

# MARY STREET, NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

## DESIGN GUIDELINES



### MARY STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES

PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

NOVEMBER 2015  
OUR FILE 08124D

**DRAFT**



# MARY STREET DESIGN GUIDELINES

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# 1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

MHBC has been retained by the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to prepare design guidelines for Mary Street which is located within the urban area of Niagara-on-the-Lake. An aerial photo of Mary Street is included on the following page.

Mary Street is an important street within the community as it is located at the edge of what is commonly referred to as 'Old Town'. Those travelling to Old Town from outside of the community would typically enter the community

via Niagara Stone Road through Mary Street. Making the intersection of Niagara Stone Road and Mary Street an important gateway into the historic core of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The character of Mary Street differs from east to west with the east end having a rural residential character and the west end having a more commercial character.

The street is anchored by the Kinsmen Park at the

east end and the triangle of green space where Mary Street turns into Lakeshore Road at the west end.

The purpose of these guidelines is to describe the character of Mary Street; to guide future development along Mary Street in a manner which is appropriate given the existing character; and to identify opportunities and guide improvements to the public realm.



KINSMEN PARK TERMINATES THE EAST END OF MARY STREET.



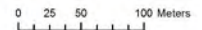
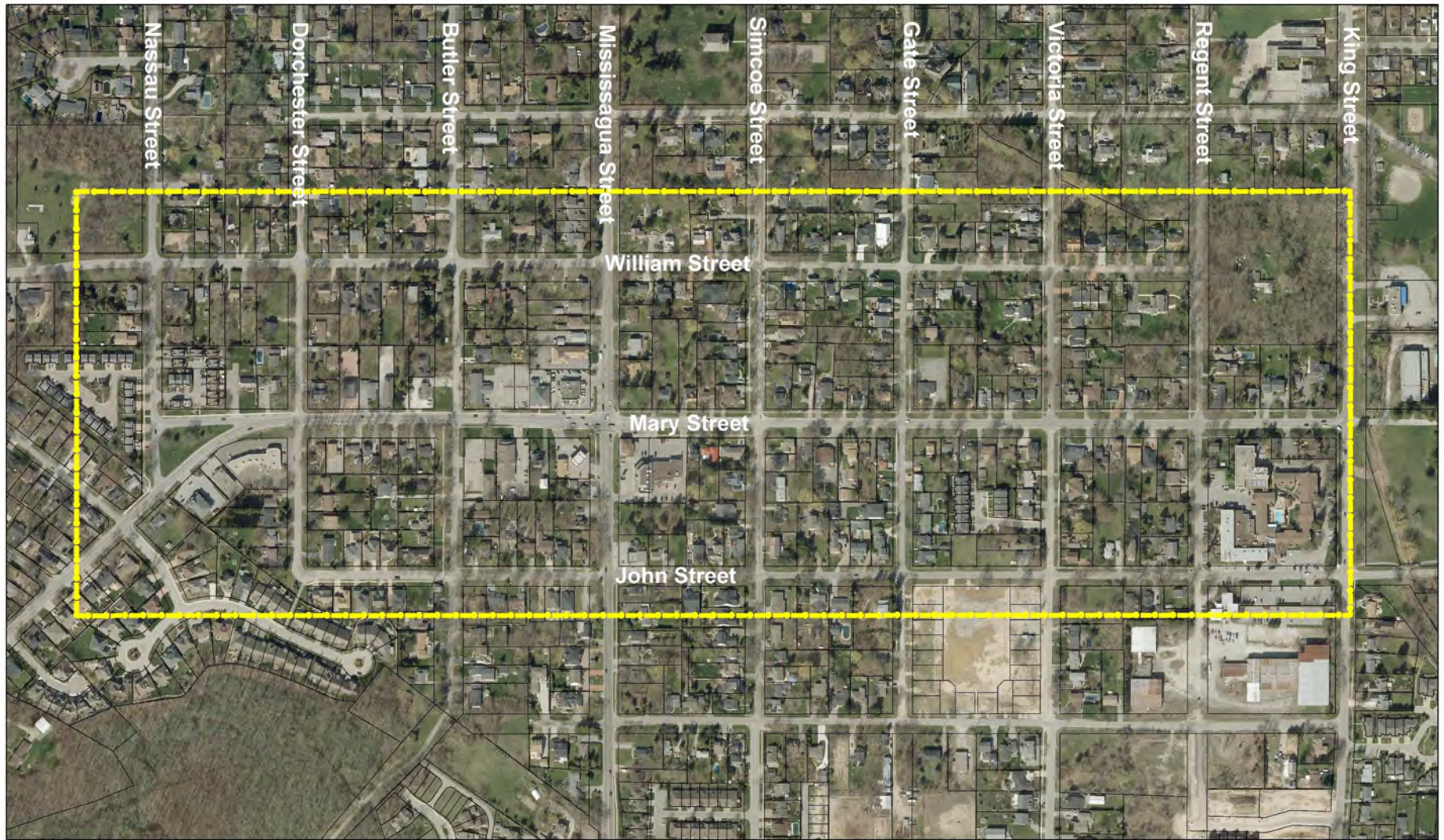
THE INTERSECTION OF MARY STREET AND NIAGARA STONE / MISSISSAUGA ROAD IS A KEY GATEWAY.



A TRIANGULAR GREEN SPACE IS LOCATED AT THE WESTERN EDGE OF MARY STREET.



# map of mary street





## 2 SURROUNDING CONTEXT

The map on the previous page illustrates Mary Street and the surrounding context. The corridor is generally surrounded by residential uses as follows:

### **TO THE NORTH:**

Single detached residential with a few homes which have been converted to Bed and Breakfasts establishments. Most of the homes along William Street reflect the 'Old Town' character of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

### **TO THE EAST:**

Mary Street terminates at King Street to the east, beyond which is a large park area which includes Kinsmen Park and Veteran's Memorial Park. The Niagara River is located further to the northeast.

### **TO THE SOUTH:**

A mostly residential area which is the beginning of a transition area between Old Town and newer development further to the west. The area to the south includes some multiple residential development and a number of Inns and Bed and

Breakfast establishments. The Pillar and Post Inn is also located to the south (southeast) with a portion visible from Mary Street.

### **TO THE WEST:**

Mary Street turns into Lakeshore Road to the west. Lakeshore Road leads to a subdivision and beyond that the rural area of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Two Mile Creek Conservation Area is also located to the west of the Mary Street corridor.





# 3 STRENGTHS AND ASSETS

Mary Street has a number of strengths and assets, some of which can be further improved upon. The following is a summary of some of the key strengths/assets:

- Proximity to the U.S., the Niagara Escarpment and Highway 405.
- Proximity to a number of wineries and the commercial core of Old Town.
- Proximity to the Niagara River and a number of trails including the Lake Ontario Waterfront Trail (a portion of which runs along Mary Street) and the Niagara River Recreation Trail.
- Attractive built form and large lots along the eastern portion of Mary Street.
- A walkable street with short blocks.
- Large trees and mature landscaping.
- A large park area at the eastern terminus.
- Proximity to local commercial uses, particularly along the western portion of Mary Street.





## 4 CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

The character of Mary Street varies as one travels from east to west. While the western portion of Mary Street has more of a mixed character, the eastern portion is in keeping with much of the older residential areas in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This area is predominantly a low rise residential neighbourhood existing primarily of one and two storey single detached houses.

Mary Street is the unofficial boundary between the older area of the community and new or more recent residential development. While not within the defined Heritage Conservation District Area of Old Town, the character of Mary Street is similar to the older residential parts of the Heritage Conservation District. This includes:

- Older homes with relatively large setbacks from the street;
- Medium to relatively large lots with mature street trees and vegetation;
- Residential buildings typically set in the middle of the lot with garages located either to the side or the rear of the property in a form characteristic of pre-mid-century residential development.



For the purpose of these guidelines Mary Street has been divided into separate areas, each of which have their own distinct character. These areas are described briefly below, and in more detail in the following sections.

#### **AREA 1: WEST MARY STREET**

West Mary Street is mostly comprised of local commercial uses. It has been built to more of an urban standard with more formal sidewalks. This area includes a number of residential to commercial conversions. While a few residential buildings remain within this area, all of the lots along west Mary Street are zoned Commercial (GC). Some of the commercial blocks on Lakeshore Road have also been included in the West Mary Street area.

#### **AREA 2: MARY STREET NODE**

The intersection of Mary Street and Niagara Stone Road/Mississauga Street has its own unique

character as a node and an entrance into Old Town and as a commercial intersection. Commercial uses at the intersection serve both a local commercial and service commercial function.

#### **AREA 3: MARY STREET TRANSITION AREA**

The transition area is the block between Niagara Stone Road/ Mississauga Street and Simcoe Street. This block has been identified as a separate area given the commercial uses at the intersection. Some intensification may be appropriate in this block as a transition from the commercial blocks to the more residential area in east Mary Street.

#### **AREA 4: EAST MARY STREET**

East Mary Street is the area between King Street to the east and Simcoe Street to the west. This area is primarily comprised of single detached homes and single detached homes which have been converted to bed and breakfast establishments

and inns. Traditionally these inns have been permitted via site specific zoning provisions. East Mary Street has been built to a rural road standard with rolled curbs and a drainage ditch on the south side. A continuous sidewalk runs along the north side of the street (narrower than most urban standards), while on the south side of the street the sidewalk starts and stops.







WEST MARY STREET



WEST MARY STREET



WEST MARY STREET



WEST MARY STREET



MARY STREET NODE



MARY STREET NODE



EAST MARY STREET



EAST MARY STREET



EAST MARY STREET



# 5 WEST MARY STREET

The following is a summary of key principles, design guidelines and opportunity areas for west Mary Street (Area 1 as described in Section 4 of this document).

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Development within the identified west Mary Street area is subject to the following design principles:

1. Support Active Transportation: Walking and cycling are common activities within Niagara-on-the-Lake. While there are cycling lanes and sidewalks along Mary Street both of these can be improved to further encourage pedestrian and cycling movements. New development proposals within west Mary Street, as well as any public sector improvements will enhance the active transportation network.
2. Create a Public Open Space Network: West Mary Street is anchored by the large public park on the east side of King Street. There is an opportunity to provide a public open space at the west end of Mary Street with the sidewalk and cycling system linking these two spaces.
3. Establish west Mary Street as a commercial focus within the broader community. A number of recent development applications suggests a commercial rejuvenation in this area. Development proposals which further add to the mix of local commercial uses in the area will be encouraged. Mixed use developments are also desired within this portion of Mary Street. High quality design and building materials will be utilized within this area.
4. High-Quality Built Form and Landscaping is essential: New development proposals within west Mary Street will be developed with a high standard in terms of the building design and landscaping. With high quality redevelopment west Mary Street can transition to a destination within Old Town.



EXAMPLES OF ATTRACTIVE DEVELOPMENTS ALONG WEST MARY STREET.





LEFT:

THE CURRENT CONDITION ALONG WEST MARY STREET. THE SIDEWALK RUNS DIRECTLY ADJACENT THE ASPHALT ROAD SURFACE WITH NO BOULEVARD OR LANDSCAPED AREA.

PARKING FOR THE ADJACENT DEVELOPMENT EXTENDS TO THE CURB AT THE EDGE OF THE SIDEWALK.



LEFT:

IMPROVEMENTS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR WEST MARY STREET, INCLUDING MORE PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY SIDEWALKS AND A LANDSCAPED BOULEVARD SEPARATING VEHICULAR TRAFFIC FROM PEDESTRIANS.

USES WHICH ACTIVATE THE STREETScape, SUCH AS OUTDOOR PATIOS, ARE ENCOURAGED, IN PARTICULAR AT THE INTERSECTION OF MARY STREET AND MISSISSAUGA ROAD.





**OPPORTUNITY AREAS**

The guidelines on the following pages reference a few opportunity areas within west Mary Street. These areas are identified on the above map and described as follows:

- 1. Publicly owned triangle formed where Lakeshore Road splits from Mary Street.
- 2. The Mary Street streetscape currently lacks street trees (on public property) and has inconsistent sidewalk treatments. This road will be improved in the future.
- 3. The publicly owned portion of the Butler Street right-of-way.
- 4. Remaining residential dwellings zoned commercial.

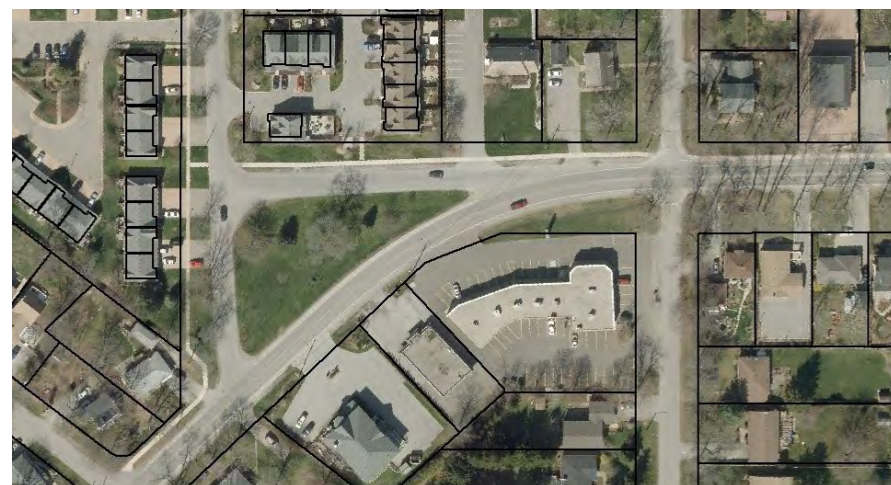


## DESIGN GUIDELINES

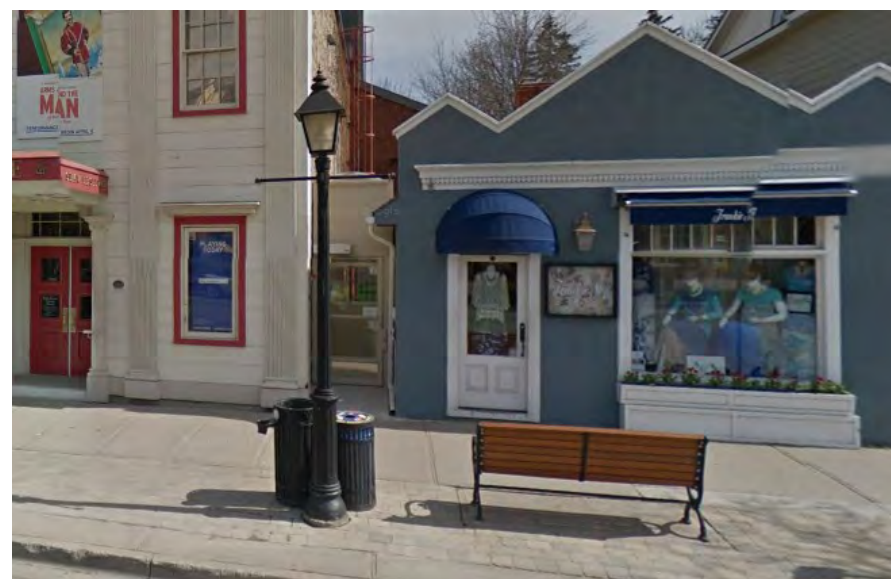
The following guidelines will inform public and private development on west Mary Street. The public realm relates to all areas owned by the Town or Region including roads, sidewalks and open space. The private realm relates to private owned properties and includes buildings, private yards and off-street parking areas.

### PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES

- Create an improved public open space area as a landmark as one enters Mary Street from the west. The existing triangular shaped parcel where Mary Street becomes Lakeshore Road is an ideal location for a small urban park.
- The streetscape should be redeveloped to include street trees planted at the street edge. Sidewalks, of a consistent width, on both sides of the street will also be provided.
- A minimum sidewalk width of 1.5 metres is required. Wider sidewalks (2.0 metres or wider) are recommended along developments which attract more pedestrians (restaurants, shops).
- Where possible landscaped strips should be provided between the roadway and the public sidewalk.
- New street trees must be native species tolerant of urban conditions.
- Landscape and sidewalk treatments should be developed to an urban standard and should be more substantial than the more residential area to the east.
- Where possible sidewalks should be widened. Where sidewalk widths permit, public seating should be incorporated.
- Street furniture such as benches and bicycle racks should be installed at regular intervals along Mary Street. Street furniture will be coordinated with similar styles/colours/ materials used throughout.



THE EXISTING TRIANGULAR OPEN SPACE (ABOVE) REPRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A PUBLIC PARKETTE. GRAPHICS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE SHOW HOW THIS AREA COULD BE REDEVELOPED AS A FEATURE ALONG MARY STREET.



STREET FURNITURE SHOULD BE INSTALLED AT REGULAR INTERVALS.

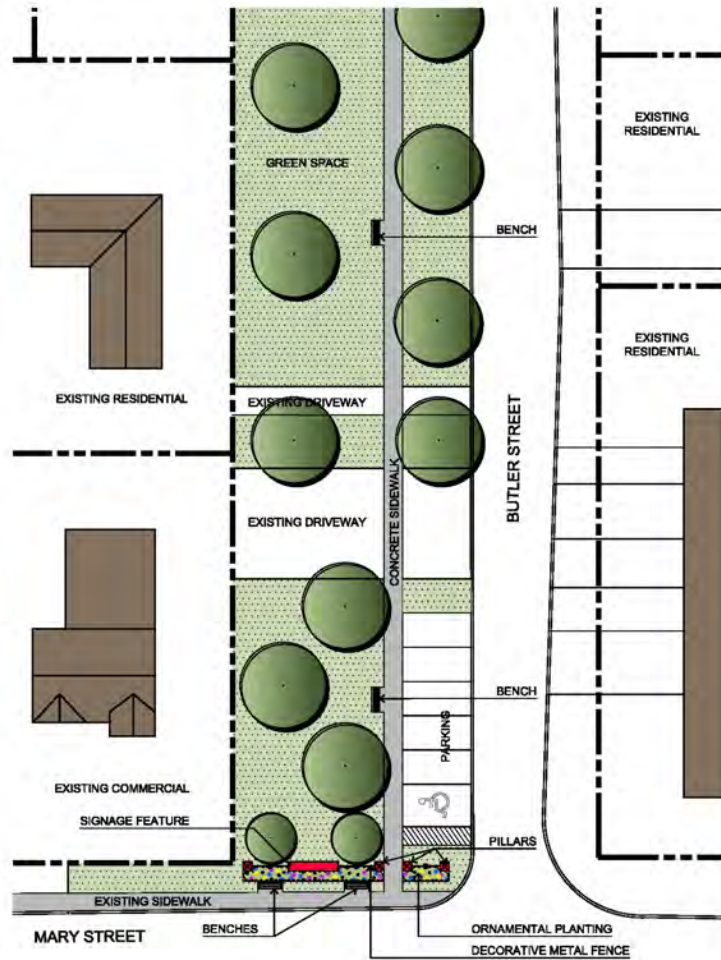
# park concepts



THE ABOVE GRAPHICS ILLUSTRATE HOW THE EXISTING TRIANGULAR OPEN SPACE COULD BE DEVELOPED AS A GATEWAY INTO MARY STREET.

THE CONCEPT ON THE RIGHT CONTEMPLATES THE CLOSURE OF A PORTION OF MARY STREET TO ALLOW FOR AN EXPANDED PARK AREA. THE PROPERTIES ALONG THIS STRETCH OF MARY STREET ARE ACCESSED VIA THE ADJACENT SIDE STREETS. THIS CONCEPT ALSO SHOWS A POTENTIAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON LAKESHORE ROAD.





THE ABOVE GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATES HOW THE PUBLIC OWNED PORTION OF BUTLER STREET NORTH OF MARY STREET COULD BE DEVELOPED WITH ON-STREET PARKING, LANDSCAPED AREAS AND PUBLIC SEATING. A SIMILAR TREATMENT COULD BE APPLIED TO THE BUTLER STREET RIGHT-OF-WAY SOUTH OF MARY STREET.

- Require discussion with the Region of Niagara that emphasizes complete street design and addresses safe forms of active transportation.
- Seating and landscaped areas are encouraged at the corners of blocks along Mary Street.
- Pedestrian scaled lighting is encouraged to reinforce the walkability of the area.
- Opportunities for on-street parking will be explored. On-street parking will result in slower traffic movement and will buffer pedestrians from the travelling roadway.
- Consider developing the publically owned portion of the Butler Street right-of-way as a public parkette and/or parking area.

#### **PRIVATE REALM GUIDELINES**

- Buildings should be located at an appropriate setback to maintain a close relationship between the building and the street. A 2-5 metre setback is appropriate.
- Where possible new buildings should have similar setbacks to adjacent buildings. Where setbacks vary on both sides of a new building, the average setback should be used.
- New commercial uses should locate within the west Mary Street area or at the intersection of Mary Street and Niagara Stone Road/Mississauga Street.
- New buildings may be permitted at 3 storeys subject to urban design review.
- High-Quality Built Form and Landscaping: New development proposals within west Mary Street will be developed with a high standard of building design and landscaping. With high quality redevelopment west Mary Street can transition to a destination within Old Town.
- For new developments off-street parking should be located at the rear of the building. Side yard parking is preferred over front yard parking when rear yard parking is not possible. Parking in the front yard is discouraged.

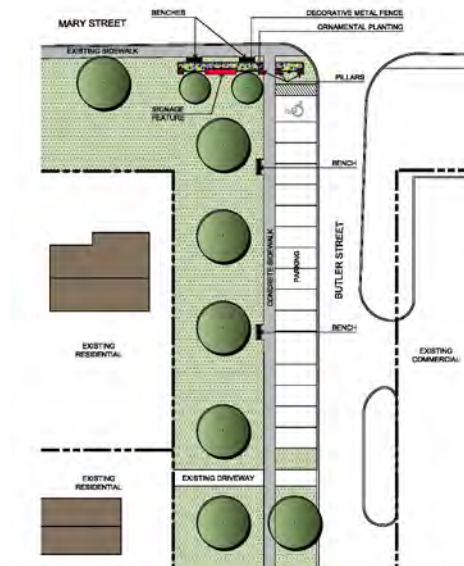
- Parking should be provided in accordance with the zoning by-law. In some cases reduced parking standards may be appropriate.
- The remaining residential units on the south side of Mary Street between Dorchester Street and Butler Street present an opportunity for live/work units or a multi tenant development.
- Attractive ground related signage is found throughout the Mary Street corridor. This type of signage, made from natural materials, is preferred over backlit fluorescent and plastic signs. Back-lit and temporary signage should be prohibited.
- Buildings should be oriented to face Mary Street. Corner buildings are encouraged to address both street frontages, though the entrance should be located along the Mary Street frontage.
- Additions to existing buildings should be designed to seamlessly blend with the existing building.
- Flat roofs are inconsistent with the desired character envisioned for the west Mary Street area and will therefore be restricted.
- Residential units above commercial and office uses are encouraged.
- For any new restaurant uses, a setback that accommodates outdoor seating or patio areas is encouraged.
- A consistent rhythm of similar architectural details and elements is encouraged to assist in the creation of a strong neighbourhood image. This could include the use of similar building materials or roof pitches.
- Natural materials and heritage colours are encouraged within the west Mary Street area. Brick and siding are among the most commonly used building materials.



THE SINGLE DETACHED DWELLINGS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF MARY STREET REPRESENT A REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY.



A LIVE/WORK TYPE DEVELOPMENT WITH REAR LANE ACCESS COULD WORK IN THIS LOCATION.



REQUIRED PARKING FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS COULD BE OFF-SET BY ON-STREET PARKING WITHIN THE PUBLICALLY OWNED RIGHT-OF-WAY ON BUTLER STREET (SOUTH OF MARY).



## 6 MARY STREET NODE

The following is a summary of key principles, design guidelines and opportunity areas for the node at Mary Street and Niagara Stone Road/ Mississauga Street, referred to herein as the intersection.

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following are the key design principles for the intersection:

1. Establish the node as a focus within the community: The node marks an important entrance into historic old town. Improvements to the built form and landscaping at this intersection will help to define it as an important gateway and focal point.
2. Create social interaction and pedestrian activity at the node: The addition of more pedestrian friendly uses, seating areas and outdoor patios will foster more activity at the intersection.



## DESIGN GUIDELINES

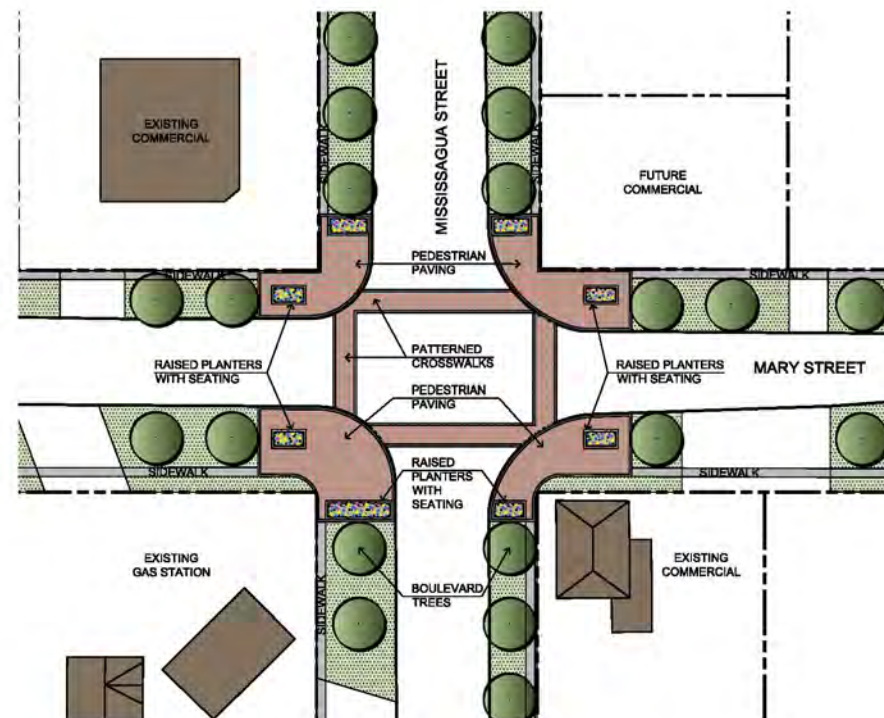
The following guidelines inform public and private development within the node.

### PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES

- The streetscape will be redeveloped to include enhanced landscaping to emphasize the prominence of the intersection. Sidewalks, of a consistent width, on both sides of the street should also be provided.
- Wider sidewalks (2.0 metres or wider) are recommended at the intersection to attract more pedestrians.
- New street trees and landscape materials must be tolerant of urban conditions.
- Where sidewalk widths permit, public seating should be incorporated.
- Pedestrian scaled lighting is essential at the intersection.
- Pedestrian crossings will be constructed and could be designed with special paving or coloured concrete for high visibility.

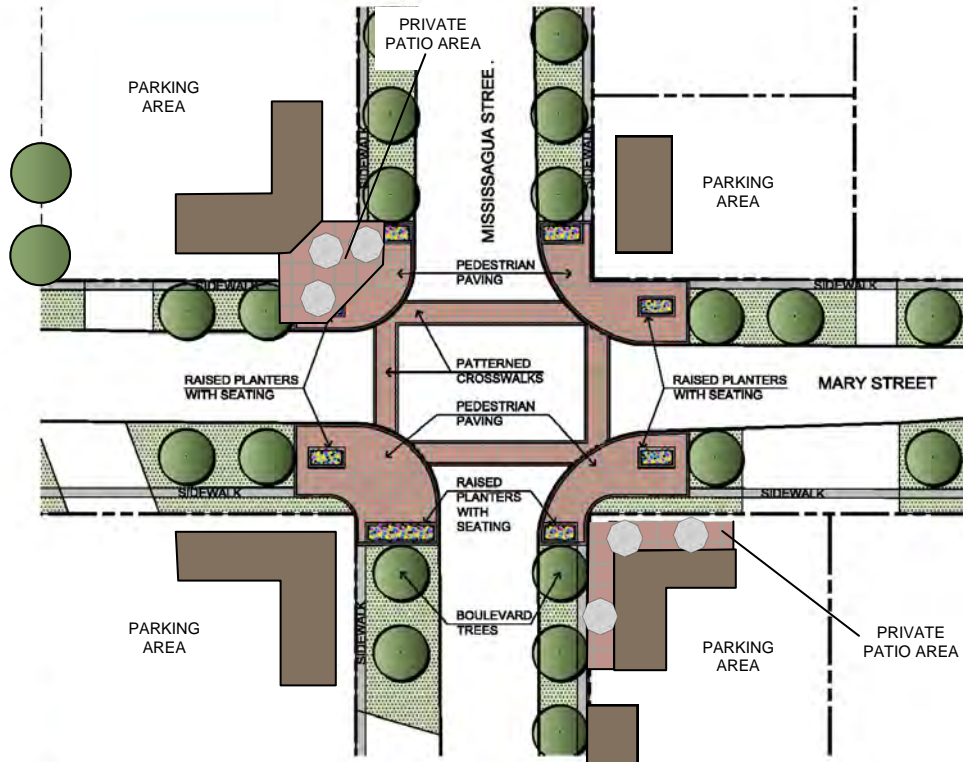
### PRIVATE REALM GUIDELINES

- Any new buildings should be set close to the street and oriented towards the intersection. A 2-5 metre setback is appropriate. Exceptional designs may permit further reduction of setbacks.
- Private patios and seating areas are encouraged. Patios may be permitted at a 0 metre setback to encourage their inclusion in development proposals.



THE ABOVE GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATES POTENTIAL PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AT THE INTERSECTION INCLUDING IMPROVED SIDEWALKS; PEDESTRIAN PAVING AND CROSSINGS; PLANTERS WITH SEATING; AND ADDITIONAL STREET TREES.





THE ABOVE GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATES POTENTIAL LONG TERM PRIVATE SECTOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INTERSECTION. THIS INCLUDES ORIENTATION OF BUILDINGS TO THE INTERSECTION; PRIVATE PATIO AREA; AND OFF-STREET PARKING WHICH HAS BEEN LOCATED TO THE REAR OF BUILDINGS.

- New buildings may be permitted at 4 storeys subject to urban design review.
- High-Quality Built Form and Landscaping: New development proposals within the node will be developed with a high standard of building design and landscaping.
- For new developments off-street parking should be located at the rear of the building where possible. Side yard parking is preferred over front yard parking. Parking between the building and Mary Street is strongly discouraged.
- Parking should be provided in accordance with the zoning by-law. In some cases reduced parking standards may be considered. Criteria for reduced parking standards will be provided and may include reductions for bicycle parking.

# 7 TRANSITION AREA

The following is a summary of key principles, design guidelines and opportunity areas for properties in the block between Niagara Stone Road/Mississauga Street and Simcoe Street.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Development within the identified transition area is subject to the following design principles:

1. Support compatible development: New development within the transition area shall be compatible with residential development in the east Mary Street area.
2. Encourage a mix of uses: A range of uses is appropriate within the transition area including residential, office, personal services, and mixed use.
3. Support improvements to the public realm: Necessary improvements to the public realm include more consistent sidewalks, public seating, and more clearly defined cycling routes.
4. High-Quality Built Form and Landscaping for private development is essential. New development proposals within the transition area should be developed with a high standard of design in terms of the building design and landscaping.
5. Ensure an appropriate transition to the east Mary Street area in terms of building height, density and overall massing.





## DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to inform public and private development within the transition area.

### ***PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES***

- Consistent sidewalks are needed on both sides of the street within the transition area as it is anticipated that this area will have greater pedestrian traffic.
- Any new street trees and landscape materials must be tolerant of urban conditions.
- Where sidewalk widths permit, public seating should be incorporated.

### ***PRIVATE REALM GUIDELINES***

- There are a number of large, deep lots within the transition area which could be developed at a greater density than that of a single detached dwelling.
- Any new buildings should be oriented towards Mary Street in keeping with the general development pattern that exists currently. Backlotting along Mary Street is not permitted.
- Building heights should generally be 2-3 storeys (11 metres).

- Density and massing in the transition zone shall provide for a transition between the node and the lower density East Mary Street Area. Residential densities should typically be in the range of 12 units/acre.
- Where setbacks vary on both sides of a new development site, the average of the setback of the neighbouring buildings can be used. Generally a setback of 5-10 metres is acceptable. In some circumstances a lesser setback can be considered.
- Rooflines for infill development should generally match rooflines of existing buildings in the area.
- Roof materials and colours should complement the building materials and proposed building design.
- New buildings should generally fit in with the existing buildings in terms of height, massing and character.
- Residential and multiple residential uses are appropriate within the transition area.
- There is a mix of architectural styles along the Mary Street corridor. New architecture should be varied but related to older buildings in form and scale.

- Building materials and finishes should reflect a high level of craftsmanship.
- Consistent rhythms of similar details and architectural elements should be used to reinforce the continuity of the street and will assist in the creation of a strong neighbourhood image.
- New buildings should have clearly defined entranceways. Main building entrances should be accessed from the Mary Street frontage.
- Existing buildings along Mary Street include large amounts of natural materials. Brick and siding are among the most commonly used materials. New developments are encouraged to incorporate natural materials in keeping with surrounding development.
- Corner buildings should address both building frontages. Features such as wrap around front porches, bay windows and side entrances are encouraged.
- Townhouses should generally be limited to six attached units.

## 8 EAST MARY STREET

The following is a summary of key principles, design guidelines and opportunity areas for the remaining properties in the block between King Street and Simcoe Street.

### DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Development within the identified east Mary Street area is subject to the following design principles:

1. Maintain the existing character of east Mary Street. Minimal new development is anticipated within east Mary Street as this area is considered to be a stable residential area.





## DESIGN GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to inform public and private development within the east Mary Street area.

### **PUBLIC REALM GUIDELINES**

- A continuous sidewalk currently exists on the north side of Mary Street. Improvements to this sidewalk are encouraged to provide barrier free access and a more consistent sidewalk width. If possible, a continuous sidewalk should be provided along the south side of Mary Street as well.
- The current road profile (no curb and gutter) should be maintained to retain the existing character of east Mary Street.
- Cycling lanes will be clearly identified.

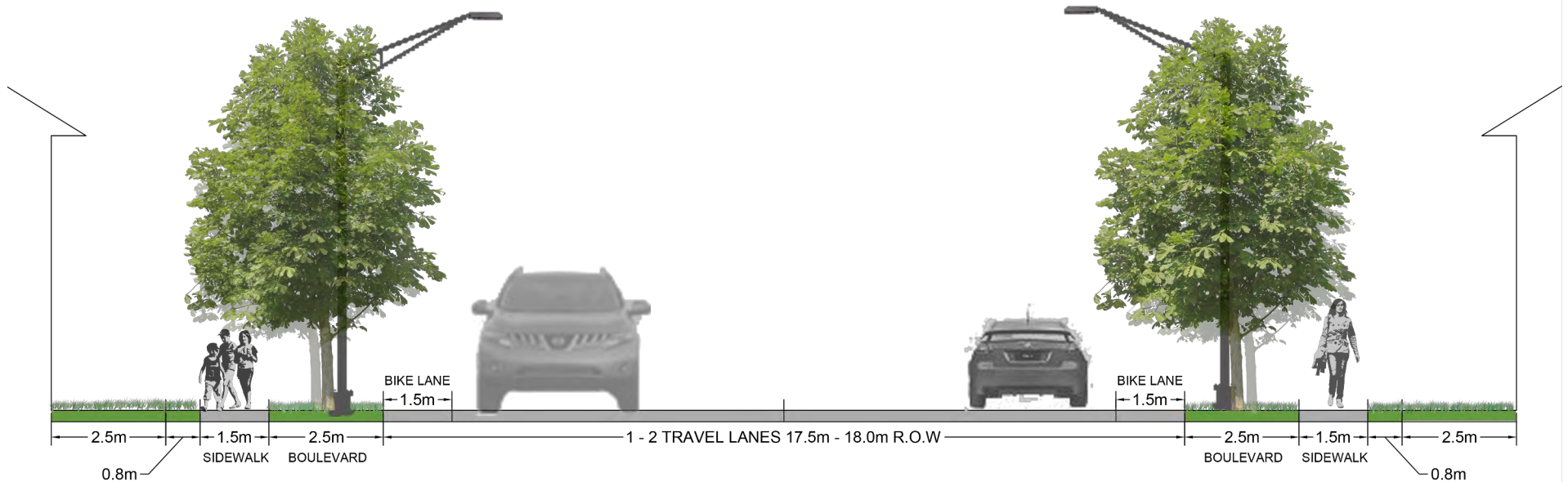
### **PRIVATE REALM GUIDELINES**

- It is anticipated that most development within east Mary Street will be single detached residential development. In some circumstances accessory units may be permitted.
- Improvements or additions to existing single detached residential development are encouraged over new development.
- Conversions of single-detached dwellings to bed and breakfast uses may be considered if the residential feel of the street is maintained.

- Any new buildings should be oriented towards Mary Street in keeping with the general development pattern that exists currently. Backlotting along east Mary Street is not permitted.
- Setbacks for new buildings of 7.5 to 15 metres is acceptable. Different setbacks may be considered.
- Where setbacks vary on both sides of a new development site, the average of the setback of the neighbouring buildings may be used.
- Rooflines for infill development should generally match rooflines of existing buildings in the area.
- Roof materials and colours should complement the building materials and proposed building design.
- New buildings should generally fit in with the existing buildings in terms of height, massing and character.
- Buildings should generally be 2 storeys (9.5 metres) in height. An additional storey may be appropriate in some circumstances.
- There is a mix of architectural styles along the Mary Street corridor. New architecture should be varied but related to older buildings in form and scale.
- Building materials and finishes should reflect a high level of craftsmanship.
- Consistent rhythms of similar details and architectural elements should be used to reinforce the continuity of the street and will assist in the creation of a strong neighbourhood image.
- New buildings should have clearly defined entranceways.
- Any new development within the Pillar and Post property should respect and protect the character of Mary Street.
- Existing buildings along Mary Street include large amounts of natural materials. Brick and siding are among the most commonly used materials. New developments are encouraged to incorporate natural materials in keeping with surrounding development.
- Corner buildings should address both building frontages. Features such as wrap around front porches, bay windows and side entrances are encouraged.

# cross section

- DRAFT -



APPROPRIATE ROAD CROSS SECTION FOR EAST MARY STREET.



# 9 INITIATIVES

Some of the objectives and guidelines contained within this document require Town or Regional action to effect the desired outcome. The following list of short, medium and long term initiatives provide the Town with a strategy to improve Mary Street.

## SHORT TERM INITIATIVES

1. Adopt this document and make it available to all residents, developers, and stakeholders. A link to this document should be provided on the Town's website.
2. Use this document as a tool to review planning applications.
3. Use this document to create a development permit system.
4. Identify potential sources of funding and financing tools to implement public realm improvements described herein.
5. Develop a streetscape plan for Mary Street which takes into consideration the differences among the identified character areas.
6. Consider incorporating some general design principles as part of the Official Plan Review.
7. Identify potential changes to the zoning of properties along Mary Street.

## MEDIUM TERM INITIATIVES

1. Review this document after five years and determine if any addendums or additional sections should be prepared.
2. Complete the streetscape plan developed in the short term.
3. Begin to implement some of the public sector improvements identified herein (i.e. triangular parkette, on-street parking, pedestrian crossings).
4. Adopt a signage strategy for development along Mary Street.

## LONG TERM INITIATIVES

1. Review this document every five years and adjust accordingly.
2. Coordinate streetscape improvements with any Regional initiatives including improvements to cycling routes, sidewalks and boulevards.