**Downtown**

***Excerpt from***

***The London Plan***

**Our Vision for the Downtown Place Type**

829\_Our Downtown will exude excitement, vibrancy, and a high quality of urban living. It will be the preeminent destination place for Londoners, residents from our region, and tourists to experience diverse culture, arts, recreation, entertainment, shopping and food. Our Downtown will showcase our history and offer vibrant and comfortable public places filled with people, ranging from large city-wide gathering places, to heavily treed urban plazas and intimate parkettes.

830\_Dundas Street will be the most exciting street in the city, offering a multitude of

experiences as one progresses along its length. We will connect strongly to our birthplace, at the Forks of the Thames River, where we will create beautifully landscaped “people places” that Londoners will gravitate toward. And, we will cherish our heritage streetscapes that tell the story of our past, and create a unique and enriching setting that will give our core a strong sense of place and identity.

831\_Our Downtown will be the hub of our economy’s business community, containing the city’s large office buildings and a complex blend of professional and business service functions that collectively create dynamic synergies. Our vibrant Downtown restaurants, entertainment venues, hotels, and convention centre facilities, combined with the highest-order communications infrastructure, will be attractive to those who work Downtown and those businesses that seek out the best and the brightest employees.

832\_Our Downtown will be an exceptional neighbourhood unto itself - with housing, services, and amenities targeted to serve a wide spectrum of lifestyles such as families, seniors, and young adults. The shared economy will thrive in our core, including such features as shared office and work space, as well as shared car and bicycle fleets. Our Downtown will be the most highly connected location in the entire city, being the hub for rapid transit, rail, and the multi-use pathway along the Thames River. Downtown will offer the city’s premier pedestrian experience.

833\_London’s Downtown of 2035 will be our calling card to the world. It will embody and communicate our vision that London is Exciting, Exceptional and Connected.

**Role Within the City Structure**

834\_As shown in our City Structure Plan, the Downtown will serve as the highest-order mixeduse centre, and will be unique in the city. It will be connected to the transit villages through rapid transit corridors, and will also be connected to our recreational network, at the confluence of the two branches of the Thames River. Major rail lines, serving commuter traffic, strongly connect our Downtown to the surrounding region, nationally and internationally.

**How Will We Realize Our Vision?**

835\_We will realize our vision for Downtown by implementing the following in all the planning we do and the public works we undertake:

1. Prepare a Downtown Master Plan which establishes a series of strategies, actions, tools and projects to achieve our vision for the Downtown. Budget for, and invest in,

those initiatives established in the Downtown Master Plan as a priority for London.

2. Prepare a community improvement plan for the Downtown to plan for improvements to the Downtown’s public realm and provide financial incentives for private property owners to improve their properties.

3. Prepare Downtown Urban Design Guidelines to ensure that all development contributes to a vibrant and walkable environment and enhances the city’s Downtown skyline.

4. Prepare a Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan to preserve our valuable heritage resources.

5. Prepare a parking plan to coordinate municipal parking supply and provide for public parking at strategically advantageous locations.

6. Ensure that civic infrastructure is planned to facilitate and accommodate growth and development Downtown.

7. Invest in cultural and institutional uses that will act as catalysts for Downtown improvement

8. Invest strategically in the development and maintenance of the Downtown’s public realm, recognizing the important role that its appearance and condition plays in establishing London’s identity and economic vibrancy.

9. Create the context to encourage residential development in the Downtown, including such measures as building residential neighbourhood amenities, designing inviting park spaces and offering financial incentives for residential construction.

10. Create strong connections to the Thames River through our streets, pathways, and by fronting Downtown development onto to the river corridor wherever possible.

11. Integrate trees and landscaping at, and adjacent to, development sites to create a robust landscaped Downtown environment that is comfortable and attractive in all seasons and contributes to the environmental sustainability goals of this Plan.

12. Develop a network of urban parks, lanes, and plazas to provide passive recreational and social spaces and common useable amenity space within the Downtown.

13. Include various forms of public art in public and private sector development projects and install public art throughout the Downtown’s public realm.

14. Direct large-scale office developments, greater than 5,000m 2, to the Downtown to prevent the deterioration of the important Downtown office market while still

allowing for a reasonable supply of office uses outside of the Downtown.

15. Locate major government buildings, hotels, convention centres, and large

entertainment and cultural facilities in the Downtown.

16. Establish strong physical and collaborative connections between the Downtown and the surrounding urban business areas such as Richmond Row, the Old East Village, SOHO, and Hamilton Road.

17. Establish the Downtown as the hub of mobility in our city, serving as the city’s primary station for rapid transit, regional bus, rail and any future high speed rail network.

18. Ensure that our city’s major commuter rail connections are located in the Downtown.

**Permitted Uses**

836\_The Downtown is the highest-order mixed-use activity centre in the city. The

following uses will be permitted within the Downtown:

1. A broad range of residential, retail, service, office, cultural, institutional, hospitality, entertainment, recreational and other related uses may be permitted in the Downtown Place Type.

2. Mixed- use buildings will be encouraged.

3. Along commercial-oriented streetscapes, retail and service uses

will be encouraged at grade, with residential and non-service office uses

that do not serve a walk-in clientele directed to the rear of buildings and

to upper floors.

4. New surface parking lots of any kind will be strongly discouraged in the Downtown. New surface commercial parking lots shall not be permitted

and surface accessory parking lots will be permitted only in exceptional

circumstances.

5. Where surface commercial parking lots have previously been established through temporary zoning and have been in place for a protracted period of time, Council will not support further extensions of such temporary uses. Exceptions may be made, in extenuating circumstances, on a short-term basis.

6. Above-ground parking structures may be permitted, but shall not be allowed to have parking uses directly fronting onto Downtown streets at grade. Their upper levels shall be screened with architectural treatments and/or occupied with other uses permitted in the Downtown.

7. Educational facilities of all scales and types will be encouraged within the

Downtown.

8. Light industrial uses may be permitted where it is deemed appropriate and it is demonstrated that there will be no adverse land use impacts and the use can be

compatible within its context.

9. The full range of uses described above will not necessarily be permitted on all sites within the Downtown Place Type.

**Intensity**

837\_The Downtown will have the tallest buildings and the highest densities permitted in the city. The following intensity policies apply within the Downtown

Place Type:

1. The Buildings within the Downtown Place Type will be a minimum of four storeys in height and will not exceed twenty storeys in height. Bonus zoning beyond this limit, up to thirty storeys, may be permitted in conformity with the Our Tools policies of this Plan.

2. Zoning permissions for height in the Downtown will be directly related to

the ability of a development proposal to meet the City Design policies of

this Plan.

3. The evaluation of height and built form will take into account access to sunlight by adjacent properties, wind impacts, view corridors, visual impacts on the Thames Valley Corridor, and potential impacts on public spaces and heritage properties located in close proximity to proposed development.

4. There will be no minimum parking required for Downtown development. Over-development of parking will be strongly discouraged.

5. The Zoning By-law will include regulations to ensure that the intensity of development is appropriate for individual sites.

6. The full extent of intensity described above will not necessarily be permitted on all sites within the Downtown Place Type

**Form**

838\_All planning and development applications for lands within the Downtown will be reviewed by the Urban Design Peer Review Panel and the following policies:

1. All planning and development applications will conform with the City Design policies of this Plan, the Downtown Master Plan and the Downtown Urban Design Guidelines.

2. All planning and development applications will conform with the Downtown Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines.

3. All the planning and design that is undertaken Downtown will place a priority on the pedestrian experience through site layout, building location, and a design that reinforces pedestrian comfort and safety.

4. The design and positioning of new buildings in the Downtown will not impact pedestrian comfort by introducing inappropriate wind turbulence and velocity within the public realm. A wind assessment will be required for all projects, and

efforts to mitigate existing negative wind conditions will be required.

5. New buildings and changes to existing buildings will be designed to include architectural features that protect pedestrians from rain and sun exposure. Such features include, but are not limited to, awnings, arcades, and overhangs and should be designed in an unobtrusive manner.

6. The design of new development will provide for continuity and harmony in

architectural style with adjacent uses that are of architectural or historical

significance, without mimicry.

7. Building design that represents individual creativity and innovation will be encouraged within the Downtown to create landmarks, develop a distinctive character for the Downtown, and contribute to the city’s image.

8. All of the public works that are undertaken Downtown, including installation, improvement and maintenance of signage, sidewalks, lighting, parking areas and

equipment, furniture, public art and landscaping will be consistent with the City Design and Downtown Form policies of this Plan, the Heritage Conservation District Plan, and all relevant guidelines.

9. All public works will ensure a high quality pedestrian environment through streetscape improvements such as widening sidewalks, upgrading the sidewalk material, planting street trees, installing benches and other street furniture, providing pedestrian lighting, and integrating public art.

10. Shared parking facilities and carshare/bikeshare programs will be encouraged within the Downtown.

11. Projects associated with financial incentives offered through community

improvement plans shall conform with all City Design and Downtown Form policies of this Plan and all relevant guideline documents.

**Applications to Expand the Downtown Boundary**

839\_For the purposes of this Plan, the Downtown is defined as the area bounded by:

• Colborne Street to the east

• The CN railway tracks to the south

• The Thames River to the west

• Kent Street from the Thames River to Richmond Street; Richmond Street from Kent Street to Angel Street; Angel Street from Richmond Street to Clarence Street; Clarence Street from Angel Street to Central Avenue;

Central Avenue from Richmond Street to Wellington Street; Wellington Street from Central Ave to Princess Avenue; Princess Avenue from Wellington Street to Waterloo Street; Waterloo Street from Princess Avenue to the mid-block between Queens Ave and Dundas Street; and mid-block between Queens Avenue and Dundas

Street to Colborne Street, to the north.

840\_This boundary is adequate in size to accommodate growth for the foreseeable

future, well beyond the life of this Plan. Expanding the Downtown boundary could

negatively impact a number of important goals for the Downtown, and will be strongly discouraged. However, in the event that a boundary amendment is proposed, the following criteria will be considered together with all the policies of this Plan:

1. The availability of suitable lands within the existing boundaries of the

Downtown to accommodate the types of uses proposed.

2. The potential to undermine the goal of developing an intense and concentrated Downtown.

3. The impact of the expansion area on the ability to accommodate a dense, pedestrian-oriented scale of development.

4. The pedestrian accessibility of the proposed expansion area from all parts of the Downtown.

5. Adverse impacts related to traffic, parking, loss of privacy, noise, shadowing or other matters that development may have on adjacent neighbourhoods outside of the Downtown.

**Planning and Development Applications**

841\_All planning and development applications, as defined in the Our Tools part of this Plan, will be evaluated based on the following:

1. The degree to which the proposal conforms with the Our Strategy, City Structure and City Building policies of this Plan.

1. The degree to which the proposal conforms with the Downtown Place Type policies of this Plan.

3. Potential impacts that the proposal may have on properties that are adjacent to the subject site and those that are located within the surrounding neighbourhood(s).

4. The degree to which the proposal is compatible with, and fits within the context of, adjacent properties and the surrounding neighbourhood(s).

5. The availability of civic infrastructure, in place or planned, to service the

proposed development.

842\_The Evaluation Criteria policies in the Our Tools part of this Plan provide further guidance for the evaluation of potential impacts, context, and compatibility.