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Appendix A: Tall Building Guidelines
1.0 Downtown Tall Buildings Vision

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

Purpose of the Study

The Downtown Secondary Plan outlines a vision of Hamilton’s downtown that is ‘vibrant’ with ‘human scale streetscapes offering comfort’. It also aims to combine heritage with new concepts and designs while linking the Downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods from the Waterfront to the Escarpment. Recent work by City staff resulted in an inventory of heritage buildings that add to the Downtown’s character and liveability. This vision, together with a renewed development interest in tall buildings in Hamilton’s core will, over time, fundamentally change the shape of the Downtown.

As part of the current review of the Downtown Secondary Plan, Planning staff at the City of Hamilton identified the need for guidelines surrounding the development of tall buildings within Hamilton’s downtown. The existing Secondary Plan includes height limits, but also permits exceptions where certain criteria (sun, shade or wind impacts on public spaces) are mitigated. Initiated in 2014, the Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Study (the Study) was developed in conjunction with the Secondary Plan Review, and acts as input into the final update of the Secondary Plan. The Study establishes a planning framework that will guide where tall buildings are appropriate, provide clarity around how these mitigation strategies are to be evaluated, and include specific design guidance around tall building height, fit and relationship to context.

The Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Study outlines the process (See Section 1.3) that was initiated in December 2014 and completed in May 2016. The Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Guidelines is a key deliverable of the Study and outlines a series of performance based measures to inform site and building design. Both documents should be read and used in conjunction with its companion document.

Key Considerations

As part of the Study, the following considerations are addressed:

- **What is Tall?** – The definition of “tall buildings” within the Hamilton context.
- **Unique Context** – The study considers unique aspects of Hamilton’s downtown with regards to tall buildings, specifically: topography, natural heritage (Niagara Escarpment) views (from the Escarpment and/or harbour), parcel size, and key transit corridors/hubs.
- **Context and Fit** – The guidelines define appropriate locations, heights and relationships for tall buildings and consider the Site Character Area and the varying contexts of the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- **Climatic Consideration** – The cumulative impacts of sun, shade and wind are addressed, with criteria that are to be used for their evaluation.
• **Heritage Buildings** – The protection of, and relationship to heritage buildings are addressed by the guidelines. Additionally, specific guidelines related to land assembly in this context are provided.

• **Open Space** – The relationship of tall buildings to existing open spaces and the provision of new open spaces are addressed. This includes density and/or height bonusing.

• **Conformance with Zoning** – The new guidelines will be aligned with the zoning by-laws as part of the Secondary Plan review process.

**Study Boundary**

The Downtown Tall Buildings Study is similar to the Downtown Secondary Plan area. It is bounded by Cannon Street to the north, Wellington Street to the east, Hunter Street to the south and Queen Street to the west; both sides of the bordering streets being included. It overlaps four downtown neighbourhoods: Beasley, Central, Corktown and Durand. The study also includes the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan Expansion Area (Urban Hamilton Growth Centre) along James Street from Cannon Street to Murray Street to the north, as well as from Hunter Street to Charlton Avenue to the south.
1.2 Policy Context

Several key policy documents and studies inform the Hamilton Downtown Tall Buildings Study, as follows:

**Urban Hamilton Official Plan (2013)**

The *Urban Hamilton Official Plan* applies to the lands in the urban area of the city. The Plan includes many policies that at a broad level relate to tall buildings. Contained within is a dedicated section for urban design policies that describe the general relationships of buildings to their surrounding context and requirements for mitigation of negative impacts.

**Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan (2005)**

The Downtown Secondary Plan was the first formal plan for the Downtown core, approved in 2001. The *Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan* provides specific direction regarding the role and character of different streets and corridors within the Downtown. Additional direction is provided for the transitional neighbourhoods in the Downtown’s perimeter and specific areas. Recommendations around height are found throughout and generally respond to the character of each area.

**Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan Review (2016)**

A review of the Downtown Secondary Plan is currently underway to update the land use policies and mapping. As part of the review, the City is carrying out this Tall Buildings Study.

**James Street North Mobility Hub Study (2014)**

The Provincial Government (Metrolinx) has constructed a new GO Transit station at James Street North and Murray Street in Hamilton. This location is identified as a Mobility Hub by Metrolinx. The James Street North Mobility Hub Study was initiated to study the area around the GO Transit station and identify opportunities and actions required to achieve a successful Mobility Hub. The study was presented to Planning Committee on September 19, 2014 and approved by Council on September 24, 2014.

The *James Street North Mobility Hub* study area overlaps with part of the Downtown as addressed through the *Downtown Secondary Plan*, specifically the segment of James Street North (north of Cannon Street) and the transit station area itself. The *James Street North Mobility Hub Study* includes specific recommendations for the built form within this area and puts forward a series of demonstration plans for “Opportunity Sites”. “Opportunity Sites” no. 5, 6 and 7 are located within the Secondary Plan area. Some of the built form recommendations vary from those within the current Secondary Plan and Zoning By-law, both of which will need to be amended to be consistent with the new recommendations.
Additional Related Studies

The Tall Buildings Report and Guidelines are informed by a number of related guidelines and studies, including but not limited to:

- *Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan* (2016)
- *Hamilton Downtown Built Heritage Inventory* (2014)
- *James Street North Mobility Hub Study* (2014)
- *City of Hamilton Cultural Plan* (2013)
- *Pedestrian Master Plan* (2012)
- *John Rebecca Park Master Plan* (2012)
- *Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy* (2012)
- *City of Hamilton Public Art Master Plan* (2009)
- *Downtown Transportation Master Plan* (2008)
- *The King Street West Streetscape Master Plan* (2004)
- *Downtown Mobility Streets Master Plan* (Bay Street, James Street, John Street, Hunter Street) (2003)
1.3 Study Process

**Vision and Principles**
Develop understanding of vision, objectives and policy background.

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

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

**Building Types**
Prepare specific guidelines for the different building types:
- Type 1
- Type 2
- Type 3
- Type 4

**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 Building Study for Planning Committee.

### Secondary Plan Review

1.0 **Vision and Principles**
March 12 WORKSHOP

2.0 **Downtown Area Analysis**
March 24 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

3.0 **Character Area Framework**
April 9 DESIGN REVIEW PANEL
May 26 COMMUNITY MEETING AND WORKSHOP

4.0 **Building Types**
August 19 CITY STAFF PRESENTATION

5.0 **Tall Building Design Guidelines**
October 8 DESIGN REVIEW PANEL #2

**Final Reporting**
April 11 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 14 COMMUNITY LIAISON COMMITTEE #3
April 27 COMMUNITY MEETING AND WORKSHOP

**We Are Here**

Downtown Hamilton Tall Buildings Study
1.4 Stakeholder Consultation

Between March 2015 to May 2016, several phases of consultation occurred with the Community Liaison Committee (CLC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Design Review Panel (DRP) and the public. The key elements of each session are outlined below.

**Vision, Goals and Objectives Workshop** - March 12th, 2015
- Introductions and Purpose of Workshop
- Review of Goals and Objectives
- Confirmation of Draft Principles
- Review of Best Practices
- Workshop#1 - Group Discussion Planning Framework Gap Analysis
- Review of Draft Outline and Study Structure
- Presentation and Review of Draft Analysis and Inventory
- Workshop #2: Views, Landmarks and View Termini
- Workshop #3: Draft Character Area Framework

**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** - March 24th, 2015
- Introductions and Purpose of Study
- Review of Goals and Objectives
- Confirmation of Draft Principles
- Planning Framework Gap Analysis
- Review of Draft Outline and Study Structure
- Presentation and Review of Draft Analysis and Inventory
- Character Area Framework

**Design Review Panel Presentation** - April 9th, 2015
- Introductions and Purpose of the Tall Buildings Study
- Review of Goals and Objectives for the Tall Buildings Study
- Confirmation of Draft Principles
- Schedule
- Review of Draft Outline and Study Structure
- Draft Downtown Area Analysis and Inventory

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting** - April 9th, 2015
- Introductions and Purpose of Study
- Review of Goals and Objectives
- Confirmation of Draft Principles
- Planning Framework Gap Analysis
- Review of Draft Outline and Study Structure
- Character Area Framework
- Contextual Mitigation
- Building Massing

**Community Meeting and Workshop** - May 26th, 2015
- Open House
- Presentation
- Questions
- Workshop #1: Inventory and Analysis
- Workshop #2: Character Areas Review
- Workshop #3: Options Review
- Workshop Feedback

**Technical Advisory Committee Meeting** - April 11st, 2016
- TBD

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting** - April 14th, 2016
- TBD

**Community Meeting and Workshop** - April 27th, 2016
- TBD
1.5 Vision and Principles

Following preliminary analysis, background review, case studies and best practices review, the first round of consultation focused on identifying and clarifying the vision and principles for the study. This was developed through an iterative process of consulting with City Staff, the Community Liaison Committee and the public. The Tall Buildings Study is guided by ten 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 to and from 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 incentive to **realize related policy objectives.**

10. Location of Tall Buildings should be **informed by Transit Infrastructure.**
2.0 Downtown Area Analysis

The physical shape and form of the Downtown can help determine where Tall Buildings would be most appropriately located. The following diagrams illustrate analysis conducted for the Downtown Area, focusing on:

- Topography
- Downtown Connections
- Heritage Buildings
- Surrounding Neighbourhoods
- Surface Parking Lots
- Places of Worship
- Parks, Schools & Schoolyards
- Permitted Heights
- Existing Tall Buildings
- Recent Development Applications
- Views
2.1 Topography

The topography of Hamilton’s Downtown is characterized by: the Niagara Escarpment, which runs roughly parallel to Downtown’s southern edge and rises to an elevation approximately 120m above the level of the Gore; the Harbour to the north, together with remnant creeks that flow 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.
2.2 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).
2.3 Heritage Buildings

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan Appendix F identifies elements of designated heritage significance (see map to the left).

Additionally, the Downtown Built Heritage Inventory (completed in 2014) identifies a long list of heritage properties including recommended, registered and designated buildings.

Specific guidelines are required for the integration and/or response of tall buildings with heritage properties.
1. Lister Block - 1923

2. Landed Banking and Loan Company Building - 1908

3. Pigott Building - 1928

4. Hamilton Brass Manufacturing Co. Building - 1873

5. Hamilton GO Centre - 1933

6. John Sopinka Courthouse - 1935

7. James St South Stone Terrace buildings - 1854
2.4 Surrounding Neighbourhoods

Downtown Hamilton is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods several of which overlap with the boundary of the Downtown. Each neighbourhood has its own unique physical character creating diverse interface conditions and typologies in the Downtown. The Tall Building Study considers how to best transition to and interface with these neighbourhoods, from a character perspective as well as a built form perspective.
Strathcona, Kirkendall, Durand, Corktown

Characterized by regular rectilinear 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, up to and beyond Wellington Street.
North End, Beasley
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.

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.

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

Centered around Downtown Hamilton’s primary public space- Gore Park- the Gore Neighbourhood is characterized by a consistent collection of civic buildings that frame the Park.
2.5 Surface Parking Lots

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 infill and potentially tall buildings and will require particular attention from the Study. Two parking lots (shown in green) have already been identified in the Secondary Plan as locations for future parkland.
2.6 Places of Worship

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 mitigated. In addition to the parks, schools and yards, the map also identifies major schools and learning centres located in the Downtown.
2.7 Parks, Schools & Schoolyards

- Bayfront Park
- Victoria Park
- Beasley Park
- City Hall plaza
- Prince's Square
- Gore Park
- Corktown Park
- Samuel Lawrence Park
2.8 Transit

The map to the left highlights three of the proposed transit lines as part of the BLAST Plan, the network concept as a result of the 2007 Transportation Master Plan and the Metrolinx regional plan, The Big Move. The B Line is one of 15 priority projects in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area and studies are currently underway.

Rapid Ready is a five year multi-modal transportation plan approved by Hamilton City Council on February 27, 2013. The Plan includes a strategy to prepare Hamilton for rapid transportation and an outline of funding requirements.

The 10 Year Local Transit Strategy approved by Council in March 11, 2015 builds upon Rapid Ready and provides short term actions for City Council to continue developing its transit network.
2.9 Permitted Heights - Downtown Secondary Plan

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

The ten tallest existing buildings within and surrounding Hamilton's Downtown are indicated on the map. The following pages further outline year of construction, height and address. The majority of these (7) are between 22 and 25 storeys tall. The remaining three are 25, 33 and 43 storeys tall respectively.
1. LANDMARK PLACE
Year: 1974
Height: 127 m (43 flr)
Address: 100 Main St.E.

2. STELCO TOWER
Year: 1973
Height: 103 m (25 flr)
Address: 100 King St.W.

3. OLYMPIA APARTMENTS
Year: 1976
Height: 98 m (33 flr)
Address: 150 Charlton E.

4. BDC BUILDING
Year: 1971
Height: 91 m (22 flr)
Address: 25 Main St. W.

5. THE MARTINIQUE
Year: 1984
Height: 84 m (25 flr)
Address: 155 Park St. S.

6. THE VILLAGER
Year: circa 1980
Height: 80 m (25 flr)
Address: 160 Market St.

Escarption
Section at Victoria Street

View from the Lake
7. BAY 200
Year: 1975
Height: 80 m (25 flr)
Address: 200 Bay St. S.

8. QUEEN'S TERRACE
Year: 1974
Height: 80 m (25 flr)
Address: 151 Queen St. N.

9. 55 HESS STREET S.
Year: circa 1989
Height: 80 m (23 flr)
Address: 55 Hess St. S.

10. FIRST PLACE
HAMILTON
Year: 1976
Height: 78 m (25 flr)
Address: 350 King St. E.
2.11 Recent Development Applications

1. Royal Connaught
   Status: Phase 1 - Under Construction
   Phase 2 - Approved
   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 Main St W.

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.
At the time of study, there were five recently approved and/or under construction developments, ranging from 12 to 36 storeys, as illustrated here. The following pages illustrate a composite of existing and new approved/constructed tall buildings.
Existing Tall Buildings and Recent Development Applications

1. Royal Connaught
   Developer: Valery Homes and Spallacci Homes
   Height: 14, 21, 24, 36 floors
   Use: residential

2. The Connoy
   Developer: Stanton Renaissance
   Height: 30 floors
   Use: residential

3. Bella Tower Luxury Apartments
   Developer: Vrancor Development
   Height: 28 floors
   Use: residential

4. Tivoli Condos
   Developer: Diamante Investment
   Height: 21 floors
   Use: residential

5. 150 Main Street West
   Developer: Vrancor Development
   Height: 21 floors
   Use: residential
2.12 Views Towards the Lake and the Escarpment

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.
View of the Escarpment or ‘Mountain’ from East Hamilton

View of the Harbour from James St.
2.13 Vistas and Terminal Views

A Vista is ‘a line of vision, contained by buildings of landscaping, to a building or other feature which terminates the view’ (Hamilton’s Site Plan Guidelines).

These terminal views are sites usually located at the end of a travel route or at a sharp bend of the road, and consequently visible from long distances. They are natural locations for landmark buildings and places, as they stand out from their surrounding context and are easily recognizable from afar.

That is the case for some of Hamilton’s Downtown landmarks, such as the Hamilton City Centre, the Go Hamilton Centre Terminal as well as the Gore.

The map identified the location of other potential Vistas.
1. GO Station Vista

2. Hamilton City Centre Vista

3. The Gore Terminal Vista
### 3.0 Building Types

#### 3.1 Site Assessment Matrix

As per the Secondary Plan, building heights fall into three ranges: Low Rise (2-4 storeys); Mid-rise (6 to 8 storeys) and High-rise (12+ storeys). The following matrix identifies how one factor which informs the possible building type is site frontage and lot depth. This is cross-referenced with the six Character Areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRONTAGE</th>
<th>LOT DEPTH</th>
<th># STOREYS</th>
<th>HEIGHT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - 30m</td>
<td>20 - 90m</td>
<td>4 - 6 str (max)</td>
<td>22m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30m + (min)</td>
<td>32.6m - 44.6m (min.)</td>
<td>6 - 12 str (max)</td>
<td>19.5m - 34.5m (max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35m + (min)</td>
<td>45.5m + (min)</td>
<td>12+ str</td>
<td>35m +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80m + (min)</td>
<td>80m + (min)</td>
<td>12+ str</td>
<td>35m +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Building Types - Lowrise Infill

Frontage: 5-30m
Depth: 20-90m
R.O.W: 20-24m
#of Storeys: 4-6 str
Max. Height: 22m
Lowrise Infill Precedents

Templar Flats - King William St.

Commercial Building - James St.

Beasley Park Towns - Wilson St.
3.3 Building Types - Midrise

Frontage: **30m+**

Depth: **32.6-51.8m**

R.O.W: **20-36m**

# of Storeys: **6-12 str**

Max. Height: **19.5-34.5m**
Midrise Precedents

Residences at Acclamation - James St. N, Hamilton

Witton Lofts - Murray St., Hamilton
3.5 Building Types - Point Tower

Frontage: **35m+**
Depth: **45m+**
R.O.W: **20-27 m**
#of Storeys: **12 str+**
Max. Height: **35m+**
3.6 Building Types - Hybrid

Frontage: 75m+
Depth: 45m+
R.O.W: 20-27 m
#of Storeys: 12 str+
Max. Height: 35m+
Hybrid Precedents

150 Main - Main St. W.
4.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

Key outcomes of the Study include:

• Based on a consultative process, to confirm that there is strong identification with the Niagara Escarpment as a primary topographical and natural asset; therefore, to establish that new tall building's should be no greater in height than the Escarpment;

• To identify additional prominent views, vistas and landmarks within and around the Downtown which should be respected;

• To outline how a tall building's form should respond to adjacent heritage buildings, including identification of appropriate set-backs, step-backs and separation distances;

• To identify the need to transition between public and private areas, as well as between tall buildings and adjacent lower-rise neighbourhoods through tower separation distances, transition of height and form;

• To mitigate shadow and wind impacts particularly on the public realm, parks and open space, school yards, and adjacent lower-rise residential areas;

• To ensure tall buildings support and enhance pedestrian comfort at-grade, through programming of more active uses at-grade, utilization of appropriate materials and façade treatments, and sculpting of tall building elements to prevent down draft conditions at-grade; and,

• To provide precedents, illustrations and diagrammatic examples of quality design.

Based on the preliminary analysis, different Character Areas exist within the Downtown; the Tall Building Guidelines identify such areas and outline design-related priorities for each in order to inform the specific design of tall buildings and the compatibility with the area character and context.

The Tall Buildings Guidelines seeks to further specify additional goals, criteria and standards regarding the form and function of Tall Buildings within the Downtown, and should be read as the continuation and result of this Study.

The recommendations of the Study and Guidelines are supportive of a number of objectives and policies as outlined in two primary policy documents: The Urban Hamilton Official Plan, and the Downtown Secondary Plan.