

6. SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND DESIGN DIRECTIONS

6.1 PURPOSE

The policies of this section provide direction with respect to social, cultural, heritage, community improvement and design issues.

6.2 HOUSING

6.2.1 Purpose

The Town shall encourage the provision of a full range of housing types and densities to meet the projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents recognizing that these requirements shall primarily be satisfied through development in the Communities of Stouffville and Ballantrae-Musselman Lake, and potentially in Vandorf-Preston Lake, in conformity with the policies of the relevant Secondary Plans.

6.2.2 Housing Policies

The Town will provide for an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet the 2031 forecast population for the Town by;

- i) encouraging housing forms and densities designed to be affordable to moderate and lower income households;
- ii) encouraging all forms of residential intensification in the Community of Stouffville, in conformity with the policies of the Secondary Plan, where there is sufficient existing or planned infrastructure to create a potential supply of new housing units; and,

- iii) establishing cost-effective development standards for new residential development and redevelopment to reduce the cost of housing.

6.2.3 Housing Targets

The Town, to meet the allocation of population by the Region of York Official Plan to the Town, will plan to accommodate a housing unit target of an additional 9,200 units between 2012 and 2031. Further, the Town will Plan to achieve a housing mix target in the Community of Stouffville where the majority of residential is planned to comprise of 50% low density residential units; 27% medium density residential and 23% high density residential units.

The achievement of the housing mix target shall not be required on a yearly basis, but the Town shall review progress in meeting the targets every five years, and will monitor on an annual basis.

6.3 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

6.3.1 Municipal Improvement Goals and Objectives

i) Goals

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall maintain, rehabilitate and redevelop the existing physical environment by both public and private means to accommodate the social and economic priorities within the community.

ii) Objectives

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall:

- a) Implement improvements to the physical and social facilities and services in a planned and efficient use of municipal capital expenditures;
- b) Maximize the use of funding from various federal and provincial agencies;
- c) Encourage projects and programs which improve the Town's physical and social environment, and economic base;
- d) Promote private investment in the upgrading of existing buildings and property in a manner compatible with the overall community interest.

6.3.2 Criteria for the Selection of Areas in Need of Community Improvement

i) Residential

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall use the following criteria for the selection of residential neighbourhoods as community improvement areas:

- a) Condition of structures including accessory uses;
- b) Condition of landscaping and neighbourhood maintenance;
- c) Condition and adequacy of physical hard services including water system, sanitary sewer system, storm water drainage, roads, sidewalks and street lighting;

- d) Condition and adequacy of municipal and private recreational facilities and services including active and passive parks, arenas, pools, lawn bowling greens and tennis courts;
- e) Condition and adequacy of municipal and private social and cultural facilities and services such as day-care centres, senior citizen homes, community halls, libraries and galleries; and,
- f) Encroachment of conflicting land uses which deter and have a negative social impact on the existing neighbourhood.

ii) Commercial

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall use the following criteria for the selection of commercial areas as community improvement areas:

- a) All of the criteria listed in Section 6.3.2 i);
- b) Lack of easily accessible and good condition off-street parking and loading areas;
- c) Motor vehicle traffic delays in shopping areas;
- d) Inadequate pedestrian walkways to shopping areas from parking locations and along store fronts;
- e) Deficient amenities such as benches, bicycle racks, waste disposal containers and attractive floral and tree landscaping conducive to a pleasant shopping environment;
- f) Commercial vacancy rates greater than ten percent over a three month period; and,
- g) Deteriorated building facades and signage.

iii) Industrial

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall use the following criteria for the selection of industrial areas as community improvement areas:

- a) All of the criteria listed in Section 6.3.2 i);
 - b) Lack of easily accessible and good condition off-street parking and loading areas;
 - c) Motor vehicle traffic congestion in industrial areas;
 - d) Visual pollution including storage areas;
 - e) Environmental problems.
- iv) Agricultural/ Rural Areas

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville shall use the following criteria for the selection of agricultural/rural areas as community improvement areas:

- a) All of the criteria listed in Section 6.3.2 i);
- b) Promoting a viable tourism economy;
- c) Ensuring local food security;
- d) Provisioning of essential community services and infrastructure; and
- e) Other matters as deemed appropriate by the Town.

6.3.3 Delineation of Areas in Need of Community Improvement

The Town may consider the establishment of a Town-wide Community Improvement Area or other site-specific Community Improvement Project Areas. This shall include the Downtown Stouffville Community, or others as identified in the Town Wide Community Improvement Plan.

6.3.4 Phasing of Improvements

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville intends to concentrate on the improvement of property that will advance the Town's goals in terms of Corridor Development, Downtown Rejuvenation, Urban Intensification, and Rural Advancement as a first priority, as identified in the Town Wide Community Improvement Plan.

6.3.5 Implementation

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville intends to achieve its overall community improvement objectives as identified in Section 6.3.1 by the following means:

- i) Preparation of a Town Wide Community Improvement Plan, or community improvement plans for other specific areas of the Town;
- ii) Utilization of provincial and federal funding programs;
- iii) Acquisition of land;
- iv) Enforcement of a property standards bylaw;
- v) Encouragement of rehabilitation of private and public buildings;
- vi) Public education on the programs and funding offered by various levels of government to private property owners; and,
- vii) Encouragement of the Business Improvement Area Organization and the Chamber of Commerce to actively participate in the community improvement objectives;
- viii) Application of the Ontario Heritage Act in terms of both the designation of buildings and heritage districts.

6.4 HERITAGE

6.4.1 Purpose

The Town through the management of its heritage resources seeks:

- i) the conservation of the Town's heritage resources by identifying, recognizing, preserving, protecting, improving and managing those resources, including the potential for their adaptive reuse;
- ii) the integration of the conservation of heritage resources into the Town's general planning approach; and,
- iii) the promotion of an understanding and appreciation of the heritage resources of the Town to both residents and visitors.

6.4.2 Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

The Town shall continue to maintain a citizens heritage advisory committee known as the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, to advise and assist Town Council on all heritage matters which affect the Town. In particular, LACAC shall:

- i) advise Council with respect to the designation of individual heritage properties or specific areas under the Ontario Heritage Act;
- ii) comment on all applications for development approval and for demolition permits affecting heritage resources;
- iii) assist Council on matters relating to the conservation of buildings and heritage conservation districts, as well as the promotion of heritage conservation; and,
- iv) advise property owners with respect to appropriate conservation/ maintenance practices, and to the extent practical, assist in facilitating heritage conservation work.

6.4.3 Heritage Resource Inventory

6.4.3.1 Inventory

The Town shall encourage LACAC, in consultation with other interested groups or individuals and public agencies, to develop and maintain a list and/or inventory of resources of heritage interest.

6.4.3.2 Role of Inventory

- i) If a resource is not on the Town's list and/or inventory of heritage resources, it does not necessarily mean that the property and/or resource is not of heritage interest.
- ii) During the processing of development applications, resources of potential heritage interest will be identified, evaluated and added to the Town's list and/or inventory as appropriate.

6.4.3.3 Criteria for Inclusion

The following criteria shall be used in determining the historic or architectural value or interest of heritage resources included or proposed to be included in the inventory:

- i) Historic Value or Interest

A property shall be considered to have historic value or interest if the property has been designated by the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture, and Recreation to be of archaeological or historical significance pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act or, satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

- a) it dates from an early period in the development of the Town;
- b) it is a good, representative example of the work of an outstanding local, national or international architect, engineer, builder, designer, landscape architect, interior designer or sculptor and is well preserved;
- c) it is associated with a person who is recognized as having made a significant contribution to the Town's social, cultural, political, economic, technological or physical development or as having materially influenced the course of local, regional, provincial, national or international history;

- d) it is directly associated with an historical event which is recognized as having local, regional, provincial, national or international importance;
- e) it is an example and illustration of the Town's social, cultural, political, economic or technological development history,
- f) it is an example of outstanding interior design; or,
- g) it is an example of a rare or otherwise important feature of good urban design or streetscaping.

ii) Architectural Value or Interest

A property shall be considered to have architectural value or interest if it provides an open space required for the visual appreciation of a building or district of architectural value or interest or satisfies at least two of the following criteria or one of these criteria plus one of the criteria listed in subsection 6.4.3.3 i) of this Plan:

- a) it is a representative example of a method of construction now rarely used;
- b) it is a representative example of its architectural style or period of building;
- c) it is a representative example of architectural design;
- d) it terminates a view or otherwise makes an important contribution to the urban composition or streetscape of which it forms a part; or,
- e) it is generally recognized as an important Town landmark.

6.4.4 Recognition of Individual Properties

6.4.4.1 Recognition

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, in concert with LACAC and individual property owners, will seek to recognize significant heritage resources through appropriate forms of commemoration (i.e. plaques, signage), through the provision of information (i.e. pamphlets, publications, walking tours, etc. as resources permit) and through designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

6.4.4.2 Designation

The Town may designate selected buildings listed pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act to afford protection from alteration.

6.4.4.3 Criteria for Designation

In determining candidates for designation, the Town shall consider the following criteria:

- i) The building or property is associated with the life of a person important in the history of the Town, the Province, the Nation or internationally; or
- ii) The building or property is the location of, or is associated in a significant way, with an historic event; or
- iii) The building embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, period or method of construction, or the work of an important building designer or architect; or
- iv) The building is an integral part of a distinctive area of the community or is considered to be a landmark of special value which contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of the Town.

6.4.4.4 Designated Properties

The Town shall maintain a list of properties designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act including the designation by-laws and reasons for designation.

6.4.5 Designation of Heritage Conservation Districts

6.4.5.1 Criteria for Designation

In the designation of Heritage Conservation Districts regard shall be had to, but, not be limited to, the following criteria:

- i) A significant number of the buildings or structures reflect an aspect of local history by nature of location and historical significance of setting;
- ii) A significant number of the buildings and structures are of a style of architecture or a method of construction significant historically or architecturally at a local, regional, provincial, national or international level;
- iii) The district contains other important physical, archaeological, environmental, cultural, or aesthetic characteristics that in themselves do not constitute sufficient grounds for designation of a district, but which lend support in evaluating the criteria for designation; or,
- iv) The district is an area of special association that is distinctive within the Town and, as a result, contributes to the character of the entire community.

6.4.5.2 Designation Procedure

- i) The Town shall consider designation of Heritage Conservation Districts in consultation with LACAC and prior to the designation of such areas shall:
 - a) identify its intent to define and investigate an area;
 - b) carry out a detailed study of the area which examines the special aspects of the area which contribute to its special character and includes a survey to locate and categorize all buildings and structures and sites of historic and architectural interest; and,
 - c) prepare and adopt a Heritage Conservation District Plan which will encourage conservation through controls and incentives and establish criteria for controlling demolition and regulating design through the establishment of the distinctive features which warrant the creation of the District.

- ii) Where the Town, having satisfied the provisions of subsections 6.4.5.1 and 6.4.5.2 i), deems it appropriate to designate a Heritage Conservation District, a by-law shall be passed under the Ontario Heritage Act which shall identify the extent of the area, contain procedures to control the alteration and demolition of existing buildings, as well as the construction of new buildings, based on the criteria in the Heritage Conservation District Plan, and outline appeal processes.

6.4.6 Protection of Heritage Resources

6.4.6.1 Protection of Resources

The Town shall protect heritage resources designated under Parts IV and V of the Ontario Heritage Act by:

- i) requiring that any person who proposes to demolish or alter a designated heritage property submit plans to the Town for approval under the Ontario Heritage Act; and,
- ii) requiring that, prior to the Town's approval of any alteration, partial demolition, removal or change in use, the applicant prepare a heritage impact statement, where deemed necessary by the Town, that shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town, in consultation with LACAC, that the proposal will not adversely impact the heritage significance of the property or a Heritage Conservation District in which it is located.

6.4.6.2 Limitations on Protection

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection 6.4.6.1, the Town shall not restrict:

- i) the rights of the owner to make alterations to any building or structure designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, provided that such alterations do not affect the reasons for the designation and provided that such alterations are in keeping with the policies of this Plan and meet the requirements of the Zoning By-law and all other applicable regulations; and,
- ii) the use to which designated buildings and structures are put provided that such use conforms with the policies of this Plan and the regulations of the Zoning By-law.

6.4.6.3 Demolition Permits

Where a demolition permit is granted for a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or listed in the Town's list of heritage resources, the recording of the property prior to demolition, to a standard acceptable to LACAC, shall be a condition of the demolition permit.

6.4.6.4 Public Works

Consideration shall be given to the effects of public works and development, particularly any extensions or changes to the existing road system, including expansion of existing pavement widths, or the establishment of new roads, on heritage resources and measures required to mitigate such effects, prior to approval of such works and development. Evaluation of the effect of such works or development will include consideration of the "no change" option, as well as significant modifications to the project.

6.4.6.5 Adjacent Development

All new development permitted by this Plan which involves, or is located in or near, heritage resources shall be required to:

- i) study and consider the preservation, relocation and/or adaptive reuse of buildings or structures based on both social and economic costs and benefits;
- ii) incorporate in any reconstruction or alterations, design features that are in harmony with the area's character and existing buildings in mass, height, setback and architectural details and, in particular:
 - a) new additional features should generally be no higher than the existing heritage buildings and wherever possible shall be placed to the rear of the building or set back substantially from the principal facade; and,
 - b) new construction and/or infilling should complement the immediate physical context and streetscape by generally being of the same height, width and orientation of adjacent buildings, being of similar setback, of like materials and colours and using similarly proportioned windows, doors and roof shape.

- iii) express the heritage resource in some way, including the display of building fragments, marking the traces of former locations, exhibiting descriptions of former uses and reflecting the former architecture and uses.

6.4.7 Signage

Signs on designated buildings and on buildings in Heritage Conservation Districts and Heritage Conservation District Study Areas shall be subject to the approval of the Town. The Town will encourage signs which are compatible with a heritage building and/or District and which conform with the Town's signage guidelines for heritage buildings and areas. These guidelines will address illumination, colour, materials, typography and design.

6.4.8 Special Resources

6.4.8.1

The Town shall encourage the retention of pioneer cemeteries in their original location.

6.4.8.2

The Town shall discourage the closure and relocation of small cemeteries.

6.4.8.3

The Town shall encourage the preservation of mature trees and other vegetation of heritage significance. Existing landmark trees and tree and hedge rows shall be an essential consideration in the design of any development; however, the Town shall also take into consideration the relative importance of competing resources. The preservation of trees along streets and roads shall be encouraged by the Town, except where removal is necessary because of disease or to ensure public health and safety.

6.4.9 Archaeological Resources

Where there is information available that indicates that archaeological potential exists on a site, the Town shall, prior to any development, require an archaeological assessment in conformity with the provisions of Section 7.3 viii) of this Plan. Where the potential for

impacts to archaeological resources exists, based on the results of the archaeological assessment, the assessment and mitigation will be reported upon to the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. A recommendation for clearance of archaeological resource concerns will be provided when such work has been completed to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation.

6.4.10 Funding and Advocacy

6.4.10.1

The Town may assist in efforts to obtain funding for the conservation and restoration of buildings, for archaeological surveys and for the implementation of Heritage Conservation District programs with the assistance of the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation and other appropriate authorities.

6.4.10.2

The Town may provide loans and/or grants to property owners or groups undertaking restoration or rehabilitation of designated or significant heritage properties. Other forms of financial assistance will be investigated, developed and utilized wherever appropriate.

6.4.10.3

The Town will encourage public awareness and the provision of information concerning heritage issues.

6.4.10.4

The Town will encourage the consultation and involvement of local residents in heritage planning matters.

6.5 COMMUNITY DESIGN STRATEGY

6.5.1 Purpose

The Town's Community Vision reflects its unique character. Part of that character is determined by the design of development in the rural/agricultural area, the Gormley Industrial Area, Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Vandorf-Preston Lake. This section outlines general design policies for the rural/agricultural area, the Gormley Industrial Area, Ballantrae-Musselman Lake and Vandorf-Preston Lake. These general design policies will be implemented as new development and redevelopment occurs and through improvements to public facilities when financially feasible.

6.5.2 General Design Policies

6.5.2.1 Streets and Streetscapes

The width and design of streets, as well as the configuration of lots and siting of buildings adjacent to the streets (i.e. streetscape design) is an essential part of a community's character. The Town shall have regard for streetscape design, as well as transportation planning considerations, in reviewing proposals for new roads and modifications to the existing street pattern, as well as the relationship between the street and abutting development.

6.5.2.2 Existing Street System

No significant changes are anticipated to the existing street system; however, where reconstruction or other modifications such as widenings, additions of turning lanes and realignments are proposed, the Town shall carefully evaluate the impacts of such changes on the streetscape and shall seek to minimize modifications which detract from positive characteristics of the streetscape wherever possible. In addition, as part of such changes, the Town shall consider modifications which introduce traffic calming techniques and/or enhance the streetscape such as additional tree planting, widening of boulevards, addition of sidewalks and provision for bicycles, and creation of landscaped medians. Consideration may also be given to the introduction of traffic calming techniques which do not require reconstruction of the street where concerns with the amount and speed of traffic have been identified.

6.5.2.3 Street System - New Development Areas

New development areas shall be limited, but where they occur they should be connected to the existing development whenever possible through road connections, as well as bicycle and pedestrian links, to ensure that the community functions in an integrated fashion. These linkages will be developed in a manner which is sensitive to the character of existing areas, while promoting communication between all parts of the community.

6.5.2.4 Streetscape Design

The layout of streets, configuration of lots and the siting of buildings and parking areas shall ensure that:

- i) parking areas for non-residential uses are designed to reduce their impact on the adjoining streetscape by:
 - a) screening of the parking lot through the use of such features as low fences, walls or landscaping;
 - b) locating the parking lot on the site in a manner which reduces its impact on the street;
 - c) keeping to a minimum the amount of parking located between the main building and the street line;
 - d) a reduction in the scale of large parking areas through their subdivision into smaller areas by means of landscaping; and,
 - e) use of joint access where feasible.
- ii) buildings and structures are oriented to the street, and reverse lotting shall be prohibited unless there is no other option, in which case it will be kept to the minimum;
- iii) there are significant areas of unobstructed road frontage adjacent to open space, environmental and institutional areas to allow views into such sites, and where possible public access, subject to appropriate design to ensure no adverse environmental impacts;

- iv) in low density residential areas, garages shall be designed so that they are not the dominant feature in the streetscape, in particular, garages shall not:
 - a) project beyond the facade of the residence; or,
 - b) dominate the frontage of the lot,unless plans are submitted by the applicant to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Town that the garages can be appropriately integrated with the streetscape;
- v) landscaping provides for features such as the definition of the street, framing of views and focal points, direction of pedestrian movement and demarcation of areas with different functions as appropriate;
- vi) lighting shall provide suitable illumination for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists; and,
- vii) utilities on public or private property are clustered or grouped where possible to minimize visual impact. The Town shall encourage innovative methods of containing utility services, particularly large utility or utility cluster sites on or within streetscape features such as gateways, lamp posts or transit shelters.

When considering, as part of site plan approval, the design of the streetscape adjoining a site and the placement of sustainable design elements on adjoining roads, the Town shall ensure that:

- viii) street furniture, including utilities, paving treatment, signage and plantings reflect Town design standards and are appropriate to the specific area of the community;
- ix) plantings are selected and planted in a manner which ensures their long term sustainability;
- x) the design encourages walkability and bicycle movement and, in particular, provides for pedestrian safety and accessibility to existing or potential future transit;

- xi) the design reflects the other relevant policies of this section particularly policies related to Safe Community Design and Gateways.

6.5.2.5 External Building Design

When considering, as part of site plan approval, the external design of buildings, the Town shall take into account all the policies of this Plan, particularly the policies of this Community Design Strategy. In addition, in evaluating the external design of buildings the Town shall seek design which:

- i) includes sustainable building practices such as the use of green roofs and solar panels and, in particular buildings will be encouraged to be achieve LEED or Energy Star or other similar certification;
- ii) complements the massing patterns, rhythms, character and context of the existing development, while recognizing that built form evolves over time and that new buildings should not necessarily replicate existing buildings;
- iii) clearly defines public and private spaces;
- iv) is accessible to all;
- v) is in scale with surrounding development; and,
- vi) is designed to animate the street in the Hamlet of Bloomington and other centres such as Lemonville, as well as the Gormley Industrial Area, and in particular, any commercial or institutional buildings will be oriented to, and located close, to the street, will have front doors that face the street, and strong pedestrian connections to the street. In addition, commercial buildings will have significant glazing and/or display windows on any portion of the building visible from the street.

6.5.2.6 Views

- i) New development in the Hamlet of Bloomington and other centres such as Vandorf and Lemonville, shall be designed to preserve views of the surrounding rural area from the community existing at the date of adoption of the Plan. New development shall also be designed to preserve, enhance and/or create significant views of the following features:

- a) natural features including woodlots and wetlands;
 - b) important public buildings; and,
 - c) open spaces;
- ii) Public buildings, other institutional buildings and other major buildings and structures shall be encouraged to locate:
 - a) at the termination of a street or view corridor; or,
 - b) at the intersection of arterial or collector streets.

6.5.2.7 Landscape Design

The Town shall ensure that appropriate landscaping is provided in all new development to:

- i) maintain and enhance the character of existing developed areas;
- ii) allow for the creation of strong landscaped features in new development areas; and,
- iii) provide for features such as the definition of public open space, framing of views or focal points, direction of pedestrian movement and demarcation of areas with different functions.

In particular, the Town shall promote the planting of native plant material, particularly adjacent to natural areas, and shall naturalize park areas where practical.

6.5.2.8 Safe Community Design

To promote safety and security in public places the following measures shall be followed:

- i) The design and siting of new buildings and structures shall provide opportunities for visual overlook and ease of public access to adjacent streets, parks and open spaces;

- ii) clear, unobstructed views to parks and open spaces shall be provided from adjoining streets;
- iii) appropriate lighting, visibility and opportunities for informal surveillance shall be provided for all walkways, parking lots, parking garages and parks and open space areas;
- iv) landscape elements shall be selected and sited in order to maintain views for safety and surveillance;
- v) the sharing of such facilities as parking and walkways shall be encouraged to increase use and public presence in such areas;
- vi) design which promotes a sense of community ownership for public spaces by maximizing use, control and surveillance opportunities by occupants of adjacent buildings and frequency of use by the public shall be encouraged; and,
- vii) the provision of views into, out of and thorough publicly accessible interior spaces shall be encouraged; and,
- viii) design which precludes entrapment or the perception of entrapment through properly identified exits and signage shall be encouraged.

6.5.2.9 Barrier Free Access

Barrier free access to public buildings and facilities, and along new and existing pedestrian routes, shall be promoted including ramps, automatic doors and curb cuts.

6.5.2.10 Walkability and Bicycling

In considering the design of both public and private facilities, a key consideration shall be features which contribute to enhancements to the ability for movement by pedestrians and bicyclists including additions to the Town's trail system, wide sidewalks where appropriate, bicycle paths and bicycle parking.

6.5.3 Gateways

The major entrances to the Town, the Hamlet of Bloomington and other centres such as Lemonville, the Community of Vandorf, and the Gormley Industrial Area shall be designed to recognize their role as “gateways” to the community. These areas establish for visitors and residents an image of the Town and should reflect respectively the Town’s character and differentiate it from the surrounding communities, and the character of the individual centres, and differentiate them from the surrounding rural environment. In particular, the Town shall incorporate features such as landscaping and signage in the road allowance to clearly identify these gateway areas.