



CITY OF KINGSTON

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

Report No.: PC-10-053

TO: Chair and Members of Planning Committee

FROM: Cynthia Beach
Commissioner, Sustainability and Growth

RESOURCE STAFF: George Wallace
Director, Planning and Development Department

DATE OF MEETING: 2010-06-17

SUBJECT: Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The appropriate design of buildings and streetscapes is an important component to the growth of a City, and is essential for achieving sustainability in an urban environment. The Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines will help to implement the policies of the Official Plan and facilitate the planning approvals process by identifying the desired form of development for new and infill development within the City.

The intent of the design guidelines is to describe, in words and illustrative pictures, the City's policies and general urban design objectives and recommended best practices for both new development and redevelopment within Kingston. The guidelines will be of assistance to development proponents when preparing plans for their project, and to staff, the public, and City committees in assessing the merits of the proposals.

The guidelines will be implemented in a variety of ways. The most immediate use will be to inform development proposals through consultation between staff and developers. Other ways of implementing the guidelines that are recommended in the document include: providing guidance to the new Comprehensive Zoning By-Law; amending the Site Plan Control By-Law to reflect the recent changes to the *Planning Act* regarding exterior design control; developing educational programs to promote the guidelines; and, establishing a design review process and/or hiring a full-time urban designer. A list of action items that require further consideration by the City are provided and include: road widths, rights-of-way, and the coordination of utilities; on-street parking restrictions; laneways; pedestrian crossings; and, sidewalks.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT it be recommended to Council that the Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines, dated May 2010, be accepted in fulfillment of the Terms of Reference, that the report be received, and that the guidelines be approved in principle;

AND THAT the guidelines be forwarded to other Municipal Departments for information and consideration for future implementation.

AUTHORIZING SIGNATURES:

<u>ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER</u> Cynthia Beach, P.Eng., MCIP, RPP, Commissioner, Sustainability and Growth
<u>ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER</u> Gerard Hunt, Chief Administrative Officer

CONSULTATION WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSIONERS:

Terry Willing, <i>Community Services</i>	N/R
Denis Leger, <i>Transportation, Properties & Emergency Services</i>	N/R
Jim Keech, <i>President and CEO, Utilities Kingston</i>	N/R

(N/R indicates consultation not required)

OPTIONS/DISCUSSION:

In 2009, the City hired the firm of Brook McIlroy Inc. Planning + Urban Design / Pace Architects (BMI/Pace) to undertake two sets of urban design guidelines. One set was to focus on the development of new communities, while the other was to provide guidelines with respect to residential intensification projects. This report presents the final set of guidelines and provides background information on the project, as well as details as to the public consultation process that was undertaken, and the proposed implementation of the guidelines.

Background

Urban design guidelines for both new communities and residential intensification will support the implementation of the new Official Plan, which recognizes the value of quality architecture and vibrant communities. The residential intensification guidelines were initially identified several years ago through the Downtown Residential Review and as part of the preparation of the Official Plan. They will support the implementation of Official Plan policies that address the need to preserve the character of existing residential neighbourhoods. More specifically, these guidelines will help to: maintain the unique sense of place derived from the various existing streetscapes; protect the heritage character of some of the older neighbourhoods in the City; encourage compatible additions, alterations, and renovations to buildings; facilitate compatible new construction; and, increase densities appropriately in a way that enhances existing neighbourhoods.

The need for guidelines for new communities was identified several years ago as a result of design challenges related to new subdivisions. These challenges include both broader community design issues, such as the homogeneity of housing types and densities (i.e. primarily small lot, single detached dwellings) and the lack of mixed use in larger neighbourhoods, as well as concerns over the development of individual subdivisions, such as street widths and designs and subsequent maintenance issues (e.g. snow removal). The urban design guidelines for new communities will ensure that communities are designed to be safe, accessible, and sustainable, and that they contribute to the variety of building types and designs in the City.

Additional background information on the design guidelines can be found in Report No. PC-10-013, which was presented to Planning Committee at their meeting on January 7, 2010.

Application

The intent of the design guidelines is to describe, in words and illustrative pictures, the City's general urban design objectives and recommended best practices for both new development and redevelopment within Kingston. The guidelines will be of assistance to development proponents when preparing plans for their project, and to staff, the public, and City committees in assessing the merits of the proposals. However, these general guidelines will not apply where a more area-specific set of guidelines is in effect and reflected in the Official Plan through policies, such as the Downtown and Harbour Area or the North Block Central Business District.

The residential intensification guidelines will be used to assist in restoration, development and redevelopment projects, so as to ensure that the integrity and character of existing residential neighbourhoods is maintained. The guidelines will also create an environment where old and new buildings can co-exist in harmony, and assist property owners in planning appropriate building renovations and any new construction.

The urban design guidelines for new communities will apply to large areas of land within the urban area that have not been previously developed, or that have the potential to be extensively redeveloped. The guidelines will assist the public and private sectors in the design and development of individual subdivisions, as well as larger communities or secondary plan areas. The design guidelines will also apply to large redevelopment projects, including brownfield sites. More specifically, these guidelines will be used to:

- Provide direction to the development review process for areas without an approved secondary plan;
- Complement and enhance any design considerations in approved secondary plans;
- Assist in the preparation of any future secondary plans, as well as updates to the Official Plan or Zoning By-Law; and,
- Provide a foundation for zoning provisions related to yard setbacks, driveways, etc. in the new Comprehensive Zoning By-Law.

It should be noted that the provisions within the guidelines are examples of best practices, and while they illustrate the City's design intent with respect to future development and redevelopment, they are not regulatory in nature and should not be read the same way as the provisions of a zoning by-law. For example, if an illustration in the document shows a 7.5 metre rear yard setback for a particular type of housing for new communities, it does not automatically mean that that setback will apply to the rear yards of all such homes developed in new subdivisions. The best practices in the guidelines will have to be used in designing and reviewing new communities and subdivisions, and the actual dimensions used will have to be tailored to suit the particular site and area in question. The important factor is that the final proposed plan reflects the form and function intended by the guidelines.

In terms of the public realm, the design guidelines for new communities provide direction on the development of streets, sidewalks, and associated amenities such as lighting and street furniture. Again, these guidelines provide advice on the best practices associated with the development of new communities. It should not be assumed that the road standards recommended in the section of the guidelines on new communities will be applicable to existing streets in the City. To reconstruct an existing street to the standards proposed for new communities may not be possible, and could prove costly in terms of the movement of existing utilities and the loss of mature street trees.

Public Consultation

As part of the development of the Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines, two sets of public open houses and workshops were conducted. The first set of workshops and open houses were held on February 3, 2010 at Memorial Hall in City Hall. These first sessions were intended to:

- Introduce the study and provide context and background information;
- Gather general feedback from residents and the development community through the workshop exercises; and,
- Develop a framework for residential intensification and new communities.

The second set of open houses and workshops were held on March 31, 2010 in the Press Lounge at Portsmouth Olympic Harbour. The purpose was to present the draft of the guidelines document and allow the public to ask questions and provide feedback. Written submissions regarding the draft document were accepted until mid-April.

Planning & Development Department Staff and the consultants met with staff from other City departments, including Engineering, Public Works, Transportation, Kingston Transit, Recreation & Leisure, Building Services, Accessibility, and Heritage Planning. Meetings were also held with representatives of the Kingston Construction Association (KCA) and the Kingston Home Builders Association (KHBA).

Costs & Affordability

One of the main concerns raised by both groups from the development community and staff from other departments is the potential for the guidelines for new communities to affect the cost of housing and infrastructure, and impact the level of service delivery. In some cases, the design guidelines represent a change from current development standards, such as promoting sidewalks on both sides of the roads, and having single-loaded roads along natural areas and at least 50% of park spaces. This will have an impact on both the initial cost of the construction of such facilities, as well as an impact on operating budgets (e.g.

more sidewalks to plow in the winter). Developers have also cautioned that any increases in the cost of construction will be passed along to homeowners.

Staff in the Planning & Development Department are aware of the concerns addressed above, but believe that the best practices illustrated in the urban design guidelines for new communities will result in more complete, compact, and pedestrian-friendly environments. With respect to affordability, not all additional costs will have to be spread to all lots in a subdivision, as certain lots, such as those that would share a single-loaded road with an open space, would command a higher price. Space for affordable housing could still be found in other areas of a neighbourhood, as the guidelines also speak to developing a more diverse mix of housing types, and having areas that support medium and higher density dwellings.

The issue of reconciling the costs associated with the changes for development that are illustrated in the guidelines is something that requires additional research and attention. Therefore, staff support the recommendation in the guidelines that encourages further detailed study of the appropriate design of public infrastructure and changes to current levels of services and the associated costs.

Implementation

Section 6 of the document provides recommendations on the implementation of the guidelines. Some of the main recommendations for implementation include:

- Using the guidelines to help develop provisions for the new Comprehensive Zoning By-Law;
- Amending the Site Plan Control By-Law to implement the new policies of the Official Plan and Section 41 changes to the *Planning Act* relating to exterior design control;
- Developing education programs to promote the design guidelines, such as producing home building information packages, holding annual information sessions, utilizing the design checklist that accompanies the guidelines, and continuing the Livable City Design Awards program;
- Setting up some form of design review process, and/or hiring a full-time urban designer; and,
- Monitoring and updating the guidelines on a regular basis.

This section of the document also speaks to exceptions to the guidelines. It notes that when implementing design guidelines it is important to recognize that exceptions can sometimes be warranted, and at times, a project that strives for excellence in design can demonstrate that a specific guideline is not appropriate in that instance.

The implementation section also includes a number of action items that will need to be followed up on as part of the overall implementation of the guidelines. These action items include the further study and analysis of the following components, and envision further consultation with the development community, other City Departments and the public with respect to these matters:

- Road widths, rights-of-way, and the coordination of utilities;
- On-street parking restrictions;
- Laneways;
- Pedestrian crossings;
- Sidewalks; and,
- Cost of implementation and change in level of service to the municipality and developers.

While the action items are something that staff will have to pursue in the future, the document can still be used by staff in their discussions with development proponents to illustrate what the expectations are for the form and function for new development and redevelopment projects.

The Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines have been presented in a single document for the purpose of review and for presentation to Planning Committee and Council. By combining both sets of guidelines into one document, staff and the consultants were able to produce the final product more cost-effectively. However, following Council approval, staff intend to distribute the guidelines in a more "user-friendly" format, such as having each section posted separately on the website for downloading, and producing individual hard copies for the sections on new communities, general design guidelines, and residential intensification (Sections 3 through 5 respectively). This will allow development proponents to focus on the guidelines that are most pertinent to their project.

Conclusion

In general, the response received through public consultation regarding the urban design guidelines for new communities and residential intensification has been very positive. It is seen as an effective step towards the development of sustainable, pedestrian-oriented communities, and the redevelopment of existing properties in a way that preserves the character of surrounding neighbourhoods. The guidelines illustrate the City's design objectives and recommended best practices for both new development and redevelopment within Kingston, and will help to achieve sustainable growth within the urban area.

As noted above, there were a number of concerns identified by municipal departments or the development community that will warrant further investigation and discussion as part of the implementation of the guidelines. This will include further consultation with all of the interested stakeholders.

The guidelines should be presented to Council for approval in principle, and the document should be distributed to the appropriate municipal departments, so that staff can begin consideration of the action items recommended in the implementation section of the report.

EXISTING POLICY/BY LAW:

The issue of urban design is dealt with in Section 8 of the new Official Plan. The Official Plan recognizes the value associated with quality architecture, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and vibrant neighbourhoods, and states that the City may undertake urban design guidelines that apply to specific types of development, to specific areas of the City, or to the entire City. Any urban design guidelines that are developed may be used for the following reasons:

- To clarify the strategic intent and design objectives of the Official Plan;
- To complement and enhance any design considerations in development applications; and,
- To assist in the preparation of any future secondary plan, community improvement plan, or other relevant planning document.

NOTICE PROVISIONS:

N/A

ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

This report is available in different formats upon request from the Accessibility Coordinator.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The funds for both sets of urban design guidelines were allocated in the capital budget. Additional considerations concerning costs associated with the implementation of the new standards will need to be provided through further study.

CONTACTS:

- George Wallace – Director, Planning & Development Dept. (613-546-4291, ext. 3252);
- Cherie Mills – Manager, Policy Planning, Planning & Development Dept. (613-546-4291, ext. 3289); and,
- Sonya Bolton – Senior Policy Planner, Planning & Development Dept. (613-546-4291, ext. 3237).

OTHER CITY OF KINGSTON STAFF CONSULTED:

- Marnie Venditti, Manager, Development Approval, Planning & Development Dept. (613-546-4291, ext. 3256);
- Del Stowe, Building & By-Law Enforcement (613-546-4291, ext. 3261);
- Kim Brown, Engineering Services (613-546-4291, ext. 3132);
- Jim Miller, Utilities Kingston & Kingston Hydro Corp. (613-546-1181, ext. 2475);
- Robb Kidd, Fire & Rescue (613-548-4001, ext. 5107);
- Kristine Hebert, Recreation & Leisure, Parks Development (613-546-4291, ext. 1256);
- Chanda Theng, Recreation & Leisure, Parks Development (613-546-4291, ext. 3250);
- Damon Wells, Public Works (613-546-4291, ext. 2313);
- Ian Semple, Kingston Transit (613-546-4291, ext. 2306);
- Paula Nichols, Parking Operations (613-546-4291, ext. 2392);
- Deanna Green, Traffic Division (613-546-4291, ext. 3170);
- Barry Kaplan, Accessibility Coordinator (613-546-4291, ext. 3182); and,
- Marcus Letourneau, Heritage Planner (613-546-4291, ext. 1386).

EXHIBITS ATTACHED:

Exhibit 'A' – Kingston Residential Intensification and New Community Design Guidelines (circulated under separate cover)