

Brampton

Official Plan Review Discussion Paper

Urban Form / Development Design

May 2005

Our Brampton...
**Our
Future**

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This Discussion Paper is published for the purpose of public and agency comment as part of the City of Brampton Official Plan Review.

The proposed directions for refinement of the Official Plan do not necessarily represent the position of City Council.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Discussion Paper

This purpose of this Discussion Paper is to review the existing urban form policies of the City of Brampton Official Plan, and to present policy options that best implement the City's intention of promoting high quality civic and development design. The existing urban form policies are reviewed in the context of the relevant Provincial, regional and municipal policies and initiatives as well as other municipalities' Official Plans to identify what issues that need to be addressed and directions to be considered in the revision of the urban form policies of the Brampton Official Plan.

This discussion paper presents the findings and recommendations of the review. It is also intended to invite input and comments from the public and relevant stakeholders on these issues before proceeding to the formulation of policy statements during the next stage of the Official Plan Review.

1.2 Objectives of the Urban Form Policy Review

The current urban form policies in the Brampton Official Plan are still relevant though general in the area of physical design standards and high quality development. They are also not entirely reflective of the new directions and leadership role that the City is taking in the area of civic design. Updating and strengthening of the urban form policies is thus needed to demonstrate the City's commitment to achieving high quality urban design and to implement the various recent and proposed initiatives including block planning and the recommendations of the recently adopted City-wide Development Design Guidelines (DDG).

The need to enhance the Official Plan urban form policies also stems from the generality of provincial policies including the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) in the areas of built form and civic design. As such, the City's Official Plan needs to be more comprehensive to provide clear direction on the City's expectations related to physical design standards. The current review is thus intended to determine the policy directions for implementing these objectives.

1.3 Structure of Discussion Paper

This discussion paper contains seven sections. Section 1 is the Introduction while Section 2 discusses the need for a review of the Official Plan and the objectives of the Official Plan Review Program. Section 3 presents a review of policies relating to urban form in the Provincial, regional and local context. Section 4 considers other City of Brampton initiatives including the Development Design Guidelines, the Block Plan Process, Flower City Strategy and Central Area Plan Review. Section 5 provides an overview of the Official Plans of five municipalities including the Cities of Mississauga, Toronto and Burlington and the Towns of Oakville and Markham in respect of their urban form and design policies. Section 6 identifies directions for policy enhancement and amendments based on the preceding review. Section 7 provides conclusions.

2.0 CITY OF BRAMPTON OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

2.1 Need for a Review

The current City of Brampton Official Plan was approved by Brampton City Council on June 28, 1993 and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on March 6, 1997. The Official Plan has been subsequently modified through a series of amendments since its approval. In accordance with Section 5.3.1 of the Official Plan and Section 26(1) of the *Planning Act*, the City is currently undertaking a scoped review of the Official Plan. The objective of periodic reviews of the Official Plan is to maintain a contemporary Official Plan which reflects community interests while fulfilling its primary role of directing the physical development of the City, and accounting for social, economic, environmental and other relevant considerations.

A Special Meeting of City Council was held on June 3, 2002 in the Council Chambers at Brampton City Hall to present and receive comment regarding the need to review the City of Brampton Official Plan. Based on input received at the meeting and from the initial round of agency responses, staff presented a report to the Planning, Design and Development Committee meeting of July 15, 2002 that recommended the City's Official Plan be reviewed, but limited in scope to the following policy-based focus areas:

- Preparing a new set of *long term growth forecasts* as part of updating the Official Plan to replace the 1998 Development Charges forecasts.
- Assessing the *retail policies* of the Official Plan to assert their effectiveness in responding to retail trends.
- Updating the *office strategy* to reflect more realistic business development opportunities and to designate office land that is better matched to the locational requirements of Greater Toronto Area office users.
- Updating the *environmental mapping* of the Official Plan (including the identification of appropriate environmental linkages) by incorporating the findings of the City's Woodlot Strategy, updating the groundwater protection policies and ensuring that the *environmental policies* of the City's Official Plan conform with the policy requirements and terminology of the Provincial Policy Statement, the Region of Peel Official Plan, the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) Credit River Watershed Management Strategy, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Valley and Stream Corridor Management Program and related initiatives.
- Updating the *urban design policies* of the Official Plan based on the new direction the City is taking in the area of civic design in accordance with the recently adopted Development Design Guidelines and because of the Provincial Policy Statement's limited coverage in the areas of physical design and high quality development.
- Updating the *cultural heritage policies* of the Official Plan to ensure conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement and to reflect the existing and planned policies and initiatives for cultural heritage preservation and protection.

- **General housekeeping** matters which represent a variety of policy and mapping items that may need to be implemented during the course of the review. Staff is recommending the addition of the issues arising from the public agency comments submitted to the City. The matters proposed for further study include transportation (CN Rail, Ministry of Transportation) and utilities (Trans Canada Pipelines).

2.1 Goals and Objectives of the Official Plan Review

The primary goal of the Brampton Official Plan Review is to

...ensure that the City's planning decisions are appropriately focused on relevant objectives and policies, and to establish a suitable long term urban boundary.

The Official Plan Review process itself is intended to achieve the following five outcome-based objectives:

- Objective 1: The completion of the Official Plan Review within a timely and responsible manner
- Objective 2: The completion of the Official Plan Review within allocated budget resources
- Objective 3: The resulting Official Plan has a high level of acceptance by the residents, agencies and stakeholder groups with minimal or no appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board
- Objective 4: The Official Plan Review incorporates a high degree of public participation
- Objective 5: The Official Plan Review does not significantly delay other aspects of the Planning, Design & Development Department's work program

2.2 Official Plan Review Process and Program

Subsequent to the July 15, 2002 Planning, Design & Development Committee meeting, staff reviewed the preliminary work program and proposed a revised work program that was approved at the November 18, 2002 Planning, Design & Development Committee meeting. The work program was subsequently revised to account for the expanded scope and time of the review process. Completion of Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review, i.e., when the revised Official Plan is approved by the City Council, is now scheduled for December 2005. The revised program was approved by the City Council in February 2005.

The Official Plan review process comprises three main phases as depicted in Figure 1. Phase 1 includes the evaluation of existing conditions, selection of strategic focus areas of the Official Plan that require revision, and finalization of the work program. Phase 1 was completed in November 2002.

The current Phase 2 of the Official Plan Review focuses on the analysis of the identified focus areas through the preparation of discussion papers, public consultation with the stakeholders and subsequent initiation of official plan amendments to revise the Official Plan. Phase 2 will culminate in the approval of the revised Official Plan by the City Council.

Phase 3 involves the processing and approval of the proposed official plan amendments by the Region of Peel which is delegated by the Regional Council as the approval authority for all local area municipal Official Plans. In accordance with the Planning Act, the Region is required to issue a notice of decision within 180 days from the receipt of the Official Plan.

2.4 Community Participation

Public input and participation is a key component of the Brampton Official Plan Review and is critical to its long term success. This principle is embodied in the following objectives of the Official Plan Review process,

*“The resulting Official Plan has a high level of acceptance by the residents, agencies and stakeholder groups with minimal or no appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board.”
(Objective 3)*

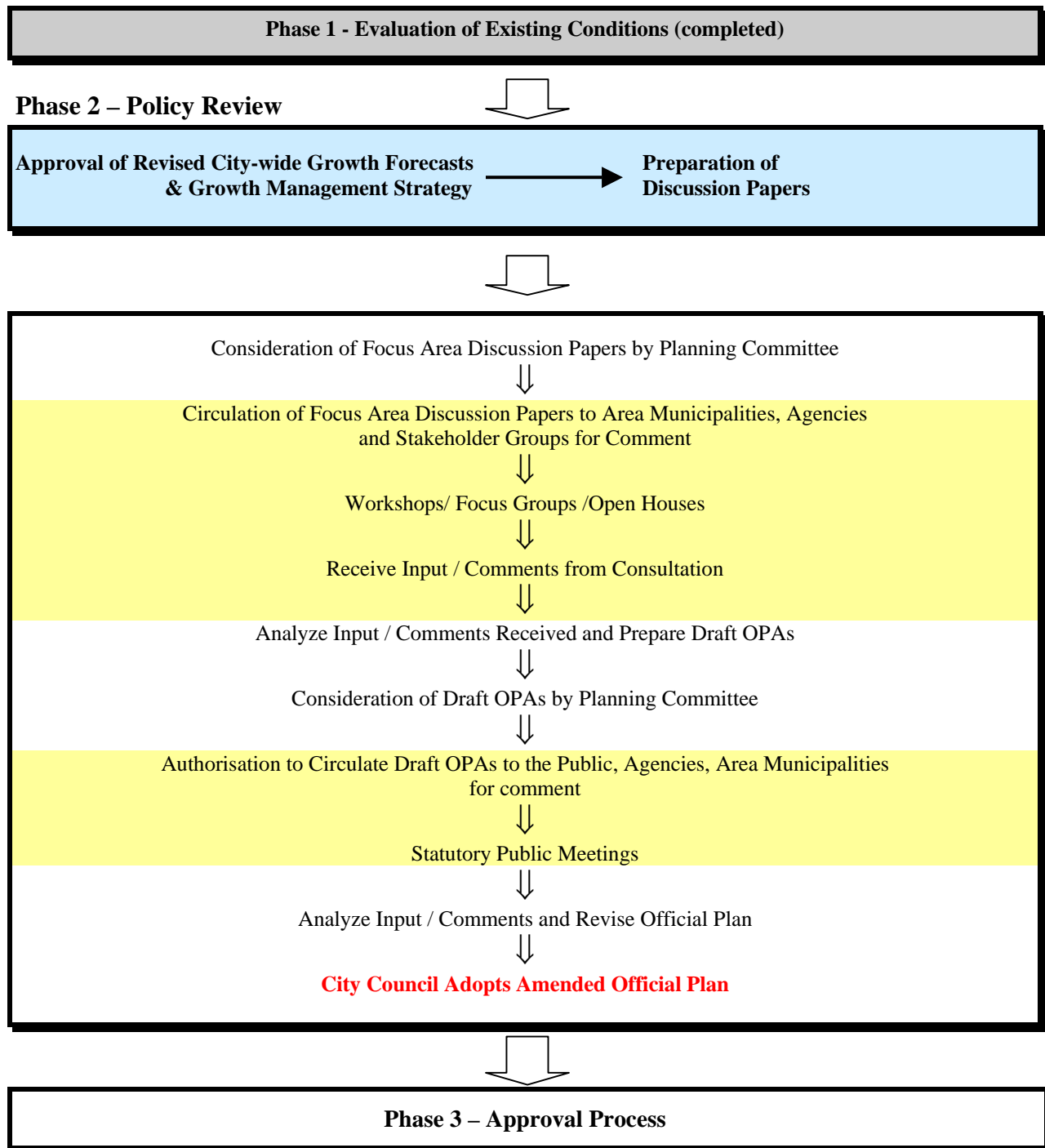
*“The Official Plan review incorporates a high degree of public participation.”
(Objective 4)*

A Communication Plan has been created to proactively engage Brampton citizens, business and stakeholder groups in the planning process to acquire feedback into, and a sense of ownership of, the new Official Plan. The communication process comprises three phases of information, engagement/action and evaluation. It would provide an open dialogue with key groups that would continue beyond the Official Plan Review process.

In addition to the statutory public meeting as required by the *Planning Act*, public involvement in the Official Plan Review will be promoted by communicating through Official Plan newsletters and the City’s web page, scheduling meetings with residents, agencies and stakeholder groups, holding open house sessions in conjunction with the Focus Area Discussion Papers, and organizing workshop and focus group sessions. The results from each session will be presented in a follow-up staff report to Planning, Design & Development Committee for consideration.



Figure 1 BRAMPTON OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW PROCESS



Legend

- Completed Work
- Current Stage
- Public Consultation

3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

In considering an update to the Urban Form policies of the Official Plan, it is appropriate to examine the broader policy context provided by the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, the Region of Peel Official Plan and Strategic Plan, and the City of Brampton Strategic Plan and Official Plan. Policies pertaining to Urban Form in these documents are reviewed in this section and issues that need to be addressed in the future amendment are identified.

3.1 Province of Ontario

3.1.1 The Planning Act of Ontario

The *Planning Act* is the principle piece of legislation governing the development of land in the Province of Ontario. The *Act* outlines the purpose of land use planning, the tools and the power that may be exercised by municipalities, and the various restrictions and procedures that must be followed by municipal government in the process of developing land and changing land uses.

The *Planning Act* is not intended to prescribe urban form policies. However, the *Act* recognizes that urban form can be controlled to some extent through regulating height, spacing, character, etc. as provided under Section 41 Site Plan Control.

The *Planning Act* also maintains the importance of land use controls. Section 34 of the *Planning Act* states that zoning by-laws may be passed by the councils of local municipalities for construction of buildings or structures and for regulating the type of construction and the height, bulk, location, size, floor area, spacing, character and use of buildings or structures to be erected or located within the municipality.

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* also has relevance to urban form in that it defines community improvement and community improvement areas as “*a municipality or area within a municipality, the community improvement of which, in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.*” This provides the municipality with a means to improve its urban form.

3.1.2 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is a key element in Ontario’s land use planning system and is the complementary policy document to the *Planning Act*. The *PPS* provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development and promotes the Provincial policy-led planning system.

Subsection 3(10) of the Planning Act states that the PPS must be reviewed every five years to determine whether revisions are needed. The latest review was initiated in 2001 and the new Provincial Policy Statement officially came into effect on March 1, 2005. This coincided with the passage of Section 2 of the Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act 2004 which requires that any decision made by planning decision makers “shall be consistent with” the PPS as opposed to the previous “shall have regard to” standard.

The Provincial Policy Statement does not deal with matters of physical design and development quality per se, but recognizes the complex interrelationships among economic, environmental and social factors in planning. It supports a comprehensive, integrated and long-term approach to planning, and recognizes linkages among the various policy areas.

Under the new the PPS, strong emphasis is given to promote intensification, brownfield revitalization, compact development form, and mixed uses to enable more efficient use of land and infrastructure, and to support transit-oriented development. This will in turn contribute to better environmental planning and conditions including improvement of air quality and more efficient use of energy through the reduction in travel demand and private automobile use. On energy conservation, the role of development design is highlighted. The policies promote design and orientation which maximize the use of alternative or renewable energy, such as solar and wind energy, and the mitigating effects of vegetation.

3.1.4 Proposed Places to Grow Act and Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Bill 136 the *Places to Grow Act* was introduced in the Ontario Legislature in October 2004. Under the proposed Act, Growth Plans would be established to implement the Province's vision for managing growth and development. In February 2005, the Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) was released. The Plan is established within the framework of the *Planning Act* and Ontario's existing planning system. Whereas the Provincial Policy Statement provides overall policy directions on matters of Provincial interest related to land use and development for all of Ontario, the Draft Growth Plan provides more detailed policies that further elaborate on the directions and concepts of the PPS for the GGH. Specifically, the Growth Plan identifies areas to grow, areas to protect and priority infrastructure investments to serve current and future needs. It also sets out the criteria and process for the completion of five sub-area growth strategies to address common policy issues at a geographic scale beyond municipal boundaries. Brampton is within the "GTA and Hamilton Sub-area".

Of particular relevance to urban form and urban design is the policy to direct growth to existing and designated urban growth centres before moving into greenfield sites which forms the backbone of the Growth Plan. To achieve this objective, the Growth Plan has established policies that support intensification and re-urbanisation, compact development, transit-supportive densities and mixed uses.

Under the Draft Growth Plan, Brampton's City Centre is classified as an "Urban Growth Center" while the balance of the City is within the "Built Up Area". The exception is Northwest Brampton which is currently located outside the "Designated Growth Area" boundary of the draft Growth Plan. The Draft Growth Plan has policies for each of these designations including intensification targets, development form and densities and implementation tools.

The goal for "Urban Growth Centres" is to achieve a vibrant, compact and efficient urban form. They are key areas for intensification and key focus of transit and infrastructure investment to support growth. Opportunities for intensification include those traditionally found in downtown cores, areas with underutilized infrastructure as well as brownfields and greyfields. The Plan describes ways for how intensification can be undertaken without adversely affecting the

character of the community. Possibilities include minor increase in building height by adding additional stories to buildings along main street, more intensive use of industrial parks and employment zones, provision of a greater variety of residential development such as townhouses, stacked townhouses and apartments, and less expansive surface parking lots.

For the “Designated Growth Areas” or greenfield sites, the Growth Plan has policies to ensure amongst other things, transit supportive densities; and to encourage attractive and transit supportive street configurations; and alternative transportation modes including cycling and walking in all new development. The latter principle is echoed in another Growth Plan policy on integrated transportation network that requires municipalities to establish policies to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle networks are integrated into community design.

The Growth Plan also sets a framework to steer growth pressures away from the places and systems that need to be protected including unique natural and cultural heritage sites, valuable natural resources and high quality agricultural land. Of particular relevance to physical design are the following:

The Natural System

“All planning authorities will consider how activities and land use changes outside of the natural system affect the natural system and will promote and undertake appropriate planning and design to ensure external connections to the natural system are maintained and enhanced.”

Cultural Heritage Resources

The Growth Plan considers cultural heritage resources as critical to a community’s sense of place. These resources include buildings, monuments, streetscapes and neighbourhoods that are recognised as an important link to a community’s past. As they frequently form the traditional core areas of communities, adaptive re-use that would support intensification and mixed use communities without compromising their heritage value is considered appropriate. To this end, the following policy is proposed:

“Municipalities are encouraged to prepare municipal heritage plans. As part of the planning process, municipalities are encouraged to identify and map significant cultural heritage resources and develop policies for the protection and appropriate use or re-use of cultural heritage resources as part of achieving intensification targets.”

Under the *Places to Grow Act*, the Growth Plan will have precedence over official plans, zoning bylaws etc and municipalities are required to amend their Official Plans to conform as appropriate. In updating the Brampton Official Plan urban form policies, the role of physical design in growth management will need to be given more emphasis to address the opportunities and challenges ahead. For intensification objectives to be successful, clear, strong Official Plan urban design policies are required to ensure infill/redevelopment is sensitively integrated with existing communities.

3.2 Region of Peel

3.2.1 Region of Peel Official Plan

The Region of Peel Official Plan was adopted by Regional Council on July 11, 1996 and approved with modifications by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on October 22, 1996. The Regional Official Plan is the primary long-range strategic land use policy document for the Region of Peel.

The Region of Peel Official Plan sets the Regional context for more detailed planning to occur at the local level by protecting the environment, managing resources and directing growth and also sets the basis for providing Regional services in an efficient and effective manner. Of relevance to urban form are Chapter 5 Regional Structure and Chapter 7 Implementation.

Section 5.3 The Urban System sets out goals, objectives and policies pertaining to lands within the urban system that are composed of a variety of communities that contain diverse living, working and cultural opportunities. Staff note that these policies support the Central Area and Office Node policies of the City of Brampton Official Plan. Section 5.3 further states that intensified and compact form and a mix of land uses in appropriate areas that efficiently use land, services and infrastructure should be achieved while taking into account the characteristics of existing communities. Under this policy, Regional Council will direct area municipalities to prepare policies that address the intended role and character of the node. Regional Council will also examine, jointly with the area and neighbouring municipalities, the possibility and feasibility of a system of Regional Urban Corridors in Peel.

Section 7.4 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design sets out goals, objectives and policies pertaining to the many initiatives needed to fulfill the intent of the Plan. The General Objective, as stated in Section 7.4.1, is “to create a better designed physical environment that reduces the possibility of crime.”

Brampton’s Official Plan has already addressed the relevant policies of the Regional Official in respect of urban form. More emphasis should perhaps be given to compact development form and to make specific reference to the ‘Crime Prevention through Environmental Design’ (CPTED) principles in the future policies.

3.3 City of Brampton

3.3.1 City of Brampton Strategic Plan

The City of Brampton implemented a new Strategic Plan in 2003. Referred to as the “Six Pillars”, the City’s new Strategic Plan was created to guide thinking and planning for the next decade. The “Six Pillars” represent the building blocks upon which Brampton will realise its overall vision of being “a vibrant, safe and attractive city of opportunity where efficient services make it possible for families, individuals and the business community to grow, prosper and enjoy a high quality of life”.



The Goal Statement of the Strategic Plan states that Brampton communities will be built that preserve heritage and **achieve a high standard of civic design for the whole City**. From an Urban Form perspective, the following two Strategic Plan's pillars are relevant:

Pillar Two deals with managing growth and specifically requires a balanced land use pattern that includes:

- **implementing a block planning process** to encourage attractive and efficient communities for new development within the City, and;
- revising and implementing a new Secondary Plan for the downtown and central corridor that promotes an economically strong, attractive, and vibrant downtown.

Pillar Three deals with protecting the environment and enhancing the community, and states that Brampton shall build a community that preserves our heritage and **achieve a high standard of civic design for the whole city**. The Plan further states that the City shall:

- **implement its civic and development design guidelines** to achieve architectural excellence, and;
- when planning and designing transportation corridors to achieve **transit-oriented, mixed-use development**, the City recognizes the importance of **pedestrian-friendly streetscapes**.

The City of Brampton Strategic Plan promotes high civic design standard for the whole city through the implementation of development design guidelines, and a block plan process. It also promotes an attractive and vibrant downtown, transit-oriented mixed-use development and pedestrian friendly streetscapes. The Official Plan policies should further reinforce these latest strategic planning vision and principles.

3.3.2 City of Brampton Official Plan

The City of Brampton Official Plan has two sections that deal with urban form and design, i.e., Section 3.2 City Concept and Section 4.10 Urban Form.

City Concept

Brampton's Official Plan is founded on a number of organizing principles. Overall, it is aimed at creating

- A dynamic balanced urban growth area within the Greater Toronto Area
- A compact urban form developed through a system of nodes, corridors and districts

Another basic organizing principle or assumption of the Official Plan is Urban Form; which places importance on:

- Attractive and vibrant urban areas; and
- Control of form/impacts

The overall intent of the current Official Plan relative to urban form is to achieve and sustain a high quality physical environment for Brampton, which is consistent with its role as a major urban centre in the Greater Toronto Area. The establishment of overall city design principles for Brampton serves as the basis for guiding the development of a high quality physical environment. The Official Plan also develops a long-range city structure concept that identifies urban units including: the Central Area and a system of districts, nodes and corridors in accordance with existing and projected growth patterns; and establishes general design principles for each type of urban unit.

Urban Form Policies

The urban form policies in Section 4.10 are organized around five areas with an ‘Introduction’ which outlines the overall goals and objectives for urban form and design. The five policy areas are Urban Physical Form and The City Concept; General Urban Form Principles, Element Specific Design Principles, Other Design Considerations, and Implementation.

Introduction

The ‘Introduction’ provides a brief description of the broad goal of the urban form policies. It states that the City of Brampton is taking a leadership role toward the creation of a high quality physical and natural environment. It also states that the City is committed to a dynamic partnership with the development community to achieve a distinctive physical environment that expresses Brampton’s image as a major urban centre.

The scope of the urban form policies is defined in relation to the built environment. The built environment of a city is identified with its tangible elements: the organization and character of streets, parks, squares and particularly with the nature of the buildings that enclose these important public places. The urban form policies deal with the relationships between public places and their surrounding built edges. They also serve as an overall guide for the development of a high quality built and natural environment in Brampton. It is intended that the secondary planning, tertiary planning, subdivision approval, zoning and design standards and site plan processes will serve to interpret the overall urban form guidelines of the Official Plan in a more detailed and area specific manner.

i) Urban Physical Form and The City Concept

The City of Brampton recognizes the close relationship between the basic structural units of corridors, nodes and districts and overall physical form of the urban area. Each corridor, node and district is usually characterized by a particular road pattern, land use distribution, built form and landscape treatment which represents the styles and development standards of the period in which it is built. These components combine to generate the City's essential physical form.

These policies require that these interrelationships be considered in the planning of any infill or new development as early in the process as possible. This enables modifications to a plan which will facilitate the future detailed design of the project rather than impose unnecessary and unavoidable constraints.

ii) General Urban Form Principles

The overall urban form principles set the basic parameters for all future city design strategies, plans, policies and programs. These are broad design principles in their most basic form to allow for flexible interpretations without the need for amendments to the Official Plan.

The Official Plan encourages all physical development in Brampton to reflect the following set of urban form principles or combinations thereof:

- Coherence
- Diversity
- Open Space
- Preservation
- Scale
- Enhancement
- Circulation
- Safety
- Human Services
- Ecological Environment
- Sustainability
- Land Use Compatibility

(iii) Element Specific Design Principles

These policies promote the identification and enhancement of site specific design elements through the secondary plan, subdivision plan and site plan processes. The City's intent is to permit reasonable flexibility in considering the role of site specific design elements, within the context of the overall city design principles, without the need to frequently amend the Official Plan.

The Official Plan states that the City may, in considering all forms and scales of development, require the identification and enhancement of any combination of the following specific design elements:

- Areas of Special Identity
- Gateways
- Landmarks
- Open Space and Natural Features
- Views and Vistas
- Public Art

Section 4.10.3.2 of the urban form policy further states that the City encourages physical development that reflects the overall city design principles in combination with the enhancement of any site specific design elements. As well, the City can identify site specific design elements

in the secondary planning and district design planning processes, with the particular characteristics of the element that the City wishes to reinforce appropriately described.

There are also specific requirements for linkages between natural features and city streets, as well as development surrounding open spaces.

(iv) Other Design Considerations

In addition to general and site specific design principles, the Official Plan has also established conditions for some built and design elements including

- Signage
- Parking
- Roofscapes
- Utilities
- Buffers
- Energy Conservation
- Residential Streetscapes

(v) Implementation

The last section of the urban form policy deals with implementation. It states that the City should take a leading role in promoting high quality in the physical environment by encouraging good design in both public buildings and public works projects. To establish the means to achieve these objectives, the Official Plan directs the City to develop an implementation strategy which will include the following:

- *An Urban Form Management Strategy* to be prepared by the City which will have regards for the environment, topography, major open spaces, vistas, skylines, major landmarks, visual coherence and for matters including but not limited to
 - The overall city design concept
 - Urban design guidelines
 - Secondary plans
 - District design concept plans or tertiary plans
 - Conditions of subdivision approval
 - Zoning and design standards, and
 - Site plan control
- *Design studies for specific street blocks or areas* to be undertaken by the City in connection with Official Plan Amendments, Secondary Plans or Tertiary Plans as appropriate.
- *Special studies* to be undertaken by property owners to formulate long range city design objectives and standards *for secondary plan areas* according to the requirements set by the City including those of the site specific design elements and other design considerations.

- *District design plans* to be prepared by the City to respond to, reinforce or adjust the conditions in the district with regards to such physical and spatial matters as setbacks, open spaces, height and massing of structures, etc.
- *Design program* to be provided by the applicant as part of the site plan approval process which will include such analysis as architecture, wind and sun exposure, pedestrian and vehicular requirements etc.

3.4 Issues to be Addressed in Urban Form Policy Amendment

The Provincial and regional policies are very broad in the area of physical design. New directions are however provided for further promoting compact development form, mixed-uses and densities that use land and infrastructure efficiently including public transit. These have implications on urban form and design policies.

Brampton's existing Official Plan urban form policies are considered still largely relevant both in structure and content. However, some of the existing policies may be too general which need to be enhanced in terms of details to better convey the intent and requirements. The role of urban design as an integral part of planning should be emphasised as well as aesthetic and social considerations in the policy goals. Overall updating of the policies is also needed to implement the latest Provincial, regional and City policies as discussed throughout this section of the report as well as other recent design initiatives undertaken by the City, notably the Development Design Guidelines and the block plan process as discussed in the next section. A table summarising the scope and functions of these design and related processes and initiatives are provided at the end of Section 4.

Some terminologies of the Official Plan's urban form section are outdated especially those referred to in the implementation section including "urban form management strategy", "design studies for street blocks", etc. These need to be brought up-to-date to reflect the latest development design process and to be consistent with the DDG. The title "urban form" may also need to be changed as it conveys a perception of a confined scope of concern i.e., urbanised development form. Re-titling to "Development and Civic Design" would be more appropriate to reflect the policy intent and to better tie in with the complementary document "Development Design Guidelines".

4.0 OTHER BRAMPTON CITY DESIGN INITIATIVES

The City has taken on a new direction and leadership role in the area of civic design since the last Official Plan Review. This commitment to high quality physical design is reflected in the numerous recent initiatives undertaken notably the City-wide Development Design Guidelines, Block Planning, the Flower City Strategy, the various Central Area/Downtown design reviews, and the Gateway Beautification program. Many of these initiatives are already underway. The Official Plan urban form policies should support and further reinforce the guidelines and objectives of these initiatives.

The scope of these initiatives are highlighted in the summary table located at the end of this section, together with the policies described in Section 3.0.

4.1 Development Design Guidelines

The development and design of new communities plays a vital role in the realization of the City of Brampton's "Six Pillars" Vision. A principle factor that will assist in the pursuit of these goals is the City's approach to physical design towards high quality development. To this end, the Development Design Guidelines have been prepared to assist the City and the development industry in achieving these goals in the development and design of new communities, and in re-establishing Brampton as a "Flower City".

The DDG's vision for cities is that they are composed of three main elements i.e., *place, people and visions*. It states that:

"Cities involve *place* – the natural and cultural features / conditions which speak of a particular place. They involve *people* – the values of residents; their sense of community; their social, recreational, economic and housing needs; the business interests of merchants; and the special needs and interests of different individuals / groups. Cities also involve *visions* – a picture of the place in which residents wish to live, work and play."

The purposes of the Development Design Guidelines are to:

1. Ensure the planning and design of new communities is consistent with and promotes the City of Brampton's Vision and civic design objectives,
2. Guide developers and their consultants through the development design process,
3. Establish criteria and design guidelines for Block Plans within Secondary Plan areas,
4. Identify community design issues at the earliest stages of development to ensure that decisions are made throughout the process which facilitate functional and attractive design,
5. Outline specific guidelines and requirements to ensure a high level of quality in the design of new communities and their interface with existing communities.

The Development Design Guidelines are intended to guide the development of communities from a design perspective, to guide secondary planning and more specifically the preparation of Block Plans. They primarily deal with new development areas and do not address infill and intensification within the built-up areas. The guidelines set the foundation, direction and vision for detailed design in the subsequent stages of community development. They are to be used in conjunction with other official documents such as the Official Plan and Secondary Plans.

Essentially, the guidelines are meant to promote the following:

- A visually attractive environment,
- A visually attractive and predominantly “Green” community,
- Pedestrian friendly and pedestrian scaled public spaces,
- Environmentally sustainable and healthy ecosystems,
- A strong relationship to the City’s natural resources such as woodlots, creeks, valleylands, hedgerows, views and vistas,
- A sense of identity and arrival,
- A distinct community character,
- Aesthetically and visually attractive interfaces and edges between land uses, and;
- A connection to the horticultural heritage of the City by incorporating planting themes, which include the heritage rose.

The DDG represents Brampton’s latest statement on the City’s commitment to outstanding physical design standards. This commitment should be supported by the Official Plan. The Official Plan policies will be required to ensure adherence to the City’s DDG as amended from time to time. It is envisaged that the DDG’s overall guiding principles would be incorporated into the urban form / development design policies as described in Section 6 of this paper while the more detailed and element specific guidelines will be integrated into the respective sections of the Official Plan policies eg. Residential, Open Space, etc. as appropriate. The latter review is being undertaken concurrently as a separate Official Plan Amendment for the entire DDG.

4.2 Block Planning

The traditional development approval process involves several stages – Secondary Plan, Draft Plan of Subdivision, Site Plan and detailed design. The City of Brampton has recently introduced a new second stage to the Secondary Plan process. Stage One (General Planning Area) entails the preparation of an overall land use concept while the new Stage Two (Detailed Sub-Area Block Plans) entails the preparation of detailed Block Plans for sub-areas within the Secondary Plan area.

The introduction of the block planning process was put forward primarily to:

- Achieve the City’s civic design objectives in the earliest stages of the development process and ensure consistency and high quality in the development of new communities from concept to implementation.
- Illustrate through a further level of design direction how these objectives are being met in the design of new communities.

- Focus on the design implications of development planning – in particular, compatibility or fit between uses, road connectivity and existing and proposed – before the detailed design stage.
- Involve all interested parties in effective, efficient decision making.

The components of Block Planning include the Secondary Plan components and the following:

- Community Structure
- The Open Space System
- The Street Network
- Streetscapes
- Edges and Gateways
- Site Planning and Built Form

All block plans and components should be guided by the following principles from concept to detailed design:

- Develop a strong community image and character
- Incorporate important existing features and conditions
- Enhance the visual experience for residents, motorists and pedestrians.

All documentation of Block Plans will undergo design review by City staff (Civic Design and Development Teams) and require approval in principle from City Council.

The block plan process and associated requirements will have to be reflected in the future development design policies of the Official Plan.

4.3 Design Brief

At the tertiary planning level, the City has used another tool, i.e., design brief for the following purposes:

Community Design Brief

This is used for larger sites, usually at a block scale, in areas with older secondary plans or infill situations and where there is no block plan available. The structure of this type of design brief is usually similar to the block plan at a more summary level and with a shorter processing time. The purpose of the brief is to fill the gap of a community design concept, create a framework for and to coordinate individual pieces of development in the area.

Site Design Brief

This is usually used for sites with one or more buildings or development parcels. This is required prior to Site Plan submission where there are no appropriate Tertiary Plans or design guidelines. It is sometimes used in the Site Plan approval process to test the project design performance.

The City will continue to use design brief where circumstances warrant. It is especially effective in the early stages of the planning process to ensure a clear understanding of the vision and design objectives for the project.

4.4 Flower City Strategy

The Flower City Strategy builds on the past history of Brampton as Flowertown and its re-emergence as the Flower City. The Strategy works towards increasing the visual recognition and civic initiatives by coordinating and linking together all aspects of the City that will enhance and promote its image. It is a comprehensive and long-term initiative and an emphasis is placed on promoting the City as the “City in the Garden”.

Relevant to city and development design is the Strategy’s ‘Place Making’ goal, i.e., “to create a beautiful and distinctive city that celebrates our floral heritage in all aspects of city building programming and special events”. This goal is to be achieved through a number of deliverables including city building and programming opportunities as follows:

- Strategic plans including vision statements and the **Official Plan**
- community design and planning initiatives including “gateways”, “streetscapes”, “pathways” and “Development Design Guidelines” etc.
- physical improvements to the public and private realms i.e., built form and open space
- principles to guide staff decision-making in all aspects of physical planning and design

Civic and community design principles should be developed to guide decision-making to ensure that all new city-building and community building activities integrate, support and celebrate the City’s flower strategy and ensure the highest level “quality of place”. Examples of such principles include:

- Floral neighbourhoods that will integrate a variety of flowers into the community and its components parts
- Green neighbourhoods that are defined by a connected park and open space system that is linked and easily accessible
- Heritage neighbourhoods that have distinctive homes, protect and celebrate cultural and natural resources
- Pedestrian neighbourhoods that have convenient street layouts, within walking distance of public open space, shopping, community services and transit
- Diverse neighbourhoods that promote a mix of housing, open spaces, shopping, office spaces and civic buildings
- Designed neighbourhoods that are beautiful, reflect Flower City values, and have defined centre, edges and entrances.

The Official Plan is one of the vehicles for implementing the Flower City Strategy. Its vision and relevant community design principles need to be integrated into the urban form policies for implementation.

4.5 The Image and Identity Urban Design Framework

The Framework is intended to be a comprehensive policy document that consolidates all the relevant planning initiatives related to the Flower City Strategy into one strategic document for its implementation, notably the “Place Making” goal and associated deliverables. It envisages that the Flower City Strategy will be extended beyond flowers and into upgrades to all open space elements. For example, the vision can be metaphorically expressed in the built form through the use of materials such as terra sandstone/soils and blue colour materials to represent valleys and rivers etc. The open space system is the one thread that weaves throughout the City and links all elements together.

4.6 Central Area Design Review and Guidelines

As the focus of the overall city structure, a number of initiatives have been undertaken to guide the physical development of the Central Area which includes Downtown Brampton as discussed below.

4.6.1 Brampton Central Area Plan Review

This review represents the City’s latest planning initiative for the Central Area. The primary purpose of the review is to revisit the assumptions and strategic role and function of the Central Area in the context of today’s market realities. The establishment of a broader mixture of higher intensity land uses within the Central Area has been promoted for some time, but the planned evolution has not materialised as quickly as anticipated or in some cases not at all. Issues of location, accessibility, timing, economics, aesthetics and market acceptance of the envisioned urban character are difficult to overcome, especially when substantial, lower intensity greenfield opportunities continue to compete for developer and consumer attention. A Draft Final Report was issued in March 2005 which provides recommendations for future land uses and urban design guidelines and a comprehensive implementation strategy that will ensure the realization of the vision for the Brampton Central Area.

The vision for the Brampton Central Area comprises seven fundamental components including:

1. The protection and improvement of the stable neighbourhoods included within the Brampton Central Area;
2. The improvement of all urban streetscapes and open space components of the public realm;
3. The establishment of high order transit within the Queen Street and Main Street Corridors;

4. The focus of administrative, cultural and civic land uses in Downtown Brampton, as well as retail, office and higher density forms of housing throughout the Brampton Central Area
5. An intensified urban structure, focused on identified transit stops that are within the transit corridors
6. The development of higher intensity land uses within the identified redevelopment sites, especially the Hospital Redevelopment Site; and
7. The long term evolution of the Bramalea City Centre into a more dynamic, urban district, supporting high order transit within the Queen Street Corridor

The report identifies sixteen priority actions as part of the strategy for implementing the vision for the Central Area. Of relevance to development design are the initiatives recommended for developing a planning framework that facilitates and manages changes. The City is urged to approve an over arching set of planning policies and design guidelines for the entire Brampton Central Area including establishing a new secondary plan for the Brampton Central Area; proposed reduction in parkland dedication requirements; and parking standards.

In preparing this Discussion Paper, it has come to the attention of staff that the Official Plan with respect to the Central Area is somewhat outdated although it contains the necessary direction and policies for attracting development and redevelopment.

4.6.2 Downtown Urban Design Study

The Study is proposed to be undertaken to develop an urban design vision and guidelines to provide direction for the built form of Downtown Brampton. These guidelines will implement the goals, objectives and policies of the Brampton Official Plan, Secondary Plans and the City's Development Design Guidelines. The study will coordinate and consolidate the various City-wide initiatives that affect the downtown/central area including the Central Area Plan Review and the previous Downtown Civic Design Guidelines.

The study will recommend specific guidelines for elements such as site organization, pedestrian comfort, heritage content, streetscape principles, urban space/parks, Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles and new development principles. The guidelines will provide clear direction to the proponents of new and infill development regarding the City's expectations for physical and visual quality.

4.6.3 Brampton Downtown Civic Design Guidelines

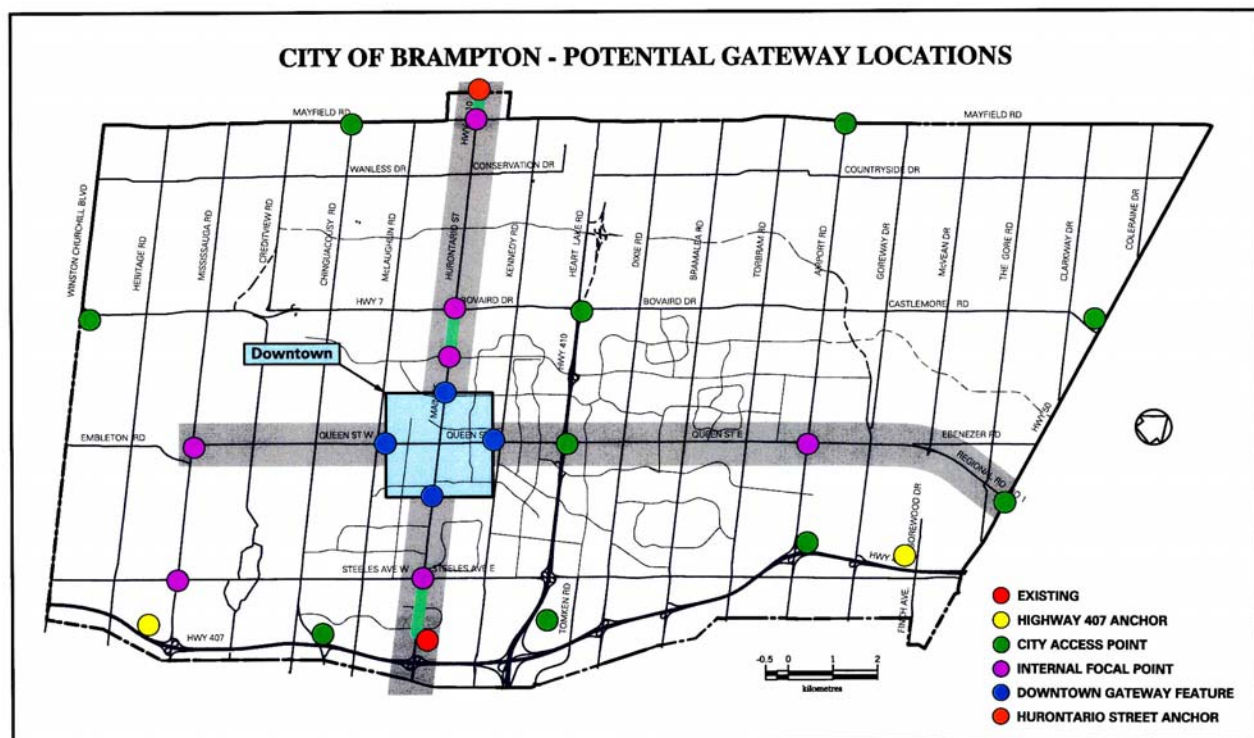
The Brampton Downtown Civic Design Guide was prepared for the City of Brampton Parks & Recreation Department. The study illustrates how the design of all the streetscape elements can be further coordinated to strengthen the downtown and guide future efforts. The report contains recommendations organized around the identification of various 'character areas' within the downtown core which include: primary and secondary streetscapes, gateways, pedestrian laneways, City Hall, and Market Square where the future Performing Arts Centre is located.

4.7 Gateway Beautification Program

The Gateway Beautification Program was developed in 2001 by the City’s Community Services Department. It is designed to punctuate key intersections throughout the City with classic architectural features and colourful floral displays as an expression of Brampton’s corporate and civic identity. The program establishes a policy that recognises the gateway typologies as the corporate standard and provides a unified theme for expressing the City’s identity at these locations.

An intersection’s potential as a gateway is determined based on a number of considerations such as traffic volume, access to the historic downtown core, proximity to the municipal boundary and its relationship to the overall city and immediate neighbourhood. From the assessment, a gateway hierarchy is established and design treatments are devised. Important gateways identified include Highway 407 Anchor, City Access Point, Hurontario Street Anchor, internal focus point and Downtown Gateway. Gateway treatments proposed range from large scale and minimally detailed features along Highway 407 to small scale and highly detailed features at focal point intersections. The gateway installations can be city initiated and funded, developer initiated and funded or a partnership.

Gateway is already included as a component of the urban design framework under the existing Official Plan policy. The policy can be further strengthened by incorporating the more detailed design principles developed in the Gateway Beautification Program and the Development Design Guidelines.





4.8 Environics Survey

The Environics Survey was conducted by the Environics Research Group Limited for the City of Brampton in November 2002. It was carried out in the form of a telephone survey of 1,014 residents of the City of Brampton from October 29 to November 18, 2002. Over half of the respondents have lived in Brampton for more than ten years.

When asked to think about the City of Brampton and the three things about Brampton that they are most proud of, twenty-five percent of respondents replied “clean/visually attractive”. This is down from twenty-nine percent of respondents in 2001, thirty-one percent in 2000 and thirty-two percent in 1999. Five percent of respondents replied “nice downtown core/historic preservation”. This is up from four percent in 2001 and two percent in 2000, but down from eight percent in 1999.

When asked about their satisfaction with services provided by the Planning and Building Department, in particular with the appearance of new development, seventy-one percent said they were satisfied while twenty-four percent were not. The level of satisfaction was down from seventy-five percent in 2001 and seventy-nine percent in 2000 and 1999.

The Environics survey revealed that while there is a slight general decline in the level of satisfaction with the physical development and physical appearance of the City, the overall perception is still favourable. In cognizance of the latest public opinion, the City will strive to improve on the relevant aspects and to maintain high standards in civic and development design for all of Brampton, as promoted in the Six Pillars vision. The current urban form policy review is one such endeavour.

4.9 Issues to be Addressed in Urban Form Policy Amendment

The review of the City’s recent initiatives on city design has identified a number of issues that need to be addressed in revising the Official Plan policies. These include the guiding principles of the DDG; the Block Plan process; the use of design brief, Flower City Strategy vision and objectives; the role and design guidelines for the Central Area as well as the reinforcement of the importance of gateway in the overall city design.

Key Design and Related Processes and Initiatives

| Design and Related Process/Initiative | Scope | Authority | Impact on Urban Design |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|--|
| Six Pillars Strategic Plan | Provides the overall strategic vision and goals for the City, i.e., the Six Pillars in respect of quality of life, the environment, economy, governance etc. | City Council | The Six Pillars guide thinking and planning of the City and are implemented through the various City policies and programs including the Official Plan. Pillar Two and Pillar Three concerning managing growth, and protecting the environment and enhancing the community have particular relevance to urban design in that they set out the goals for block planning, a vibrant downtown, high civic standards for the whole City through implementing development design guidelines, and promoting transit-oriented, mixed use development. |
| Brampton Official Plan | Is the legal planning document that establishes goals, objectives and policies for planning and development in the City. It incorporates and implements approved planning policies including the City's Strategic Plan. | Planning Act | The "City Concept" and Urban Form sections of the Official Plan set out policies for urban form and design, including the overall goal of achieving a high quality physical environment for the City and a long range city structure that comprises the Central Area and a system of districts, nodes and corridors. Some of the Official Plan policies are too general to meet the City's current intentions for urban design. |
| Secondary Plan | Detailed statutory policy plan for a district that articulates and implements the Official Plan objectives, policies and land use designations for that area. | Planning Act | Provides the legal framework for planning and development of a district including land use and road network schedules, visions and guidelines for civic and community design, and principles for block planning. The scope of the secondary plan is often too large and too broad to provide sufficient details for development design. |
| Block Plan | Plan for a sub-area within a secondary plan to demonstrate in further details how the physical design objectives and requirements of the secondary plan are achieved before proceeding to the subdivision plan stage. | City Council | Provides a tertiary land use planning and road network framework that focuses on the design implications of development and ensures achievement of the City's design objectives in the earliest stage of planning as well as consistency of development quality from concept to implementation. |

Key Design and Related Processes and Initiatives (Cont'd)

| Design and Related Process/Initiative | Scope | Authority | Impact on Urban Design |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| Design Brief | A document that establishes vision, principles and guidelines for design and development of a site. Design briefs that have been used in the City include “community design brief”, “site design brief” etc. | City Council | Usually used for larger sites at block scale in areas with older secondary plans or infill situations and where there is no block plan available. The brief fills the gap of a community design concept, creates a design framework for, and coordinates individual development within a larger area. In the case of site design brief, it is usually required prior to Site Plan Submission where there is no tertiary plan or design guidelines. It is also sometimes used in the Site Plan Approval process to test the project design performance. |
| Brampton Development Design Guidelines (DDG) | City-wide design guidelines for community development, secondary planning and block planning. | City Council | The DDG has provided clearer directions on the City’s requirements for physical design standards which should be supported by the Official Plan. As the DDG primarily deals with new development, the Official Plan needs also to establish policies for urban design standards for infill/intensification and existing built-up areas. |
| Brampton Flower City Strategy | An initiative aimed at reclaiming and enhancing the City’s heritage as a Flower City | City Council | The Strategy’s “Place Making” goal has particular relevance to urban design and is to be integrated into and implemented through city-building policies and initiatives including the Official Plan, the DDG, Pathways Plan etc. |
| The Image and Identity Urban Design Framework | Intended to be a comprehensive policy document that consolidates all the relevant planning initiatives related to the Flower City Strategy into one strategic document for its implementation, notably the “Place Making” goal and associated deliverables | City Council | The Program is intended to establish a framework to align all planning efforts with and contribute to the Flower City Strategy. It also extends the Flower City Strategy beyond flowers and into upgrades to all open space elements. |

Key Design and Related Processes and Initiatives (Cont'd)

| Design and Related Process/Initiative | Scope | Authority | Impact on Urban Design |
|---|--|--------------|--|
| Brampton Gateway Beautification Program | The program is designed to punctuate key intersections throughout the City with classic architectural features and floral displays as an expression of Brampton's corporate and civic identity including that of a Flower Town. | City Council | The Program establishes a policy that recognises the gateway typologies as the corporate standard and provides a unified theme for expressing the City's cultural image and corporate identity at these locations. These standards are applicable to both public and private projects. |
| Central Area Design Review and Guidelines | These include a number of initiatives i.e., Brampton Central Area Plan Review, Downtown Urban Design Study, and Brampton Downtown Civic Design Guidelines which are intended to guide planning and physical development of the Central Area including Downtown Brampton. | City Council | The Draft Final Report for the most recent review, i.e., Brampton Central Area Plan Review recommends that the City should establish a new secondary plan for the Central Area to support its role of the Central Area in the overall urban structure hierarchy and to provide directions for urban design. The Official Plan should also implement these recommendations. |

5.0 REVIEW OF OTHER OFFICIAL PLANS

As part of the current review, the official plan urban design policies of five municipalities i.e., Mississauga, Toronto, Burlington, Oakville and Markham were considered. The purpose of the review is to identify “best practices” for consideration in the revision of Brampton’s policies for development design. For ease of consideration and reference, these policies are attached in Appendix A.

5.1 City of Mississauga

The Region of Peel approved the City of Mississauga Official Plan, the “Mississauga Plan”, in May 2003. Mississauga’s Official Plan consists of two parts, the “City Plan” and a number of “District Plans”.

Urban Form Goals and Objectives

The goals in Section 2.2 Urban Form and Community Identity state the ideal policy conditions for development in Mississauga, such as the development of a compact urban form with a City Centre, Nodes and communities that are well-designed with high quality architecture. The objectives in subsection 2.2.2 elaborate on these goals and state Mississauga’s desire to strengthen the role of urban design in the achievement of the desired urban form; develop and locate Nodes with greater intensity; maintain a distinct identity for each local community, and reinforce the role and identity of the City Centre as downtown Mississauga.

Urban Design Goals and Objectives

Section 2.11 of the Official Plan sets out Mississauga’s urban design goals including the achievement of high quality and innovative urban design, creation of a strong sense of place, promotion of a built environment that integrates heritage, community character and streetscape as well as prominence of the City Centre and emphasis of Nodes. These are further articulated in a number of objectives in Subsection 2.11.2 which promote the creation of distinct places and locales as well as innovative and diverse urban form and design, ensure high urban design standards for pedestrian and vehicular systems, promote built form that relates to the public street and defines its scale, and encourage special design elements in built form and streetscape.

Policies for City Centre and Nodes

The policies in Section 3.10 describe the overall principles for City Centres and Nodes that these places would accommodate a greater variety and concentration of uses than surrounding areas with more compact, mixed-use and higher intensity transit oriented developments that maximize the use of existing infrastructure. They will provide a community focus and identity.

Subsection 3.10.3 details the characteristics of the built form of Nodes including:

- High quality urban design, landscaping and pedestrian amenity;

- Creation of a sense of gateway to the core area by prominent built form and landscaping close to the street;
- Creation of a sense of place within the node by distinctive architecture and landscaping;
- Built form closely related to and integrated with the street line, with minimal building setbacks, to provide spatial enclosure and street-related activity;
- Compatible building bulk, massing and scale of built form to provide an integrated streetscape;
- Retail uses along main street frontages with direct access to the public sidewalk;
- No parking provided between the building and the street line on principal street frontages and intersections;
- Pedestrian and cycling convenience and safety is a priority.

As higher density residential and employment development is necessary to support nodes and transit usage therein, down-zoning of lands within the nodes and transition areas shall not be permitted.

Urban Design Policies

The policies for urban design are set out in Section 3.15 of the Mississauga Plan. In the 'Introduction', the relationship between the urban design policies and the District Policies is described. The application of the urban design policies should respect the specific circumstances of the district and the specific policies contained in the District Policies. As such, the principles will be applied in a flexible manner based on the design merits of each development application.

The urban design policies are organised around twelve principles. Policies of particular interest are highlighted below.

Context

A policy is provided specifically for buildings higher than three storeys setting out special considerations and requirements including sun and shadow studies, view studies and micro-climatic studies.

Places

These policies promotes amongst the various design treatments, the creation of a sense of enclosure and identity at major intersections. Enclosure is defined as having built form along the street edge to heights appropriate to the context of the intersection.

Urban Form

This policy states that Mississauga will be receptive to design solutions that enhance housing affordability while maintaining functional and aesthetic quality as well as areas of high and medium density residential buildings that manifest a broad range of building types and forms.

Landscaping and Planting

The policy gives cognizance to landscaping as an integral part of urban design. The objectives should be to promote a diversity of native species, stabilize slopes, reduce soil erosion, provide protection from the elements, and enhance the operation of the storm water management facilities.

Civic Spaces

The important role of the public realm is emphasised in this policy. It states that civic buildings and spaces should be a strong focus of community design and major roads and intersection should be designed as important civic spaces and linkages.

Specific Areas

This policy makes provisions for special conditions for special areas. At present, there is only one area covered under this policy, i.e., Mississauga Road.

Special attention is also accorded to a number of urban design qualities including pedestrians through the **Pedestrian Activity** policy; scenic drives as part of the **Visual Interest** policy; and the special reference to the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the **Safety** policy.

5.2 City of Toronto

The 2002 City of Toronto Official Plan is the first Official Plan for the amalgamated City of Toronto. The Official Plan is about “ensuring Toronto remains an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging and promises a high quality of life for generations to come”.

The Toronto Official Plan is based on four core principles: diversity and opportunity, beauty, connectivity, and leadership and stewardship. Principle two, “beauty” states that “all successful cities astonish with their human-made and natural beauty. People want to live in cities that understand their past and push their creative limits.”

Policies on City Structure

Downtown

Chapter two, “Shaping the City” has sections that deal with the overall city structure which includes the Downtown, Centres and Avenues. A dynamic downtown is identified as critical to the health of a city and to the region that surrounds it. Downtowns are the oldest, most dense and most complex part of the urban landscape with a rich variety of building forms and activities. The downtown policies of the Toronto Official Plan encourage investment in the downtown environment in order to maintain and improve the public realm, promote an environment of creativity and innovation for arts and culture, support and enhance specialty retail and entertainment, and maintain a high-quality business infrastructure.

The downtown policies also state the need to improve the quality of downtown (by developing programs and activities to maintain and upgrade amenities and infrastructure); to encourage a full range of housing opportunities; to preserve the architectural and cultural heritage; and to develop design guidelines specific to districts of historic or distinct character. Priority is also accorded to enhance the accessibility and mobility in the downtown area by improving public transit and pedestrian facilities.

Centres

Centres are identified as areas with excellent transit accessibility where jobs, housing and services are concentrated in a dynamic, mixed-use setting with different levels of activity and intensity. The establishment of these centres is a priority for managing growth in Toronto.

Avenues

Avenues are identified as important corridors along major streets where reurbanization can create new housing and jobs while improving the pedestrian environment, the look of the street, shopping opportunities and transit service. Reurbanization will be achieved through the preparation of studies for strategic mixed-use segments of the corridors.

Urban Design Policies

Chapter three, “Building a Successful City” has policies that guide growth by integrating social, economic and environmental perspectives in order to make an attractive Toronto with a strong economy and complete communities. Urban design policies are part of this chapter and are organised around five sections, i.e., the built environment, the public realm, built form, built form - tall buildings, and public arts.

Role of Urban Design

The Toronto policies acknowledge the important role of urban design, not only in land use planning and city design, but also from the social and economic perspectives. It states that good urban design is “not just an aesthetic overlay, but an essential ingredient of city-building. Good urban design is good business and good social policy”. “Inclusiveness” is one of the objectives of city design in addition to beauty, vibrancy and safety.

Social Emphasis

The social dimension is manifested in many policies including the heavy emphasis given to pedestrians, human scale design, neighbourhoods and communities. The need for harmonious integration of the existing and the new, aesthetically, functionally and socially, makes up a good part of the urban design policies. This is in part due to the mature state of development of the city that it is already fully built up with infill and redevelopment being and expected to be the main development activities in the future.

Implementation

A lot of emphasis is placed on the implementation aspect including:

- The need for private-public sector collaboration
- Committing necessary funds to create and maintain high quality public realm
- The use of design competitions and urban design awards as incentives for promoting urban design, architecture, and landscape excellence and public interests in civic and city design
- The use of skilled professionals in the design and construction process
- The need for fiscal and financial commitment in promoting public art

The Public Realm

The Public Realm section of the Toronto Official Plan recognizes that public buildings, open spaces, streets and parks are a “key shared asset” that:

- draw people together,
- create strong social bonds at the neighbourhood, city and regional level,
- convey a public image to the world,
- unite people as a city,
- set the stage for festivals, parades, and civic life, and;
- create communities.

Built Form

This section stresses the importance of fit between new development and existing communities and neighbourhoods in aesthetics, functions and the overall social fabrics. The policies describe that “Great cities are built one building at a time, with each new building making a contribution to the overall urban design of the City. Developers and architects have a civic responsibility to create buildings that not only meet the needs of the clients, tenants and customers, but also the needs of the people who live and work in the area who will encounter the building in their daily lives.”

Detailed policies are provided to support the principle of integration. These include massing, parking, street and pedestrian systems, and the requirements for providing amenities for adjacent streets and open spaces.

In addition to the Official Plan, Toronto also has Urban Design Guidelines for specific building types such as the Toronto Urban Design Guidelines for Infill Townhouses. The purpose of the document is two-fold. It clarifies the City’s interest in addressing development impacts with a focus on protecting streetscapes and seamlessly integrating new development with existing housing patterns. As well, the guidelines are intended to assist all concerned parties i.e., architects, planners, developers as well as residents to make more informed decisions and assessments about infill townhouse development. Planning and design guidelines/parameters for infill townhouses are provided including streets and open spaces, building location and organisation, building form and pedestrian environment.

Tall Buildings

Another unique feature of Toronto's policies is those for tall buildings. Tall buildings are discussed with regard to their placement and with the recognition that they belong only in some places, which help to reinforce the civic centres and define the City's image. By concentrating these developments on a small part of the site, other areas can be freed up to provide open spaces, community facilities and amenities. Notwithstanding, it is pointed out that tall buildings are only one form of intensification. Street oriented, grade related or mid-rise building types are anticipated to make up most of the proposed intensification.

Tall buildings are considered of possessing "larger civic responsibilities and obligations than other buildings". As such, and to ensure that they fit within their context and minimise their potential impacts, additional built form principles and urban design considerations are devised to regulate their location and design (e.g. how the three parts of base, middle (shaft) and top should be integrated as a whole).

Public Art

Toronto has a vision for transforming the city into a large public art gallery. To implement this vision, the policies call for the adoption of a public art master plan; and the use of public and private funding, including dedicating one percent of the capital budget of all municipal buildings to public art. The policies further encourage public art initiatives on city and public properties; and the inclusion of public art in all significant private sector development.

5.3 Town of Oakville

The latest version of the Town of Oakville Official Plan was approved in September 2004. Part C Section 7 Urban Aesthetics sets out the broad policy for urban design while more specific development design guidelines are presented in the respective land use policy sections of the Plan in Part D.

Landscape Design

The Urban Aesthetics policy includes only a very brief statement on goals and objectives. Landscape design features prominently in the policy as one of the two aspects that the policy aims to promote, the other being quality building design.

Development Design Control Tools

The Oakville Official Plan Urban Aesthetic policy focuses on control over development design, and the tools for achieving such purposes. The *Planning Act* and its relevant provisions are cited throughout the policies as the enabling legislation for development design control. Requirements for site plan approvals are detailed in the policy (Section 7.2). A number of development is subject to site plan approval including all medium and high density residential development including a residential building containing 25 or more units, and all retrofit apartments added to such development. Other tools that are included in the policy are "studies for the aesthetic

improvement of existing areas” that the Town may undertake (Section 7.6), periodic review to ascertain improvement that may be made to enhance appearance of commercial and employments areas and Heritage Conservation Districts (Section 7.10), and detailed guidelines for controlling development of selected areas and uses (Section 7.11).

Infill Residential Development

The policy devotes considerable attention to infill residential development which is considered of requiring greater care and sensitivity in their design implementation as stated in Section 7.12. (In other Official Plans reviewed including those of Mississauga, Burlington and Markham, residential infill and intensification policies are included in the residential policy section.) The policies are mostly advisory in nature such that the Town “encourages” instead of “requires” infill development to be more compatible with the adjacent area and to have minimal impact. Similarly, the criteria for assessing these projects comprise advisory guidelines (eg. preservation of existing trees is encouraged, character of existing roads and streetscapes is to be maintained and enhanced where feasible) while compulsory requirements are mainly limited to conformance with the density provisions of the Official Plan, and conformance with the character of development and lot size that prevails in the adjacent area.

5.4 City of Burlington

Part II Section 6.0 of the City of Burlington Official Plan speaks to design matters which are defined as those involving or related to visual character, aesthetics and compatibility of land use and the qualitative aspects of development. The policy envisages a supplementary role for design principles that they supplement land use policies, zoning and Sign By-laws, site plan and subdivision process. Design principles are to be used primarily as guidelines as opposed to regulatory tools in the preparation and review of development proposals and community improvement plans. Notwithstanding, it is one of the objectives of the policy to integrate urban design into the full range of decision-making activities to assist in achieving the design objectives of the Official Plan.

There are five sets of design policies including:

- Natural Environment and Heritage;
- Existing and New Communities;
- The Public Realm;
- Design Guidelines; and
- Implementation

Policies of particular interests include:

- The objective of *providing a diverse social setting* through the implementation of the Existing and New Communities policies.

- The Design Guidelines policy on “*Street Level Activity*” specifically the creation of a continuous and harmonious streetscape environment with emphasis on maintaining the continuity of grade-related activity areas, both inside and outside of buildings.
- A number of Implementation policies including the need to review the zoning by-law regulations as well as existing municipal development engineering standards from a design perspective to encourage innovation that achieve city design objectives, and the use of Review Committee and similar set up to obtain advice on design issues. As well, there is a specific policy that encourages senior levels of government and public utilities to have regard for the design objectives contained in the Official Plan.

5.5 Town of Markham

The Town of Markham Official Plan was approved in 1987 and consolidated in 1993. The Plan is currently undergoing a technical amendment which is expected to be complete in early 2005. Policies on design are set out in Part II Section 2.2 Visual Appearance. The policies are relatively brief, comprising goal, objectives, policies and implementation.

There are some similarities between the policies of Markham and Oakville. These include the emphasis placed on landscape design (as one of the two main concerns listed in the objectives, the other being good building design), and the policy on period review of some areas including Heritage Conservation Districts to ascertain their appearance and implement improvement as feasible.

The role of high quality public facility design is considered of particular importance in setting an example of good design as stated in the objectives. Cooperation with the local community including residents, ratepayers’ associations and local business associations etc. is one of the policies for implementing visual design standards and related matters.

5.6 Issues to be Addressed

Each of the Official Plans reviewed has its own distinct approach to urban design. The differences are likely to be attributed to a number of factors including their scale of urbanisation, physical/spatial characteristics and growth management objectives.

The benchmarking exercise has been useful in identifying best practices and possible directions for consideration in updating Brampton’s urban form and design policies including:

- The important role of urban design as an essential city building ingredient
- The City to assume a leading role in promoting high urban design standards through the creation of a high quality public realm
- More detailed goals and objectives for urban design policies
- Landscape design as an important part of urban / development design
- Importance of corridors, neighbourhoods and communities as part of the city structure in addition to centers and nodes

- More emphasis on social dimension (e.g. housing opportunities and affordability; respect for existing social fabrics etc.)
- Priority to pedestrians
- Priority to public transit
- Emphasis on mixed-use, compact development form in nodes and centers
- Redevelopment, intensification and infill
- Importance of contextual planning including harmonious integration of new and old, new and existing, and compatibility with adjacent building / development in use, scale and character
- The Public Realm
- Sense of identity and enclosure
- Tall building policies
- Multiple residential policies
- Policy for special areas
- Public Art master plan
- Implementation aspect: emphasis on close private-public sector collaboration; public and stakeholder participation; public funding commitment; design competitions; urban design awards, Review Committee and use of skilled professionals.

6.0 PROPOSED CHANGES FOR CONSIDERATION

6.1 Overview of Proposed Directions for Policy Changes

While the present policies on urban form are still relevant, they are considered not entirely reflective of the new direction and the leadership role that the city is taking in the area of civic design. This is evident by the various recent initiatives implemented including block planning, the City-wide Development Design Guidelines, and the commitment to create a high quality public realm. Some existing policies are also considered too general which need to be strengthened to provide clearer direction to staff and project proponents to facilitate better understanding of the City's expectations for built form and development design.

The need for enhancing the development design policies also stems from the generality of the *Planning Act* and Provincial Policy Statement in this aspect. More policy directions are provided by the recently released new Provincial Policy Statement and Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) including the emphasis on intensification/infill redevelopment, mixed uses, compact development form, and transit-oriented, pedestrian friendly development which should also be implemented through the Official Plan urban design policies. As well, policies should be established to include new and potential implementation tools to further advance the objectives of promoting high quality and innovative urban design.

Possible directions for policy changes have been discussed throughout this Discussion Paper. These proposals are consolidated and summarized in this section for consideration. A summary table highlighting the major recommendations is also attached as Appendix B.

6.2 Urban Design Vision Statement

The City will continue to be a dynamic, attractive and vibrant urban center that is built of the highest urban design standards on par with other great cities of the world. It is a community that celebrates tradition, diversity and stability, by enhancing and integrating its rich cultural and natural heritage with modern, efficient new development.

The City will have a legible, cohesive and compact urban form that focuses on a balanced transportation system and contributes to fulfilling its role as an urban growth center in the Greater Toronto Area.

The City structure will comprise:

- A network of attractive, efficient and integrated residential communities that provide residents with strong sense of identity and a variety of housing choices including distinctive executive enclaves;
- An economically strong, attractive and vibrant Downtown and Central Area;
- Nodes that are focus of integrated economic, civic, cultural, recreational and transportation uses;

- High quality business parks and places of employment;
- Distinctive Gateways and Landmarks that define community character and enunciate the Flower City image;
- Strategically placed, well-planned Corridors with transit-supportive densities;
- A high quality, comprehensive system of Open Spaces integrated with an extensive pathway network that are aesthetically pleasing and functional; and
- Special Character Areas that exemplify unique character and heritage, design excellence and community pride.

6.3 Recommended Urban Design Strategy

To achieve the urban design vision as set out in the preceding section, the proposed strategy will build on and strengthen the existing policy typology as discussed in Section 3 and 4. The City-wide DDG will continue to provide detailed physical design standards and guidelines while supporting policies are to be formulated and enshrined in the Official Plan and secondary plans. Implementation tactics are to be focussed on blocks plans and design briefs. This approach sets the overall direction for the current review and updating of the Official Plan urban design policies as discussed below.

6.4 Policy Title

The title “Urban Form” is proposed to be changed to avoid the misconception of confined concern for “urbanized” built form and development only. It is recommended that this section of the Brampton Official Plan be re-titled to “Development and Civic Design” to more appropriately reflect its scope and intent. The new title would also tie in better with that of the complementary document, i.e., “Development Design Guidelines”.

6.5 Policy Structure

While the existing structure of the Official Plan Urban Form policies is still largely relevant, some improvement is considered desirable to better present the policy intents. These include a separate section for policy goals and objectives to articulate in more details the City’s vision and expectations for urban design. Restructuring of the “Element Specific Design Principles” and “Other Design Considerations” sections is also proposed to better align with the Development Design Guidelines specifically on policies for block planning. Details of the proposed changes are described in Sections 6.9 and 6.10 below.

6.6 Policy Goals and Objectives

The existing policy has only very general descriptions on the goals and objectives of development or urban design. These are provided in two parts. On the overall city structure, the principles are to achieve:

- A dynamic and balanced urban growth area within the GTA, and
- A compact urban form developed through a system of nodes, corridors and districts

At the urban form and design level, the goal is to achieve and sustain a high quality physical development for Brampton. The urban form policies are intended to deal with the relationships between public places and their built edges as well as to serve as an overall guide for the development of a high quality built and natural environment.

These basic goals and objectives need to be updated and expanded to reflect the contemporary vision for development design as reflected in the latest city, regional and Provincial policies. In particular, human/social dimensions need to be added to the overall goal as established in the DDG's "place, people and vision" principle for city design. Similar emphasis are also found in the policies of the Peel Region, Mississauga and Toronto Official Plans including the need to respect the existing communities; and to create and maintain strong sense of identity and place. Good urban design is said to be good business as well as good social policy.



The policy should include a declaration on the City's commitment to take a leadership role in promoting high quality and innovative urban design. The need to treat urban design as an essential city building ingredient rather than just an aesthetic overlay should be reinforced by the Official Plan. Urban design should be integrated into the full range of decision-making activities to assist in achieving such objectives.

The development design policies should also support the City's other initiatives notably the Flower City Strategy and Growth Management Program. The latter policy assigns a priority to public transit; priority for pedestrian; promotion of mixed-uses and compact form of development; and efficient use of existing infrastructure and land. The role of urban design in growth management should be given greater emphasis in the Official Plan urban design policies.

Other pertinent objectives identified in the review of other municipalities' Official Plans include:

- Encourage high quality, innovative and diverse urban form and design;
- Facilitate harmonious integration of new and old/existing development from an aesthetic, social and functional perspective;
- Promote meaningful public and stakeholder participation; and
- Foster closer private-public sector partnership and collaboration.



6.7 Urban Physical Form and the City Concept

This existing policy is intended to show linkage to and the need to relate all new and infill development to the overall city structure which includes the Central Area and a system of corridors, nodes and districts as set out in Section 3 of the Official Plan. This policy needs to reflect any change in the city structure such as the latest role of the Central Area as defined in a recent draft of the Central Area Plan Review Study, and changes in the number of office nodes as a result of the recommendations of the Official Plan Review on Office Policy. A greater emphasis should also be placed on “corridors”, “gateways”, “communities”, “neighbourhoods” and “special character areas” in the overall urban form hierarchy.

6.8 General Urban Form Principles

These general urban form/design principles are still relevant but should be expanded to support the DDG and to add clarity. Proposed enhancements of these policies are described below.

Additional Policy - Sense of Identity and Place

An additional principle, i.e., “sense of identity/sense of place” is proposed to be included. This is an important design principle that should be adopted in all development to enhance the sense of belonging and civic pride; to communicate the identity of the community; to facilitate recognition and identification of communities and neighborhoods. A strong sense of place can be created by developing a visual character and identity; creating comfortable public spaces; encouraging the interaction of residents and visitors with their built and natural environments; and providing a palette of community features which are distinct to the community (Part III 2.1 Develop a Strong Community Image and Character in the DDG refers).

Coherence

This policy should also speak to coherence with the City’s smart growth objectives and harmonious integration of the new and existing development principles.

Diversity

The existing policy speaks to diversity of form and design only but not diversity of uses which is also encouraged within the City of Brampton to promote the potential of individuals to live, work and play within the community, and to provide variety and richness of community life. The

creation of mixed-use areas is considered particularly effective in supporting focal points and gateways (Part V 1.2 Balanced Land Use Pattern in the DDG).

Mixed-use development is also promoted in the new PPS and the Draft Growth Plan for the GGH as a key growth management/sustainable development principle.

Open Space

This policy should be expanded to include the following functions as stated in Part V 2.0 Open Space System of the DDG:

- Contribute to establishing the character of neighbourhoods/places;
- Contribute to enhancing the built environment; and
- Support a balanced vision for recreation, urban design, natural systems and community identity.

The open space system should also reinforce the vision of creating Brampton as a City of parks and gardens which is rooted in the City's cultural heritage as a Flower City.

The word “may” before “contribute to ecosystem function” should be deleted or replaced by “shall” to strengthen this policy.

Preservation

“Significant elements” should be defined. According to the DDG, these should include

- natural features such as woodlots, valleylands, ponds, creeks and streams;
- built structures such as significant architecture;
- heritage features including built and natural heritage resources, and
- important views and vistas.

Their preservation and integration are important for redevelopment as well as new projects which should be included in the policy because they



- facilitate compatibility or fit between old and new elements in the landscape
- create a sense of visual integrity or wholeness throughout the community, and
- provide mature / established settings for new, planned communities (Part III 2.3 Incorporate Important Existing Features and Conditions in the DDG)

Scale

The objective should be broadened to state “human scale” instead of “pedestrian scale” only. Issues of vertical/horizontal scale, and massing also need to be addressed as well as the principle of harmonious integration of existing and new components especially for infill and redevelopment projects.



Enhancement

The existing policy is too general. Inclusion of other objectives should also be considered in addition to aesthetic and physical enhancement such as housing choice and affordability (Section 3.15.4.2 of the 2003 Mississauga Plan), and better integration of land uses. At the least, the list of candidates for enhancement should be expanded to include all of the components of the “existing and surrounding built/natural environment”.

Circulation

Development should not only support but also *enhance* the circulation systems which should be of high standards of urban design.

The policy should also state priority for pedestrian and public transport over private automobiles as established by the various City, regional and Provincial policies including Brampton’s own Strategic Plan “Six Pillars” vision, Peel Region Official Plan, and the latest Provincial Policy Statement and Draft Growth Plan for the GGH.



Safety

The policy should make reference to the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles, as spelt out in the Region of Peel Official Plan and Mississauga Plan 2003.

Human Services

A definition for human services and what they constitute should be included.

Ecological Environment

The existing policy is too passive. It should speak to and more proactively promote the objectives of the protection, conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and ecosystem.



Sustainability

This policy should be linked to the smart growth and sustainable development principles.

Land Use Compatibility

Some of the objectives in Part V 1.1 Integrated Community Structure of the DDG such as “Land use components should complement one another through their distribution in the plan, while ensuring diversity of community functions” should be reflected in this policy to proactively encourage land use compatibility.



6.9 Community/Site Specific Design Principles

The existing “Element Specific Design Principles” and “Other Design Considerations” sections of the urban form policies are proposed to be restructured to better reflect the latest directions in development design including block planning and the Development Design Guidelines. These policies are proposed to be organized under a new section heading of “Community/Site Specific Design Principles” and an expanded “Element Specific Design Principles” section to address non-site specific built and design issues.

To better align with the current block planning process and the Development Design Guidelines, the community/site specific design policies will be grouped around the following key structuring elements:

- Open space system,
- Landscaping,
- Street network,
- Streetscapes,



- Edges and gateways
- Landmarks, and
- Views and Vistas.

Open Space System

The DDG and other newer relevant documents have provided more detailed guidelines for open space design and development. These will be primarily dealt with by the Open Space and Environmental Management sections of the Official Plan which would be cross-referenced. The basic principles should however be reflected here to strengthen and to bring the policy up to date with the City's latest design intentions for these elements. Consolidation of the several existing related policies on open space including Sections 4.10.3.1 (iv), 4.10.3.4 and 4.10.3.5 is considered appropriate.

According to the DDG (Part IV 1.2 and Part V 2.0 Open Space System), the open space system is comprised of parks, open space links, the multi-use trail system, natural features and storm water management facilities. The DDG requires that natural features including valleylands, naturalized channels and woodlots be preserved and enhanced as part of the open space system. Such system approach should be reflected in the policy to ensure the provision of continuous and coordinated open space systems and to meet the functional, recreational and social needs of the community.



Landscaping

Closely related to open space is landscaping which is not part of the current urban form policy of the Official Plan. A policy should be added to give landscaping more prominence, as it is an important part of urban design in Brampton, notably in implementing the vision of re-establishing its Flower City image and heritage.



Street Network

The street network is one of the major defining elements of the physical structure of an area. As such, it should be included in the policy as one of the design elements to be addressed in development proposals. According to the DDG, documentation shall identify the hierarchy of streets and the design strategies that develop their character as described in Part IV 1.3 and Part V 3.0 Street Network.

Streetscape

The development of a comprehensive streetscape system is integral to the development of the community as it reinforces the overall hierarchy of the street network, communicates image and character and directly affects the daily experience of the residents. Streetscape consists of the following major components:

- Street trees
- Lighting
- Street furniture
- Signage
- Built form
- Landscaped features.



The design of the streetscape should create an enriched public domain for residents and visitors and achieve a pedestrian scaled environment by de-emphasizing the importance of the car/garage in the public space of the street (Part IV 1.4 and 4.0 Streetscapes of the DDG).

The existing policies in Sections 4.10.4.13 and 4.10.4.14 Residential Streetscape should be expanded to reflect these planning and design objectives for all types of streetscape, not just residential.



Edges and Gateways

The existing policy should be broadened to include “edges” as the two are interrelated and complementary to each other. According to the DDG, the three main “edges and gateways” components are edges, gateway intersections, and entrance features. These features provide the means to understand a community at its boundaries; reveal the community’s image, and the character of different neighbourhoods and spaces to pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. These and other design principles as stated in Part IV 1.5 Edges and Gateways of the DDG, and the Gateway



Beautification Program should be reflected in the policy to provide further guidelines for development.

Landmarks

The existing policy is very vague on what landmarks are. Criteria such as existing and potential symbolic significance, prominent positions in the City pattern are subject to interpretation. Equally vague is the treatment that would be acceptable for those sites with only potential to reach landmark status on the basis of their locational characteristics. “More flexibility will be available” is wide open for interpretation. Improvement is needed to provide clearer direction for such features/development.



Views and Vistas

The determination of views and vistas at the early planning stages can be used to reinforce the land use pattern, in particular the locations of parks, community facilities and institutions and open space links. The strategic location of these view corridors contribute to the creation of a balanced land use pattern as they provide points of orientation and act as transitions between land uses. They also play an important role in the development of neighbourhoods and community identity (Part V 1.3 Views and Vistas in the DDG).

Roads and streets are also important contributors of views and vistas, especially scenic routes and drives. These form a critical part of the visual journey through a community and should thus be added to this policy. As described in Part III 2.2 Enhance the Visual Experience of the DDG, views and vistas may be achieved through the strategic alignment of road right-of-ways, the layout of circulation and open space systems, in addition to the siting of major features, public uses and built form.



6.10 Element Specific Design Principles

Most of the existing policies need to be enhanced to better reflect the DDG and to provide more guidelines for the respective considerations. As well, additional policies are identified for inclusion to support the DDG, and to implement the City’s latest directions in urban design and growth management.

Additional Design Considerations

Public Realm

The public realm comprises public buildings, open spaces, streets and parks. These are considered a key shared asset that bond people and places together. It is an important concept of city design that should receive more emphasis in the Official Plan policy. Brampton is already taking a proactive role in creating a high quality public realm to facilitate the realization of the vision of achieving excellence in civic design for the entire city (as promoted under Pillar Three of the Brampton Strategic Plan).



Institutional Development

Similar to the public realm, quasi-public and institutional uses such as schools, places of worship etc. are often important civic and visual features in the community and have the potential to act as landmarks. Policies should thus be established to provide more specific guidelines for their design and development. Issues such as location, visibility, access, disposition and built form should be addressed as set out in the DDG.



Infill and Intensification

According to the current provincial policies including the PPS and the Places to Grow document, infill and intensification are an important component of any growth management strategy. In anticipation of and to guide future development/redevelopment, physical design standards for these projects should be included as part of the urban design policy. Emphasis on harmonious integration of new development with those existing in scale, form and character should be the overarching principle for design, in addition to meeting the infrastructure and technical requirements. The policy also needs to speak to where such development is permitted. It should be a policy of the City's Official Plan to allow such activities in most areas of the City without the need for identifying them in a Secondary Plan process before hand. The caveat to this policy would be that any such proposal would need to meet the design and technical criteria stipulated in the Official Plan.



Redevelopment, if properly planned, contributes significantly towards revitalization and rejuvenation of the community. However, the terms “infill” and “intensification” often bear a negative connotation instead of one of opportunity. “Community Revitalization” is perhaps a more appropriate term to be adopted to reflect the intent. There is also a need to distinguish the various forms of redevelopment including infill, intensification, replacement and redevelopment and to develop policies accordingly.

Mixed-Use Development

A new policy needs to be added to implement mixed-use development which is being promoted across the board as an important growth management tool including the new Provincial Policy Statement; Draft Growth Plan for the GGH; the Region of Peel Official Plan and Brampton's own Strategic Plan.

Mixed use development generally refers to integrated employment, retail and residential development in a compact form, usually at a higher density with a pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive environment that allows efficient use of resources. As well, they are used to create focal points for the community.



There are various types and forms of mixed-use development ranging from large scale comprehensive mixed use centres to home occupations/ live-work arrangement. Presently, the City's Official Plan only provides for mixed-use in the Central Area. This policy should be reviewed to allow mixed-use development in other locations such as designated nodes and corridors. Built form is considered crucial to the success of such development, especially those outside the Downtown Core. This is because of the suburban character of these areas, especially along the main corridors, which are not conducive to such integrated development.



Comprehensive re-planning of the area is needed to provide a more favourable environment for mixed-use development to occur and to ensure compatibility and integration of such uses with the surrounding context. The policy should address these issues.

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development is another important component of growth management that will be given significant emphasis in the urban design policy. Transit-supportive urban design requires holistic approach to planning at the earliest stage and must be supported by land use, physical design, and process and incentives. Some of the urban design principles to be considered include giving preference to grid network over discontinuous road network; developing street oriented uses along arterial roads; encouraging intensification at existing activity nodes, encouraging a mix of higher density uses along transit routes; avoiding reverse lotting in subdivisions; improving access between arterials and the interior of blocks to minimise walking distances to transit stops, and creating pedestrian and transit user friendly environment and amenities including attractive streetscapes.

Candidates for establishing transit nodes or transit-oriented development include Queen Street, Main Street, Downtown, Bramalea Center and Mount Pleasant Village.



Tall Buildings

High-density development and tall buildings are likely to become more common in Brampton with increasing urbanization. These matters are not part of the Official Plan at present. The closest reference is in Section 4.1.1.6 of the Residential policies. The section states that high density residential sites must comply with the secondary plan policies, the density increase must be able to be accommodated by the road network, there must be no detrimental impacts on adjacent properties, and there must be the ability to physically integrate the proposed development with the neighbourhood in terms of density, design, function and other physical considerations.



Toronto has fairly comprehensive Official Plan policies on tall buildings while Mississauga and Oakville have policies that deal with high and medium density development. The DDG has objectives for residential apartments that address parking, winter access, built form at the base of the building (Part VI 1.6 Multiple Unit Dwellings and Apartments). The development design policies of the Official Plan should reinforce the DDG in these aspects, as well as provide more guidelines relating to the built form of tall buildings, including issues of potential impacts such as overlooking, obstructions of grade level vistas and the over shadowing of adjacent properties.

Multiple-Residential Development

On-site amenities and facilities of multiple residential developments are mentioned in Section 4.1.1.8 of the Residential policies of the Official Plan. The DDG has multiple residential dwelling objectives that deal with parking, built form, base of the building and building roofs. These guidelines should be reinforced in the Official Plan. The City of Toronto Official Plan has a section on multi-residential development which states that they must contain indoor and outdoor amenity spaces such as balconies, terraces, courtyards, rooftop gardens and other forms of amenity space.



Policy for Special Areas

Provision can be made in the policy for special areas which warrant special design consideration. Examples of special character areas include Downtown, Queens Street Corridor, Bramalea Center, and cultural and natural heritage areas such as Churchville, and Credit Valley. The Mississauga Plan has such a policy while Toronto's Official Plan has Urban Design Guidelines for each district. The inclusion of such provision in the urban design policy will help bridge the gap between the Official Plan (and the secondary plan) and the zoning by-law where circumstances warrant.



Car-Oriented Development

While the core urban design objective is to encourage pedestrian-friendly, transit supportive development, there remains the need to maintain a certain level of car-oriented development to cater to the demand for uses such as drive-throughs, gas stations, automobile repair and sales facilities. The issues that the policy needs to address are compatibility (in use, scale and character); potential traffic and visual impacts; environmental interface and safety. The main objective is to ensure proper location of these facilities within the city fabric and their integration with the surrounding context. As a general policy, these developments are not encouraged at main gateways and nodes. It may also be appropriate to prohibit drive-throughs in the Downtown Core, Office Centres, and within 100 meters from a residential area.



Engineering Structures and Elements

According to the DDG (Part V 4.4), engineered structures include:

- Bridges
- Bridge abutments

- Headwalls (associated with stormwater management facilities)
- Retaining walls
- Drainage channels (refer to naturalized channels)
- Guardrails

They are generally located in the public ROW or public spaces and are integral and necessary components of the streetscape. As such, they form part of the visual experience of the public domain and should be designed to meet the following objectives:



- To enhance the visual quality of the public domain;
- To promote the character of the community; and
- To communicate civic identity

The Official Plan should implement these guidelines as a new policy or as part of the proposed policy on public realm.

Enhancement of Existing Element Specific Design Principles

Public Art

This policy should go farther to “encourage provision of” public art in all significant development, both public and private, and not merely “identify” sites for such purposes. To further promote public arts throughout the City, consideration can be given to the development and adoption of a Public Art Master Plan, and increasing public funding commitment as well as incentives for developers such as development bonussing.



Signage

The DDG has provided more detailed guidelines for signage design especially with regard to the criteria for balancing the requirements for form and identity that “the design...commensurate with the architecture of the buildings in its scale, materials, consistency and design. A high level of clarity, visibility and visual interest should be attained with minimal visual clutter and impact on adjacent uses”. Avoiding rooftop signs is another important policy, which needs to be implemented through the Official Plan (Part VI 2.2.2 Signage and Part V 4.0 Streetscapes of the DDG).



Block Planning should be added to Section 4.10.4.2 of the Official Plan as one of the processes for implementing the policy for signage.

Parking

The DDG has provided very detailed guidelines for parking design in residential, commercial and employment areas including service and loading areas which should be supported by the Official Plan (Part V 3.1, Part VI 2.1.3, 2.1.5, and 3.1.4). The principle of garage placement and driveway design to minimise their impact on the streetscape should also be established as part of the Official Plan development design policies (Part VI 1.3 Garage Placement and Driveway Design refers).



Roofscape

The existing policy covers only rooftop equipments. This should be expanded to implement other principles for roofscape design in the DDG to encourage a variety of roof forms to add to visual interest and to enhance the public streetscape (Part VI 1.4.6 Roof Form (Residential Areas) and 2.1.1 Building Design and Facility Development). Avoiding rooftop signs is another important policy that should be included (Part V 4.0 Streetscapes of the DDG).



Utilities

This policy should include DDG's recommendation for screening or mitigating the visual impact of above ground utility installations as stated in Part V 4.0 Streetscapes that "Above ground utilities should be visually screened by the use of "unique" utility box designs, street furniture, light standards and other streetscape elements which may be utilized to mitigate the visual impact of the utilities".

6.11 Implementation

This section needs substantial updating to implement the latest development design process and requirements notably the DDG and the "block plan". These initiatives need to be sanctioned to form part of the urban design policy framework as discussed in Section 6.3 above. In essence, the Official Plan and secondary plans will establish the strategic policies while the DDG and associated design guidelines (such as Gas Stations, Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, Commercial and Business Corridors etc.) will articulate these policy objectives in detailed design standards to guide tertiary and site planning through the use of block plans and design briefs.

As well, consideration should also be given to include new policies and potential new implementation tools to further promote high quality and innovative urban design:

- Fostering public and stakeholder participation in the urban design process;
- Encouraging closer private and public sector collaboration in promoting excellence in development and city design;
- Encouraging senior levels of government and public utilities to have regard for design objectives;
- Periodic reviews and studies for aesthetic improvement of existing areas;



- Review of existing Zoning Bylaw to ensure compatibility with Official Plan policies in respect of urban form and design;
- The need for public funding commitment;
- The use of design competitions and urban design awards to promote excellence in and public appreciation for urban design. The City of Toronto has both initiatives while Mississauga has the longest running urban design awards in Ontario. The Oakville Visual Aesthetics policy promotes the use of Review Committee and similar set up to obtain advice on design matters; and
- Recognition to the need of using skilled/ qualified professionals in the design and construction process.

Various terminologies including “Design studies for specific street blocks or areas”, and “Urban Form Management Strategy” need to be updated and replaced by “Block Plan” and “Development Design Guidelines” respectively. Cross-referencing to the relevant policies in the Implementation section of the Official Plan (Section 5.4. and 5.5) should also be made in the policy to add clarity.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This discussion paper has documented the results of a study process that examined the urban form section of the City of Brampton Official Plan, in the context of the relevant provincial, regional and municipal policy documents, other municipalities' Official Plans, related City of Brampton initiatives and policy directions that should be considered during the Official Plan review.

Since the last Official Plan review, the City of Brampton has substantially changed the way it looks at urban form and civic design. Based on the new direction that the City is taking in this area, the City has implemented a number of policies and programs, most notably block planning, the City-wide Development Design Guidelines and the Flower City Strategy.

This review has revealed that while many of the urban form policies of the City's Official Plan are still relevant, expectations of the standards for physical development have changed and this section of the Official Plan needs to be updated to reflect these newer, more relevant policies and initiatives. As well, the present urban form policies are very general in nature and more detail is needed to provide clearer direction to the community on the City's expectation in the area of civic and development design.

This discussion paper has proposed possible directions for urban form policy review and provides a forum for community input to these proposals before proceeding with the drafting of an Official Plan Amendment.