Study Overview

WHY ARE WE HERE?
As part of the review of the Secondary Plan for Downtown Hamilton, the City is carrying out a Tall Buildings Study to create a set of tall building guidelines to help guide future development.

PURPOSE OF THE TALL BUILDINGS STUDY:
• To determine appropriate locations for tall buildings in Downtown Hamilton
• To develop a set of guidelines for how tall buildings should be evaluated to ensure they fit in with their surrounding area
• To update and strengthen the policy direction in the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan for tall buildings

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU:
• What is “tall” within the Hamilton context?
• Where should tall buildings be located?
• How can tall buildings compliment the unique aspects of Hamilton’s Downtown?

Study Schedule

1.0 Vision and Principles
Develop understanding of vision, objectives and policy background

2.0 Downtown Area Analysis
Prepare analysis of the Downtown today, including existing buildings, parks, heritage buildings, topography, character and uses.

3.0 Character Areas Framework
Based on the analysis, develop Character Area Framework that will shape future development.

4.0 Building Types
Prepare specific guideline for the different building types.

5.0 Tall Building Design Guidelines
Prepare guidelines for the height, size and shape of tall buildings.

Final Reporting
Prepare final Secondary Plan, Zoning Bylaw amendments and Tall Buildings Study for Planning Committee.

Hamilton
Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Study
Community Meeting and Workshop

May 26th, 2015
The Tall Buildings Study will consider the unique aspects of Hamilton’s Downtown including topography, cultural heritage, natural heritage, open space, views, parcel size, and transit, to assist in determining appropriate locations, heights and shape for tall buildings.

**VIEWS**

The Downtown benefits from many spectacular views of the escarpment and the waterfront. Are there particular views that should be protected from tall buildings? Are there views that would benefit from new buildings?

**SHADOWS**

Tall buildings cast shadows that can impact the surrounding streets and open spaces. Are there particular streets and open spaces that need to be protected from shadows?

**NEIGHBOURHOOD TRANSITIONS**

Many stable residential neighbourhoods are either part of the Downtown, or surround it. How can tall buildings transition to respect the character, height and privacy of these neighbourhoods?

**VIBRANT STREETS**

New buildings will bring people that will contribute to the Downtown’s growth and vitality. How can tall buildings support a vibrant and safe street life?

**WEATHER PROTECTION**

Tall buildings can change wind patterns in the Downtown. How can they be designed to minimize wind impact and provide weather protection that supports a vibrant Downtown?

**OPEN SPACE**

Taller Buildings can free up space on the ground for added green space. What sort of open spaces, connections or amenity spaces would support a growing Downtown?

**HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

The Downtown is filled with many heritage buildings that reflect the unique history and character of Hamilton. How can tall buildings be integrated with heritage buildings in a beneficial way?
Draft Principles

The Tall Buildings Study will be guided by the following Principles:

1. Tall Buildings form an **integral part of Downtown Hamilton**.

2. The form, shape and height of Tall Buildings should be shaped to mitigate potential negative impacts.

3. Tall Buildings within Downtown Hamilton should respond to the unique topography and landscape, including the escarpment and the waterfront.

4. Tall Buildings within Downtown Hamilton should support the creation of a robust public realm network, including parks, streets and plazas.

5. Tall Buildings should be located in a fashion that preserves key views and termini both from and to the Downtown.

6. The location, shape and form of Tall Buildings should respond to the surrounding neighbourhood context.

7. The shape and form of Tall Buildings should respond to and respect existing heritage buildings and districts.

8. Tall Buildings should be designed in a way that mitigates the negative impacts of climatic conditions (wind and sun).

9. **Additional height** should be considered as an appropriate incentive for related policy objectives (heritage and open space requirements).

10. Location of Tall Buildings should be informed by Transit Infrastructure.

*Place a dot on which principle is most important to you.*
The physical shape and form of the Downtown can help determine where tall buildings would be most appropriately located. The following panels describe this analysis and we welcome your feedback and input.

**Topography**

The topography of Hamilton's Downtown is characterized by: the escarpment, running roughly parallel to Downtown's southern edge and rising to an elevation approximately 120m above the level of the Gore; the harbour, to the north, together with remnant creeks that flowed from the south-west to the north-east; and the Hamilton Bar, a geological formation dating from the glacial period that represents a rise following the line of York Boulevard out to Burlington Heights.

**Downtown Connections**

Hamilton's Downtown is shaped by a number of key elements that either connect or divide the city, including: the original Aboriginal Trail (King Street); York Boulevard; James Street; the former Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway corridor (Hamilton GO Centre); and the Canadian National Railway corridor (James Street North station).
The Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (completed in 2014) identified a long list of heritage buildings including recommended, registered and designated buildings. Specific guidelines will be required for the integration of tall buildings with heritage structures.

Heritage Buildings

Registered (Non-Designated)
Recommended for Register
Designated
Candidates for designation

Heritage Character Area

Strathcona, Kirkendall, Durand, Corktown
Characterized by regular, rectangular blocks, the neighbourhoods to the west of the Downtown include a consistent mix of larger homes of Victorian vintage. Parts of this extend into the Downtown up to Caroline Street.

Landsdale, Stinson
The urban fabric to the east of the Downtown shares many characteristics with the neighbourhoods to the west, but is more varied and extend into parts of the Downtown as well.

North End
Characterized by a diverse collection of buildings on varied lot sizes, elements of the North End’s unique built form character extend into the Downtown up to approximately York Boulevard.

Keith
Characterized by modest homes and larger industrial parcels, these neighbourhoods are contained to the areas north of the CN rail corridor.

Barton - Tiffany
The residential areas of Barton-Tiffany are distinct from those south of York Street and those east of Hess Street. They are characterized by larger, compact homes on regularly sized lots with a generous canopy.

The Gore
Downtown Hamilton’s primary public space, the Gore is characterized by a consistent collection of civic buildings that frame its public space.

Civic Centre
Characterized by the exuberant City Hall, the Civic Centre is a collection of larger civic buildings that represent an ambitious, if incomplete, vision for the Downtown’s public realm.

Surrounding Neighbourhoods

Downtown Hamilton is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods that sometimes overlap into the Downtown. Each neighbourhood has its own unique physical character. The Tall Building Study will consider how to best transition to these neighbourhoods.
The Downtown includes a significant number of surface parking lots that are either privately or publicly owned. Existing surface parking lots are likely locations for new tall buildings and will require particular attention from the Study. Two parking lots (shown in green) have already been identified as locations for future parkland as part of Hamilton’s Official Plan.

Places of worship play a special role in the life of Hamilton's Downtown. Many are heritage buildings and / or frame important views within their neighbourhoods.

The map to the left identifies all places of worship within the Downtown, along with their primary entrances and orientations.
Park space within the Downtown is currently limited and care must be taken to mitigate any potential negative impacts of tall buildings on these spaces. Opportunities to augment the open space network should be considered.

Schools and their yards are key components of the Downtown's open space network. Shade, overlook and other impacts on these spaces will need to be considered and potentially mitigated. The map identifies major schools and learning centres located in the Downtown.

*Which parks and open spaces are important to you? Place a dot on the map on your favourite park or open space.
The ten tallest existing buildings within and surrounding Hamilton’s Downtown are listed below and located on the map. The majority of these (7) are between 22 and 25 storeys tall. The remaining three are 25, 33 and 43 storeys tall respectively.

The existing Downtown Secondary Plan ‘Putting People First’ includes clearly defined limitations around height. These have been augmented by the additional regulations around height that form part of the James Street North Mobility Hub Study Area. The Plan also allows for exceptions to the height limit where certain impacts (shade + wind) are mitigated.

Existing Tall Buildings and Recent Development Applications
# Downtown Area Analysis

## Existing Tall Buildings

1. **Landmark Place**  
   - Year: 1974  
   - Height: 127 m (43 flr)  
   - Address: 100 Main St.E.

2. **Stelco Tower**  
   - Year: 1973  
   - Height: 103 m (33 flr)  
   - Address: 100 Main St.W.

3. **Olympia Apartments**  
   - Year: 1976  
   - Height: 98 m (30 flr)  
   - Address: 150 Charlton E.

4. **The Martindale**  
   - Year: 1980  
   - Height: 84 m (25 flr)  
   - Address: 155 Park St. S.

5. **The Villager**  
   - Year: 1979  
   - Height: 82 m (25 flr)  
   - Address: 151 Queen St. N.

6. **Bay 200**  
   - Year: 1975  
   - Height: 80 m (25 flr)  
   - Address: 200 Bay St. S.

7. **Queen's Terrace**  
   - Year: 1974  
   - Height: 80 m (25 flr)  
   - Address: 151 Queen St. N.

8. **BDC Building**  
   - Year: 1971  
   - Height: 91 m (22 flr)  
   - Address: 25 Main St. W.

9. **The Villager**  
   - Year: 1979  
   - Height: 82 m (25 flr)  
   - Address: 151 Queen St. N.

10. **First Place Hamilton**  
    - Year: 1976  
    - Height: 78 m (25 flr)  
    - Address: 350 King St. E.

11. **55 Hess Street S.**  
    - Year: circa 1989  
    - Height: 80 m (23 flr)  
    - Address: 55 Hess St. S.

12. **The Villager**  
    - Year: circa 1980  
    - Height: 80 m (25 flr)  
    - Address: 160 Market St.

## Recent Development Applications

1. **Royal Connaught**  
   - Status: Phase 1 - Under Construction  
   - Height: 108 m (36, 24, 21, 14 str)  
   - Address: 82-114 King St.E

2. **The Connoly**  
   - Status: Approved  
   - Height: 103 m (30 str)  
   - Address: 98 James St. S.

3. **Bella Tower**  
   - Status: Under Construction  
   - Height: 84 m (26 str)  
   - Address: 150 Charlton E.

4. **Tivoli Condos**  
   - Status: Approved with Conditions  
   - Height: 75.1 m (22 str)  
   - Address: 108 James St N.

5. **150 Main St W.**  
   - Status: Under Construction  
   - Height: 36 m (12 str)  
   - Address: 150 Main St W.

## View from Victoria Street (looking West)

## View from the Waterfront (looking South)
The following map identifies key views of the Downtown (largely from the escarpment or waterfront). The shape of the skyline in these views will need to be ‘sculpted’ to best maintain a consistent form. Key views past the Downtown that require preservation will need to be identified.
Views from the Downtown can be grouped as follows: views that start at the ‘Hamilton Bar’ and extend south to the escarpment; views to the south, blocked by the railway corridor; and views starting from the east of the railway corridor. Views towards the waterfront are not continuous from the Downtown due to the bridges that cross the CN rail corridor.
Downtown Area Analysis

Landmarks & Terminal Views

Landmarks are buildings and places that stand out from their surrounding context and are easily recognizable from long distances. Some of Hamilton's Downtown landmarks are the Hamilton City Centre, the Go Station Terminal as well as the Gore.

View Corridors allow for extended views along the Downtown and tend to connect to the surrounding neighbourhoods. Their character is shaped by the surrounding buildings and tends to vary along each corridor when in town.
The Draft Character Area Framework attempts to describe the appropriate buildings for different areas of the Downtown. It is informed by the Review and Assessment shown on Panels #2 through #10 and was developed with input from City Staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Design Review Panel and the Community Liaison Committee. The next panels describe the character of each Area and include examples of the types of buildings that could be appropriate for each area.
Prime Retail Streets represent the traditional commercial districts of Downtown Hamilton. Buildings along streets like James Street North and parts of King Street are typically 3-4 stories tall and house a variety of shops that support a vibrant street life. Preserving and improving this street life will be critical in these areas.

As Downtown Hamilton’s primary open space, the Gore requires special attention. The blocks surrounding the Gore already include some tall buildings, but also include ‘gaps’ that will be developed over time. Identifying the heights of new buildings around the Gore will be a critical question to answer as part of this Study.

The Downtown Core is already home to some of Hamilton’s tallest buildings, and the best place for new tall buildings. The design of towers will need to limit the impacts of shade and wind.

The Main Street Corridor is already home to a mix of tall buildings. The wider street and easy access could accommodate a mix mid-rise and tall buildings.
Examples of Building Types

5. York Boulevard Gateway

As a gateway into the Downtown, the York Boulevard area could offer opportunities for redevelopment.

6. John / Rebecca

The parking lots around John and Rebecca Streets offer rare opportunities to develop full blocks of the Downtown. These blocks could house larger uses like community facilities or supermarkets that are integrated with tall buildings, townhouses and mid-rise buildings.

Gateways

GO Stations (Transit Oriented Development)

Grouping taller buildings around transit infrastructure is a key policy in Hamilton’s Official Plan. The James Street North Mobility Hub Study (prepared in 2014) identifies a series of properties around the James North GO Station that could accommodate taller buildings (5-6 stories in height).

Many people enter the Downtown along either King or Main Streets. These ‘gateways’ already include a few tall buildings such as First Place on King Street. Could new tall buildings at these locations also act as gateways?
Options - Possible Height Scenarios

The different building types presented on the last two panels could be combined in a variety of different ways. The following three panels illustrate three possible scenarios for tall buildings in the Downtown.

OPTION 1

assumes that tall buildings are concentrated within the Downtown Core and the Gore. Midrise buildings are shown along Main Street and the new James North GO Station. The York Boulevard area could offer opportunities for highrise redevelopment. Development along James Street North and King Street would be limited to 3-4 stories.
OPTION 2 assumes that tall buildings are concentrated within the Downtown Core, and a pair of gateways along King and Main Streets. Tall buildings around the Gore are strictly limited, and the parking lots in the John / Rebecca area would be developed with a mix of tall, mid and low rise buildings. Taller, mid-rise buildings are shown along Main Street. Development along James Street North and King Street would be limited to 3-4 stories.
OPTION 3 assumes that tall buildings are concentrated within the Downtown Core, the Gore and a pair of gateways along King and Main Streets. Mid-rise buildings are shown along Main Street and the new James North GO Station. The parking lots in the John / Rebecca area would be developed with a mix of tall, mid and low rise buildings. The York Boulevard area could offer opportunities for highrise redevelopment. Development along James Street North and King Street would be limited to 3-4 stories.
Next Steps

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Other Ways to Get Involved:

• Sign up for **e-mail/mail updates** (leave email and/or mailing address on Sign-in Sheet). We will send you project updates, materials and information about consultation events.

• **Comment Sheets** – Fill out and leave with the team or email to alissa.mahood@hamilton.ca

PROJECT CONTACT:

Alissa Mahood
City of Hamilton
alissa.mahood@hamilton.ca
905-546-2424 ext. 1250
71 Main Street West, 6th Floor

For more information visit our website:

www.hamilton.ca/downtownhamiltonreview

Thank you for participating today!