

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Introduction to Saugeen Shores

The Town of Saugeen Shores was formed in 1999 by amalgamating the Town of Port Elgin, the Town of Southampton and the Township of Saugeen. The Town has a population of approximately 12,000 persons and is a vibrant, growing community that wishes to retain its small town character and lifestyle. The community has a rich cultural heritage and a beautiful natural setting with Lake Huron and the Saugeen River as main attractions.

Several plans and studies in the recent history of these communities have sought to identify community values. A review of both the Port Elgin and the Saugeen Shores Strategic Plans (1996); a survey conducted by the Southampton Residents' Association (2005); and public comments expressed in the Background Report to the 2006 Saugeen Shores Official Plan update identified that the following values are of enduring importance to the citizens of Saugeen Shores:

1. *Small Town Atmosphere (Mix of Urban and Rural Character)*
2. *High Quality of Life*
3. *Natural Attractions (Waterfront, Beaches and Sunsets, River, Recreational Trails)*
4. *Tourism Amenities and Activities*
5. *Rich Cultural Heritage including Heritage Architecture*

## 1.2. Overview of Rationale for Urban Design Guidelines

In its true sense, 'urban' most accurately describes those parts of our built environment that are discernibly different from their suburban and rural counterparts. It implies denser arrangements of buildings characterized by overlapping patterns of use and clearly defined human-scaled spaces where citizens interact with one another.

These factors create a system of relationships that is larger and more comprehensive than the design of individual buildings and which requires special consideration for best results. The organization of these various factors, including building design, landscape open space, transportation and environment are referred to as 'urban design' and guidelines provide clear examples of the standards and good practices that are necessary for the creation of successful, memorable places.

### 1.2.1. Purpose of Saugeen Shores Design Guidelines

The Saugeen Shores Urban Design Guidelines are intended to be flexible and to encourage builders and developers to propose innovative designs that contribute to the quality of life in Saugeen Shores. The Design Guidelines emphasize qualitative statements rather than quantitative standards wherever possible, and focus on describing a desired urban structure including private and public realms. Further, they provide guidance to applicants and staff alike for revitalization of lands and a framework for development.

The goal of the Saugeen Shores Urban Design Guidelines **is to create a blueprint for the design of future growth within the community**. This document represents a planning tool that will allow the Town to achieve a vision for Highway 21 and High Street, the 'Main Streets' of Saugeen Shores. While growth and development are important within the community, it is also important to preserve and **enhance the characteristics of 'small town' that create a pedestrian scale and atmosphere** within Saugeen Shores. This key principle, together with municipal urban design initiatives including streetscape enhancements, will act as a catalyst for increased business activity and further enhance this community as an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

### 1.2.2. Objectives of the Design Guidelines

As noted, the overall goal of the project is to create a blueprint for the look and feel of future development along the commercial corridor of Saugeen Shores, one that maintains and enhances those characteristics of Saugeen Shores that its citizens hold dear. Towards this end, the guidelines are intended to:

- maintain and improve the visual image and identity of Saugeen Shores, by raising awareness of Town's unique identity and increasing its presence with key structural components;
- ensure that strong pressures for development are directed to achieve better design quality by making sure new development is appropriate and 'fits' into the Town setting;
- ensure high quality urban design is achieved from new development across the entire Municipality;
- foster greater interest in the positive contributions new development can make to the public realm and commitment to making places for people to appreciate and enjoy; and
- improve the overall quality of the public realm along the corridor by improving connections and creating spaces that people utilize.

## 1.3. History and Context

The Town of Saugeen Shores, together with the County of Bruce, undertook this project in 2008/2009 in order to support growing community interest in the design of its buildings and spaces. As Saugeen Shores' transitions from a small beach town into a

community with several large-scale developments, it has become apparent to the community that there is a need to ensure that new development 'fits' with the desired urban fabric of the community.

Understanding and describing this desirable urban fabric involved a number of steps that are highlighted below. These steps involved all levels of community stakeholders from Council to businesses and the public. It was essential to this process to take every opportunity to ensure that all issues were highlighted and that solutions were appropriately articulated. These guidelines represent the combined efforts of community members and planning and design professionals to identify and express how community identities for Port Elgin and Southampton should be reflected in the built environment along the main commercial streets. The following outlines the contextual process to create the design guidelines.

#### **1.3.1. STEP 1: Determining the Project Scope**

The project focus was outlined as the Highway 21 and High Street corridors of Saugeen Shores. This area was chosen as the area of focus in order to:

- Take the opportunity to define and unify its character;
- Influence development in the area of the municipality that is experiencing the most development pressure;
- Recognize this corridor(s) significance as the most traveled and used street(s) in the Town; and
- Work at a project with a manageable size and scale.

#### **1.3.2. STEP 2: Identifying Urban Design Issues**

One of the essential tasks related to this project was to identify the design issues that the community felt needed to be addressed. A Public workshop held in July 2008 was used to identify design issues and to clarify the direction of the guidelines.

The initial Community Workshop identified several issues or themes to be addressed through the guidelines that were presented to the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) in September 2008.

- Incorporate good design principles into new development;
- Protect and enhance the natural environment;
- Create a gateway or entrance to the community;
- Improve the streetscape in core areas and extend design elements along Highway 21;

- Incorporate mixed use buildings in the commercial areas;
- Make the corridor accessible and convenient for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Improve traffic circulation and parking functionality;
- Acknowledge the unique character in both Port Elgin and Southampton;
- Implement a design theme to guide development;
- Maintain a “Small Town” atmosphere/character; and
- Manage signs and billboards in an appropriate fashion.

### **1.3.3. STEP 3: Recognizing Saugeen Shores’ Design Vision**

In addition to the Design Guidelines project, the Town of Saugeen Shores in 2008/2009 undertook a number of initiatives with goals related to community improvement. The Town initiated a Signage and Wayfinding Strategy along with the County the Bruce; a branding exercise to clarify the identity of Port Elgin and Southampton; and a Community Improvement Plan to improve the downtown core area of Port Elgin. These various projects and their public processes reaffirmed the issues and direction for the design guidelines. For example, the CIP committee undertook an extensive public input process that highlighted the following key areas that needed focus:

- Pedestrian friendliness / Accessibility
- Branding / Aesthetics
- Environment
- Traffic Flow / Parking
- Property Standards / Historical Preservation

Simultaneously, the Town participated in a branding exercise through the Signage and Wayfinding initiative to clearly articulate the community’s identity. The results of that process highlighted the following strengths:

### Port Elgin

- Sunsets
- Vibrant
- Friendly
- Family
- Progressive
- Beach
- Growth
- Casual
- Safe
- Relaxed
- Lifestyle
- Home

### Southampton

- Lighthouse
- Heritage
- Culture / Sophisticated
- Elegant
- Sunsets / Beach
- Natural Beauty

One of the more extensive public consultation processes developed the vision statement for the Town's Official Plan. The Town of Saugeen Shores Official Plan states the following vision:

“Saugeen Shores will continue to be a leader in Bruce County in providing a place for families, retirees, culture, tourism, business and industrial opportunities. It is the objective of this Plan to help preserve both the identity and the diversity of the unique communities that jointly form the Town of Saugeen Shores while strengthening and enhancing a sense of oneness.”

Again, this community vision echoes the overarching design principles that are reflected in the design vision presented below.

#### **1.3.4. STEP 4: Developing a Design Vision**

As established in the various public input gathering exercises, Lake Huron is the prevailing asset recognized by residents of Saugeen Shores. The beaches, sunsets, boardwalks, lighthouses, and the opportunities for activity that they afford are frequently referred to in statements of community strengths, values, and assets. The key opportunity of these design guidelines is to unify the community by identifying ways to embrace the connections between the key commercial corridors and the best asset of the community – the waterfront.

The approach taken in these guidelines is highly context-specific, and recognizes that Port Elgin and Southampton have subtle differences in their built form, urban structure, and population characteristics that suggest different ways of appreciating the opportunities afforded by the waterfront. This has the potential to translate into distinct design approaches for each community that convey the waterfront theme.

#### **1.3.4.1. Port Elgin – ‘National Geographic World’s Best Sunset’**

Public descriptions of Port Elgin typically portray the community as a fun, contemporary, and inviting beach community and attribute its character to:

- A comparatively more commercial atmosphere than the rest of Saugeen Shores with a long, straight commercial ribbon that is the backbone of the Town;
- A thriving young, family-based community;
- A laid back atmosphere attributed to a robust beach / tourist economy; and
- A historical / traditional downtown complimented with an increase in new commercial development and housing starts.

Whether folk lore or fact, the residents of ‘Port’ refer to the community’s sunset as one of the world’s best. This iconic image is confirmed in all forms of media from promotional material through the Municipality’s logo and is a great starting point for development of the design guidelines. In combination with the keywords identified in the community’s branding exercise, the design guidelines for ‘Port’ need to support the atmosphere of a vibrant, relaxed, family-oriented resort with a beautiful waterfront and picturesque sunset as a backdrop.

#### **1.3.4.2. Southampton – ‘Oldest Port on the Bruce Coast’**

Southampton residents are proud of their heritage buildings and lighthouses, art school, and boardwalk. Specifically when the public describes Southampton they portray a trim, historical beach community with a character arising from:

- A comparatively compact, vibrant, commercial core terminating at the waterfront;
- Historic shore lighthouses and harbour;
- A cozy, cottage-type community with treed lanes and comfortable streets; and
- Strong cultural institutions like the art school and the museum.

Southampton’s strength comes from its marine heritage and its timeless natural beauty. The Chantry Island and its lighthouse are the iconic image of Southampton, which again is confirmed throughout the community. This icon in combination with the keywords

identified in the branding exercise, are the starting point for the design guidelines depicting the image of Southampton as a place that invites you to stroll along High Street or the boardwalk and relax, reflect, and enjoy this beachfront community at sunset in the ‘Oldest Port on the Bruce Coast.

### **1.3.5. STEP 5: Implementing the Design Vision**

The design guidelines support the *DESIGN VISION* by articulating the design direction outlined above and addressing key design considerations for the community and, in doing so, promote a higher standard for development that is suited to the distinct identity of Saugeen Shores and its constituent communities.

The *DESIGN PRINCIPLES* that flow from this vision are developed in Chapter 2. These principles, of a *Unique, Intimate, and Inviting Community* express the desired characteristics of the community that are to be reflected in the guidelines. These design principles underpin the *GENERAL GUIDELINES*, which address common elements of the design issues identified, such as building form.

More specific *DISTRICT GUIDELINES* are provided for areas within both Port Elgin and Southampton where common characteristics among developments invite specific recommendations to establish a particular context for new development.

## **1.4. The Nuts and Bolts / Using the Guideline**

### **1.4.1. Using the Guidelines**

Once adopted, this document will provide a guideline that will be used to review the suitability of public and private development proposals. These guidelines are intended for use by Municipal Council, Municipal Staff, Development Applicants, and members of the community. The principles adopted in the guidelines will ensure that future development contributes to the continuity of the built environment and strengthens the functional and aesthetic qualities along the commercial corridors of Saugeen Shores. Users of the guideline should review the general guidelines and the district guidelines specific to the area under consideration.

### **1.4.2. Terminology**

These design guidelines include recommendations directed towards the public and the private realm. Many projects will involve both the public and the private realm.

#### **1.4.2.1. Public Realm**

The Public realm is best defined as the network of public spaces – streets, sidewalks, parks, alleys, and public rights-of-way – that comprise the connective tissue of spaces that citizens share in their daily lives. The public realm consists of areas within the Town of Saugeen Shores that are publicly or privately owned, where access is open and without charge to everyone to use or see.

#### **1.4.2.2. Private Realm**

The character of public space is primarily formed by the arrangement and details of the elements that define it – the walls of buildings that enclose a public park, the storefronts in commercial areas, or the dwellings that line a residential street– are all privately owned areas that greatly impact the ability of citizens to enjoy their public spaces. The private realm areas within the Town of Saugeen Shores are both publicly and / or privately owned.

#### **1.4.3. Authority**

The design guidelines build upon the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law of the Town of Saugeen Shores and are intended to provide design considerations that are consistent with those policy documents. While these guidelines are not mandatory, compliance with these design guidelines is strongly encouraged. Where there is an outstanding conflict between the guidelines and the Official Plan or Zoning By-Law, the Plan or By-Law takes precedence. The guideline development process has sought to identify potential conflicts and recommend amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law to promote higher quality design. Following these guidelines will benefit the community by providing high quality and context-sensitive Main Street development in Saugeen Shores.

## 2 Design Principles

### 2.1 Overview

Saugeen Shores features two distinct downtown cores along the Highway 21 Corridor that are separated by agricultural and rural lands. Port Elgin and Southampton are historic ports stemming from a similar era of settlement. As such, their heritage architecture is not markedly different. Both main streets feature historic yellow-brick buildings, a diversity of residential structures including cottages, bungalows, manors, and farmhouses, and a variety of commercial buildings of a range of vintages.

As noted, the goal for the Design Guidelines is to create a blueprint for the future development of Saugeen Shores. This future development will promote creative new initiatives and redevelopment proposals that will contribute to the aesthetics and function of the existing built form of Saugeen Shores.

The community issues that were identified, along with the unique qualities recognized in Chapter 1, were distilled into three guiding principles that summarize the desired community *DESIGN VISION* for development proposals. A public workshop was held in spring of 2009 to present these *DESIGN PRINCIPLES* to the community prior to establishment of the guidelines. These principles, listed and described below, form the basis of the organizational structure used to create the guidelines.

- Unique Community
- Inviting Community
- Intimate Community

The *DESIGN PRINCIPLES* along with the *GENERAL GUIDELINES* will be considered as they relate to each development proposal that is submitted to the Town of Saugeen Shores. More specific *DISTRICT GUIDELINES* are also provided, and it is intended that they be used in conjunction with these overall principles.

### 2.2 UNIQUE COMMUNITY

Saugeen Shores is most notable for its location along the shore of Lake Huron with each community recognizing individual assets related to that waterfront relationship. Some residents have described Port Elgin as a commercial centre, while Southampton is more of a cottage community. The most noticeable physical distinction between these communities is that Port Elgin, with a long and straight highway corridor running through the Town, is home to the majority of the Municipality's commercial development, whereas

the corridor curves closer to the Lake and crosses the Saugeen river on its way through Southampton, and the relatively short High Street commercial area runs perpendicular to Highway 21.

The Design Principle of “Unique Community” refers to the need to:

- Reinforce the design identity of both communities;
- Reflect the natural heritage resources in each community;
- Create coherence with while fostering creativity;
- Reflect the cultural heritage and value the past history of each community; and
- Reinforce the unique features that define the character of each community.

*Therefore, the Guidelines are structured to:*

- Identify features that improve image and legibility by enhancing the attributes that contribute to Southampton’s heritage atmosphere and Port Elgin’s family-friendly atmosphere;
- Address challenges and take advantage of the opportunities related to interacting with the waterfront location in each community;
- Create distinctive urban form and shape distinctive neighbourhoods to create local identity by promoting creative new development that supports and enhances the best features of these areas within the larger community; and
- Protect and enhance views and gateways to and from established landmarks and recognize distinctive urban built form.

### **2.3 INTIMATE COMMUNITY**

In addition to the attractiveness and uniqueness of Saugeen Shores, we also recognize that maintaining the small-town character and atmosphere in Saugeen Shores is important. Although what makes a community intimate is difficult to define typically the qualities that distinguish us from other communities are also the qualities that create familiarity and a level of comfort and connectedness for its citizens.

The Design Principle of “Intimate Community” refers to the need to:

- Create streets where people can walk around and see each other face-to-face;

- Provide accessible public places where people can walk, sit, play, relax, and talk;
- Enhance our public spaces and define them with interesting buildings, art, and trees;
- Support a full range of accessible community businesses and services that are vibrant and foster our commercial cores as destinations; and
- Provide a variety of housing opportunities for all segments of the community.

*Therefore, the Guidelines are structured to:*

- Promote an active pedestrian environment by creating developments that connect with local streetscapes and provide opportunities for sidewalk uses like cafes, sidewalk sales, and public art;
- Recommend critical upgrades to pedestrian infrastructure including sidewalks and benches;
- Promote urban forestry for beauty and shade;
- Add vitality and safety to the downtown core by strengthening and supporting the core businesses;
- Enhance building interaction with the streetscape; and
- Strengthen and extend the network of open spaces and create a vibrant public realm by encouraging opportunities to create new public spaces in association with development.

## **2.4 INVITING COMMUNITY**

Saugeen Shores is an inviting place to live and visit. This is an overwhelming ‘theme’ that is expressed throughout the community, from the Official Plan documents to community workshops.

The Design Principle of “Inviting Community” therefore refers to the need to:

- Provide a clear sense of wayfinding so that it is both easy to find and to get to the places that people want to go;
- Provide a high quality experience that is recognized by the continuity and quality of the built environment (things don’t feel out of place);
- Encourage lighting that provides safety and security while minimizing light pollution;
- Have a high level of security reflected in design features to help people feel safe and secure without high fences and cameras; and

- Recognizing that our main street is also our main traffic corridor, design must promote accessibility and circulation of pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile traffic.

*Therefore, the Guidelines are structured to:*

- Support the efficient use of Port Elgin’s highway corridor lands to support its commercial role and provide a more walkable, ‘urban’ character in the town;
- Pursue every opportunity to increase the aesthetic characteristics of the corridor by incorporating aspects like landscaping, pedestrian access, tree canopy cover, etc.;
- Create lively and attractive local places by mixing uses and providing for human scale and promoting safe and sustainable communities;
- Encourage dark sky compliant lighting in new development and re-development proposals;
- Define gateways, edges and settings that can be improved through appropriate new development. Gateways should provide integration and visual continuity from urban to rural areas; and
- Integrate parking so that it does not dominate the development, the streetscape, or adjacent developments.

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## 3 General Guidelines

### 3.1 Introduction

The following guidelines have been developed to communicate how the Design Principles of a unique, intimate, and inviting community affect key areas of the physical community of Saugeen Shores. These key areas include Landmarks and Edges, Getting Around Town, Buildings, Open Space, and the Environment.

### 3.2 Landmarks and Edges

#### 3.2.1 Gateways

A Landmark can be a sign, landscape feature, work of art, building, or other feature that defines or represents a town, neighbourhood, downtown, or other destination. Landmarks can be simple or complex, small or large, specific to a single site or extend over several blocks, but should always be readily associated with the location they represent.

- ❖ **Community Identity** should be enhanced in conjunction with landmarks; conspicuous landmarks should be created with strategic land uses at key locations in the town, such as town and neighbourhood entrances;
- ❖ **Local Culture** and surrounding features should be reflected in landmark design;
- ❖ **Local Image** and **Legibility** should be improved by landmarks to help people feel like they are in a distinct place;
- ❖ **Creativity, boldness** and **consistency** can be used to foster intrigue and interest; and
- ❖ **Sustainability** and **Durability** are key considerations for architectural components. Landmarks should be timeless and of continuing relevance to the community.
- ❖ **Buildings** can be excellent landmarks. Buildings in landmark locations, such as corner lots and T-intersections off the corridor should be designed to draw extra attention to their location.

**Single Landmark:** This type of landmark is developed for a SINGLE LOCATION and helps to create an identity and orient visitors in the area. Landmarks typically signify an entrance or other important intersection or location, and might include the construction of a “landmark” structure, landscaping, signage, and lighting. Smaller “Welcome” signs and gardens at the entrance to the town or neighbourhood can also serve as landmarks.

**Multiple Landmark:** This type of landmark consists of SERIES OF TWO OR MORE RELATED FEATURES along a common corridor or area. Each individual element may be similar to others or may take on the character of the immediate area in which it is located while maintaining some common design elements. This type of landmark is often used to distinguish different neighbourhoods or districts along a common route.

**Landmark Corridor:** This type of landmark is developed as a CONTINUOUS SYSTEM along a highway, street, or greenway, and may include landscaping, signage, banners, lighting and other streetscape elements in addition to landmark elements used to signify a high-profile corridor or district.

### 3.2.2 Edges

Edges provide the first visual impressions of a community, neighbourhood, or even a single development. They can present a welcoming atmosphere or can be indifferent and even threatening. Development edges and the settings they create can be improved through appropriate new development. Some developments are too close to important edges and present building faces with lower-quality finishing. Some edge locations are unsightly or derelict. It is too often assumed that substandard treatment of these areas is acceptable but edge sites are often highly visible, especially from vantage points along roadways. A strong and confident development edge provides the first hint about the character and quality of the community. Combining topography and landscape with higher quality built forms can produce an attractive result.

Development edges can be defined and improved in a number of ways including:

- ❖ **Distinctive Built Form** with the creation of unique new developments and the protection of established landmarks to create local identity;
- ❖ **Landscaped Buffers** at the edges of community boundaries or where there are significant land use changes. Urban forestry should be encouraged for beauty and shade;
- ❖ **Connecting** the corridor and adjacent developments with pathways and cycleways to residential neighbourhoods;
- ❖ **Environmental Areas**, such as river frontage, should be enhanced and protected by ensuring that peripheral developments include measures to improve environmental quality; and
- ❖ **Public Spaces** should be connected, enhanced, and defined with interesting buildings, art, and trees.

## 3.3 Getting Around Town

### 3.3.1 Roadways and Access

The Highway corridor does double-duty as the primary route for through traffic and the locus of local commercial activity. In recognition of this reality, it is critical that developments along the corridor maintain or improve the efficiency of automobile travel while providing local access to people stopping to use the services and amenities of the corridor. Further, the roadway travel experience should be of the highest quality in order to encourage travellers to stop and shop.

The roadway itself should feature:

- ❖ **Driving lanes** that are efficient and in good repair
- ❖ **Alternative Transportation** opportunities including bicycle lanes, route signs, and ‘share the road’ signs
- ❖ **Controlled access** with driveways from adjoining streets or shared with adjacent lots through a joint-access easement
- ❖ **Aligned entrances** so that driveways across the street from each other line up and avoid overlapping left hand turns
- ❖ **Treed Medians and boulevards** in selected areas to separate traffic and increase street enclosure

### 3.3.2 Parking

Parking areas should be easy to access and navigate but should not dominate the landscape along the corridor. Onsite parking should be located to the side or rear of buildings. Adequate space should be provided for delivery, service, and emergency vehicles to manoeuvre on the site and for snow storage. (TS). Parking opportunities are somewhat dependent upon individual site conditions and opportunities for shared parking; offsite parking may be possible for commercial uses provided it is located within (200m) of the property. Development proposals are encouraged to find ways to share parking and road access and are encouraged to submit evidence that reduced parking standards are acceptable.

Parking areas should feature:

- ❖ **Sharing** of parking spaces between uses to minimize paved surfaces in new development and intensify development on existing sites
- ❖ **Safe Design** with lighting, landscaping, and parking design that limits opportunities for concealment;
- ❖ **Landscaping** that divides large parking areas into smaller areas and establishes street-like internal circulation systems;
- ❖ **Pedestrian Accessibility** with clearly defined pedestrian routes from parking areas to the building entrance and priority parking spaces for people with handicaps or disabilities

- ❖ **Snow Storage** areas that minimize the visual impact of large snow piles. Snow storage in front setback areas should not exceed 1.5m in height; and
- ❖ **Bicycle Parking** areas that are sheltered wherever possible, highly visible, and secure racks (not wheel-benders)
- ❖ **Sharing** of parking among multiple retailers can result in better overall use of space

### 3.3.3 Wayfinding and Signage

People need to be able to figure out where they are and how to find things they want to see or do. A clear signage system plays a significant role. In 2008 the Municipality of Saugeen Shores joined with the County of Bruce to develop a tourist-oriented wayfinding system that unifies the Municipality while identifying the individual design vision for each community. A comprehensive wayfinding system was developed including gateway signs, interpretive markers, and pedestrian map directories. Signs within the community carry a header element that takes its design from that community's gateway sign.

In addition to 'public' signs, commercial signs play an important role in identifying commercial and industrial buildings and help attract customers. In rural areas signs are particularly important in identifying locations and attracting motorists traveling along the corridor.

Signs should be:

- ❖ **Visible** so that they can be read – not concealed behind trees, placed too high or too low, or too small. Perpendicular signs can be read from a great distance, and can be read by drivers and pedestrians without turning their heads.
- ❖ **Clear** so that they communicate what they need to convey. Contrasting colours and symbols are helpful for people with impaired vision or limited literacy.
- ❖ **Coherent** so that they make sense and contribute to the design vision of the corridor and the rest of the town. This is particularly important for multiple-tenant signs in commercial developments
- ❖ **Tactile** with depth and texture incorporated as design features; back-lit signs are discouraged
- ❖ **Accurate** so that people who aren't local can find out what you offer
- ❖ **Connected** to the storefront or the site. Rooftop, pylon, portable/temporary, and off-site signs (ie billboards for off-site tenants) are discouraged

### 3.3.4 Drive-Throughs

Drive-throughs are a unique land use that has the potential to profoundly impact traffic, the streetscape, and surrounding uses. They can provide a high frequency of service with significantly reduced demand for parking spaces, but potential issues arising from their development require special attention.

Drive-Throughs should be:

- ❖ **Located** in Highway Commercial areas to serve the motoring public without interfering with downtown traffic;
- ❖ **Buffered** from adjacent uses with landscaping, berms, and fencing to mitigate noise and visual impacts;
- ❖ **Accessed** from side streets, or with entrances as far as possible from an intersection;
- ❖ **Landscaped** with a full front yard and no vehicle lanes between the building and the street. A mixture of native, salt-tolerant coniferous and deciduous species should be used and designed to provide shade;
- ❖ **Organized** to avoid traffic conflicts, with continuous stacking lanes and clear pedestrian access to the building from the street.

### 3.3.5 Unmotorized movement

As we learn more about how our built environment affects our health we have realized that unless safe, comfortable alternatives are provided, people will not get out of their cars. Creating a people-friendly environment that connects to the broader community in conjunction with new developments promotes a healthy lifestyle and encourages people to leave their cars and walk or roll around. This in turn promotes shopping and dining as the time spent in the area is increased, thereby increasing economic prosperity. While the discussion of corridor streetscaping as it relates to pedestrians is found in the open space section, it is additionally important to recognize the need to:

- ❖ **Make it Easy** to get around without a car by providing safe, clearly signed places to leave cars, bikes, and scooters, ample handicapped parking spaces, and clean, smooth, and well-maintained places to walk and roll;
- ❖ **Connect** the pedestrian system in a way that promotes use by creating a safe, comfortable experience;
- ❖ Provide **at-grade entrances** with gentle slopes as all users can access the system and when necessary provide ramps; and
- ❖ **Make it Safe** by correcting grades, replacing sidewalks, and using pedestrian-scaled lighting so that the entire system can function.

## 3.4 Buildings

### 3.4.1 Size, Shape, and Location

Buildings define much of the physical character of the community. Important basic elements of buildings include their *Size*: How big the building feels; *Shape*: Whether the buildings are narrow or wide, shallow or deep, tall or short; and *Location*: near the street or set further back, close to other buildings or all alone. These features establish the basic frame for how the street feels. Much of the way we perceive and interact with our built environment stems from these basic elements.

Buildings can also speak to our cultural heritage. New development along the corridor should fit with its surroundings to enhance our cultural environment. New development or redevelopment should be:

- ❖ **Scaled** in a way that supports and maintains the historical pattern of building development along the corridor; the setback and frontage of the street should increase towards the core of the community;
- ❖ **Situated** to create a sense of enclosure, safety, and comfort by ensuring the interaction with the street is appropriate. Developments should put their best face forward to creating an inviting entrance;
- ❖ **Similar in height** to neighbouring buildings; up to a one-storey difference is appropriate height between adjacent buildings or additions. A porch or colonnade, belt course of bricks, “stepped” increase, and/or roof details should be used to ease transitions greater than one storey; and
- ❖ **Set back** from the street in keeping with neighbouring buildings and structures to create uniformity along the streetscape. Typically the sense of enclosure is higher in the cores where buildings are closer to the street, making things feel more like a ‘town centre’.

### 3.4.2 Fit and Finish

Built form further influences the street and community atmosphere by reflecting the local context. The cultural heritage of Saugeen Shores includes lumber mills and furniture factories, active ports and fisheries, and recreational development. These activities have resulted in a wide variety of Commercial, Residential, Mixed-Use, and Industrial buildings. Further, a variety of materials, colours, and details have been employed in Saugeen Shores, resulting in an interesting but somewhat eclectic townscape that would benefit from some underlying order. Careful attention to building details such as the placement and proportions of windows, doors, and other architectural details can improve the coherence of a building and the street. Therefore, development and redevelopment should:

- ❖ **Reference** local heritage with high-quality design and construction that reflects the design vision and enhances the built environment of the community
- ❖ **Define** the building face with using windows, doors, sign boards, cornices, and other architectural features. These elements should be designed to balance the building mass and maintain the general pattern of windows, doors, and details along the street. Blank walls are discouraged.
- ❖ Improve the **coherence** of the corridor by considering the user’s needs and the best features of their site and surrounding development in relation to the overall design vision.
- ❖ **Treat Roofs** as an integral feature of the building design, and use roof features and details to screen any rooftop mechanical equipment.

### 3.4.3 Accessibility

Places that are open to the public should, as much as possible, be barrier-free. A “Walk and Roll” audit could be a valuable tool for assessing the current barriers to accessibility in the town; further advice from the Accessibility Committee could be taken, though preliminary recommendations could include:

- ❖ **Smooth Ramps** to provide access to local store, services, and institutions
- ❖ **Sidewalk standards** to maintain a straight, clear pedestrian pathway
- ❖ **Contrasting colours** to mark signs, steps, and grade changes
- ❖ **Audible signals** to assist in street crossings

### 3.4.4 Climate and Energy

The climate of Saugeen Shores is significantly affected by Lake Huron. Temperatures are moderated by its waters, which warm and cool slowly. Winds can be strong, having traveled uninterrupted for over a hundred kilometers, picking up moisture along the way and releasing heavy snowfalls and rains in the municipality.

Corridor development should consider these challenges and pursue opportunities to reduce energy needs, including:

- ❖ **Efficient Roofs** to provide environmental gains. Conventional roofs that use Highly reflective materials, such as white shingles/steel or gravel can cut air conditioning costs; solar panels for water heating or electrical generation reduce energy demand; and living roofs can improve insulation, capture carbon dioxide, and control storm water
- ❖ **Orienting** buildings along the street face, but with the longer dimension pointing generally north/south where possible
- ❖ **Insulation** that is thorough and thick
- ❖ **Natural Lighting** for daytime needs
- ❖ **Planting Trees** strategically to serve as windbreaks and provide summer shade.

### 3.4.5 Landscape

Landscaping provides context for a building, softening its edges and adding a finishing touch to its relationship with the ground, the street, and its surroundings. Landscaping also provides a visual connection between buildings, their lots, and the surrounding communal open space network, and serves as a buffer between uses with different visual and functional characteristics.

Landscaping should:

- ❖ **Add Texture** in three dimensions, incorporating natural ground covers, flowers, shrubs, and trees
- ❖ **Bridge** the landscape of the public realm and streetscape with the individual building and its site
- ❖ **Be Attractive** using low-maintenance native varieties wherever possible
- ❖ **Be Consistent** with the landscaping treatments of nearby spaces
- ❖ **Emphasize ease of access** to the building by creating a well-defined and welcoming approach

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## 3.3 Open Space

### 3.3.1 Public Parks

Courtyards, parks, and squares are gathering places that give a bit of breathing room and often become a focal point of the community. Green spaces are the ‘jewels’ on the necklace of the public realm. As such, they should be distributed along the corridor offering respite to the traveler both physically (a place to sit) and visually (breaking up the urban landscape). There are already a number of green spaces along the corridor and attempts should be made where possible to add to them. Parks along the corridor will be:

- ❖ **Visible** and identifiable features within the community;
- ❖ **Enhanced** with furnishings like bicycle racks, benches, garbage receptacles, etc and where possible enhanced with public art or elements of interest to animate the space;
- ❖ **Connected** by pedestrian and cycling routes to other parks, community activity areas and neighbourhoods;
- ❖ **Green** with a vegetated character that is sustainable within the urban context;
- ❖ **Clean** and well maintained with design appropriate to the types of use; and
- ❖ **Safe** by encouraging eyes on the park for public surveillance.

### 3.3.2 Streetscapes and Sidewalks

Streetscapes and sidewalks provide a way from one place to another. Great streets are also destinations in and of themselves. People will rush down uninviting or unremarkable streets, but will linger, meander, and enjoy the journey in pleasant places. Streetscapes should provide *pleasant, efficient and accessible* transportation for pedestrians including those whose mobility may be limited. Streets and sidewalks should feature:

- ❖ **Sustainable and durable construction** with a high standard of construction and ease of maintenance;
- ❖ **Pedestrian-scaled** lighting standards that provide even, directed lighting and reflects the design vision for the district;
- ❖ **Animating Features** including opportunities for leisurely enjoyment of the space while creating an experience through cafes, public art, programming, interesting window displays;
- ❖ **Street Trees and Planting Areas** for shade, enclosure, natural beauty, and relief from the hard surfaces of the town;
- ❖ **Separation** between pedestrians and vehicles that may include treed boulevards, amenity strips, or on street parking. Complementary materials can be used that define and prioritize pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle areas portions of the streetscape;

- ❖ **Street Furniture** that is coordinated and reflects the community design vision while providing parking spaces for bikes; and
- ❖ **Bulbouts and pedestrian crossings** at strategic locations to reduce turning speeds and calm traffic while giving pedestrians a comfortable landing before crossing the street.

### 3.3.3 Lanes and Trails

The Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Master Plan (2004) calls for the incorporation of trails, where possible, in new development or redevelopments in the Town. These trails may connect walkway blocks, parks and stormwater management facilities, and provide linkages to other trails within the Town. Alleys and trails provide a secondary movement system within the community. Alleys have a utilitarian heritage as short and narrow service access to back lots and buildings. Trails provide a non-motorized ‘highway’ through and between Port Elgin and Saugeen Shores. Both of these movement systems are essential to providing improved access to the corridor and attempts should be made to recognize and improve connections for both systems to the corridor.

#### 3.3.3.1 Laneways

Laneways are intimate passageways with occasional deliveries and represent an opportunity to develop pedestrian-priority access between beaches/trails/residential areas and the downtown.

- ❖ **Landscape** improvements that transition from intensive urban areas to less intensive neighbourhoods should be considered for downtown lanes. The style should reflect the design vision for each district;
- ❖ **Connect** this secondary/pedestrian movement system to the grid with streetscape features (bulbouts, trees, planters, public art);
- ❖ **Water** permeability should be improved wherever possible especially as neighbourhood connections become less formal;
- ❖ **Safety** is a priority for laneways, with lighting and landscaping designed to limit opportunities for concealment;
- ❖ **Enable** back-lot development to increase natural surveillance

#### 3.3.3.2 Trails

The Town of Saugeen Shores has developed a comprehensive Parks and Trails Master Plan and is currently making headway with improvements to the local trail system. A non-motorized rail trail provides an off-road recreational corridor that runs nearly the entire length of the corridor and crosses it twice. This plan includes recommendations for bringing trail crossings to and across the corridor, but provides little information in regard to cyclists interested in traveling or accessing businesses or amenities along the corridor.

Trail Development should:

- ❖ **Develop** commuting opportunities along the recreational trail system
- ❖ **Define** trail / route crossing points with signs, hardscaping etc.
- ❖ **Improve signage** for recommended cycling routes.

### 3.4 Environment

The Sustainability of our community and its relationship with the environment will be considered in design concepts of all new developments and redevelopments. As we are all aware, our influence on the environment greatly impacts the way we live. We have the ability to reduce the environmental footprint of our built form and improve the livability of our community. The environmental steering committee can be a tremendous resource to identify and promote best practices.

New development and / or redevelopment should consider:

- ❖ **Reuse** of existing buildings and site materials is encouraged if it can contribute to the sustainability of the site and community and, more importantly, to the conservation of site and community heritage;
- ❖ **Renewable Energy Design** is encouraged when developing and current trends in ground source, wind and solar collection should be considered as noted with other recommendations in the Built Form Guidelines;
- ❖ **Water Efficiency, Quality and Recharge** in site design by developing plans for water harvesting and reuse and incorporating landscapes that reduce or eliminate the needs for irrigation while maximizing green cover. Stormwater management components including green or living roofs, permeable pavements, landscaped collection ponds and bioswales should be investigated;
- ❖ **Environmentally sensitive areas** should be protected as a community resource. Tree protection should be practiced wherever practical and feasible. These areas offer passive recreational spaces and visual interest, maintain species diversity and create a healthy environment;
- ❖ **Roadside trees** along road edges can create an interesting visual element and can also help protect the road from crosswinds and blowing snow. Coniferous Trees should be planted along the Highway to create a windbreak. In town, Deciduous trees with a narrow trunk and modest canopy should be selected for in-town applications to maintain visibility and provide shade; and
- ❖ **Landscaping** sufficient areas of a development will not only add beauty but can also mitigate the urban heat island effect and make the development more hospitable to people once they are outside their vehicles.