



THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT: *Committed to delivering cost-effective and efficient services for the residents of the Town of Amherstburg with a view to improve and enhance their quality of life.*

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To: Mayor and Members of Town Council

Subject: Urban Structure Plan - Background Report

1. **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that:

1. The report of September 25, 2023, entitled Urban Structure Plan Background Report **BE RECEIVED for information.**

2. **BACKGROUND:**

The Town of Amherstburg is currently undertaking an update of its Official Plan, the guiding planning document under the Planning Act that provides the long-term framework for growth, development, and the protection of many valuable cultural and natural heritage resources located in the Town. As a background report to the Official Plan, Administration is undertaking the drafting of an Urban Structure Plan. The Urban Structure Plan will support the policies proposed in the new Official Plan. Administration has developed a background report. (Appendix A) Administration is currently in the process of drafting the Urban Structure Plan.

Generally, an Urban Structure Plan establishes the major structural elements of an urban system and is structured to provide direction on growth management. At a Town-wide scale, it sets up the general locations for mixed uses, employment areas, large open spaces, activity areas, as well as the major linkages that connect these elements. The Town of Amherstburg's draft urban structure follows the nodes and corridors concept and considers the infrastructure and transportation upgrades required to support future

growth. Nodes and corridors throughout the Town and the downtown are identified as priority areas for growth.

The Urban Structure Plan (USP) formally illustrates the existing “big picture” form of the municipality through visual mapping and policy. It identifies the key structural elements such as nodes, corridors, and areas where specific activities are present. The Urban Structure Plan will help guide the Town’s Official Plan and will be key to ensuring the Town can accommodate future growth in Growth Areas. The Urban Structure Plan will help with responding to growth pressures and directing growth to the appropriate areas.

The Urban Structure Plan will provide the basis for more detailed work on specific land use designations. Policies related to the designations will be completed as part of the Official Plan review process.

3. DISCUSSION:

Based on the nodes and corridors concept, the draft Urban Structure Plan includes the following structural elements:

- Urban Nodes:
 - Downtown Node;
 - Community Nodes;
 - Neighborhood Nodes;
- Corridors:
 - Primary Corridors;
 - Secondary Corridors;
 - Scenic Corridors;
- Major Activity Centres;
 - Growth Areas
 - Employment Areas
 - Major Open Space
 - Culturally Significant Areas
- Neighbourhoods

Residential intensification will be encouraged generally throughout the entire built up areas of the Town, including the nodes, corridors and neighbourhoods. While the nodes (including the downtown) and corridors will absorb the majority of the intensification, the neighbourhoods will also need to accommodate a share of residential intensification.

Policy Context

The Urban Structure Plan will be prepared to conform to all relevant Provincial Acts, policies and plans, including the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). The Urban Structure Plan is a policy tool that provides the Town with the high-level framework that will help to inform the land use designations in the Official Plan.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The PPS establishes a broad vision for how communities should grow over time. In order to ensure that the policies in the PPS are applied in all communities as a key component

of the planning process, the Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters “shall be consistent with” the PPS.

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. It sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. Municipal official plans are to build on this policy foundation with more detailed policy direction that is consistent with the PPS policies.

Section 1.0 of the PPS provides policies for Building Strong Healthy Communities. Section 1.1.1 states:

1.1.1 Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by:

- a) promoting efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term;*
- b) accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons), employment (including industrial and commercial), institutional (including places of worship, cemeteries and long-term care homes), recreation, park and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs;*
- c) avoiding development and land use patterns which may cause environmental or public health and safety concerns;*
- d) avoiding development and land use patterns that would prevent the efficient expansion of settlement areas in those areas which are adjacent or close to settlement areas;*
- e) promoting the integration of land use planning, growth management, transit-supportive development, intensification and infrastructure planning to achieve cost-effective development patterns, optimization of transit investments, and standards to minimize land consumption and servicing costs;*
- f) improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society;*
- g) ensuring that necessary infrastructure and public service facilities are or will be available to meet current and projected needs;*
- h) promoting development and land use patterns that conserve biodiversity; and*
- i) preparing for the regional and local impacts of a changing climate.*

The Urban Structure Plan will help the Town meet the goals of the PPS by providing the high level policy to support the development of a healthy, liveable and safe community. The Urban Structure Plan will provide the background policies to support appropriate locations for growth and intensification.

Local Policy Context

Long term planning for the Town of Amherstburg raises a number of challenges and questions. Where should growth go? Where should redevelopment go? How can the Town be prepared to benefit from shifts in the global economy? What infrastructure is needed to accommodate change?

In recent years the Town of Amherstburg has initiated a number of studies and plans to support long term growth for the town. These studies and plans include:

- Community Strategic Plan – currently under review
- Economic Development Community Improvement Plan – approved April 11, 2023
- Howard Industrial Park District Secondary Plan – currently in the public consultation stage
- Transportation Master Plan – currently under review

The Urban Structure Plan will further support growth for the Town and will provide policies that are consistent with the recommendations brought forward by the above mentioned reports.

Next Steps

The next step will be to refine the draft Urban Structure Plan. The draft Urban Structure Plan and associated Draft Policies will be the subject to stakeholder consultation. Staff will be draft an Urban Structure Plan and circulate for input from of departments and stakeholders. The draft USP will available to the public through the Talk the Burg website and community feedback and direction will help inform the final plan.

Administration has begun developing the draft Urban Structure Plan, including completing internal charrettes identifying major structural elements of Amherstburg, and field reviews. A preliminary map has been developed in order to help inform the conversation as the project moves forward (see Appendix B).

4. RISK ANALYSIS:

The recommendation presents little to no risk to the municipality.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

The Urban Structure Plan is being prepared in house and does not require additional funding.

6. CONSULTATIONS:

Christopher Aspila, Manager of Planning Services
Sarah French, Planner

7. CONCLUSION:

The Urban Structure Plan is a tool that many sophisticated municipalities have utilized in recent years to help illustrate the structural elements that make up their municipalities. The USP will be an important support study to inform the policy direction in the Official Plan Update.



(Adam Coates)
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Report Approval Details

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Attachments:	- USP_Background Study Report 20230911.pdf - Preliminary Mapping.pdf
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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