

DRAFT: OPA 125, DOWNTOWN NIAGARA FALLS GO TRANSIT SECONDARY PLAN
CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS OFFICIAL PLAN

PART 2 - BODY OF THE AMENDMENT

All of this part of the document entitle PART 2 – Body of the Amendment, consisting of the following text and attached maps, constitute Amendment No. 125 to the Official Plan of the City of Niagara Falls.

DETAILS OF THE AMENDMENT

The Official Plan of the City of Niagara Falls is hereby amended as follows:

MAP CHANGES

The following new figures are added as follows:

- a) Figure 9: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Planned Road Network
- b) Figure 10: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, New Road Connections and Improvements
- c) Figure 11: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Planned Active Transportation Network
- d) Figure 12: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Public Realm Improvement Plan
- e) Figure 13: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Street cross-section on Bridge Street between Victoria Avenue and River Road
- f) Figure 14: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Street cross-section on River Road
- g) Figure 15: Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Street cross-section on Erie Avenue between Queen Street and Bridge Street

The following schedules are to be modified:

- a) Schedule A4 - Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Land Use Plan
- b) Schedule A2A - Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan, Building Heights Plan

TEXT CHANGES

A new SECTION 2, PART 5 – SECONDARY PLANS is to be added as follows:

SECTION 2: DOWNTOWN NIAGARA FALLS GO TRANSIT STATION SECONDARY PLAN

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this Secondary Plan is to provide the vision and planning framework to guide future transit-oriented development and redevelopment in the area around the Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station. The Plan provides long range policy direction for:

- a) Land use;
- b) Transportation;
- c) Municipal infrastructure;
- d) Urban design and public realm improvements; and,
- e) Implementation.

VISION

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area will be a vibrant and complete neighbourhood. It will emerge as a walkable, mixed use area based on the principles of sustainable development and provide seamless integration between the existing VIA Rail Station, the Niagara Regional Transit Hub, and Downtown Niagara Falls. The area will provide enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities, transit connectivity, and a multitude of new uses and community facilities to help create a diverse and bustling urban destination.

The Secondary Plan Area is planned as a transit-oriented neighbourhood with attractive built form, safe and walkable streets with a diversity of housing typologies and mix of uses. Future growth will include new office, commercial, institutional, and residential development to support investment in transit infrastructure and other facilities.

New development intensification will address housing needs, including affordable housing and the redevelopment of underutilized sites, through encouraging a mix of inclusive and attractive new developments. The siting and scale of new community facilities and development will complement the form, scale and character of the community while supporting the city-building objectives of the Secondary Plan.

New public open spaces within the Secondary Plan Area will provide a central gathering space and catalyst for the new neighbourhood close to the GO Station. New active transportation connections will form part of improved streetscapes, lined by a mix of active uses forming a more vibrant pedestrian environment. River Road is an iconic street that is a priority for significant investment. Bridge Street, Buttrey Street and portions of Erie and Victoria Avenue are secondary improvement streets that will receive public realm enhancements to help revitalize the area and support a walkable urban setting with a healthy and diverse mix of 'main street' retail frontages that are supportive of the retail function of Queen Street.

Downtown Niagara Falls will continue to function as a mixed use commercial node with access and viewing opportunities of the Niagara River, and future tourist-related investments in hotels and other tourist commercial uses to support Downtown Niagara Falls.

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area has the potential to accommodate an additional 2,450 people and 560 employees by 2041.

DOWNTOWN NIAGARA FALLS GO TRANSIT STATION SECONDARY PLAN OBJECTIVES

Creating a Gateway/Terminus Hub through the following measures:

- a) Comprehensively improve the public realm;
- b) Concentrate mixed use intensification along Bridge Street, Erie Ave, Park Street and portions of Queen Street and other sites in proximity to the Station;
- c) Strengthen residential neighbourhoods and provide for a network to address land use compatibility along Buttrey Street and Ferguson Street;
- d) Support tourist uses along River Road; and
- e) Celebrate, conserve and enhance the historic and cultural assets of the Downtown.

SECONDARY PLAN AREA LIMITS

The limits of the Niagara GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area are depicted on **Schedule A4**. The Plan Area extends approximately 800 metres around the station site and includes key properties that may redevelop as a result of the GO station as well as corridors that will form important transportation arteries and connections to and from the station.

Changes to the boundary of the Secondary Plan shall require an amendment to the area municipal Official Plan.

LAND USE POLICIES

2.1.1 Land Use Structure

Lands within the Secondary Plan Area are designated as one of the following land use categories, as depicted on **Schedule A4**:

- a) Low Density Residential
- b) Medium Density Residential
- c) High Density Residential
- d) Mixed Use 1 (Downtown)
- e) Mixed Use 2
- f) Tourist Commercial
- g) Employment/Mixed Use
- h) Utility
- i) Recreation and Open Space
- j) Environmental Protection Area
- k) Transit Station Area
- l) Special Policy Areas

2.1.2 Relationship with the Niagara Falls Official Plan Land Use Categories and Permissions

The land use designations for the Secondary Plan are intended to complement the broader land use designations provided in the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan. In most cases, the land use policies and permissions described in the Secondary Plan are more

detailed than those provided for within the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan. Where there are inconsistencies between a particular policy in the Official Plan and the Secondary Plan, the policies of the Secondary Plan shall prevail.

2.1.3 General Policies

The following uses are permitted in all land use designations in this Secondary Plan:

- a) A use which is accessory to a permitted use;
- b) Replacement and expansions to existing legal uses, buildings and structures in conformity with the policies of the Official Plan and this Secondary Plan;
- c) Public utilities, including water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure (except within the Natural Open Space system);
- d) City parks, public spaces and recreational facilities; and,
- e) Institutional uses.

Nothing in this Plan will prohibit the continued operation of legal nonconforming uses of land, buildings or structures within the Study Area. Please refer to the Niagara Falls Official Plan Section 6 on Non-Conforming Uses.

2.1.4 Overall Density Targets

The land uses of the Plan are identified to support an overall density target of 150 people and jobs per hectare, in line with the Province of Ontario's 2017 Growth Plan.

2.1.5 Low Density Residential

2.1.5.1 Planned Function

The planned function of the Low Density designation is to provide opportunities for ground-oriented housing in a low density format. The intention of this designation is to recognize the existing, established low density residential neighbourhoods which form the edges of the Plan Area. Areas which are designated for low density residential development are expected to generally be maintained as low density areas and should not be the focus of significant intensification.

2.1.5.2 Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include residential uses such as:

- a) Single detached dwellings;
- b) Semi-detached dwellings;
- c) Street townhouses;

- d) Duplexes;
- e) Block townhouses; and
- f) Other compatible housing forms (as defined in this Secondary Plan and the City of Niagara Official Plan).

2.1.5.3 Density

The permitted density for new low density residential is up to a maximum of 40 units per hectare with a minimum net density of 20 units per hectare.

2.1.6 Medium Density Residential

2.1.6.1 Planned Function

The planned function of the Medium Density designation is to provide opportunities for residential development in a low-rise format in proximity to existing residential uses. A diversity of dwelling types is encouraged to support the City's range of accommodation options and housing intensification objectives.

2.1.6.2 Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include residential uses such as

- a) Townhouses;
- b) Stacked townhouses;
- c) Apartments; and
- d) Other multiple dwellings (as defined in this Secondary Plan and the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan).

2.1.6.3 Density

The permitted density for new medium density residential development shall range from a minimum residential density of 50 units per hectare up to a maximum of 75 units per hectare.

2.1.7 High Density Residential

2.1.7.1 Planned Function

The planned function of the High Density Residential designation is to provide opportunities for residential development in higher intensity development format. Diversity of dwelling types is encouraged to support the City's range of accommodation options.

2.1.7.2 Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include:

- a) Mid-to-high-rise apartments; and
- b) Other multiple dwellings (as defined in this Secondary Plan and the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan).

2.1.7.3 Density

Residential development within the High Density designation is permitted up to a maximum of 200 units per hectare.

2.1.8 Mixed Use 1 (Downtown)

2.1.8.1 Planned Function

The planned function of the Mixed Use 1 designation is to provide opportunities for mixed use development in a high density format. Uses can be mixed across a parcel or mixed within a building. Commercial, office, institutional uses that enliven the street should be located on the ground floor of buildings close to the front property line to help frame and animate the street. Surface parking should be located at the rear of buildings to prioritize orientation of building frontages along the street.

2.1.8.2 Permitted Uses

The Mixed Use 1 designation generally corresponds to the Major Commercial area as identified in Section 3.2 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan. Permitted uses include medium and high density residential uses such as:

- a) Apartments in accordance with the height provisions on Schedule A2A (except at grade);
- b) Commercial uses; and
- c) Office uses.

Permitted commercial uses include a full range of personal and professional service commercial uses, office, and may include recreational, community and cultural facilities as secondary uses. Large format retail uses are not permitted. Grocery stores and food stores intended to support people living and working in the Downtown are permitted.

2.1.8.3 Density

Residential development within the Mixed Use 1 designation is permitted up to a maximum of 150 units per hectare.

2.1.8.4 Form of Mixed Use Development and Redevelopment

The Mixed Use 1 designation includes the City's historic downtown and adjacent main street areas. Development within these areas is intended to be located along downtown streets where a mix of different uses could be located at the street level including commercial, residential or office type uses.

The policies allow flexibility in terms of which uses are located at the street level and accommodates a mix of uses within a single building or within multiple buildings throughout an area. Development shall be characterized by buildings that provide a defined street wall and are proportional to the width of the street.

2.1.9 Mixed Use 2

2.1.9.1 Planned Function

The planned function of the Mixed Use 2 designation is to provide opportunities for mixed use development within the Victoria Avenue corridor. The Mixed Use 2 designation permits similar uses to the Mixed Use 1 designation with lower development intensities as a transition to the adjacent residential areas. Uses can be mixed across a parcel or mixed within a building.

Commercial, office, institutional uses that enliven the street should be located on the ground floor of buildings close to the front property line to help frame and animate the street. Surface parking should be located at the rear of buildings to prioritize orientation of building frontages along the street.

2.1.9.2 Permitted Uses

The Mixed Use 2 designation generally corresponds to the Minor Commercial area as identified in Section 3.3 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan. Permitted uses include medium density residential uses such as:

- a) Low and mid-rise apartments;
- b) Commercial uses; and
- c) Office uses.
- d) Permitted commercial uses include a full range of personal and professional service commercial uses, office, and may include recreational, community and cultural facilities as secondary uses; Large format retail uses are not permitted. Grocery stores and food stores intended to support people living and working in the Downtown are permitted.

2.1.9.3 Density

Residential development within the Mixed Use 2 designation is permitted up to a maximum of 100 units per hectare.

2.1.9.4 Form of Mixed Use Development and Redevelopment

The Mixed Use 2 designation is intended to serve the local retail needs, and provide a 'main street' function for the adjacent residential areas. Predominant land uses include a

wide range of retail uses and personal service shops and limited offices, all on a small scale to serve the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

2.1.10 Tourist Commercial

2.1.10.1 Planned Function

Lands designated Tourist Commercial are located along River Road between Leader Lane and Bridge Street and along Victoria Avenue between Ferguson Street and Leader Lane. The planned function of the Tourist Commercial designation is to provide facilities for tourist information facilities, public facilities, accommodations, etc. to meet the demands of tourists, as prescribed by Section 4 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan.

The Tourist Commercial area provides an interface along River Road and integrates the Niagara Parkway greenway and views of the Niagara River and of the United States. As such, this area functions as a sightseeing area allowing visitors to view and experience the Niagara River gorge. Accommodations and ancillary commercial uses are also encouraged in this district.

2.1.10.2 Permitted Uses

The Tourist Commercial designation generally corresponds to the Whirlpool Satellite District as identified in Section 4 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan. Permitted uses include:

- a) Recreation;
- b) Accommodation and hotels;
- c) Restaurants;
- d) Retail and sports equipment rentals; and
- e) Other related uses.

Residential uses may be permitted throughout lands designated Tourist Commercial either as stand-alone or mixed use buildings in order to assist in creating a complete community in accordance with the policies of this Plan and PART 1, Section 3 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan.

2.1.10.3 Form of Development and Redevelopment

The general intent for development is to enhance the overall physical setting of the Tourist District, provide tourism-related amenities, uses, and destinations, with a high quality built form and public realm that attracts people to the area. Building heights throughout the tourist area shall be restricted to four storeys in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning By-law. Council shall consider the allocation of additional building height, up to 8

storeys as identified in this Secondary Plan. The maximum height shall be allocated if a proposed development meets the following criteria;

- a) the applicant has submitted all required rezoning information;
- b) the applicant agrees to provide sidewalk and streetscape improvements in accordance with Section 4.4.4 of the Niagara Falls Official Plan;
- c) the proposed development, in the opinion of Council, adheres to the intent of this Secondary Plan, the Niagara Falls Official Plan and applicable design criteria.

2.1.11 Employment/Mixed Use

2.1.11.1 Planned Function

The lands between the GO Transit Station to the south and the existing low density Glenview neighbourhood to the north are designated Employment/Mixed Use. This is an area in transition from heavy industrial uses towards lighter industrial uses and, over time, will realize the introduction of a greater mix of housing units. This area will take time to develop and will be dependent on a number of factors.

The Employment/Mixed Use designation will allow the evolution of the area to proceed, beginning with providing opportunities for the establishment of employment/service commercial uses. This Plan, however, recognizes existing industrial uses within the Secondary Plan Area and provides reasonable opportunities for the limited expansion of these uses. Please refer to Sections 2.5.20-20.5.23 of this Plan for additional policies for each of the separate Special Policy Areas that overlay the Employment/Mixed Use designation within the Secondary Plan Area.

2.1.11.2 Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include the following:

- a) Industrial uses in existence at the time of the adoption of this Plan;
- b) Existing residential uses;
- c) Knowledge-based research, technology, service, communication, information, management uses.
- d) Service commercial, restaurants, clinics, financial institutions, indoor recreation, offices; and
- e) Street and stacked townhouses and apartments provided such uses are not located within the applicable separation distance from industrial uses and appropriate mitigation measures are included in the development.

2.1.11.3 Uses with Potential for Adverse Impacts

New industrial uses which have the potential for adverse noise, vibration and/or odour impacts are not permitted within the Employment/Mixed Use designation.

2.1.11.4 Brownfield Remediation

Lands under this designation are currently, or have been used in the past, for industrial purposes. As such, as a condition of any development approval, a Record of Site Condition will be required to be submitted prior to commencement of development.

2.1.12 Utility

The Utility designation has been provided to recognize the Regional High Rate Pre-Treatment Facility located south of Buttrey Street. The lands designated Utility shall be protected for current and future municipal infrastructure and associated uses.

2.1.13 Recreation and Open Space

Please refer to Section 12 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan for the planned function and permitted uses within the Parks and Open Space designation. New recreation and open spaces shall be provided for based on the public realm policies, as outlined in Section 2.8 (Urban Design) of this Plan.

In general, the public realm policies outlined in Section 2.8 are intended to ensure that a high quality public realm, open space, and protected environment is achieved. The policies define an open space framework that links outdoor spaces through the creation of new parks, gateways, streetscape improvements, and active transportation paths to create a unique, beautiful, and healthy public realm environment. The public realm guidelines also provides guidance and direction for future investment into new parks, multi-use trails, streetscapes, sidewalks, bike racks, water bottle refill areas, on-road cycling facilities to get to recreational areas, and green spaces.

2.1.14 Environmental Protection Area

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area has an Environmental Protection Area which is represented on **Schedule A4**. Please refer to policies in Section 11.2 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan for applicable land use permissions.

2.1.15 Environmental Conservation Area

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area has an Environmental Conservation Area which is represented on **Schedule A4**. Please refer to policies in Section 11.2 of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan for applicable land use permissions.

2.1.16 Transit Station Area

The lands designated as Transit Station Area on **Schedule A4** of this Plan are intended to function as an integrated transit station facility, supporting a range of transit options.

The expectation is that the area will support international, national, regional and local transit connections, including both train and bus services.

Access to the station area should support a range of transportation choices and prioritize access for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. Opportunities for passenger pick and drop off should also be provided, along with an appropriate supply of parking for commuters.

The precise layout and limits of the Transit Station Area may be refined without amendment to this plan, as the location of the Transit Station Area may be subject to further refinement through the design process. Furthermore, as GO service becomes more established, Metrolinx may need to modify station layout to better support opportunities for travel.

The City will work closely with the Region, Niagara Falls Transit and Metrolinx to ensure that the new GO rail facilities are designed and implemented to support the objectives and policies of this secondary plan.

Permitted uses include public infrastructure, such as a train station and bus station, as well as any associated transit supportive uses which might enhance the function of the Transit Station Area (such as commercial, institutional uses/public uses).

2.1.17 Land Use Compatibility

2.1.17.1 Employment Uses

Any new proposed development for sensitive uses which is within 1000 metres of an existing Class 3 industrial facility, 300 metres of an existing Class 2 industrial facility or 70 metres of an existing Class 1 industrial facility shall be subject to Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change D-6 Guidelines for Land Use Compatibility.

In addition to the above, new proposed development should be oriented and designed to avoid land use compatibility and implications on surrounding employment uses, and it may be subject to further study.

2.1.17.2 Active Rail

No new residential development is permitted within a 30 metre setback of a rail right-of-way. Permitted uses within this setback include public and private roads, parkland and other outdoor recreational space including backyards, swimming pools and tennis courts, unenclosed gazebos, garages and other parking structures and storage sheds, where permitted within the policies of this Plan. Development in proximity to active rail (within 300m) may be subject to further study (including air quality, noise and other sensitivity studies).

2.1.18 Building Height

The planned maximum building heights are shown on **Schedule A2A**. The heights depicted on Schedule A2A are intended to reflect the planned maximum number of storeys and the following policies apply:

- a) The maximum number of storeys build on the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan Schedule A.2 (Downtown Node Height Strategy) for applicable parcels;
- b) On a site-by-site basis, the City may allow for marginally taller buildings where the findings of supporting studies, such as an urban design study, wind study and light/shadow study can demonstrate that there are no negative impacts on adjacent properties nor the public realm;
- c) The City may require a peer review of any studies which propose to exceed the planned building heights;
- d) Transitioning of height from the street edge is to be achieved with the use of step-backs as per Section 2.8.9 of this Plan; and
- e) All developments which are proposed to be taller than 6 storeys shall require a light/shadow study and an urban design study to demonstrate how the development fits within the context of the site and surrounding area.

2.1.19 Affordable Housing

The policies of this plan are intended to provide support for affordable housing by allowing for a wider range of mid and high rise housing choices in close proximity to higher order transit. The (City/Town) also encourages the Region to consider locations in close proximity to the GO rail station for any future affordable housing projects provided by Niagara Region Housing.

2.1.20 Special Policy Area (SPA) - 1

(Repeal and replace SPA - 7 within the Niagara Falls Official Plan)

Special Policy Area 1 applies to approximately 8 hectares of land located between Buttrey Street and Ferguson Street, and extending along Buttrey Street between Elgin Street, that were identified as Industrial within the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan and have been redesignated Employment/Mixed Use in this Secondary Plan. These parcels are subject to the employment conversion criteria as identified in the Region of Niagara Official Plan and Province's Growth Plan. These parcels should be reviewed as part of the Region of Niagara's Municipal Comprehensive Review process currently underway and shall only be permitted to develop following approval as part of that process. Should any properties not be approved, revisions to the Land Use Schedule A4 shall be made to

revert back to the Industrial designation. **Schedule A4** shall be made to revert back to the Industrial designation.

In addition to the Employment/Mixed Use policies of this plan (Section 2.5.11), and other applicable policies of this plan, development of lands designated Employment/Mixed Use with a Special Policy Area - 1 designation is subject to the following policies:

- a) These lands are intended to develop for a broad range of employment activities including light industrial; warehousing; office; laboratory and research facilities; automotive uses; service commercial uses; technology industries; recreational and fitness facilities.
 - i. Industrial uses shall primarily occur inside buildings and have minimal outdoor storage. Any outdoor storage must be screened.
 - ii. The implementing zoning by-law shall list the permitted uses as well as the development regulations which will apply.
- b) Through the implementing zoning, a limited range of industrial uses and no outside storage will be permitted on properties within 50 metres of Ferguson Street in this Special Policy Area in order to promote compatibility with the residential neighbourhood to the north.
- c) This Plan provides for the continuation and expansion of the existing general industrial businesses within the Special Policy Area. In the long term, it is the intent of this Plan to provide for a transition of the area to light industrial, service commercial and tourist commercial uses.
- d) In addition to the employment uses permitted in the areas, Tourist Commercial uses may also be developed on land to a depth of 120 metres from Victoria Avenue between Ferguson and Buttrey Streets. Development of this land for Tourist Commercial uses may be permitted subject to an amendment to the zoning By-law and the provision of the necessary infrastructure and transportation facilities to accommodate the development.
- e) The City of Niagara Falls, in consultation with neighbourhood residents and businesses, may prepare a plan to provide streetscape improvements along and in the Buttrey Street area and upgrade needed infrastructure. The City may also provide grants and loans to promote environmental remediation, building and site improvement, as well as acquire and prepare property for redevelopment as permitted in the Community Improvement policies of this Plan and in the City of Niagara Falls Brownfields Community Improvement Plan.

- f) The development of the Buttrey Street area should provide for a high quality of streetscape design, site planning and building design. The intersection of Victoria Avenue and Buttrey Street should be improved to serve as a gateway to the district. Public and Private street design should provide for pedestrian comfort and accommodate the needs of cyclists and transit users while maintaining a connection between the Glenview residential area and the City's downtown. The design and development of individual sites should have regard to the following principles:
- i. Buildings, with the exception of the outlet mall, are encouraged to be placed close to the street edge with a majority of parking located in the side and rear yards, subject to individual site development conditions.
 - ii. A high quality of building design is encouraged throughout this neighbourhood with particular emphasis on buildings fronting onto Victoria Avenue.
 - iii. Common driveways that access more than one site should be considered to minimize the driveways on public roadways.
 - iv. Loading and service areas should generally be located in the rear or interior side yard to minimize views from public streets.
 - v. Loading areas should be provided so that all required truck movements are on-site. Outdoor amenity areas are encouraged to be provided for employees.
 - vi. Office and entrance elements should be generally oriented to the street with convenient visitor parking provided.
 - vii. Landscaping should be used as a major visual element in unifying the streetscape, screening and softening long expanses of blank walls.
 - viii. Individual entrances of multiple tenant buildings should be identifiable without detracting from the overall appearance of the building.
- g. Prior to the approval of a plan of subdivision, consent, or site plan application, an Environmental Site Assessment and remediation, and/or a Noise Study shall be required where necessary.

2.1.21 Special Policy Area (SPA) - 2

(Repeal and replace SPA - 7 within the Niagara Falls Official Plan)

Special Policy Area 2 applies to approximately 14 hectares of land south of Buttrey Street adjacent to the Transit Station Area that were identified as Industrial within the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan and have been redesignated to Employment/Mixed Use in this Secondary Plan. These parcels are subject to the employment conversion criteria as identified in the Region of Niagara Official Plan and Province's Growth Plan. These parcels should be reviewed as part of the Region of Niagara and City of Niagara Falls Municipal Comprehensive Review process currently underway and shall only be permitted to develop following approval as part of that process. Should any properties not be approved, revisions to the Land Use Schedule A4 shall be made to revert back to the Industrial designation.

In addition to the Employment/Mixed Use policies of this plan (Section 2.5.11), and other applicable policies of this plan, development of lands designated Employment/Mixed Use with a Special Policy Area - 2 designation is subject to the following policies:

- a. These lands are intended to develop for a broad range of employment activities including light industrial; warehousing; office; laboratory and research facilities; automotive uses; service commercial uses; technology industries; recreational and fitness facilities.
 - i. Industrial uses shall primarily occur inside buildings and have minimal outdoor storage. Any outdoor storage must be screened.
 - ii. The implementing zoning by-law shall list the permitted uses as well as the development regulations which will apply.
 - iii. Tourist commercial uses which are designed to support and leverage the proximity to the Downtown and the GO Station. New proposed tourist commercial uses should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods to the north of Buttrey Street and not be of a size and scale which would undermine the mixed-use shopping function of the Downtown.
- b. In addition, a commercial outlet mall primarily serving the tourist market may be permitted on the approximately 21 ha site south of Buttrey Street. The mall shall serve as a catalyst to spur further development within the area. Each store within the outlet mall will market a limited number of brands or range of products. The outlet mall shall be regulated through a site specific zoning by-law amendment that will:
 - i. limit the total retail gross floor area to 27,870 square metres within two phases. The first phase shall be limited to 18,580 square metres. An additional 9,290 square metres of retail space may be permitted after 2013;

- ii. limit the gross floor area for the individual retail units and retail signature stores through the implementing zoning by-law;
 - iii. excludes department store, supermarket, home improvement centre and big box retail uses; and
 - iv. apply the appropriate siting provisions for the development including, but not limited to, parking, setback, building massing and lot coverage.
- c. The developer of the lands referenced under Policy 13.7.1.2 shall be responsible for all improvements to road system, including, but not limited to, design and traffic control measures required as a result of the development which occurs south of Buttrey Street.
- d. In order to ensure a comprehensive approach to servicing, street systems and stormwater management for the 21 ha property south of Buttrey Street development may occur by way of plan of subdivision, condominium, site plan control or other planning process.
- e. The City of Niagara Falls, in consultation with neighbourhood residents and businesses, may prepare a plan to provide streetscape improvements along and in the Buttrey Street area and upgrade needed infrastructure. The City may also provide grants and loans to promote environmental remediation, building and site improvement, as well as acquire and prepare property for redevelopment as permitted in the Community Improvement policies of this Plan and in the City of Niagara Falls Brownfields Community Improvement Plan.
- f. The development of the Buttrey Street area should provide for a high quality of streetscape design, site planning and building design. The intersection of Victoria Avenue and Buttrey Street should be improved to serve as a gateway to the district. Public and Private street design should provide for pedestrian comfort and accommodate the needs of cyclists and transit users while maintaining a connection between the Glenview residential area and the City's downtown. The design and development of individual sites should have regard to the following principles:
 - i. Buildings, with the exception of the outlet mall, are encouraged to be placed close to the street edge with a majority of parking located in the side and rear yards, subject to individual site development conditions.
 - ii. A high quality of building design is encouraged throughout this neighbourhood with particular emphasis on buildings fronting onto Victoria Avenue.

- iii. Common driveways that access more than one site should be considered to minimize the driveways on public roadway.
- iv. Loading and service areas should generally be located in the rear or interior side yard to minimize views from public streets.
- v. Loading areas should be provided so that all required truck movements are on-site.
- vi. Outdoor amenity areas are encouraged to be provided for employees.
- vii. Office and entrance elements should be generally oriented to the street with convenient visitor parking provided.
- viii. Landscaping should be used as a major visual element in unifying the streetscape, screening and softening long expanses of blank walls.
- ix. Individual entrances of multiple tenant buildings should be identifiable without detracting from the overall appearance of the building.
- f. Prior to the approval of a plan of subdivision, consent, or site plan application, an Environmental Site Assessment and remediation, and/or a Noise Study shall be required where necessary.
- g. The Low Density Residential and other applicable policies of this Plan apply to the area designated Low Density Residential with a Special Policy Area designation. Prior to the approval of any planning application, an Environmental Site Assessment and remediation, and/or a Noise Study shall be required where necessary.

2.1.22 Special Policy Area (SPA) - 3

(Repeal and replace SPA - 42 within the Niagara Falls Official Plan)

Special Policy Area 3 applies to approximately 0.41 hectares of land located on the southwest corner of Elgin Street and Terrace Avenue. The land is designated Low Density Residential on Schedule A4 of this Secondary Plan. Notwithstanding the policies contained in Section 2.5.5 of the Secondary Plan, an inn, comprised of not more than two buildings and not more than 16 guest suites, shall be permitted. The inn may include a dining room and a spa for the sole use of overnight guests.

The spa may include massage therapy which shall be provided by registered massage therapists. The existing apartment building, which is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, may be converted from its residential use and may contain up to 10 guest suites. A second building may contain up to six guest suites. Development shall be subject to Site Plan Control and an agreement registered on title in order to address access,

parking lot design and construction, loading, refuse storage, lighting, landscaping, fencing and servicing to ensure compatibility with neighbouring residential properties.

2.1.23 Special Policy Area (SPA) - 4

(Repeal and replace portion of SPA - 62 within the Niagara Falls Official Plan)

Special Policy Area 4 applies to two sections of the Secondary Plan Area. SPA - 4a consists of approximately 0.8 hectares of Tourist Commercial designated lands located east of Victoria Avenue and north of Ferguson Street.

SPA - 4b consists of approximately 0.5 hectares of Employment/Mixed Use designated lands located west of Victoria Avenue, north of the former NS&T Railway corridor, and south of the CN rail corridor.

- a. Development of lands designated Special Policy Area - 4 is subject to the following policies, in addition to other applicable policies of this Plan (note that lands designated SPA - 4b are also subject to the Employment/Mixed Use policies in Section 2.5.11 of this plan):
- b. These lands are intended to be developed for a broad range of employment activities including light industrial (activity primarily occurring within buildings and minimal outdoor storage); warehousing; office; laboratory and research facilities; automotive uses; service commercial uses such as restaurants, printing shops, fitness and recreation, convenience stores; and, institutional uses such as community centres, arenas, and churches. The zoning bylaw applicable to this area will list the permitted uses as well as the development regulations which will apply.
- c. Prior to the approval of any planning application, an Environmental Site Assessment and remediation, and/or a Noise Study shall be required where necessary.
- d. The design and development of individual sites within the Special Policy Area should have regard to the following principles:
 - i. Buildings should generally be placed close to the street edge with a majority of parking located in the side and rear yards, subject to individual site development conditions.
 - ii. A high quality of building design is encouraged with particular emphasis on buildings fronting onto the extension of Thorold Stone Road.
 - iii. Common driveways that access more than one site should be considered to minimize the driveways on public roadways.

- iv. Loading, service and parking areas should generally be located in the rear or interior side yard to minimize views from public streets. Landscaping and screening from public views will be required to achieve this objective.
 - v. Loading areas should be provided so that all required truck movements are on-site.
 - vi. Outdoor amenity areas should be provided for employees.
 - vii. Office and entrance elements should be generally oriented to the street with convenient visitor parking provided.
 - viii. Landscaping should be used as a major visual element in unifying the streetscape, screening and softening long expanses of blank walls.
 - ix. Individual entrances of multiple tenant building should be identifiable without detracting from the overall appearance of the building.
- e. Tourist Commercial and other applicable policies of this Plan apply to the area designated Tourist Commercial with a Special Policy Area designation (SPA - 4a). Prior to the approval of any planning application, an Environmental Site Assessment and remediation, and/or Noise Study shall be required where necessary.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

2.1.24 Transportation Network

The Secondary Plan Area is served by a multi-modal, integrated transportation network, which accommodates pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and automobiles. The area is laid on a relatively fine-grain grid pattern, providing a well-connected network for a range of modes.

The Downtown streets, such as Park Street, Queen Street, Victoria Avenue, and Erie Avenue, are key transportation corridors that contribute to pedestrian and vehicular connectivity within the Area. River Road is a scenic road that currently functions both as an arterial and provides driveway access to the adjacent establishments. The existing Niagara Falls Transit and WEGO systems provide mobility in the downtown and planned enhancement of local transit services will continue to improve mobility for downtown residents and visitors to/from the proposed GO Train Station.

As the area evolves over time, the expectation is that some improvements will be required to enhance automobile, transit, cycling and walking networks within and around the area to ensure that an appropriate balance of transportation options are provided. The

transportation network must provide for a better balance of the full range of transportation modes.

The transportation network and improvements identified in this Plan build on the City and Region's planned transportation improvements, as outlined in a number of approved documents. In addition to the enhancements to the transportation network identified within this Secondary Plan, additional site specific transportation improvements could be required as per the Regional Traffic Impact Assessment Guidelines. The implementation of the proposed transportation infrastructure improvements should be undertaken as part of the City's Transportation Master Plan or development approvals process.

2.1.25 Improvements and Enhancements to Transportation Network

The Secondary Plan contemplates the following potential improvements to the transportation network:

- a) Road improvements and connections (as shown on Figure 10);
- b) Transit improvements; and,
- c) Active transportation improvements (as shown on Figure 11).

2.1.26 Planned Road Hierarchy

The planned road hierarchy is shown on **Figure 9**, illustrating Arterial Roads, Collector Roads and Local Roads. The following policies describe the general planned function for each road type. It is recognized that some of the roads within the Secondary Plan Area have unique functions, such as Queen Street, which is classified as a Collector Road, but effectively operates as a main street serving the Downtown. Section 2.8 elaborates further on the unique functionality and design of the key streets within the Secondary Plan Area.

2.1.26.1 Arterial Roads (23-26 metre ROW)

Arterial Roads are generally under the jurisdiction of the Region of Niagara and are planned to accommodate 2 to 4 lanes of traffic within 23 to 26 metre right-of-ways. Direct access to adjoining properties and on-street parking is generally restricted to allow for the movement of traffic through the area. The road allowance is planned to accommodate a complete street framework, including transit routes with bus lay-bys and shelters as well as bicycle facilities such as bike lanes (protected where possible), shared use lanes, paved shoulders and short- and long-term bicycle parking facilities. On-street parking may be permitted on Bridge Street between Victoria Avenue and Cataract Avenue. On-street parking on other Arterial Roads is not permitted.

2.1.26.2 *Collector Roads (20-23 metre ROW)*

Collector Roads are under the jurisdiction of the City of Niagara Falls and are planned to accommodate 2 lanes of traffic. Collector Roads are undivided with a road allowance width of 20 metres to 23 metres, allowing for the addition of turning lanes, bicycle lanes, bus lay-bays and shelters, landscaping, sidewalks and utilities. On-street parking is permitted on all Collector Roads. Bicycle parking should be provided at key destinations along Collector Roads.

2.1.26.3 *Local Roads (20 metre ROW)*

Local Roads provide access to properties and carry traffic predominantly of a local nature. Typically, roadways in this section carry low volumes of traffic short distances. Local roads generally are designed to accommodate on-street parking, sidewalks and limited landscaping in the boulevards. All local road allowances are to be 20 metres in width. On street parking is permitted on Local Roads.

2.1.26.4 *Scenic Roads*

River Road is a unique, scenic two lane road which stretches along the eastern edge of the Secondary Plan Area. River Road is owned and maintained by the Niagara Parks Commission. All infrastructure improvements and enhancements for River Road are under the jurisdiction of the Niagara Parks Commission. The current two lane road is planned to be maintained as a scenic road, providing connectivity along the Gorge between the Falls, the Downtown and the GO station. Refer to Section 2.8.7 for additional details on suggested streetscape enhancements for River Road respectively.

2.1.27 Planned Road Improvements and Connections

Figure 10 illustrates new connections, road widening and other road improvement opportunities which are intended to support the implementation of the Secondary Plan. The current road network is expected to accommodate the forecasted travel demand into the area resulting from intensification and commuter traffic associated with enhanced GO Rail services. There are three main road-related improvements (excluding streetscape improvements which are addressed in Section 2.8):

- a) **Thorold Stone Road Extension:** There is a need to complete the extension of Thorold Stone Road from Fourth Avenue to Bridge Street. This Arterial Road extension will terminate at the intersection of Bridge Street and Victoria Avenue. The Region of Niagara is responsible for undertaking the extension, which should include a roundabout. Active transportation connections along this extension should be considered.
- b) **Victoria Avenue Improvements between Bridge Street and Valley Way:** There is a need to examine opportunities to optimize and enhance this portion of the City-maintained Collector Road. Over time, it is expected that this stretch of two lane

Collector road will experience increased traffic flows. Opportunities to improve this stretch of corridor could include signal optimization, including potential to optimize signalization for pedestrian and cyclist traffic flow. Reduction/consolidation of access points and/or adjustments to on-street parking should also be considered.

- c) **Signalization of Victoria Avenue at Buttrey:** There is a need to examine the sightlines at the intersection of Victoria Avenue and Buttrey Street where the geometry of the rail corridor crossing may create challenges for residents living in the area as well as commuters accessing the GO station from the north. Signalization of Victoria Avenue at Buttrey Street should be explored to improve this intersection. This could also be achieved through the reconfiguration of Buttrey Street such that it curves north to connect with Ferguson Street east of Victoria Avenue.

There are no road widenings contemplated in the plan for the area.

2.1.28 Transit Network

Transit service within the Secondary Plan Area is provided by a number of operators, including Niagara Falls Transit and the Niagara Parks Commission (WEGO). The City will continue to work with transit providers to improve the integration of services.

2.1.29 GO Transit Station Area

The Transit Station Area includes the existing VIA Rail/Amtrak station and surrounding lands as identified on **Schedule A4** that include all lands north of the existing CP Rail line to Buttrey Street. The design of the station area will be planned to address the following elements:

- a) Improved access to the station area for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, kiss and ride and carpool users;
- b) A sufficient supply of parking for commuters;
- c) Pedestrian-scaled lighting and other safety features to promote and support active transportation at any time of day or night;
- d) Wayfinding solutions;
- e) Opportunities to preserve, restore and maintain the heritage aspects of the train station building and to re-purpose the building for a multi-modal transit station; and,
- f) Opportunities for universal access and incorporation of sustainable design measures.

2.1.30 Transit Supportive Improvements

This Plan encourages the improvement and provision of new transit-supportive amenities such as shelters, bike racks, short- and long-term bicycle storage, seating, wayfinding and lighting within and around the Transit Station Area and other transit stops. The City will work with the Niagara Region and the Niagara Parks Commission (who operates the WEGO service along with the City) to enhance the public realm, increase passenger amenities and improve linkages in and around existing and proposed transit stops. Refer to Section 2.7 for additional details.

2.1.31 Active Transportation Network

The planned Active Transportation Network is depicted on **Figure 11**. The network is planned to improve connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists within the Secondary Plan Area and to surrounding areas.

2.1.32 Active Transportation Improvements

The active transportation network should provide direct and safe connections to the GO station, major transit stops, multi-use trails, major destinations (e.g. Riverfront and the Downtown), parks, schools, employment opportunities and recreational facilities. Amenities for cyclists and pedestrians should be a priority, located at key points all along the network. There are a number of active transportation improvements proposed for the area, including the following:

- a) On-Road Bike Route/Lanes (on-road and where possible, protected):
 - Victoria Avenue (between Bridge Street and Morrison Street);
 - Bridge Street (between Victoria and River Road);
 - Erie Avenue (from Huron Street to Bridge Street);
 - River Road bike lane widening; and,
 - Hickson Avenue (from Buttrey Street to Leader Lane).
- a) Multi-Use Trail (off road):
 - Multi-use trail connecting Hickson Avenue to Erie Avenue across the GO transit station site (routing/alignment to be confirmed through Station Design);
 - Extension of Olympic Torch Race Legacy Trail to River Road and to the Michigan Central Railway Bridge to provide a cross border pedestrian and cyclist connection; and,

- Enhancements to River Road to allow for off-road/separated cycling and pedestrian facilities, including sidewalks and lookouts.

In addition, Figure 11 shows the active transportation improvements proposed by the Niagara Region 2041 Transportation Master Plan.

2.1.33 Secure Bike Parking Facilities

The implementing Zoning By-law may require the provision of secure bicycle parking facilities in a conspicuous location, long-term bike parking areas within buildings, and on-site shower facilities and lockers for employees who bike to work. The City should allow for a reduction in the number of required parking spaces where bicycle parking facilities are provided.

2.1.34 Transportation Demand Management

Development applications in proximity to the GO station shall include a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan, prepared to the satisfaction of the City of Niagara Falls. The intent of the TDM Plan is to implement and promote measures to reduce the use of low-occupancy automobiles for trips and to increase transit use, cycling and walking. Generally, the need for TDM Plan is contingent upon the proposed use, size and scale of development and general proximity to the station.

2.1.35 Traffic Impact

Future developments may require a Traffic Impact Assessment. Any Traffic Impact Assessment shall be subject to the Regional Traffic Impact Assessment Guidelines where a Regional Road is impacted.

2.1.36 Parking

Through the development approvals process, the City will consider alternative parking requirements for mixed use and high density developments including shared parking standards. Such requests will be supported by a Parking Demand Analysis completed to the satisfaction of the City.

2.1.37 Coordination with the City's Transportation Master Plan

The transportation and growth assumptions, vision and other relevant aspects of this Secondary Plan have been developed considering the policies and direction of the City of Niagara Falls Transportation Master Plan, Transportation Beyond Tomorrow 2031. Any future amendments to the Secondary Plan shall ensure alignment between the Secondary Plan and the Transportation Master Plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1.38 Water and Sanitary Servicing

As part of the implementation of this Secondary Plan, the City will work with Niagara Region to ensure that there is adequate water and sanitary servicing and capacity to accommodate the long-term planned development for the Secondary Plan Area.

2.1.39 Municipal Servicing Study

As part of the implementation of this Secondary Plan and the policies of Chapter 2 of the Official Plan, the City will undertake an analysis of local infrastructure to ensure that adequate servicing is in place to accommodate the planned growth for the area. The City will update its municipal master servicing strategy as required.

2.1.40 Development Applications and Servicing Requirements

The City may also require development applications to be supported by site-specific servicing studies.

2.1.41 Sustainable Stormwater Management

The City encourages innovative measures to help reduce the impacts of urban runoff and maintain base groundwater flow. Such measures may include bioswales, permeable pavers, rain barrels and green roofs. Please refer to Policy 4.5.1 (Part 4) of the City of Niagara Falls Official Plan for additional direction on opportunities for funding and implementation of sustainable stormwater management elements.

2.1.42 Coordination of Public Works

The City will work with the Region to ensure that planned public works for the area are coordinated to minimize the impacts of construction on the residents and businesses within the Secondary Plan Area. Coordination efforts will consider the phasing of streetscape improvements, any future road works and maintenance, as well as any upgrades to water and sanitary networks.

The following section provides the urban design policies and guidelines for the Secondary Plan Area. The policies of this section are intended to complement and build upon the urban design policies in Part 3 Section 5 of the Official Plan and be implemented through the site plan process.

The purpose of these policies is to provide guidance for enhancing the character of the area, including both the private and public realm. The policies are intended to provide a degree of flexibility, allowing for a range of design styles and expressions which will contribute to creating a unique sense of place.

The following sections provide an overview of the urban design improvements being recommended as part of this plan, present the urban design guidelines for the public

realm, outline the urban design guidelines for the private realm and describe the design integration policies.

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URBAN DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS

The public realm improvement strategy is intended to enhance the attractiveness and functionality of the Secondary Plan Area. The planned Public Realm Improvement Plan is depicted on **Figure 12** and considers the following:

- a) Major Gateway Improvement areas;
- b) Minor Gateway Improvement areas;
- c) Major Streetscape Improvement areas;
- d) Minor Streetscape Improvement areas;
- e) Potential Street Grid Refinement;
- f) Potential New Public Spaces;
- g) Potential Public Space Improvements; and,
- h) Active Transportation Connections.

Please refer to **Table 2.1** of this Plan for additional direction on recommended phasing and implementation of these improvements. The following identifies the improvement areas as presented on **Figure 12**.

2.1.43 Gateways

Gateways are intended to function as formal entranceways into the Secondary Plan Area and create a strong sense of place. Presently, the Secondary Plan Area does not feature any prominent public space treatments at gateway locations and accordingly, the Plan contemplates two levels of improvement:

- a) Major gateway improvement areas; and,
- b) Minor gateway improvement areas.

Gateways include lands within the right-of-ways and all abutting lands.

2.1.43.1 Major Gateway Improvement Areas

Major gateway improvements should include prominent signage, enhanced lighting, intensive landscaping (such as seasonal floral displays, tree planting), cycling-supportive infrastructure, public art and other types of public realm enhancements. Adjacent redevelopment should be designed to support the function of the gateway. One major gateway improvement area has been identified:

- a) **Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street intersection and surrounding area:** This intersection is one of the only 'four-corners' that provides a direct connection to the study area. The intersection includes a pedestrian refuge island and narrow sidewalks with little streetscape planting or pedestrian furniture. The intersection is characterized by underutilized commercial parcels and existing low rise residential uses and is not generally a pleasant pedestrian environment.
- b) The Victoria Avenue/Bridge Street intersection could become a major gateway node due to its direct connectivity with Whirlpool Bridge, Niagara Falls, and the future Transit Station that connects users with transit into the downtown and beyond. In addition, uses to the northwest of the intersection, such as Great Wolf Lodge, function as a key regional destination and draws in customers from across the region and beyond. There is an opportunity to establish a visual identity that can be carried through the study area. To achieve this, private realm signage should be consolidated and minimized, new welcome and wayfinding public signage should be introduced, sidewalks should be widened and landscaping and planting should be expanded for the intersection.

2.1.43.2 *Minor Gateway Improvement Areas*

Minor gateway improvements should include a smaller scale of public realm enhancements, such as landscaping, cycling-supportive infrastructure, public art, lighting and appropriately-scaled wayfinding cues. The expectation is that Minor Gateway Improvements are for locations which require enhancements to address the public realm at prominent intersections, but would not necessarily imply prominent redevelopment opportunities on adjacent lands. Two minor gateway improvement areas have been identified:

- a) **Erie Avenue and Bridge Street:** This T-intersection includes the Transit Station to the north, the existing City of Niagara Falls Transit Terminal to the east, and the historic Europa Hotel on the west. This is an important intersection that offers significant opportunities for redevelopment, due to its location within the Transit Station Area, and has been identified as a gateway improvement area. In addition, redevelopment opportunities within the development parcels fronting onto this intersection can provide new uses, built form, pedestrian connectivity and investment needed to support the Transit Station and Downtown Niagara Falls. Gateway improvements should include new high quality mixed use development, street furniture, street trees, planting, and hard landscaping. New pedestrian realm enhancements should include signage and wayfinding. Pedestrian realm design treatments should be expanded to link the Transit Station with the Downtown through the introduction of a new linear public space and enhanced sidewalk connection along Erie Avenue to Queen Street.

- b) **Bridge Street and River Road:** At the intersection of two key arterial roads, and in proximity to the Whirlpool Bridge and Environmental Conservation Area, this intersection has been identified as a minor gateway improvement area. This intersection serves an important international border crossing function and offers important views and vistas into the Niagara River. Redevelopment within this intersection and general area should be of a high quality to enhance the special qualities of this location, including the border crossing function, views into the Niagara River, and proximity to the Environmental Protection Area. In addition to the uses described for the Tourism Commercial designation, future development proposals should explore opportunities to include cultural or institutional uses within the development program in order to create an enhanced destination and regional draw.

In addition, enhanced landscaping and tree plantings, pedestrian-scaled lighting, cycling facilities, street furniture and new public spaces should be considered in these minor gateway improvement areas.

2.1.44 Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements are intended to provide direction for future enhancements to the key roads within the Secondary Plan Area. Three levels of improvement are contemplated in this Plan:

- a) Major streetscape improvement areas;
- b) Minor streetscape improvement areas; and,
- c) Potential street grid refinement.

Streetscape improvements apply to the public land within the right-of-way.

2.1.44.1 Major Streetscape Improvement Areas

Major streetscape improvements are proposed for River Road (between Buttrey Street and the south boundary of the Secondary plan Area, and Erie Avenue (between Bridge Street and Queen Street). Key improvements should include (but not limited to) tree plantings on both sides of the street to provide shade and comfort for pedestrians, improved lighting and occasional street furniture, as well as completion of the sidewalk and the introduction of bike lanes for Bridge Street.

2.1.44.2 Minor Streetscape Improvement Areas

Minor streetscape improvements have been identified for Buttrey Street (between Victoria Avenue and River Road), Bridge Street (east of Victoria Avenue), and Victoria Avenue (between Buttrey Street and Morrison Street). Key improvements should include (but not limited to) tree plantings on both sides of the street to provide shade and comfort for

pedestrians and bike lanes, as well as completion of the sidewalk network along Buttrey Street.

2.1.44.3 Potential Street Grid Refinement

A new mid-block laneway has been recommended between Park Street and Queen Street to provide rear yard access for redevelopment sites along the south side of Park Street. This laneway would provide access to parking, service and loading areas, while allowing the Park Street frontage to be preserved for pedestrian related activities.

2.1.45 Potential New Public Spaces and Public Space Improvements

Where new major mixed use development or redevelopment is planned, new public spaces should be provided to enhance the pedestrian environment and provide amenities for residents, employees and visitors. Where public spaces exist, improvements should be made to better serve the existing and planned community. Public spaces should be designed to be barrier free and to include a mix of design elements including (but not limited to) enhanced landscaping, shade trees, ample locations for seating and public art.

New public spaces should be located close to the street and be connected to the pedestrian network. New public spaces should also be connected with existing or planned transit stops. Figure 12 identifies a potential new public space west of Erie Avenue between Bridge Street and Park Street and a potential public space improvement along Bridge Street. The icons are for illustrative purposes only and the need, location and design of public spaces shall occur through the site plan application process. The icons depicted on Figure 12 are not intended to be comprehensive, and additional new public spaces will be required through the development application process.

2.1.46 Active Transportation Connections

Figure 12 also identifies the existing and planned active transportation network, including new active transportation connections that are needed to achieve the future network. The active transportation connections are described further in Section 2.6.8 and 2.6.9 of this Plan.

2.1.47 Adjacent Development

Future development surrounding the Major Gateway shall consider the urban design intent of this gateway intersection and reflect a human-scale format to improve the pedestrian quality of the streetscape. Where new development or redevelopment is planned near a Gateway Improvement Area, the proposed development/redevelopment should be designed in a manner which enhances the function of the gateway, through:

- a) Complementary building orientation and massing, with consideration for design of active frontages;
- b) Enhanced architectural detailing;

- c) Linked private and public pedestrian connectivity;
- d) Enhanced private realm landscaping; and,
- e) Other elements as appropriate.

Please refer to Section 2.8.9 of this Plan for further guidance on building height and massing

2.1.48 Implementation of Public Realm Improvements

The public realm improvements depicted on **Figure 12** shall be implemented through a future Community Improvement Plan, Public Realm Master Plan, the redevelopment approvals process or as part of other municipal works. The improvements depicted on **Figure 12** are intended to support growth and intensification within the Secondary Plan Area. Additional public realm improvements should be implemented through the development approvals process, based on the needs of the proposed development. Section 2.9 of this Plan provides additional details regarding implementation.

2.1.49 Building Public Spaces for People

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area, and in particular the lands surrounding Bridge Street, suffer from an inadequate public realm. Underdeveloped lots, large surface parking lots, lack of weather protection and outdoor public spaces, and small, poorly defined sidewalks result in inadequate walking and cycling conditions. The key directions in the Secondary Plan, as well as the following text, provide solutions towards improving this condition.

Improving the public realm for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users will contribute to livable and animated streets and parks. As properties within the Plan Area redevelop, it will be increasingly important to improve the public realm.

2.1.49.1 Boulevard Design

Boulevards are the component of the public right-of-way from building face to street edge. The design of the boulevard must accommodate pedestrian circulation, and an attractive public realm. It should support its multi-purpose function, accommodating pedestrian circulation, adequate space for healthy tree growth, plants and other landscaping, bicycle parking, public art, transit shelters, street lighting, signage, street furniture, utilities and adequate space for commercial and social activity.

Within the Plan Area, the boulevard width should reflect the character and function of the street. Where insufficient space exists within the right-of-way to achieve the minimum recommended boulevard width, a combination of measures should be explored including setting buildings back at-grade and reduced lane widths. Boulevards typically consist of the Patio and Marketing Zone (Transition Zone), Pedestrian Through Zone (Sidewalk), Planting and Furnishing Zone and Edge Zone. Cycle Tracks or Multi-Use Paths may also be part of the boulevard (Figure 13; Figure 14).

Development of these zones should adhere to the following guidelines:

2.1.49.1.1 *Patio and Marketing Zone*

- a) Elements that may be located within this zone include private seating areas, planters, signage, and temporary retail displays. In areas with retail at grade, this zone should be wider to accommodate active at-grade uses.
- b) Elements within the patio and marketing zone should not impede the pedestrian clearway in any manner.
- c) Overhanging signage and awnings can be installed if they do not impede pedestrian travel in any manner and meet local signage regulations.

2.1.49.1.2 *Pedestrian Through Zone*

- a) Pedestrian through zones shall typically have an unobstructed width of 1.8 to 3.0 metres.
- b) May include demarcated areas along sidewalks where vehicles may encounter pedestrians along their route (i.e. at drive aisles, crosswalks and intersections). In this case, the use of accent paving should be followed.
- c) Pedestrian through zones should be designed to meet all AODA standards and be unobstructed both horizontally and vertically.
- d) Constructed of a solid, stable and textured material, such as concrete.
- e) Pedestrian through zones should be provided on both sides of the road.

2.1.49.1.3 *Planting and Furnishing Zone*

- a) The width of the planting and furnishing zone may range between 1.0 to 3.0 metres depending on available space.
- b) The planting and furnishing zone will contain street furniture, street trees, street lighting and other fixed objects.
- c) Tree plantings and landscaping should be optimized to provide sun protection and reduce heat islands.
- d) In hardscaped areas, trees should be planted in continuous tree trenches utilizing soil cells to encourage longevity and viability. Soil cells can be extended under on street parking, multi-use paths and bike facilities where soil volume is critical.
- e) No elements located within the planting and furnishing zone should impede travel within the adjacent pedestrian through zone or cycling lanes.
- f) The planting and furnishing zone can be hardscaped or softscaped or include a mix of both types of landscaping.
- g) The design of hardscapes and softscaped surface should be designed to promote low maintenance and durable materials.
- h) Snow storage will likely occur in this area and all elements should be designed to accommodate and withstand snow loading.

2.1.49.1.4 *Edge Zone*

- a) Located next to the curb.
- b) Should be a hard surface contiguous with the grade of the planting and furnishing zone. Should be constructed of durable materials appropriate for snow storage and street cleaning.
- c) Should not overlap with cycling facilities.
- d) May be designed with decorative paving.

2.1.49.2 *Bridge and Park Streets*

Bridge Street has been identified as a minor streetscape improvement area on Figure 12. Streetscape improvements along Bridge Street as well as intensification along Bridge and Park Streets will have a significant impact on the Station Area and Plan Area.

Built form adjacent to Bridge and Park Streets is presently dominated by a collage of small-scale residential and commercial properties, checkered with vacant lots and surface parking. The Secondary Plan designates the entire area surrounding these two streets as Downtown Mixed Use. Lands along Bridge and Park Streets include some large consolidated properties; however, much of the land is divided into smaller properties, which may require further consolidation.

Major improvements are recommended for the area between Bridge and Park, including development of a linear park along the abandoned rail corridor and streetscape improvements along Bridge Street within proximity of the existing VIA Rail station building.

Along Bridge Street as redevelopment occurs, it is recommended that buildings be setback to accommodate minimum 4.4 metre boulevard widths to improve pedestrian mobility and accommodate street trees, bicycle parking, landscaping, street furniture, etc. Further, it is recommended that dedicated bicycle lanes be provided along Bridge Street connecting to bicycle lanes along Victoria Street and River Road to more safely accommodate active transportation to the Station Area.

Redevelopment of Bridge Street is proposed to be accommodated within a planned 23.2 metre right-of way as illustrated on Figure 15 the following page. The previous general boulevard recommendations apply to Bridge Street and specific design recommendations include:

- a) Ensure a minimum pedestrian clearway/sidewalk of 2.5 metres.
- b) Provide textured edges and sound assisted crosswalks to assist the visually impaired.
- c) High quality treatments, such as granite edges, should be considered for the pedestrian clearway. The pedestrian clearway should be coordinated with the design of feature paving across boulevards, intersections, crosswalks and driveways.
- d) Feature paving should be used to delineate areas of pedestrian priority.
- e) The Planting and Furnishing Zone plus Edge Zone should have a width of 1.9 metres.
- f) On-street parking should be 2.5 metres in width and provided on both sides of the street.
- g) On-street cycling lanes shall be provided on both sides of the street with minimum widths of 1.2 metres.
 - One 3.3 metre wide travel lane should be provided in each direction.

2.1.49.3 *River Road*

Running along the riverfront, River Road is home to residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and open space uses. Intensification along River Road is identified north of Queen Street while South of Queen Street will continue to house predominantly low density residential uses. River Road has been identified as a Major Streetscape Improvement on Figure 12.

To serve the mix of tourists including cyclists, local shoppers and residents, River Road should also be treated as a Complete Street, as shown on Figure 5.4. A minimum 4.0 metre boulevard will provide spill-over space for retail establishments while enhancing pedestrian mobility and creating more opportunities for street trees, landscaping and street furniture.

Redevelopment of River Road is proposed to be accommodated within a planned 21 metre right-of-way as illustrated on the following page. The previous general boulevard recommendations apply to River Road and specific design recommendations include:

- a) New buildings should be setback from the public right-of-way to provide space for an enhanced frontage and spillover area.
- b) Ensure a minimum pedestrian clearway / sidewalk of 2.5 metres along the west boulevard.
- c) The Planting and Furnishing Zone plus Edge Zone should have a minimum width of 1.5 metres.
- d) On-street parking should be 2.5 metres in width and provided along the west side of the street.
- e) One 3.5 metre wide travel lane should be provided in each direction.
- f) A 3.4 metre wide physically separated two-direction multi-use path should be located within the east boulevard.
- g) Durable surfaces, such as asphalt or concrete should be used in the design of the multi-use path.
- h) A wide pedestrian promenade of 3.5 metres shall be developed within the eastern boulevard. The design of the pedestrian promenade shall draw from a palette of streetscape materials that is consistent, visually strong and celebrates River Road as a key tourist corridor within the Niagara Region. A consistent visual character shall be developed along the length of the street.

2.1.49.4 *Erie Avenue*

Erie Avenue connects Queen Street, the heart of downtown Niagara Falls, to Bridge Street and provides a direct view corridor to the existing train station. A comprehensive design exercise should be conducted to transform Erie Avenue into a woonerf between Queen Street and Bridge Street that follows the direction of the cross section identified in Figure 5.5. Due to their complex nature, shared streets need to be designed in a collaborative manner with city staff, landowners and residents. Specific design issues that should be considered include:

- a) Grade separated sidewalks will be eliminated and focus will be placed on differentiated material use.
- b) Surface treatments will include varied materials to provide visual and textural cues to users across the width of the right-of-way.
- c) Gateway or entry points should be well defined by a change in paving and signs to indicate a change in road behaviour expectations.
- d) Incorporate changes in texture, bollards or other property demarcation elements to define parking spaces.
- e) Draw from a palette of streetscape materials that is consistent and visually strong to establish a consistent visual character along the length of the street.
- f) Integrate street furniture in such a way so as to encourage community engagement within the streetscape and provide driver engagement.
- g) Integrate principles of inclusivity and accessibility considerations.
- h) Provide for active transportation infrastructure such as bicycle parking.
- i) Cluster or group utilities where possible to minimize visual impact.

2.1.49.5 *Buttrey Street*

Buttrey Street connects Victoria Avenue with River Road, to the north of the Transit Station. It functions as a collector road. It currently functions as an industrial street, which does not have sidewalks, curbs and gutters nor defined street components. Future uses north of the street are identified as medium density residential in the long term, although employment/mixed uses will be accommodated in the short term. With the redevelopment of properties along Buttrey Street, this street has been identified as a Minor Streetscape Improvement area on Figure 12 and should be prioritized for the planned 20 metre right-of-way. As the road is directly adjacent to the Station Area, it should be designed to accommodate expected high pedestrian and cyclist traffic volumes.

Design recommendations include:

- a) Ensure a minimum pedestrian clearway/ sidewalk of 2.5 metres on both sides of the street.
- b) The Planting and Furnishing Zone plus Edge Zone should have a minimum width of 1.5 metres
- c) On-street parking should be 2.5 metres in width and provided along both sides of the street.

- d) One 3.5 metre wide travel lane should be provided in each direction.

2.1.49.6 Victoria Avenue

Victoria Avenue is classified as an arterial road between Bridge and Buttrey Street and a collector road south of Bridge Street. It functions as a major north-south accessway through the Plan Area. It has also been identified as a Minor Streetscape Improvement area on Figure 12. Design of Victoria Avenue should accommodate transit and provide safe and dedicated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Important elements to consider include:

- a) Sidewalks and high quality and visible pedestrian amenities.
- b) Pedestrian crossings only at signalized intersections.
- c) Transit amenities with transit in mixed traffic.
- d) Dedicated cycling facility (bike lane or cycle track) on both sides of the street.
- e) Landscaping.

Design recommendations include:

- a) Ensure a minimum pedestrian clearway / sidewalk of 1.8 metres on both sides of the street.
- b) The Planting and Furnishing Zone plus Edge Zone should have a minimum width of 1.6 metres.
- c) Physically separated bicycle lanes on each side of the street should be designed to include a 1.8 metre bicycle lane plus 0.8 metre buffer.
- d) Two 3.5 metre wide travel lanes should be provided in each direction.

2.1.49.7 Potential Street Grid Refinement

The mid-block laneway between Park Street and Queen Street shall be used as access to parking, loading and servicing. The lands along the laneway will be planned for with the following design recommendations:

- a) Buildings to the north of the laneway shall front onto Park Street;
- b) Buildings to the south of the laneway shall front onto Queen Street; and
- c) The laneway should be planned at a width of 7 metres.

2.1.49.8 *Street Furniture*

Street furniture consists of the benches and seats, two-stream waste receptacles, shelters, drinking fountains, weather protection, etc. that provides the setting for resting, sitting and eating and social encounters within the public realm. For future road reconstruction, as identified in the transportation Section 2.6 of this Plan, it will be important to properly locate street furniture so that they do not impede pedestrian movement. Preferably, street furniture should be located within the Planting and Furnishing Zone (see Section 2.8.7).

Other guidelines for street furniture include:

- a) The City should select strategic locations for groupings of furniture that would benefit adjacent retail establishments and the public. For example, waste receptacles are appropriate near food establishments and benches are welcome near public spaces and cafes and patios. These locations should include the Major and Minor Gateways as identified on Figure 12 of this Plan.
- b) Groups of benches should be located in new green/park spaces throughout the Plan Area.
- c) Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be considered as appropriate.
- d) Street furniture should be designed with the aim of being accessible for all including the disabled and elderly.
- e) Street furniture should be linked together where appropriate to stimulate social encounters.

2.1.49.9 *Public Art*

Public art installations can be standalone or integrated into buildings, street furniture and other infrastructure.

Public art has the capacity to animate public spaces. Bringing them to life. Public art can be temporary or permanent. It can reflect an area's natural setting, spirit, unique history or aspirations and can draw attention to universal themes or local, regional, national and global issues. Public art has the ability to inspire thought and reflection. Or it can just be fun.

The design of public art should:

- a) Be located in high use areas such as public parks, plazas, curb extensions, multi-use paths, etc.
- b) Limited near forms of traffic control (i.e. stop signs) to minimize driver distractions and sight-line obstructions.

- c) Public art installations should be durable and easily maintained.
- d) Reflect Secondary Plan policy in its coordination and maintenance.

2.1.49.10 New Public Open Spaces

New public open spaces or public space improvements should be provided at the following locations, as identified on Figure 12:

- a) Within the old rail corridor running between Bridge Street and Park Street, and continuing northwest from the Bridge Street and Victoria Avenue intersection.
- b) At the southwest corner of Erie and Bridge Streets.
- c) South of Bridge Street, mid-block between Chrysler Avenue and Erie Avenue.
- d) Along River Road, mid-block between Bridge Street and Park Street.

Additional public open spaces shall be planned for through the development application process.

2.1.49.11 Semi-Public Open Spaces

The majority of open spaces within the Plan Area will be semi-public open spaces. Their function will be similar to that of public open spaces, but the land will be under control of agencies such as Metrolinx or private developers via condominium corporations. Semi-public open spaces should be designed to:

- a) Provide direct access from adjacent public sidewalks.
- b) Be visible from active indoor areas.
- c) Include features (e.g. paving, seating, public art, etc.) constructed of materials equal in quality and appearance to those used in station entrances, main private buildings and nearby public spaces.
- d) Maximize sun exposure through the location and massing of taller building elements.
- e) Use hard and soft landscaping materials that are high quality, easily replaceable and low maintenance.
- f) Select site furnishings (e.g. play equipment, public art, shelters, signage, fencing, etc.).
- g) Use plant materials that are low maintenance, and pest and disease resistant.

2.1.49.12 *Landscaping*

Providing improved landscaping, along Bridge Street and within public and semi-public open spaces, will help create visual continuity throughout the Plan Area. Trees shall be incorporated into public street design and will frame all streets and pathways, with a priority to the major and minor streetscape improvements identified on Figure 12. Trees provide shade and comfort and enhance the visual and environmental qualities of the street.

To sustain trees, planting should occur in sufficiently deep and wide planting areas backfilled with appropriate soil. Native and disease-resistant species for street trees should be used, wherever possible, to promote long-term growth. The following are general landscaping guidelines that should be adhered to as the Plan Area develops:

- a) To allow for full growth and to ensure their long-term viability, street trees should be planted with appropriate soil volume in continuous tree trenches.
- b) Where compaction of planting soil is anticipated, the use of soil cells should be considered.
- c) Only species that are tolerant of urban conditions should be used. Mono-culture planting may, in the case of disease, be entirely lost and is, therefore, strongly discouraged. Refer to Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority's Native Plant Guide for information on appropriate native plants.
- d) Plantings should be selected that require little maintenance and do not require the use of pesticides and fertilizers.
- e) Shrub and ground cover planting should be utilized in open tree pits, provided the minimum pedestrian clearway dimension is available.
- f) Careful consideration should be given to the type and location of trees. Higher branching trees should be positioned to ensure there is no interference with cyclists or truck traffic. Sight lines should also be considered in the location of trees planted at intersections.
- g) Seasonal appeal, especially for the winter months, should be considered for all planting.
- h) The planting of trees, as infill along existing streets where the rhythm of existing trees is interrupted, should be implemented.

2.1.49.13 *Low-Impact Development*

Low-Impact Development (LID) is an approach to managing stormwater run-off at the source by replicating natural watershed functions. It uses simple, cost-effective methods

to capture, detain and treat stormwater. General guidelines that should be adhered to include:

- a) Incorporate LID practices, where possible and as appropriate. LID options can include:
- b) Bioswales or drainage swales;
- c) Bioretention planters, units or curb extensions;
- d) Perforated pipe system;
- e) Permeable paving; and
- f) Pre-cast tree planters or soil cells.
- g) Where possible, replace unnecessarily paved areas with permeable materials (medians, dedicated parking lanes / lay-bys, traffic islands). However, do not use permeable materials within the pedestrian clearway.

2.1.50 Site Design

2.1.50.1 A Strong Neighbourhood Framework

Community design includes the location and orientation of buildings. When sited and designed correctly, buildings should enhance the existing character of the street. This can be accomplished through protecting and directing views, providing a consistent street wall, and relating buildings to the street and pedestrian activities.

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan Area includes significant lands with redevelopment potential. These lands are primarily located within the following areas:

- a) South of Park Street between Buckley Avenue and Cataract Avenue
- b) North of Buttrey Street between Dyson Avenue and Stanton Avenue
- c) South and North of Bridge Street
- d) East of May Avenue
- e) Along the west side of River Road
- f) In the under-utilized lots northeast of Ferguson Street and Terrace Avenue

These lands are designated Mixed Use, Tourist Commercial, Office Commercial, and high density residential. It is critical that the design of these sites ensures that buildings contribute to a human scale while providing a fine-grained street and block network.

Building floor plates should be appropriate to support intensification and innovative employment and tourism uses as well as transit investment.

2.1.50.2 Gateway Features

A major gateway is proposed for the intersection of Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street, with minor gateways proposed at the intersections of Erie Avenue and Bridge Street as well as River Road and Bridge Street. The demarcation of gateways are created through the provision of consistent elements such as signage and wayfinding, urban space, hardscaped or landscaped surfaces, public art and appropriate built form to provide orientation and to assist in defining a neighbourhood's distinct character. The design should:

- a) Create a sense of entrance and arrival, contributing to community image and identity, at a scale appropriate for the given context. Elements contributing to gateway features and design include: signage and wayfinding, trees and other landscaping, feature lighting, paving, seat walls and public art.
- b) Development at gateways should meet a high standard of design, recognizing their role as a gateway, and be appropriately oriented to the public realm.

2.1.50.3 Access and Entrances

Vehicular access to on-site parking, loading and servicing facilities should be located from secondary streets and rear lanes wherever possible. Where this is not possible, mid-block access can be considered in instances where:

- a) The driveway is located an appropriate distance from the nearest intersection or side street.
- b) Appropriate spacing between adjacent driveways is maintained resulting in no more than one driveway every 30 metres.
- c) Opportunities to consolidate shared access to minimize curb-cuts are prioritized.
- d) Consideration is provided to contain mid-block driveways within the building massing with additional floors built above.

2.1.50.4 Parking

As the Plan Area develops, a variety of parking solutions will be appropriate to support increased densities and build out of the Station Area. As a general rule, surface parking should be designed to minimize its visual impact and to allow for future intensification as a development site. As such, the layout of parking should consider site access, landscaping and site servicing that will permit the eventual redevelopment of these sites.

2.1.50.4.1 *Surface Parking*

- a) Surface parking lots should be divided into smaller “parking courts.” Large areas of uninterrupted surface parking should be avoided.
- b) Surface parking areas should be located at the rear, or side-yard of a building and should not be placed between the front face of a building and the sidewalk. Driveways to parking should be from rear lanes and side streets wherever possible.
- c) Shared parking and shared driveways between adjacent properties are encouraged. Where multiple access points currently exist, they should be consolidated where possible.
- d) Where appropriate, permeable paving should be considered to promote drainage.
- e) Use planting strips, landscaped traffic islands and/or paving articulation to define vehicle routes that include pedestrian walkways, improve edge conditions and minimize the aesthetic impact of surface conditions.
- f) Distinctive pavement and pavement markings should be used to indicate pedestrian crossings and create an interesting visual identity.
- g) Clear, 1.5 metre (minimum) dedicated pedestrian routes should provide direct connections from parking areas to building entrances.
- h) Pedestrian-scaled lighting should be provided along pathways.
- i) Preferential parking (i.e. accessible parking stalls, bicycles, car-share, energy efficient vehicles) should be located close to building entrances.
- j) Parking along the GO rail tracks should be adequately screened with high-quality landscaping.
- k) Parking on corner lots is discouraged. However, where required, it should be screened by landscaping.

2.1.50.4.2 *Landscaping for Parking*

- a) High quality landscaping treatments should be used to define site boundaries, provide buffers between adjoining developments, and screen storage and utility areas.
- b) Parking should be screened from the public realm.
- c) Landscaped parking islands, of at least 1.5 metres wide, at the end of parking rows and pedestrian connections that contain salt tolerant shade trees are encouraged. Selection of plant materials should consider the following:

- d) Year-round maintenance;
- e) Seasonal variety;
- f) Hardiness and resistance to disease;
- g) Maintenance requirements; and
- h) Tolerance of plant materials to salt and urban conditions.

2.1.50.4.3 *Bicycle Parking*

- a) Bicycle parking should be provided at regular intervals along major roads such as River Road, Buttrey Street, Park Street and Bridge Street, other areas of high pedestrian activity, and located close to building entrances.
- b) Bicycle parking should not impede pedestrian circulation. Post-and-ring and inverted 'u' parking, constructed of painted or galvanized steel, is preferred as larger units can impede pedestrian movement and snow clearing.
- c) Bicycle parking and storage facilities should encourage active transportation, including parking at the GO Station, within public parks and open spaces and short term bicycle storage at employment areas.
- d) Provide secure and plentiful bicycle parking at the GO Station entrances.
- e) Provide sheltered bike areas that are integrated with the station design and located in highly visible areas in the vicinity of platform access points.
- f) In addition to bicycle racks, bicycle lockers are strongly encouraged, especially for large office developments and at the GO Station.

2.1.50.4.4 *Structured Parking*

Parking lots are to be designed such that, as the Plan Area intensifies, surface parking lots can transition to structured parking, if and when warranted. Structured parking should adhere to the following guidelines.

- a) Integrate above-ground parking structures into the streetscape through active-at-grade uses, and attractive façades that animate the streetscape and enhance pedestrian safety.
- b) Locate pedestrian entrances for parking structures adjacent to station entrances, main building entrances, public streets or other highly visible locations.
- c) Screen parking structures from view at sidewalk level through architectural detailing and landscaping.

2.1.50.4.5 *Storage, Servicing and Loading*

- a) Loading docks, outside storage and service areas are to be located in areas of low visibility such as at the side, or at the rear of buildings.
- b) Where possible, accommodate garbage storage areas within the building. Where this is not possible, screen outdoor storage areas from public view through an attractive, and integrated enclosure.
- c) Outside storage and servicing facilities should be constructed of materials to match or complement the building material.
- d) Service and refuse areas should be designed with a paved, impervious surface asphalt or concrete to minimize the potential for infiltration of human materials.
- e) Loading and service areas may occupy the full rear yard if adequate landscape edge and buffer treatments are provided.
- f) Service and refuse areas are not to encroach into the exterior side or front-yard set-back.

2.1.50.4.6 *Front Property Setbacks*

To create a consistent street wall to frame Buttrey Street, Bridge Street, Park Street and River Road, and to create an active streetscape, design should:

- a) Locate buildings at the front property line, or applicable setback line.
- b) Provide additional setbacks in areas with retail at grade to accommodate a minimum 4.8 metre boulevard width for outdoor display areas, seating and landscaping.
- c) Where streets have a variety of setbacks, locate new buildings at a setback distance that reflects the average of the adjacent buildings.

2.1.50.4.7 *Rear Setbacks and Transitions*

Where mid-rise sites abutting stable residential areas exist the following rear setbacks and transitions are required to minimize shadow and privacy issues on adjacent uses:

- a) Provide a 7.5 metre rear-yard setback from the abutting property line.
- b) Apply a 45-degree angular plane from the abutting property line for sites deeper than 36 metres.
- c) Apply a 45-degree angular plane from a height of 10.5 metres above the 7.5 metre setback line on properties less than 36 metres deep.

2.1.50.4.8 *Sites Abutting Open Spaces*

Where buildings are adjacent to open spaces (i.e. Transit Plaza), apply shadow testing on a case-by-case basis to ensure a minimum of five hours of sunlight per day from spring to fall.

2.1.51 Building Height and Massing

2.1.51.1 *Getting the Right Fit*

Buildings within the Plan Area will be predominantly low to mid-rise, with taller buildings focused south of Buttrey Street along key corridors and nodes in proximity to the Transit Station Area.

2.1.51.2 *Mid Rise Building Design*

The potential for mid-rise buildings has primarily been identified south of Buttrey Street, along River Road, Park Street, Bridge Street and Erie Avenue.

These buildings should:

- a) Provide a focus on residential mixed use density consistent with Schedule A4 of this Plan, in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Station Area. Mid-rise buildings near Bridge Street and Erie Avenue and along River Road should be built to support the feasible integration of ground floor retail.
- b) Generally be located at the front property line to create a continuous streetwall.
- c) Be aligned with street frontages along corner sites.
- d) Minor variations in setbacks are encouraged to facilitate wider boulevards, accommodate public amenity space and create a more interesting streetscape.
- e) Taller buildings should have a building base (podium).
- f) Taller buildings should step back 3.0 metres above the building base.
- g) An additional stepback in the building should be determined by a 45-degree angular plane applied at a height equivalent to 80 percent of the width of the right-of-way.
- h) Main building entrances should be directly accessible from the public sidewalk.
- i) The ground floor of all buildings with commercial uses should be 4.5 metres (floor-to-floor height) to accommodate internal servicing and loading, and future conversion to retail (where appropriate).

- j) 60 percent of the building frontage on the ground floor and at building base levels should be glazed to allow views of indoor uses and to create visual interest for pedestrians.
- k) Clear glass is preferred over tinted glass to promote the highest level of visibility, and mirrored glass should be avoided at street level.
- l) Balconies should be designed as integral parts of the building, which may include protruding balconies. Balconies should not be designed as an afterthought.

2.1.51.3 Building Podiums and Stepbacks

A clear building podium, defined by a front stepback, reinforces a consistent streetwall, helps to integrate new development into an existing lower building fabric, and creates a human-scaled building at grade.

- a) As no established streetwall height exists within the Plan Area, other than along Queen Street, the height of the podiums should range between 3 to 4 storeys.
- b) Achieve a minimum building stepback of 2.5 metres. In special circumstances (i.e. to protect views), a setback of 5 metres may be appropriate.

2.1.51.4 Employment - Office

New employment - office uses are identified for a small parcel west of Victoria Avenue at the northeast corner of Bridge Street and 1st Ave. Any new buildings in this location should:

- a) Be located to address Victoria Avenue, but may incorporate setbacks that provide attractive landscaping and tree-planting.
- b) The principle façades should incorporate large glazed areas and entrances, providing visibility between the building and the street.
- c) Parking should not be located between the principle façade and the adjacent street / sidewalk.
- d) Main entrances should be directly accessible from public sidewalks.
- e) Where possible, shared driveways should be provided.
- f) Open storage should be minimized. Where permitted, it should be screened from public view.
- g) Site design must define a well-organized system of entrances, driveways and parking areas that minimizes conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles.

- h) On large, flat roofs, opportunities for green roofs and or patios should be incorporated to create green spaces and usable outdoor amenity areas for employees. Roof top units should be screened from view.

2.1.51.5 *Tourist Commercial*

- a) Tourist Commercial uses are located along River Road between Leader Lane and Bridge Street. New buildings along River Road should have:
 - b) A 4.5 metre ground floor height to accommodate retail uses.
 - c) Ground floor façades should incorporate large, non-reflective, glazed areas to promote visibility from the street to the building interior.
 - d) Provide additional setbacks, where necessary, to accommodate a minimum 4.0 metre boulevard width for outdoor display areas, seating and landscaping.
 - e) A continuous streetwall and façade fronting River Road should be maintained.
 - f) Main entrances should be directly accessible from public sidewalks.
 - g) Parking should not be located between the principle façade and the adjacent street / sidewalk.

2.1.51.6 *Façade Design*

The aesthetic qualities of a building's façade are a vital factor in how the public perceives the building, and how that building impacts their experience of the street.

- a) Façades facing streets, sidewalks and public open spaces should be composed of large areas of glazing to encourage pedestrian interaction and enhance safety.
- b) Extend finishing materials to all sides of the building, including building projections and mechanical penthouses.
- c) Avoid blank walls, or unfinished materials along property lines, where new developments are adjacent to existing smaller-scaled buildings.
- d) Articulate the façades of large buildings to express individual commercial or residential units through distinct architectural detailing, including entrance and window design.
- e) Utilize a design and material quality that is consistent and complementary.
- f) Where lots have frontages on an open space, provide dual façades that address both frontages with an equal level of material quality and articulation.

- g) Emphasize the focal nature of corner buildings through elements such as projections, recesses, special materials, and other architectural details.
- h) Provide weather protection through architectural details such as vestibules, recessed entrances, covered walkways, canopies and awnings.

2.1.52 Sustainability

2.1.52.1 Considering the Future

Buildings account for approximately 40 percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in North America. Adopting sustainable practices in building design not only decreases the amount of GHG emissions released, but also lowers operating costs. Key considerations for achieving sustainable building design include:

- a) Building orientation;
- b) Sustainable landscape design;
- c) Urban heat island mitigation;
- d) Stormwater management;
- e) Alternate transportation options;
- f) Renewable energy;
- g) Green roofs;
- h) Building envelope design;
- i) Natural ventilation;
- j) Day light design;
- k) Dark sky design;
- l) Bird friendly design;
- m) Waste management; and
- n) Water use reduction and waste water technologies.

Sustainable goals and guidelines are included throughout the document, but the key guidelines are outlined in the following sections.

2.1.52.2 *Passive Solar Design*

The locations of buildings to each other and to open spaces influences the amount of energy they consume as well as comfort and quality of interior and exterior spaces.

New development within the Plan Area should be massed to maximize opportunities for access to natural light and heating, cooling, security and views. Building design should analyze site characteristics and address existing conditions. For example:

- a) Intended uses within buildings should be arranged to make the best use of natural conditions.
- b) The following climatic conditions should be analyzed when designing block layout, buildings and open spaces:
 - c) Solar loss and gain;
 - d) Temperature;
 - e) Air quality;
 - f) Wind conditions;
 - g) Cloud cover; and
 - h) Precipitation.
- i) Within new developments, residential uses should maximize indirect natural light.
- j) Within new developments, retail or office uses that employ heat-producing machinery should face north.
- k) Trees and vegetation, operable windows, treated glass, roof coverings and other building elements should be selected to take advantage of natural means of regulating interior temperature, lighting and other environmental variables.

2.1.52.3 *Energy Efficiency*

As discussed earlier, buildings use a significant amount of energy and contribute to the production of GHG. Reducing energy use in buildings is, therefore, an important strategy to reduce the environmental impact of urban development.

Design will need to utilize life-cycle cost analysis in the design process to take long-term energy costs into account. This will lead to adjustments in the orientation of buildings and the configuration of internal space to make the best use of natural processes to control interior environmental variables.

- a) Lifecycle cost analysis should be used to evaluate mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.
- b) Buildings and windows should be oriented and designed to optimize natural means of heating, cooling, ventilating and lighting interior spaces.
- c) Street and pedestrian-scaled lighting systems should incorporate LED technology to reduce energy and maintenance demand.
- d) Development proposals are encouraged to explore the potential use of geothermal technology and solar energy to reduce grid energy dependency.
- e) Inventories of all plumbing fixtures and equipment, as well as all heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, should be summarized in building packages as well as a strategy for minimizing water demand.
- f) Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation standards and design guidelines should be implemented and exceeded, where appropriate.
- g) Buildings should consume energy at a rate that is at least 10 percent lower than specified by the Commercial Building Incentive Program (CBIP) administered by Natural Resources Canada.

2.1.53 Design Integration

2.1.53.1 Developing Accessible and Comfortable Communities

The transformation of the Plan Area into a vibrant transit-supportive community will be measured by transit ridership, the number of people on the streets, the vitality of new businesses including a mix of uses, an urban built form for new residential and commercial buildings and an improved public realm.

The successful design of buildings, streets and open spaces will be reinforced by the creation of comfortable, welcoming, weather protected and accessible connections between buildings that promote an inviting community atmosphere.

The guidelines in this section outline key considerations that will support the development of accessible and comfortable communities.

2.1.53.2 Accessibility

Complete Communities are accessible for all residents. This includes ensuring that residents have access to jobs and transit, but also designing buildings and public spaces that allow for ease of movement for people of all ages and abilities.

A key to providing a high quality public realm is making it accessible to all people. The guidelines and requirements in the following documents provide more detailed

information with respect to creating and promoting accessible environments and should be referred to in the design of all public and private spaces:

- a) Ontario Building Code
- b) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- c) Principles of Universal Design

As well, recent changes to the Planning Act enable the City of Niagara Falls to secure facilities designed to have regard for accessibility for persons with disabilities through Site Plan Control.

2.1.53.3 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

All publicly accessible areas, including streetscapes, parks, parkettes, mid-block connections, forecourts and patios should conform to the provisions recommended through CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). The application of CPTED principles should address items such as:

- a) Providing clear views to sidewalks and public areas.
- b) Taking advantage of passing traffic surveillance as a deterrent for unwanted activities.
- c) Identifying point of entry locations.
- d) Placing amenities such as seating and lighting in areas where positive activities are desired and expected.

2.1.53.4 Microclimate and Shadows

- a) The design of buildings should be informed by their context including their impact on adjacent properties.
- b) The design of buildings within the Plan Area will be informed by shade and micro-climatic studies that examine wind mitigation, solar access and shadow impacts on adjacent streets, open spaces, buildings and associated properties.
- c) Building massing should allow ample sunlight to penetrate to the sidewalk and adjacent public spaces, and should mitigate the impact of high winds to support pedestrian comfort.
- d) Where existing and future open spaces are adjacent to development sites, the scale of development will be restricted, as determined through wind and shadow studies.

- e) Building and site design will provide semi-weather protected spaces that blend indoor and outdoor uses including deep canopies, overhangs, sheltered terraces, roof terraces, courtyards, forecourts and gardens that optimize active use throughout the year.
- f) Building heights above four storeys will incorporate step-backs to mitigate the perception of building height from the surrounding areas.
- g) Shadow studies for blocks and individual buildings should be undertaken on the equinoxes and solstices.

PHASING AND GENERAL TIMELINE FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

This Secondary Plan identifies a number of capital improvements to the public realm and transportation network. Table 2.1 outlines the short, medium and long-term priorities to implement the capital improvements within the Secondary Plan area, and should be referenced in conjunction with Schedules 4 through 7 of this Plan. Short-term priorities are intended to be implemented within a 5 year timeframe. Mid-term priorities are intended to be implemented within a 10-year timeframe. Long-term priorities are intended to be implemented within a 20-year timeframe. Modifications to Table 6.1 may be required due to shifts in capital planning, funding, or strategic priorities, and can be made without an amendment to the Secondary Plan.

TABLE 2.1: PHASING PROGRAM

Capital Improvement: <u>New Connections and Roadway Improvements</u>	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
Thorold Stone Road Extension	n/a	Mid-Term
Signalization of Victoria Avenue at Buttrey Street	Alternative would be to realign Buttrey Street to connect with Ferguson Street to improve sight lines	Mid-Term
Victoria Avenue Improvements		Mid-Term

Capital Improvement: <u>Bike Route/Lane (On-Road)</u>	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
Bridge Street	Between Victoria Avenue and River Road	Short-Term
Victoria Avenue	Between Bridge Street and Armoury Street	Mid-Term
Erie Avenue	Between Bridge Street and Huron Street	Short-Term
Hickson Avenue	Between Buttrey Street and Leader Lane	Mid-Term
Morrison Street	Between Victoria Avenue and River Road	Mid-Term

Capital Improvement: <u>Multi-Use Trail</u>	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
Transit Station Trail	Connecting Erie Avenue with Hickson Avenue and Hickson Avenue with River Road	Short-Term
Olympic Torch Race Legacy Trail Extension	Connecting existing Olympic Torch Race Legacy Trail with the Michigan Central Railway Bridge and River Road	Mid-Term

Capital Improvement: <u>Streetscape Improvements</u>	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
River Road Major Streetscape Improvements	Between Buttrey Street and Simcoe Street	Mid-Term
Bridge Street Minor Streetscape Improvements	Between Victoria Avenue and River Road	Short-Term
Buttrey Street Minor Streetscape Improvements	Between Victoria Avenue and River Road	Mid-Term
Victoria Avenue Minor Streetscape Improvements	Between Buttrey Street and Bridge Street	Long-Term
Erie Avenue Minor Streetscape Improvements	Between Bridge Street and Queen Street	Short-Term
Potential Street Grid Refinement	Mid block between Park Street and Queen Street connecting St. Lawrence Avenue with River Road	Long-Term

Capital Improvement: Gateway Features	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street Major Gateway	-	Mid-Term
Erie Avenue and Bridge Street Minor Gateway		Short-Term
River Road and Whirlpool Bridge Minor Gateway		Mid-Term

Capital Improvement: Public Space	Details/Extent	Priority (short-, mid- or long-term)
New Public Space at southwest corner of Erie Avenue and Bridge Street	-	Short-Term
New Public Space adjacent to Transit Station Area		Mid-Term
Public Space Improvement south of Bridge Street	Mid-block between Chrysler Avenue and Erie Avenue	Mid-Term
Public Space Improvement along River Road	Mid-block between Bridge Street and Park Street	Mid-Term

2.1.54 Municipal Capital Improvements

The City will prepare a phasing strategy to assist with the implementation of this Secondary Plan. The Phasing Strategy should consider the following:

- a) The capital improvement priorities identified in Section 2.9 of this Secondary Plan;
- b) The expected timing of development, including the expected build-out of vacant lands and redevelopment of existing areas;
- c) The timing of any potential transportation, infrastructure and public realm improvements; and,
- d) Any other projects or initiatives which may impact the timing of development.

Priority should be given to improvements in the general Transit Station Area identified, as identified on the Transportation Improvement Plan and Public Realm Improvement Plan that support transit oriented development and intensification in these areas.

2.1.55 General Implementation

The Downtown Niagara Falls GO Transit Station Secondary Plan shall be implemented through a variety of tools, including, but not limited to:

- a) The planning and development application process, through tools such as site plan approval, plans of subdivision and condominium and consents to sever;
- b) City of Niagara Falls Transportation Master Plan;
- c) The City of Niagara Falls Zoning by law;
- d) Updates to the City's various Community Improvement Plans; and,
- e) Other tools as described in this Chapter.

2.1.56 Municipal Works within the Secondary Plan

All future municipal works undertaken by the City of Niagara Falls within the Secondary Plan Area shall be consistent with the policies of this Plan.

2.1.57 Official Plan Amendments

Unless otherwise stated in this Plan or the City's Official Plan, applications for development which do not align with the Policies or Maps of this Plan shall require an Official Plan Amendment. Amendments to the Official Plan shall be subject to policies of the Official Plan and shall require a planning justification report, along with any other supporting studies identified through the pre-consultation process.

2.1.58 Zoning By-Law

2.1.58.1 Alignment with Zoning By-Law

The City will update its zoning by-law to ensure that the land use and design policies for this Secondary Plan are reflected in the City's zoning by-law.

2.1.59 Amendments to Zoning By-Law

Applications for development within the Secondary Plan Area shall be subject to the policies of this Secondary Plan and the City's Official Plan (where applicable). Amendments to the zoning by-law shall be subject to policies of the Official Plan and shall require a planning justification report, along with any other supporting studies identified through the pre-consultation process.

2.1.60 Site Plan Approval, Plans of Subdivision, Plans of Condominium and Severances

Applications for site plan approval, plans of subdivision, plans of condominium and consents to sever shall be consistent with the policies of this Secondary Plan and the City of Niagara Falls' Official Plan.

2.1.61 Updating the City's Community Improvement Plan(s)

The City of Niagara Falls shall update the Community Improvement Plans (CIP) for lands within the study area to align with the vision, objectives and policies of this Secondary

Plan. Updates to the Brownfield CIP should reflect the site specific redevelopment needs of lands along Buttrey Street. Updates to the Downtown CIP should prioritize transit oriented redevelopment in proximity to the Transit Station Area.

2.1.62 Signage and Wayfinding Strategy for Downtown Niagara Falls

Upon adoption of the Secondary Plan and the completion of the Community Improvement Plan, the City will prepare a signage and wayfinding strategy for Downtown Niagara Falls. The purpose of the signage and wayfinding strategy is to reduce visual pollution and improve wayfinding. The City may also refer to the Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan Bikeway Identification and Destination Wayfinding Signage for Cyclists guide.

2.1.63 Coordination with the Regional Municipality of Niagara

2.1.63.1 General Coordination

The City will work with Niagara Region, who is the approval authority for this Plan, to ensure that the policies of this Plan are implemented including any opportunities to implement the urban design and public realm improvements through any future Regional works. The City also encourages Niagara Region to consider opportunities for affordable housing development within the Secondary Plan area.

2.1.63.2 GO Transit Service

The City of Niagara Falls will work collaboratively with Niagara Region and other appropriate agencies (including Niagara Parks Commission, Niagara Falls Transit and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority) to ensure that the planning, design and implementation of the expanded GO transit service, as well as upgrades to the VIA Rail station within Downtown Niagara Falls, addresses the vision and policies of this Plan. It is expected that the City will collaborate with the Region and agencies to ensure that:

- a) The station areas include attractive, pedestrian friendly and transit-supportive public spaces and connections;
- b) The station areas are planned to address integrated and diversified mobility options and seamless access; and,
- c) The station areas are designed to help support the mixed use vision for Downtown Niagara Falls.

2.1.64 Development Charges

The City will include any growth-related infrastructure identified in this plan as part of the next Development Charges By-law update.

2.1.65 Parkland Dedication

Where the City accepts cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication, the City will dedicate the funding to the development of the public space program for the Secondary Plan area. The

City will prioritize development which contributes to the enhancement of the public realm and transportation.

2.1.66 Opportunities for Municipal Property Acquisition

In order to facilitate the implementation of the plans and policies of this Secondary Plan, property acquisition may be required by the municipality. Should property acquisition be required, the municipality shall undertake a fair and equitable process that minimizes effects on landowners and tenants.

2.1.67 Monitoring Program

The City will prepare a monitoring program to track the implementation of the Secondary Plan and report on the progress of its implementation. The monitoring program should identify development statistics for residential intensification and the status of the various actions identified in this Plan (such as the Community Improvement Plan and various streetscape projects).

2.1.68 Updating the Secondary Plan

The City will comprehensively review the policies of this Secondary Plan at the 10 year review of the City's Official Plan. Depending on the outcomes of the review, the City may decide to update the Plan.

2.1.69 Conflicts with Official Plan

In the event of a conflict between the Official Plan and this Secondary Plan, the Policies of the Secondary Plan shall prevail.

2.1.70 Boundaries

The boundaries shown on the Secondary Plan Maps are approximate, except where they meet with existing roads, Niagara Escarpment Conservation Area or other clearly defined physical features. Where the general intent of this Secondary Plan is maintained to the satisfaction of the City of Niagara Falls, minor boundary adjustments will not require an amendment to this Secondary Plan.