



Brampton

REPORT

Planning, Design & Development Committee

Standing Committee of the Council
of the Corporation of the City of Brampton

Date: May 20, 2005

File: P25OV UF

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT**

Brampton Official Plan Review Urban Form/Development Design
Discussion Paper

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OVERVIEW:

- **This report presents the Brampton Official Plan Review Urban Form/Development Design Discussion Paper for the review of Planning, Design and Development Committee.**
- **This Discussion Paper is intended to invite input and comments from the public and stakeholders on civic and community design issues before proceeding to revise the Official Plan.**
- **The current urban form policies of the Official Plan are found to be still relevant but enhancement of a number of aspects is considered necessary to reflect the new directions and leadership role that the City is taking in the area of civic and community design.**
- **Proposed directions for policy changes include updating and strengthening of existing policies to implement the recent City, regional and Provincial policies and initiatives respecting physical design, corporate initiatives and the recently released new Provincial Policy Statement and Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).**
- **As well, policies should be established to introduce new and potential implementation tools to further advance the objectives of promoting high quality and innovative urban design.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** the Staff Report dated May 20, 2005 entitled “Information Report, Brampton Official Plan Review Urban Form/Development Design Discussion Paper” and attachments (File P25OV UF) be received;

2. **THAT** staff be authorized to release the “Brampton Official Plan Review Urban Form/Development Design Discussion Paper” for public consultation and that the City consult with the public and relevant stakeholder groups through a workshop session to receive comments on the Discussion Paper before proceeding to revise the Official Plan;
3. **THAT** staff be directed to report back to Planning, Design and Development Committee with results of the consultation, and final recommendations on changes to the urban form section of the Brampton Official Plan; and
4. **THAT** the City Clerk be directed to forward a copy of this report and Council resolution to the Region of Peel, York and Halton, the City of Toronto, and to the area municipalities of Mississauga, Caledon, and Vaughan for their information.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this staff report is to advise the Planning, Design and Development Committee of the results of the Urban Form policy review (which forms part of the City’s ongoing Official Plan Review). The attached Discussion Paper prepared by City Staff (Appendix A) proposes policy options that best implement the City’s intention of promoting high civic design standards and high quality physical development throughout the City. The Discussion Paper is recommended for release for public consultation before staff proceeds to revise the Official Plan.

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 public on the City’s expectation in the area of civic and community design

CURRENT SITUATION:

Urban Form Policy Review

The Urban Form Policy Review comprises four main components:

- A review of the policies respecting urban form/development design in the Provincial, regional and local context;

- A review of the recent initiatives of the City of Brampton respecting civic design including the City-wide Development Design Guidelines, the Block Plan Process, Flower City Strategy and Central Area Plan Review etc;
- A review of other municipalities' Official Plans including Mississauga, Toronto, Burlington, Oakville and Markham to identify "best practices" in urban design policies; and
- Recommendations on possible directions for enhancing the Official Plan urban form policies, based on the foregoing analysis.

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 relevant enabling legislation and policies including the *Planning Act*, Provincial Policy Statement, the Region of Peel Official Plan and Strategic Plan, and the City's own Strategic Plan.

The review has revealed that Provincial and regional legislation and policies are generally very broad in the area of physical design. New directions are however provided in the new Provincial Policy Statement, Draft Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), and the Region of Peel Official Plan to further promote intensification, brownfield revitalization, compact development form, mixed-use and transit-oriented development. These policy directions have implications for urban design and need to be duly accounted for in the Official Plan.

Existing and Potential Policy Initiatives and Programs

The City has taken on a new direction and leadership role in the area of civic design. This commitment to high quality physical design is reflected in the various recent initiatives undertaken which should be supported by and implemented through the Official Plan. These initiatives include the recommendations of the City-wide Development Design Guidelines, the Block Plan process, Flower City Strategy, the role and design guidelines for the Central Area as well as the reinforcement of the importance of gateway in the overall city design as promoted in Brampton's Gateway Beautification Program.

Review of other Official Plans

The main objective of reviewing the Official Plans of other municipalities is to identify and benchmark "best practices" in urban form/development design policies. The Official Plans of Markham, Mississauga, Toronto, Oakville, and Burlington were considered. The review has complemented the general policy analysis in confirming policy gaps that need to be addressed and possible directions to be considered in amending the urban form policies of the Brampton Official Plan.

PROPOSED POLICY CHANGES FOR CONSIDERATION

While the present Official Plan urban form policies are still relevant, they are considered not entirely reflective of the new direction that Brampton is taking in the area of civic design including block planning, the City-wide Development Design Guidelines (DDG), and the commitment to create a high quality public realm. For example, a declaration should be made in the policy to demonstrate the leadership role and commitment that the City is taking in promoting high civic design standards and high quality physical development. As well, the intention of strengthening the role of urban design in planning and as an essential city building ingredient needs to be clearly stated in the Official Plan. It should be clearly stated that the Official Plan should apply to both private and public sector developments.

Updating and strengthening of some existing policies are also needed to reflect the latest City, Regional and Provincial policies and initiatives, and to provide clear direction to the public on the City's expectations regarding built form and development design. Stronger Official Plan policies are also required to improve defensibility of the City's urban design intentions and requirements at the OMB. These include sanctioning block planning and the DDG to form part of the urban design policy framework. As well, new policies should be established to support preferred development patterns (eg. infill/intensification, transit-oriented development, compact development form and mixed-uses, etc.) as well as new and potential implementation tools to further advance the objectives of promoting high quality and innovative urban design.

Updating of some terminologies and improving presentation of the "community/site design" and "element specific" policies are proposed to better align with the block planning process and the DDG, including re-naming the section title from "Urban Form" to "Development and Civic Design". The re-titling is also intended to correct the misconception of a confined scope of concern for urbanized development form.

Proposed changes to the Official Plan urban form policies are highlighted in the summary tables of Appendix B.

Proposed Consultation Process

After receiving direction from City Council, the Discussion Paper will be released for public consultation to widely consult with the community and relevant stakeholder groups including professional organizations (architects, urban designers, landscape architects and planners etc.), and the development industry. Various opportunities will be provided to promote public participation including individual meetings/discussions with City staff as appropriate, and a workshop session to receive comments and input from citizens and interest groups on the Discussion Paper. Council will be informed of the date, location and participation list well in advance of the workshop.

Staff will report back to the Planning, Design and Development Committee with results of the consultation and final recommendations on changes to be made to the urban form section of the Official Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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AGREED,

John B. Corbett, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Planning,
Design and Development

Karl Walsh
Director, Community Design, Parks
Planning and Development

Attachments:

- Appendix A: Brampton Official Plan Review Urban Form/Development Design Discussion Paper
- Appendix B: Summary Table of Proposed Changes to Urban Form Section of the Brampton Official Plan

Appendix A
Brampton Official Plan Review
Urban Form/Development Design Discussion Paper

Appendix B

Summary Table of Proposed Changes to the Urban Form Section of the Brampton Official Plan

Recommended Policy Directions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updating and overall strengthening of the policies to provide more details and clearer direction on the City’s expectation for civic and development design ▪ To demonstrate the City’s commitment in taking a leadership role in promoting high urban design standards ▪ To sanction block planning and the DDG to form part of the urban design policy framework ▪ To reflect the latest vision and principles for city structure with more emphasis on “corridors”, “gateways”, “communities”, and “Special Character Areas” ▪ To introduce new policies to promote preferred development design (eg. mixed uses, transit-oriented development, infill/intensification etc) and new implementation tools to facilitate high quality and innovative urban design (eg. design brief, design competition, design awards etc.) ▪ To update the relevant terminologies including the policy title from “Urban Form” to “Development and Civic Design” to better reflect its intentions and comprehensive scope 	
Proposed Changes to Specific Policies	
Existing Policy	Proposed Change
Policy Title “Urban Form”	Policy to be re-titled to “Development and Civic Design” to avoid the misconception of confined concern for “urbanized” built form and development only
Policy Goals and Objectives	A separate section to provide more detailed policy goals and objectives including a declaration of the City’s commitment to take a leadership role in promoting high quality urban design, the contemporary vision for civic design including emphasis on social responsibilities, and the role of urban design as an essential city building ingredient
Urban Physical Form and the City Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To reflect any changes in the city structure that may arise from this and other relevant policy reviews and, ▪ To expand the urban form hierarchy to include “gateways “, “communities”, “neighbourhoods” and “special character areas” etc.
General Urban Form Principles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coherence ▪ Diversity ▪ Open space ▪ Preservation ▪ Scale ▪ Enhancement ▪ Circulation ▪ Safety ▪ Human services ▪ Ecological environment ▪ Sustainability ▪ Land use compatibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To add a new policy on “Sense of Identity and Place” ▪ To reflect relevant recent Provincial, regional and City policies and initiatives and best practices identified from benchmarking exercise to strengthen existing policies

Summary Table of Proposed Changes to the Urban Form Section of the Brampton Official Plan (cont'd)

Existing Policy	Proposed Change
<p>Element Specific Design Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area of Special Identity ▪ Gateways ▪ Landmarks ▪ Open space and natural features ▪ Views and Vistas ▪ Public Art 	<p>To be re-titled to “Community/Site Specific Design Principles” and to structure policies around the following structural elements to better align with the block plan and DDG:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open space system, ➤ Landscaping, ➤ Street Network, ➤ Streetscapes, ➤ Edges and Gateways, ➤ Views and Vistas
<p>Other Design Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage ▪ Parking ▪ Roofscapes ▪ Utilities ▪ Buffers ▪ Energy Conservation ▪ Residential Streetscapes 	<p>To be re-titled to “Element Specific Design Principles”, and to strengthen existing policies to address additional general built form and design issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Public Realm ➤ Institutional development ➤ Infill and Intensification ➤ Mixed-use development ➤ Transit-oriented development ➤ Tall buildings ➤ Multiple-residential development ➤ Policy for Special Areas ➤ Car-oriented development ➤ Engineering structures and elements
<p>Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To incorporate the DDG and block planning process and requirements ▪ To update the relevant terminologies including replacing “design studies” and “Urban Form Management Strategy” with “block plans”, and “Development Design Guidelines” as appropriate. ▪ To establish new policies including potential implementation tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Compliance with existing and design guidelines to be prepared including Gas Stations, Downtown Urban Design Guidelines, Commercial and Business Corridors etc. ➤ Fostering public and stakeholder participation in the urban design process ➤ Encouraging closer private and public sector collaboration ➤ 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 the existing Zoning Bylaw to ensure compatibility with the Official Plan Urban Design policies ➤ 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 ➤ Recognition to the need of using qualified professionals in the design and construction process