
- (j) The proposal identifies and implements any required transportation improvements, with a particular focus on *transportation demand management* measures;
- (k) Medium to high rise residential uses are located with direct vehicular access to arterial or collector *roads* to the extent possible. Where such access is deemed by the City to be undesirable or not feasible, vehicular access may be provided by local streets if traffic is directed to the nearest arterial or collector *road* via a route that minimizes vehicular travel within the low rise residential neighbourhood;
- (l) *Infrastructure* capacity is not exceeded;
- (m) Community services, *infrastructure* and transportation impact issues are adequately addressed, as applicable. A Transportation Impact Study, Servicing Report, and any other relevant supporting information may also be required. All relevant supporting information may require, at the City's request, examination of off-site impacts;
- (n) If applicable, safe access, flood protection and geotechnical stability is achieved to the satisfaction of the City and the Grand River Conservation Authority, and any other authority having jurisdiction;
- (o) Emergency response is determined feasible, and emergency access is

- provided, to the satisfaction of the City; and,
- (p) The proposal satisfies all other applicable policies, including the policies of this Official Plan.

Exceeding High Rise Designation Requests

- (8) In addition to Policy 3.4(6), applications to exceed the maximum height limit of the High-Rise designation, being 25 or 30 storeys, must demonstrate how the impact of the increased height will be minimized on adjacent low or medium rise areas. Such applications must demonstrate appropriate building massing and built form to mitigate shadow impacts, wind impacts, retain prominent views (including sky views), and complement the planned scale and densities of adjacent properties. Mitigation measures may include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Increasing the setback, and/or incorporating step backs from abutting low or medium rise residential areas;
 - (b) Incorporating terraced massing on any side of the building that abuts a low or medium rise residential area;
 - (c) Reducing floorplate size for a more slender built form;
 - (d) Recognition of existing or planned grade changes between abutting low or medium rise residential properties and the proposed *development* and,
 - (e) Recognition of features that provide a buffer between the development and the adjacent low or medium rise residential areas. Such features may include parks, greenspaces, trails and roads, environmental areas, hydro corridors, properties within non- residential designations, and properties with height and density limits that serve to buffer low and medium rise residential areas from higher rise developments.
- (9) As the height and/or scale of a development increases, the applicant shall demonstrate how the urban design, mitigation of impacts, and benefits to the surrounding community correspondingly increase.
- (10) Sections 3.4 (6)-(8) will apply to buildings higher than 30 storeys regardless if any height limits are removed by a senior level of government.
- (11) New development shall seek to optimize, rather than maximize, height and density on any site. Optimization involves an appropriate and desirable balance between various city-building objectives, including the provision of housing, achieving built form and urban design objectives, a vibrant public realm, local economic development, preservation and enhancement of *cultural heritage resources*, site functions, provision of social and amenity spaces (including green spaces), land use compatibility, and community building. Development shall be required to comprehensively consider and support the totality of such objectives, to ensure that it constitutes good planning and aligns with the urban design and built form principles and objectives as outlined in this Plan.

- (12) Any proposed tall building *developments* exceeding 410 metres above sea level shall demonstrate that the proposed *development* will not negatively impact the Region of Waterloo International Airport and public safety, as demonstrated either through an aeronautical assessment prepared by a qualified consultant, or a Land Use Assessment from NAV Canada, to the satisfaction of the Region of Waterloo.
- (13) An amendment to this Plan shall not be required for minor increases in building heights beyond those set forth in Policy 3.4(1) and Policy 3.4(2) due to grades, subject to compliance with the Zoning By-law.

3.5 CITY STRUCTURE

The majority of new *development* in the city will be directed to specified urban structural components in accordance with this Plan. These urban structure components include Nodes, Corridors, Major Transit Station Areas, and *Designated Growth Areas*. Where authorized by this Plan, *development* may occur outside of these identified areas, however the majority of *development* will be directed to these *strategic growth areas*, which form the core of the City's structure.

This Plan identifies a series of designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas that are anticipated to accommodate a significant proportion of the City's population and employment growth over the life of this Plan. Designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas are shown on **Schedule 'B' – City Structure**. Planned heights of designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas are shown on **Schedule 'B1' – Built Form**. The range of designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas are outlined below, and explained further in subsequent policies:

- (a) Primary Node, being the Uptown Waterloo;
- (b) Major Nodes;
- (c) Major Corridors;
- (d) Minor Nodes;
- (e) Minor Corridors;
- (f) Minor Neighbourhood Corridors;
- (g) Major Transit Station Areas and,
- (h) *Designated Growth Areas*.

3.5.1 Designated Nodes

Nodes are places where employment, housing, commercial land uses and services and other amenities are concentrated with different levels of activity and intensity. Nodes contribute to the creation of *complete communities* by providing opportunities for residents to live close to employment, shopping and other services and are focal points for *pedestrian*, bicycle and transit routes. Each Node may be different in terms of its character, potential for growth, and scale.

While lands within Nodes will generally be planned as *mixed-use* areas, it is not the intent of this Plan to permit a full range of uses on all lands within Nodes. Permitted uses will be defined as set out in the land use policies of this Plan with limitations on the nature and scale of *ancillary* or complementary uses permitted in order to maintain the intended planned function of lands within the Nodes.

- (1) Uptown Waterloo is the Primary Node within the City and will be planned to accommodate a wide range of commercial, employment, social, cultural, entertainment, accommodation, open space, recreational, institutional, as well as residential uses, facilities and spaces. The Uptown Waterloo Primary Node is also a focus area for ION LRT as the Node overlaps three Major Transit Station Areas as shown on Schedule 'B'. The Uptown Waterloo Primary Node is intended to serve as a destination within the community as well as fulfilling a local service and administrative function for surrounding neighbourhoods. Section 3.6 of this chapter further defines policies related to the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node.
- (2) Major Nodes are planned as medium high to high rise *mixed-use* areas that accommodate a range of uses, which may include residential, commercial, employment, social, cultural, recreational and institutional uses. Commercial uses that provide for the day- to-day and weekly shopping needs of several surrounding neighbourhoods will be encouraged and, where appropriate, Major Nodes shall be planned to accommodate small to medium-sized *food stores*, with the objective that all residents will have access to a *food store* within an approximate 15-minute walking distance of their residence. *Employment Areas* that are located within Major Nodes will be planned to support Major Nodes as a destination, and conversion to non-employment uses shall be consistent with provincial policy.
- (3) Minor Nodes are planned as medium to medium-high rise *mixed-use* areas that accommodate a range of uses, which may include residential, commercial, employment, social, cultural, recreational and institutional uses. Minor Nodes generally include neighbourhood-serving commercial centres that provide for the day to day and weekly shopping needs of the surrounding neighbourhood and, where appropriate, shall be planned to accommodate small to medium-sized *food stores*, with the objective that all residents will have access to a *food store* within an approximate 15-minute walking distance of their residence. Where lands within a Minor Node are adjacent to Low Rise Residential areas, height and/or density will be limited as defined by this Plan and the Zoning By-law.

Expansions to Nodes

- (4) Expansions to existing designated Nodes or the designation of new Nodes will be considered by Amendment to this Plan where the City is satisfied that there is a demonstrated benefit to the community associated with additional medium, medium-high or high rise uses, and subject to consideration of the following criteria:
 - (a) Whether the area is a destination point, or is planned to be a destination point, with a concentration of employment and commercial uses;
 - (b) There is potential for *intensification* due to the location, size, and configuration of the properties;
 - (c) The scale of the present use would allow for greater density;

- (d) The area serves, or is planned to serve, as a service centre for the day to day needs of people living or working in nearby residential or *employment areas*;
 - (e) The area is, or is planned to be:
 - i. In the case of Minor Nodes, an intersection of multiple transit routes.
 - ii. In the case of Major Nodes, an intersection of higher frequency transit routes; and,
 - (f) The expansion to an existing designated Node or designation of a new Node is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- (5) Future Nodes are areas where a more compact built form and/or broader range of uses (residential, commercial and/or employment uses) would benefit and support the surrounding neighbourhoods and/or business areas. Details regarding the scale, nature and location of such uses is to be determined and/or refined through further planning studies. Future Nodes are shown on **Schedule 'B' – City Structure**.

3.5.2 Designated Corridors

Corridors are major streets or transit routes that link Nodes and/or Major Transit Station Areas and provide opportunities for *intensification* through the application of high, medium high and medium rise land use designations, or in limited cases low rise. Corridors are generally located on planned or existing higher frequency transit routes, and therefore are designed to support various modes of transportation by having significant population and employment densities. Corridors are also anticipated to act as key *active transportation* linkages between destinations. Land uses within Corridors are primarily residential and employment, though some Corridors may be designated for Corridor Commercial uses as defined by the land use policies of this Plan. Lands within Corridors designated for residential or employment uses may include a limited amount of commercial uses, as described in appropriate land use designations, provided such uses do not conflict or interfere with the satisfactory operation and development of lands for their intended planned function.

- (1) Major Corridors generally connect a series of Major Nodes and/or the Primary Node and have the greatest capacity and potential to support higher frequency transit. As such, they will be planned to accommodate medium-high to high rise uses to provide for sufficient future population and employment growth to support planned transit service levels.
- (2) Minor Corridors connect a series of Major Nodes, Minor Nodes and/or the Primary Node. Planned land uses within Minor Corridors will be predominantly medium to medium high rise residential or employment, with some limited areas having a planned function other than residential or employment. A limited amount of commercial uses are permitted as set out in the applicable land use designations. Where lands within a Minor Corridor are adjacent to lands designated as Low Rise Residential, height and/or density will be limited as defined by this Plan and the Zoning By-law.
- (3) Minor Neighbourhood Corridors are predominantly residential and intended to facilitate the gradual evolution and minor densification of neighbourhoods by

allowing more intensive low rise uses in specific locations, such as low rise *missing middle housing*. Minor Neighbourhood Corridors are located along:

- (a) major streets and transit routes, which are currently mostly comprised of low density building forms such as single detached buildings and which have the ability to evolve towards more compact, diverse low rise housing forms; or
- (b) local streets that complement transportation supportive corridors as they are adjacent to a Minor Corridor and/or have the ability to support a Minor Corridor to achieve its planned function.

Expansion to Corridors

- (4) Expansions to existing designated Corridors or the designation of new Corridors will be considered by amendment to this Plan where the City is satisfied that there is a demonstrated benefit to the community associated with additional low, medium, medium-high or high rise uses, and subject to consideration of the following criteria:
 - (a) The corridor is an existing or planned to be a major traffic and higher frequency transit route;
 - (b) The corridor directly links a Node(s), Major Transit Station Area(s) or other major origin and destination points, or supports a Minor Corridor in the case of designating new Minor Neighbourhood Corridors;
 - (c) There is potential for *intensification* due to the ability for lot consolidation, properties front onto the corridor rather than back onto the corridor, and/or lots are deep enough to permit greater density;
 - (d) The lands are designated primarily for medium to high rise development, or more intensive low rise development when considering potential Minor Neighbourhood Corridors; and,
 - (e) The proposed amendment demonstrates that the expansion to an existing designated Corridor or designation of a new Corridor is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood.

3.5.3 Major Transit Station Areas

Major Transit Station Areas are lands located in close proximity (generally within 500 – 800 metre radius, representing a ten minute walk) to ION Light Rail Transit stops within the City of Waterloo. These areas, shown on Schedule 'B' – City Structure of this Plan are a major focus for future growth and *intensification*. Higher population and employment densities and a mix of uses are planned within these areas to support transit ridership, and contribute to the development of *complete communities*, with convenient access to a range of housing options, including *affordable* housing, jobs and local services / amenities.

Station Areas Plans have been developed for Major Transit Station Areas outside of the Uptown Primary Node area as shown on Schedule 'J1' – 'J5' – Station Areas. Policies for these Major Transit Station Areas (outside of the Uptown Primary Node area) draw from the Council adopted Station Area Plans that provide detailed guidance on land uses, mobility, parking, public realm and urban design.

Three Major Transit Station Areas are located in Uptown Waterloo and overlap with the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node. Uptown Major Transit Station Areas are subject to the

general policies in this section and the relevant policies set out in Section 3.6 Uptown Waterloo Primary Node.

The City shall plan for densities in all Major Transit Station Areas identified on **Schedule ‘B’ – City Structure** to increase over time. The City will review and may increase density targets through future Official Plan Reviews, and future City-initiated Official Plan Amendments.

- (1) Major Transit Station Areas in this Plan and delineated in Schedule ‘B’ are recognized as Protected Major Transit Station Areas in accordance with the Planning Act.
- (2) All Major Transit Station Areas identified on Schedule ‘B’ – City Structure will be planned to:
 - (a) Achieve a minimum gross density target as outlined in Table 3-1 of this Plan and in accordance with provincial policy, which will be achieved by:
 - (i) Establishing minimum residential and non-residential densities in the Zoning By-law;
 - (ii) Requiring *development* applications, excluding applications for *site plan* approval, for lands located within Area A and Area B on Schedules ‘J1’ to ‘J5’ which propose densities lower than the minimum density established in the Zoning By-law to provide an appropriate and accepted rationale through a Planning Justification Report, demonstrating how future phases of development will achieve the minimum density target. In accordance with the Planning Act and applicable provincial policy, Ministerial approval is required for official plans and amendments that propose lower density targets.
 - (b) Accommodate a mix of transit supportive land uses that create both origins and destinations for transit users.
 - (c) Be focal points for active transportation networks, with connections to other destinations.
 - (d) Support the unique character of each of the station areas and create attractive places for working, learning, living and recreation.
 - (e) Stimulate new investment and promote economic development by encouraging job growth and commercial vitality.
 - (f) Support place-making through public and private realm improvements, public art, new open spaces and enhanced amenity.
 - (g) Support connectivity, integration and transfers between mobility systems.
 - (h) Support the creation of new *affordable* housing units through Inclusionary Zoning

OPA No. 50, approved September 12, 2024

Inclusionary Zoning within Major Transit Station Areas

- (3) Inclusionary Zoning is a tool that allows the City to require *affordable* housing units to be provided in new developments within Major Transit Station Areas. Policies for Inclusionary Zoning are intended to support the development of mixed-income communities and equitable access to higher order transit by increasing the supply of *affordable* housing for low and moderate income households in locations close to Major Transit Station Area stops.

- (a) Inclusionary Zoning will be implemented in conjunction with other planning tools to increase the supply of *affordable* housing within Major Transit Station Areas that might not otherwise be built, contributing to diverse, mixed-income communities that offer a range of housing options that are *affordable* for a range of household incomes.
- (b) Inclusionary Zoning policies will be informed by ongoing monitoring and periodic financial impact assessments in accordance with Provincial requirements, or more frequently as the City of Waterloo deems necessary, to facilitate the creation and increased supply of *affordable* housing while mitigating impacts on new market housing supply.
- (c) The City will work collaboratively with the Region, private and non-profit developers and housing providers to leverage expertise to achieve the desired housing objectives contemplated through Inclusionary Zoning.
- (d) Inclusionary Zoning will be implemented through the Zoning By-law and guided by Inclusionary Zoning Implementation Guidelines.

OPA No. 50, approved September 12, 2024

- (4) Planned land uses within Major Transit Station Areas are shown on **Schedule 'A' – Land Use Plan**, with additional direction provided through Station Area Plans where applicable for Major Transit Areas identified on Schedules 'J1' to 'J5'.
 - (a) In accordance with the Regional Official Plan, Station Area Plans are not required for the Major Transit Station Areas located in Uptown and overlapping with the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, which includes the Waterloo Public Square, Willis Way and Allen Street LRT stops.
 - (b) Medium, medium high and high rise *development* in Major Transit Stations Areas within Uptown will be directed to the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, and any designated Nodes and Corridors within Uptown as indicated on Schedule 'B' and in accordance with the heights set out in Schedule 'B1'.
 - (c) Section 3.6 of this chapter further defines policies related to the Uptown Waterloo Urban Primary Node.
 - (d) As a general principle, and subject to the detailed land use policies of this Plan, transit-supportive uses such as medium to high rise residential, commercial and/or compatible employment uses shall be encouraged in all Major Transit Station Areas, as set out in the Station Area Plans and the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node. Non-transit supportive uses such as commercial uses oriented to vehicular travel shall be discouraged.
 - (e) Station Area Plans applicable to Major Transit Areas identified on **Schedules 'J1' – 'J5' – Station Areas**, provide the framework for land use change in the areas around LRT stops using a proximity-based approach, meaning that a high degree of *intensification*, activity and connectivity will be planned in activity nodes that are closest to the LRT stops. Within close proximity to an LRT stop, lands will develop according to *transit-oriented development* principles. As the distance from the LRT stop increases, planned land uses and development standards will generally support less intensive uses, while maintaining connectivity and place-making objectives throughout the station area.
 - (f) The geographic boundaries for the proximity-based planning approach within the

Station Areas subject to Station Area Plans are illustrated on Schedules 'J1' through 'J5'. Adding lands to or removing lands from the Major Transit Station Area boundaries shall require an Official Plan Amendment. Minor revisions to the proximity-based planning boundaries identified on Schedules 'J1' through 'J5' as "Area A" and "Area B" shall be permitted without an Amendment to this Plan, but shall require an amendment to the Zoning By-law.

- (g) For clarity, Policy 3.5.3(2)(a) (i) and (ii) will not apply to the Uptown Major Transit Station Areas that overlap with the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node.

Station Area Plans (Area A)

- (5) Lands in closest proximity to an LRT stop are shown as Area A on Schedules 'J1' through 'J5'. Such areas shall be planned as *pedestrian*-oriented activity nodes that generally accommodate a high intensity of *mixed-use* development within a Major Transit Station Area. For lands within Area A, the following provisions shall apply:
 - (a) The Zoning By-law shall not permit the *development* of new automobile-oriented uses.
 - (b) Properties in key strategic locations relative to the LRT stop shall be zoned in a manner that provides for active ground floor uses to help animate the streetscape or other *pedestrian* environment. Such uses may be:
 - (i) Required as a component of *development* within single or *mixed-use* buildings at the time of *development*, and such areas shall be identified as active frontages in the Zoning By-law; or,
 - (ii) Encouraged through the development of a built form that would enable the introduction of such uses over time as the community evolves, and such areas shall be identified as convertible frontages in the Zoning By-law.
 - (c) Parking regulations shall address appropriate types and ranges of automobile and bicycle parking to be provided, including both minimum and maximum standards for automobile parking as well as limitations on new surface parking facilities for automobiles. In all cases, automobile and bicycle parking standards will reflect the desire to reduce reliance on the automobile in favour of transit usage and active forms of transportation.
 - (d) The Zoning By-law shall include provisions related to minimum and/or maximum building setbacks and massing to ensure a compact built form with a strong relationship to the street or other *pedestrian* environment, and to achieve the urban design objectives of this Plan and the City's Urban Design Manual.
 - (e) The City will plan for a built form that provides for the highest level of *pedestrian*-oriented activity as a priority over car-oriented activity, and as such, lands within Area A shall not be designated or zoned to permit drive-through facilities.
 - (i) Notwithstanding the above, development proposals to permit drive-through facilities may be considered for lands within Area A. Such proposals will be subject to concurrent applications for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and *Site Plan* Control and will only be considered for approval in circumstances where:

- the location, design and function of the drive-through facility maintains the intent of the Official Plan as it relates to the form and function of the area as defined by the policies of this section and section 3.9 of this Plan;
- the proposal achieves a high standard of urban design which limits the impact of vehicular queueing on the existing or planned streetscape and limits impacts on surrounding *sensitive land uses*;
- the proposal does not have a negative impact on the *pedestrian* orientation of the land use designation;
- safe and convenient *pedestrian* movement into, through and adjacent to the site can be maintained as a priority; and,
- density requirements can be achieved.

Station Area Plans (Area B)

- (6) Other lands that are proximate to an LRT stop are shown as Area B on Schedules ‘J1’ through ‘J5’. Such areas shall generally be planned as transit-supportive nodes of lesser intensity than those areas in closer proximity to the LRT stop, while retaining a focus on connectivity and place-making objectives. For lands within Area B, the following provisions shall be included in the Zoning By-law:
- (a) Parking regulations shall address appropriate types and ranges of automobile and bicycle parking to be provided, including both minimum and maximum standards for automobile parking, as well as limitations on new surface parking facilities for automobiles. In all cases, automobile and bicycle parking standards will reflect the desire to reduce reliance on the automobile in favour of transit usage and active forms of transportation.
 - (b) The Zoning By-law shall include provisions related to building setbacks and massing to ensure a compact built form with a strong relationship to the street or other pedestrian environment, and to achieve the urban design objectives of this plan and the City’s Urban Design Manual.
 - (c) The City will plan for a built form that provides for a high level of *pedestrian*-oriented activity as a priority over car-oriented activity, and as such, lands within Area B shall not be designated or zoned to permit drive-through facilities.
 - (i) Notwithstanding the above, development proposals to permit drive-through facilities may be considered for lands within Area B. Such proposals will be subject to concurrent applications for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan Control and will only be considered for approval in circumstances where:
 - the location, design and function of the drive-through facility maintains the intent of the Official Plan as it relates to the form and function of the area as defined by the policies of this section and section 3.9 of this Plan;
 - the proposal achieves a high standard of urban design which limits the impact of vehicular queueing on the existing or planned streetscape and limits impacts on surrounding *sensitive*

land uses;

- the proposal does not have a negative impact on the pedestrian orientation of the land use designation;
- safe and convenient pedestrian movement into, through and adjacent to the site can be maintained as a priority; and,
- density requirements can be achieved.

Remaining Lands in Station Areas

- (7) Lands within a Station Area that are furthest from the LRT stop, shall generally be planned as transit-supportive nodes of the least intensity, relative to other lands within the Station Area, while retaining a focus on connectivity to the stop. The following provisions shall be reflected in the Zoning By-law:
- (a) Parking regulations where applicable shall address appropriate types and ranges of automobile and bicycle parking to be provided, and in all cases, automobile and bicycle parking standards will reflect the desire to reduce reliance on the automobile in favour of transit usage and active forms of transportation.

Public Realm and Place-Making

- (8) Station Area Plans for lands identified on Schedule 'J1' to 'J5' identify opportunities for new public and privately owned parks, plazas and open spaces to enhance public interaction, green the stations and serve as focal points as areas evolve to accommodate larger numbers of residents and workers.
- (9) Opportunities to create and enhance public spaces, as identified in the Station Area Plans, will be secured through the *development* approvals process.
- (10) The City may identify 'priority public spaces' on Schedules 'J1' through 'J5', as spaces that are integral to the successful planned function of the Station Area. The location of the public space on the Schedule(s) is deemed to be conceptual in nature and not necessarily associated with a specific location or property, unless identified as such.
- (11) Consistent with policies 3.9.2(1) and 12.2.4 this Plan, the City may require the preparation of detailed master plans and/or design studies in conjunction with development applications, including site plans, to facilitate and ensure appropriate built form, open space, and public and private realm improvements on strategic sites/areas.

Mobility

- (12) Station Area Plan policies include strategies to guide local mobility improvements to, from and within the station areas with key components of the strategies including:
- (a) Conceptual cross-sections for certain streets to provide guidance on balancing the needs of various mobility types and to inform future detailed design exercises and planning decisions.
- (b) Opportunities to increase connectivity to and within Major Transit Station

Areas on public and private lands, with the objective of creating a smaller street and block network that fosters improved mobility throughout an area and creates additional connection points to properties.

- (13) Improvements to road and *pedestrian/cycling* connections that enhance connectivity and provide for improved access in keeping with the objectives and strategies outlined in the Station Area Plans will be identified and secured through the *development* approvals process.
- (14) The City may identify priority connections on Schedules 'J1' through 'J5', as connections that are integral to the successful planned function of the Station Area. Where this occurs, the location of the connection on the Schedule(s) is deemed to be conceptual in nature and not necessarily associated with a specific location or property, unless identified as such.

OPA No. 14, approved January 11, 2018

3.5.4 Intensification within Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas

Intensification shall be directed within Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas through the application of land use designations that permit medium to high rise uses, or in limited cases low rise uses, as shown on **Schedule 'B1' – Built Form**. Development within designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas shall demonstrate compatibility and integration with surrounding land uses and contribute to an animated streetscape through the utilization of appropriate height, mixing of uses, massing, architectural design, character, setbacks, siting and landscaping, parking, public spaces and *conservation of cultural heritage resources* through the application of the following policies:

- (1) *Mixed-use* development will be strongly encouraged within designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas, where appropriate, provided the land use designation and zoning support such *mixed-use* development. It is not the intent of this Plan that all lands within Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas will accommodate a full mix of uses and direction will be provided in this regard through the land use designations applied to the lands.
- (2) High Rise, Medium-High Rise and Medium Rise land uses will primarily be located in designated Nodes, Major and Minor Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas, and therefore in proximity to major *roads*, major *community infrastructure*, public transit routes, and other supporting land uses. However, Low Rise land uses will be maintained in Minor Neighbourhood Corridors.
- (3) Construction of new low rise uses will be discouraged within designated Nodes, Major and Minor Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas. *Development* applications, excluding applications for *site plan* approval, proposing such uses will be reviewed in

the context of the policies in this chapter.

- (4) *Intensification of existing* low rise housing to higher density multiple residential buildings will be encouraged in designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas by the application of minimum densities on residential lands, where applicable.
- (5) Minor Neighbourhood Corridors shall be zoned to permit a range of more intensive Low Rise residential uses including but not limited to: stacked townhouses and low rise apartments, as well as converted dwelling houses and Additional Residential Units (see policy 10.1.2 of this Plan). The implementing Zoning By-law and/or other guiding documents may further articulate and control the design of development within a Minor Neighbourhood Corridor to ensure that the intent of this Plan is achieved, and development is compatible with and provides an appropriate transition in relation to adjacent land uses.
- (6) In planning for more intensive low rise, medium rise, medium high rise and high rise housing sites, and to assist in the achievement of planned densities in a given area, the Zoning By-law may identify minimum lot sizes and other performance standards in designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas that encourage lot consolidation and discourage the division of land intended for multiple unit housing forms.
- (7) The City, in consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee, encourages adaptive reuse of significant built heritage resources, and requires the conservation of *cultural heritage resources* in all areas of the City, including designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas.

3.5.5 Designated Growth Areas

Designated Growth Areas are those areas within the city that have not been previously developed within the Urban Area Boundary. *Designated Growth Areas* will accommodate a portion of growth within Waterloo, although the supply of land within *Designated Growth Areas* is expected to diminish over the life of this Plan.

- (1) *Designated Growth Areas* will be planned in a manner that integrates new *development* with existing communities and supports the creation of neighbourhoods as *complete communities*. *Development* within *Designated Growth Areas* will be guided by the policies of this Plan and be consistent with the objectives set out in this chapter.
- (2) The City of Waterloo will ensure orderly *development* in *Designated Growth Areas* through conditions and agreements applied or obtained through the development review process and through any District Planning processes or equivalent, and through Capital Budgets.

3.6 UPTOWN WATERLOO PRIMARY NODE

Uptown Waterloo serves as the City's Primary Node, and is delineated as shown on **Schedule 'A' – Land Use Plan, Schedule 'A1' – Commercial Land Uses, Schedule 'A2' – Employment Areas, Schedule 'B' – City Structure, and Schedule 'B1' – Built Form**. As the City's Primary Node, Uptown Waterloo will be planned to:

- (1) Serve as a major focal point and destination for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as residential, commercial, employment, social, cultural, entertainment, recreational, accommodation and public open space uses;
- (2) Accommodate and support major transit, *pedestrian* and cyclist *infrastructure*;
 - (a) Any portions of Major Transit Station Areas located within the boundaries of the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node will be planned as priority areas for growth within the Major Transit Station Area. Policies in Section 3.5.3 of this Plan shall apply to any *Major Transit Station Areas* located within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node.
- (3) Serve as a higher density major employment centre that will attract significant employment uses, with a particular focus on office employment;
- (4) Accommodate a significant share of the City's future population and employment growth in a compact urban form that features high-quality design, supports a balanced transportation mode share and is designed to increase the number of *pedestrians* and cyclists;
- (5) Achieve the density target detailed on Table 3-1, through intensification of properties, which will occur over time in a manner that is compatible with, and appropriate within, the context of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- (6) Accommodate development that *conserves cultural heritage resources*.

3.6.1 Retaining Uptown's Sense of Community, Identity and Commercial Vitality

The Uptown Waterloo Primary Node will be planned to achieve balance between meeting growth objectives through *intensification* and the need to retain Uptown's sense of community and identity. The City will use appropriate implementation tools, including land use designations, the Zoning By-law, the capital budget, *site plan* control and urban design guidelines, *Heritage Register*, Heritage Permits and *Heritage Impact Assessments* to encourage and facilitate a land use pattern that supports Uptown's intended form and function and to support the following policies:

Pedestrian-Oriented Environment and Public Realm

- (1) Consistent with the Urban Design policies of this Plan, site and building design as well as improvements within the public realm (*roads*, parks and sidewalks) will support safe and convenient *pedestrian* movement.

- (2) The City will plan for land uses that support a pedestrian-oriented environment within the Uptown Primary Node.
- (3) It is a policy of this Plan that development will support a high quality, safe and attractive public realm and streetscape in the Uptown.
 - (a) Uptown's high quality public realm will include a public square, public art, parks, greenspaces, and a *pedestrian* and bicycle-friendly environment to facilitate community connections and interactions through special events, festivals, and everyday activities.
 - (b) The City views the 'greening' of Uptown as a critical component of creating high-quality urban open spaces. The City shall promote horticulture and the integration of open space components into and throughout Uptown. Clear and definite connections shall be emphasized between open spaces as well as between Uptown and Waterloo Park.
 - (c) Development within Uptown Waterloo Primary Node will feature high quality, safe and attractive amenity and community space.

Architectural Integrity

- (4) It is a policy of this Plan to encourage, reinforce and improve the architectural integrity of buildings within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, particularly those fronting onto King Street through such means as urban design guidelines and the Zoning By-law. In order to maintain and enhance the function of King Street as the City's main street, for buildings that immediately abut King Street within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node, the Zoning By-law will contain provisions that require minimum and maximum building heights.
 - (a) For properties within the Main Street height limit on **Schedule 'B1' – Built Form**, minor increases in height beyond 4 storeys may be considered by way of an Amendment to the Zoning By-law, subject to the applicant demonstrating to the City's satisfaction that the planned built form and massing of the streetscape is maintained through an appropriate upper storey façade setback and other massing and supporting design strategies. Applications to exceed 4 storeys shall be accompanied by an urban design study, demonstrating how the proposed height addresses the City's built form and urban design objectives, guidelines and standards to the satisfaction of the City.

Cultural Heritage Resources

- (5) Development within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node will be considered in conjunction with the Heritage policies of this Plan, as found in the Arts, Culture, Heritage, Recreation and Leisure Chapter. In consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee, the City will identify and/or designate properties and districts with cultural heritage value or interest and support owners to restore and maintain *built heritage resources* and cultural heritage landscapes;
- (6) The City will Plan for and encourage the identification, description and interpretation of *cultural heritage resources* for educational and tourism purposes.

- (7) A portion of the MacGregor/Albert Heritage Conservation District is located within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node. It is a policy of this Plan that these lands will be generally planned to permit low rise residential land uses that are characteristic of the Heritage Conservation District designated in accordance with policy 4.7.7(1), subject to the Area Specific policies included as part of this Plan.

Community Destination for Major Arts and Cultural Facilities and Events

- (8) The City supports the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node as a community focal point for arts and culture, including cultural businesses, and will plan for and encourage:
- (a) The concentration of major arts and cultural facilities in the Uptown; and,
 - (b) The programming of major festivals and community gathering events in the Uptown.

Open Space

- (9) It shall be a policy of this Plan to encourage the development of the Laurel Creek open space and greenway system in conjunction with the park and institutional open space corridor formed by Waterloo Park through the University of Waterloo lands and including the Laurel Creek Conservation Area.

Commercial Vitality

- (10) This Plan supports a strengthened commercial centre, with continued retail and commercial services market growth in the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node. The Uptown Waterloo Primary Node will continue to expand its commercial vitality and any planning for future commercial space throughout the City must ensure that sufficient market support is available to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

3.7 WATERLOO AS A COMPLETE COMMUNITY

A *complete community* is one that includes a broad range of housing, a mix of jobs, a broad range of commercial establishments and services, *community infrastructure* including schools, parks and recreation sites, cultural and social facilities/services that are well connected by a system of networks. The City will collaborate with the Region, Area Municipalities and other groups on initiatives that support the *complete community* concept at the regional level, including to ensure appropriate planning and locating of region-wide serving facilities and institutions such as hospitals and associated medical research clusters. The city will be planned for *complete communities* at the Planning District and neighbourhood level, with a focus on supporting the achievement of neighbourhoods that are compact and vibrant, and where people can meet their daily needs within a short trip by walking, cycling and rolling.

- (a) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, a regional serving hospital with associated medical buildings and research facilities shall be permitted in any land use designation of this Plan, excluding Open Spaces as shown on **Schedule 'A3'**.

3.7.1 Planning Districts

The City of Waterloo is made up of a series of defined Planning Districts, as shown on **Schedule 'C' – District Boundaries**. The City will plan for the provision of a range of appropriate *community infrastructure* within each Planning District with a goal of meeting the day to day needs of residents, employees and/or visitors to Waterloo. Where appropriate, these uses shall be clustered to encourage the development and sharing of complementary facilities and services, and to facilitate *sense of place* and convenience within the Planning District and its neighbourhoods.

- (1) The City shall encourage opportunities to enhance the availability of locally serving retail and service commercial facilities at appropriate locations within residential Planning Districts, thereby reducing travel times for day to day commercial needs. This Plan envisions convenient access to healthy food as a key priority and as such, small to mid-size *food stores* that are well distributed throughout the community are preferred over fewer, large format *food stores*. To encourage convenient access to *food stores*, the City will:
 - (a) Plan for the provision of one small to mid-size *food store* for every 10,000 residents; and,
 - (b) Plan for the distribution of *food stores* uses such that all residents will have access to a *food store* within one kilometers of their residence.
- (2) Development will reinforce neighbourhood focal points, strengthen linkages to existing and future parks, trails and open space, public transportation stops, cycling networks, as well as other *community infrastructure*.
- (3) The City shall encourage appropriate supporting commercial facilities and services to meet the daily needs of employees within Planning Districts that function predominantly as *employment areas*.
- (4) Access to public transit and *active transportation* networks are an important component of a *complete community*. The City supports robust transit and *active transportation* networks that are well connected within and between Planning Districts.

3.7.2 Neighbourhoods

Individual neighbourhoods will be planned as *complete communities* that are well connected to meet daily needs, facilitate social interaction and foster a sense of community.

- (1) The City shall plan for the movement of users with varying degrees of mobility including *pedestrians*, cyclists, transit users and motorized vehicles within and between neighbourhoods as further defined by the policies included in the Transportation Chapter of this Official Plan.
- (2) The City will plan for neighbourhoods that provide safe and healthy living

environments, and promote healthy lifestyles by:

- (a) Applying appropriate standards to development to support the safety, health and well-being of residents of all ages;
 - (b) Requiring development to be consistent with crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles;
 - (c) Applying or adhering to appropriate regulations, policies and guidelines to ensure incompatible uses do not locate in or near residential neighbourhoods;
 - (d) Supporting *convenience retail* uses within new residential neighbourhoods, thereby reducing travel times for day to day commercial needs;
 - (e) Providing well maintained and safe physical *infrastructure*, including an integrated and comprehensive cycling and *pedestrian* system;
 - (f) Supporting access to locally-grown food by planning for *community gardens*, and *urban agriculture* where appropriate;
 - (g) Providing easily accessible and interconnected parks, trails and public gathering spaces that feature a high standard of design, and provide for four-season accessible recreational opportunities, balanced with conservation of environmental attributes;
 - (h) Planning for development that incorporates energy efficiency into transportation *infrastructure*, neighbourhood and building design. Plans of subdivision, Zoning By-law amendments, and *site plans* will be evaluated on the basis of this and other considerations;
 - (i) Planning for development that discourages the use of noise attenuation walls and berms through the use of *passive noise attenuation measures*;
 - (j) Ensuring that the design of the road network provides for direct and efficient transit routes within and between communities; and
 - (k) Locating land uses such that the distances to a *transit stop* are generally within a 450 metre walking distance.
- (3) The City will plan for the provision of an appropriate range and mix of housing types, sizes, costs and tenure within neighbourhoods by:
- (a) Encouraging intensification and infill within designated Nodes and Corridors, and Major Transit Station Areas;
 - (b) Generally maintaining the land use intensity of existing low density residential neighbourhoods located outside of designated Nodes and Corridors, while permitting context-sensitive *intensification* in low density residential areas where it is appropriate;
 - (c) Supporting the Regional Municipality of Waterloo's Regional 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan;
 - (d) Promoting the provision of accessible and *affordable* housing to meet the needs of lower income residents; and,
 - (e) Encouraging accessible and *VisitAble* housing in order to facilitate ease of living and aging in place.
- OPA No. 34, approved October 28, 2022**
- (4) The City will plan for neighbourhoods that foster a sense of community and identity by:
- (a) Planning for development that is consistent with the urban design policies set out in this chapter, ensuring coordinated development and a high

- standard of design that enhances neighbourhood identity and improves the *pedestrian* environment. Special attention shall be paid to major intersections and areas adjacent to *community infrastructure*;
- (b) Planning for development that protects natural features and incorporates the conservation of cultural heritage resources as prominent neighbourhood features; and,
 - (c) Planning for public gathering places that feature a high standard of design and focus on creating a desirable place for people to gather and visit.
- (5) For clarity, policies 3.7.2 (1) – 3.7.2 (4) shall apply to the development of residential *Designated Growth Areas* and existing neighbourhoods.

3.8 GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The City shall guide growth in a manner that appropriately considers protection of the natural environment. The policies in this section are intended to complement and be read in conjunction with the policies set out in the Environment and Energy Chapter.

- (1) Appropriate input of environmental considerations into planning, growth and operational decisions is a priority for the City of Waterloo. Such input shall be provided at an early stage of the decision-making processes.
- (2) The City encourages the use of environmentally-friendly building, site and neighbourhood design as a means to mitigate adverse impacts associated with conventional urban development, to enhance the living experience of occupants and nearby residents and to support a competitive economy as well as a complete community.
- (3) The City shall continue to recognize watershed planning as integral to the municipal planning process.
- (4) The City shall demonstrate environmental stewardship by:
 - (a) Ensuring that all new or renovated buildings owned by the City of Waterloo comply with the Green Building Policy;
 - (b) Implementing and periodically updating, as required, the City's Energy Management Program for City-owned buildings; and,
 - (c) Pursuing municipal practices or standards that reduce the impact on the natural environment.

3.9 URBAN DESIGN

Urban design is the design, analysis and process of city building. The City supports and encourages a high standard of urban design for public and private sector projects that contributes toward a memorable, attractive and livable city - a city designed for people with

a strong and coherent sense of place.

Urban design applies to various scales of the city including the site, the block, the neighbourhood and the city as a whole. It is expected that each scale of development relates to the Urban Design objectives of this Plan and achieves the Urban Design policies as set out in this section. The implementation of these policies will be supported by the applicable City by-laws, standards, guidelines and documents.

3.9.1 Urban Design Objectives

The Urban Design objectives and design policies contained in this Plan establish the general design vision for the City and inform the design criteria for the City to evaluate new *development* proposals subject to the provisions of the Planning Act and Council direction. The City's Urban Design objectives and policies may be further specified and detailed through the Zoning By-law and implementing manuals, in particular the Urban Design Manual, and related processes. The Urban Design objectives for the City include the following:

Design Excellence

It is a priority for the City that built form reflects design excellence to recognize the important role that built form has in defining the City's quality of life, appeal, and image. The policies of this Plan aim to guide the successful growth and development of the city through urban design by focusing on built and natural environments.

This Plan strives for design excellence reflected through high-quality materials, sustainable building design and construction, considerate use of resources, thoughtful consideration of buildings' impacts on the urban fabric, and attention to human-scaled design that considers people of all ages and abilities.

Creating a Sense of Place

Site and building design are intended to foster a distinct sense of place with particular attention to coordinated streetscapes, without limiting architectural design, innovation or creativity. *Development* can present design opportunities for key areas throughout the city such as the Uptown Primary Node and other *strategic growth areas* within the City Structure to form an area-specific identity, with emphasis on coordinated building materials and colours, architectural style, public art and landscaping.

Connectivity

The policies of this Plan seek designs that promotes connectivity with emphasis on pedestrian and non-vehicular safety, direct and convenient access to transit routes, amenity spaces, building entrances and public streets. Barrier-free access, where feasible, will be provided to building entrances from the public street, particularly along transit routes.

Streetscaping and Street Activity

The design quality of building elements closer to the street, particularly the podium or street wall, should be emphasized over the taller components of buildings, due to their inherent impact on the *pedestrian* experience. Good streetscapes integrate the public right of way and the private *development* that frames it. The design of the streetscape is encouraged to include landscaping, resting spaces and gathering spaces. *Development* should address the

interaction between public and private spaces.

The policies of this plan seek *developments* that promote street activity and animate the public realm by locating building entrances towards the street, providing windows along the street frontage, encouraging mixed-use development, and promoting outdoor amenity spaces along the street or between buildings.

Enhancing the Pedestrian Experience

The *pedestrian* experience at the street level is a key measure of good urban design. A *pedestrian*-friendly environment can be established at the neighbourhood level through the implementation of an efficient, safe and logical street pattern, smaller block sizes, an interconnected public realm network, and active uses along the primary street edge; it can be further reinforced at the streetscape level through human-scale street wall heights, building and facade articulation, frequent entrances, transparency, and a consistent rhythm of streetscape elements and street trees. Together, these elements work to create walkable environments that are safe, attractive and welcoming for people of all ages and abilities. The streetscape network is an important component of a *complete community* and the public realm as a whole, tying together housing, employment, commercial, and *community uses* in a cohesive framework that promotes walkability, accessibility and convenience.

3.9.2 Urban Design Implementation

- (1) The City will incorporate urban design considerations into all *development* decisions in order to assist in achieving the Urban Design objectives and policies outlined in the policies of this Plan. The Urban Design objectives and policies will be implemented through studies, plans and other City documents, including but not limited to:
 - (a) Implementing Zoning By-Laws;
 - (b) Draft Plans of Subdivision/Condominium;
 - (c) District Implementation Plans and Block Plans;
 - (d) Station Area Plans;
 - (e) Master Planning in accordance with policy 12.2.4;
 - (f) Urban Design Manual, Guidelines, and studies;
 - (g) Comprehensive Engineering & Landscape Manual;
 - (h) *Site Plan* Control;
 - (i) Committee of Adjustment; and,
 - (j) Development Agreements.

3.9.3 General Urban Design Policies

The following General Urban Design policies are intended to support the design objectives established in policy 3.9.1 of this chapter and define the primary design elements and expectations that will apply to all *development* in the City in the public and private realm:

Public Realm and Streetscapes

- (1) *Development* in the City of Waterloo shall consider and align with the following urban design directions with regards to streetscapes and placemaking:

- (a) Streetscapes include the public street, the setbacks, and the building edges, which work together to create the pedestrian environment. Visually interesting streetscapes that imbue a sense of place should be created through variation in building typology, massing, architectural detailing and materiality.
- (b) Streets will be designed to promote active transportation and connection to transit stations, including walking, and cycling, and rolling.
- (c) Streets and blocks should be designed to create a finely-scaled and interconnected network that promotes integration between existing and planned communities. New streets shall connect with existing streets wherever possible to achieve an interconnected network of streets.
- (d) *Development* is encouraged to contribute to a continuous street wall along its street frontage and will contribute to a human scale streetscape.
- (e) The City will promote an attractive and coordinated approach to streetscape design with emphasis given to green and complete streets; pedestrian, cyclist and rolling friendly design; and coordinated landscape and building design elements that animate the street in the public and private realm, through a cohesive visual identity.
- (f) *Development* is encouraged to integrate small-scale publicly-accessible open spaces where possible, in the form of mid-block connections, sliver parks, forecourts, courtyards, mews and other micro spaces, in order to enhance *pedestrian* experience and movement.
- (g) Along primary streets and where active uses are located on the ground floor, building design is encouraged to feature frequent entrances, high transparency, well-articulated facades, and a rhythm of *pedestrian*-scaled architectural bays or modules along the street that provide variety and visual interest.
- (h) Street trees contribute to urban infrastructure as they help reduce urban heat island effects, mitigate wind impacts, improve stormwater management function, support urban habitat and biodiversity, and contribute to improved human health and well-being. In addition, street trees beautify the urban environment and contribute to the attractiveness of the public and private realms. Trees are strongly encouraged on both sides of all streets (within the road allowance, and within front and flankage yards) wherever feasible, such that they form a continuous canopy at maturity.
- (i) Parking areas and structures will be located and designed to limit their visual impact on the public realm. Where feasible, underground parking is encouraged for intensification projects, particularly residential or mixed-use development. Surface parking in planned intensification areas is generally discouraged.
- (j) Where above-grade parking structures are proposed, they are strongly encouraged to be wrapped by permitted active uses fronting the street, with additional measures taken to screen any parking which is visible from public view through the use of landscaping or other design strategies. On primary streets, above-grade parking structures are strongly discouraged; where they

exist, they should be wrapped by active uses such as residential units, retail, commercial or institutional uses on all podium levels. On secondary streets, above-grade parking structures shall be required to be wrapped by active uses at-grade and are encouraged to include active uses above the ground floor.

Built Form and Building Typologies

- (2) Well-designed and sculpted buildings help contribute to a high standard of design, enhancing neighbourhood identity and improving the broader *pedestrian* environment. The built form of new *development* should contribute to an overall safe, accessible, and visually interesting environment. *Development* in the city will consider and align with the following key built-form design directions:
- (a) New *development* including infill should be located and organized to fit harmoniously within the existing and planned context to support streets, lanes, parks and open spaces, enabling the creation of a vibrant and safe public realm. The following policies apply:
- i. Buildings should be sited, and oriented to frame adjacent streets and public spaces with good street proportion, helping to create a high-quality *pedestrian* realm.
 - ii. Buildings will be designed with prominent building entrances to face primary streets or areas of high pedestrian movement. Access from sidewalks, other *pedestrian* facilities and public open spaces to primary building entrances shall be clearly visible, convenient and direct, with minimum changes in grade, and will be accessible and *barrier-free*.
 - iii. Infill *development* should be compatible with existing and planned context and character. Compatibility is to be demonstrated, with regard for the characteristics that define the streetscape.
 - iv. On a corner site, the *development* should address both street frontages and give prominence to the corner.
- (b) New *development* including infill shall provide appropriate built form transitions between areas of different heights and/or intensity of uses. The following policies apply:
- i. Transition in scale is to be appropriately implemented at the site, block and neighbourhood level.
 - ii. *Development* should incorporate measures that foster built form transition, which may include but are not limited to, stepbacks to upper levels, vertical and horizontal recesses and projections, façade articulation, architectural detailing and changes in plane, materiality, texture and colour to break visual impact.
 - iii. Shadowing onto public realm, parks and open spaces is strongly discouraged. In general, shadows should be mitigated to the extent possible.
- (c) Tall buildings are described as any building taller than 11 storeys in height measured from average grade. The following policies apply:

- i. Tall buildings will provide appropriate separation distances as outlined by the Zoning By-law, to limit negative impacts to the public realm, other tall buildings on the same site, and neighbouring properties, including sky view, access to sunlight, and privacy for building occupants.
 - ii. The profile of tall buildings should ensure that massing contributes to *pedestrian* scale, reduces the appearance of bulk, and that shadows do not unduly shadow the public realm, amenity space, and neighbouring properties.
 - iii. Tall buildings should employ a series of methods to mitigate wind impact on the public realm and amenity spaces, and enable a safe and comfortable pedestrian and user experience.
- (d) Development will sympathetically *conserve*, respect and complement the *cultural heritage resources* of the city as a whole, and the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node in particular. The following policies apply:
 - i. The City will seek to retain, *conserve*, and/or rehabilitate *cultural heritage resources* in their original locations where possible. Where it is not possible to retain the original uses, adaptive re-use of heritage buildings shall be encouraged.
 - ii. New *development* will achieve a compatible relationship with *cultural heritage resources* and heritage districts in their context through consideration of elements such as urban scale, building height, massing, materiality, profile and architectural features.
- (e) Within Uptown Primary Node, the City shall:
 - i. Encourage above ground hydro wires to be relocated underground where practically and financially feasible. Where underground hydro services are contemplated, *development* shall be designed to accommodate the underground hydro services (including vaults, switchgears, and the like), related appurtenances, and easements.
 - ii. Utility pole placement should avoid impeding pedestrian travel, mobility devices, and sight lines, as well as allow for barrier free access to pedestrian and cycling areas.
 - iii. Regulations and standards to facilitate the transition of hydro lines and plant to underground locations may be established in the Zoning By-law, Urban Design Manual, and Comprehensive Engineering & Landscape Manual.
- (f) As part of new *development*, opportunities for public art and site amenities are encouraged, especially for larger sites, and *development* within designated Nodes, Corridors and Major Transit Station Areas. Consideration to be given to the following:
 - i. Public art should contribute to a *sense of place*, meaning or local context.
 - ii. Within the Uptown Waterloo Primary Node and near transit stops, the integration of urban site amenities such as landscaped outdoor spaces, urban seating areas, and public art is

encouraged. A variety of other site amenities may be considered and incorporated into intensification projects that animate the street, contributes towards sustainable design, and enhances the quality of life for its users and visitors.

Major Transit Station Areas

- (3) The design of urban areas around Major Transit Station Areas as identified on Schedule 'B' - City Structure plays an important role in supporting urban vibrancy and public life. In addition to helping to facilitate direct and convenient access and movement within and around transit facilities, Major Transit Station Areas have the ability to support a transit-oriented context, encourage street-level activity animation and contribute to broader place making objectives. The urban design of Major Transit Station Areas should include:
- (a) A station plaza near ION LRT stops. Plazas can be modest in size but should have good building definition, active uses along adjacent property frontages, and multiple access points. Station plazas should feature a mix of hard and softscaping to support both functional and aesthetic objectives.
 - (b) Wayfinding features and strategies which provide a sense of direction, and orientation for all users of all ages and abilities. These features will help users easily navigate to and from the transit station through the use of signage and identification which is fully visible and accessible from the public street.
 - (c) For Major Transit Station Areas located outside of Uptown Waterloo, identified on Schedule 'J1- to 'J5', at least one open space area near of the station should be provided.
 - (d) Parking within Major Transit Station Areas, where provided, shall be designed and organized to not detract from the public realm or hinder other forms of mobility. Design of parking areas shall:
 - i. Limit new surface parking lots within 100 metres of a Light Rail Transit Stop.
 - ii. Locate parking to the side or rear of buildings where surface parking is proposed, to enable a continuous street edge and the creation of attractive urban spaces.
 - iii. Screen parking structures.
 - iv. Provide active uses on the ground floor wherever feasible.
 - v. Require the perimeters of surface parking lots to be landscaped with trees and other appropriate planting materials.
 - (e) Additional urban design considerations and guidelines are identified in the Council approved Station Area Plans for Major Transit Station Areas located outside of Uptown Waterloo, as identified on Schedule 'J1- to 'J5'.

Large Sites

- (4) Large sites may include but are not limited to malls, plazas and larger commercial sites / areas, and larger industrial sites / areas, which are proposed

for *development* or redevelopment through *intensification*. These sites and areas may be historically auto-oriented with extensive parking and isolated large buildings. These sites and areas have the potential to create vibrant, integrated communities. The objective of this Plan is to transform these sites and areas into pedestrian-friendly *complete communities* that fit seamlessly into the city. The following policies will apply to the *development* and *intensification* of large sites:

- (a) Large sites shall be planned to create *complete communities* unto themselves. Important principles of *complete communities* for large sites include:
 - i. Mixed-use: Sites should incorporate diverse functions - housing, work, education, recreation, and transit - so people can access essentials close by. If employment lands transition to mixed-use, a meaningful amount of employment and office uses must remain (be integrated into the new *development*), as set forth in the implementing zoning by-law.
 - ii. Compact: High-density areas with easy access to green spaces, public transit, and community services promote sustainable transportation and the efficient use of land.
 - iii. Amenity-rich: Streets and public spaces should be safe, appealing, and diverse in purpose, supporting vibrant daily life. Services (like childcare, shopping, and healthcare) and *community uses* should be within short walking distances, accessible to all ages and income levels.
 - iv. Well connected: Access to and through the site should facilitate convenient connectivity by all modes of travel.
- (b) Large sites shall demonstrate a high standard of urban design and architecture, be comprehensively planned, and protect for effective emergency response.
- (c) The City may require a Master Plan for large sites in accordance with policy 12.2.4 to address site circulation, land uses, urban design, emergency response, and the provision of appropriate open spaces, among other matters, in order to optimize the contextual fit of *development* across:
 - i. the subject lands; and/or
 - ii. the area, rather than one property at a time.
- (d) A phasing strategy may be required for the development of large sites. Large sites may develop over time; public spaces, amenities, and services should be implemented in balance with residential growth. Phased plans help minimize community disruption and maintain continuous access to essential services.

Priority

- (5) This Plan places a greater emphasis on urban design compared to density.

3.10 PROTECTED COUNTRYSIDE

The Protected Countryside is a continuous band of *natural features* and agricultural lands surrounding the north, west, and south sides of the Region of Waterloo's Urban Areas that is to be permanently protected. Lands within the Protected Countryside contain a large concentration of prime agricultural lands, *woodlands*, watercourses, portions of the Grand River valley, *wetlands*, *Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes*, *Regional Recharge Areas*, and portions of the Waterloo and Paris-Galt Moraines. The Protected Countryside is intended to permanently protect these valuable areas from urban *development*, while providing for the continued use of the lands for agriculture, environmental and other appropriate rural uses in conformity with the policies in this Plan.

- 3.10.1 The Protected Countryside is designated by the Region of Waterloo in the Regional Official Plan. A portion of the Protected Countryside is located in the City of Waterloo and is shown on Schedule 'B' - City Structure.
- 3.10.2 Land uses within the Protected Countryside will be regulated in accordance with the underlying land use policies of the Rural or Landscape Level Systems designations in this Plan.
- 3.10.3 Expansions of the City's Urban Area Boundary will not be permitted into the Protected Countryside.
- 3.10.4 The designation of lands as Protected Countryside will not affect agricultural uses and associated normal farm practices as defined in applicable Provincial legislation and regulations in conformity with this Official Plan and the Zoning By-laws, and statutes, policies and regulations of other government agencies.
- 3.10.5 Nothing in this Plan shall prevent the owner of a legal lot of record located within the Protected Countryside from obtaining a building permit to construct or enlarge a single detached dwelling, accessory building or farm structure, provided it is in conformity with all other City, Regional, and Grand River Conservation Authority policies and regulations.