

Agenda Item #	Page #

Planner: Sean Galloway

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS - PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN M. FLEMING DIRECTOR, LAND USE PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES MEETING ON MARCH 26, 2012

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director, Land Use Planning and City Planner:

- (a) The following information report on the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines **BE RECEIVED** for information; and
- (b) That Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to refer the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines to the following review processes:
 - i) Official Plan Review Process;
 - ii) Transportation Master Plan;
 - iii) Culture Plan;
 - iv) Urban Forestry Plan.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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The following previous reports are pertinent to this matter:

- a) May 10, 2004 Report to Planning Committee (Overview of Smart Growth and Placemaking)
- b) March 21, 2005 – Sunningdale North Area Plan (Adoption of pedestrian oriented area plan)
- c) July 18, 2005 Report on Placemaking Demonstration Project
- d) September 24, 2007 – Old Victoria Area Plan and Design Guidelines
- e) November 3, 2008 – Council Adopts Placemaking Guidelines
- f) July 20, 2009 – Placemaking Design Guidelines Implementation Project Planning Committee Report – This report identified the Terms of Reference for the Placemaking Guidelines Implementation Project, preferred consultant team and proposed schedule for completion.
- g) November 8, 2010 – Placemaking Implementation Guidelines Information Report
This report requested Civic Administration to circulate the Placemaking Implementation Guidelines. In addition, the report identified that further refinement of the Guidelines would be necessary to ensure ease of use for applicants.

ANALYSIS

In December of 2011, a draft of the Urban Design Guidelines was received by the Planning and Environment Committee. Staff were directed to circulate the document for feedback to the following groups and stakeholders within the Community:

- London Development Institute
- London Home Builders Association
- Urban League

Agenda Item #	Page #

Planner: Sean Galloway

- London area landscape architects
- London Society of Architects
- London Transit Commission
- LACH
- EEPAC
- Urban Design Peer Review Panel
- City of London Engineering Department (Transportation, Water, Wastewater, SMW, Operations)
- Development Services
- Utilities Coordinating Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- London and area planning consultants

Over the course of the past two months, urban design staff have circulated the document, received feedback and subsequently met with some of the above noted groups to gain a better understanding of the barriers to implementation. These include:

- City Engineering Department
- London Transit Commission
- London Development Institute
- Urban Design Peer Review Panel
- London area planning consultants
- Utilities Coordinating Committee Representative

A summary of responses can be found in Appendix A. Five general themes have emerged from the feedback process, which include:

1. Official Plan Congruence

The current DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines document contains concepts that are at a city-wide level, but presently do not have an associated policy context in the Official Plan. As such, staff is recommending that the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines be deferred while these urban design policy issues are addressed through the Official Plan Review Process;

2. Cost

Urban design initiatives should strive to create a balance between investment and value with respect to constructing the city. In building well designed neighbourhoods and cities, urban design can create the desired economic, social and environmental value that provides a strong foundation for any place. Through the circulation of the DRAFT urban design guidelines discussion relating to both the cost and value of implementing components of urban design were identified. In addition, respondents acknowledged that cost comes in two forms, capital cost and maintenance cost. Staff will review the document in relation to both of these elements. It is noted, the initial capital cost is one component, but the longer term maintenance of the investment, from the City's perspective, also needs to be considered. With respect to the overall costs and this document, it should be noted that the guidelines within the draft document were generally prepared using existing applications under review by the City's Planning Department as the basis;

3. Ontario Municipal Board

Given that the draft document contains concepts that currently do not have an associated policy context in the Official Plan (noted in item #1), concerns were raised about the defensibility of the Guidelines at the Ontario Municipal Board;

Agenda Item #	Page #

Planner: Sean Galloway

4. Urban Structure Plan

The primary feedback for this theme surrounds two relationships, first, what is the relationship between the Nodes and Corridors Map to the London Transit Commission’s Bus Rapid Transit Plan and the Transportation Master Plan. Second, what is the relationship between the proposed cross-sections and the current engineering standards for public rights-of-way. At present, both the cross-sections and the Nodes and Corridors Plan are being integrated into both Plans. Further work is needed to refine the concepts within the identified Plans; this is noted as a next step (see below);

5. Urban Forest

Issues within this theme were identified specifically around the provision of adequate space for tree growth. Urban design staff will continue to work with the Urban Forester and the City’s Operations Division to refine the details related to this theme.

Through the feedback collected, it is clear that respondents unanimously recommended that the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines need to integrate with other current processes/studies that are being undertaken by the City of London; particularly, the Official Plan (OP) Review that will begin in April. Other studies include:

- a) The Transportation Master Plan
- b) The Culture Plan
- c) The Urban Forestry Plan

In the interim we will rely on current OP policies and City design guidelines. Presently, there is a significant amount of policy and regulatory tools that provide design guidance including:

Official Plan Policy

- a) Chapter 4 – Commercial (Urban Design Objectives)
- b) Chapter 11 – Urban Design
- c) Chapter 19 – Implementation (Site Specific UD Guidelines)

City Wide Urban Design Guidance

- a) Placemaking Guidelines
- b) Drive Through Urban Design Guidelines
- c) Zoning By-law (Drive-Throughs and bonusing)
- d) Applicable portions of the site plan by-law

Area/Site Specific Urban Design Guidelines

- a) Hyde Park Community Plan Urban Design Guidelines
- b) Talbot Community Design Guidelines
- c) Airport Road South Business Park Urban Design Guidelines (Innovation Park)
- d) Advanced Manufacturing Park Urban Design Guidelines(UWO)
- e) Dingman Creek Industrial Urban Design Guidelines
- f) Upper Richmond Village Urban Design Guidelines
- g) Downtown Urban Design Guidelines
- h) Old Victoria Area Plan Urban Design Guidelines

General Design Guidance Information

- a) Illustrated Urban Design Principles
- b) Illustrated Urban Design Examples

Though this list is comprehensive there is still a need to prepare a set of urban design guidelines that sets out the overall organising structure and design guidance for the City at large. The above noted documents have assisted staff with preparing the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines that were presented to the December 12, 2011 Planning and Environment Committee. However, elements of the city-wide design guidance in the current draft document needs to form part of the upcoming OP Review.

Agenda Item #	Page #

Planner: Sean Galloway

Next Steps

By referring the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines to the OP Reivew Process, a revised form of the document will return to the Planning and Environment Committee in June or September of 2013. In the interim, urban design and planning staff will look to do the following:

- Work with the Development Services to better implement the various urban design guideline documents, particularly the Placemaking Guidelines, both from a subdivision and site plan perspective;
- Refer the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines into the Official Plan Review process;
- Work with the various Engineering Units (ie. Transportation, Water, Sewer, Stormwater, Operations) to deliver projects that include urban design as part of the infrastructure life cycle renewal process;
- Work with various divisions and units on the implementation of public projects. These include, but are not limited to: public spaces (ie. parks and public squares) and community facilities (community centres, fire stations and park outbuildings);
- Continue to incorporate elements of the DRAFT Urban Design Guidelines into the various master planning process and Environmental Assessments currently underway within the City, these include, but are not limited to: the Transportation Master Plan; Culture Plan and the Urban Forestry Plan.

PREPARED BY:	SUBMITTED BY:
SEAN GALLOWAY, MCIP RPP URBAN DESIGNER	JAMES YANCHULA, MCIP RPP MANAGER COMMUNITY PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN
RECOMMENDED BY:	
J M FLEMING, MCIP RPP DIRECTOR OF LAND USE PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER	

March 1, 2012
SG

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Planner: Sean Galloway

Appendix A – Feedback Summary

Agenda Item #	Page #

Urban Design Guidelines - Comments and Feedback						
Official Plan Congruence	Summary	Official Plan documents are created through the Planning Act, legislation that establishes them as the primary policy tool for municipalities to "manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and natural environment of the municipality". Guideline documents are intended to flow from the policy direction established by the Official Plan.	(Section 2) The terminology adopted for major streets does not conform to the Official Plan designations and does not conform to accepted practice in the transportation planning field. The accepted terminology has been developed over a number of years and is widely understood by land use and transportation planning practitioners.	(Section 2) What is the status of the Urban Structure Plan? To state that this plan "sets the context for development" is, at best, misleading. My understanding is that the Official Plan and Zoning By-laws provide this context.	(Section 2, 4th paragraph, pg 8) There is the statement "it is understood that City of London documents and standards will need to be realigned to be consistent with the USP." I submit that this wording should be the other way around. The City's Transportation Plan, as embodied in the Official Plan, is the over-riding authority. Street standards and access management guidelines, prepared by those with expertise in the appropriate disciplines, should take precedence over so-called "visionary" concepts.	We are seriously concerned that the purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines document purports to apply to: "all new developments, investments, and initiatives in London, including without limitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All City projects; approvals; and • All other City standards and processes." (Page 4). Applying it in such a broad manner is concerning to us because the document's 'urban structure plan', street network and other sections contain significant elements which conflict with the City's existing Official Plan.
	There is concern that the Urban Design Guidelines were created with the intention to supersede the Official Plan. In its present form, the guideline document appears to be the overarching policy document for the City. Guideline documents are intended to flow from the policy direction established by the Official Plan.	Official Plan documents are created through the Planning Act, legislation that establishes them as the primary policy tool for municipalities to "manage and direct physical change and the effects on the social, economic and natural environment of the municipality". Guideline documents are intended to flow from the policy direction established by the Official Plan. In its language, the Urban Design Guidelines document appears to supplant the role of the Official Plan as the overarching planning policy document of the City. We suggest that the document be revised in one of two ways to avoid unnecessary confusion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Guidelines document be revised to clarify that it is an "Area Design Guideline" as described by Section 11.1.3 of the Official Plan, with all material contradicting the Official Plan removed; or 2. The Guidelines document be revised as 				Pg10 - This section includes provisions which are contrary to the current O.P. The O.P. need to be amended first. The Urban Structure Plan should be adopted as a schedule to the O.P. (c) does transportation support this? (e) grid network is not always desirable (f) does this apply to both local & secondary collections connecting to arterials, ie 36m arterial to 36m secondary collection?

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Appendix A – Feedback Summary

Agenda Item #	Page #
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		<p>a discussion paper on urban design issues, intended to support the current Official Plan Review process. - LAPC</p>			
Cost		<p>In general, we can probably find new standard locations for watermain, but these will be under hard surfaces and will carry higher costs for repairs and replacement. - Engineering</p>	<p>Section 1, Introduction states "These urban design guidelines will assist proponents and designers in creating vibrant and dynamic neighbourhood places within our community". This section goes on to say the City's objective of achieving quality urban design is to enhance the appearance and experience of the public realm as the basis of the guideline. Many of the guidelines in the document are related to the private sector enhancing the public realm with little concern for the cost to the developer.</p>	<p>Pg15 Facades - This section seems to regulate S.D.D. by providing Architectural Controls in subdivisions; these are usually certified by a Consultant. i) do we need a section for T.H.'s, Apt's, Industrial, Commercial, Institutional? ii) group similar topics together ie corner lots e,f,n, etc iii) How do we regulate "high quality materials" -do we have a list? -who pays for the extra cost? (g) will the new zones help us to "reflect current streetscape" -how will new zones work when we want to change the streetscape? (o) questions of how much detail covered in SPA; interior excluded.</p>	
OMB		<p>Guidelines are not defensible with the Board - Difficult to defend guidelines. Urban Design section of OP sets a good tone but guidelines don't work with the OP</p>	<p>Cannot have a document that is not appealable</p>		