



Municipality of North Perth Downtown Areas Revitalization and Beautification Strategy

PART ONE

Community Improvement **plan**



Draft
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1.0 Introduction

Located in the northern limits of Perth County, the Municipality of North Perth is a community of rural and small urban settings, and home to more than 12,500 people. With the advantage of two major highways (Highway 86 and Highway 23) traversing the Municipality, the settlement areas of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton have historically served as the Municipality's primary business and service destinations. Known as the community's "Downtown Areas", Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton, range in size and character; but each provides a significant economic and social function locally, throughout the County, and to the travelling public.

Over the years, there has been significant community involvement in efforts to ensure the economic and social wellbeing of the Downtown Areas of North Perth, by the Municipality, the business community, and local residents. In 2011, the Municipality took a coordinated approach to various revitalization and beautification efforts within and amongst the Downtown Areas, through the development of a **Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy**. The Strategy includes:

- **Part One: a Community Improvement Plan**, which sets out a long-term plan for the revitalization and beautification of public and private property; and
- **Part Two: a Streetscape Design**, which establishes a vision and conceptual designs for the public landscapes and streetscapes of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton.

In accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, this part of the Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy represents the Community Improvement Plan for the Downtown Areas of North Perth. Its purpose is to provide a broad-based, strategic, and coordinated framework for future Municipal planning studies, infrastructure projects, and construction/redevelopment programs, and to engage in specific revitalization and redevelopment activities with private landowners within the Downtown Areas. The second part of the Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy is the Streetscape Design, which is a companion document to this Community Improvement Plan.

This Community Improvement Plan has been prepared under the direction of a Municipal Steering Committee and in consultation with local elected Officials, Perth County, members of the business community, and local residents.

2.0 Background

2.1 Authority

Several legislative documents provide the authority for Ontario municipalities to prepare Community Improvement Plans, including the *Planning Act* and the *Development Charges Act*. The following sections provide a summary of legislation relevant to this particular Community Improvement Plan. For additional information or clarification on the authority for certain Community Improvement activities, reference to the actual Act should be made.

2.1.1 The Planning Act

The following definitions and provisions are provided by the *Planning Act* with respect to municipal powers as they relate to Community Improvement activities:

2.1.1.1 Community Improvement

Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act* defines Community Improvement as “the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a Community Improvement Project Area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary”. With respect to the provision of residential uses and buildings, the *Planning Act* specifies that this includes the affordable housing in Section 28(1.1).

2.1.1.2 Community Improvement Project Area

Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act* defines the term Community Improvement Project Area as “a Municipality or an area within a Municipality, the Community Improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”.

Section 28(2) states that where there is an official plan in effect in a local Municipality or in a prescribed upper-tier Municipality that contains provisions relating to Community Improvement in the Municipality, the council may, by By-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a Community Improvement Project Area.

2.1.1.3 Community Improvement Plan

Section 28(4) of the *Planning Act* states that once a Community Improvement Project Area has been designated by By-law, “the council may provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area”.

The Municipality may then prepare and use a Community Improvement Plan to:

- Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land (Section 28(3));
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6));
- Sell, lease or dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6)); and
- Make grants or loans to owners and tenants of land and buildings within the Community Improvement Project Area to pay for the whole or any part of eligible costs related to Community Improvement (Section 28(7)).

Eligible costs are specified in Section 28 (7.1) of the *Planning Act*, and include costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities.

Section 28 (7.3) states that the total of the grants and loans that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the Community Improvement project with respect to those lands and buildings.

Outside of Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities also use tools provided by Section 69 (related to establishing tariffs of fees in respect to planning and building) as part of Community Improvement Plans. Under Section 69(2), Municipalities are permitted reduce the amount of or waive the requirement for the payment of a fee in respect of an application where the council, planning board or committee is satisfied that it would be unreasonable to require payment.

2.1.2 The Development Charges Act

In addition to the range of Community Improvement tools established by the *Planning Act*, Section 5 of the *Development Charges Act* allows a Municipality (through its development charge by-law) to provide for full or partial development charge exemptions for certain types of development. This tool is often incorporated into Municipal Community Improvement Plans.

2.2 Basis

2.2.1 County of Perth and Listowel Official Plan

The County of Perth Official Plan serves as both the upper and lower tier Plan for the former Townships in the County, including North Perth. However, since a local Official Plan for the serviced urban area of the Former Town of Listowel existed prior to amalgamation, it continues in-effect as a lower tier Plan for the Listowel Ward.

As required by the *Planning Act*, both the County of Perth Official Plan and the Official Plan for the Listowel Ward contain provisions relating to Community Improvement in the Municipality of North Perth. Section 18.10.2 of the County of Perth Official Plan and Section 17.10.2 of the Listowel Official Plan identify a “Principal Goal” for Community Improvement: *to foster a continuing process of comprehensive renewal in the form of redevelopment, rehabilitation, and maintenance as a means of ensuring the economic and social vitality of the principal settlement area (Listowel) of North Perth and the various communities (including Atwood and Monkton) of Perth County.*

In order to achieve the “Principal Goal” for Community Improvement, Section 18.10.6 of the County Official Plan and Section 17.10.6 of the Listowel Official Plan state that a number of implementation methods and procedures will be employed, including: *exercising the appropriate provisions of the Planning Act pertaining to Community Improvement.*

The County and Listowel Ward Official Plans also identify a set of criteria for the establishment of Community Improvement Project Areas, in Section 18.10.4 and 17.10.4 respectively.

2.2.2 Relevant Municipal Studies

As part of the broader Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Project, and the preparation of this Community Improvement Plan for the North Perth Downtown Areas, the following studies were consulted for relevant background information:

- Perth County MovingON Community Planning Guide (2011);
- The North Perth Council Approved Master Growth Plan (2010);
- Perth, St. Marys and Stratford Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2010);
and
- County of Perth Business Retention + Expansion Project (2008).

Many of the conclusions and strategic recommendations from these documents provide support and rationale for the programs contained in this Community Improvement Plan.

2.2.3 Community Consultation

A number of community consultation initiatives were undertaken as part of North Perth's Downtown Revitalization and Beautification project:

- Three separate Design Workshops were held in the communities of Monkton, Atwood, and Listowel on November 17, 2011; and
- A Community Survey was completed by members of the public during the month of November, 2011.

The Design Workshop and Community Survey provided background and community insight on the strengths and weaknesses in each of the Downtown Areas and contributed to the identification of critical needs to be addressed by a Streetscape Design and Community Improvement Plan.

2.2.4 Strategy Presentation

On November 28, 2011, a Strategy Presentation was provided to the Municipality's Project Steering Committee, which summarized the background work and results of the community consultation activities undertaken as part of the North Perth Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Project. The Strategy Presentation is the primary basis for this Community Improvement Plan and companion Streetscape Design document. The Strategy Presentation provided recommendations with respect to:

- The critical needs to be addressed by a Community Improvement Plan and Streetscape Design;
- Recommended Community Improvement Project Areas and Streetscape Design Areas;
- Recommended Municipal Leadership Programs and Financial Incentive Programs to be included within the Community Improvement Plan; and
- Streetscape Recommendations and preliminary conceptual designs for each of the Downtown Areas.

The Strategy Presentation should be referred to for a detailed summary of the background work completed in support of this Community Improvement Plan. Results of the Design Workshops and Community Survey are summarized in the Strategy Presentation.

3.0 The Community Improvement Plan

3.1 Community Improvement Goals

The North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan sets out a broad-based, strategic, and coordinated framework for future Municipal projects and private revitalization and redevelopment activities within the Downtown Areas of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton. The specific goals of the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan are:

- a) To coordinate and encourage community leadership;
- b) To guide the expenditure of Municipal funds;
- c) To motivate and leverage private sector investment;
- d) To increase tax assessment and revenues;
- e) To retain and increase employment, shopping, tourism, and living opportunities;
- f) To improve the physical state and visual aesthetic of public and private property and buildings; and
- g) To improve conditions for walking, cycling, and accessibility.

3.2 Community Improvement Project Areas

In accordance with Section 28(2) of the *Planning Act*, lands identified in Figures 1 to 3 below have been designated Community Improvement Project Areas, by By-law, for the purpose of this Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan.

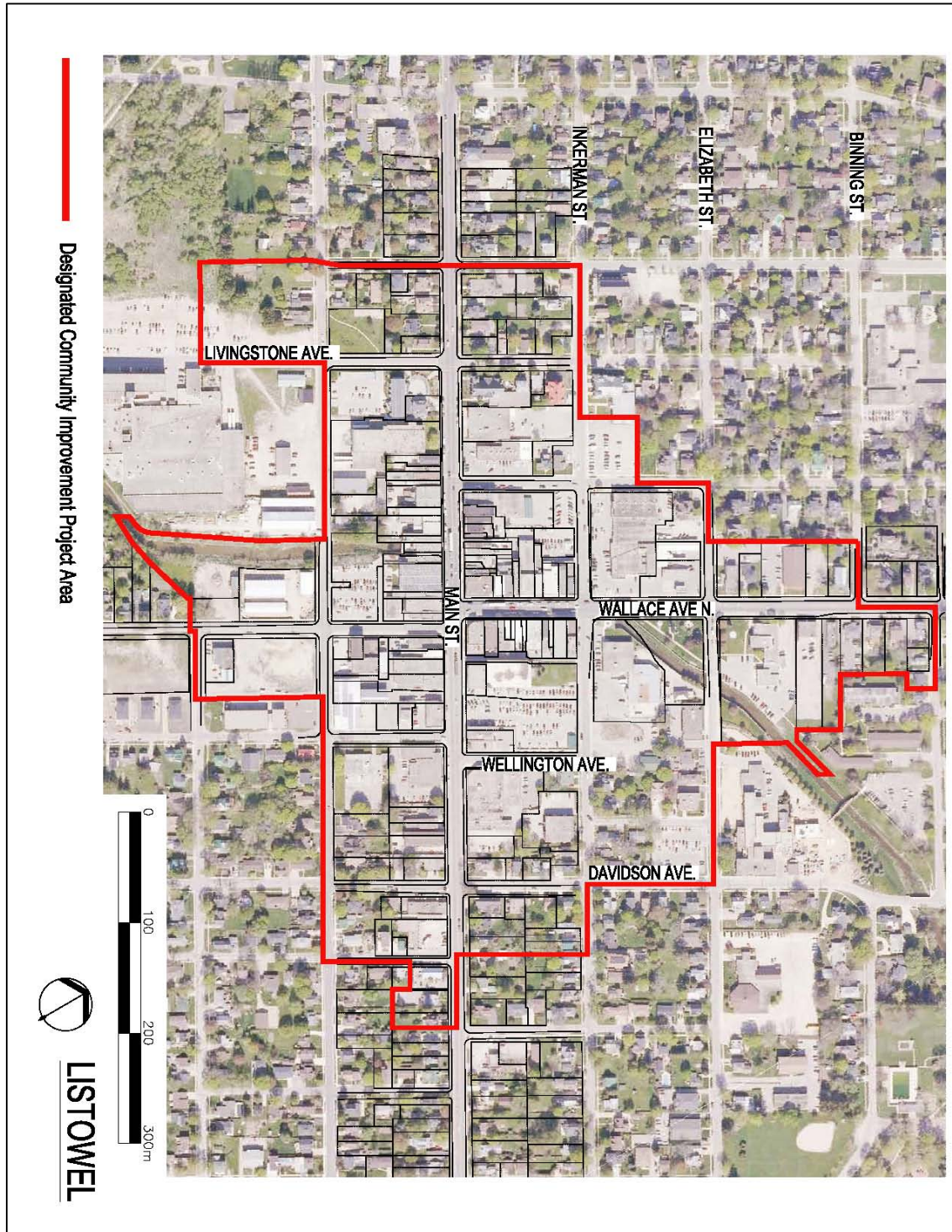
The specific boundaries of the Downtown Community Improvement Project Areas have been identified based on the following characteristics:

- There is a high concentration of commercially designated and zoned land;
- Some building stock is in need of restoration and façade Improvements;
- Improvements to streetscape elements are required;
- There is a need to improve safety with respect to pedestrian and bicycle movement;
- Community leadership and revitalization efforts need to be strengthened and/or coordinated;
- Branding and promotion is required;
- Additional parking is required or needs to be formalized; and
- Facility/parking signage needs to be improved.

These characteristics are consistent with the criteria for the establishment of Community Improvement Project Areas, as identified in Section 18.10.4 the County Official Plan and Section 17.10.4 of the Listowel Ward Official Plan.

The programs included within this Community Improvement Plan apply only to lands that are within the designated Community Improvement Project Areas. Potential applicants should note that in order to be eligible for any of the Financial Incentive Programs available in accordance with Section 3.4, the subject property must be within a designated Community Improvement Project Area.

Figure 1: Listowel Downtown Community Improvement Project Area



Community Improvement *plan*

Figure 2: Atwood Downtown Community Improvement Project Area

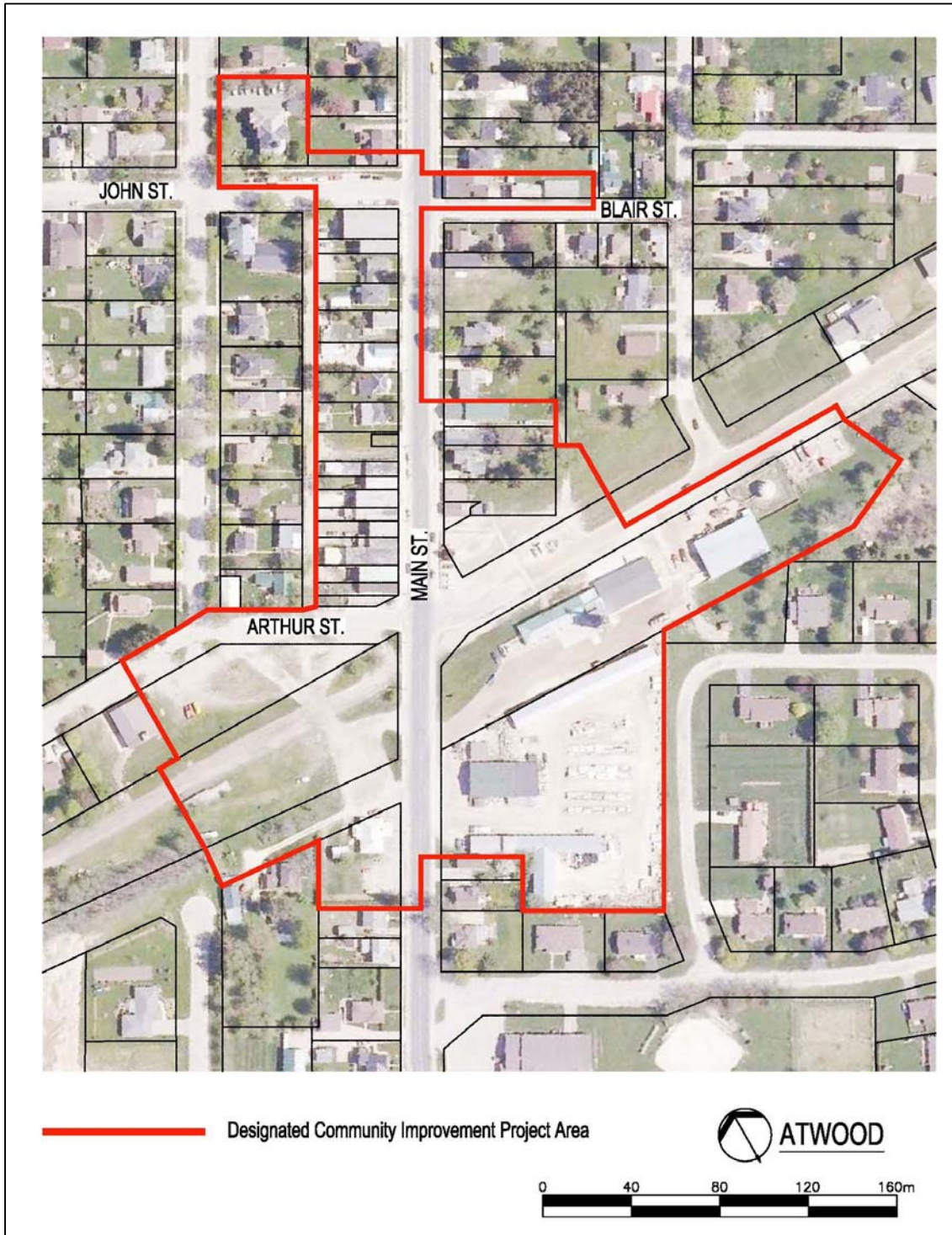
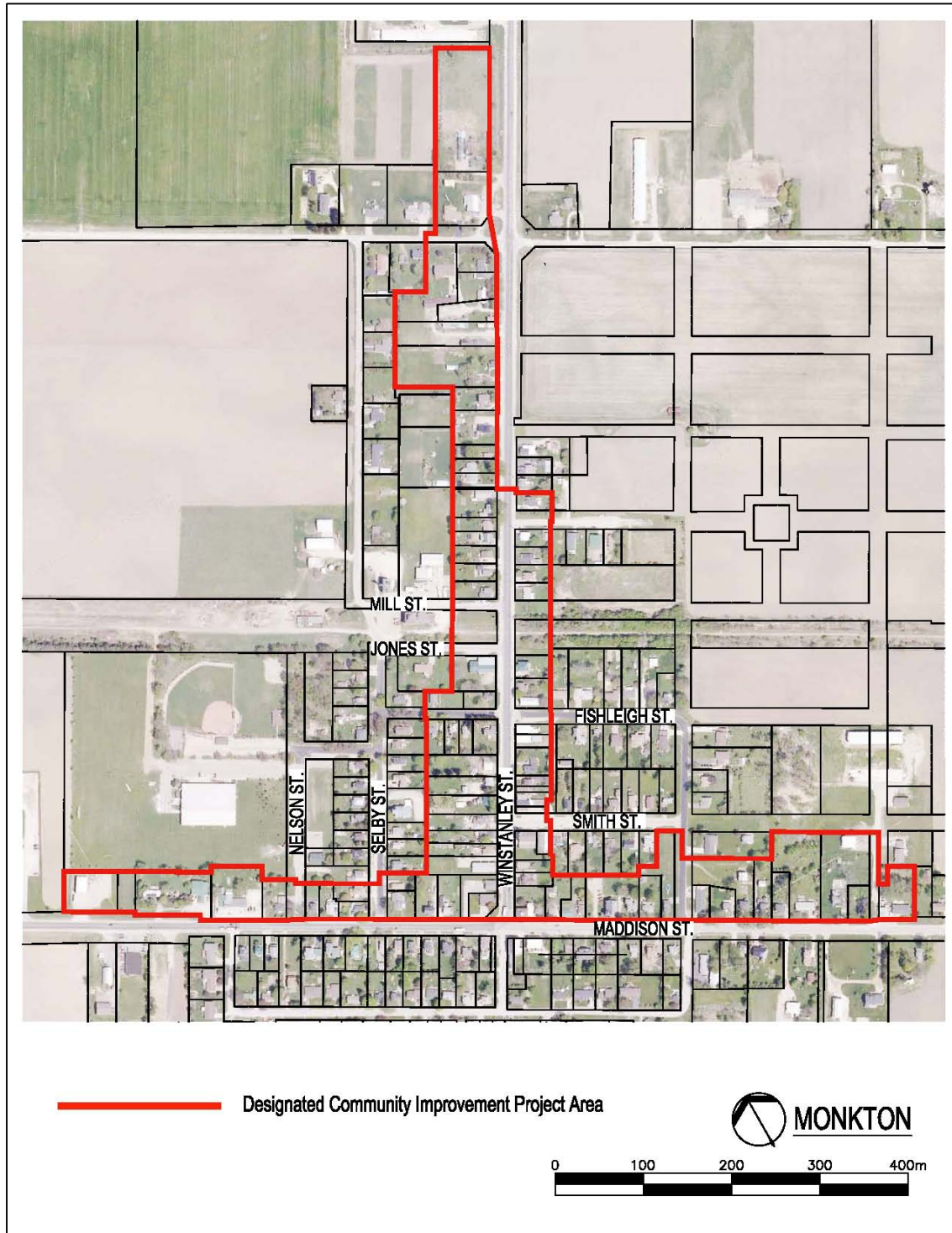


Figure 3: Monkton Downtown Community Improvement Project Area



Community Improvement *plan*

3.3 Municipal Leadership

3.3.1 Purpose

Background work and consultation activities completed as background to the Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy identified the need for Municipal Leadership Programs that will contribute to, motivate, and assist in Community Improvement in the North Perth Downtown Areas. Municipal Leadership Programs are Municipally-led initiatives that will enable the Municipality to provide proactive and visible leadership in achieving the goals of this Community Improvement Plan.

Section 3.3.2 identifies a number of Municipal Leadership Programs (ranging from high to lower priority) that are designed as a means to encourage private sector investment in the designated Downtown Community Improvement Project Areas. By setting out the Municipal Leadership Programs, the Community Improvement Plan attempts to coordinate and guide the expenditure of Municipal funds.

The Municipality may engage in any of the initiatives outlined below as part of the implementation of this Community Improvement Plan, subject to the availability of Municipal funds and other resources. An indication of anticipated timing is provided as a target for implementation.

3.3.2 Programs

The following Municipal Leadership Programs have been identified as part of the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan:

- Municipal Community Improvement Committee;
- Community Improvement Marketing;
- Implementation of the Streetscape Design;
- Urban Design Guidelines;
- Parking Study;
- Walking and Cycling Plan;
- Municipal By-law Enforcement and Review; and
- Downtown Marketing and Promotion.

Additional details for each of the programs are provided below.

3.3.2.1 Municipal Community Improvement Committee

Program

Council will establish a Municipal Community Improvement Committee, which will be responsible for the implementation of the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan, in accordance with Section 4.0. The Committee will be comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of Municipal and County staff. Specific Committee roles and responsibilities may include:

Details:

- Marketing and promoting the Community Improvement Plan and programs;
- Assisting with the implementation of Municipal Leadership Programs;
- Developing community partnerships and identifying opportunities to coordinate events/improvement efforts amongst groups such as the County, Business Improvement Area, Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, Retail Merchants Group, etc.;
- Responding to enquiries from the public;
- Participating in pre-application consultation meetings with Financial Incentive Program applicants;
- Processing/evaluating Financial Incentive Program applications;
- Preparing recommendations to Council with respect to applications for Financial Incentive Programs (unless the Municipal Community Improvement Committee has been delegated the authority by Council to approve Financial Incentives); and
- Monitoring and reporting on the success of the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan to Council and identifying Plan revisions, as required.

A Community Improvement Administrator may also be assigned or hired to coordinate and assist with implementation.

Timing:

The Municipal Community Improvement Committee is a high priority. It should be established immediately and remain active over the life of this Plan.

3.3.2.2 Community Improvement Marketing

Program

The success of the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan will be dependent upon the successful marketing of the Municipality's leadership role and investments, and the Financial Incentive Programs offered by this Plan. The Municipality will therefore implement a Marketing Program in order to promote the programs available by this Community Improvement Plan and the results achieved.

Details:

The Marketing Program will:

- Inform the public of Municipal Leadership Programs and investments being undertaken within the Community Improvement Project Areas;
- Advertise Financial Incentive Programs and describe the application process;
- Publicize the results and details of projects funded by the Financial Incentive Programs;
- Be targeted to existing and potential property and business owners, business associations, developers, investors, etc.
- Use tools such as websites, promotional brochures, informational workshops, and community displays to promote information.

This initiative will be undertaken with assistance from/in consultation with groups such as the County, Business Improvement Area, Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, Retail Merchants Group, etc.

Timing:

Community Improvement Marketing is a high priority and is recommended as on-going program. It should be initiated upon the adoption of the Community Improvement Plan and implemented over the life of this Plan.

3.3.2.3 Streetscape Improvements

Program

The Municipality will undertake streetscape improvements in accordance with the Streetscape Design (a companion document prepared as Part Two of the broader Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy), which establishes a vision and conceptual designs for the public landscapes and streetscapes of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton.

Details:

Streetscape Improvements will include:

- Tree planting in the Public Right of Way;
- Enhancing pedestrian routes through community;
- Traffic calming measures;
- Implementing gateway features;
- Improving key intersections and crosswalks;
- Implementing a consistent palette of street furnishings;
- Establishing logical gathering points;
- Implementing planting beds;
- Implementing on-street signage to direct visitors to important community locations;
- Undertaking improvements at locations where the rail trail crosses a main street; and
- Creating clearly defined parking areas.

In order to ensure that improvements are coordinated over the long-term, this initiative will be undertaken with assistance from/in consultation with groups such as the County, Business Improvement Area, Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, Retail Merchants Group, etc.

Timing:

Streetscape improvements are recommended as high priority, on-going Municipal Leadership initiatives. They should be initiated upon the adoption of the Community Improvement Plan and undertaken over the life of this Plan, in accordance with funds allocated by Council.

3.3.2.4 Urban Design Guidelines

Program

The Municipality will undertake the preparation of Urban Design Guidelines for various types of development within “character areas” of the Downtown Areas and the surrounding communities.

Details:

The Urban Design Guidelines will address issues related to built form, including building façades, parking, signage, heritage conservation, architectural styles and massing, building materials, setbacks and orientation, fenestration, and landscaping.

The Urban Design Guidelines may also deal with matters related to cultural heritage conservation.

The purpose of the Urban Design Guidelines will be to promote design that is generally consistent within each of the Downtown Areas and broader communities, but to also demonstrate the unique character of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton. They will be used to inform landowners and developers of the desired design approaches in each of the Community Improvement Project Areas, and will serve as a guide to those proposing development and redevelopment.

The Urban Design Guidelines will be used by City staff and Council in considering developments within the Downtown Areas and surrounding communities.

The Urban Design Guidelines will be based upon and consistent with the Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2 of this Plan.

This program may be a joint-undertaking between the County and Municipality.

Timing:

This is recommended as a medium priority initiative, with implementation beginning in 2012/2013.

3.3.2.5 Parking Study

Program

The Municipality will undertake a Parking Study to examine the need and options for additional parking in the Downtown Areas of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton.

Details:

The Parking Study will:

- Inventory existing parking supply;
- Determine current demand;
- Project future demand;
- Identify and assess options in the Downtown Areas; and
- Propose a recommended Parking Strategy.

The Parking Study will examine Municipal parking spaces, on-street parking spaces, and private off-street parking spaces.

Its purpose will be to identify better ways to meet the parking needs of residents, business owners, employees, visitors, and other users.

This program may be a joint-undertaking between the County and Municipality.

Timing:

This is recommended as a medium priority initiative, with implementation beginning in 2012/2013.

3.3.2.6 Walking and Cycling Plan

Program

The Municipality will prepare a Walking and Cycling Plan, which will act as a blueprint for developing walking and cycling infrastructure within the Downtown Areas and potentially throughout the Municipality. The Walking and Cycling Plan will identify ways to make North Perth a better and safer place for walking and cycling and will help promote alternate forms of travel.

Details:

The Plan will evaluate existing conditions in order to understand walking and cycling options in the Downtown Areas, including:

- Street design;
- Cycling infrastructure;
- Sidewalks;
- Recreational paths/trails;
- Connectivity; and
- Parks and facilities.

The overall goal of the Walking and Cycling Plan will be to identify infrastructure needs to develop a walking and cycling network and implementation strategy that:

- Improves accessibility;
- Increases transportation choices;
- Improves safety for pedestrians; and
- Integrates transportation.

This program may be a joint-undertaking between the County and Municipality.

Timing:

This is recommended as a medium priority initiative, with implementation beginning in 2012/2013.

3.3.2.7 Municipal By-law Enforcement and Review

Program

The Municipality will enhance By-law enforcement activities within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Areas in respect to property maintenance and occupancy standards, signage, tree maintenance and preservation, parking, and zoning (as required) in order to facilitate Community Improvement in the Downtown Areas of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton.

Details:

The Municipality may also review applicable By-laws in order to determine if any amendments are required that would better contribute to goals identified by this Community Improvement Plan.

Timing:

This is recommended as a lower priority initiative, with implementation beginning in 2013/2014.

3.3.2.8 Downtown Marketing and Promotion

Program

The Municipality will undertake Downtown Marketing and Promotion to “brand” and market the Downtown Areas and promote businesses, events, tourism and recreational activities. This program may be a joint-strategy between the County, Municipality and the Business Improvement Area, Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, Retail Merchants Group, etc., in order to ensure that the message for the Downtown Areas is consistent.

Details:

Specific Initiatives may include:

- Developing coordinated themes or brands for each of the Downtown Areas;
- Undertaking visitor, resident, business, and shopper surveys to better understand the demographics of visitors and perceptions of the Downtown Areas;
- Preparing brochures, inserts, and advertisements for local and regional newspapers;
- Developing a “Downtown Areas Guide”, featuring:
 - Maps of the Downtown Areas (and surrounding areas), highlighting places of interest;
 - Festivals and events;
 - Dining and shopping;
 - Visitor information/accommodations;
 - Arts, culture and heritage information;
 - Recreational activities; and
 - Business promotions, gift certificates and coupons.
- Promotional material may be displayed at local businesses libraries, community centres, and the Municipal office, or be made available on-line.

Timing:

The Downtown Marketing and Promotion Program is recommended as a lower priority program. The preparation of materials should be initiated beyond 2014.

3.4 Financial Incentives

3.4.1 Purpose

Background work and consultation activities completed as part of the Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy identified the need for Financial Incentive Programs that will be offered to eligible landowners and tenants of land and buildings in order to achieve the goals of this Plan.

Financial Incentives may be offered in the form of tax assistance, grants, and rebates. Section 3.4.2 identifies a detailed set of Financial Incentive Programs that may be put into effect by the Municipality. Proposed projects must be located within a designated Community Improvement Project Area in order to be eligible for the Financial Incentives. As well, applicants must meet a set of eligibility criteria and design criteria (identified in Section 3.4.2, 4.3, and Section 4.4.2) in order for a proposed Community Improvement project to be approved. The application process and application requirements for Financial Incentives are described in Sections 4.5 and 4.6.

The Municipality may or may not put any number of the Financial Incentive Programs set out in the following sections into effect during the implementation period of this Plan, subject to the availability of Municipal funds and other resources. Annually, the Municipal Community Improvement Committee will make a recommendation to Council with respect to programs that will be put into effect. As part of the annual budgeting exercise, Council will allocate a Community Improvement budget to the Financial Incentive Programs that have been put into effect.

3.4.2 Financial Incentive Programs

The following Financial Incentive Programs have been identified as part of the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan:

- Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program;
- Downtown Housing Grant Program;
- Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program;
- Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program; and
- Development Charge and Planning/Building Fee Rebate Program.

Details for each of the programs are provided below.

3.4.2.1 Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program

Purpose: The Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program offers grants to property owners whose property tax has increased as a result of the substantial rehabilitation or redevelopment of a building or property within a Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.

The purpose of the program is to defer a property tax increase for a period of time in order to finance substantial property improvements that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner.

The Municipality will benefit from a portion of the tax increase during the grant period, and the full tax increase following the grant period.

Details: Following the completion and reassessment of an approved rehabilitation/redevelopment project, and payment of the full reassessed value of Municipal taxes, a grant is provided that is equivalent to all or a portion of the tax increment.

The tax increment is calculated as the difference between pre-project Municipal taxes and post-project Municipal taxes.

The grant may be equal to up to 100% of the Municipal portion of the tax increase, as determined by the Municipality upon approval of a Community Improvement Plan Financial Incentive application. The amount of the rebate may decrease each year after the property tax increases, by a percentage determined by the Municipality.

Rebates will be paid annually for a period of up to ten years or until the total eligible costs of the rehabilitation/redevelopment project has been reached, whichever comes first.

Eligibility: Eligible projects will include the substantial rehabilitation or redevelopment of existing commercial, institutional and mixed-use buildings/properties where it is anticipated that an increase in property taxes will result.

Whether or not a project is considered substantial will be determined at the sole discretion of the Municipality, but will

typically include projects involving at least 30% of the gross floor area of an existing building, a vacant property, or will require significant infrastructure improvement/reconstruction.

If a property is sold, in whole or in part, before the grant period lapses, the original owner is not entitled to receive the remaining grant payments.

Applicants receiving the Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant will not be eligible for any additional Financial Incentive Programs offered through this Community Improvement Plan.

All of the General Eligibility Criteria in Section 4.4 of this Plan apply. The proposed exterior design of buildings, including signage, must be consistent with the Community Improvement Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2.

Payment:

Grants will be provided upon successful completion of the approved project, to the satisfaction of the Municipality, and payment of the full reassessed value of Municipal taxes.

3.4.2.2 Downtown Housing Grant Program

Purpose: The Downtown Housing Grant Program offers grants to property owners for the rehabilitation of existing upper floor/rear building residential units or the conversion of existing commercial/mixed-use building space to residential units within a Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.

The purpose of the program is to finance property improvements that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner. The program will also stimulate the rehabilitation of residential units, promote the reuse of buildings, and increase the number of affordable housing units/people living in the Downtown Areas.

The Municipality will benefit from property tax increases as a result of the property improvement.

Details: Following the completion of an approved downtown housing rehabilitation or conversion project, a grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 50% of the construction cost, to a maximum of \$10,000.00 per unit. Applicants will be reimbursed for the rehabilitation or conversion of a maximum of 4 units.

Eligibility: The following types of projects are considered eligible for the Downtown Housing Grant Program:

- Interior design and restoration to existing upper floor/rear residential units in a mixed-use building, which will improve living conditions, result in an increase in value, or bring units into compliance with the applicable codes and By-laws; and
- Conversions to existing commercial or mixed-use building space where two or more residential units are created.

Applicants receiving the Downtown Housing Grant Program may be eligible for additional Financial Incentive Programs offered through this Community Improvement Plan (as determined by the Municipality and subject to available funds).

All of the General Eligibility Criteria in Section 4.4 of this Plan apply. The proposed exterior design of buildings, including

signage, must be consistent with the Community Improvement Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2.

Payment:

Grants will be provided on a one-time-basis upon successful completion of the approved project, to the satisfaction of the Municipality.

3.4.2.3 Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program

Purpose: The Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program offers grants to property owners for improvements to existing commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings, or the façades of existing commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings within a Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.

The purpose of the program is to finance building and façade improvements that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner. The program will also promote improvement of the physical condition and visual aesthetic of private property and buildings.

The Municipality will benefit from property tax increases as a result of the property improvement.

Details: For commercial building improvement projects:

- Following the completion of an approved project, a grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 50% of the construction cost, to a maximum of \$7,500.00. At the sole discretion of the Municipality, a maximum grant of \$10,000.00 may be provided if the building is on a corner lot, or if original/heritage features are being restored.

For commercial façade improvement projects:

- Following the completion of an approved project, a grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 50% of the construction cost, to a maximum of \$5,000.00. At the sole discretion of the Municipality, a maximum grant of \$7,500.00 may be provided if the building is on a corner lot, or if original/heritage features are being restored.

Eligibility: Building improvements to existing commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings may be considered eligible for the Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program. Eligible building improvements will include (but not be limited to) the following, as determined by the Municipality:

- Structural repairs;

- Interior restoration and design;
- Repair/replacement of the building infrastructure, such as roofing, windows, and doors;
- Repair/replacement of plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and fire protection systems;
- Weatherproofing;
- Removal of barriers to access for people with disabilities; and
- Any other improvements that may bring a commercial building up to code, or address health, safety, or risk management issues.

Installation of any of the above will also be eligible, where it increases the gross floor area of retail space.

Façade improvements to existing commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings may be considered eligible for the Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program. Eligible façade improvements will include the repair/restoration/replacement/installation of exterior features including (but not limited to) the following, as determined by the Municipality:

- Brick and stone masonry;
- Exterior woodwork;
- Architectural metals;
- Paint (including paint removal, surface preparation, cleaning, and/or painting);
- Awnings;
- Interior window display areas;
- Signage; and
- Exterior lighting for building and signage.

In order to be eligible for increased grants for the restoration of original/heritage features, past/historical photographs (or other

documentation) of the subject building will be required (where possible) in order to demonstrate that improvements will return the building or façade to its original condition and appearance. Where possible, improvements will be made by repairing rather than replacing the original architectural feature. Council may request input from the Municipal Heritage Committee (if one exists at the time of application) in order to assess the application.

Applicants receiving the Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program may be eligible for additional Financial Incentive Programs offered through this Community Improvement Plan (as determined by the Municipality and subject to available funds).

All of the General Eligibility Criteria in Section 4.4 of this Plan apply. The proposed exterior design of buildings, including signage, must be consistent with the Community Improvement Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2.

Payment:

Grants will be provided on a one-time-basis upon successful completion of the approved project, to the satisfaction of the Municipality.

3.4.2.4 Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program

Purpose: The Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program offers grants to property owners for improvements to the landscape of existing commercial, institutional, or mixed-use properties within a Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.

The purpose of the program is to finance property improvements that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner. The program will also promote improvement of the physical condition and visual aesthetic of private property and buildings.

The Municipality will benefit from landscape improvements to private properties, which will be consistent with the conceptual designs for the public landscapes and streetscapes of Listowel, Atwood, and Monkton (as provided by the Streetscape Design, the companion document to this Plan).

Details: Following the completion of an approved commercial landscape improvement project, a grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 50% of the construction cost, to a maximum of \$3,000.00 per property. At the sole discretion of the Municipality, a maximum grant of \$5,000.00 may be provided if the building is on a corner lot, or if more than one yard is visible from a public street or space.

Eligibility: Improvements to front yard landscape will be eligible for the Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program. Improvements to rear and side yards may also be eligible if the landscaped area is visible from a public street or space.

Eligible landscape improvements will include (but not be limited to) the following, as determined by the Municipality:

- Addition of plants and green space, including sod, trees, vegetation, etc.;
- Addition of permanent landscaping elements such as fencing, benches, planters;
- Upgrading parking areas with new pavement; and
- Addition of walkways.

All of the General Eligibility Criteria in Section 4.4 of this Plan apply.

Payment:

Grants will be provided on a one-time-basis upon successful completion of the approved project, to the satisfaction of the Municipality.

3.4.2.5 Development Charge and Planning/Building Fee Rebate Program

Purpose:

The Development Charge and Planning/Building Fee Rebate Program offers full or partial rebates to property owners for applicable planning application fees, building permits fees, and development charges required for the development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of commercial, institutional, or mixed-use buildings within a Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.

The purpose of the program is to finance new development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner. The program will also promote improvement of the physical condition and visual aesthetic of private property and buildings.

The Municipality will benefit from property tax increases as a result of new development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction within the Community Improvement Project Area.

Details:

Following the completion of an approved development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction project, a rebate is provided that is equivalent to up to 100% of the planning application fees (Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Minor Variance, Site Plan Approval), building permit fees, and development charges paid by the applicant.

The value of the rebate will be determined by the Municipality upon review and approval of a Financial Incentive application.

Eligibility:

Eligible projects will include the development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of commercial, institutional and mixed-use lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes.

Applicants will be eligible for one or more rebates related to the following, as determined by the Municipality:

- Planning fees required for Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Minor Variance, and Site Plan Approval applications;
- Building permit fees; and

- Development charges.

All of the General Eligibility Criteria in Section 4.4 of this Plan apply. The proposed exterior design of buildings, including signage, must be consistent with the Community Improvement Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2.

Payment:

Applicants must pay for all applicable application fees and development charges prior to undertaking the approved work.

Rebates will be provided on a one-time-basis upon successful completion of the approved project, to the satisfaction of the Municipality.

4.0 Implementation

4.1 Implementation Period

It is anticipated that the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan will be implemented over a 10-year period ending December 31, 2022. Council may extend or reduce the implementation period as deemed appropriate or necessary.

4.2 Administration

4.2.1 Administrative Body

Council will establish a Municipal Community Improvement Committee comprised of Municipal and County staff from various departments in order to oversee the implementation of the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan.

A full or part-time Community Improvement Administrator may also be assigned or hired to coordinate day-to-day tasks associated with implementation of the Community Improvement Plan.

4.2.2 Administration of Municipal Leadership Programs

The Municipality may put into effect any number of the Municipal Leadership Programs identified in this Plan during the implementation period. Implementation will occur in accordance with the anticipated timing identified in Section 3.3, subject to the availability of Municipal funds and other resources.

Annually, the Municipal Community Improvement Committee will make a recommendation to Council with respect to programs that will be put into effect. Following Council approval, the Municipality of North Perth will execute the Municipal Leadership Programs, in accordance with a Council approved budget.

Implementation of the Municipal Leadership Strategy will be dependent on the commitment of the Municipality to contribute to, motivate, and assist in Community Improvement activities and undertakings, in addition to available funds.

4.2.3 Administration of Financial Incentive Programs

The Municipality may put into effect any number of the Financial Programs identified in this Plan during the implementation period, subject to the availability of Municipal funds and other resources.

Applications for Financial Incentive Programs will be received and evaluated in a timely manner, in accordance with Section 4.5 of this Plan.

Final decisions on Financial Incentive Program applications will be made by Council, unless the Municipal Community Improvement Committee has been delegated authority by Council to make final decisions with respect to approval.

Applications for Financial Incentive Programs will be evaluated and a recommendation/decision will be made by the Municipal Community Improvement Committee in accordance with:

- Eligibility Requirements, as outlined in Section 3.4 and 4.4;

- Application Requirements, as outlined in Section 4.6; and
- A Council approved budget.

Should an application be refused, all applicants will be given an opportunity to request Council/the Municipal Community Improvement Committee to reconsider its decision.

4.3 Financial Management

As part of the annual Municipal budgeting exercise, Council will identify a Community Improvement Budget for the Municipal Leadership Programs and Financial Incentive Programs that have been put into effect for that year, if any.

The annual budget for Financial Incentive Programs will fund the following programs:

- Downtown Housing Grant Program;
- Commercial Building and Façade Improvement Grant Program; and
- Commercial Landscape Improvement Grant Program.

Funding for the Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program and Development Charge and Planning/Building Fee Rebate Program will not be included within the Community Improvement Budget. Both programs are administered as rebates following payment to the Municipality, and therefore do not require funding.

During the implementation period, Council will determine if changes to funding and incentive levels are necessary or warranted to ensure that the Community Improvement Plan functions properly in respect of the goals of this Plan and the Municipality's financial circumstances.

4.4 Eligibility

In addition to the eligibility requirements identified for each of the Financial Incentive Programs in Section 3.4, Financial Incentive Program applications and Community Improvement projects proposed by all applicants must meet a series of General Eligibility Criteria and Urban Design Criteria, as set out in the following sections.

4.4.1 General Eligibility Criteria

In addition to the eligibility requirements identified for each of the Financial Incentive Programs in Section 3.4, the following General Eligibility Criteria must be met:

1. All proposed projects must help achieve the goals for Community Improvement as identified in the applicable Official Plans and Section 3.1 of this Plan;
2. Applications must be submitted in accordance with requirements in Section 4.6;
3. Applications must be submitted to the Municipality prior to commencing any Community Improvement project;
4. All proposed projects must be within a designated Downtown Community Improvement Project Area within the Municipality of North Perth;
5. Applicants may apply for one or more Financial Incentive Programs available through the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan. However, the Downtown Rehabilitation/Redevelopment Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program may not be combined with any other Financial Incentive Programs available through the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan;
6. The total of the grants and rebates provided to an applicant shall not exceed the eligible cost of the Community Improvement project with respect to those lands and buildings;
7. Applicants must be the owner of the property, or and an agent/tenant to whom the owner has provided written consent for the application;
8. The property owner must no have outstanding tax arrears at the time of application;
9. Proposed projects must be in accordance with all applicable County and Municipal policies, by-laws, provisions, standards, and guidelines (unless an application for an Official Plan Amendment or Zoning By-law Amendment is associated with the proposal);
10. The proposed exterior design of buildings, including signage, must be consistent with the Downtown Areas Community Improvement Urban Design Criteria provided in Section 4.4.2;

11. Projects must be completed in accordance with applicable planning approvals and required permits; and
12. Completed projects must be consistent with the original project description provided by the applicant and approved by the Municipality, supporting materials, and any applicable program agreement.

4.4.2 Urban Design Criteria

The Municipal Community Improvement Committee will use the following Urban Design Criteria to evaluate applications for all Financial Incentive Programs, where applicable. The formal Urban Design Guidelines for the Downtown Areas of North Perth (prepared as a Municipal Leadership Program, as described in Section 3.3.2.6) will also be based on the following criteria.

4.4.2.1 Criteria for Exterior Renovations

The renovation, cleaning, or restoration of the street façades of buildings in the North Perth Downtown Areas is to be encouraged and will support the unique image and character of these areas. In general, the renovation of street façades should be consistent with the design principle for new infill development in the Downtown Areas. Community improvement projects involving exterior renovations within the North Perth Downtown Areas should address the following principles:

1. The design and execution of exterior renovations shall respect the architectural character and heritage of buildings being renovated;
2. Where past alterations have been made to the exterior cladding materials and window pattern of a façade, current renovations should be seen as an opportunity to reestablish the original character of the façade;
3. The removal without replacement of traditional architectural details such as brackets, dentals and cornices from buildings shall be discouraged;
4. The blocking of windows or the alteration of window patterns shall be discouraged;
5. The use of tinted glass or “fake” windows shall be discouraged;
6. The closing or blocking of main building entrances facing the streetscape shall be discouraged;
7. The use of traditional materials and colours as appropriate to the building façade and the façades of neighboring buildings shall be encouraged; and
8. Where appropriate street level entries for residential units above shall be encouraged, integrated, and designed in a fashion that is complementary to the façade and the neighbouring building façades.

4.4.2.2 Criteria for Infill Development

Well-planned and designed infill developments have the potential to positively enhance the desirable qualities of Downtown Areas and to contribute to the social and visual vitality of streetscapes. Community Improvement projects involving infill development within the Downtown Areas should address the following principles:

1. New development shall respect and enhance the appearance and structure of established streetscapes;
2. Where possible new development in Downtown Areas shall be designed to preserve and maintain existing buildings and their façades if they are deemed to have heritage value;
3. The Downtown Areas of North Perth have a rich history of traditional architectural styles that are a community resource that should be respected and enhanced. If a traditional architectural style is being quoted in the design of new buildings, it should be consistently applied to all elements of its street elevation;
4. The architectural design of the façades of new infill buildings shall have regard for and be complementary with the designs of existing adjacent buildings on the same streetscape in terms of height, massing, cornice lines, visible roofscapes, materials and colours;
5. The design of new buildings shall utilize exterior cladding materials that are complementary and compatible with those used by neighbouring buildings;
6. Corner lots are important visual and spatial focal points within the Downtown Areas and should receive particular attention. For new buildings located on corner lots, all building façades visible to public view from public streets shall be designed to an equal level of detail and shall be consistent with existing buildings and their façades in terms of the use of materials and colours;
7. When designing infill developments in the Downtown, it is important to maintain the traditional image of a continuous street wall of store fronts. With this in mind, the front façades of new buildings shall not be set further back from the street line than adjacent buildings;
8. New buildings shall be sited with the same front yard setbacks as existing adjacent buildings to visually and physically support the streetscape;
9. In the design of front elevations, where possible, the ceiling height of main floors shall be consistent with that of adjacent buildings to allow for the creation of a visual datum line for the placement of signage and for consistency in the size and proportions of display windows;

10. The scale, design and placement of windows on the upper floors of building elevations shall be consistent with the overall architectural style of the façade and shall be consistent with the visual datum line formed by the upper floor windows of adjacent buildings in the streetscape;
11. The designs of new building elevations shall enhance the pedestrian experience along streetscape. To this end, building elevations along the streetscape shall be encouraged to provide pedestrian awnings along their store fronts. These awnings should ideally be of the roll-up type rather than the fixed or illuminated signage type;
12. Design of signage for buildings within the Downtown Areas shall emphasize artistic quality and be complementary to the overall designs of the building elevations they are placed on;
13. To enhance the night time and evening experience in the Downtown Areas the modest use of the outdoor lighting to illuminate building elevations shall be encouraged when used to accent the image of the building and architecture in the streetscape; and
14. Within the Downtown Areas, the primary opportunity for residential re-development and intensification can be achieved through the renovation or conversion of the upper floors of existing commercial buildings.

4.5 Application Process

The following is a summary of the process for the submission, evaluation, and approval of Financial Incentive Program applications:

1. Applicants should meet with one or more members of the Municipal Community Improvement Committee (or the Community Improvement Administrator) for a pre-consultation meeting, prior to submitting an application, in order to confirm application requirements for a complete application.
2. The Municipal Community Improvement Committee will evaluate all applications and supporting materials. Applicants will be notified if their submission is incomplete.
3. Based on the evaluation of complete applications, a recommendation will be made to Council (unless Council has delegated its approval authority to the Municipal Community Improvement Committee). Applications will be approved upon a unanimous recommendation.
4. Should the application be approved, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement may be required, which will outline the terms, duration, default, and any other provisions of the incentive program.
5. Upon approval and/or completion of Community Improvement project, the Municipality reserves the right to inspect any properties/buildings, or to audit final costs at the owner's expense.
6. Should the applicant fall into default of any of the requirements of the Incentive Program or Municipality, approved incentive program benefits may be delayed, reduced, or canceled. Applicants may be required to repay benefits to the Municipality.
7. Any program commitments may be cancelled if work does not commence within six months of approval of an application, or if a project is not undertaken/completed in accordance with an agreement with the Municipality.

4.6 Application Requirements

Applications for Financial Incentive Programs offered through this Plan must include:

- 1) Completed application forms; and
- 2) Supporting documentation, as determined by the Municipal Community Improvement Committee at a pre-consultation meeting, which may include (but is not limited to):
 - Specifications of the proposed project, including plans, drawing, and studies;
 - Photographs of the existing building condition;
 - Past/historical photographs and/or drawings;
 - Two cost estimates for eligible work provided by licensed contractors; and
 - Any additional requirements as determined by the Committee.

The Municipality is not responsible for any of the costs associated with a Community Improvement Plan application.

All sources of additional funding/incentives must be declared at the time of application submission and will be considered upon review and evaluation of the application.

4.7 Monitoring

The Municipality will conduct annual reviews of the Community Improvement Plan in order to determine its effectiveness. Specifically, the purpose of the Monitoring Program is to determine:

- If the programs are achieving the goals for Community Improvement; and
- If adjustments to the programs or Plan are required.

The Municipal Community Improvement Committee will be responsible for monitoring the Community Improvement Plan in accordance with the following:

- 1) Baseline data in each of the Downtown Community Improvement Project Areas will be collected upon adoption of the Community Improvement Plan in order for the Municipality to understand program results. Data could include (but will not be limited to):
 - Commercial/apartment vacancy rates;
 - Residential property/unit numbers;
 - Mixed-use building numbers; and
 - Property assessment averages.
- 2) The details, progress, and results of Financial Incentive Program applications will be tracked. Information to be collected and tracked will include (but not be limited to):
 - Number of successful and unsuccessful applications by type;
 - Project details as proposed by application;
 - Project details as completed;
 - Number of residential units by type and gross floor area of residential space converted, rehabilitated or constructed;
 - Gross floor area of commercial space rehabilitated or constructed;
 - Total dollar amount value of project;
 - Percentage of application/permit fees refunded;
 - Additional incentives received by the applicant;
 - Increase in assessed value of property and Municipal property taxes upon completion of project; and

- Number of program defaults.
- 3) Based on the information obtained through monitoring, the Municipal Community Improvement Committee will prepare an annual report to summarize results to Council, the business community, and other local stakeholders/interested parties. As required, the annual report will include recommended Plan or program adjustments.
 - 4) An amendment to the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan will not be required in order to:
 - Put into effect or discontinue any of the programs contained in this Plan;
 - Adjust funding levels for the Municipal Leadership Programs and the Financial Incentives Programs; and
 - Modify the implementation period of the Plan.
 - 5) Formal Amendments will be required to the North Perth Downtown Areas Community Improvement Plan or implementing By-laws in order to:
 - Add any new programs, or any new criteria related to any of the programs offered by this Plan;
 - Expand or modify any of the North Perth Downtown Community Improvement Project Areas.



Municipality of North Perth Downtown Areas Revitalization and Beautification Strategy

PART TWO

Streetscape design



January 2012

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1.0 Streetscape Design Recommendations

1.1 Introduction

In 2011 the Municipality of North Perth began a formal and coordinated process of revitalizing and beautifying the community core areas (or “Downtown Areas”) of Monkton, Atwood, and Listowel. The **Downtown Revitalization and Beautification Strategy** is a two-prong approach comprised of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and a Streetscape Design component. Detailed background information can be found in the Strategy Presentation provided to the Municipality’s Project Steering Committee on November 28, 2011. Also refer to the accompanying document prepared by Zelinka Priamo Ltd. for information on the CIP.

The Streetscape Design is primarily a graphic document in the form of Streetscape Concept Design Plans (see appendix A). This report is intended to accompany and elaborate on the Plans. It has been prepared under the direction of a Municipal Steering Committee and in consultation with elected Officials, Perth County, members of the business community, and local residents.

1.2 The Plans

Figures 1-3 below outline the areas within each community identified as priorities for streetscape enhancements. The Streetscape Design Concept Plans illustrate recommended improvements for these areas.

Figure 1: Monkton CIP and Streetscape Design Areas

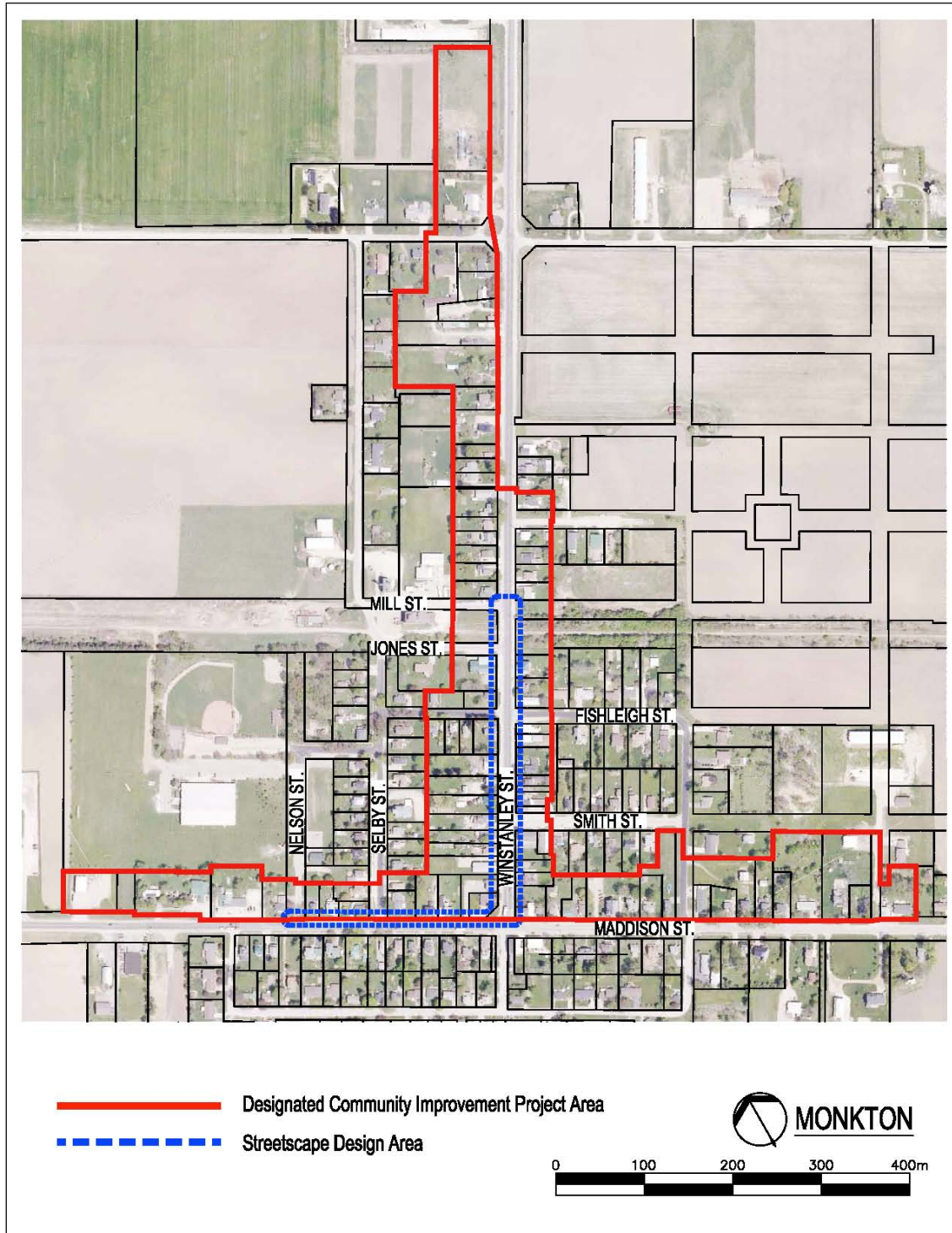


Figure 2: Atwood CIP and Streetscape Design Areas

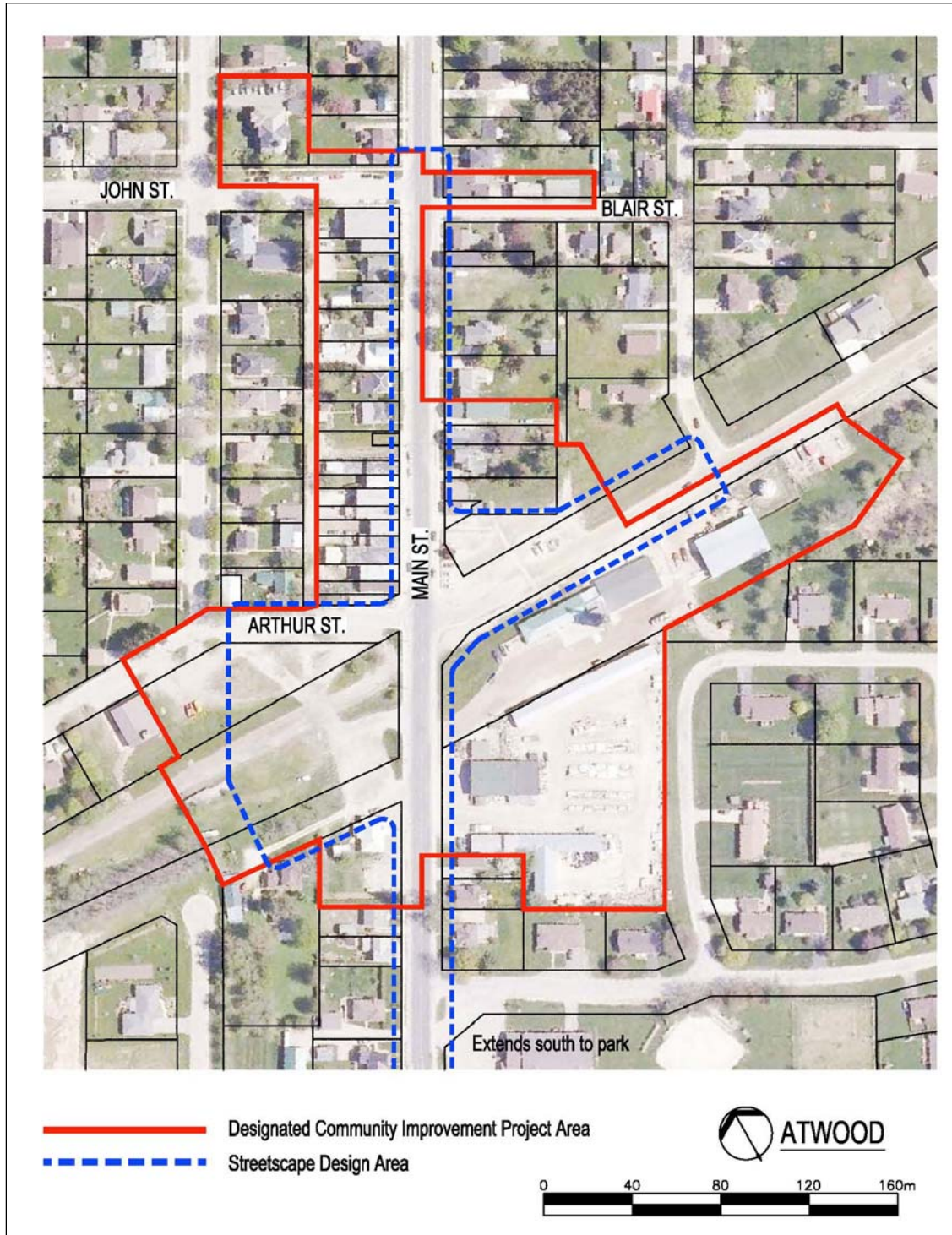
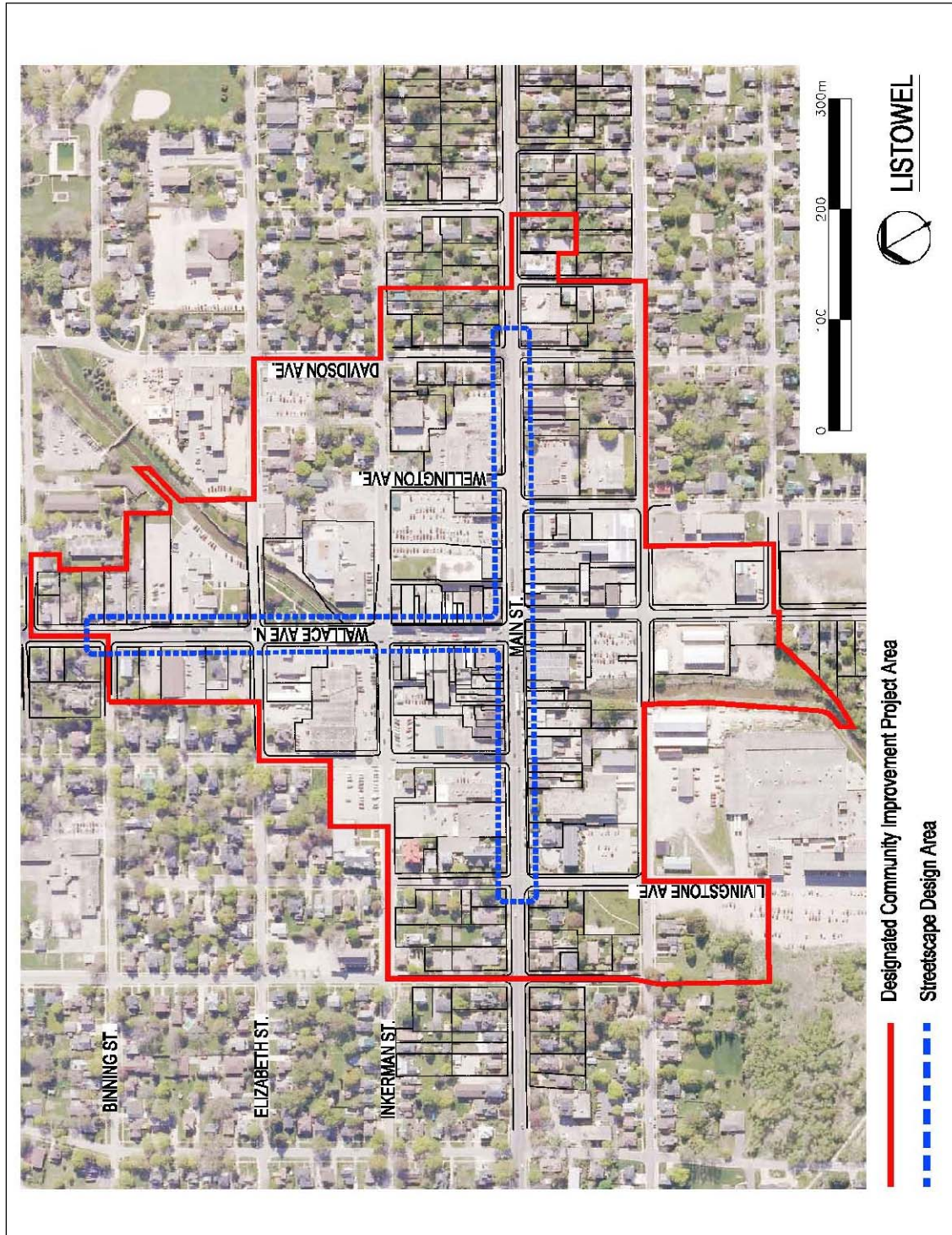


Figure 3: Listowel CIP and Streetscape Design Areas



2.0 Shaping the Driving and Walking Experience

The impression visitors take away from a community is often shaped by their experience driving through it. As they drive, visitors form a series of visual images in their mind—either positive or negative—and these in turn influence their overall impression of the place. How they remember their visit can influence whether they decide to return in the future.

We can shape the outcome of these visitor impressions through streetscape design techniques that affect how visitors (and locals) see the built community. Views to significant features can be emphasized, while less desirable views can be screened or minimized through visual distractions. Streetscape forms and features can be manipulated to create a linear series of unique spaces, like “rooms”, one passes through—in a sense telling the story of the community and giving it a legible form (gateway, historic centre, commercial/retail centre, recreational / green space, nightlife area, etc.)

By giving a community a more structured form, we also influence how its inhabitants experience it. A more aesthetically pleasing community fosters local pride and encourages further beautification and improvement efforts.

The following recommendations outline techniques to shape the driving and walking experience. These are applicable to all three communities: Monkton, Atwood, and Listowel.

2.1 Balancing Pedestrian and Vehicular Needs

Before streetscape improvements are made, it is important to establish what the goals are: efficient traffic flow and maintenance, comfortable and attractive pedestrian zones, or a balance of both?

The overall form of the downtown streetscape needs to consider both vehicular and pedestrian users. Designing for only one user group often lowers the quality of the experience for the other user group. Thus, a street designed purely with traffic flow in mind can be an unpleasant place for those on foot. Similarly, a streetscape design that takes pedestrian needs into consideration must not overlook the driving experience or maintenance issues.

More often than not, streetscape improvements oriented towards the pedestrian experience have a positive impact on the driving experience as well, with minimal inconvenience for maintenance workers. Healthy tree canopies, coordinated street furnishings, and a busy street life all create a more pleasurable and memorable journey for drivers, and may also entice them out of their vehicles and into local businesses.

Such improvements cannot be made as an afterthought to traffic design, but must be implemented via a coordinated and master planned approach. For example, trees and other plantings have specific soil and space requirements and must be integrated with other infrastructure improvements—not added in later.

Through careful design and planning, it is possible to balance the needs of drivers and pedestrians.

2.2 Streetscape Form and Paving

2.2.1. Add Sidewalk Bump-Outs at Key Intersections and Strategic Mid-Block Locations.

Unique spaces along a driving route can be defined by entrance and exit points (like doors), created by narrowing the path of travel. This can be achieved through sidewalk extensions, or bump-outs, added to key intersections and strategic mid-block locations.

Bump-outs narrow the roadway and cause drivers to slow down and pay more attention to their surroundings. As a result, bump-outs make excellent locations to highlight community landmarks or provide navigational information (e.g., gateway features).

Bump-outs also create additional space in the pedestrian right-of-way (R.O.W.), providing opportunities for plantings, site furnishings, and crosswalks. They are especially effective for adding trees to the streetscape, as soil volumes of an adequate size to support healthy tree growth can be incorporated at the time of construction.

While bump-outs pose potential obstacles for snowplows, the benefits to the streetscape outweigh this inconvenience. To minimize damage from snow clearing equipment, vertical elements can be placed on the bump-outs to provide visual cues to plow operators.

The main streets in all three communities have sufficient width in most areas to accommodate sidewalk bump-outs. We have indicated optimal locations in the Streetscape Design Concepts included in this document. Design and implementation of the bump-outs will require coordination with and possible modification due to existing catch basins and underground utilities.

Examples of Sidewalk Bump-outs



Sidewalk bump-outs with trees in planters (Woodstock, Ontario).



Sidewalk bump-out with plantings and pedestrian crosswalk (Ballard, Washington).

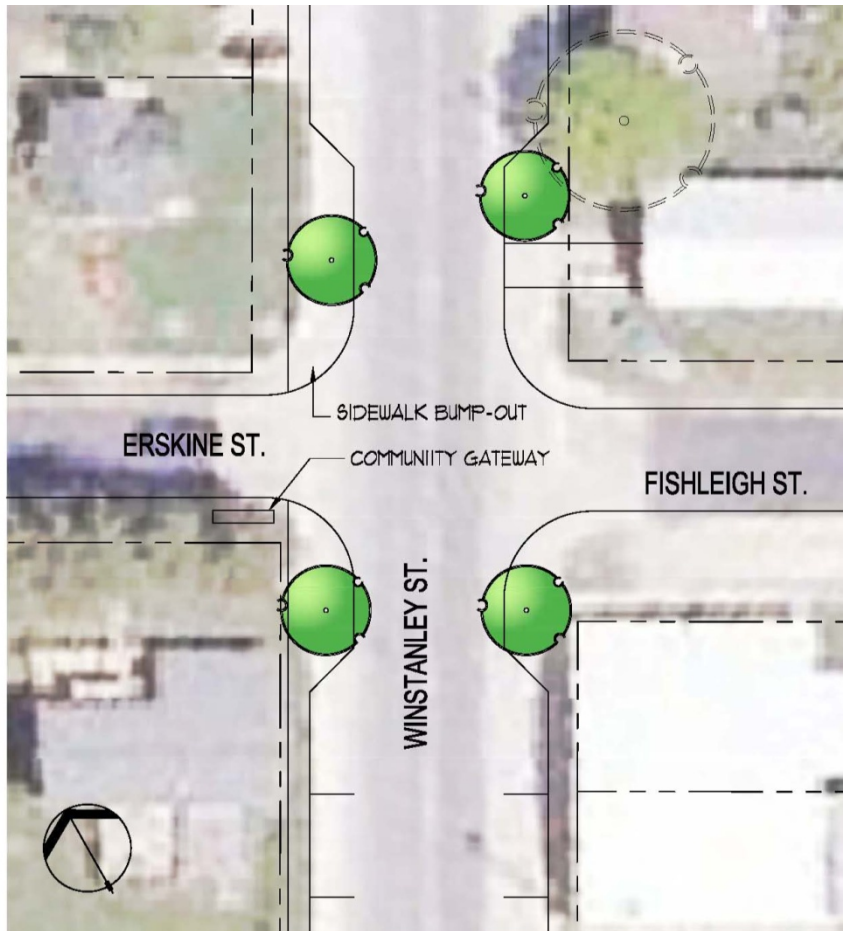


Sidewalk bump-out with trees and low planting.



Sidewalk bump-out with trees.

Proposed Bump-Outs for Monkton



2.2.2. Use Decorative Pavers as Sidewalk Banding and at Key Intersections and Crosswalks

In order to enhance the pedestrian experience, we recommend adding a paved banding to community core sidewalks. This will not only help to define the pedestrian zone, but the colour and texture contrast can enhance the overall community image. Furthermore, contrasting colours and textures assist the elderly and visually impaired in navigating the streetscape. Textured paving is especially important at intersections for this purpose.

Decorative interlocking pavers are a durable and flexible option with a wide range of colour, texture and pattern possibilities. They are relatively easy to install and repair, when necessary.

The same material can also be applied to pedestrian crosswalks and key intersections, using concrete edging to contain the pavers (refer to Figure 4). Adding a contrasting colour and material will draw attention to these points and encourage drivers to slow down and pay more attention. Crosswalks should be raised to the elevation of the sidewalk to create speed tables that function as traffic calming measures. If properly designed and built, these do not pose a problem for snow plows.

For areas where heavy loads or settlement are a concern, decorative pavers can be placed on concrete or an ultra-base composed of granular materials mixed with cement to create a rigid surface.

Examples of Streetscape Paving



Sidewalk – before pavers added.

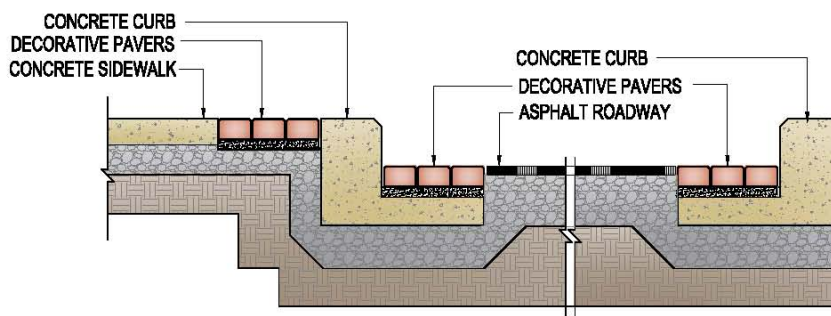
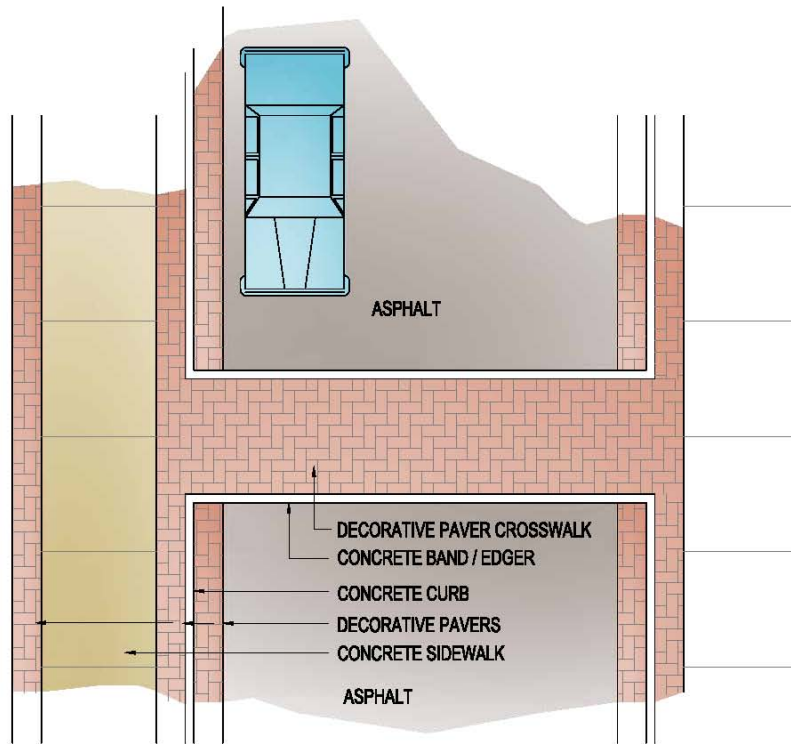


Sidewalk – after pavers added.



Sidewalk bump-outs and contrasting paving draws drivers' attention to a pedestrian crosswalk. Vertical elements such as bollards can aid visibility in winter.

Examples of Decorative Paving Crosswalk and Sidewalk Detail



DECORATIVE PAVING CROSSWALK & SIDEWALK DETAIL - N.T.S.

2.3 Planting

2.3.1 Add Trees along the Public R.O.W. and Private Properties Where Space Permits

Trees have many positive benefits in urban spaces, including improved thermal comfort and air quality, aesthetic enhancement, and view framing / screening. Unique or historic specimens can also act as local landmarks. Trees help shape and define the scale of the pedestrian space, adding to the comfort and overall shopping experience. Recent studies suggest that shopping districts with trees are more popular and businesses are able to improve profitability.

We recommend that, where space permits, trees be added to the public R.O.W. In order for tree plantings to have healthy and vigorous growth, it is critical to provide them with adequate soil volume, root access to oxygen and water, and proper pH and drainage.

Technologies such as Silva Cells and structural soil can create growth zones that support the tree under paved areas. Breakout zones can also be provided to allow roots access to adjacent soil volumes.

Where existing sidewalk space is limited, bump-outs with integrated tree growth zones may be used to increase tree planting possibilities. They also move trees away from building faces, allowing for more natural growth and proper branch structure.

Business owners are often concerned about tree branches visually blocking signs and promotional displays. This is a result of low branches (for example, from planting small tree species). Proper growth and species selection will allow high branching—producing clear site lines to signage, and screening the upper floors of buildings. This directs the eye to the ground plan and enhances views to the businesses.

In order to further augment the main street tree cover, private home and business owners should also be encouraged to add street trees where their properties have sufficient room and the public R.O.W. space is limited. The Streetscape Design Concepts indicate many locations where this may be possible (especially in Monkton and Atwood).

2.3.2 Create Large Planting Beds with Groups of Raised Planters, or Trees and Planters, and Consider a Variety of Plant Heights

Large planters may also be used for smaller trees. In this case, a greater effect can be created by grouping planters together, or with other planting (trees in the ground, sidewalk plantings, etc.). Not only will this add more interest by providing a variety of plant heights, but judiciously placed planting groupings will help use the landscaping budget more effectively. Listowel already has a number of tree planters, which are currently spread out along the main streets and have less visual impact. By painting or staining these planters to coordinate with other street furnishings (see 2.6 below) and grouping them together in strategic locations, a greater visual effect can be achieved. These planters may be most useful in areas where underground utilities prevent in-ground planting (for example, where the Maitland River crosses below Wallace Ave.).

2.3.3 Include Low Walls or Other Edging to Discourage People Walking Across Planters

Street plantings—including shrubs, perennials, and annuals—should be visibly contained through the use of low planter / seat walls or other types of edging (see example photos). This will discourage pedestrians from walking across planting areas and causing damage. Plant selection should take into consideration maintenance, salt and drought tolerance, and year-round interest. The side faces of planter walls should be rounded and sloped to accommodate snow removal and maintenance. Planter edges should be slightly raised to prevent contaminants such as salt from entering the planting bed.

Examples of Streetscape Plantings



Planters grouped together for more impact, and mixed with trees for a variety of plant heights (Chicago).



A combination of trees, annuals and decorative planters creates visual interest (Chicago).



Decorative fencing provides a place to sit and defines the planter boundary (Chicago).



A simple, exposed aggregate concrete planter wall (Halifax).



Round planters also act as bollards.



Stone curb and seat wall with decorative fencing.

2.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

2.4.1 Consider Existing and Potential Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes through the Community

When considering community core areas, it is important to think of them not in isolation from the surrounding neighbourhoods, but integrated with them. Developing conceptual and physical linkages from the core into surrounding areas helps strengthen community activities and connections. Pedestrian routes are a critical component of these linkages.

At the community input meetings on November 17, we discussed with the participants how they move through their community, particularly on foot and bicycle. We were able to start developing an idea of pedestrian routes—both those already in use and locations where routes might be added or enhanced to improve access.

This initial picture informed our Streetscape Design Concepts. For example, we suggest logical locations for pedestrian crosswalks at intersections and selected mid-block locations. More detailed design work should continue to take pedestrian routes into consideration.

2.5 Gateways

2.5.1 Create Welcoming Gateways at Entrance Points to Each Community Core Area

As discussed above, the driving experience through a community can be shaped by creating a series of “rooms”. Gateways at the entrance points to each community core area give visitors a sense of arrival, and can begin the narration of what the community is all about. A community core or downtown area is an expression of the community, its heritage, and values. The gateway is therefore an opportunity to establish a sense of place for visitors and residents. Care should be taken to develop a theme that is compelling, memorable, and not dated.

Gateway features such as walls, signage, and plantings should be coordinated within each community to portray a harmonious and unified message. The Concept Plans indicate where these gateway points may be best located.

Examples of Gateways



A gateway can help establish the character and values of a community.



Clear graphics and text help with navigation.

2.6 Street Furnishings

Street furnishings help establish the overall look and feel of a community, provide comfort and convenience to both pedestrians and drivers (e.g., street lighting), and can act as landmarks or way-finding aids (e.g., signage, unique plantings, etc.). Types of furnishings include:

- Benches
- Bike racks
- Trash / recycling receptacles
- Planters
- Lighting
- Signage

2.6.1 Develop a consistent palette of street furnishings

A consistent palette of street furnishings communicates a clear and unified image of a community to visitors and locals. By coordinating lights, benches, trash receptacles and other amenities, the community conveys a sense of care, planning, and order. This in turn can help define the community to both outsiders and residents, making it a more memorable place to live or visit.

2.6.2 Use the same style for all three communities, but customize for each community with unique colours or castings

A common style of furnishings should be used for Monkton, Atwood, and Listowel in order to tie them together visually under the same “brand”, as North Perth communities. This will create a stronger impression for visitors travelling through the three communities, for example on the main north-south highway route.

Furnishings should be customized with unique colours or castings in order to foster individual community identity.

Other considerations in selecting furnishings include:

- Durability of materials
- Comfort
- Ease of use for all demographic groups (e.g., include arms on benches to assist the elderly and disabled)
- Resistance to vandalism and other damage

Garbage receptacles must be selected with consideration for maintenance issues as well. Maximum weight loads, types of pickup vehicles, frequency of visits, and winter access should all be reflected in the types chosen.

For recycling stations, the types of waste should be coordinated with the recycling programs available in the community. Keep in mind that some post-pickup sorting may be required to eliminate items that have been improperly placed.

2.6.3 Group furniture at logical gathering points rather than spreading them out along the entire streetscape

As with the planting, the streetscape furniture budget can be used most efficiently and effectively by concentrating improvements at logical gathering points rather than spreading them out along the entire streetscape. A street corner with a number of benches and other amenities is a more attractive and inviting place to stop to rest or meet a friend than a lone bench located off the beaten track.

While furnishings should be grouped together, care should be taken in locating waste and recycling containers. Pet waste and other garbage produce unpleasant odours and can attract wasps, so these containers should be close enough to benches for convenience, but not so close as to be a nuisance.

Examples of Coordinated, Customizable Street Furniture



Example of a bench. Customized colours can be used for each community.



Customized casting on a bench arm.



Example of a trash receptacle. Customized colours can be applied.



Example of a coordinating recycling station. Customized colours can be applied.



Example of a bike rack. Customized colours and castings can be applied

2.6.4 Lighting Improvements

Lighting is important in both the vehicular and pedestrian zones. One of the issues raised at the community input meetings was that lighting is insufficient in many areas. Listowel has suitable existing light fixtures that can be modified to increase pedestrian zone lighting (see example photos). Modifications also provide an additional opportunity for community branding and seasonal expressions (banners, plantings, outlets for Christmas lights, etc.). Coordinating fixtures should also be used in Monkton and Atwood.

New lighting technologies such as LED fixtures offer improved performance and can lower long-term operating costs.

Examples of Lighting Options & Modifications



Existing street lighting can be modified to provide more light, for example by using twin headed fixtures.



Pendant-style luminaires can be added to increase light in the pedestrian zone. Pendant arms can also accommodate banners or planters.

2.7 Signage

2.7.1 Add On-Street Signage to Direct Visitors to Important Community Amenities (Parking, Community Centre, etc.)

Ease of navigation and way-finding is an important factor when considering the visitor experience: visitors to a community take away a more positive impression when their visit is smooth and hassle-free.

Clear and consistent signage along the community core streetscape can assist navigation for both newcomers and residents. The public input meetings identified this as an issue, particularly in Monkton, where the community centre is located off the main route of travel and not well signed, and in Listowel, where parking facilities are not always clearly indicated. As noted in item 2.4, strengthening physical and conceptual linkages between a community core and surrounding amenities and activities is an effective way of creating a more dynamic sense of community for both residents and visitors. Improved signage will contribute to these linkages.

We recommend developing a consistent, uniform palette of signage, taking into consideration sign hierarchy, legibility at highway / in-town driving speeds, location, and graphic clarity.

Examples of Street Signage



Clear and attractive signage that complements the existing light poles in Listowel.



Signage offers opportunities for community branding.

3.0 Additional Recommendations for Monkton and Atwood

Both Monkton and Atwood are rural, small town communities. As such, they elicit a generalized set of cultural expectations for visitors driving through (safe, family focused, healthy, connected to the land, etc.). If these expectations are not met, the community does not make a strong impression on the visitor. But if the community is able to express a clear sense of character to match these expectations, the visit becomes a memorable and positive one.

In Monkton and Atwood the main street is crossed by an old rail line, now converted to a multi-purpose trail (pedestrians, cyclists, snowmobiles, etc.). In both cases, the trail is not well marked and may be easily overlooked by visitors travelling through the community.

The trail / street intersections and associated open green spaces offer great opportunities to develop attractive and memorable community amenities that can also shape the driving experience along the main street and enhance the rural character of these small towns.

3.1 Streetscape Recommendations

3.1.1 Add Planting and Trailhead Features (Kiosks, Pavilions) to Create a Park-Like Feeling

As illustrated in the Streetscape Design Concepts, the areas where the trail meets the roadway can be developed with plantings and structural features that highlight the trail, enhance the streetscape, and improve visitor way-finding.

The addition of trees and other plantings close to the road at these locations will also create a natural landmark or transition point between different spaces along the travel route. Finally, by bringing nature closer to the street, the rural character of the community can be emphasized.

3.1.2 Add Planted Medians and Crosswalks

The current roadway width allows for the addition of planted central medians where the trail crosses the road. In conjunction with plantings on either side of the road, medians can visually and/or physically narrow the streetscape and encourage drivers to slow down and pay more attention. This in turn helps facilitate trail users crossing the roadway safely. In addition, medians act as a respite or stopping point, allowing pedestrians to rest and time their crossing more easily. This is especially important for elderly or disabled trail users.

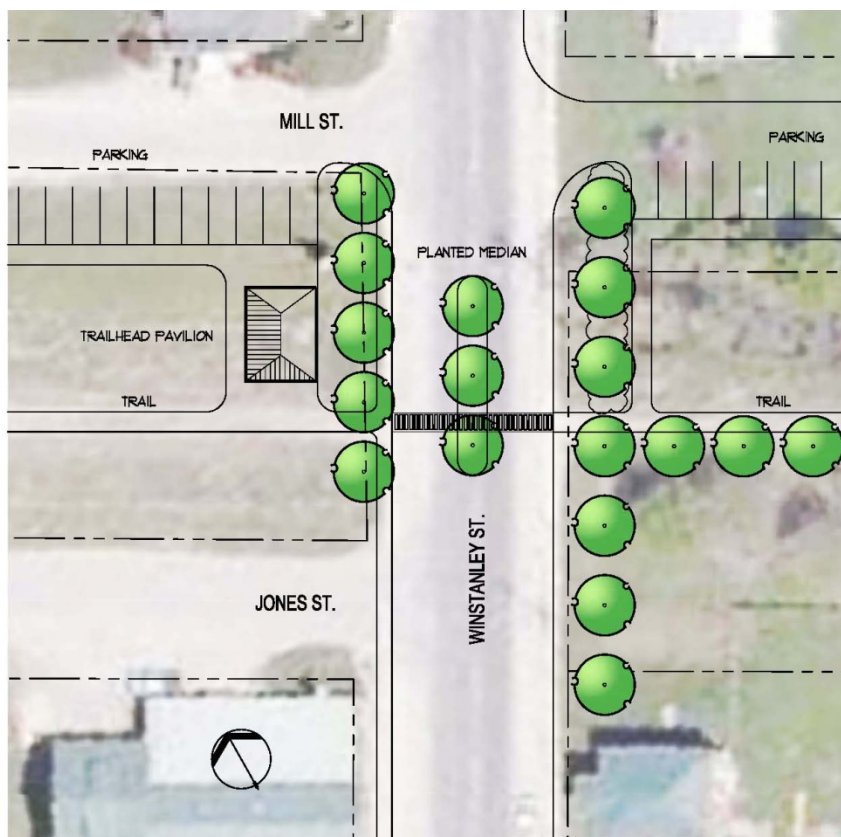
Crosswalks paved with contrasting colours / materials and raised to the level of the sidewalk (as discussed above, see item 2.2.2) will also contribute to pedestrian safety by increasing visibility for vehicles.

Medians should be designed to be wide enough to be seen easily from a vehicle, to allow snow plows to pass without damage, and to support healthy tree growth. Sufficient median width allows tree branches to be shaped more naturally to extend over the road, without posing a hazard for larger vehicles.

In addition to tree plantings, medians can be enhanced with a central feature such as a sculpture, clock tower, or fountain. These can become a memorable community landmark (consider the CN Tower or the Eiffel Tower).

3.1.3 Create Clearly Defined Parking Areas

Currently, the parking areas around the trails are not clearly defined. As part of developing a more structured and planned trailhead area, formal parking areas should be included. The Concept Plans indicated logical locations for parking.



Example of proposed improvements to the trail crossing areas, including planting trailhead pavilion, and clearly defined parking: Monkton.

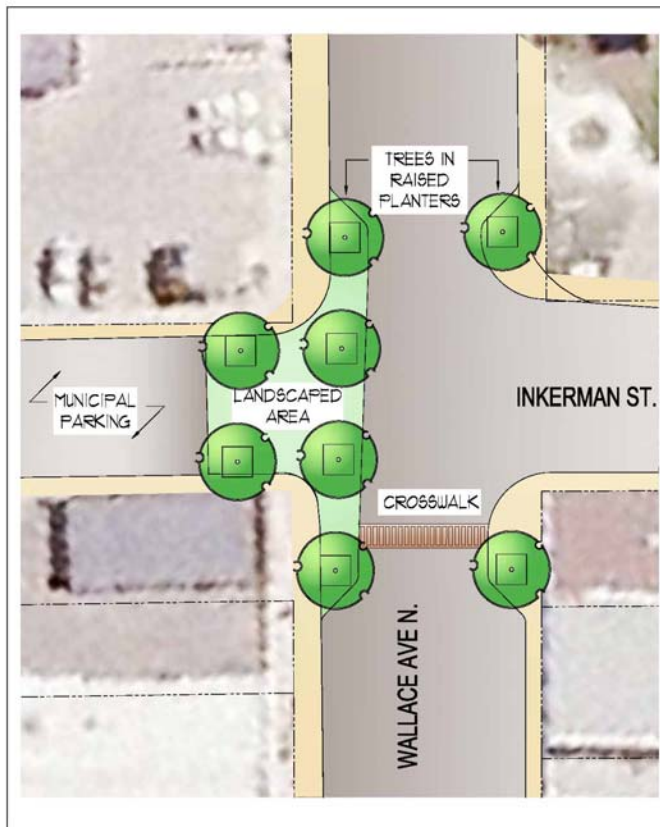
4.0 Additional Recommendations for Listowel

4.1.1 Close or Limit Access to Inkerman Street West

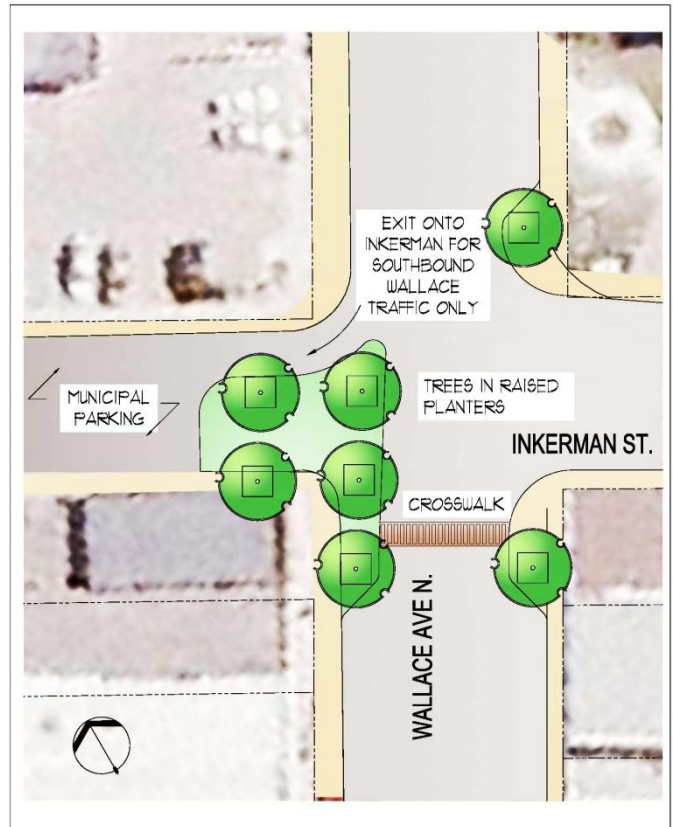
At the public input meeting on November 17, traffic congestion was identified as an issue in Listowel. For example, the block of Wallace Avenue N. between Inkerman Street and Main Street is often backed up with vehicles. The distance between these two intersections is relatively short, and vehicles turning on and off Wallace in both locations contribute to the congestion.

The intersection of Wallace Avenue and Inkerman Street is unsignalled. Vehicles attempting left-hand turns here (onto either street), contribute to congestion along Wallace. Rather than adding traffic signals so close to the Wallace-Main St. intersection, we recommend closing or limiting access to Inkerman west of Wallace (see figures 5 and 6).

Inkerman and Wallace – Closed West Access



Inkerman and Wallace – Limited West Access



This approach has additional benefits to the overall streetscape, and the downtown area in general. By closing or limiting access to Inkerman, additional space would be created for landscaping and trees, thereby extending the green / park space along the Maitland River further into the downtown area. This would strengthen the visual impact of the river and create a more memorable landmark within Listowel.

Altering the Inkerman – Wallace intersection would require traffic and parking studies, as well as an exploration of various design alternatives.

4.1.2 Create a Municipal Parking Area along Inkerman Street West

The current land use along the block of Inkerman Street just west of Wallace is commercial, fronted by paved parking areas. Closing or limiting access from Wallace would create an opportunity to transform the street into a municipal parking area. It would be necessary to work with the neighbouring property owners to fashion a unified and coordinated space, to ensure access is retained to their businesses, and to enhance their presence on the street. By incorporating landscape features and furnishings from the streetscape, the parking area could be visually tied into the rest of the downtown core. A re-design of this area should also include strategies to screen garbage bins and utility areas.

4.1.3 Coordinate School Crosswalk with Gateways

The north gateway and crosswalk proposed at the intersection of Wallace Avenue and Binning Street is relatively close to an existing school crossing. These two crosswalks should be coordinated and/or combined, with consideration of the potential closing of the school in the next few years.

Safety is a concern with all crosswalks and school crosswalks in particular. Given the sloping topography of this section of Wallace, and the traffic volume, design of the gateway and crosswalk should include a careful examination of the views to the site.

5.0 Next Steps

The Streetscape Design Concept plans have been prepared as a tool to guide and inform future work in revitalizing the downtown areas of Monkton, Atwood, and Listowel. They are conceptual in nature, focusing on broad ideas and recommendations.

Moving forward, the following steps will be necessary to realize the vision laid out in this report.

5.1 Identify Priorities

Note that these are listed as general steps, but may not necessarily be applied to all areas at once. Rather, specific priorities and sites may be addressed individually as funding is made available, using the Concept Plans as a guide.

The Concept Plans can also be implemented as part of already-planned or future infrastructure improvements. For example, if sidewalks are to be rebuilt as part of a sewer replacement project, bump-outs and decorative paving banding (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) can be included as part of the rebuild.

It is therefore important that the Municipality begin to establish priorities in terms of specific areas or elements for revitalization, and use these to develop a plan to direct funding as it becomes available.

5.2 Public Participation

Public participation is an important component in determining community priorities for streetscape revitalization. Furthermore, given that one of the main goals of streetscape revitalization is to create a dynamic and attractive public space that reflects the character of the overall community, public input is essential in ensuring that any revitalization projects and programs have long-term viability and are well supported by the community.

5.3 Obtain Detailed Base Information

The base information used to prepare the Concept Plans included: aerial photography, parcel boundaries, and edge of road paving. Underground utilities locations were also available for Listowel.

In order to prepare more detailed and accurate plans ready for construction, additional base information will be required, including all street level and underground infrastructure, existing vegetation, topography and drainage patterns, and building outlines.

5.4 Prepare Detailed Designs / Working Drawings

Once more detailed base information is compiled, the general concepts can be developed into site-specific designs taking existing conditions into account. These can be further developed as construction-ready working drawings as resources and schedules allow.

6.0 Conclusion

Empty streets, no matter how attractive, are not as successful as streets that are full of life. The above recommendations primarily address the physical realm, but we recognize that this is only one component of the streetscape. We have therefore also considered social and cultural aspects of the streetscape and what it means to the greater community.

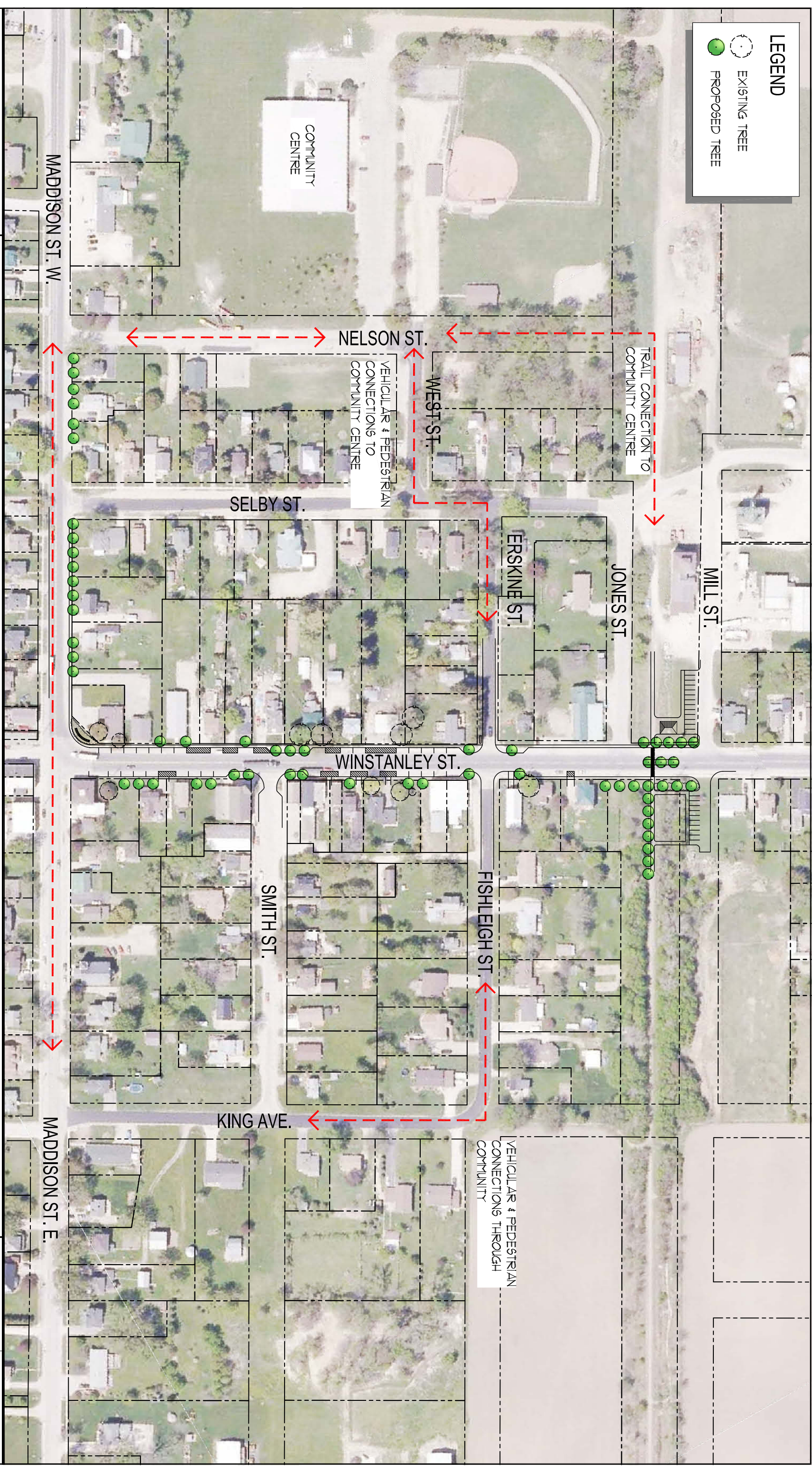
Community life on the street needs to be given as much attention as physical improvements. Shops and other businesses should be encouraged to use the street as an extension of their activities (e.g., sandwich boards, outdoor eating, planters, etc.). While use of the street should be controlled and may require some guidelines, it is important to allow expression of personality along the street in order to contribute positively to the quality of the street life. Pedestrian activity and interest encourages passers-by to stop and explore, and makes the street a vibrant and engaging place. People need to feel engaged in order to participate, and by participating, they take away a much more positive impression of a place.

The streetscape is a stage provided by the community. People and objects animate this space. The richness and vitality developed here results in a lively and healthy community.

APPENDIX A:
Streetscape Design Concept Plans

LEGEND

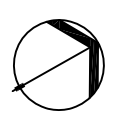
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- PROPOSED TREE



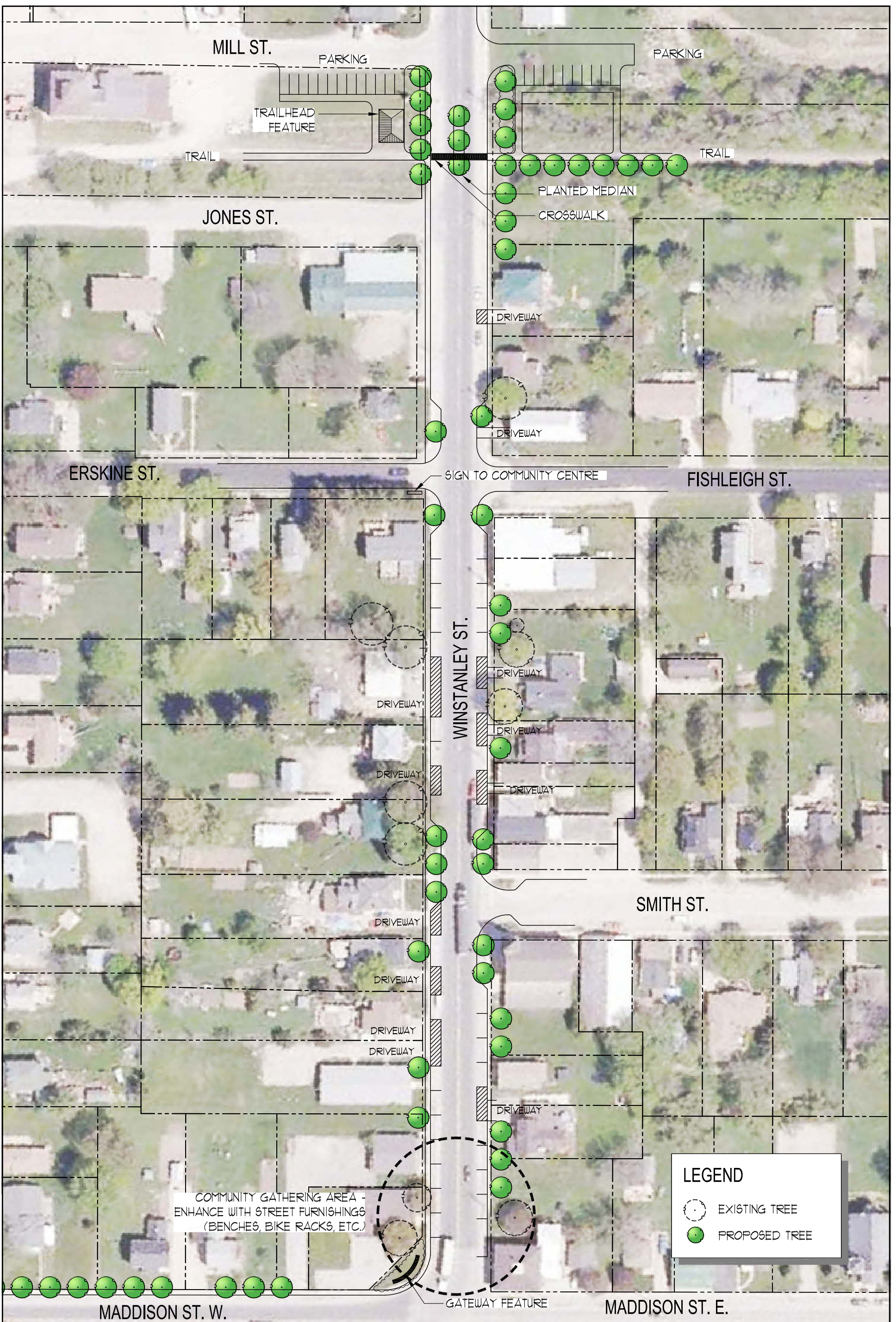
RON KOUDDYS
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS
 308 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario, N6A 1V7
 Tel: (519) 867-3322 Fax: (519) 846-2474

TITLE:

MONKTON
STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - OVERALL



PROJECT NUMBER:	11-210	SCALE:	1:2000
DRAWN BY:	RKLA Inc.	DATE:	NOV.2011
DRAWING NUMBER:	L-1d		



LEGEND

- EXISTING TREE
- PROPOSED TREE



RON KOUDYS
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS INC.

Tel: (519) 667-3322, Fax: (519) 645-2474

MONKTON
STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN
WINSTANLEY ST.



11-210

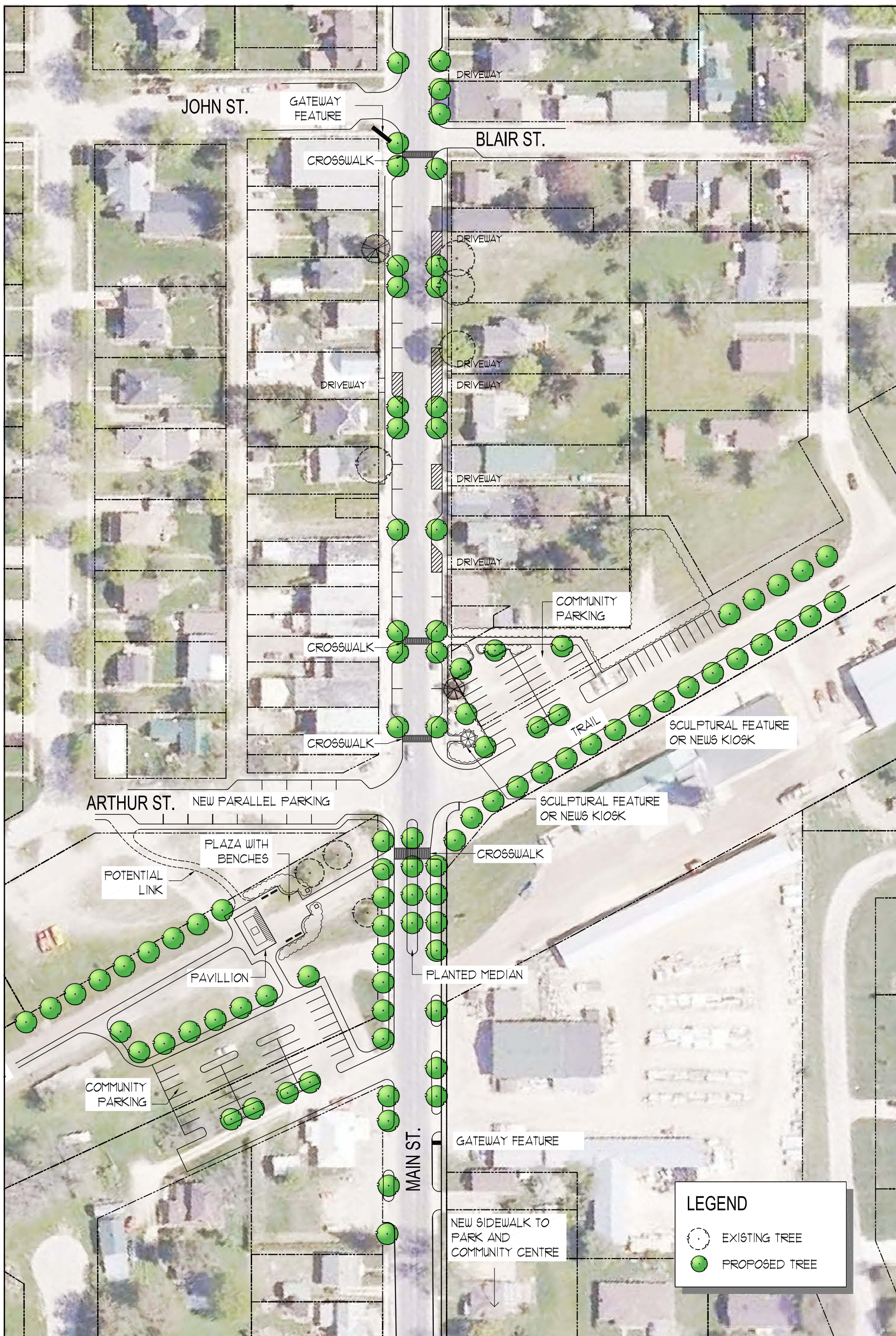
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DRAWN BY: RKLA Inc.



DATE: NOV. 2011

DRAWING NUMBER:

L-2d



LEGEND

-  EXISTING TREE
-  PROPOSED TREE



**RON KOUDYS
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS INC.**
368 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario, N6A 1V7
Tel: (519) 667-3322, Fax: (519) 645-2474

TITLE:

**ATWOOD
STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN**



PROJECT NUMBER:

11-210

SCALE:

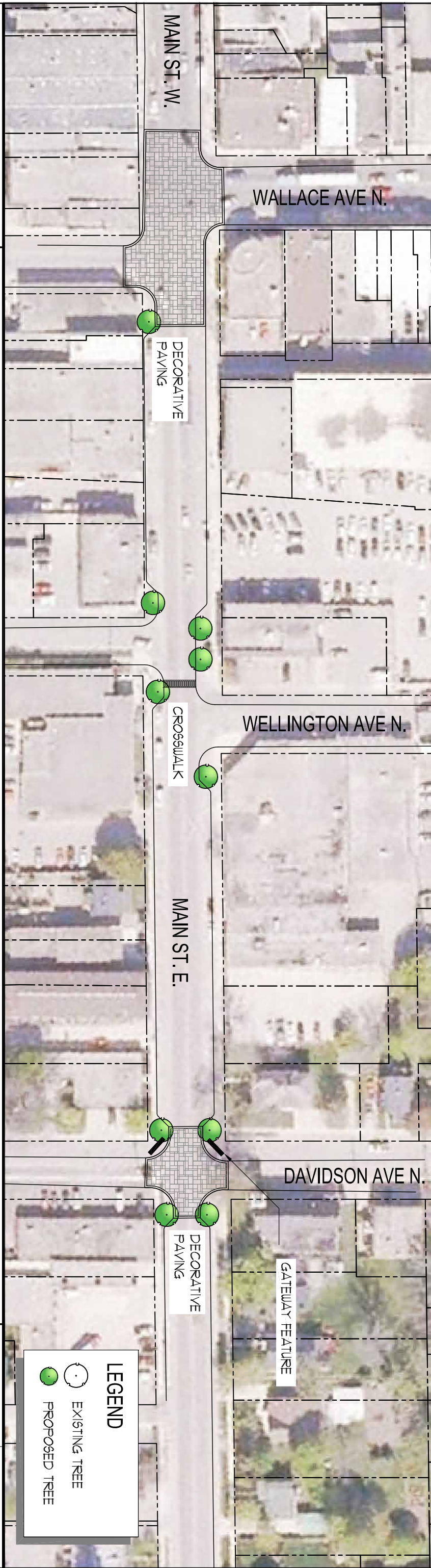
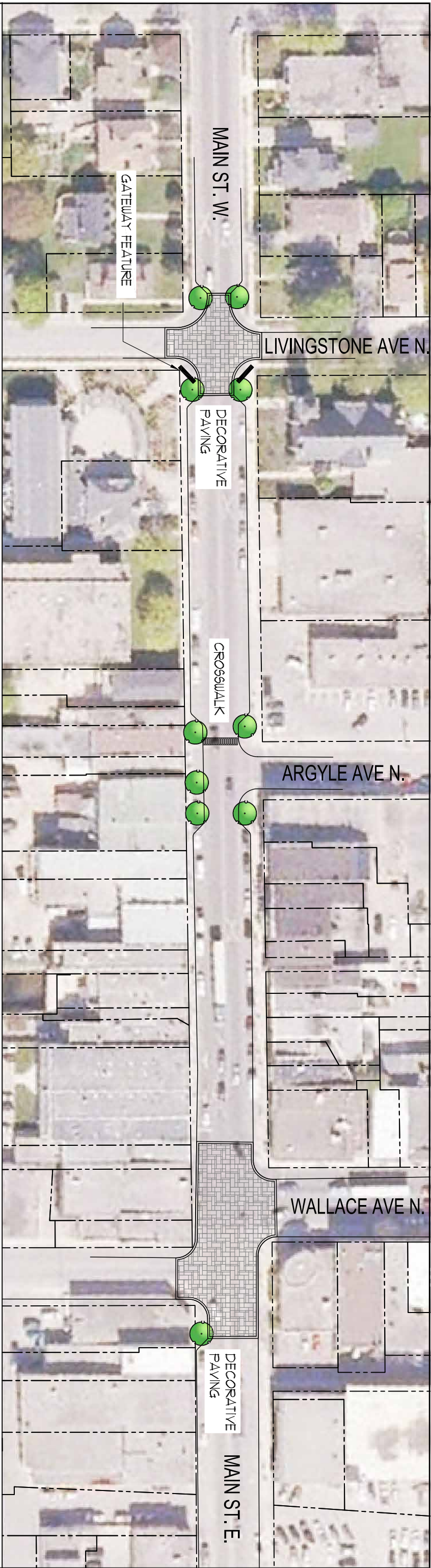
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DRAWN BY: RKLA Inc.

DATE: NOV. 2011

DRAWING NUMBER:

L-3d



LEGEND

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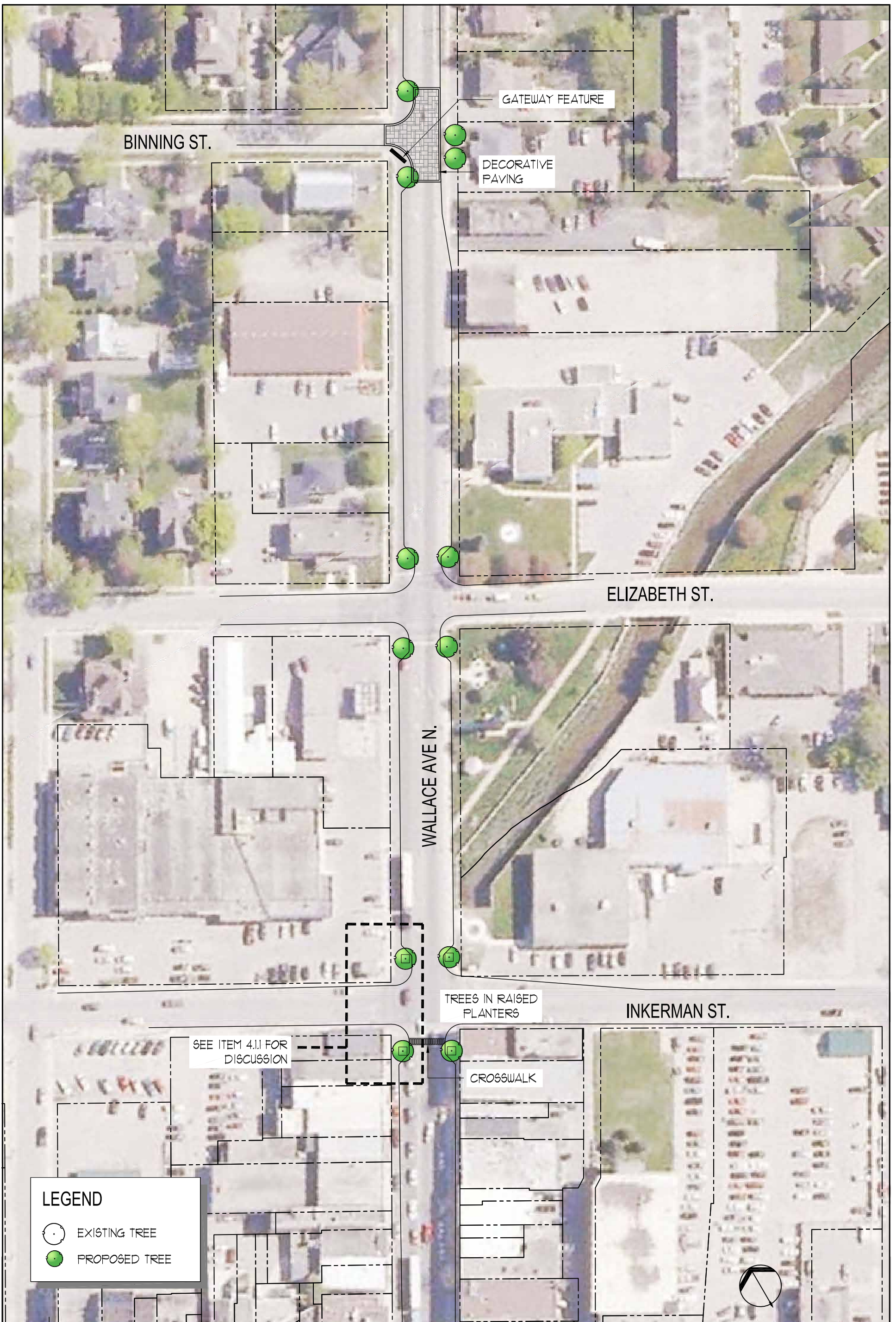


RON KOUDDYS
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS



308 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario, N6A 1V7
 Tel: (519) 867-3322 Fax: (519) 846-2474

LISTOWEL
STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - MAIN ST.

11-210	1:1000
DRAWN BY: RKL/A Inc.	DATE: NOV.2011
DRAWING NUMBER: L-4d	



LEGEND

-  EXISTING TREE
-  PROPOSED TREE

SEE ITEM 4.11 FOR DISCUSSION



**RON KOUDYS
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS INC.**
368 Oxford Street East, London, Ontario, N6A 1V7
Tel: (519) 667-3322, Fax: (519) 645-2474

TITLE:
LISTOWEL
STREETSCAPE CONCEPT PLAN - WALLACE AVE

PROJECT NUMBER: 11-210	SCALE: 1:1000
DRAWN BY: RKLA Inc.	DATE: NOV. 2011
DRAWING NUMBER: L-5d	

