



Terms of Reference

Urban Design Committee

1.0 PURPOSE AND MANDATE

- 1.1 The Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Urban Design Committee (Committee) is strictly an advisory committee that provides urban design advice and recommendations to Council and Town Staff, specifically the Community Development and Services Department (Staff) with respect to planning applications and any other urban-design related matters that Council and Staff may request the Committee's advice on. It does not have the authority to approve or refuse applications or make policy decisions. The Committee is not intended to replace the role of Staff in the development approval process. Rather, the Committee provides an additional level of consultation to enhance the Town's development approval process.
- 1.2 The Committee also provides design advice on the potential physical and aesthetic impact of proposed buildings, structures, landscapes, parks and infrastructure projects to the community's public realm, including an evaluation of its relationship to the site and its surrounding character.
- 1.3 The Committee may be called upon to advise Council directly on general matters related to urban design, including aspects of the Community Planning Permit System.

2.0 ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The Committee is established by Council in accordance with these Terms of Reference. All members are guided by this Terms of Reference.
- 2.2 The Committee will consist of one (1) member of Council, one (1) member of the Municipal Heritage Committee, and five (5) members, comprised of qualified individuals as described in Section 3.0.
- 2.3 A member shall cease to be a member if absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without prior authorization from the Manager of Planning. A new member to fill the vacated position will be subject to the selection and qualifications criteria, as per Section 3 of this Terms of Reference.

3.0 COMMITTEE SELECTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 3.1 Applications for Committee membership are requested at the beginning of the term of Council. Members will be appointed by resolution of Council for the duration of Council.
- 3.2 Preference will be given to individuals who are or have been in the last five years members of the following professional associations:
 - a) Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) and/or Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)
 - b) Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) and/or Canadian Society of Landscape Architects (CSLA)
 - c) Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and/or Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP)
- 3.3 Members shall have a demonstrated high level of expertise and knowledge in their particular field.
- 3.4 Members shall have a fair knowledge of the composition, architecture, history and character of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Region in order to enable them to make a positive contribution towards improving the Town's built environment and character.
- 3.5 Only one member of any particular firm or organization shall be permitted to be a member of the Committee at the same time.
- 3.6 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake employees are not eligible to be members of the Committee.

4.0 SCOPE OF WORK

- 4.1 The Committee will primarily evaluate development applications and major high-profile projects and provide professional advice and recommendations to Council and Staff on matters of design that affect the public realm, including the design of proposed buildings, structures, parks and open spaces, and associated streetscapes, in order to promote and uphold standards of design excellence. The primary role of the Committee is to assist Staff in interpreting policy for specific sites and projects, as well as to define areas of concern that need to be resolved.
- 4.2 At the request of Council, the Committee will also provide input to the development of architectural design guidelines and other design standards as required.

5.0 MEETING SCHEDULE

- 5.1 The Committee is scheduled to meet the last Tuesday of every month. The meetings will start at 5pm in Council Chambers of the Town Municipal Office, 1593 Four Mile Creek Road, Virgil, ON. The annual schedule will be provided at the beginning of each year and meeting dates will be posted on the Town's website.
- 5.2 Established meeting dates and times will not be changed unless circumstances warrant special consideration.
- 5.3 Committee meetings are recorded and made available for public viewing on the Town's website after the meeting date.
- 5.4 Generally, three (3) projects will be scheduled for each meeting date to allow for appropriate time for members to evaluate the materials presented, as well as to discuss and formulate recommendations on each project. Additional number of projects, exceeding the maximum, may be permitted should circumstances warrant special consideration, as determined by the Urban Design Specialist or as directed by Council.

6.0 PROJECT REVIEW TIMELINE

- 6.1 The required presentation materials, including plans, drawings, studies, etc., submitted by the applicant, shall be determined by the Urban Design Specialist and made known to the applicant at the earliest stage possible. The applicant will be required to submit the required materials not less than three (3) weeks prior to the scheduled meeting date.
- 6.2 Complex projects will generally be considered by Committee as follows:
 - a) First (schematic design review): the first review will be scheduled at the pre-consultation stage during the initial functional design of the project. This will afford the possibility of significant changes, if suggested by Staff and/or the Committee.
 - b) Second (detailed design review): the second review will be scheduled following revisions being made. This meeting is intended to contribute to the detailed design process of the project.

- 6.3 It is recognized that not all projects require two stages of review, as per this Terms of Reference. In this circumstance, the determination to undergo a reduced review will be recommended by the Urban Design Specialist and reported to Council.

7.0 OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The meeting agenda and presentation packages for each Committee meeting will be sent electronically to members one (1) week prior to each meeting. Members, upon receipt of the meeting agenda and presentation packages, shall notify the Urban Design Specialist of their attendance status to ensure quorum, as per Section 11 of this Terms of Reference.
- 7.2 Each project will be allocated 60 minutes on the meeting agenda with the following approximate time restrictions:
- a) Urban Design Specialist presentation: 5 minutes
 - b) Applicant presentation: 10 minutes
 - c) Question and answer period and discussion through the Chair: 30 minutes
 - d) Formulation of recommendations through the Chair: 15 minutes
- 7.3 For larger, more complex projects, an allotted time of 60 minutes may not be sufficient. Should this arise, the meeting agenda will be adjusted to accommodate greater review time. This may occur at the expense of other projects being permitted to be on the meeting agenda, as determined by the Urban Design Specialist.
- 7.4 Meetings are open to the public. In accordance with the Town's Procedural By-law, the Committee can request to receive a delegation. The request shall be voted and approved by a majority of the members.
- 7.5 The Committee's comments will be based on Council-approved land-use and urban design policies.
- 7.6 The Committee will provide a clear consensus to Staff and applicants on key aspects needing improvement for each project.
- 7.7 Following the meeting, the Urban Design Specialist will report the Committee's recommendations and inform Council of the appropriate actions to be taken by the applicant. The Urban Design Specialist will further advise the Committee and Council, via minutes of the Committee included in the Council Information Package, on subsequent actions taken as a result of the Committee's recommendations.

8.0 ROLES AND DUTIES

8.1 The Committee shall elect a Chair and a Vice Chair at the first meeting for a two-year period. The Chair and Vice Chair should have a minimum of one (1) year of experience on an Urban Design Committee or other urban design advisory panel to be eligible. Members are eligible for re-election to Chair and Vice Chair positions.

8.2 The duties of the Chair shall be as follows:

- a) Chair all regular meetings of the Committee and exercises authority and performs duties as required;
- b) Ensure that decorum is maintained at each meeting and that the rules of procedure and conduct are observed in accordance with By-law No. 4675-13 (Town's Procedural By-law);
- c) Ensure that all members are provided an opportunity to comment;
- d) Assure that all applicants are provided an opportunity to present and comment; and
- e) Provide guidance and leadership to the committee in the completion of its mandate.

8.3 The duties of the Vice Chair shall be as follows:

- a) Perform the role and responsibilities of the Chair in their absence.

8.4 The duties of the all members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, shall be as follows:

- a) Attend all Committee meetings, and if a member is unable to attend, notify the Urban Design Specialist as soon as possible prior to the meeting;
- b) Review meeting agendas and presentation packages for all projects on the meeting agenda prior to the meeting, regardless of meeting attendance status;
- c) Contribute time, knowledge, skill and expertise to the fulfilment of the Committee's purpose, duties and scope of work;
- d) Be cognisant and disclose of any conflict of interest or perceived conflict in terms of issues that may service to benefit them personally, as per Section 13 of this Terms of Reference; and

- e) Act to protect the privacy of individuals with respect to personal information contained in reports and information circulated to them.

9.0 QUORUM

- 9.1 An attendance of a majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.
- 9.2 If quorum is not attained, no actions or recommendations emanating from a meeting will not have any force or effect. If quorum is determined to not be attained prior to a meeting, the meeting will be rescheduled. Members and applicants will be notified of the rescheduling.

10.0 SUPPORT STAFF

- 10.1 The Committee shall be assisted by the Urban Design Specialist, who will provide background information, expert/technical advice and administrative report to the Committee.
- 10.2 Staff may also be in attendance to further provide background information and to allow for further understanding in the processing of development applications.
- 10.3 A staff member of the Clerks Department will attend in order to record minutes of each Committee meeting.

11.0 REMUNERATION

- 11.1 Each member shall receive \$50 for each meeting attended. Payment is arranged biannually by the Corporate Services Department.

12.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 12.1 Members shall avoid conflicts of interest. Members shall take proactive steps to mitigate conflicts of interest in order to maintain public confidence in the Town and its elected officials. Members are encouraged to seek guidance from the Integrity Commissioner and/or legal advice when they become aware that they may have a conflict between their responsibilities to the public as a Member and any other interest.

12.2 All members have the duty to advise of any conflict of interest with respect to all matters before the committee. Members should decline to participate in the disposal of a matter where a real or apparent conflict is present.

12.3 All members, upon receipt of the meeting agenda, shall inform the Urban Design Specialist of any conflicts of interest on the matters to be considered.

12.4 If a member has any conflict of interest on any matter and is present at a meeting at which the matter is the subject of consideration, the member:

- a) Should, prior to any consideration of the matter at the meeting, disclose the interest and the general nature thereof;
- b) Should not take part in the discussion of any question in respect of the matter; and
- c) Should not attempt in any way whether before, during or after the meeting to influence the discussion of the application.

13.0 REPORTING

Proceedings and minutes of the Urban Design Committee will be reported to Council following each meeting in the subsequent Council Information Package.

14.0 ENABLING LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS TO BE REFERENCED

- a) By-law No. 4675-13 (Town's Procedural By-law)
- b) Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake Official Plan
- c) Any other relevant documents pertaining to urban design in Niagara-on-the-Lake