

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Downtown Action Plan: An infrastructure Renewal and Public Open Space Plan (DAP) refines the work and principles set out in the **Downtown Design Concept (DDC)** released in the fall of 2001. The Plan will form part of Kingston's ten year Capital Plan for the infrastructure in the downtown. The DAP is an urban design study for the whole downtown, and an annual work plan spread over a ten to fifteen-year period.

The Downtown Action Plan's study area consists of approximately thirty-six city blocks. The project will involve the replacement of roughly nine kilometres of urban streets and sidewalks, from building edge to building edge. The plan is spurred on by the need to replace the underground utility infrastructure (storm and sanitary sewers, waterlines, electrical, telecommunications, and fibre optics) in the Study area. Kingston is not unique in this regard, as deteriorated underground infrastructures are an issue across Canada.

The Downtown Action Plan (DAP) sets out design recommendations for the public open spaces in the downtown, which includes all streets, parks and the waterfront area. The design recommendations are based, not only on enhancing Kingston's physical character, but also, on reinvesting, supporting businesses, and encouraging redevelopment and infill by adding value through improvement of public lands.

Beyond the infrastructure replacement, the Downtown Action Plan will:

- direct increased green space and connections to the waterfront;
- co-ordinate streetscape improvements (street furniture, paving, lighting, road cross sections, and open space);
- identify opportunities for tourism, recreation and entertainment;
- improve traffic movement.

While the study boundaries reflect the mixed-use downtown business district, the study identifies different character areas within the downtown. These are the Princess Street commercial streetscape, the Historic District between Brock and Johnson Streets, the redevelopment lands of the North Block and Block 'D' and, lastly, the Waterfront. The conceptual designs for Princess Street, the Historic District, Confederation Park, and Boucher Park and the Waterfront directed the development of layout patterns and a palette of streetscape elements for each of the character areas. The analysis, design approach, and design recommendations were reviewed by the DAP Task Force, a Technical Steering Committee, stakeholders and the public. Positive reaction to the Downtown Action Plan has gained momentum and established expectations for its implementation.

The DAP looked comprehensively at the downtown. The scope of the DAP is broad and all encompassing. It includes lighting, signage, public art, financial analysis and traffic. The project is defined as a single \$80 million program, which has given it a unity it would never have enjoyed if the City of Kingston pursued infrastructure replacement incrementally. To attain the value added, inherent in such a large scale revamping of the public right-of-way, the City of Kingston needed to package downtown as a single idea. The DAP has created an opportunity to enhance the success of the downtown, and to build on community expectations and synergies.

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C R E D I T S

The Downtown Action Plan (DAP) was prepared by Corush Sunderland Wright Limited in 2003. This Action Plan was a direct result of, and endorses, the key direction established in the Downtown Design Concept, which was prepared by the City of Kingston Planning Department. The Downtown Action Plan was enriched by the positive input of the Business Improvement Area members, city staff and the public. The members of the consulting team, Steering and Technical Advisory Committee's are listed:

Project Manager: *Mark Gladysz; Heritage Planner*

Technical Advisor to Project Manger: *Richard Strong; FCSLA*

Consultant Team:

Corush Sunderland Wright Limited - Prime Consultant - Landscape Architects

Gabriel Design - Lighting

Castle Glenn Consultants - Traffic

J.L. Richards & Associates - Costing of Civil Work and Phasing

CN Watson & Associate Ltd. - Financial Analysis

Ann Robinson & Associates - Consultation & Public Art

The Technical Steering Committee:

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Mark Segsworth; Commissioner, Department of Operations

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The Task Force:

(included all of the above and the following individuals)

Mayor Isabel Turner (ex officio)

Councillor Rick Downes

Councillor Don Rogers

Councillor Leonore Foster

Cindie Ashton; Communications Co-ordinator

Damon Wells; Manager, Streets and Sidewalks

Paula Nichols; Manager, Parking Services

Kristine Hebert; Parks and Open Space Planning Co-ordinator

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Broader Working Group:

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Paul MacLachy; Manager, Environment, Engineering Division

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Deputy Chief Dan Murphy; Kingston Police Department

Fire Chief Harold Tulk; Kingston Fire & Rescue

William C. Leggett; Principal, Queen's University

Jeanne Ma; Director, Campus Planning & Development - Queen's University

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Kingston benefits from a wealth of fine heritage architecture coupled with a strong and vibrant commercial centre. This downtown vitality should not be taken for granted, given the neglected state of so many civic cores across North America. The challenges are one of revitalization rather than continued and improved viability. In Kingston, the need is to reinvest, building upon what exists as an already attractive and viable urban core.

Following the recent amalgamation of the City of Kingston, an opportune moment presented itself to define a direction for the quality and character of Kingston's downtown - to understand the larger role of downtown in terms of the City's economy, identity and quality of life. The purpose of the Downtown Action Plan (DAP) is to provide a road map for the renewal of infrastructure and public open space within the core. With the pressing need to replace deteriorating utilities beneath the streets, comes an opportunity to look once more at the entire urban fabric and rebuild within a comprehensive strategy.

In order to encompass the physical character of the public open space, the study's scope includes **lighting, public art, sidewalk cafes, signage, phasing, a financial plan and analysis of the closure of Ontario Street at Confederation Park**. This presents a unique opportunity to co-ordinate various aspects of the public open space network into a complete vision. As a result, the plan will be useful in directing incremental changes and small projects, as well as, major projects staged over the next ten to fifteen years.

The design approach was based on three key concepts - *clarify*, *complement* and *integrate*. To a large extent, the aspect of clarification is based on the analysis of existing conditions, which resulted in the identification of four individual character areas within the downtown. The intent was to complement intrinsic qualities of each of the character areas. This resulted in recommendations for the arrangement of material palettes and elements as variations on a theme within the downtown. These recommendations are intended to enhance and work in harmony, rather than compete or distract from the existing heritage quality of the area. Similarly, the various streetscapes, parks and waterfront should be integrated, with the overall vision of supporting and improving the economic viability and quality of the downtown environment.

In terms of process, the Downtown Action Plan benefited from the foundation and momentum established by the Downtown Design Concept (DDC). Throughout the study, direction was

given by the steering committee, the DAP task force and stakeholder consultations. Full presentations to the public provided high quality and very useful input to the design recommendations. Reaction has been very positive, with clear feedback expressed to carryout the plan.

The Downtown Action Plan has been organized in two parts, the design report and a series of technical reports. The design report's intent is to provide a narrative flow and integrated explanation, of the analysis and design recommendations. The technical reports are expected to be of most interest to City Staff and professionals, who will be working on the actual design assignments required to implement the plan in coming years. These reports are on file with the City.



The waterfront quays in the existing Ferry terminal vicinity - from the collections of John Grenville and William Barrow