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TOWNSHIP OF ZORRA  
DESIGN GUIDELINES

August 2013  
MHBC PLANNING/ OUR FILE 10169A

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# PART ONE

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE AND APPROACH

The design guidelines and associated recommendations in this document are the result of a study completed by MHBC Planning on behalf of the Township of Zorra and County of Oxford. The purpose for developing the guidelines was to establish comprehensive design direction and related implementation guidance for the Township of Zorra to assist in:

- the implementation of Provincial and Official Plan policies relating to such matters as the promotion of efficient land use and development patterns, the creation of strong, livable and healthy communities and the protection of the environment and public health and safety; and
- achieving a high quality standard of urban design throughout the Township.

The design analysis and guidelines component of this document provides detailed direction on design considerations such as site layout, building orientation and massing, architectural elements, landscaping and public realm elements. This design direction will assist in the evaluation of proposals for development/redevelopment, inform decisions on public infrastructure projects and other local investments and guide the development of design related education and/or incentive programs.

The implementation framework component of this document sets out a design action plan for the Township, including recommendations on the need for any additional documents, tools, processes and/or other measures necessary to

effectively implement the design guidelines and achieve a comprehensive design approach for the Township.

The design guidelines are organized as follows:

**Part 1. Introduction and Background** – outlines the purpose, general application and structure of the guidelines, as well as providing the background and general design context.

**Part 2. Design Analysis** – provides an overview of the character and design context for the Villages and other settlements within the Township, as well as the design principles established as part of the study.

**Part 3. Design Guidelines** – contains the design guidelines to be applied Township wide and to specific types of development and sub-areas within the Township.

**Part 4. Implementation** – provides a detailed overview of the various documents, tools and processes that can be used to implement and support the design guidelines, together with direction on how they can be used.

## Guideline Development Process

The Township of Zorra Design Guideline development process was lead by a design steering committee, comprised of members of Township Council and Township and County staff, which provided direction and technical



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feedback and input to the consultants throughout the process. To assist in understanding the local design context, field visits to Thamesford, Embro and a number of the other settlements in the Township were conducted. As well, a number of local background documents and studies were reviewed and considered, as follows:

- Oxford County Official Plan (OP) - particularly site design related policies.
- Oxford County 5 Year OP Review – Draft Urban Design Strategy and Commercial Policy Review
- Township of Zorra Zoning By-law
- Township Site Plan Control By-law and associated guidelines.
- Village of Embro Secondary Plan, including the character assessment, design recommendations and results of community surveys and consultation.
- Thamesford Village Core and area review (Ms. Laura Dent and Fanshawe College)

The study also involved extensive public input obtained through:

- Two public meetings held in Thamesford and Embro to assess the community's priorities regarding design and present and discuss potential guidelines;
- Distribution of a community design questionnaire to obtain feedback on the design elements that people felt were of the highest importance; and
- The posting of regular updates to the Township's project website, to provide the public with access to related information and materials.

In addition to the review of the above noted documents and feedback from the questionnaire and public meetings, the project team met with Laura Dent, Dent Planning, a consultant working

on the development of a community driven action plan and revitalization strategy for downtown Thamesford.

The current legislative and policy context (Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement and County Official Plan) were also considered in the preparation of these guidelines. As part of this consideration, the project team attended an open house session with respect to new design policies being considered for the Oxford County Official Plan as part of an overall County design strategy, to ensure that the guidelines developed for the Township were in keeping with the proposed County design principles and policies.

A detailed overview of the legislative and policy context are contained in Appendix A.

### OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Questionnaires were distributed at the public open house meetings and were available at the Township offices and on their website. Completed questionnaires were collected at the public open houses and at various locations throughout the Township in the weeks following the open houses.

Results from the surveys are summarized as follows:

- All survey respondents felt the guidelines should focus on landscaping and public spaces as a priority. Guidance on signage was also heavily favoured.
- For service commercial guidelines, respondents rated each of the following with equal importance: parking, landscaping, pedestrian connections, patio areas (with the vast majority of respondents selecting these). Building design had a slightly lower rating, with more than half of respondents voting this as important.

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- All the respondents thought that the most important part of industrial guidelines was buffering between more sensitive uses.
- Respecting new residential guidelines, the most important areas were voted as street trees/landscaping and sidewalks/walkway connections.
- For park design, high importance was placed on landscaping, pedestrian connections to parks, and having building lots that face parks.

Additional comments received through the public surveys are summarized as follows:

- There is a desire for Thamesford's core to become a tourist attraction by converting more homes to stores.
- A gateway could be implemented to let people know they are entering the Village (this was raised specifically for Embro).
- The speed of traffic through the core area was raised as an issue in both Embro and Thamesford.
- In Thamesford it was felt that the existing sidewalks are too close to Dundas Street.
- The design of the library in Thamesford received favourable comments.
- Lighting was a concern for both commercial and industrial development.
- There was a desire to see guidelines related to the external design of new residential dwellings.
- Respondents wanted more mature trees, winding pathway systems, accessibility for person's of all abilities, a mixture of natural and non-natural trails and regular maintenance of trails.
- People indicated a desire to see shaded areas within parks, more trails through parks, and pocket parks along the Main Street in Embro.
- There is a need for additional apartment type dwellings in Thamesford and Embro to

provide opportunities for seniors to downsize within their own communities.

### GENERAL DESIGN CONTEXT

#### Introduction

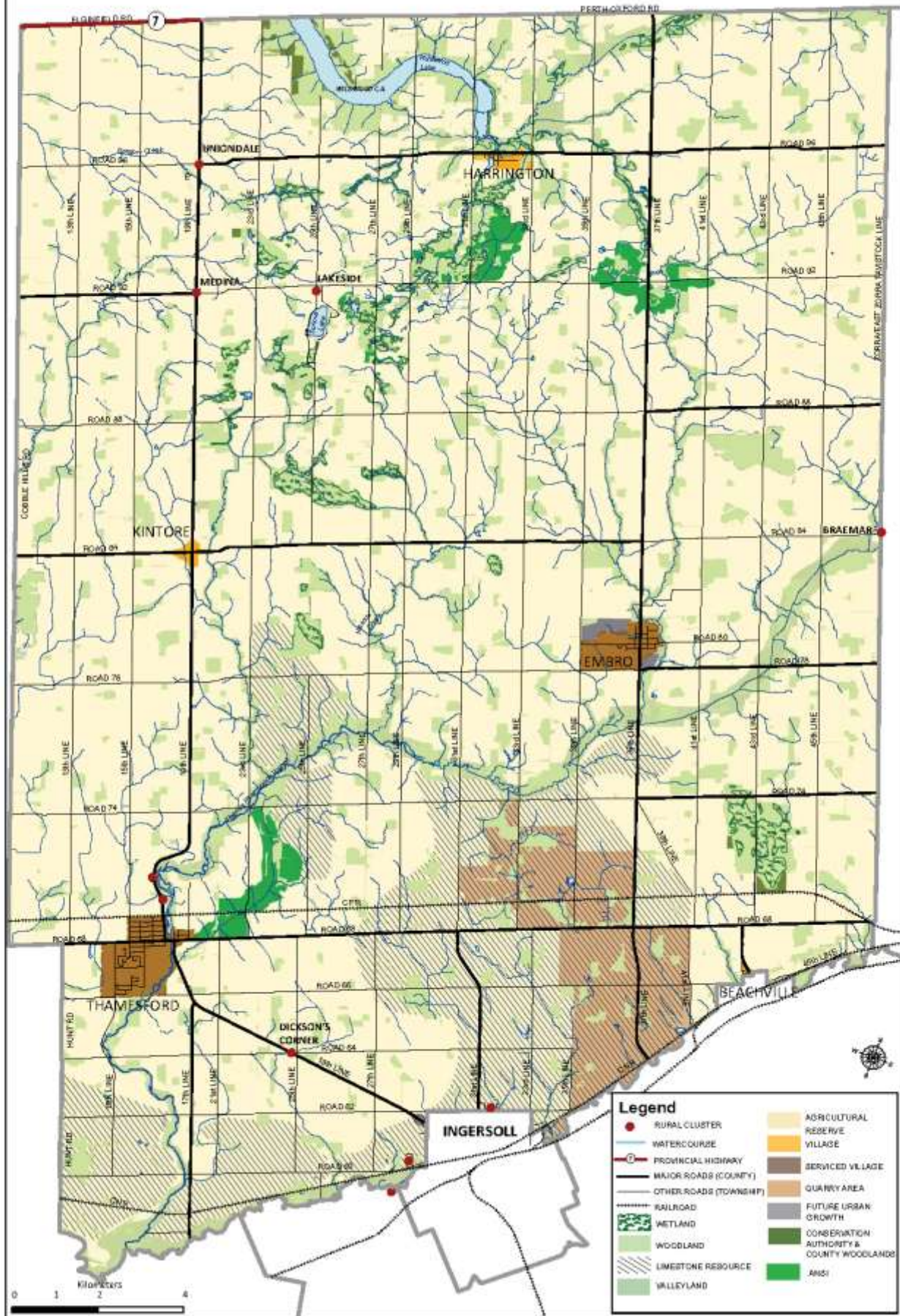
The study area for the purpose of these guidelines is the entire Township of Zorra, which is a predominantly rural municipality located in the northwest corner of Oxford County. The Township was formed in 1975 through the amalgamation of East Nissouri, West Zorra and North Oxford Townships. The Township encompasses approximately 53,160 ha (131,357 ac), over 98% of which is comprised of prime agricultural land and natural features, including river valleylands, woodlands and wetlands. Accordingly, the predominant land use in the Township is agriculture. However, the Township is also one of the top ten aggregate producing municipalities in Ontario, which is clearly evidenced by the number of sand and gravel and limestone extraction and processing operations located within the Township. The limestone extraction and processing operations and a large cement manufacturing operation are located primarily in the southeastly portion of the Township, which contains an extensive area of limestone resource.

With the exception of aggregate operations, non-agricultural related uses in the Township are primarily concentrated in the designated settlement areas. These settlements currently comprise less than 1% of the total Township land area and range in size from small residential clusters of less than a dozen households to the Village of Thamesford, which has a population of approximately 2,400. **Figure 1** provides a general overview of the various land uses and environmental features within the Township of Zorra.



Figure 1

ZORRA TOWNSHIP LAND USE DESIGNATIONS & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES





The Official Plan currently designates the various settlements in the Township according to the following hierarchy:

### Serviced Villages

- Embro
- Thamesford

### Villages

- Harrington West
- Kintore

### Rural Clusters

- Allen Street
- Braemar
- Brooksdale
- Dickson's Corners
- Lakeside/Sunova
- Medina
- McNab/Ellen Street
- North Town Line
- Uniondale

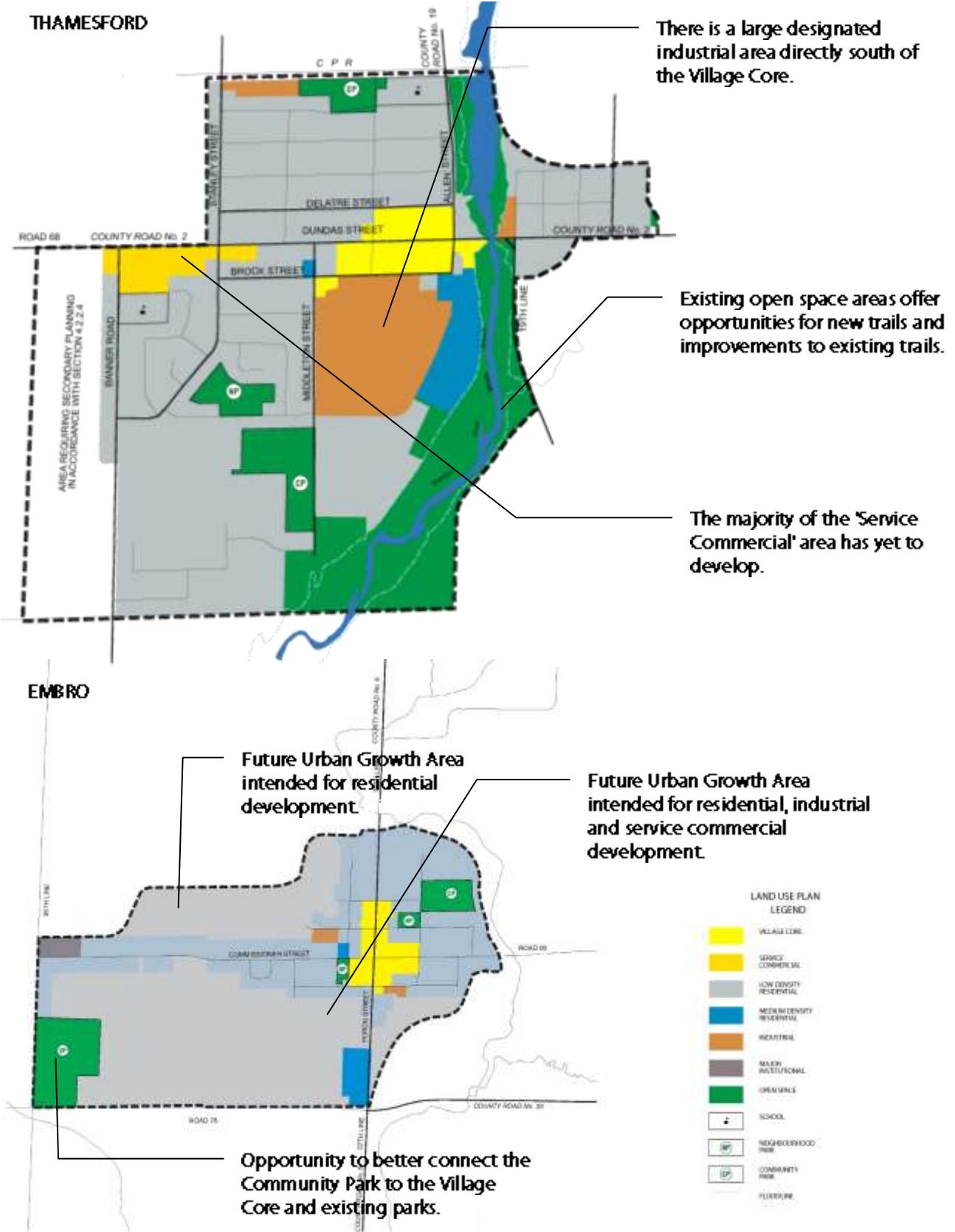
There are also a number of other small historic residential clusters in the Township that are not designated as settlement areas in the Official Plan. These include Banner, Bennington, Brown's Corners, Cody's Corners, Dunn's Corner, Golspie, Granthurst, Holiday, Maplewood, McConkey, Rayside, Youngsville, and Zorra Station.

The Rural Clusters and Villages are comprised primarily of residential uses and, in some cases, one or more commercial, industrial and/or institutional uses. The two Serviced Villages, although still primarily residential, contain a much broader range of non-residential uses.

In accordance with the Provincial Policy

Statement (PPS), the Official Plan directs non-agricultural uses to designated settlement areas in the Township as a means of preserving and protecting agricultural land and other natural features, avoiding scattered and strip development and maximizing the efficiency of municipal services where they exist. In the Township context, the two Serviced Villages (Embro and Thamesford) are intended to accommodate the majority of the forecasted growth. As such, the Official Plan policies allow for growth in such settlements to be accommodated through both intensification and greenfield development and permit a full range of land uses including residential, commercial, industrial and institutional. Therefore, although many of the guidelines in this document apply to the entire Township, the primary focus is on providing detailed design direction for the broader range of development types that are permitted in the two serviced Villages.

# MAJOR STUDY AREAS— FIGURE 2



### Transportation

As shown on **Figure 1**, the transportation network in the Township is comprised primarily of County and Township Roads, with a small section of Provincial Highway (Highway 7) and two major railway lines also serving the Township. County Road 119 and County Road 6 are major north/south roads. County Road 119 connects directly to Highway 7 just north of the Township, then runs south, through the Village of Thamesford, eventually connecting to Town of Ingersoll and Highway 401, just south of the Township. County Road 6 extends to the City of Stratford to the north of the Township and Highway 401 to the south of the Township and runs through the Village Core of Embro. County Road 2 is a major east/west road that runs through the Village Core of Thamesford, connecting directly to the City of Woodstock to the East and the City of London to the West.

Given the Township's proximity to a number of larger urban centres and access to Highway 401, it appears to be well situated to attract both residential and non-residential development. However, such future growth may also contribute to increased vehicular traffic in the Township, particularly on major roads such as those running through many of the settlement areas in the Township. In this regard, both Thamesford and Embro residents expressed concerns with the high speed of through traffic in their respective Village Core areas. Incremental improvements to the pedestrian environment incorporated through the review of new development and infrastructure projects in such areas may assist in reducing vehicular speeds by better defining these areas as pedestrian oriented environments rather than simply arterial thoroughfares. This could be accomplished through various streetscape improvements such as the incorporation of additional street trees, front yard landscaping and pedestrian amenities,



View of Dundas Street in Thamesford core



View of Huron Street in Embro core

restrictions on front yard parking areas, reducing the number and length of curb cuts and buffering pedestrian areas from vehicular traffic through landscaped setbacks between the sidewalk and curb and provision of on-street parking.

### Environmental Features and Natural Areas

As shown in **Figure 1**, the Township contains a range of environmental features and amenities, with the most prominent being the Upper Thames River and its associated valleylands. The Thames River flows along much of the Township's southerly

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## PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

border, with the middle branch of the river and associated tributaries also flowing southwesterly through the Township. The Township also contains a number of significant wetlands and other waterbodies, primarily concentrated in the northerly portion of the Township. The largest of these waterbodies is Wildwood Lake, the focal point for the Wildwood Conservation Area, which serves as a major recreational destination for residents of the Township and surrounding communities. The Township is also home to a number of smaller conservation areas, municipal parks, private campgrounds and trails which, collectively, provide the Township with a range of recreational opportunities and access to natural amenities.

In many cases, these environmental features have played a fundamental role in shaping the structure and character of the communities that have grown around them. For example, the Villages of Embro and Thamesford both contain significant valleylands associated with the Upper Thames River and its tributaries that serve as a key element of the character and natural aesthetic of these communities. As well, Lakeside, is a picturesque rural cluster that has been built around Sunova Lake. Therefore, opportunities to protect and enhance these environmental features and, where appropriate, improve the connections between these features and the community should be key considerations in the design of future development.

As indicated on **Figure 3**, many areas of the Township, including sections of Embro and Thamesford, benefit from natural topography which provides opportunities for views of the Thames River and associated valleylands, the surrounding countryside and other natural and built heritage features. Existing views of natural and built heritage features should be protected as community focal points and opportunities for new and improved views should also be considered in the design of future development.

The Township is fortunate to have large, mature trees lining many of its rural roads and village streets. Street trees can serve to complement and connect other natural features and play an important role in framing and defining the street edge, creating a more pedestrian friendly street environment and increasing overall green cover, particularly in urban areas. Therefore, opportunities to preserve and increase the number of street trees in the Township should be pursued and encouraged, including:

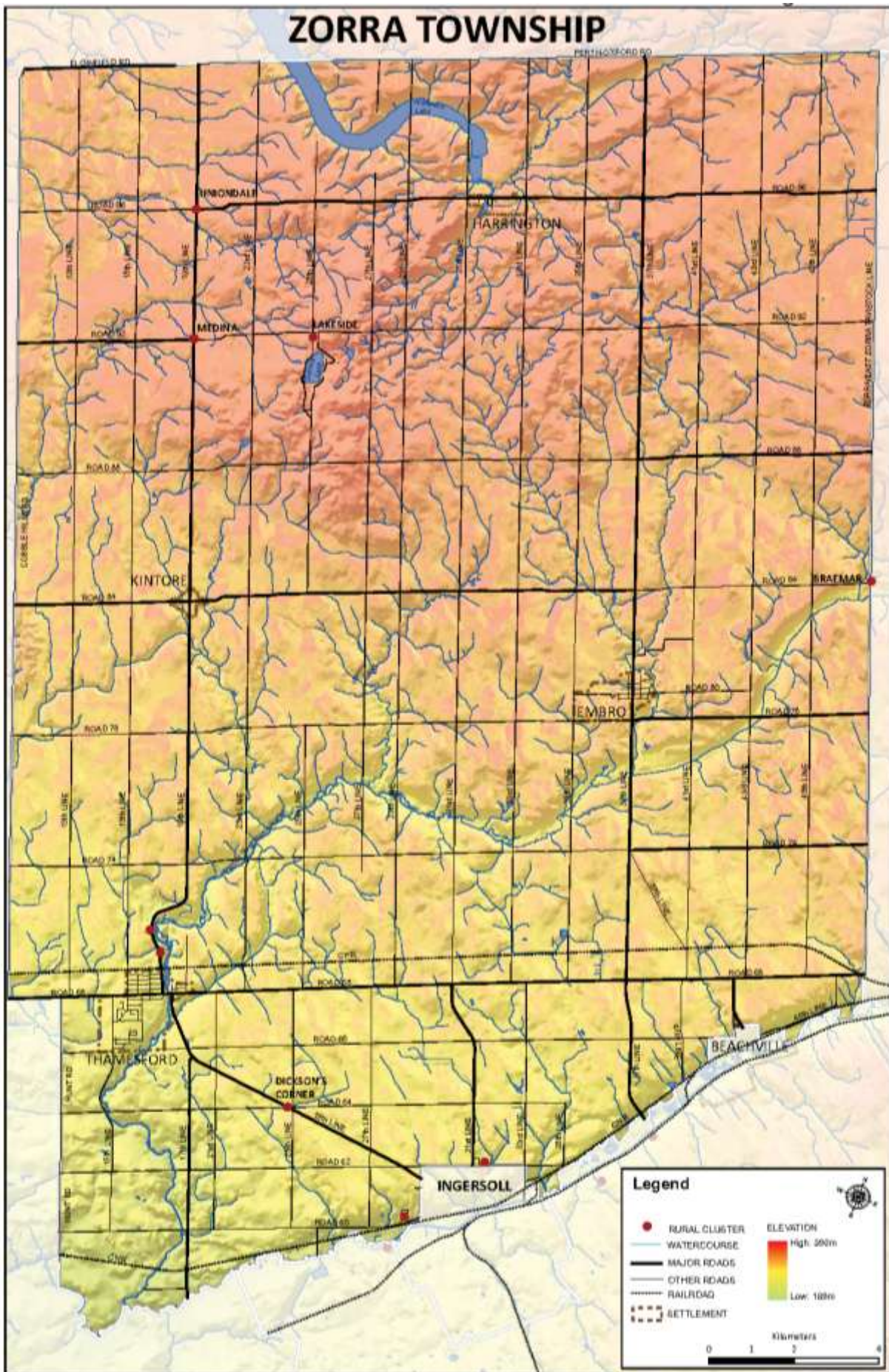
- Requiring the incorporation of street trees as part of the development of new residential communities and non-residential uses;
- Preserving existing trees and incorporating additional trees along key streets within existing built up areas, wherever possible. The focus should be on key streetscapes, active pedestrian areas (i.e. Village Cores) and streets that serve as connecting links between open space areas, village cores and other community facilities, which should be targeted as potential tree lined 'Green Streets'; and
- Establishing programs to increase the number of trees planted along rural roads.



Example of treed street



Figure 3– Township Topography



### Growth and Demographics<sup>1</sup>

According to the 2011 Census, the population for the Township of Zorra was approximately 8,000. According to County growth forecasts, the population of the Township is expected to increase over the next 20 years. The majority of growth is expected to occur within the existing designated settlement areas. Future growth and development can present both opportunities and challenges related to urban design, as it has the potential to substantially alter the existing structure and character of a community. Poor urban design can result in development which negatively impacts the character and structure of a community, while good urban design can serve to preserve and enhance the character of a community.

Having appropriate and consistent design standards can assist the Township in attracting new growth and retaining existing residents and businesses by ensuring growth is accommodated in an efficient and cost effective manner while, still protecting and, wherever possible, enhancing the character, and quality of the built environment in the various communities. Careful attention to landscaping and built form can demonstrate the municipality's commitment to providing quality places for people to live and work. As well, creating and maintaining a unique identity and 'sense of place' can serve to make each community more recognizable to and desirable for, residents, business patrons and other investors.

Demographic data for Oxford County illustrates three main patterns:

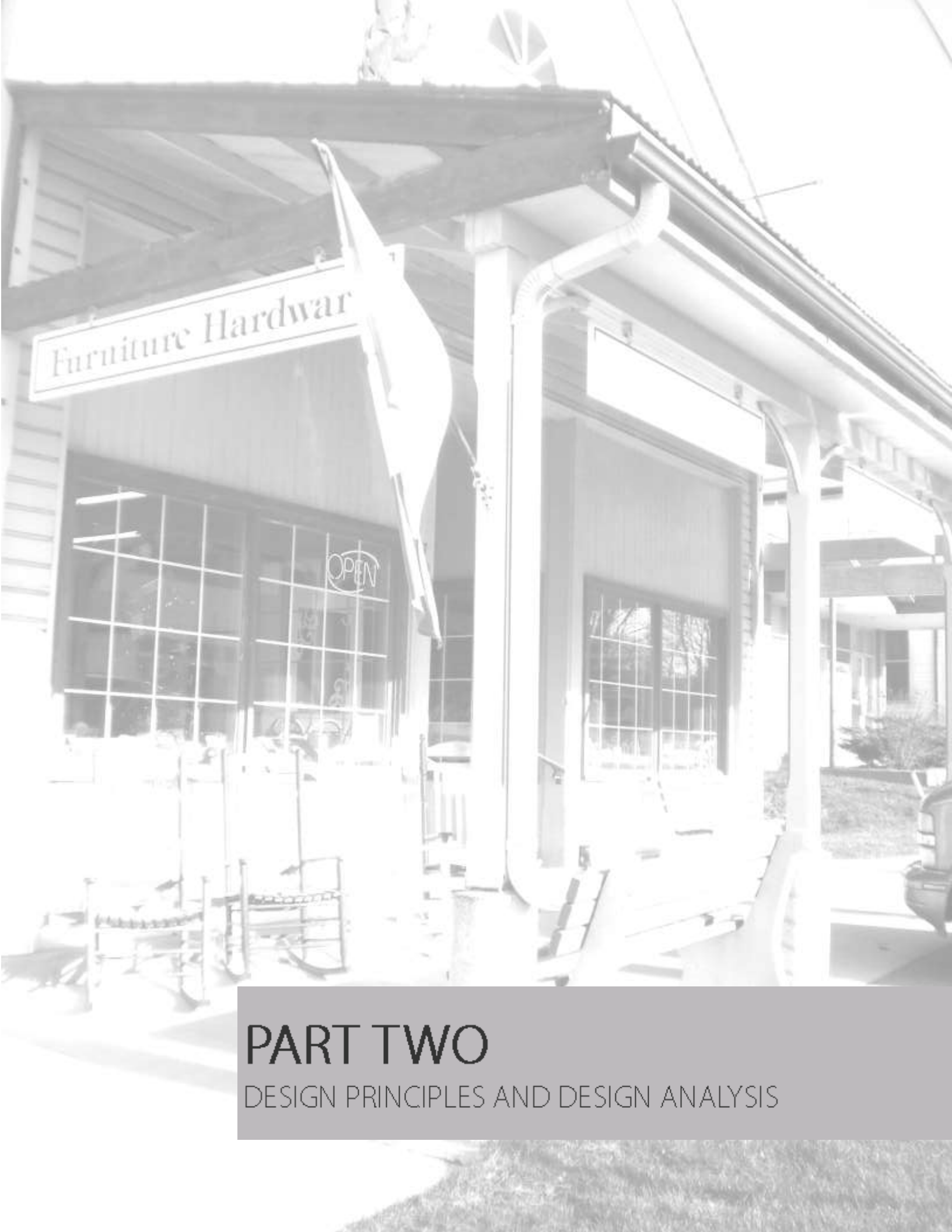
- a larger percentage of 0-14 year olds relative to the rest of Ontario;
- a larger percentage of 65+ relative to the rest of Ontario; and
- a smaller percentage of 25-54 year olds relative to the rest of Ontario.

The County continues to see an increase in the 65+ age cohort as a percentage of the County's total population. It is important that future development within the County considers this aging population and its long-term needs. Over the longer term it is anticipated that there will be a greater need for services and amenities for seniors. While it is difficult to dictate use through urban design guidelines, wherever possible and appropriate, the County and Township should encourage the provision of these types of services and/or amenities. Further, accessible design features should be required as part of new development/re-development proposals.

A comparison of Ontario versus the Oxford County illustrates that the County has a larger percentage of '2 person' households than the provincial average. The percentage of '2 person' households in both the rural and urban areas of the County is fairly consistent, averaging 34.8% of all households, representing by far the single largest category. Although the percentages are very similar to provincial rates, the County has a slightly smaller percentage in all other household size categories. However, all five townships in Oxford (including Zorra), exhibit a substantially higher number of '4-5 person' and '6 or more person' households than the urban areas in the County and the Province as a whole. Therefore, through the review of applications for residential development, the Township and County should try to ensure a range of unit types and sizes is provided in order to accommodate the range of household sizes.

<sup>1</sup> Source: *Oxford County Population, Household and Employment Forecasts (2001-2031)*, and *Oxford County Statistical Newsletter*





## PART TWO

DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN ANALYSIS

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

As part of this study, a number of design principles were established. These principles were developed through a combination of context analysis, public consultation, and a review of related legislation and applicable policies. These principles were also reviewed against the draft design principles established as part of the County Urban Design Strategy being undertaken as part of the 5 year Official Plan review try to ensure consistency between the Township and County design objectives.

The following six (6) design principles and objectives are intended to provide overall direction for the Township design guidelines and are not listed in any particular order.

## **PRINCIPLE 1:**

### **WALKABILITY / HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**

Objective: To create walkable communities with strong connections to major destinations within each community as well as between different neighbourhoods (both existing and future) within each community.

## **PRINCIPLE 2:**

### **VARIETY**

Objective: To build communities that provide a range of housing types, amenity areas and community focal points.

## **PRINCIPLE 3:**

### **CONSERVATION**

Objective: To conserve, enhance and integrate existing natural features as focal points within the community.

## **PRINCIPLE 4:**

### **CONNECTIVITY AND INTEGRATION**

Objective: To connect and integrate new developments with the existing community through the careful layout of streets, sidewalks and open spaces.

## **PRINCIPLE 5:**

### **CHARACTER**

Objective: To maintain the unique character of each community within the Township and ensure that new development contributes to and builds upon the existing character of the community. This includes protecting, creating and enhancing views of significant natural features and buildings of historic or community significance

## **PRINCIPLE 6:**

### **LIVEABILITY**

Objective: To promote design solutions that contribute to sustainable practices, a healthy lifestyle and a complete community.



# DESIGN ANALYSIS

The following section provides an overview of the design context for the various settlement areas in the Township, as well as some of the key design opportunities and considerations. These include improved pedestrian and trail connections, potential development/redevelopment sites and areas, community uses and landmarks, heritage buildings, priority streetscaping areas, parks and natural features and potential gateway locations.

## Thamesford

The Village of Thamesford is the largest settlement in the Township, with a population of approximately 2,400. The Village is situated in the south-west portion of the Township at the intersection of Oxford Road 119 and Oxford Road 2, approximately mid way between the City of Woodstock and the City of London.

### *Historic context<sup>1</sup>*

Thamesford was first surveyed in the early 1800's. By the 1820's land was being purchased and settled in a grid pattern on both sides of the Thames River. Although the majority of the land surveyed was originally laid out east of the Thames River, development ended up occurring largely west of the river. In 1842, 'Governor's Road' (current County Road 2), was re-routed to go through Thamesford, which at that time served as a mid-point stop between Woodstock and London. This resulted in the subsequent establishment of a range of commercial uses in the Village.

Many of the first settlers to the Village were originally from Northern Scotland. This ancestry



Historic Thamesford, Dundas Street



Historic Thamesford Mill

likely influenced the 'Country Victorian' architectural style displayed in the construction of a number of the older buildings. A number of historic residential dwellings still exist within the Village and they are primarily located in and around the Village Core. Many of the original non-residential buildings have since been demolished/replaced or extensively renovated with more modern architectural styling. Some notable exceptions are the Thamesford Mill, the Balmoral Inn and the former Bank building, which are located along Dundas street, as well as the two older churches in the Village.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from: Embro and West Zorra Township History Book Committee (2008) *Historically Bound Embro and West Zorra 1820-2007 Volume Two*, Aylmer Express.

*Existing Land Uses and Character*

Thamesford is home to a number of natural features and historic buildings. The Thames River Middle Branch runs through the Village, with the historic flour mill (circa 1845) located along the easterly banks. This creates a picturesque view as one enters the Village from the south and east. In addition to a number of municipal parks and recreation facilities, including an arena and outdoor swimming pool, the majority of Thamesford's river frontage has also been turned into public parkland and trails, providing the Village with a broad range of passive and active recreational opportunities. In terms of other community serving uses, the Village is also home to a number of churches, two elementary schools, a fire hall, a library and a community policing office. **Figures 4, 5, and 6** provide an overview of the existing land uses and design context for the Village.

Existing residential development in the Village is almost exclusively low density, with the exception of a few multi-unit residential developments in and around the Village Core. The character of the existing residential areas in Thamesford is generally reflective of the date of their development. The oldest residential area is located north of Oxford Road 2 and west of the Thames River. This area is characterized by larger lot sizes, with ranch style bungalows and one and a half storey homes, built between the original settlement period and the mid 1960's. The residential areas to the south of Oxford Road 2, west of the Thames River, consist of somewhat smaller lots with a mix of two storey homes and ranch style bungalows, generally built in the 1970's and 1980's. The newest residential area, located in the southwest corner of the Village, began to develop in the mid 1990's, following the arrival of sanitary sewers, and continues to be developed to present day.



This subdivision is characterized primarily by two storey dwellings on somewhat smaller lots (e.g. 50 ft frontages) than found elsewhere in the Village, owing to the fact that it was the first residential area planned and developed on the basis of full municipal services.

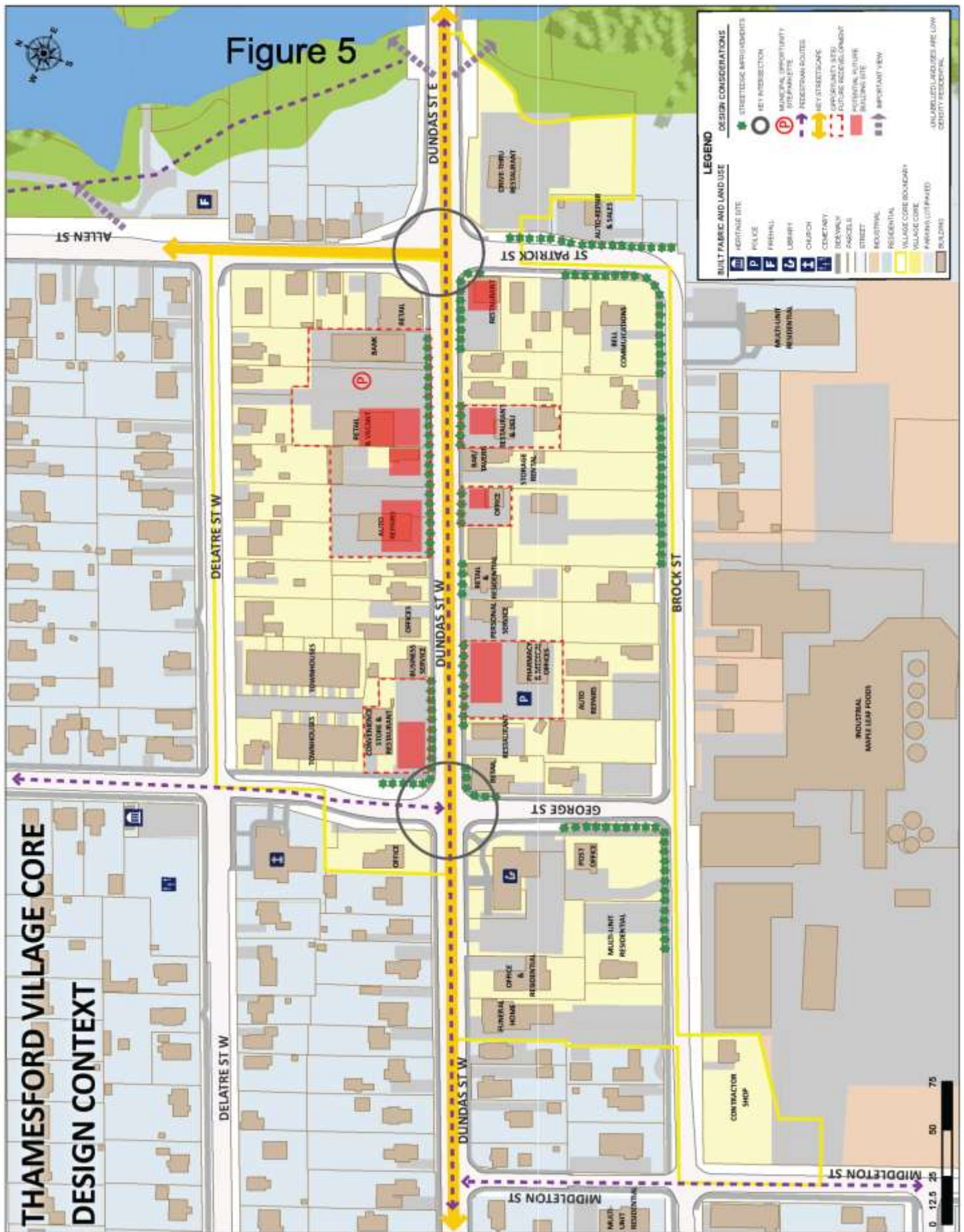
The Village Core is the historic commercial area of the Village and contains a mix of newer and older residential, commercial and institutional buildings on a range of parcel sizes. The majority of the businesses in the Village Core are smaller, independently operated office, convenience commercial, personal service and highway commercial type uses. Some recent additions to the Village Core include a Macs Convenience Store and Gas Bar and a restaurant with a drive through (Tim Hortons) that currently serves as a commercial anchor for the easterly end of the



# Figure 4













# PART TWO

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN ANALYSIS



Thamesford village core



Thamesford village core

Village Core. The older buildings in this area are generally two storeys in height, located close to the street and maintain a pedestrian orientation, while newer developments tend to be one storey in height and setback from the street, with wide curb cut access, limited to no landscaping and front yards used primarily for on-site parking. Over time, these newer developments have created a number of substantial gaps in the built fabric of the historic core area, which has contributed to a less comfortable pedestrian environment and detracts from the appearance of the main street streetscape and, by association, the overall image and character of the village.



Thamesford village core

An example of a newer development in the Village Core with a more street oriented, pedestrian focus is the Thamesford Library. During the public consultation process, the library was cited by a number of residents as having desirable urban design features, including extensive landscaping, appealing signage, street furniture and well defined public amenity areas. In terms of building design and orientation, the main building entrance and front façade face the street, with direct connections to the public sidewalk, and parking is located to the rear/side of the building, rather than between the building and the streetline. Further, the building's architectural design incorporates both



Thamesford Branch of the Oxford Public Library

modern and historical features, as well as a sloped (versus flat) roof and extensive windows along the front facade.

The Village also contains a stretch of existing service commercial development located along the westerly extent of Dundas Street. This area contains more automobile oriented commercial uses, such as a gas station, automotive repair shop, used car dealership and a convenience store. Given that existing commercial development in this area generally predates the implementation of site plan control in the Township, it tends to be characterized by numerous and lengthy curb cuts, parking/loading facilities and service areas located in the front yard and limited to no trees or landscaping. There is a remaining block of undeveloped land on the south side of Dundas Street, between Banner road and Stanley Street, which could accommodate future service commercial development.

Thamesford's only major industrial use is a large food processing operation (Cold Springs Farms), which serves as a key employer for the area. There is a relatively wide (>40 m) landscape buffer, anchored by a continuous row of mature coniferous trees, located along the westerly boundary of the site which provides some separation and screening of the operation from the residential uses across Middletown line to the west. However, given that the industrial use was established well before many of the Township's current land use controls were enacted, there is very limited land use transitioning, buffering and landscape screening along the northerly boundary of the site.

#### *Design Opportunities and Challenges*

In terms of future residential development, there is a large area of undeveloped land in the southeast corner of the Village (south of the Cold



Typical Service Commercial Development on Dundas Street

Springs plant) that is designated for future low and medium density residential development, as well as a Secondary Planning Area in the southwesterly corner of the Village. Both of these areas have potential to be developed for residential purposes in the future and would require one or more planning approvals through which the applicable design guidelines could be applied. There may also be opportunities to apply these guidelines to future residential infill and redevelopment projects within the Village that require site plan approval e.g. multi-unit residential.

With respect to Village Core and service commercial areas, the Township and the Thamesford business association/local businesses have recently undertaken a number of projects to improve the streetscape along Dundas Street, with an initial focus on signage, landscaping and beautification. However, the streetscape and pedestrian environment along Dundas Street remain key design challenges. One of the primary goals for the implementation of these guidelines should be to improve the existing streetscape conditions in the Village through the review and design of future development and other public and private projects. Fortunately, there appear to be a range of potential



development/re-development sites within the Village Core and along the westerly extent of Dundas Street, where the pedestrian character and overall image of the Village could be substantially improved with well designed sites and buildings. (See **Figure 5**) Redevelopment should consider restrictions on front yard parking, minimum and maximum building heights, maximum building setbacks and the design of buildings.

Given the Village Core's central location and the relatively compact layout of the Village, the Core is within a reasonable walking distance of most existing and future residential development. Providing for ample connections between the Village Core, residential neighbourhoods, community facilities and open space areas, coupled with a focus on improving the overall quality of the pedestrian environment, will serve to encourage and support increased pedestrian activity throughout the Village and particularly within the Village Core.

The Upper Thames River and its associated valleylands serve as a key component of the character and natural aesthetic of the community. Further, the natural topography of the area provides opportunities for views of the valleylands and surrounding countryside, as well as other natural and built heritage features. To date, the municipality and community have done an excellent job of capitalizing on the river and valleylands through the development of linear parkways along much of their length. However, further opportunities to protect and enhance these natural amenities and, where appropriate, improve the connections with the community should continue to be key design considerations. As well, existing views of both natural and built heritage features should be protected and opportunities for new and improved views considered in the design of future development.



Lions River Parkway, east side of the Thames



Existing Parks and Trails

**Figures 4, 5, and 6** provide an overview of the existing design context in the Village of Thamesford, and identify some of the key design considerations and opportunities in the Village, including:

- **Community landmarks/built heritage:** Thamesford contains a number of prominent historical and/or civic buildings and sites. The prominence of these sites and role as community focal points should be protected and enhanced, where feasible. For reference, a number of these sites, such as churches, cemeteries, schools, parks, community centre, library and former Thamesford Mill have been specifically identified.

- **Potential gateway locations:** Potential gateway locations are identified for the western most entrance to Thamesford, as well as the northern entrance. A further gateway location has been identified at Dundas Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Line, given the significant open space in that location, the volume of traffic, the historic mill and the adjacency to the Village Core.
- **Key Intersections:** A number of key intersections have been identified along Dundas Street. These intersections correspond to high visibility locations for commercial uses within the Village, where specific attention should be given to ensuring any development/re-development incorporates high quality, landmark type buildings that address both street frontages and the corner.
- **Important views:** A number of locations in Thamesford have been identified for protection or enhancement of views of the Thames River and associated valleylands (See also Development Area #4).
- **Key Streetscapes:** The entire length of Dundas Street and the southern portion of Allen Street should be considered as a priority streetscape due to its high visibility and the nature of adjacent lands uses and buildings. In these areas, there should be an increased focus on:
  - \* Creating a continuous corridor of large, branching, street trees to improve the pedestrian environment (e.g. provide shade), provide a visual cue to slow traffic and mitigate the visual impact of overhead utilities;
  - \* Limiting/reducing the number and length of curb cuts to create a safer pedestrian environment and provide more opportunity for street trees and front



St. John's Anglican Church



Gateway location

yard/boulevard landscaping;

- \* Decorative, pedestrian scaled, street lighting; and
  - \* In the Village Core, potential use of bump out curbing (to narrow pedestrian crossing points, slow traffic, define on-street parking areas and provide more area for landscaping and street trees) and special paving (to better identify pedestrian areas and crossing points), well defined on-street parking (to provide parking, slow vehicular traffic and buffer pedestrians) and pedestrian amenities and bicycle parking.
- **Street Edge Improvements –** Indicate areas

where there may be opportunity to improve the existing street edge condition through a reduction in the number and length of curb cuts, improved front yard landscaping, additional street trees and/or screening of existing front yard parking areas.

- **Pedestrian Routes:** Indicates existing and proposed pedestrian routes in the Village. A key design principle for the Township is walkability and a healthy lifestyle. Therefore, efforts should be made to continue to improve the pedestrian and cycling network within Thamesford through the provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails with appropriate connections throughout the community.
- **On-street pedestrian/cycling routes that serve as connecting links between open space areas, community facilities and the Village Core should be targeted for an enhanced pedestrian environment (e.g. well designed sidewalks, continuous street trees, pedestrian scaled street lighting and other pedestrian amenities).**
- **Redevelopment Areas:**
  1. The Thamesford Mill offers an opportunity for re-development. Efforts should be made to retain as much of the original mill as possible. Any redevelopment proposals for the Mill should incorporate significant pedestrian connections, including sidewalks where appropriate.
  2. Future re-development in this area should consider maintaining a wide pedestrian boulevard along the east side of Middleton Street to provide a key north/south pedestrian connection between the Village Core and community facilities, parks and open space to the south.
  3. There are several un-developed properties along Dundas Street designated for service commercial use. These sites provide an opportunity to establish attractive, well designed commercial development at the western entrance to the village. Development plans for this area should have a strong focus on enhanced landscaping and building design.
  4. The easterly boundary of this future development area abuts a large linear open space area associated with the Thames River valleylands. Given the prominence and importance of this natural feature to the natural open space system in the Village, it will be crucial to ensure future development establishes an appropriate interface that respects and is protective of this nature feature. This area represents a unique opportunity to improve views of and public access to the river and valleyland features through good community design.
  5. A future street/pedestrian and cycling route should be incorporated in this area as part of future development to provide a direct pedestrian connection between the residential areas to the west and the Thames River valley.
- **Opportunity Site/Future Redevelopment Area:** Identify sites in the Village Core that may have potential for future development/re-development, either individually, or as part of a larger re-development project. There are also a number of larger residential properties in the southerly portion of the core area that may have potential to re-develop for commercial purposes over time.
- **Municipal Opportunity Site/Parkette:** Township owned lands in the Village Core



currently used as a municipal parking area and parkette. There may be potential to further capitalize on this site in the future by incorporating it into a larger, well designed, commercial redevelopment project in this area.

- **Potential Future Building Location:** Indicates conceptual locations for future buildings (in keeping with these design guidelines) that would assist in re-establishing a more consistent, pedestrian oriented, street wall in the Village Core, if the sites were to be re-developed over time.

## Embro

The Village of Embro is the second largest settlement in the Township, with a population of approximately 900. The Village is located in the central eastern area of the Township, approximately 15 km northwest of Woodstock. The closest arterial intersection is Road 78 (Oxford Road 33) and Huron Street (Oxford Road 6), the latter of which runs north-south directly through the Village Core. The Village serves as a local commercial centre for the surrounding agricultural area.

### *Historic context<sup>1</sup>*

Historically, Embro has been described as a location with “natural hydraulic power for mill and manufacturing purposes and being on a rising eminence and surrounded with a fertile and beautiful section of country”. These natural traits may have been what originally attracted settlers to the area.

While the Town was incorporated in 1858, settlement of the lands began as early as 1833. Many of its first settlers were of Scottish ancestry. The name Embro is said to be the



Embro gateway signage

Gaelic form of ‘Edinburgh’ and this Scottish heritage continues to dominate the cultural identity of the village, with its primary festival of the year being the Embro Highland Games. This ancestry also likely influenced some of the older residential and commercial buildings which were constructed in general keeping with a ‘Country Victorian’ architectural style (with some gothic revival, renaissance, and romanesque details), using locally available construction material, such as brick, stone and wood.

Development in the village first occurred along a limited grid street pattern via survey plans dating back to the mid-1800’s in the area north of the present Village Core and later extending to the west. The business section of the village eventually shifted in a southerly direction to where it largely resides today. In the past, rail service linked Embro to London and St. Mary’s, which historically contributed to a thriving commercial area. Although many of the former commercial buildings have since been demolished or converted to other uses, a number of historical commercial and institutional buildings remain, including the former Embro Town Hall, the United and Presbyterian Churches and a number of the commercial buildings along Commissioner Street, east of Huron.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from: Embro and West Zorra Township History Book Committee (2008) *Historically Bound Embro and West Zorra 1820-2007 Volume Two*, Aylmer Express.

*Existing Land Use Pattern and Character*

Much of Embro's structural character and built heritage has remained relatively intact since the original settlement period. These character elements are complemented by the Village's picturesque setting, overlooking a branch of the Thames River and associated valleylands and the surrounding rural landscape.

The Village is served by a number of municipal parks, a community centre/arena and recreational trails which provide a range of passive and active recreational opportunities for residents. A variety of institutional and community serving uses are also located within the Village, primarily in and around the Village Core, including two churches, a fire hall, a community policing office, a post office and a library. **Figures 7, 8, and 9** provide an overview of the existing land uses and design context for the Village.

Existing uses in Embro consist primarily of single detached residential development, with varying periods of construction. Many original dwellings (mid-late 1800s) still exist on the lots in and around the Village core. These dwellings are typically 'Country Victorian' style homes on smaller lots than found in later period residential development. Residential development from the mid 1950's to present has largely been located around the periphery of the Village Core and along the north and south sides of Commissioner Street, west of Ross Street. Many of the newer residential dwellings are single storey ranch style bungalows on slightly larger lots. Multiple unit residential in the Village consists primarily of two seniors apartment buildings, one of which (Cambro Court) frames the southerly entrance to the Village.

The Village Core is the primary commercial area of the village and is concentrated primarily along Huron St (Oxford Road 6). This area contains a

mix of residential uses and smaller commercial businesses, most of which are independently owned/operated, including restaurants, offices, grocery/liquor store, farm supply outlets, bank, gas station and other automotive services. A number of historic buildings still exist in and around the Village Core, exhibiting architectural features that can generally be described as 'Country Victorian' (with some gothic revival, renaissance, and romanesque details). Similar to Thamesford, the older commercial buildings are generally two storeys in height, located close to the street and maintain a more pedestrian orientation, while the newer commercial development tends to be one storey in height and more automobile oriented e.g. setback further from the street, limited to no landscaping, parking in the front yard. These newer developments have created a number of gaps in the built fabric of the historic pedestrian core area, which has contributed to a less comfortable pedestrian environment and detracted from the overall appearance of the streetscape and character of the village.

The historical grid road pattern and smaller block sizes in the Village core area has resulted in a well connected urban fabric that is conducive to pedestrian movement. The most regular block



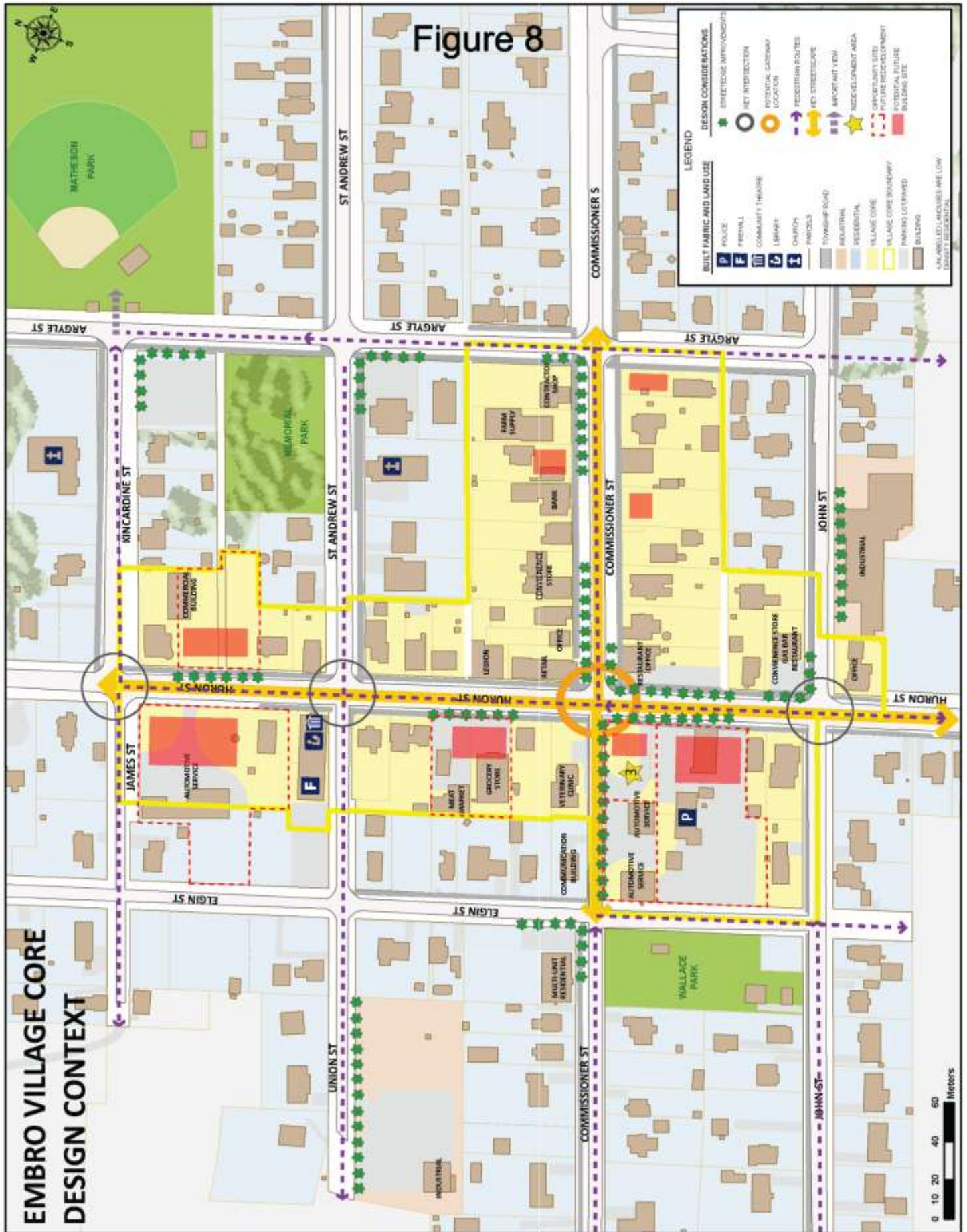
Embro residence—'Country Victorian' style





# EMBRO VILLAGE CORE DESIGN CONTEXT

Figure 8



**LEGEND**

**BUILT FABRIC AND LAND USE**

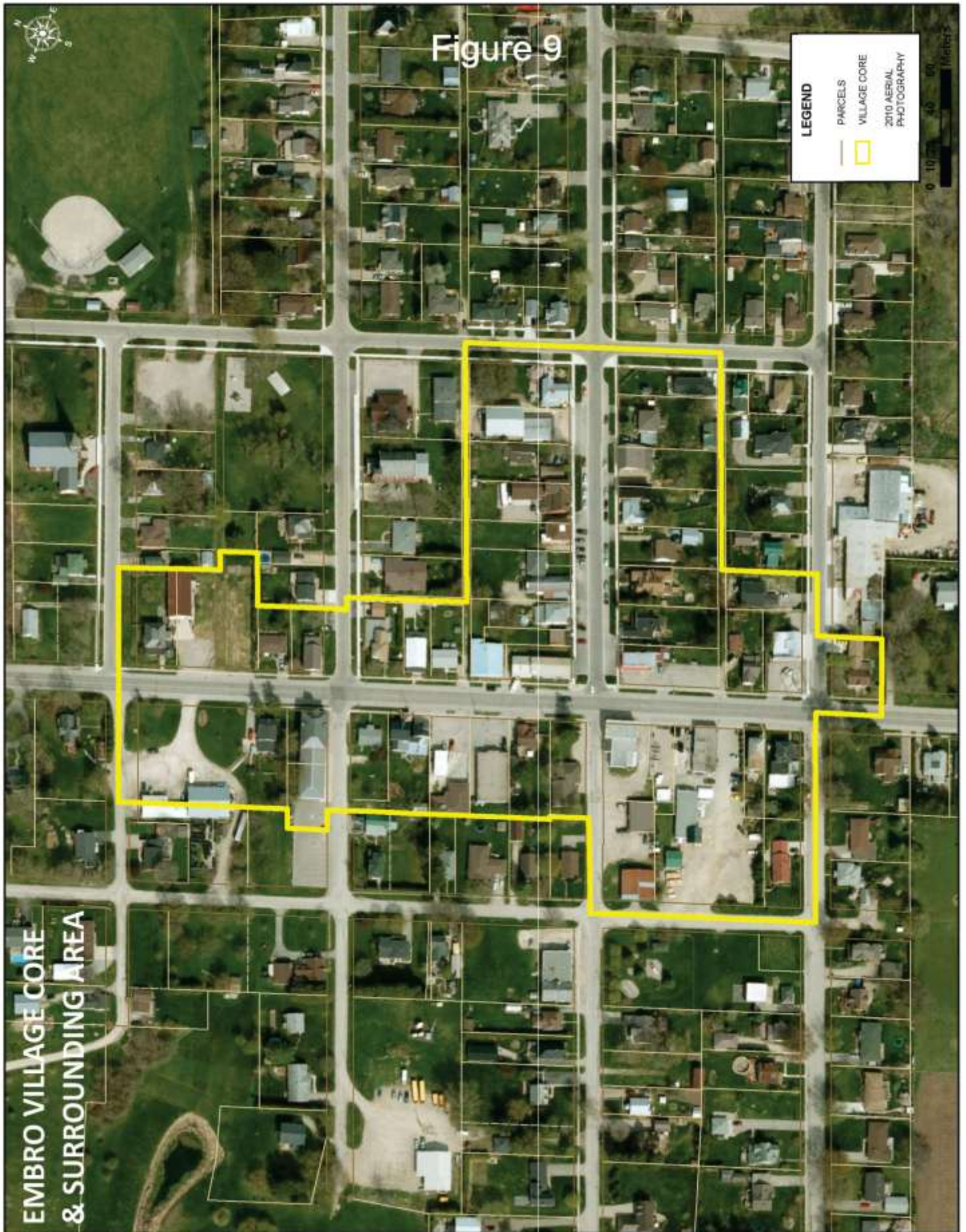
- POLICE
- PERNALL
- COMMUNITY THEATRE
- LIBRARY
- CHAURON
- FINCELS
- TYNAMP ROAD
- INDUSTRIAL
- RESIDENTIAL
- VILLAGE CORE
- VILLAGE CORE BOUNDARY
- PARKING LOT/STAMP
- BUILDING

**DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

- STREET EDGE IMPROVEMENTS
- KEY INTERSECTION
- POTENTIAL GATEWAY LOCATION
- PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
- KEY STREETSCAPE
- IMPORTANT VIEW
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA
- OPPORTUNITY SITE
- POTENTIAL FUTURE BUILDINGS SITE

UNLABELLED LAND USE ARE LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL







sizes are found between Huron Street and Argyle Street, with shorter blocks found between Huron Street and Elgin Street. The historic grid pattern currently ends west of Ross Street, where connectivity is weaker, given the limited number of street connections.

Although there are no lands currently designated for service commercial development in the Village, there are a number of existing service commercial uses located within the core, including farm supply outlets, building contractors and various automotive services. The village also contains a few small scale industrial uses including a school bus depot, Township public works yard and a multi-tenant industrial building (former RWF industries).

#### *Design Challenges and Opportunities*

The level of new development in the village over the years has been fairly modest, likely due in large part to the absence of full municipal services. This gradual growth may be one of the reasons that Embro has been successful in maintaining many of the historic buildings and structural and rural village character elements that help define the overall identity of the community. With the recent arrival of both municipal water and sewers, there is greater potential for new infill and greenfield development in the Village, which will present related opportunities to enhance and expand on the existing character through the application of the design guidelines. These guidelines will apply to future infill and redevelopment projects within the existing built up areas of the Village, where site plan approval is required (e.g. non-residential and multi-unit residential development). As well, future greenfield development will generally require various planning approvals through which the design guidelines can be applied.



Commercial Uses on Huron Street



Commercial Uses on Huron Street

key focus for the implementation of the design guidelines in Embro should be on improving the existing built form and streetscape conditions in the Village Core through the review and design of future development and other public and private sector projects. Fortunately, there appear to be a number of potential development/redevelopment sites in and around the Village Core, where the pedestrian environment and overall character of the Village could be improved over time with well designed sites and buildings. The existing street layout and built form in the historic areas of the village already contribute to a pedestrian supportive environment. However, this environment could be much improved through the inclusion of



enhanced streetscaping and pedestrian amenities along existing main streets (Huron and Commissioner), particularly in and around the Village Core. The existing pedestrian network should also be expanded upon over time, by ensuring that new greenfield developments incorporate well designed and connected streets, walkways and trails.

In terms of future greenfield development, there is considerable future urban growth land contained within the settlement boundary for the Village, primarily concentrated to the north and south of the existing development on Commissioners Street, west of Huron Street (37<sup>th</sup> Line). As these lands comprise approximately half of the total land area within the settlement boundary, the manner in which future development in these areas is designed and constructed will have a fundamental impact on the overall character and identity of the Village. Although a large portion of this land has been identified for future low density residential development, there are also areas identified for future light-industrial, institutional and service commercial development.

In late 2010, the Township approved a secondary planning study for Embro which contained a number of planning recommendations pertaining to the future use and design of the lands within the village. These recommendations included that urban design briefs be required for applications within the Future Urban Growth lands to ensure development implements the design principles in the report. These design principles relate to such matters as community integration, connectivity/street pattern, walkability/healthy lifestyle, supporting the village core, distribution of parkland and open space, housing character and housing mix and density. The design guidelines in this document reflect and expand upon the design principles outlined in the Embro Secondary Planning Study.

**Figure 10** shows the Council approved secondary plan concept for the Village, including existing and future pedestrian routes.

Similar to Thamesford, the Thames River and natural topography in the area are key components of the overall character and natural aesthetic of the community. Therefore, opportunities to protect and enhance the river and associated valleylands and, where appropriate, improve the connections between such features and the rest of the community should also be key design considerations. As well, existing views of natural and built heritage features should be protected and opportunities for new and improved views considered in the design of future development.

**Figures 7, 8, and 9** provide an overview of the existing design context in the Village of Embro, and identify some of the key design considerations and opportunities in the Village, including:

- **Community Landmarks/Built Heritage:** Embro contains a number of prominent historic and/or civic buildings and sites. The prominence of these sites and role as community focal points should be protected and enhanced, where feasible. For reference, a number of these sites, such as churches, parks, the community centre and the old Town Hall/Library are specifically identified.
- **Potential Gateway Locations:** Potential gateways have been identified at the northern and southern entrances to Embro, as these are the directions from which most people enter the community. These intersections should communicate that one is entering the community through enhanced landscaping, signage and/or built design features such as landscaped medians. Secondary gateway locations have been noted at the entrance to the Community Centre, the easterly entrance to





the Village and at the intersection of Huron and Commissioner Streets.

- **Key Intersections:** A number of key intersections have been identified along Huron Street. These intersections correspond to high visibility locations for commercial uses within the Village, where specific attention should be given to ensuring any development/re-development incorporates high quality, landmark type buildings that address both street frontages and the corner.
- **Important View:** Indicates various locations in Embro where views of natural features (e.g. SWM ponds and Thames River valleylands) should be protected or enhanced.
- **Key Streetscapes:** Huron Street and Commissioner Street should be considered as priority streetscapes due to their high visibility and the nature of adjacent land uses and buildings. In these areas, there should be an increased focus on:
  - \* Creating a continuous corridor of large, branching, street trees to improve the pedestrian environment (e.g. provide shade), provide a visual cue to slow traffic and mitigate the visual impact of overhead utilities;
  - \* Limiting/reducing the number and length of curb cuts to create a safer pedestrian environment and provide more opportunity for street trees and front yard/boulevard landscaping;
  - \* Decorative, pedestrian scaled, street lighting; and
  - \* Additionally, in the Village Core the potential use of bump out curbing (to narrow pedestrian crossing points, slow traffic, define on-street parking areas and provide more area for landscaping and street trees) and special paving (to better identify pedestrian areas and crossing



Historic Commercial Site



Embro Old Town Hall

points), well defined on-street parking (to provide parking, slow vehicular traffic and buffer pedestrians), bicycle parking and enhanced landscaping and pedestrian amenities.

- **Street Edge Improvements:** Indicate areas



where there may be opportunity to improve the existing street edge condition through a reduction in the number and length of curb cuts, improved front yard landscaping, additional street trees and/or screening of existing front yard parking areas.

- **Pedestrian Routes:** Indicates existing and proposed pedestrian routes in the Village. A key design principle for the Township is walkability and a healthy lifestyle. Efforts should be made to continue to improve the pedestrian and cycling network within Embro through the provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and trails with appropriate connections to the community. In this regard, proposed extensions to the pedestrian routes have also been identified in the approved secondary plan for the Village (See **Figure 10**).
- **On-street pedestrian/cycling routes** that serve as connecting links between open space areas, community facilities and the Village Core should be targeted for an enhanced pedestrian environment (e.g. well designed sidewalks, continuous street trees, pedestrian scaled street lighting and other pedestrian amenities).
- **Redevelopment Areas:**
  1. This property is adjacent to the existing senior apartments (Cambro Court) and the proposed road connection into the Future Development Lands. There are opportunities for enhanced landscaping on this property and trail and walkway connections to the new community and seniors home
  2. This site represents municipally owned land on Commissioner Street which could, over time, redevelop as a parkette/primary trail entrance.
  3. This site consists of municipally owned land at the important intersection of Huron and Commissioner Street. This is

an ideal location for a public gathering area such as a parkette or an urban square. There may also be potential to capitalize on this site in the future by incorporating it as part of a larger commercial redevelopment project at this intersection.

- **Potential Future Building Location:** Indicates conceptual locations for future buildings that are in keeping with these design guidelines and would assist in re-establishing a more consistent, pedestrian oriented, street wall in the Village Core, if the sites were to be re-developed over time.

### Harrington West

Harrington West, known locally as Harrington, is a small village with approximately 130 residents located in the north central area of the Township along Oxford County Road 28 (Road 96), just south of Wildwood Lake. The overall character of the Village is largely a function of its picturesque location, being virtually surrounded by gently rolling hills, woodlands, wetlands and other natural features.

#### *Historical Context<sup>1</sup>*

In addition to a mill, it believed that the abundant springs in the area attracted people to settle in the area. The Village was originally laid out in a partial grid pattern, with the lands east of the mill pond developed into 20 blocks of varying sizes, each containing several lots. The lands to the north of what is now Main Street were left undeveloped and are now largely owned by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority. The original settlement came to be known as Springfield, but was later renamed to Harrington and eventually to Harrington West, as it is referred to today.

<sup>1</sup> Taken from: Embro and West Zorra Township History Book Committee (2008) *Historically Bound Embro and West Zorra 1820-2007 Volume Two*, Aylmer Express. Lorena Chauley, Harrington West Local Resident, June 20, 2012.

In 1875 the Village of Harrington West contained approximately 200 people. However, the village was never served by a railway and it slowly transformed from a limited commercial centre into a mostly residential hamlet. Given that the settlers of the area were largely of British ancestry, a number of the older residential buildings in the area exhibit a 'Country Victorian' architectural styling.

### *Development Character*

Existing residential development in the Village is primarily located to the south of Road 96, between the 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Line. This residential development is comprised of a mix of properties fronting directly onto the south side of Road 96 and those fronting onto a number of side/internal streets located to the south of Road 96. A number of natural/environmental features have interrupted the grid road pattern layout that was originally intended for the Village. As a result, the residential development in the village resembles linear strip development more than a true grid pattern. Despite the small size of the Village, the street pattern does not provide for easy pedestrian connections between the east and west sides of the Village.

Like many of the other smaller settlements in the Township, Harrington is not currently served by sidewalks and does not have a defined commercial area or consistent built fabric e.g. building setbacks, architecture etc. However, given it's more naturalized setting, the streetscape through the Village does benefit from having existing mature trees along much of the road frontage.

The residential dwelling types and architecture in the Village are fairly diverse, with a few of the older dwellings maintaining historical 'Country Victorian' architectural features, while others have been



Harrington signage



Harrington signage



Harrington Community Centre



Harrington residence

renovated or more recently built with a more modern architectural styling.

In terms of non-residential uses, there are a number of community facilities located in the Village, including a community centre, municipal park, conservation area and a library/community hall. Few local businesses are located in the Village.

#### *Design Challenges and Opportunities*

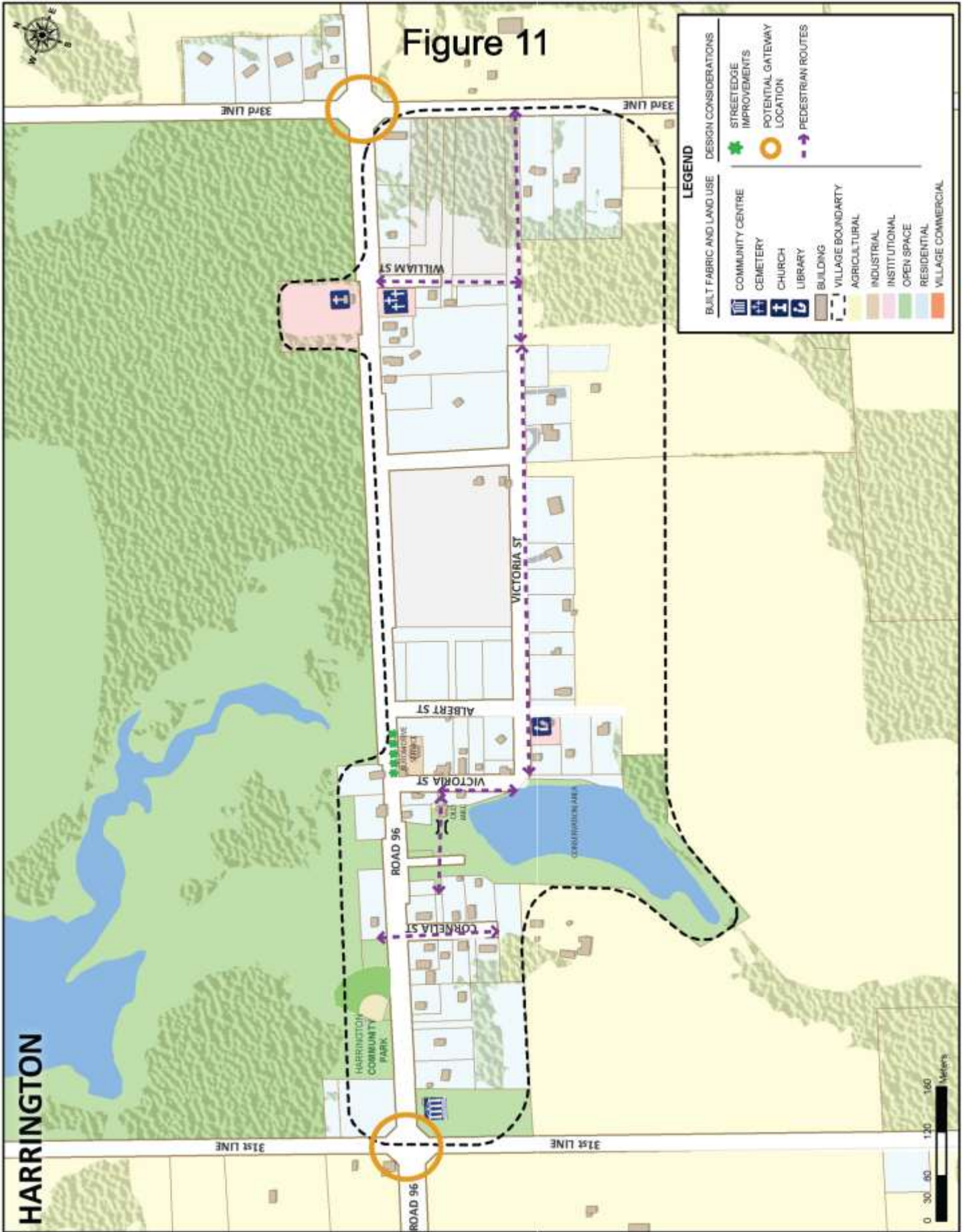
The undeveloped lands within the Village of Harrington may provide future opportunities to enhance community character by way of consistent design and development patterns, protecting and enhancing views of natural features and improving connections and pedestrian linkages. For instance, there appears to be some potential for future residential infill development or re-development on underutilized lands in the southerly and easterly portions of the Village.

However, given that servicing in Harrington consists of private wells and septic systems, future development will be limited to minor infilling and rounding out within the existing settlement area. Although future development is most likely to be residential, it is possible that small scale commercial, industrial or institutional uses, that are suitable on private services, could be proposed. Therefore, the opportunity to apply the design guidelines in Harrington will likely be limited to future residential infill development, redevelopment and/or expansion of existing non-residential uses and, potentially, the development of new non-residential uses.

**Figure 11** provides an overview of the existing character/design context in the Village of Harrington and identifies some of the key design considerations and opportunities, including:

- **Community Landmarks/Built Heritage:** Harrington contains a number of prominent historic and/or civic buildings and sites, including a church, community hall, library, community park and a Conservation Area containing the old Harrington Mill. The prominence of these sites and role as community focal points should be protected and enhanced, where possible.
- **Potential Gateway Locations:** Potential gateways have been identified at the easterly and westerly entrances into the Village along Road 96 (County Road 28). These locations should communicate that one is entering the community through enhanced landscaping, signage and/or built design features.
- **Key Streetscapes:** Road 96 (County Road 28) is the main road through the Village and is already framed by a number of large trees. Along this corridor, a key focus should be on maintaining/increasing the number and continuity of large street trees in order to enhance the pedestrian environment, act as a visual cue to slow traffic (e.g. identify the limits of the settlement area) and mitigate the visual impact of overhead utilities. There should also be a strong focus on front yard landscaping for any new non-residential uses.
- **Street Edge Improvements:** Indicate areas where there may be an opportunity to improve the existing street edge condition through a reduction in the number and length of curb cuts, improved front yard landscaping, additional street trees and/or screening of existing front yard parking/open storage areas.
- **Pedestrian Routes:** Efforts should be made to continue to improve the pedestrian and cycling network in the Village by ensuring appropriate east-west connections between





residential areas, community facilities and open space areas. Pedestrian movement may also benefit from a better defined crossing point between the residential areas on the north side of Road 96 and the Community Park to the south.

### Kintore

Kintore is a small village with approximately 140 residents. Unlike most other villages in the County, Kintore is not served by any internal or side streets and consists largely of residential strip development extending out from the intersection of County Road 119 and Road 84. The village is surrounded by agricultural lands and operations and is comprised primarily of low density residential uses and limited number of non-residential uses on private services. The non-residential uses include a public school, a community recreation facility (soccer fields), a few independent commercial operations and some smaller scale industrial uses.

In terms of the streetscape, unlike many of the other smaller settlements in the Township, Kintore has the benefit of having sidewalks throughout a considerable portion of the Village, providing pedestrian connections from a number of the residential properties to the school. Much of the road frontage through the village is framed by mature street trees which contribute to the overall appearance of the streetscape and the character of the Village, however, there are a number of noticeable gaps. As well, much of the road frontage, particularly in front of non-residential uses, is characterized by drive over curbing and paved frontages/boulevards. Residential development in the Village is rural in character, with large lots and fairly deep and consistent setbacks. The village does not have a defined historic commercial area, however, there are a couple of older commercial buildings located at the main intersection and oriented



Kintore Intersection

close to the street line.

Given that the Village is reliant on private services, future development will likely be limited primarily to minor infilling and rounding out within the existing settlement area. Although it is anticipated that any new development is most likely to be residential, it is possible that small scale commercial, industrial or institutional development that is suitable on private services could be proposed in the future. Therefore, the opportunity to apply the design guidelines in Kintore is likely to be limited primarily to future redevelopment and/or expansion of existing non-residential uses and, potentially, the development of new non-residential uses.

**Figure 12** illustrates the existing character/design context for the Village of Kintore, as well as some key design considerations and opportunities, including:

- **Community landmarks/built heritage:** Kintore contains a few prominent historic and/or civic buildings and sites, including a church, two cemeteries, an elementary school and a soccer park. The prominence of these sites and role as community focal points should be protected and enhanced, where possible.

# PART TWO

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES AND DESIGN ANALYSIS

- Potential gateway locations: Given the higher volumes of traffic using County 119, primary gateway locations have been identified at the north and south entrances to the Village, with secondary gateways identified at the east and west entrances to the Village.
- Key Intersections: The junction of County Road 119 and Road 84 forms the only intersection in the Village and is key to defining its overall image and character. Therefore, it is particularly important to ensure any future development/re-development in this location incorporates high quality building and landscape design and adequately addresses both street frontages and the corner.
- Key Streetscapes: County Road 119 and County Road 28 are main roads through the Village. Within the Village limits, a key focus should be on maintaining/increasing the number and continuity of large street trees to enhance the pedestrian environment, act as a visual cue to slow traffic (e.g. identify the limits of the settlement area) and mitigate the visual impact of overhead utilities. There should also be a strong focus on limiting/reducing the number and length of curb cuts to create a safer pedestrian environment and increase the area for street trees and front yard/boulevard landscaping.
- Street Edge Improvements: Indicate areas where there may be an opportunity to improve the existing street edge condition through a reduction in the number and length of curb cuts, planting of street trees, improved front yard landscaping and/or screening of existing parking, loading and open storage areas.
- Pedestrian Routes: Efforts could be made to



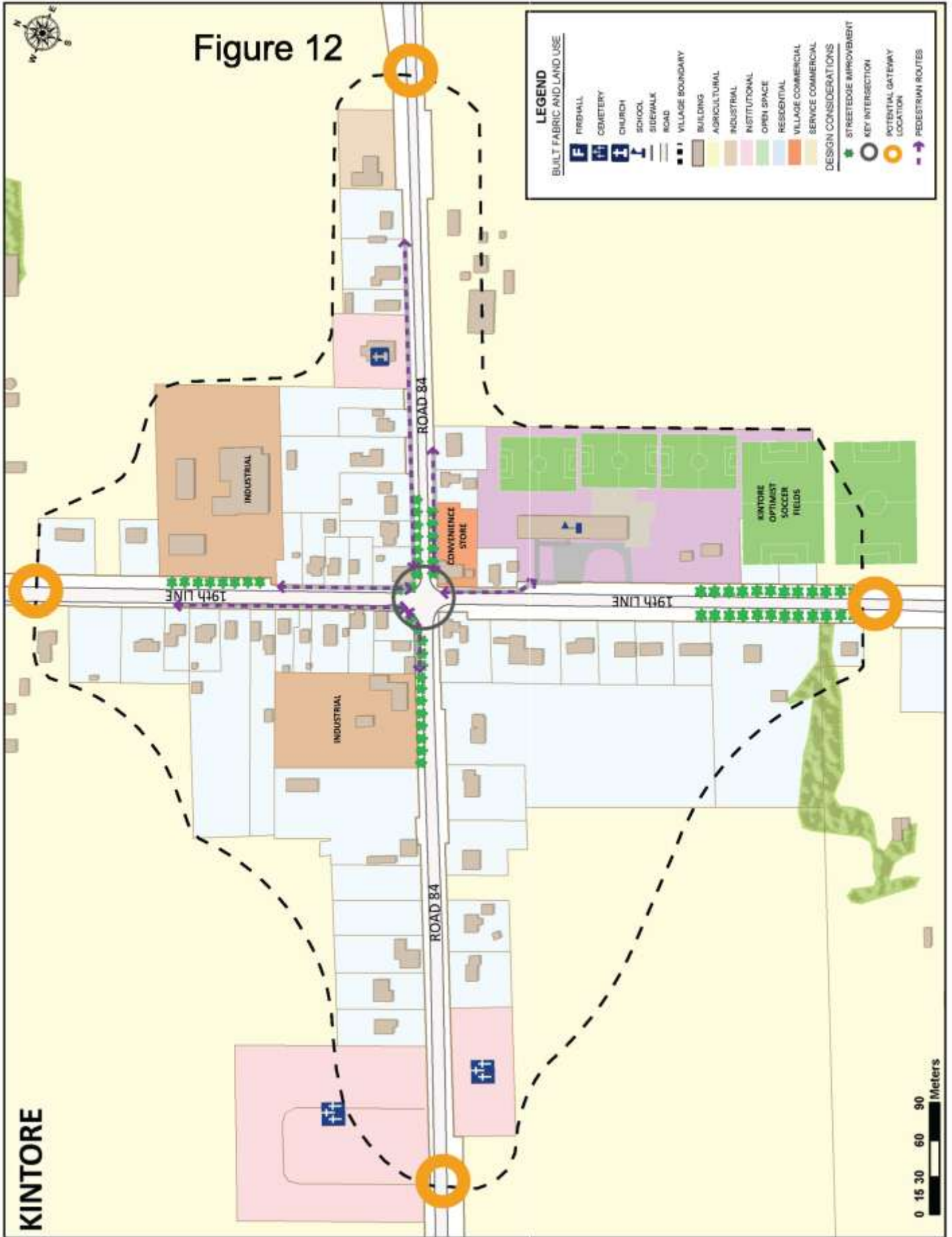
Building close to street line at main intersection



Kintore key intersection

improve upon the existing sidewalk connections in the Village by ensuring appropriate pedestrian connections to the school, soccer fields and commercial uses and better protection/separation from vehicular traffic, where possible (e.g. clearly distinguishing travel lanes from paved shoulders/boulevards).





### Other Settlement Areas

The remaining settlements in the Township consist primarily of a number of smaller Rural Clusters dispersed throughout the otherwise agricultural areas. Many of these settlements developed around a rural crossroads in and around the mid 1950's and consist, almost exclusively, of small concentrations of single detached residential dwellings on larger rural residential type lots served by private services. The overall streetscape and character of these settlements is quite varied, with a wide range of building styles, setbacks, lot frontages and prevalence of street trees. One of the more consistent aspects is the rural road cross section and lack of sidewalks. Some typical examples include Braemar, Brooksdale, Medina and Uniondale, with notable exceptions being Lakeside/Sunova, Allen Street and the North Town Line rural clusters.

The Lakeside/Sunova rural cluster (See **Figure 13**) has a somewhat unique character, due to the presence of Lake Sunova and the orientation of much of the existing development in the settlement toward that natural feature, including a small campground and recreation hall. Much of the residential development currently found within the Lakeside/Sunova Rural Cluster, particularly along the east side of Lake Sunova, was originally seasonal in nature. However, over the years, many of the dwellings in these areas have evolved into more year-round residences. These formerly seasonal areas tend to be characterized by smaller dwellings and lot sizes than are typically found in other settlements on private services, with a number oriented toward the lake and having their own docks.

The North Town Line rural cluster (See **Figure 14**) is located on the north side of the boundary road between the Township of Zorra and the Town of Ingersoll and appears, in many ways, to be an



View of Sunova Lake

extension of Ingersoll. The character of the dwellings is not dissimilar to the low-density residential development located across the road in the Town of Ingersoll, however, they are located on considerably larger lots, owing to the fact that this area does not have full municipal services

There are a small number of existing commercial, industrial and institutional uses located within various rural clusters, many of which have been established for some time. Industrial and institutional uses will likely be limited to the existing developed sites. However, there may be opportunities for new small scale commercial development suitable for private services or cottage industries to be established in some clusters.

Given that development in rural clusters is limited to minor infilling within the existing built up area, the opportunity to apply the design guidelines in such settlement areas will likely be focused primarily on redevelopment and/or expansion of existing non-residential uses and occasionally development of new non-residential uses.

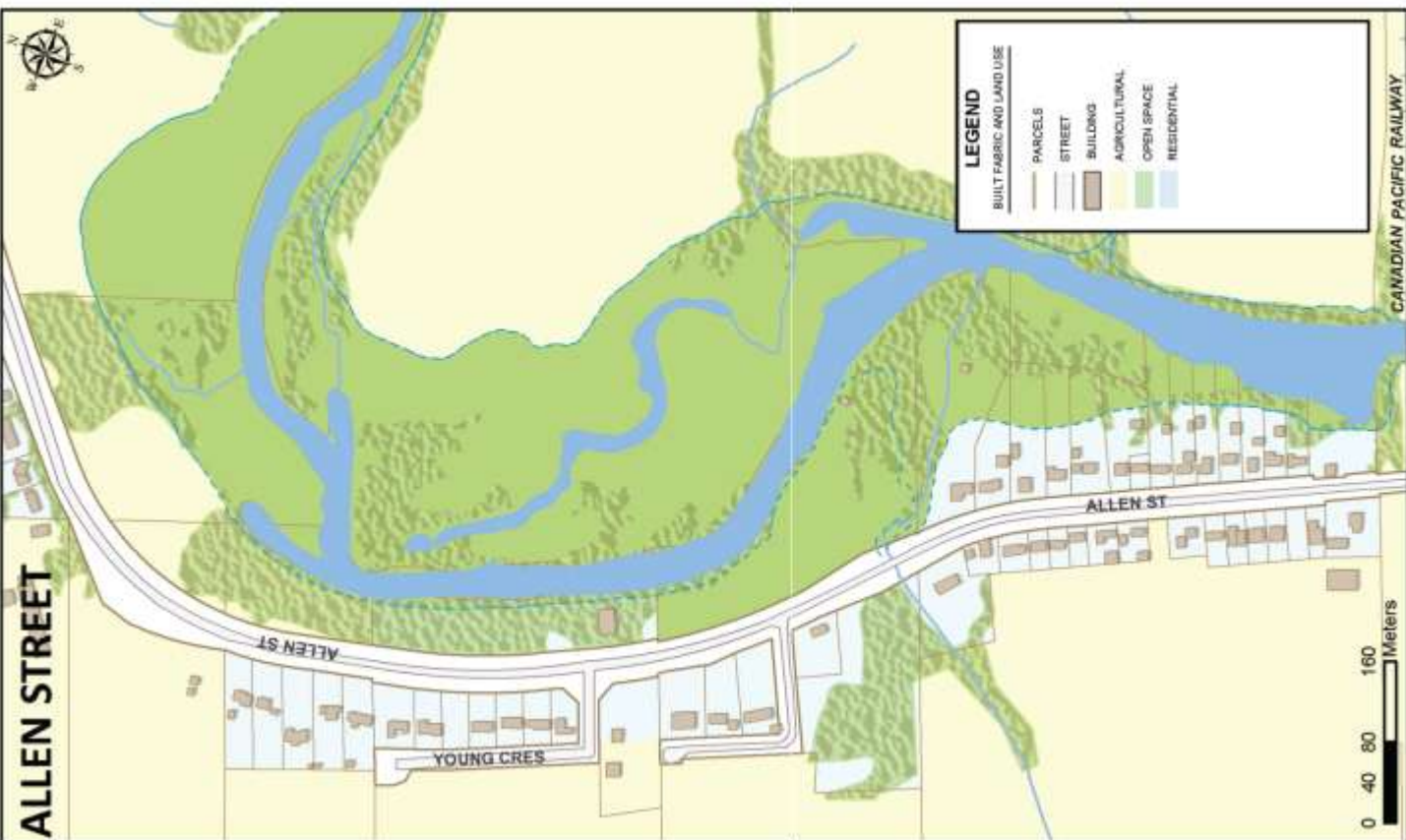
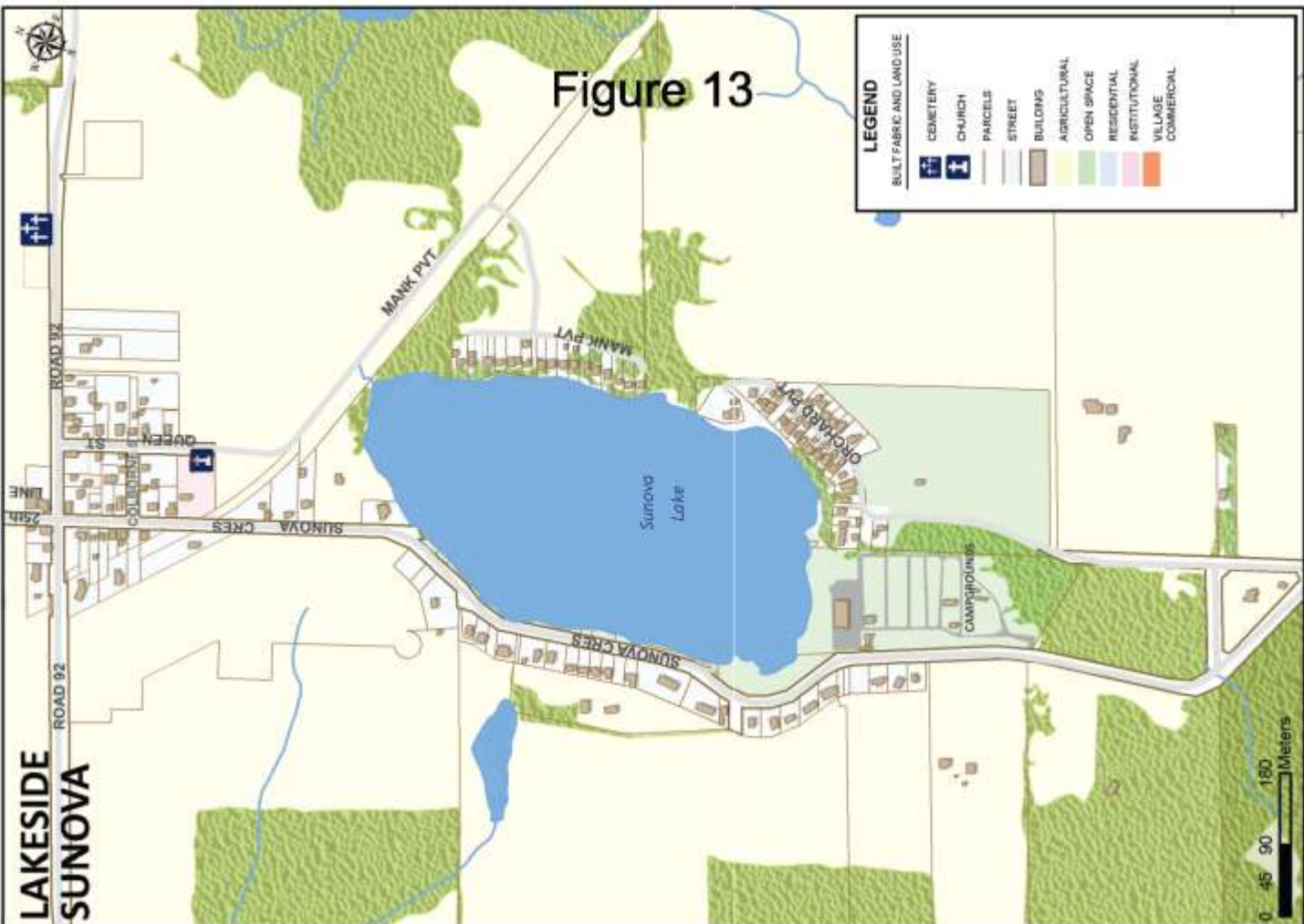
**Figures 13 and 14** illustrate the existing character and design context in the various rural clusters. Due to the primarily single detached residential nature of

these settlements and limited opportunities for development or re-development, the design considerations and opportunities are largely limited to:

- improving the street edge along the frontage of existing and future non-residential uses (e.g. reduced curb cut lengths, better screening of parking and storage areas and increasing the amount and quality of front yard landscaping);
- improving the overall character of the streetscape by increasing the number of street trees; and
- Ensuring future any development/re-development at the corners of major intersections places a strong focus on high quality building and landscaping design that addresses both street frontages.



Figure 13



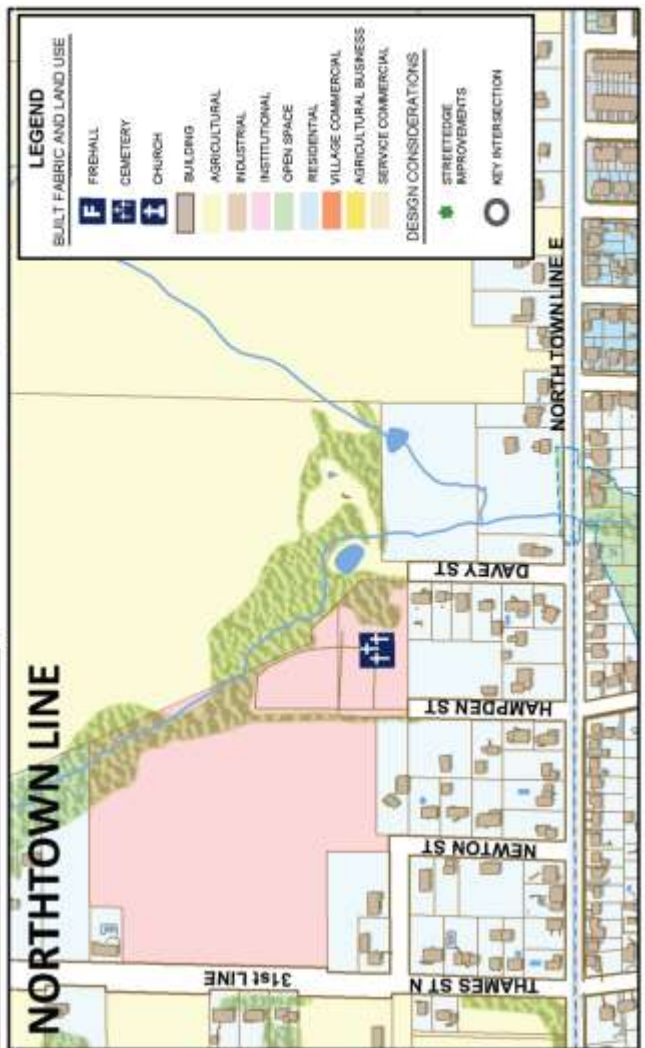
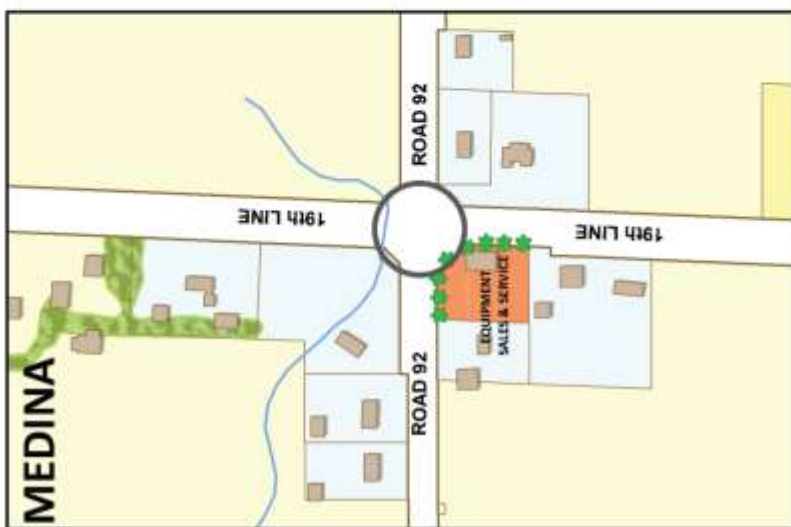
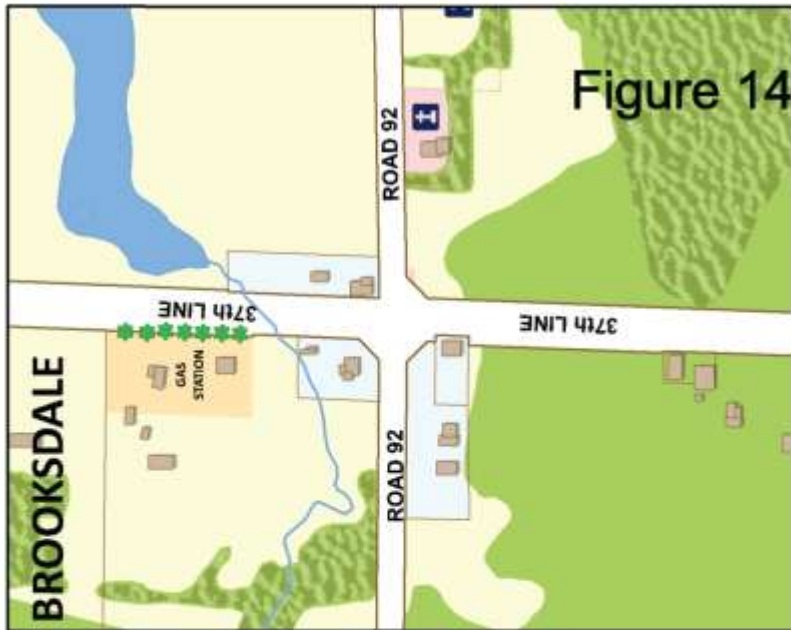


Figure 14

**LEGEND**

**BUILT FABRIC AND LAND USE**

- FIREWALL
- CEMETERY
- CHURCH
- BUILDING
- AGRICULTURAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- OPEN SPACE
- RESIDENTIAL
- VILLAGE COMMERCIAL
- AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS
- SERVICE COMMERCIAL

**DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

- STREETCROSSING IMPROVEMENTS
- KEY INTERSECTION





**PART THREE**  
DESIGN GUIDELINES



### APPLICATION OF THESE GUIDELINES

The design principals, guidelines and related recommendations contained in this document are primarily intended to provide the Township with detailed design direction for the purpose of evaluating proposals for development that require one or more municipal approvals. Examples of such municipal approvals may include:

- An application for development under the Planning Act, such as an Official Plan amendment, plan of subdivision/condominium, consent, zone change, minor variance and/or site plan;
- An application for a building permit under the Ontario Building Code Act;
- An approval under the Ontario Heritage Act; and
- Other municipal approvals e.g. under Municipal Act By-laws

These design principles and guidelines focus most extensively on the Serviced Villages of Embro and Thamesford, given that the majority of future development in the Township is anticipated to occur in those two settlement areas. However, the design principles and guidelines are also intended to be applied to development within the Villages of Harrington and Kintore, designated Rural Clusters and to industrial, commercial and institutional development and agricultural industrial/commercial development that may be permitted outside of designated settlement areas. For clarity, the design principles and guidelines are not intended to apply to general agricultural uses or licensed aggregate extractive uses.

In addition, the design principles and guidelines are intended to assist in identifying, prioritizing and informing potential future public infrastructure projects and investments, such as

streetscape improvements, trail and parkland development and the establishment of community improvement areas and plans.

The determination of which guidelines are to be applied to a particular development proposal will be determined by the applicable municipal approval authority (Township and/or County) and shall generally be identified by the Township Planner and/or Chief Building Official through the pre-consultation process or, where pre-consultation has not been undertaken, at the time a development proposal is received. The Township and/or County may require that an applicant submit a detailed design report (i.e. an urban design brief) as part of their application to indicate how their proposed development addresses the design principles and guidelines contained in this document. Should the Township or County request such a report, they will indicate the relevant guideline sections that should apply. To assist in this regard, a design checklist has been provided in Appendix B of this document.

While this document provides detailed design direction for the evaluation of development proposals, the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law remain the primary planning documents regulating land use within the Township. Therefore, should a conflict arise between an Official Plan policy and/or Zoning By-Law provision and these guidelines, the Official Plan policies and/or Zoning By-Law provisions will take precedence. Therefore, it is important that County and Township review their Official Plan policies and Zoning By-Law provisions in the context of these guidelines to determine if amendments are necessary or desirable to enable and support the design direction contained herein.

Additional detail on the various planning tools, processes and other approaches that may be

necessary or advisable to ensure, or assist in, the effective implementation of these guidelines is provided in Part 4 of this document.

### Guideline Sections

The design guidelines are divided into nine sections:

- Section 1–General Guidelines
- Section 2–Sustainability Guidelines
- Section 3–Public Realm Guidelines
- Section 4- Greenfield Development Guidelines
- Section 5–Village Core Guidelines
- Section 6–Residential Guidelines
- Section 7–Service Commercial Guidelines
- Section 8–Industrial Guidelines
- Section 9–Institutional Guidelines

Sections 1-3 contain the design guidelines that are generally intended to be applied Township wide, with the remaining sections containing design guidelines that are more focused on a specific land use or type of development.

In most cases, more than one Guideline Section will apply to a particular development. For example a new residential subdivision proposed on previously undeveloped land in a serviced village would likely be required to address the following:

- Section 1–General Guidelines,
- Section 2–Sustainability Guidelines,
- Section 3- Public Realm Guidelines,
- Section 4–Greenfield Development Guidelines, and
- Section 5–Residential Guidelines.

The circumstances under which the various guideline sections are intended to apply is outlined in the introduction to each guideline section.

# 1.0 GENERAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Unless otherwise noted, the General Design Guidelines in this section are intended to apply to all development in designated settlement areas as well as industrial, commercial and institutional development and agricultural industrial/commercial development that may be permitted outside of designated settlement areas.

The General Design Guidelines, together with any applicable development specific guidelines contained in Sections 2 through 9, shall provide the basis for the design review of a particular development. In the case of a conflict, the development specific guidelines will typically take precedence over the General Design Guidelines.

## **Guideline 1.1 - Stormwater Management Facilities**

The following guidelines apply to stormwater management facilities, recognizing that such facilities shall be also be designed in accordance with applicable municipal servicing standards:

- Stormwater management areas shall be designed as naturalized open space areas and, where possible, be located adjacent to open space and natural heritage features.
- Stormwater management areas shall be extensively landscaped with a variety of trees and other plant materials.
- Native plant species that are compatible with adjacent natural areas should be selected as part of the planting schemes for these areas
- Where possible, walkways, trails and pedestrian amenities should be incorporated within stormwater management areas.
- Lots that back onto stormwater management areas are encouraged to use low height, visually permeable (i.e. wrought iron or chain link) fencing and/or landscape screening

along shared lot lines, rather than solid wood privacy fencing, to soften the transition between the public and private realm and improve safety through natural surveillance.

## **Guideline 1.2 – Heritage and Landmark Buildings and Sites**

The following guidelines shall apply to the design of heritage and/or landmark buildings and sites and development adjacent to such buildings and sites:

- Buildings with heritage or historic significance should be retained whenever possible.
- Alterations to heritage or historic buildings should be sensitive to the original building materials, architectural details and massing. Additions and alterations should be subordinate to the historic portion of the building and subject to detailed design review.
- New development adjacent to heritage or historic buildings should consider the design, scale, massing and materials of the adjacent heritage or historic building and be designed to protect and enhance views of such buildings.



By landscaping Stormwater Management Areas these areas become attractive features of the community. Pedestrian connections through larger Stormwater Management blocks are encouraged.



- The role of other landmark buildings and sites (i.e. churches, schools, community facilities, municipal parks and public squares) as community focal points should also be protected and enhanced where possible.

### **Guideline 1.3 – Re-Use of Existing Buildings**

Encourage adaptive re-use of older buildings within the Township. This may include adaptive re-use of institutional buildings which are no longer in use (i.e. churches, schools). It may also include re-use of existing residential buildings for commercial uses in the Village Core areas. Adaptive re-use of historical or heritage buildings shall be subject to detailed design review.

### **Guideline 1.4 – Compatibility With Adjacent Development**

The following guidelines apply to consideration of neighbouring development:

- The scale and character of new development should reflect the existing neighbourhood pattern and adjacent buildings, including such features as building height, roof and ground level treatments, continuity of the street wall, facades, scale of doors, windows and other openings, lighting and landscaping.
- Adjacent buildings should be considered in determining appropriate building materials, colours, textures and architectural details (i.e. cornices, railings, lintels, arches, ironworks and chimneys) to incorporate into the design of new buildings and structures.
- New non-residential and multiple unit residential development should be sited and designed such that adjacent properties maintain sunlight exposure, have visual privacy and to minimize potential adverse impacts from lighting, noise, dust, vibration, odour and traffic associated with the development.
- Appropriate screening and buffering should be provided between residential uses and

non-residential development. Where feasible, industrial and residential uses should be separated by a compatible service commercial or institutional use.

### **Guideline 1.5 – Preferred Building Materials**

Preferred building materials generally include wood, brick and stone. The use of materials such as vinyl, aluminum and synthetic siding, mirrored or heavily tinted glass, concrete block and extensive areas of textured stucco is discouraged, particularly for landmark buildings and buildings located in high visibility areas, such as in Village Cores, at gateway locations and along main streets/major roads.

### **Guideline 1.6 – Development on Corner Lots**

The following guidelines apply to non-residential development on corner lots:

- On corner lots, both the front and exterior building facades shall incorporate a similar level of design and architectural detail.
- Where possible, main building entrances and, in the case of industrial development, accessory office and commercial components should be oriented toward the intersection.
- Various design techniques should be used to emphasize corner buildings as focal points, such as increased height, orienting building entrances toward the corner, a change in building material and/or enhanced landscaping. This is particularly important for sites at gateway locations and key intersections.

### **Guideline 1.7 - Signage**

The following guidelines apply to signage:

- Permanent signage shall not generally be permitted in residential areas, except where specifically permitted by the Township Zoning By-Law and/or Sign By-Law.
- The design of signage shall be of a quality and character that is reflective of the architectural characteristics of the building

and surrounding landscaping, while minimizing visual clutter and impact on adjacent uses.

- Signage shall be in scale with the buildings on the site and landscaped sign features (i.e. the Thamesford library sign) are encouraged.
- Multi-tenant commercial and industrial buildings/developments should have coordinated signage with consistent architectural design elements.
- Rooftop signs, freestanding temporary and mobile signs should generally not be permitted.
- Solid based ground signs are generally preferred over pylon type signs.
- Adequate signage will be provided within the development to indicated areas of no parking and emergency vehicle routes. Locational signs may be required near entrance driveways to indicate individual buildings in the development and visitor parking areas. Such signage will be readable both day and night through techniques such as size, colour, surface treatment or illumination.
- Additional sign guidelines may apply in certain character areas (i.e. Village Cores)

More detailed signage design requirements may be established through the Township's Sign By-Law, as amended from time to time. The Township should consider establishing a consistent design and character for signage in Village Core areas and other high visibility locations, such as at village gateways and key intersections.

### **Guideline 1.8 – Lighting (Street and On-site)**

New plans of subdivision and other larger developments located in the Village Core and along main streets and other pedestrian routes in designated settlement areas should incorporate pedestrian scaled, decorative street lighting.

On-site lighting should generally be consistent with the following:

- Parking areas, driveways, pedestrian areas, walkways and building entrances should be adequately and consistently lit to provide a safe and attractive environment for both pedestrians and vehicles. Pedestrian scale lighting should be used adjacent to walkways and other pedestrian areas.
- Signage, buildings and/or sites should not be illuminated more than necessary and exterior lighting should not project upward or be permitted to spill over onto adjacent streets and properties, particularly those in residential and natural areas.
- Such measures as directed lighting and use of shades, diffusers and tinted covers may be used to minimize the undesirable affects of lighting on adjacent uses.



County and Township staff should work together to determine appropriate standards for pedestrian scaled lighting. A different standard could be considered for residential areas as opposed to commercial/village core areas.

- Decorative and modest exterior lighting may be used to accent buildings, landscaping and signage and to enhance and define pedestrian areas and walkways.
- Light fixtures used on buildings in the Village Cores should be of a design, location, intensity and colour that is consistent with the original heritage character of the area, or other unifying character scheme established by the municipality in consultation with the community.

More detailed design requirements and standards for street and on-site lighting may be established by the Township through a lighting standard. The Township should consider establishing a consistent design and character for street lighting in settlement areas and specific character areas within settlement areas, such as the Village Core.

### **Guideline 1.9 – Tarpaulin Structures**

Temporary and permanent tarpaulin structures should not generally be permitted on sites within designated settlements and other high visibility areas in the Township, except in association with industrial and agricultural uses and some municipal facilities (i.e. public works yards and community recreation centres).

### **Guideline 1.10 – Creating, Preserving and/or Enhancing Views**

The design of subdivisions and sites and the location and massing of buildings should strive to create, preserve and/or enhance public views of community features such as historic or landmark buildings, rural landscapes, parks and natural heritage features and make use of any natural topography to maximize such views and vistas.

### **Guideline 1.11 - Safety and Security**

The design of development should take into consideration Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. This could include designing sites and buildings to

promote a sense of security (i.e. by clearly distinguishing between private and public and space and controlling ingress and egress) and allow for natural surveillance of public spaces through the incorporation of windows and functional porches that overlook streets, parks, open spaces and other pedestrian areas.

### **Guideline 1.12 - Barrier Free Design**

The design of sites and buildings should strive to incorporate the principles of Universal Design and shall comply with all requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 and standards released under that act. Development shall also be encouraged to comply with any municipally approved accessibility standards (i.e. County of Oxford Facility Accessibility Design Standards), until such time as they are superseded by standards released under the AODA.

### **Guideline 1.13 - Pedestrian Connections and Movement**

The following guidelines apply to pedestrian connections and movement associated with non-residential and multiple unit residential development:

- Pedestrian connections/walkways that allow for the safe and convenient movement of pedestrians into, within and out of the site shall be provided.
- Clearly delineated pedestrian connections should link main building entrances, parking areas, on-site communal recreation areas and any adjacent open space, trails and public sidewalks.
- Buildings and parking areas should be located and designed so as to minimize the distance to off-site pedestrian networks and the number and length of driveways and parking areas that pedestrians have to cross to reach main building entrances.
- Sidewalks and walkways will be adequately setback from the public and internal road and



driveway network and should be wide enough to allow two persons to move in a side by side fashion.

- Where the pedestrian system must cross driveways and parking areas, visual priority will be provided to the pedestrian system through the use of cross-walks or the continuation of the walkway material across the driveway or parking areas.
- All pedestrian connections/walkways should be of a different material and appearance than vehicular routes and be landscaped and lighted to promote the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

### **Guideline 1.14 – Loading/Service Areas and Functional Building Elements**

The following guidelines apply to loading, service areas and functional building elements/equipment:

- Wherever possible, storage and service areas (i.e. garbage and recycling) and mechanical equipment should be located inside main buildings. Garbage and recycling facilities shall also be designed to comply with any applicable municipal standards for waste storage and collection.
  - Loading and outdoor service areas should be adequately separated from residential and other sensitive land uses to minimize the potential for negative impacts from noise, fumes and odours. Where feasible, such facilities should be located in a yard which does not abut a residential property.
  - On-site loading areas, outdoor service areas and functional building elements (i.e. roof top mechanical equipment, air conditioning units, transformers, vents and utility meters) should be located in low visibility areas on the site (i.e. in a rear yard) and incorporated into and compatible with the design of the building in order to minimize their noise and visual impacts on adjacent uses, streets and other public areas.
- Where loading areas, service areas and functional building elements cannot be integrated into the design of the building, they should be sited, designed and screened so as not to be visible from the street, on-site pedestrian areas, adjacent residential uses and public spaces. Screening may be achieved through a combination of building orientation and configuration, grading/berming, landscaping, walls and other visual barriers that are designed to complement the architecture of the building and the overall landscape design of the site.

### **Guideline 1.15 - Landscaping**

The following general guidelines apply to landscaping for non-residential and multiple unit residential development:

- A predominance of native plant species that are suitable for the soil, drainage and shade conditions on the site shall be used. Plants which are tolerant to disease, drought conditions and road salt should comprise a substantial proportion of the plant material installed at any site.
- Ensure that plant material provides for seasonal variation in form, colour and texture by using a variety of species such as evergreens, trees which retain their fruit or foliage in winter, trees with unique branching and trees with interesting bark texture and/or colour.
- A substantial proportion of the landscaped open space required on a property will be planted with a variety of suitable trees, shrubs, ground covers and other plant material.
- In addition to any use specific requirements, adequate and appropriate landscaping shall be used to:
  - \* Soften or screen larger buildings and blank or unsightly building elevations from adjacent residential uses, streets and other public spaces;

- \* Screen and separate parking, loading, service areas (i.e. storage areas, garbage and recycling enclosures) and utilities (i.e. hydro transformers, air conditioners, utility meters) from residential uses, on-site pedestrian areas, streets and other public spaces;
- \* Break up larger parking areas and provide screen or shade areas within and contiguous to parking areas to improve their visual appearance and micro climate;
- \* Frame buildings and define building entrances and walkways;
- \* Highlight driveway and pedestrian entrances into a development;
- \* Provide shelter from wind, snow and other elements in proximity to building entranceways;
- \* Provide privacy for outdoor amenity areas in multiple unit residential developments;
- \* Define boundaries and edges of communal open space and activity areas; and
- \* Improve the overall appearance of the streetscape.
- Landscaped areas should be designed to compliment existing or proposed landscaping on adjacent lots.
- Landscaping shall be designed to ensure it does not compromise the safety or security of pedestrians and vehicles and that the plant material will not interfere with hydro, sewage, water, drainage or other services within the development and on adjacent road allowances and properties.

### **Guideline 1.16 - Natural Heritage Features**

The following guidelines apply to development adjacent to natural heritage features:

- A significant amount of the perimeter of natural features should be bounded by streets and/or public open spaces, as opposed to private development, in order to maximize public access and views. Where sensitive environmental features exist, access should be restricted as necessary.
- Natural heritage features shall be adequately buffered from development and linked to other natural heritage features to ensure there is no negative impact to the natural features and that the broader natural heritage system is protected, enhanced and restored over time.

### **Guidelines 1.17 - On-Site Emergency Access and Related Facilities**

Emergency access routes and related facilities and signage will be designed to comply with all applicable Ontario Building Code requirements. On site landscaping shall be designed to maintain fire hydrant visibility.

### **Guideline 1.18 - Mitigation of Environmental Impacts**

Where a development requires on-site mitigation measures in order to ensure the safety and comfort of occupants (i.e. due to environmental factors such as noise and vibration), such mitigation measures should be designed to blend with the architectural design of the building and landscaping to the extent practical.

## 2.0 SUSTAINABILITY GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are to be applied Township wide in an effort to promote development that is environmentally sensitive and sustainable.

### **Guideline 2.1 - Passive Solar**

To achieve passive solar design, buildings should be oriented so that the longer axis of building runs east/west. Passive solar orientation shall be considered in the design of greenfield development, as well as in the design of larger commercial, institutional, industrial, and multiple residential buildings with the goal of maximizing the number of buildings benefiting from passive solar orientation.

### **Guideline 2.2- Existing Buildings and Materials**

The reuse of existing buildings and materials should be encouraged in order to reduce the potential environmental impact from extracting, manufacturing and transporting new materials. Where new materials are used, they should be durable to avoid premature replacement and be locally sourced where possible.

### **Guideline 2.3 - Protection of Natural Heritage Features**

Significant natural heritage features shall be protected and appropriate interfaces with such features shall be incorporated into development plans. Native plant materials should be used in landscape designs wherever possible and particularly within open space and storm water management areas and on development sites adjacent to open space and natural areas.

### **Guideline 2.4 – Shade Trees**

Where possible, street trees and on-site trees should be incorporated as part of new development and planted at regular intervals so

that over time shaded streets and sites will assist in moderating climate.

### **Guideline 2.5 – Trails and Sidewalks**

Encourage use of the existing trail, cycling and sidewalk systems and future expansions and connections to these systems in order to encourage walking and cycling as an alternative mode of transportation within the Township.

### **Guideline 2.6 – Preserving and Enhancing Green Cover**

All reasonable efforts shall be made to minimize the removal of vegetation and preserve large and/or mature trees as part of the design of proposed development. Re-development proposals should also strive to increase overall green cover from pre to post development.

### **Guideline 2.7 – Minimize Paved Areas**

Paved areas should be minimized to increase the area of permeable surfaces and reduce volume of stormwater runoff. For commercial and industrial developments, shared parking could be considered to limit the overall paved areas of sites, where appropriate.

### **Guideline 2.8 – Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design**

Encourage energy efficient construction practices, building technologies, mechanical systems and renewable energy systems such as solar power, solar hot water and geothermal heating/cooling.

New buildings and developments should be encouraged to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification or an equivalent design standard.



**Guideline 2.9 – Bicycle Parking Facilities**

Provide on-site bicycle racks and on-site bicycle storage as part of new multiple unit residential and larger non-residential developments, where possible. Bicycle racks should also be placed at regular intervals in major activity areas, such as at main building entrances and other key locations in the Village Core. Bicycle racks should be located so as not to impede pedestrian movement.

**Guideline 2.10 – Low Water Use Buildings and Landscapes**

Technologies and site design approaches such the use of water efficient appliances, hard landscape elements and drought resistant landscaping are encouraged to reduce water consumption.

**Guideline 2.11 – Stormwater Management Approaches**

Provide quality and quantity stormwater management to control storm runoff. Alternative stormwater management techniques, such as the use of permeable pavement, naturalized landscaping and on-site infiltration and green roofs should be considered in addition to opportunities to use stormwater and/or on-site cisterns in order to minimize water used for irrigation purposes.

**Guideline 2.12 – Parking lot Landscaping**

Provide adequate parking lot landscaping, such as appropriately spaced shade trees, to reduce heat island effects.

## 3.0 THE PUBLIC REALM

The Public Realm primarily includes those areas that are under County or Area Municipal ownership, but may also include other publicly owned lands (e.g. Federal, Provincial, Conservation Authority etc.) that are intended for use by the general public. The public realm includes such community elements as parks, trails and other open space areas, municipal stormwater management facilities and streetscapes. The public realm is the area in which the municipality generally has the greatest amount of design control.

The public realm guidelines should also be applied to any development proposal involving the creation of new public realm elements e.g. parks, roads, trails and municipal storm water management facilities and any other development proposal that may directly affect or contribute to aspects of the public realm, such as the streetscape.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PARKS

In considering the design of the public realm, park development is a major component. For new residential and commercial development there is a requirement to provide parkland or cash in-lieu. The development of new parks or re-development of existing parks should address the following design guidelines.

#### Guideline 3.1 – Trail and Sidewalk Connections

Connect new parks to existing parks and trails where possible. New parks should also connect to existing built up areas where possible. Connections may be in the form of trails, sidewalks and/or walkways.



Linear parks and trail systems are encouraged in newly developing areas. Connecting new areas to the existing built areas of the Villages is an important goal for the Township.



Encourage 'eyes on the park' by having homes front parkland where possible.

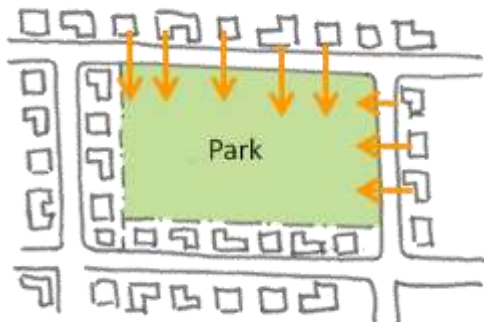


Provide for seating and gathering areas within parks and along major trail routes.



### COMMON APPROACH TO PARK DESIGN

In the common approach to park design, a small portion of the park has frontage along a street. Homes are all designed to back onto the park. Walkways are often used to provide additional access to the parks.



### EYES ON THE PARK CONCEPT

With the 'eyes on the park' concept there is greater visibility into the park. In the above example, there are still homes that back onto the park, however the park has increased street frontage, and several homes now face the park.

Existing parks in the Village of Thamesford and Embro are excellent examples of the Eyes on the park concept.



### Guideline 3.2 – Natural Surveillance

Road networks should be carefully designed to support and encourage natural surveillance through "eyes on the park". Homes that front onto parkland are encouraged over homes that back onto parkland. In cases where residential properties do back onto parkland, the use of low height, visually permeable (i.e. wrought iron or chain link) fencing and/or landscape screening along shared lot lines is encouraged over solid wood privacy fencing, to soften the transition between the public and private realm and improve safety through natural surveillance.



The above is an example of a park design which incorporates a number of design elements including 'eyes on the park', pedestrian connections, landscaping, and both active and passive recreational areas.



### Guideline 3.3 - Landscaping

Provide appropriate landscaping within parks, while ensuring that sight lines into public parks are maintained for public safety.

### Guideline 3.4 – Pedestrian Amenities

Provide for seating and gathering areas within parks.

### Guideline 3.5 – Signage and Landscaping

Use a consistent approach to park signage and provide enhanced landscaping at park entrances.

### Guideline 3.6 – Trees and Shrubs

High branching deciduous trees and low shrubs are preferred landscape materials for parks, with the goal of achieving substantial parkland tree cover over time.

### Guideline 3.7 – Public Squares and Pocket Parks

Encourage public squares and pocket parks within the Village Cores on municipally owned property in appropriate locations. Such parks should serve as community focal points and passive recreation areas, with a focus on attractive landscaping and pedestrian amenities. However, consideration should also be given to designing such parks and squares to allow for their use as community event spaces.

Public squares/pockets parks should be framed by new development. The Township may permit activities such as seating areas, restaurant patios, farmers markets and sidewalk sales within and adjacent to such parks as a means of increasing the level of pedestrian activity.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR TRAILS

New development and re-development should consider the incorporation of trails and walkways to provide connections to both existing and future parks and open space areas, particularly in



Consider linked trail systems that connect to existing and new parks.



Provide landscaping along trails.



Ensure trail widths are wide enough to accommodate a range of users.

the Villages of Thamesford, Embro and Harrington.

When designing trails, consideration should be given to landscape materials, trail amenities, trail widths and trail crossings (i.e. treatments where a trail crosses a road), as follows:

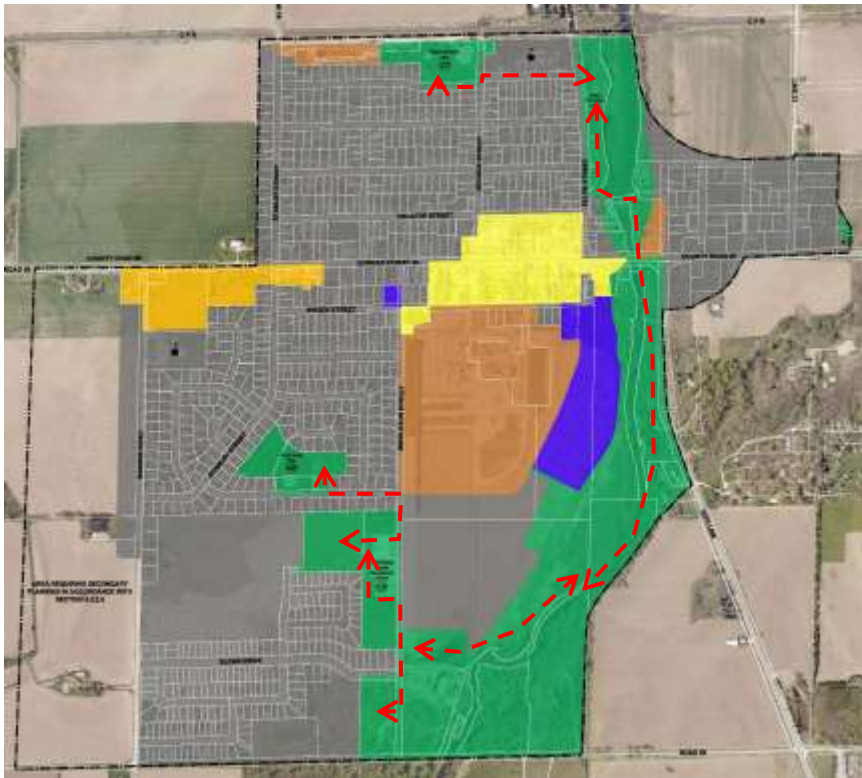
# PART THREE

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

Figure 15



Village of Embro Secondary Plan—Trail and Open Space Concept.



Village of Thamesford—Existing Park and Open Space System and Potential Connections.

**Guideline 3.8 – New Trails and Connections**

Encourage the development of linear parks and trail systems both within and between the various settlement areas in the Township. These systems should complement on-street pedestrian systems and provide connections between parks and natural areas, community facilities, residential areas, Village Cores and other activity areas, as well connections to trail networks within neighbouring municipalities, where possible.

**Guideline 3.9 – Landscaping and Trail Amenities**

Provide landscaping and trail amenities such as benches, waste bins, signage and educational information in appropriate locations along trail systems. Planting of high branching, native, deciduous trees at regular intervals is particularly encouraged.

**Guideline 3.10 – Trail Width**

Provide adequate trail widths to accommodate a range of users (cyclists, parents with strollers, etc) and allow for two way pedestrian or bicycle traffic. The minimum width of primary trails shall generally range between 3 m and 4 m.

**Guideline 3.11 – Restricting Off-Road Vehicles**

Consider the use of bollards to control trail access and ensure off-road vehicles do not enter trails.

**Guideline 3.12 – Street Frontage**

Encourage adequate street frontage at major entrances to trails/linear parks in order to increase visibility and provide room for trail head signage, staging areas and parking.

**Guideline 3.13 – Natural Surveillance**

Lots that back onto trails/linear park systems should use low height, visually permeable (i.e. wrought iron or chain link) fencing and/or landscape screening along shared lot lines, rather than solid wood privacy fencing, to soften the

transition between the public and private realm and increase the opportunity for natural surveillance.

**Guideline 3.14 – Access and Connections**

Mid block walkways, multiple access points and the provision of adequate parking and staging areas in appropriate locations are encouraged to maximize access and connections to trail systems.

**Guideline 3.15 – Entrances to the Community**

Figures 4, 7, 11 and 12 of this document identify potential gateway areas within a number of the settlement areas in the Township. These areas should be a primary focus for streetscape improvements. Such improvements may include additional street trees, landscaped medians, enhanced signage and/or built landscaped features. Any new development at these gateway locations should also incorporate enhanced building designs and landscaping.

**Guideline 3.16 - Gateways, Key Intersections and Public Spaces**

The following guidelines apply to gateways, key intersections and public spaces:

- Community entry points (e.g. Village gateways) should be defined through the use of well designed entrance features that reflect the character of each village. Such entrance features may include signage, lighting and substantial hard and soft landscaping elements. Development at these gateway locations should be designed to serve as entrance features and have a high quality built character and enhanced landscaping.
- Ensure attractive development at highly visible locations such as gateways, key intersections, corner sites and adjacent to public spaces (i.e. parks and squares). Buildings in these areas should incorporate high quality materials and design details that will enhance the visibility and focal nature of



these locations. Height, massing, architectural elements and landscaping should be used to create visual interest.

### STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AREAS AND GUIDELINES

Over time, the County and Township should strive to incorporate streetscape improvements within the designated settlements areas in Zorra and, in particular, the main streets through the Villages of Embro and Thamesford.

To assist in the implementation of the guidelines in this section, the following priorities have been identified for streetscape improvements:

#### Guideline 3.17—Village Cores and Main Streets

Village Cores and main streets are also key locations for improved streetscaping. Planting of additional street trees and increased landscaping on the boulevard and/or front yards of abutting properties should be considered where setbacks and utility locations allow. Further, decorative, pedestrian scale street lighting and durable and coordinated street furniture such as benches, garbage containers, information kiosks, sign posts, bicycle racks and planters could be incorporated over time.

#### Guideline 3.18—Park Frontages

There are several parks and public open space areas in the Township that have substantial frontage along a public road. Streets that are located adjacent to parks and open space, such as Allen Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Line in Thamesford, should also be considered as priority areas for streetscape improvements. These improvements may include additional street trees, pedestrian gathering areas and/or enhanced landscaping.

### STREET/STREETSCAPE DESIGN GUIDELINES

#### Guidelines 3.19 - Sidewalks and Cycling Facilities

The following design guidelines apply to sidewalks and cycling facilities:

- In Villages and Serviced Villages, sidewalks shall generally be provided along both sides of the street, be no less than 1.8 m in width and be buffered from the travelled portion of the roadway by a min. 1.5 m wide boulevard, wherever possible. The boulevard buffer area will serve to separate pedestrians from traffic and provide an area for street furnishings, bicycle racks and landscaping in heavier pedestrian areas, such as the Village Cores.
- In Village Core areas, sidewalks should also be buffered from moving vehicles by well defined on-street parking areas, where practical.
- Widened travel lanes should be considered to accommodate bicycles, where practical and appropriate.

#### Guideline 3.20—Cycling Connections

On-street cycling lanes, paved shoulders, multi-use trails, signed cycling routes and other cycling connections shall be encouraged, with the goal of creating a cohesive cycling network within the Serviced Villages and the Township as a whole. As such, development proposals, and in particular plans of subdivision, may be required to incorporate on-street cycling lanes/connections into their design. Potential cycling connections



Trees and other landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting, and street furniture improve the quality of streetscapes, and make walking a more pleasant experience.



**Guideline 3.17 - Above Grade Utilities**

Whenever possible electrical power supplies, telephone services, cable and other utilities shall be placed underground at the time of installation to reduce visual clutter and interference with pedestrian travel and mature tree growth. Within settlement areas, replacement of overhead utilities with below grade services is also encouraged.

**Guideline 3.18 - Parking and Access**

The following design guidelines apply to parking areas and vehicular access:

- Parking areas should generally be located to the rear or side of non-residential and multiple unit residential buildings to allow for buildings, street trees, landscaping, sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities to establish the street edge. Over time, this will assist in creating less automobile dominated and more pedestrian oriented streetscapes.
- The number and length of curb cuts and vehicular accesses should be minimized to the extent possible, without compromising adequate and safe vehicular access to and from sites. This will assist in providing a safer and more continuous pedestrian environment and increase potential opportunities for on-street parking and streetscape elements.



# 4.0 VILLAGE CORE GUIDELINES

In both Embro and Thamesford the 'Village Core' is the most diverse area of the village, permitting and containing a wide range and mix of uses. The Village Core is intended to be the most intensive and dominant business area in the settlement and also serve as the primary focal point for the community and a gathering place for residents. There is considerable potential to improve the overall character and image of both Village Cores over time through well designed infilling and redevelopment.

The following guidelines are intended to apply to development and/or redevelopment within the designated Village Core areas of Embro and Thamesford. It should be noted that additional use specific guidelines may also apply depending on the specific nature of the infill project (i.e. institutional, multiple unit residential etc.).

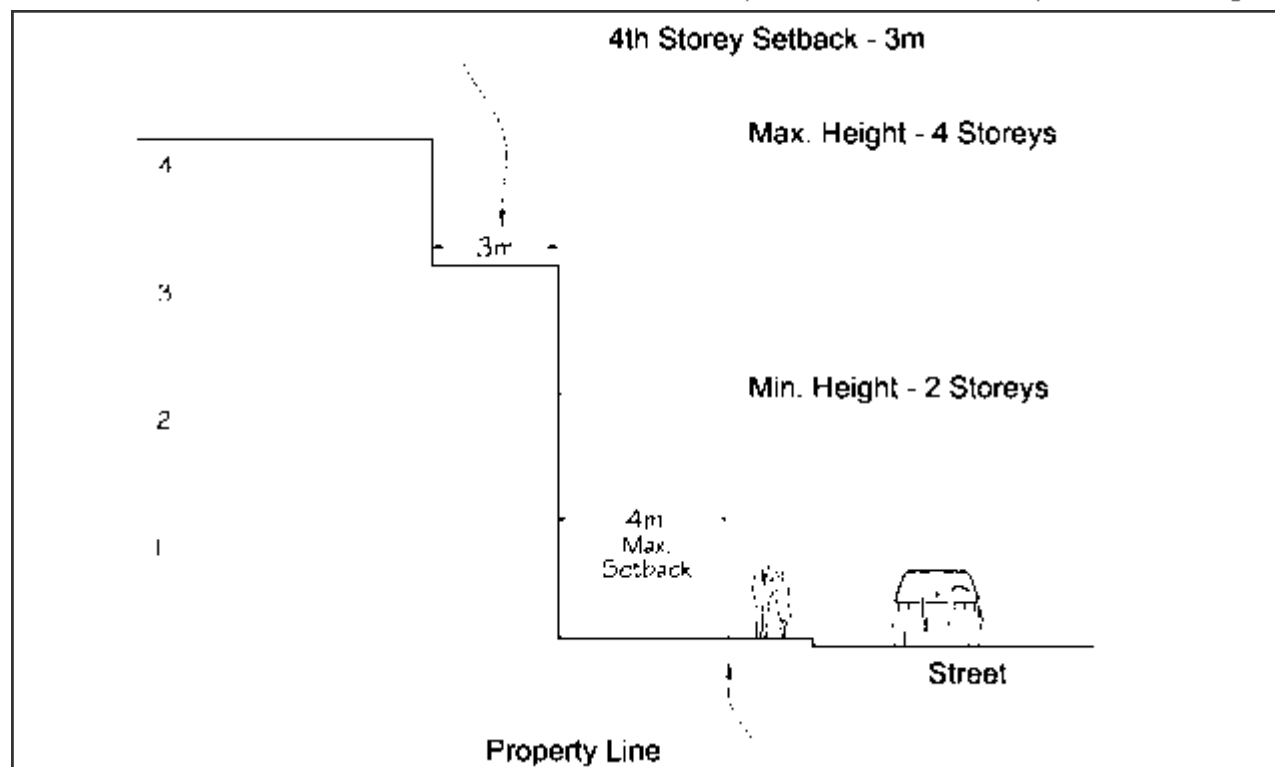
## GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE VILLAGE CORE

### Guideline 4.1 - Building Location

Buildings should be located close to the street, while allowing adequate room for street trees, landscaping, temporary retail displays, private signage, street furniture and pedestrian movement. A minimum setback of 4 m should generally be provided between the building face and the public sidewalk. A relatively continuous streetwall is encouraged.

### Guideline 4.2 – Building Height and Stepbacks

Building heights should be comparable to surrounding buildings to frame the street and create a consistent streetwall throughout the Village Core. A minimum building height of two storeys should be encouraged for new development and redevelopment fronting or



Appropriate village core building height and setbacks

flanking onto main streets. Building height shall not generally exceed four storeys, with any storey above 3 stepped back a minimum of 3 m from the front or exterior side wall of the storey beneath it.

**Guideline 4.3 - Ground Floor Use and Height**

The ground floor of buildings fronting onto the main street(s) through the Village Core should generally be restricted to commercial uses, with publically oriented retail and/or personal service type uses preferred. The ground floor should have a minimum floor to ceiling height of approximately 4.5 m to provide flexibility for a range of retail and commercial uses and to establish a continuous building character along the main streets through the Village Core over time.

**Guideline 4.4 - Building Design and Architectural Features**

The following building design and architectural guidelines apply to development within the Village Core, recognizing that not all of the guidelines may necessarily be applicable in every situation (e.g. conversion of an existing residential dwelling to commercial uses):

- New buildings with lengthy frontages should be designed to identify individual commercial units through distinctive architectural detailing, creating the appearance of multiple narrower buildings along the frontage.
- The design of new buildings, additions and renovations should strive to achieve a more consistent pattern of building heights, massing, windows, signage and architectural features over time, as a means of unifying and strengthening the character and image of the Village Core. The design, building materials, colour and architectural detailing of existing and former heritage/historic buildings in and around the Village Core area should be used to inform the design of new buildings, where possible.



Building heights for new infill development should be comparable to surrounding buildings. For example, in the Village Core of Embro many of the buildings are two storeys in height. Ideally infill development should be two storeys in height as well.



New development/redevelopment should incorporate traditional design elements and massing.

**Guideline 4.5 – Facades**

The following design guidelines apply to facades:

- Blank facades shall not generally be permitted facing or clearly visible from a public street or other public area, but may be permitted along an interior lot line where future abutting development is anticipated.
- Rear facades on through lots should be encouraged to incorporate secondary entrances and signage, adequate lighting, well screened outdoor storage areas and reasonable quality finishes.

**Guideline 4.6 - Windows and Building Entrances**

The building frontage on the ground floor should be comprised of substantial expanses of clear glass windows. Primary building entrances should face the main street and be identified and highlighted using design features such as large

awnings, canopies and double height windows and may be recessed to provide additional weather protection.

### **Guideline 4.7 - Building Materials and Colour**

Colours and materials used for new buildings, renovations and additions should attempt to reflect those traditionally or historically used for building facades in the area, with preferred materials including wood, brick and stone. Materials to avoid include vinyl, aluminum and synthetic siding, mirrored or heavily tinted glass, concrete block and large areas of textured stucco.

### **Guideline 4.8 – Outdoor Patios**

Restaurants, cafés and other similar uses are encouraged to provide outdoor patio space in appropriate locations.

### **Guideline 4.9 – Public Squares**

Development in the Village Core should be encouraged to incorporate public squares in appropriate locations to serve as community focal points and passive recreation areas and provide a potential space for community events.

### **Guideline 4.10 - Signage**

The following guidelines (in addition to the general sign guidelines) apply to signage in the Village Core:

- Signs should form an integral part of the building façade and be in keeping with the scale of the building. Sign lettering, graphics, colours, design and location on the building should be in keeping with the original heritage character of the area or other unifying character scheme established by the municipality in consultation with the local business community.
- Window signs shall be limited in size and not block the view of the interior through the window.
- Rooftop signs, pylon signs, third party signage, handwritten signs, digital electronic,



Publically owned land within the Village Cores should be considered for the development of public squares and gathering places.

neon or otherwise internally illuminated signs (except for small 'open for business' window signs) and buildings as signs should be prohibited, except where permitted by Township Council. Secondary signs, such as portable signs, shall be regulated by municipal by-laws.

- Only externally lit signage should be allowed, with the design of any visible light fixtures to be integrated into the overall design of the sign and consistent with the original heritage character of the area or other unifying character theme established by the Township.



When reviewing site plans for restaurants, cafés or other similar type uses, outdoor patio space is encouraged.



### Guideline 4.11 – Awnings and Canopies

Awnings, canopies, and other overhangs are encouraged as they provide weather protection for pedestrians and can help to unify and coordinate the streetscape. The design of awnings and canopies should match the overall design of the storefront and building entrance. A single style of canopy or awning should be used for the length of the entire building façade, regardless of the number of individual businesses or entrances.

### Guideline 4.12 – Streetscape Elements

Design elements which contribute to a coordinated streetscape are encouraged. These could include consistency in design of street furniture, lighting, banners, awnings, signage and landscaping, similar height, setback, proportions and architectural style of buildings and similar type and spacing of street trees.

### Guidelines 4.13 - Sidewalks and Pedestrian Movement

The following guidelines apply to sidewalks and pedestrian movement in the Village Core:

- In Village Core areas, sidewalks should be wide, continuous and provided along both sides of the street.
- Seating and retail displays associated with individual businesses should be located on private property between the building face and the public sidewalk, so as not to encroach on or impede pedestrian movement.
- All street furniture and free standing signage should also be located on private property, or within boulevard areas, so as not to impede pedestrian movement on public sidewalks.

### Guideline 4.14 – Connections

Connect Village Cores to natural features and open space (i.e. parks), residential areas and community facilities via on-street pedestrian and cycling routes, trails and walkways where possible.



Signage should be in scale with the building. Awnings, canopies and overhangs are encouraged as they provide weather protection for pedestrians.



A coordinated streetscape is encouraged for Village Cores. This may include unifying elements such as street trees, benches and/or banners. The Village of Thamesford currently uses banners within its Village Core.



New development in the Village Cores should ensure adequate room for pedestrians, landscaping and/or street furniture.

### Guideline 4.15 – Traffic Calming

Consider traffic calming features and measures where practical and feasible. Street design features such as narrowed and clearly delineated pedestrian crossing points (i.e. raised crossings or distinct paving materials) and well defined on-street parking, together with the creation of a strong, pedestrian oriented, streetscape character can all serve as visual cues that will assist in slowing traffic through the Village Cores.

### Guideline 4.16 – Parking, Loading and Access

The following guidelines apply to parking, loading and access:

- On street parking can provide convenient visitor parking, reduce the need for on-site parking, promote walking, slow vehicle traffic and serve as short term loading spaces for smaller commercial uses. Therefore, use of on-street parking should be promoted and on-street parking should be provided throughout the Village Core, where practical.
- Longer stretches of on-street parking should be interrupted by sidewalk bump outs to provide for narrower pedestrian crossing points, help to slow traffic and provide greater opportunity for street trees, pedestrian amenities and landscaping.
- Off-street parking and loading areas should only be permitted in a rear or interior side yard, with access from a side street or through a rear yard wherever possible. Vehicular access points shall be limited to the minimum number and width necessary to provide for adequate and safe access to and from the site.
- Consider the potential for establishing municipal parking facilities in strategic locations to reduce the need for individual on-site parking.
- Drive through facilities will not generally be permitted along the main streets in the Village Core, except where vehicular access can be provided from a side street and the drive

through lane is not located between the building and the main street.

### Guideline 4.17 – Landscaping

In addition to the general landscape guidelines in Section 1.0, the following guidelines apply to landscaping in the Village Core:

- Where space allows, landscaping should be provided between the street line and the building and used primarily to frame buildings, define building entrances and walkways and improve the overall appearance of the streetscape.
- New developments should strive to incorporate one or more shade trees into front and exterior side yard landscape designs.
- The use of seasonal plantings along main streets is encouraged as a means of enhancing the overall streetscape.



Encourage the use of seasonal plantings along main streets to enhance the overall streetscape.

## 5.0 GREENFIELD DESIGN

The Township of Zorra is committed to ensuring that its residents enjoy a high quality of life through well designed communities. As such, the following Greenfield Design Principles are to be addressed as part of any proposed development within larger areas of vacant, or largely undeveloped land, located within a designated settlement area and, in particular, within the Villages of Embro and Thamesford. Examples include areas subject to Secondary Planning and/or designated as Future Urban Growth and other larger blocks of land that have yet to be developed for settlement type land uses. The Embro Secondary Planning Study establishes basic design principles (see Secondary Plan concept) for Greenfield areas, which are summarized below.

In some cases, these Greenfield Design Principles may overlap with the overall Township Design Principles set out in Part 2 of this document. Other development specific guideline sections will also apply depending on the specific nature of the development (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial and institutional)

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR GREENFIELD AREAS

#### **COMMUNITY INTEGRATION:**

To promote integration within existing communities. This principle is achieved by maximizing vehicular and pedestrian connections to the existing built up areas, as well as providing adequate opportunities for future connections to areas currently outside of designated Serviced Village boundaries.

#### **CONNECTIVITY/ STREET PATTERN:**

Provide multiple route options for all modes of travel. Where possible the grid pattern that is currently found in the Villages of Embro and Thamesford should be maintained and expanded. This results in a community that is well connected and walkable.

#### **WALKABILITY/ HEALTHY LIFESTYLE:**

To create a walkable, healthy community that is well connected and accessible. This design principle is achieved through the provision of new and expanded trails, walkways and sidewalk systems and their connection with existing pedestrian systems, which provides pedestrians with opportunities to easily move about the communities.

#### **SUPPORTING THE VILLAGE CORE:**

Provide an increased population in close proximity to the existing Village Core. Encourage new medium density residential development to locate in proximity to the Village Core and provide for direct pedestrian connections to the Village Core. Over time, an increased population in Embro and Thamesford may act as a catalyst





for attracting and supporting additional retail and other commercial uses in the Village Cores.

**PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE:**

Distribute parks, open space and trails throughout the communities within walking distance of residents.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD AND HOUSING CHARACTER:**

Encourage the development of safe and well designed neighbourhoods that contribute to the overall character of the community and the Township. Ensure varied and attractive building designs that incorporate a high degree of architectural detail with special attention to roof lines, porches, garage design and orientation and building style.

**HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY:**

Provide for a mix of low and medium density housing styles, forms and affordability, in keeping with the minimum and maximum density targets and locational criteria established by the Official Plan.

## 6.0 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Within the Villages of Embro and Thamesford there are opportunities for both new residential subdivisions and residential infill development. There is also some potential for limited residential infill development in a number of the other settlement areas in the Township.

It is a goal of the Township of Zorra that new residential areas incorporate a high level of design. As such, the following guidelines are intended to be applied to development involving the creation of one or more residential lots or dwellings within a designated settlement area.

Proposals for multiple unit residential development and/or redevelopment shall be subject to both the general residential guidelines and the multiple unit residential guidelines contained in this section. In the case of a conflict, the multiple unit residential guidelines shall generally take precedence over the general residential guidelines.

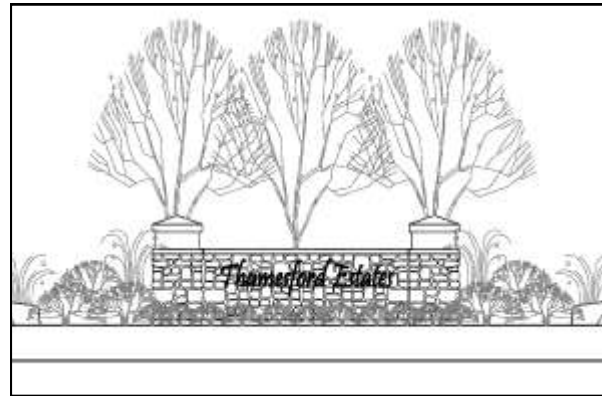
### RESIDENTIAL STREETScape GUIDELINES

New residential development in the Township shall place a strong focus on the overall streetscape. The streetscape includes building façades, street trees, sidewalks, landscaping, mailboxes, street lights, utilities and park entrances.

#### Guideline 6.1 – Neighbourhood Entrances

Landscaped entrance features are encouraged at entrances to neighbourhoods and along park frontages. Enhanced landscaping should also be considered in other areas to soften features such as medians and community mailboxes.

#### Guideline 6.2 – Street Trees



Landscaped entrance features are encouraged, but should reflect the village character.



By providing street trees at regular intervals attractive tree canopies will develop over time.



Streetscapes are enhanced by providing a variety of architectural treatments including porches, peaked roofs, dormers and various window shapes/sizes.

Provide street trees at regular intervals. Achieve at least one street tree per lot frontage and consider additional street trees along the flankage of corner lots and at neighbourhood entrance locations.

### Guideline 6.3 – Architectural Features

Front porches, peaked roofs, dormers and large windows all help to visually break up the massing of buildings and contribute to an attractive streetscape and as such should be incorporated into the design of new dwellings.

### Guideline 6.4 – Variations in House Design

Encourage a wide variety of house designs and limit repetition of similar styles. In general, there should be a minimum separation of 4 lots between duplicate model types. Similar plans may be repeated in closer proximity provided the exterior treatment is significantly varied (e.g. combination of building materials and colour, entry features, windows and roof lines)

### Guideline 6.5 – Design Priority Lots

Lots located at the visual terminus of a street, at entrances to a neighbourhood and flanking onto parks and open space shall be considered 'design priority lots'. These design priority lots should incorporate building designs with prominent features and architectural details on all publically visible facades, coupled with substantial landscaping, to help establish the character of the neighbourhood and serve as visual focal points.

### Guideline 6.6 - Sidewalks

Sidewalks shall generally be required along both sides of a residential street to encourage walking and to connect different neighbourhoods and community features, facilities and services.

### Guideline 6.7 – Community Mailboxes

The following guidelines apply to community mailboxes:



Sidewalks promote walking and help to connect neighbourhoods.

- Community mailboxes shall be located in areas which are satisfactory to Canada Post and the Township.
- Preferred locations should reduce the potential for conflict with surrounding properties, be visible and well lit and be suitable for the temporary parking of automobiles on a portion of the road allowance.
- For multiple unit residential cluster development they should also be located in an area that is easily accessible to all dwelling units, protected from the natural elements and preferably designed as an architectural/landscape feature.



The appearance of community mailboxes can be softened by adding landscaping.



**Guideline 6.8 – Services and Utilities**

Screen above ground services and utilities with landscaping where possible. Avoid placing utility boxes on corner lots, 'design priority lots', park blocks and other areas of high visibility such as in front of main building entrances. However, the rear flankage of corner lots (i.e. near the rear lot line) or the edge of the frontage of park or open space blocks (i.e. near the interior lot lines) may be suitable areas to locate utility boxes.

**Guideline 6.9 – Rear Lotting**

Rear lotting (the backing of residential lots onto a road), shall not generally be permitted, particularly where a substantial length of acoustic barrier would also be required along the street line. In the rare instances where rear lotting is permitted, only low height, visually permeable (i.e. wrought iron or chain link) fencing and/or landscaping should be permitted to delineate the rear property line/street line and provide privacy (i.e. no solid wood privacy fencing).

**BUILDING GUIDELINES**

**Guideline 6.10 - Design and Materials**

The design of dwellings in new residential neighbourhoods is encouraged to incorporate architectural style elements and exterior materials and colours of the housing traditionally found in the community, particularly when located adjacent to older residential areas. Preferred exterior materials include brick, stone/cultured stone and wooden siding. In general, the use of building materials should be consistent across all facades. Where changes in building material do occur, they should coincide with a specific architectural element or projection in the façade, as opposed to simply at building corners.

**Guideline 6.11 – Corner Lots**

Houses on corner lots should be oriented and designed to equally address both street frontage



Homes located on corner lots should treat each street frontage with importance. The above image is an example of a house which achieves this objective.

and flankage. A similar level of architectural detail should be incorporated into both facades. Corner lot designs which place the garage on one street frontage and the front door on the other and make use of corner design elements such as wrap around porches are encouraged.

**Guideline 6.12 – Natural Surveillance**

Encourage front porches and windows to promote natural surveillance or "eyes on the street".

**Guideline 6.13 – Rooflines**

The following guidelines apply to the design of residential rooflines:

- Pitched and sloped roofs are preferred over flat roofs, with a variety of roofline styles



Front porches and windows that provide "eyes on the street" are encouraged.

generally encouraged. Variation in roofline styles should still be in keeping with the overall character of the rooflines along the streetscape (i.e. a flat roof should not be introduced along a street primarily comprised of pitched and/or sloped roofs).

- The colour and pattern of roof materials should be in keeping with the architectural style of the home and other homes along the streetscape and roof vents should also be of a colour consistent with that of the roof.
- Piping/vents for functional services (i.e. plumbing and heating) should be located so as not to be visible from the street or other public areas.

### Guideline 6.14 – Garage Location and Design

The following guidelines apply to garage location and design:

- In general, the design of homes should seek to reduce the visual dominance of garages and parking areas on the residential streetscape to the greatest extent practical.
- Garages are encouraged to be setback behind the main front wall of the home. Garages that project beyond the main front wall of the house, should be restricted to a maximum projection of 2.0 m.
- Garages that have a side yard orientation, or are located to the rear of homes are encouraged, recognizing that this may not be achievable on smaller lots.
- On corner lots, garages should be located on the interior side of the home, or to the rear of the home, with access from the exterior side yard.
- Two storey home designs are encouraged to incorporate second storey space above the garage.
- Single, separated garage doors are encouraged over large double garage doors.
- Garage doors should be of a design and colour that is consistent with the design of the house. Sectional and paneled garage



The massing of this building is broken up by windows, dormers, and the chimney projection. All of these elements add visual interest to the design of the dwelling.



A consistent approach to roof lines is used in the above example. In addition the buildings are similar in height.



Architectural details such as dormers help to visually

doors that incorporate windows and appropriate architectural details are encouraged.

### Guidelines 6.15 - Driveways and Parking Areas

The proportion of the front or exterior side yard occupied by driveways/parking areas should be minimized, while recognizing the need to comply with minimum parking standards and ensure adequate area for on-site storage of snow.

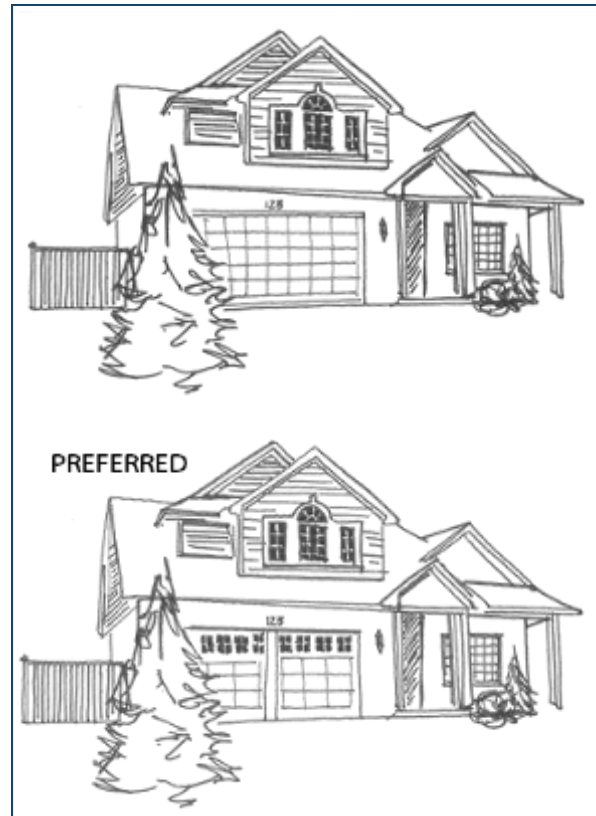
### Guideline 6.16 – Porch Location and Design

The following guidelines apply to porch location and design:

- The inclusion of front porches and related architectural elements into new house designs should be encouraged to help create a sense of place and lessen the visual prominence of garages.
- The design of front porches should ensure usable porch space (i.e. should allow for the placement of small patio furniture) and be in keeping with the architectural design of the house.
- Porches should relate to the front entrance of the dwelling and be low in profile.
- Second storey porches should generally be permitted, and are encouraged for homes that face parks and open space, to provide for additional eyes on these public areas.

### Guideline 6.17 – On Site Utilities and Mechanical Equipment

Exhaust vents, utility meters and air conditioning units should not be located along the front or exterior side walls of the dwelling. Where this is not possible, they should be incorporated into the design of the dwelling and screened from public view with fencing and/or landscaping.



Paired doors (second image above) are encouraged over one larger door.



Garages that are flush with the house place the emphasis on the porch and front door instead of the garage. architectural treatment of garage doors is encouraged.



### GUIDELINES FOR MULTIPLE-UNIT RESIDENTIAL

Within the Villages of Embro and Thamesford there may be potential opportunities for future multiple-unit residential development, such as cluster townhomes, street oriented townhomes, converted dwellings and low rise apartment buildings. In addition to providing for a range of housing types and affordability, the incorporation of multiple-unit dwellings can assist developments in achieving the minimum density targets in the Official Plan.

#### Guideline 6.18 – Corner Lots

Multi-unit residential buildings on corner lots should be oriented and designed to equally address both street frontage and flankage. A similar level of architectural detail should be incorporated into both facades. Corner lot designs which make use of corner design elements such as wrap around porches should be encouraged.

#### Guideline 6.19 – Accessibility

A mix of unit types (i.e. ground floor dwelling units) are encouraged to ensure some units achieve barrier free accessibility. A portion of all row housing dwellings in each development should provide for barrier free access and all apartment buildings will have a least one entrance which provides barrier free access.

#### Guideline 6.20 - Building Design

The following guidelines apply to multiple unit residential building design:

- New multiple unit buildings and especially townhouse dwellings should avoid long linear orientations by staggering sections of the building and by providing breaks in the building line at appropriate intervals. Periodic variations in roof line for individual units is also encouraged.
- Townhouse dwelling blocks should be limited to a maximum of 8 attached units



Ground floor apartment units are encouraged. Barrier free access should be provided to multi-unit developments.



Landscaped buffers should be provided between parking areas and public areas such as sidewalks.



Depending on the grade of a site, parking may be provided below residential units at the rear of a site.

- A variety of materials and colours should be used to distinguish separate blocks of units in multiple unit cluster developments.
- Similar to single and semi-detached dwellings, townhouse dwellings are encouraged to include front porches and enhanced garage designs.

#### **Guideline 6.21 - Privacy and Shadowing**

Multiple unit dwellings and amenity areas will be sufficiently separated from each other and from parking areas to ensure privacy and to avoid prolonged periods of shadowing, especially during the winter months. Where a multiple unit residential development abuts lower density residential uses, building(s) should be sited and designed to minimize visual intrusion on such residential uses.

#### **Guideline 6.22 – Surrounding Uses**

Multiple unit developments should be designed to complement surrounding uses. To achieve this similar setbacks may be required, as well as a consistent approach to tree planting and landscaping.

#### **Guideline 6.23 - Topography**

Where a site is characterized by topographic variations, the development will be designed as much as possible to fit the contour of the land. Higher profile buildings within the development will generally be situated at lower elevations, where feasible.

#### **Guideline 6.24 – Designing for Aging Population**

The design of multiple residential blocks should consider the aging population of the Township. This could include the provision of bungalow townhomes or other housing forms that are designed to be accessible and have a size, layout, design features and amenities that would support ‘aging in place’.

#### **Guideline 6.25 – Communal Open Space and Childrens Play Areas**

Apartment and multiple unit cluster developments will generally be required to provide a designated children’s play area and other on-site communal open space such as seating areas, communal gardens and grassed areas for both residents and visitors.

Where children’s play areas are required, they should be centrally located to allow for natural surveillance from a substantial number of units and be setback from parking areas, driveways and service areas. The play area should also be physically defined through grade change, see-through fencing and/or surface treatment, include seating amenities and be landscaped to provide partial shading.

#### **Guideline 6.26 - Outdoor Living Areas**

The following guidelines apply to outdoor living areas:

- Where outdoor living areas, either at grade or in the form of balconies or terraces, are provided, these areas will be sufficient in size and shape to serve as a useable outdoor living space. In particular, long narrow outdoor living areas are discouraged.
- Grade oriented outdoor living areas should have the boundaries defined by fencing and/or landscape elements and these areas should be screened from adjacent units. Such areas will generally be oriented away from noise sources generated by major roads or nearby land uses and sufficiently setback from parking and service areas within the development. Where this cannot be accomplished, adequate buffering in the form of fencing, berming and landscaping should be provided to ensure an acceptable comfort level for occupants.
- Where individual, grade level, private outdoor amenity areas are proposed, the development should be designed to ensure

access to such private outdoor amenity areas can be achieved without requiring movement through the dwelling, adjacent properties outside the multiple unit residential development, or other private outdoor amenity areas. Access through a garage will be considered acceptable.

### **Guideline 6.27 - Driveways and Parking Areas**

The following guidelines apply to driveways and parking areas:

- Parking areas for multiple unit dwellings without individual driveways should be located to the side or rear of the main buildings.
- For multiple unit dwellings with individual driveways (i.e. townhomes) the proportion of the front yard area occupied by the driveway should be minimized, while recognizing the need to comply with minimum parking standards and ensure adequate area for on-site storage of snow.
- Where required, more than one vehicular access will be provided for larger multiple unit residential developments and all parking areas will be accessible from each access point for emergency vehicles.
- Driveways will have sufficient width to allow efficient vehicular use, including turning movements for both private and emergency vehicles.
- Driveways and parking areas will be designed and/or will incorporate elements which will establish traffic speeds to maximize pedestrian safety.
- Separate and distinct visitor parking areas will be provided
- Surface parking lots may be screened from the public street and adjacent residential uses through a combination of location, grading/berming and landscaping (including low architectural style fences and walls), while recognizing the need to provide for pedestrian movement and safety



# 7.0 SERVICE COMMERCIAL USES

Embro, Thamesford and a number of the other settlement areas have some potential for new 'Service Commercial' development or re-development. Service commercial areas provide locations for a broad range of commercial uses that, for the most part, are not suited to locations within the Village Core because of their site area, access or exposure requirements. Generally, service commercial uses cater to vehicular traffic and single purpose shopping trips.



Landscaping is encouraged to soften larger parking areas. Site Plans for new service commercial developments should illustrate planned landscaping.

The following guidelines are primarily intended to apply to new service commercial development and substantial redevelopment of existing service commercial sites.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR NEW SERVICE COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

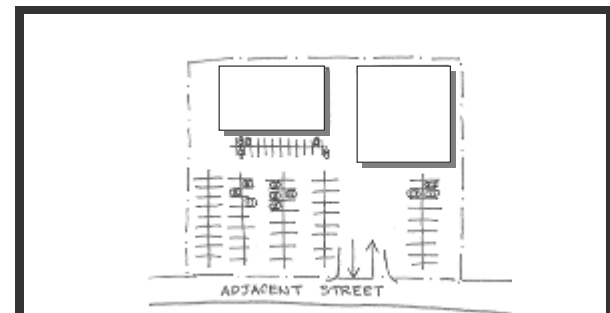
### Guideline 7.1 – Building Location

Buildings should generally be located close to the street. Larger commercial buildings may be located toward the rear of a site, provided that smaller format commercial buildings are located close to the street to define the street edge and pedestrian environment and to screen the larger buildings.

### Guideline 7.2 – Building Design

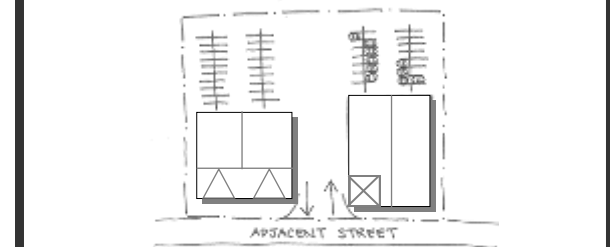
The following guidelines apply to building design:

- Facades that are visible from the public street should incorporate enhanced architectural features and detail, such as variations in building material and colour, articulation of the building wall and roof line, building entrance features and windows.



(ABOVE) COMMON APPROACH TO PARKING DESIGN

In many common approaches to commercial site design the buildings are located to the rear of the site, with the parking in front, towards the street.



(ABOVE) PREFERRED APPROACH TO PARKING DESIGN

In the above example the amount of parking is directed to the rear. The buildings are located closer to the street.

# PART THREE

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Buildings located close to the street or on-site pedestrian areas should have a high proportion of windows at grade level. Large flat wall surfaces and blank walls should not be permitted in such areas.
- Building entrances should be clearly identifiable and coordinated with the placement of pedestrian walkways. Main building entrances should be emphasized through landscaping and architectural elements, such as awnings.
- Building massing, height and roof design should be complimentary to and compatible with any adjacent residential uses. In general, pitched or sloped roofs should be considered in place of flat roofs.
- Outdoor patios and other outdoor amenity areas should be located within well landscaped pedestrian oriented areas, close to the building entrance and ideally oriented toward the public street.

### Guideline 7.3 – Multi-unit Commercial Development

Multi-unit service commercial development sites should be comprehensively designed so that all functional, architectural and design elements work together as a whole.

### Guideline 7.4 – Landscaping

In addition to the general landscape guidelines in Section 1.0, the following applies:

- Substantial landscaping should be provided between the street line and the building face. Landscaping and grading/berming should also be used to screen parking, loading and service areas and blank building elevations from adjacent residential uses, streets and other public spaces.
- Accent planting and coordinated signage should be provided at main driveway entrances.
- Where outdoor display areas are permitted, such display areas should incorporate substantial landscaping.



While more of an urban example, the above photo illustrates elements of good commercial design.

**Guideline 7.5 - Parking Areas and Access**

The following guidelines apply to parking areas and access:

- On-site parking shall be located to the interior side or rear of main buildings wherever possible and vehicle circulation through front and exterior side yards should also be avoided. If it can be demonstrated that the site cannot function without locating some parking or vehicle circulation between the building and the adjacent street, it should be the minimum possible and well screened by landscaping and grading/berming.
- Large uninterrupted parking areas should be avoided by breaking them into a number of smaller lots separated by landscaped areas or creating the appearance of a number of smaller lots through the incorporation of landscaped islands.
- Vehicular access points shall be restricted to the minimum number and width necessary for the site to function safely and properly. Access points which are shared with adjacent service commercial uses will be encouraged.

**Guideline 7.6 - Drive through facilities**

Drive through service facilities should be architecturally integrated into the building, rather than appearing independent of the primary building. Order boards and pick up windows should not be visible from abutting streets. Adequate staging lanes should be provided to ensure that drive through patrons do not interfere with on-site parking movements or result in traffic queuing onto the street.



## 8.0 INDUSTRIAL USES

As noted in the design context section of this document, there is potential for future industrial development and re-development in Thamesford and Embro and to a lesser extent within the other settlement areas. A key consideration in the development of industrial uses in settlement areas is the interface between the industrial development and more sensitive land uses (i.e. residential). As such, the following Industrial guidelines place considerable emphasis on streetscaping, landscaping, buffering and parking.

These industrial guidelines are intended to apply to industrial development within the various designated settlement areas, as well as to re-development and/or expansion of existing industrial uses and to agricultural commercial/industrial development outside of designated settlement areas.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INDUSTRIAL USES

#### Guideline 8.1 – Building Location

The location of buildings shall ensure there are sufficient setbacks to incorporate substantial landscaping and screening (e.g. grading and berming) into yards adjacent to the streetline. Buildings will also be sufficiently setback from any nearby residential development and other sensitive land uses to minimize potential adverse impacts associated with the bulk, scale and layout of buildings or noise, vibration, fumes or odour from the development.

#### Guideline 8.2 – Building Design

The following guidelines apply to building design:

- Industrial areas in proximity to residential



Landscaping is an effective way to buffer industrial areas from more sensitive land uses. Landscaping also softens larger parking areas.



Higher standards for exterior design are encouraged for industrial areas that abut residential areas. The above example illustrates attractive signage, and variety in the roof lines and building materials/colour.

areas and adjacent to main roads in designated settlement areas shall have higher standards for exterior design, including architectural detail, building materials, landscaping and treatment of open storage, loading and service areas.

- Large expanses of blank or single material facades facing the public street and other publically visible locations should be avoided. These building elevations should be enhanced through a combination of building material and colour, windows, articulation of the building wall and roof line, building entrance features and other architectural elements.
- Where possible, office and commercial components and main building entrances should be oriented toward the street or intersection (for corner lots) and contain a high proportion of windows.
- Building entrances should be clearly identifiable and coordinated with the placement of pedestrian walkways. Main building entrances should be emphasized through landscaping and architectural elements, such as awnings.
- Pitched or sloped roofs should be considered as alternatives to flat roofs
- In agricultural areas, the character and architectural form of industrial and agricultural related commercial/industrial buildings should be complimentary to traditional rural buildings in the area. Agricultural commercial/industrial buildings

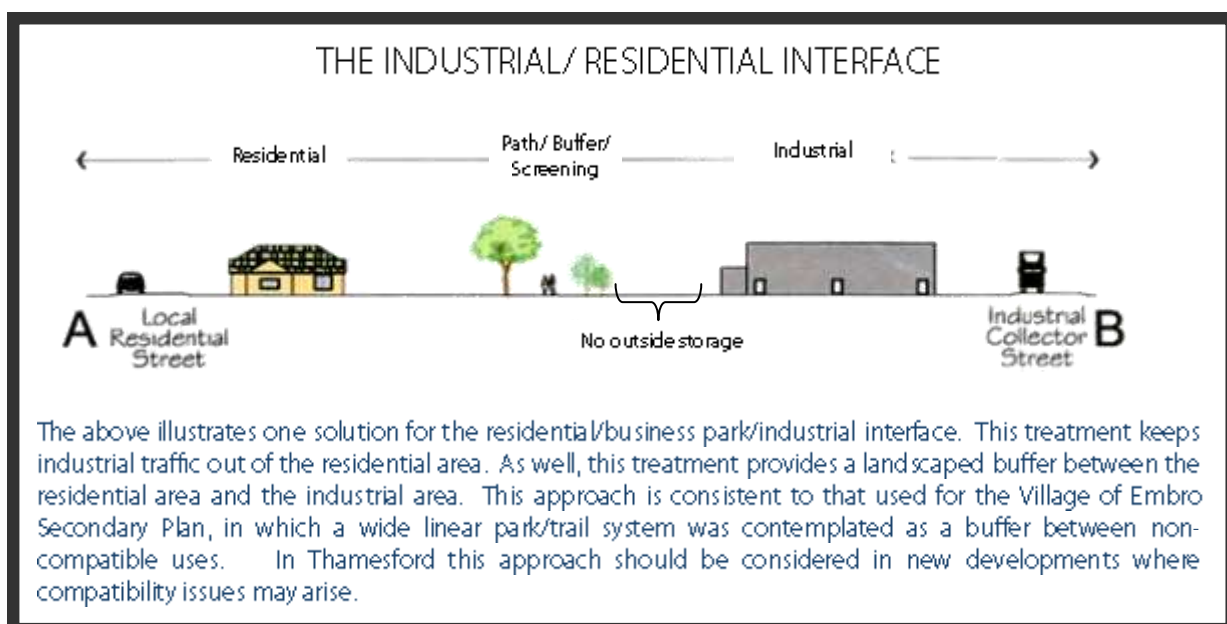
located on farm properties should be designed to be easily converted to agricultural use if no longer required.

### Guideline 8.3 – Open Storage

Where open storage of goods and materials is permitted, such storage should be located in low visibility areas on the site (i.e. a rear yard) and screened so as not to be visible from the street, on-site pedestrian areas, adjacent residential uses and public spaces. Screening may be achieved through a combination of building orientation and configuration, grading/berming, landscaping, walls, fencing and other suitable visual barriers.

### Guideline 8.4 – Vehicular Access

The number and width of vehicular access points shall be limited to the minimum necessary for the safe and efficient functioning of the site in order to minimize hazards to vehicular traffic, reduce disruption to the public sidewalk and maximize the area available for landscaping and screening.



### Guideline 8.5 - Parking

The following guidelines apply to parking:

- Parking areas should be located in an interior side yard and rear yard to lessen the visual impact on the streetscape. If parking is permitted in a front or exterior side yard, it should be limited to visitor parking only.
- Large uninterrupted parking areas should be avoided by breaking them into a number of smaller lots separated by landscaped areas and/or through the incorporation of landscaped parking islands.

### Guideline 8.6 – Landscaping

In addition to the general landscape guidelines in Section 1.0, the following applies:

- Substantial landscaping will be provided between the street line and the building, including the incorporation of larger variety trees wherever possible.
- Landscaping and grading/berming will also be used to screen parking and loading areas, outdoor storage and services areas and blank building elevations from residential uses, adjacent streets and other public areas.
- Accent planting and coordinated signage should be provided at main driveway entrances.
- Where outdoor display of finished products is permitted, such display areas should incorporate substantial landscaping.



Landscaping in parking areas should be low profile to ensure pedestrian safety is not decreased.



## 9.0 INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Within the Villages of Embro and Thamesford and to a lesser extent the other designated settlement areas in the Township there are a number of existing institutional buildings that serve as community focal points or contribute to the overall community character and, as such, should be protected and enhanced. There may also be opportunities to adapt surplus institutional buildings for new uses over time.

The following guidelines pertain to the development of new institutional and community facilities (i.e. churches, schools, libraries, community centres etc.) and re-development and/or expansion of existing institutional buildings and community facilities, including proposals for their adaptive re-use.

### DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INSTITUTIONAL USES

**Guideline 9.1- Visual Prominence and Views** The design of new institutional sites and buildings should focus on maximizing the visibility and prominence of the site and buildings within the community. Similarly, when reviewing development proposals for lands adjacent to institutional uses, ensure that views of landmark institutional buildings are retained and enhanced.

**Guideline 9.2 - Re-use of Existing Buildings**  
Encourage adaptive re-use of institutional buildings as a means of preserving them as community focal points.

**Guideline 9.3 - Building location**  
Buildings should generally be located close to the street, but provide sufficient setbacks to ensure substantial landscaping can be incorporated in



Views of important institutional buildings should be protected.



Adaptive re-use of former institutional buildings is encouraged, particularly in the Village Cores.



The Thamesford Public Library is an attractive example of a new institutional use.

yards directly adjacent to the streetline. Buildings will also be sufficiently setback from any nearby residential development to minimize potential adverse impacts associated with the bulk, scale and layout of buildings.

#### **Guideline 9.4- Building Design**

The following guidelines apply to building design:

- The design and architecture of institutional and community facilities should focus on the creation of landmark buildings and sites within the community through the incorporation of visible and distinct architectural features, high quality building materials, prominent entrances and enhanced landscaping.
- Buildings located close to the street or on-site pedestrian areas should have a high proportion of windows at grade level.
- Building massing, height and roof design should be complimentary to and compatible with any adjacent residential uses. In general, pitched or sloped roofs should be considered in place of flat roofs.

#### **Guidelines 9.5 - Landscaping and Public Spaces**

The following guidelines apply to landscaping and public spaces:

- Substantial landscaping will be provided between the street line and the building and used primarily to frame buildings, define building entrances and walkways, break up larger parking areas and improve the overall appearance of the streetscape.
- Landscaping and grading/berming will also be used to screen parking, loading and service areas from adjacent streets, on-site pedestrian areas, residential uses and public spaces.
- Accent planting and coordinated signage should be provided at main driveway entrances.

- Enhancement of institutional buildings and community facilities through the provision of public gathering places and pedestrian amenities shall be encouraged.

#### **Guideline 9.6 – Improved Connections**

Public institutional uses and community facilities should be designed to provide for new and improved linkages between natural features and open space (i.e. parks and trails), pedestrian and cycling routes and other institutional and community facilities where possible.

#### **Guideline 9.7 – Parking Areas**

The following guidelines apply to parking areas:

- On-site parking shall generally be located to the interior side or rear of main buildings and vehicle circulation through front and exterior side yards should also be avoided. If it can be demonstrated that the site cannot function without locating some parking or vehicle circulation areas between the building and the adjacent street, it should be the minimum possible and well screened by landscaping.
- Large uninterrupted parking areas should be avoided by breaking them into a number of smaller lots separated by landscaped areas or creating the appearance of a number of smaller lots through the incorporation of landscaped islands and walkways.



Furniture Hardware

OPEN

## PART FOUR

IMPLEMENTATION



# IMPLEMENTATION

## OVERVIEW

To ensure the effective implementation of the design principles and guidelines contained in this document, they will need to be incorporated into the local planning review framework and become an integral consideration in the development review and approval processes. The longer term success of these guidelines will also be heavily contingent on on-going municipal commitment and leadership, at both the staff and council level. Given that the County and the Township are responsible for certain planning and development approvals, they will both need to take appropriate actions to ensure effective implementation.

The following sections outline the various documents, tools, processes and other measures that could be employed to ensure the effective implementation of these design guidelines.

## PLANNING ACT

As outlined in Part 1 of this document, the Planning Act (PA) provides for a range of tools that can assist municipalities in directing and encouraging good built form and design. The following provides an overview of some of the tools that may assist in the implementation of the Township of Zorra Design Guidelines:

- Official Plan – Allows municipalities to establish policy direction on the intended look and feel of the built environment (e.g. downtowns, public spaces, green spaces, new communities, gateways etc.) based on objectives such as attractive, comfortable and

safe streetscapes, heritage preservation, and healthy, active and sustainability communities. Where more specific design direction is desired, such policies can be supplemented by detailed design guidelines.

- Zoning By-Law – Allows municipalities to establish provisions to regulate various aspects of the built environment, including use, location, size (including density, minimum and maximum building height and setbacks), character and off-site parking requirements. The PA also allows municipalities to approve height and/or densities that exceed zoning maximums, on a site specific basis, in exchange for the provision of services or matters set out by by-law (i.e. public art, building façade enhancements, public squares). However, the potential demand for increased height and/or density in Zorra is likely to be limited.
- Site Plan Control – External design control can be used to regulate external building, site and boulevard matters such as character, scale, appearance and sustainable design, such as street furniture, tree planting, energy efficient lighting, landscaping, building design and appearance (e.g. windows, materials, proportions etc.).
- Plans of Subdivision - Through their review, planning approval authorities can ensure plans of subdivision are designed to address various community design and sustainability considerations, including providing for a variety of housing choices and mix of uses, incorporating appropriate pedestrian and cycling connections and energy efficiency and conservation measures and ensuring the

proper design and location of parks and open space and protection of natural features.

- Pre-Consultation and Complete Application Requirements – Municipalities may require pre-consultation on certain planning applications to advise proponents of expectations and requirements (i.e. design policies and guidelines), before a formal application is submitted. To assist in their review of an application, municipalities may also require the submission of various design related studies and information before the application is considered complete (i.e. design briefs, height and/or character assessments, heritage impact assessments etc.).
- Parkland Dedication – Where parkland dedication cannot be accommodated on-site, municipalities may reduce their cash in lieu of parkland requirements in exchange for sustainability features (i.e. tree planting, permeable paving etc.). Specific Official Plan policies are required to enable the use this tool.
- Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) - CIPs are a tool that can be used to support municipal design goals by establishing municipally driven programs that focus on infrastructure provision and public realm improvements and providing incentives, such as tax assistance, grants and loans, designed to encourage development activities that support community design (i.e. building façade improvements, historic building restoration/preservation and street-scaping).

The following sections provide further detail on how these and other tools may be applied in the Township of Zorra context.

### OFFICIAL PLAN

As outlined in Part I of this document, the County of Oxford Official Plan (OP) sets out the land use policy direction for Township of Zorra and includes a number of policies that relate, either directly or indirectly, to urban design. These range from more general policies pertaining to matters such as the efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure, promoting walkability and supporting alternative modes of transportation, promoting healthy and active communities and protecting downtowns and heritage resources to more specific policies, such as identifying detailed site design criteria for certain land uses.

The Planning Act requires decisions on development applications to be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and comply with the policies of the Official Plan. Therefore, ensuring that the Official Plan contains the policy references and details necessary to enable and support the application of the design guidelines is essential for effective implementation. The design direction provided by Official Plan policies is typically more general in nature than that provided by detailed local design guidelines. Therefore, design guidelines can assist in informing and supporting the OP design policies and providing additional detail and context specific direction to guide the local implementation of such policies.

For the above noted reasons, the Official Plan should be reviewed and amended, as

necessary, to incorporate any new or revised policies, or policy references, deemed necessary to better enable and support the implementation of these design guidelines. In this regard, the County is currently in the process of undertaking a 5 Year review of the Official Plan and it is anticipated that the County wide Urban Design Strategy (currently underway) and any adopted Area Municipal Design Guidelines will be considered as part of that review.

Following are some of the main design matters arising from the Township of Zorra Design Guideline project that may warrant further consideration as part of the Official Plan review process:

- Development in the Future Urban Growth Areas of the Village of Embro is to be consistent with both the Village of Embro Secondary Plan (and the design objectives contained therein), as well as the Township of Zorra design guidelines.
- The design of all categories of development within designated settlement areas and industrial, commercial, institutional and agricultural industrial/commercial development located outside of designated settlement areas is to address the Township of Zorra Design Guidelines.
- In particular, the Rural Settlement Land Use and Functional Support Elements policies should be reviewed to determine if any revisions may be necessary or advisable to better reflect or support any of the general, public realm or use specific (i.e. Village Core) design guidelines.

### ZONING BY-LAW

The Zoning By-Law is another important tool that can be used to assist municipalities in the implementation of design guidelines. As such, the Township's Zoning By-Law should be reviewed to determine whether any new or amended Zoning provisions may be necessary or advisable to better reflect and/or implement these design guidelines.

Following are some key areas that the Township may wish to consider as part of such a review:

- Minimum front yard setbacks for residential development in Serviced Villages. These may include provisions to bring the main entrances of homes closer to the street, while recognizing established setbacks and allowing sufficient depth for parking in front of the garage. This may also include establishing separate minimum setback requirements for garages and for the main dwelling.
- Maximum widths for residential garages, driveways and curb cuts (i.e. as a percentage of dwelling or lot width).
- Maximum projections for garages beyond the front wall of the dwelling.
- Minimum and maximum front yard setbacks and permitted uses and minimum floor to floor height for ground floor space in Village Core areas.
- Minimum and maximum building heights for development in certain locations e.g. Village Core, gateway locations and adjacent to heritage/historic buildings.
- Minimum landscaped open space requirements and location
- Yard locations, setbacks and screening requirements for parking and loading areas, outdoor service areas, open storage



- Restrictions on location of tarpaulin structures
- Permitted projections e.g. architectural features, canopies, awnings, porches etc.

### SITE PLAN CONTROL BY-LAW

Section 41 of the Planning Act allows municipalities to review and regulate the location of buildings, structures and specified facilities and works through the use of a Site Plan Control By-Law. It also allows municipalities to review and regulate matters related to exterior design (i.e. character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings and their sustainable design) and sustainable design elements on adjoining streets (i.e. trees, shrubs, hedges, plantings or other ground cover, permeable paving materials, street furniture, curb ramps, waste containers and bicycle parking facilities), provided that provisions related to such matters are included in the Official Plan and Site Plan Control By-Law. As a result, site plan control (with the inclusion of exterior design control) can be a key tool for ensuring the effective implementation of design guidelines and, in particular, those relating to building character and design (i.e. colour, building materials, signage and architectural detail) and streetscaping.

The current Township of Zorra Site Plan Control by-law applies to commercial, industrial, institutional, private recreational and multiple unit residential (3 or more dwelling units) types of development, where new and/or expanded buildings and structures and/or the creation of 5 or more commercial or industrial parking spaces is being proposed. Site plan approval is also required for any amendment to an existing site plan, elevation plan, landscape plan and/or servicing plan.

The Township's Site Plan Control By-Law already includes certain exterior building design provisions (i.e. building form, colour, materials,

façade details, window and door openings etc.). However, to ensure the effective implementation of these guidelines and, in particular, the guidelines related to the design of buildings, landscaping and the public realm, the Township's Site Plan Control By-Law should be reviewed to determine if any amendments are necessary or advisable. Potential amendments may include changes to the type, scale and nature of development and/or exterior building alterations that are subject to site plan approval and the specific content of various plans and drawings required as part of the submission.

### REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

The implementation of these design guidelines will be achieved primarily through municipal review and approval of applications for development under the Planning Act and the Ontario Building Code Act.

Decisions on Planning Act applications must be consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Official Plan, including any policies pertaining to community and urban design. In addition, all Planning Act applications should be reviewed in terms of their consistency with the applicable Township of Zorra Design Guidelines.

The County and Township should review their various application processes and agreements to determine the need for any additional submission requirements, approval conditions or agreement provisions that might assist in the implementation of these design guidelines. Some potential approaches for implementing these design guidelines through the review of various Planning Act applications are detailed as follows:

### Secondary Plans and Draft Plans of Subdivision/Condominium

The review of Official Plan Amendments (i.e. secondary plans) and draft plans of subdivision/condominium provide a key opportunity for municipalities to ensure various design matters are addressed, particularly those related to residential uses, greenfield design/neighbourhood structure and the public realm (i.e. street, sidewalk and trail connections, lot sizes and orientation, range of housing types and design of parks and open spaces). In addition to allowing municipalities to ensure the physical layout of the subdivision is consistent with the design principles and guidelines, conditions of draft plan approval and subdivision agreements can also be used to ensure other design considerations are addressed.

To assist in the review and implementation of these design guidelines as part of the draft plan of subdivision/condominium review process, applicants may be required to provide additional information or plans as part of their submission, including:

- A design brief (see section on pre-consultation for further detail)
- Landscaping and streetscape plans.
- Detailed park development and landscape plan.
- Trail design plan.
- Tree preservation plan.

In addition, when preparing subdivision agreements, the County/Township may require the inclusion of specific provisions in order to achieve design objectives. Such provisions could relate to such matters as:

- Requiring a copy of the design guidelines to be provided to prospective purchasers and builders.

- Requiring the provision of street trees and landscaping in pre-determined locations.
- Establishing maintenance requirements for gateway features and boulevard landscaping

### Consents

Where appropriate, the County may consider imposing approval conditions on applications for consent in order to achieve certain design objectives/requirements. Examples of such conditions may be requirements for site specific zoning provisions (i.e. height or setback) or requiring an applicant to enter into a development agreement with the Township that includes various design related provisions and requirements. For instance, applications for residential infill development in established residential areas, or adjacent to heritage buildings, may benefit from specific approval conditions related to urban design. Such conditions may be particularly useful in instances where approval of the consent application would allow for development of a new building/use that would not be subject to review through the site plan approval process (i.e. a residential dwelling containing less than 3 dwelling units)

### Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-Law Amendments and Minor Variances

Where an application for Official Plan amendment, zoning by-law amendment and/or minor variance is required for a particular development, the County or Township (as applicable) may consider the need to incorporate site specific Official Plan policies, zoning provisions and/or minor variance conditions to assist in implementation of applicable design principles and guidelines. Specific Official Plan policies and zoning provisions may be particularly effective for establishing design requirements for new residential areas, particularly where such areas are also subject to

secondary planning.

### Site Plan Approval

As previously noted, site plan control (with external design control) is one of the key Planning Act tools that the Township can use to implement these design guidelines, particularly given that most forms of non-residential development and multiple unit residential in the Township are already subject to site plan approval.

### Pre-consultation and Application Submission Requirements

Pre-consultation on development applications can provide a key opportunity for making applicants aware of the Township's design requirements and expectations for a particular development and should generally be encouraged for all Planning Act applications.

To assist the Township in reviewing design proposals and development applications with respect to these design guidelines, a design checklist has been developed (See Appendix B). The purpose of the design checklist is to allow County/Township staff to quickly evaluate the extent to which the applicable design guidelines are being addressed by a particular development proposal and to determine what amendments to the proposal, if any, may be needed. The design guidelines and checklist should be also made available for use by proponents in advance of application submission, so that the guidelines can be taken into consideration in the initial design of their projects. Proponents should be required to submit a copy of the completed check list with their application, including the identification of any areas of potential non-compliance (with appropriate explanations) with the guidelines.

To further assist in their design review, the County and/or Township should also consider requiring proponents to submit a 'Design Brief' as part of their development application. The purpose of the 'Design Brief' would be to demonstrate how the proposed development addresses the applicable Township of Zorra Design Guidelines and, as such, should be prepared by a professional in urban design. Where deemed necessary, the approval authority may also require the 'Design Brief' to be peer reviewed.

### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS (CIPs)

The Township may wish to consider the development of Community Improvement Plans for key design areas, such as the Village Cores. CIPs can be used to encourage and support businesses and property owners that may be looking to invest in an area or to improve the design and/or appearance of their buildings and property. This is generally accomplished through the establishment of municipally driven programs focused on infrastructure and public realm improvements and the provision of incentives such as tax assistance, grants and loans. Examples of design related incentive programs may include the provision of grants and/or loans to assist with or off-set the cost of undertaking building façade improvements, historic building restoration/preservation, streetscaping improvements and the preparation of design/façade improvement plans. In Oxford, both the County and the Township have the authority to establish CIPs.

### OTHER IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Some of the other tools, processes and/or measures the County and/or Township may wish to consider implementing or, where they already



exist, reviewing/revising in order to assist in the implementation of the design guidelines include:

- **Sign By-law:** to ensure signage is aesthetically pleasing and appropriate for the type of development with which it is associated. The Township should consider establishing a consistent design and character for signage in village core areas and other high visibility locations, such as at village gateways and key intersections.
- **Streetscape Master Plan or Improvement Guidelines:** A streetscape plan/guideline could be prepared for the Township, or key areas within the Township, to assist in identifying and prioritizing specific streetscape improvements that could be undertaken in the Township. Over time, identified improvements could be undertaken by the County/Township (i.e. as part of street reconstruction projects), by property owners/developers (i.e. as part of the development process) and/or by business organizations and community groups.
- **Village Core Master Plan:** Could be completed to identify specific actions that could be undertaken to improve the image of the Village Cores and provide detailed direction on such actions. Such actions could include provision of enhanced streetscaping and pedestrian amenities, improving pedestrian and cycling connections, establishing coordinated signage, lighting and architectural design standards and provision of municipal parking and parkettes. Such plans can form the basis for, or be part of, a local Community Improvement Plan
- **Lighting Standards –** Can be used to establish specific design requirements for street lighting in the Township and/or within certain areas (i.e. requirements for decorative, pedestrian scaled lighting) as well as standards for on-site lighting where deemed appropriate. The Township should consider establishing a consistent design and character for street lighting in settlement areas and specific character areas within settlement areas, such as the village core.
- **Boulevard Tree Planting Guideline/Standard and related incentives**
- **Subdivision Engineering/Design Standards –** May assist in implementing and supporting design guidelines related to streets, sidewalks and other elements of the public realm.
- **Fencing By-Law –** Can be used to assist in implementing and supporting design direction related to fencing.
- **Building By-Law –** Could be reviewed to determine the ability for the Township to review and approve exterior building design, particularly for uses such as single detached, duplex and semi-detached dwellings which are not currently subject to site plan approval, prior to issuance of a building permit.
- **Building Information Package –** Could be developed to provide information to property owners looking to re-develop or renovate their properties, such as:
  - \* A summary of the Township's design guidelines (i.e. design checklist)
  - \* An overview of the development review process and how the Urban Design guidelines are to be implemented through that process.
  - \* An overview of any tools and incentives that might be available to assist businesses and landowners with design related improvements.
- **Heritage/historic building Inventory -** A photographic inventory of sample heritage/historical buildings could be assembled to provide development proponents with a quick indication of the local architectural styles, materials, colours and building design elements for various building types in the Township (e.g. residential and village core commercial) that could be considered in the design of new buildings.



# APPENDIX A

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

# LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

## LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND POLICY CONTEXT

### Planning Act

On January 1, 2007, a number of amendments were incorporated into the Planning Act and associated regulations through the Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006 (Bill 51). These amendments included new authorities for municipalities to promote development that is attractive, well integrated and environmentally sustainable. The key amendments were to the provisions with respect to Site Plan control, which were revised to increase municipal authority to:

- consider the external design of buildings, including the character, scale, appearance and design features (architectural and window details, texture etc) and their sustainable design.
- implement sustainable streetscape improvements on public boulevards adjoining development sites, such as street trees and other plantings, permeable paving materials, street furniture and bicycle parking facilities.

As a result, municipalities now have greater authority to address design considerations as part of the development approval process and to implement related tools such as design guidelines.

### Provincial Policy Statement (2005)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), issued under the authority of Section 3 of the Planning Act, provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and

development. The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters "shall be consistent with" the PPS.

The current PPS (March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005) provides strong, clear policy direction on land use planning to promote strong communities, a clean and healthy environment and a strong economy. It includes policies on key issues that affect our communities, such as: the efficient use and management of land and infrastructure; protection of the environment and resources; and ensuring appropriate opportunities for employment and residential development, including support for a mix of uses.

While the PPS does not contain specific urban design policies, it does contain a range of policies that are either fully or partially reliant on urban design considerations to achieve effective implementation. Such policies include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing settlement areas as the focus for growth and promote their vitality and regeneration, together with a land use pattern, density and a mix of uses which:
- efficiently uses land, resources, infrastructure and public services and promotes energy efficiency; and
- minimizes the length and number of vehicle trips and supports alternative modes of transportation.
- Identifying and promoting opportunities for intensification and redevelopment and establishing appropriate development standards to facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form and minimize the cost of housing, while maintaining appropriate levels of public



health and safety;

- Promoting healthy, active communities by planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians and facilitate pedestrian and other non-motorized movement, such as walking and cycling;
- Maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets and conserving significant built and cultural heritage resources;
- Planning so that major facilities (e.g. transportation corridors and industrial uses), are appropriately designed, buffered and separated from sensitive land uses to prevent adverse affects; and
- Providing for a full range and equitable distribution of publicly-accessible built and natural settings for recreation, including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and, where practical, water-based resources.

The province has also recently released proposed draft amendments to the 2005 PPS policies which, if approved, would further strengthen the role of built form and urban design in creating and maintaining strong, healthy and sustainable communities. Local design guidelines can assist in implementing design related provincial policies in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and character of a particular community.

### Official Plan

The Oxford County Official Plan (OP) provides the context specific land use policy direction for the County and the area municipalities within the County, including the Township of Zorra. The policies in the OP are intended to guide and manage the extent, pattern and type of settlements and the use of land and resources desired to maintain and improve the quality of the environment and the quality of life for County residents and to address matters of Provincial interest. The OP contains a range of policies that

relate, either directly or indirectly, to urban design.

Chapter 3 of the OP contains policies pertaining to the protection of agricultural land and other natural and cultural heritage resources. The policies pertaining to agricultural commercial/ industrial uses and non-agricultural uses in agricultural areas, include policies relating to design considerations such as site layout, building location and design, setbacks, vehicular access, buffering and screening. Chapter 3 also includes policies pertaining to energy efficiency and air quality. These policies promote compact urban form, mixed use and energy efficient design as means of increasing efficiency of hard and soft services, reducing development pressure on agricultural land and other environmental features and reducing automobile dependency.

Chapter 6 of the OP contains policies pertaining to the various categories of rural settlements within the County, including Rural Clusters, Villages and Serviced Villages. These policies allow for various forms of residential development within designated settlements, including plans of subdivision and infilling and intensification in appropriate locations, consistent with the level of municipal services. These policies also contain review criteria relating to such considerations as character and compatibility with adjacent development. In terms of non-residential uses, the policies allow for a range of industrial, commercial and institutional uses within serviced villages, and to a lesser extent villages, and support designated Village Core areas.

Chapter 6 also contains site design policies for commercial, industrial, institutional and multiple unit residential development located within settlement areas. These policies address such matters as storage, parking, landscaping, lighting, access, and barrier-free design.

Chapter 10 of the OP contains policy direction on implementation and includes policies with respect to the use of Site Plan Control to address matters relating to urban design, including without limitation the character, scale, appearance and design features of buildings and their sustainable design. These policies indicate that any site and urban design criteria contained in the OP, or established through site and/or urban design guidelines, shall be addressed as part of the site plan approval process.

These design related OP policies have been considered in the preparation of the guidelines contained herein.

### **Oxford Community/Urban Design Strategy**

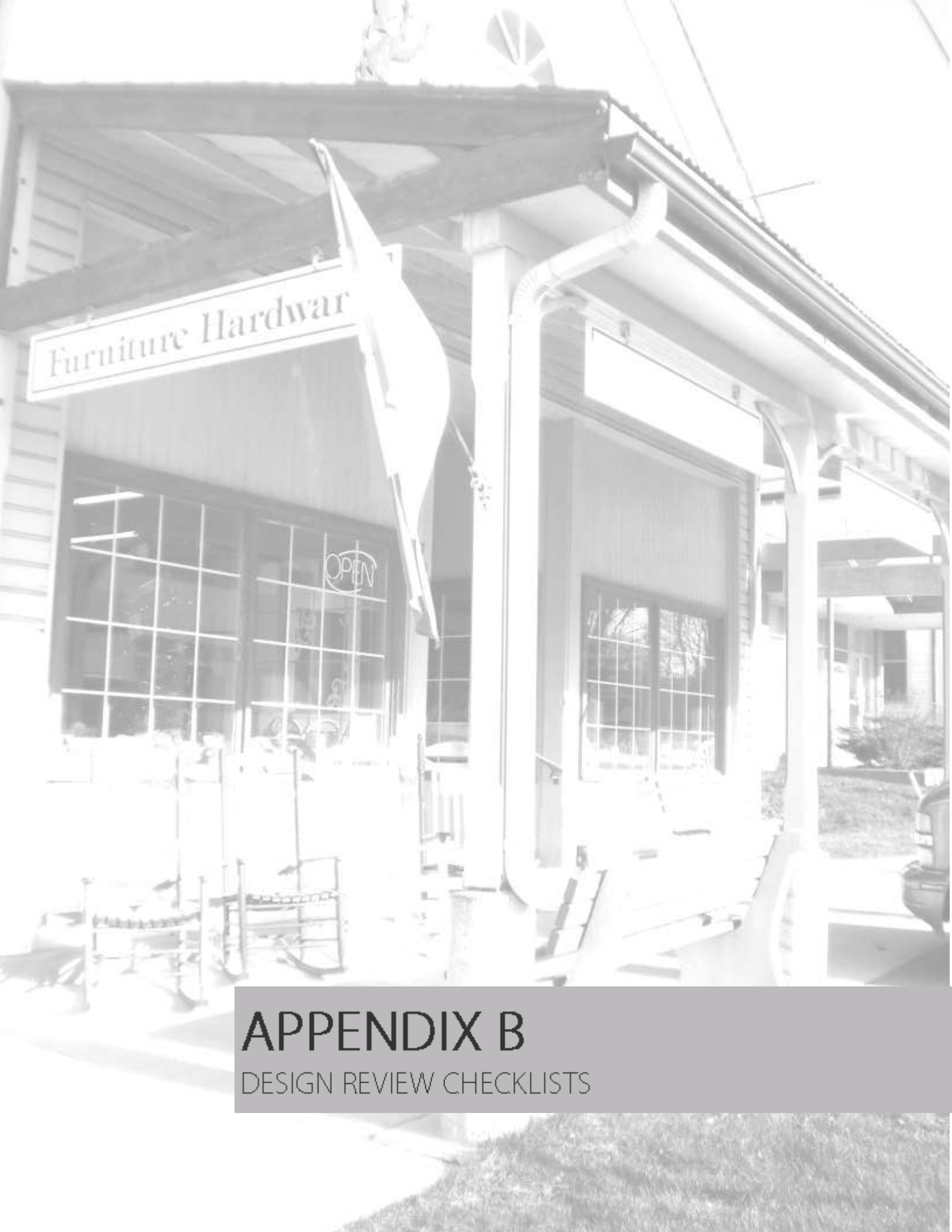
At the time this study was undertaken, Oxford County was undertaking a Community/Urban Design Strategy as part of their five year Official Plan Review process. The primary purpose of this exercise is to develop a community/urban design policy framework and overall implementation strategy for the County and eight Area Municipalities.

The community design policies being developed for Oxford County are intended to address the full range of design considerations, including community/neighbourhood structure, context and placemaking, community focal points, public spaces such as parks and streets, site and building design, heritage and culture, accommodating pedestrians and other alternative modes of transportation, landscaping, signage, lighting and environmental sustainability.

As part of this study, a number of preliminary design goals have been established, including:

- Ensure Oxford County has an urban design vision that represents the character of each unique community.
- Define a community's character by its architecture, open spaces and natural features.
- Acknowledge, foster and protect Oxford County's cultural and built heritage.
- Create vibrant places by supporting a mix of uses, where appropriate.
- Prioritize sustainability in design and construction of communities and buildings.
- Promote compact built form in urban areas.
- Preserve farmland and other natural resources.
- Ensure positive transitions between different land uses, as well as urban and rural areas.
- Focus on public health by creating accessible, walkable and complete communities.
- Support a variety of transportation choices, with a priority on pedestrians.

The implementation strategy that is also to be developed as part of this study will set out an overall community design action plan for the County, including specific recommendations on the need for any additional studies, tools, processes and/or other measures necessary to effectively implement the community design policies and to achieve an overall high quality design approach for the communities within the County. The preliminary design goals from this study were considered in the preparation of the design principles for the Township of Zorra.



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**APPENDIX B**  
DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLISTS



### DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLIST

This Design Review Checklist is a guide to assist applicants, staff, and Council and to allow the Township to examine proposed developments to ensure that they are functional and compatible with the surrounding area, and contributes to the overall aesthetic of the Township.

# APPENDIX B

## DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLISTS

Guideline	Page Reference	Complete	Partially Complete	Does Not Comply	N/A	Comments
General Design Guidelines	Stormwater management facilities are naturalized, extensively landscaped with native species and trails and pedestrian amenities are incorporated.	50				
	Buildings with heritage or historic significance are retained. Alterations are sensitive to the original building materials, new development adjacent to heritage features are sympathetic	50				
	Existing Buildings are re-used and re-purposed.	51				
	The scale of new development reflects the existing neighbourhood pattern and adjacent buildings, including building features and materials.	51				
	New non-residential and multiple unit residential development should be designed and sited such that sunlight exposure, visual privacy, lighting, noise, dust, vibration, and traffic on adjacent properties are minimized.	51				
	Preferred building materials generally include wood, brick, and stone.	51				
	Development on corner lots will incorporate a similar level of design and architectural detail on front and exterior side yards. Main building entrance is oriented towards the intersection. Corner buildings should employ various design techniques to emphasize the building.	51				
	Any signage is in compliance with Guideline 1.7	52				
	Larger developments located in the Village Core and along main streets and other pedestrian areas should incorporate pedestrian scaled lighting, in accordance with Guideline 1.8	52				
	Development incorporates Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles	53				
	The site and building is accessible to all residents, and incorporates principles of Universal Design and the standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	53				
	Pedestrian walkways are incorporated	54				
	Pedestrian walkways are clearly identified and link main building entrances and parking lots.	54				
	sidewalks and walkways are of an adequate width	54				
	Loading, service, and functional building elements are located in low visibility sites	54				
	Landscaping is consistent with Guideline 1.15 with respect to plant selection, plant location, amount of landscaped open space, and use of landscaping to delineate pedestrian/parking aisles and to frame buildings and entrances	55				
	Natural Heritage Features are protected, and adequately buffered from development and linked to other natural heritage features.	55				
Appropriate on-site emergency access is provided.	56					

# APPENDIX B

## DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLISTS

	Guideline	Page Reference	Complies	Partially Complies	Does Not Comply	N/A	Comments
Sustainability Guidelines	Existing buildings and materials are reused where possible, and new materials are durable and local sourced where possible.	57					
	Significant natural heritage features are protected and appropriately integrated to development plans.	57					
	Street trees and shade trees are incorporated in regular intervals where possible to provide shaded streets.	57					
	Use of trails, cycling and sidewalk systems is encouraged.	57					
	Reasonable efforts are made to minimize the removal of vegetation and preserve large or mature trees. Redevelopment increases overall green cover from pre to post development.	57					
	Paved areas are minimized	57					
	Bicycling infrastructure is provided	58					
	Site Design incorporates low water use technologies and landscapes	58					
	Alternative stormwater management techniques are incorporated, such as permeable pavement, naturalized landscaping, onsite infiltration.	58					
	Parking lot is adequately landscaped to reduce heat island effects.	58					



# APPENDIX B

## DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLISTS

	Guideline	Page Reference	Complies	Partially Complies	Does Not Comply	N/A	Comments
Residential Guidelines	Street trees are provided at regular intervals, at least 1 per lot.	75					
	Architectural features such as front porches, peaked roofs, dormers and windows are provided to visually breakup the massing of buildings	75					
	A wide variety of housing designs are used	75					
	Design Priority Lots' incorporate building designs with prominent features on all facades and substantial landscaping.	75					
	The proposed development does not incorporate rear lotting, in accordance with Guideline 6.9	75					
	Design of new dwellings incorporates architectural style elements and materials and colours of traditional housing in the community. Use of building materials is consistent across all facades. The building uses preferred building materials (stone, brick, wooden siding)	75					
	Houses on corner lots are oriented and design to equally address both frontages.	75					
	Residential roofline is varied, and pitched or sloped. Colour and pattern are consistent with the architectural style and other homes along the streetscape.	76					
	Piping and vents for functional services are located so as not to be visible from the street.	76					
The prominence of the garage is reduced as much as possible and is setback behind the main wall of the home. The garage design and location is consistent with Guideline 6.14.	76						

# APPENDIX B

## DESIGN REVIEW CHECKLISTS

	Guideline	Page Reference	Complies	Partially Complies	Does Not Comply	N/A	Comments
Service Commercial Uses	Building is located close to the street to define the street edge and pedestrian environment.	81					
	Building façade is visible from the street and incorporates enhanced architectural features and details.	81					
	Building is located close to the street or has a high proportion of windows at grade level. Large flat wall and blank walls are not permitted.	82					
	Building entrances are clearly identifiable and appropriate pedestrian walkways are incorporated. Landscaping and architectural elements are present near the building entrance	82					
	Building massing, height and roof design are complimentary and compatible with surrounding uses. Pitched or sloped roofs are preferred to flat roofs.	82					
	Outdoor patios and amenity areas are located within well landscaped pedestrian areas close to the building entrance and oriented toward the public street.	82					
	Multi-unit commercial developments are well integrated and comprehensively designed to function together as a whole.	82					
	Substantial landscaping is provided between the street line and building face. Landscaping is used to blank facades, screen parking and loading and service areas, from adjacent uses and public spaces.	82					
	Main driveway entrances have accented planting and coordinated signage	82					
	Outdoor display areas incorporate substantial landscaping	82					
	Onsite parking is located to the interior or rear of main buildings and vehicle circulation through front or exterior side yards are avoided where possible.	83					
	Large parking areas are avoided by breaking them up through the use of small landscaped areas or islands.	83					
	Drive-through facilities are architecturally integrated in the building and order boards and pick up windows should not be visible from abutting streets. Adequate staging spaces are provided.	83					