
North Gower Secondary Plan

1.0 Introduction

The North Gower Secondary Plan is a guide for the long-term orderly development of the Village of North Gower taking into account its unique rural setting. A community vision, which resulted in goals and objectives, provides a framework for change. The Secondary Plan provides specific direction on land-use, a parks and open space system, a multi-use pathway system, village centre and future roads.

This Secondary Plan represents a collaborative planning effort to develop the village as a desirable place to live, work and shop.

2.0 Planning Area

North Gower is a village centred on the crossing of Roger Stevens Drive, Fourth Line Road and Prince of Wales Drive. The village is surrounded by a gently rolling landscape of actively farmed land. The village is located in an area characterized by scattered drumlins, spoon-shaped hills of till pushed up by a glacier. Between these drumlins lies a clay plain deposited by the Champlain Sea.

A white church spire is the tallest structure and is visible from the major roads leading to North Gower. Surrounded by a broad agricultural plain, North Gower has thrived as an agri-business centre. Its role has diversified over time to embrace young families and others seeking a rural lifestyle, with potential for new tourism and recreation opportunities in the future. North Gower lies just beyond the doorstep of urban Ottawa, about a 20-minute drive along Highway 416 from the urban boundary and the shopping and employment opportunities there.

3.0 Vision, Goals and Objectives

The vision statements below describe the type of village desired by residents in the future.

3.1 Vision

“Based on its strong roots in agriculture, North Gower continues to thrive as the social heart of a vibrant farming community, where people put down deep roots and families live for generations surrounded by a legacy of unique heritage buildings. Over the years, the village has grown slowly, embracing its newcomers and welcoming them into the community, without forgetting its long history. In many ways, this growth has allowed the young people of the village to stay close to home while seeking opportunities in and beyond the family farm. Residents of the village and the surrounding farms have worked together for more than a century and a half to create a centre which responds to the needs of both residents and visitors.

There is a nurturing, welcoming attitude in the community that encourages families to settle and raise their children here, and grandparents enjoy living comfortably while they watch their children and grandchildren grow and enjoy a full, yet independent, lifestyle in the community. Young adults are able to find affordable housing and recreation within easy reach of employment, and youth are provided with opportunities for recreation and growth, which fosters the continuation of this sense of community.

The business community in the village has regained ground lost in the past, and again thrives as in the “old days”. North Gower is a village of unique recent entrepreneurs as well as long-established, widely respected businesses. Shops and professional offices, in new and heritage buildings in the commercial and core districts of the village, provide goods and services required for day-to-day living and farming. The Farmer’s Market celebrates a decades-long history by welcoming new vendors and regular visitors

every year. The arts and gardening communities thrive on their garden shows, studio/open houses/workshops that have become a regular part of our village life.

Village residents live relaxed, but active, lives. Recreational and community activities are the fundamental avenue where old friends meet and newcomers to the village make acquaintances and form friendships that last a lifetime. The Community Centre and surrounding grounds are the envy of other communities, forming as they do the “heart of the village” connecting residential and commercial neighbourhoods with multi-purpose pathways through parklands and green space. A youth centre provides a meeting place for the village’s young people to gather and meet friends, enjoy recreational activities, learn new skills and share music or stories in a safe environment.

Green spaces, allocated when early subdivisions were built, form the core of a system of parks and reserved lands that are now developed parklands connected by walking and cycling paths. The gem of this network is the Stevens Creek Green, with its picturesque bridges, which extends along the shores of Stevens Creek throughout its length in the village and provides an enviable natural environment where residents enjoy a variety of cultural and recreational activities.

North Gower residents are proud of their village’s position as the “rural jewel” of Ottawa. The village is linked to downtown by major and minor roads and good public transportation, giving residents rapid access to businesses, institutions and work places without compromising the rural character of their hometown. At the same time, those living in the city centre can easily take a break from the “bustle of the city” with a quick trip out to picturesque North Gower. Villagers participate actively in the affairs of the city as a whole while maintaining a strong allegiance to the distinct lifestyle found outside the City’s core.”

3.2 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives provide further direction regarding a plan for North Gower.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Growth Management

Goal: To manage growth in North Gower in an orderly way that fosters economic opportunities while providing for a mix of housing for residents recognizing its rural setting.

Objectives:

- To protect and enhance commercial functions in the Village Centre
- To provide adequate opportunity for employment
- To provide a variety of business to support the day to day needs of residents and visitors and surrounding farming community
- To create a venue that is attractive and interesting for visitors, building on attributes of the village
- To provide an adequate mix of housing, including affordable housing, for current and future needs of residents
- To attract and provide support for the rural/farm community

Village Character

Goal: To preserve and enhance the village’s natural features, historic character, open spaces and amenities in order to build upon residents’ sense of community.

Objectives:

- To ensure new development is compatible with the existing look and feel of the village's oldest streets located within the core and its existing village character
- To recognize significant landforms
- To design with nature
- To preserve the riparian zone adjacent to Stevens Creek and improve public access to the creek corridor
- To identify a safe and convenient multi-use pathway system that links open spaces and recreational resources and land-uses
- To conserve and to promote North Gower's cultural and architectural heritage resources

Public Services

Goal: To ensure that village residents' safety and security is provided for and that there is adequate infrastructure services to permit growth.

Objectives:

- To provide adequate lighting levels (streetlights)
- To ensure safe water and wastewater disposal systems
- To provide recreational and leisure facilities that are convenient to residents
- To identify partnerships for ongoing management for these recreational and leisure facilities
- To provide state of the art accessibility to communications
- To ensure safe vehicular traffic flow within the village
- To provide adequate fire services
- To ensure a system of sidewalks and pathways to encourage pedestrian activity
- To protect existing development and to protect the floodplain from inappropriate development in the vicinity of the Stevens Creek floodplain

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4.0 Land-use Designations

A Secondary Plan implements Official Plan policies, but responds to area conditions and community feedback. It is future-oriented and reflects planning direction for the future of North Gower. Schedule A - Land-use is comprised of the following designations:

- Residential
- Village Centre
- Highway Commercial
- Future Commercial
- Local Commercial
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Open Space
- Agriculture

Each of the land-use designations is described in terms of intent, examples of permitted land-uses, and associated policies. These land-uses have been implemented through Zoning By-law changes, with the exception of the Future Commercial designation.

It should be noted that the following will also apply to the land-use plan and Zoning By-law changes:

- The maximum permitted height will be three storeys, with the exception of the village's church steeples
- The Stevens Creek floodplain, shown in Schedule A, will be incorporated into the village's new zoning maps as an overlay
- Although Schedule A - Land-use provides for a range of uses, all new development must demonstrate, through hydrogeology studies in accordance with Official Plan section 4.4.2 Private
- Water and Wastewater Servicing, where deemed appropriate by the City, that the use can be accommodated on the site.

4.1 Residential

On Schedule A – Land-use, a single Residential land-use designation is shown throughout the village. This designation generally applies to existing residential subdivisions and farmlands that are not affected by the Stevens Creek flood plain.

Intent

Generally detached dwellings are the only type of residential development now found in this designation. However, this does not preclude other forms of residential development from being considered in the future in North Gower.

The intent of this designation is to permit a variety of housing including detached dwellings, which predominate in North Gower, and higher density housing so as to create opportunities for a range of housing to accommodate both young and old and for families to grow and age in place. Other forms of housing that may be considered include semi-detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, townhomes, retirement homes, and garden homes (granny flats). These uses will need to be reviewed in the context of a zoning amendment application and associated public consultation. It should be noted that an amendment to this Plan will not be required.

Permitted Uses

The primary uses in this designation will be:

1. Detached dwelling
2. Secondary dwelling unit
3. Home-based business
4. Group home

In accordance with Official Plan policy, secondary dwelling units, home-based businesses and group homes will also be permitted in all residential areas. It should be noted that garden suites will only be permitted through site-specific rezoning in order to permit a closer review of site-specific ability to accommodate the use.

Policies

1. Residential development will generally take place through plan of subdivision and shall implement the following:
 - i. Schedule B - Parks and Open Space Plan
 - ii. Schedule C – Multi-Use Pathways Plan
 - iii. Schedule D – Future Roads Plan

2. Residential subdivision design should incorporate features that will help to maintain the village's rural character by:
 - i. Incorporating rural area features that are common to the North Gower landscape into subdivision design (e.g. existing hedgerows or proposing new hedgerows that are in keeping with the existing pattern, existing barns and silo structures)
 - ii. Developing a stormwater management plan in consultation with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority and managing stormwater on-site
 - iii. Including a tree streetscape plan as part of the subdivision review process to contribute to the greening of the village since many of the newer residential neighbourhoods have few trees
 - iv. Where possible, maintaining views to the open spaces and farms outside the village
 - v. Where possible, maintaining views to the village's landmark buildings such as the church steeples
 - vi. Providing a transition area in new development abutting existing residential neighbourhoods. This may include locating new detached dwellings adjacent to existing detached dwellings with possibly semi-detached and duplex dwellings located further away.
3. Subdivision plans will identify connections and easements for future roads, so that over time, local roads and pedestrian paths connect adjacent subdivisions.
4. The naming of new streets will reflect the history and heritage of North Gower.
5. There are limited opportunities to provide affordable housing in North Gower. Due to the small scale of housing development, it is difficult for the City to impose a requirement for affordable housing. Secondary dwelling units, or separate residential units built within existing dwellings, are the most easily-created form of affordable housing available in the village. Another affordable option is a garden suite located on a homeowner's property. A site-specific temporary rezoning, for up to 10 years, will be required to permit a garden suite.
6. Minor institutional uses (e.g. churches) will be permitted in the Residential land use designations, but will require a rezoning to accommodate the use. No amendments to this plan will be required.
7. Housing is limited to a scale and rate of growth that does not overwhelm the village character of North Gower and is in keeping with a slower pace of development desired by residents. The expected rate of growth is 25 building permits per year.

Housing will consist primarily of detached dwellings, however, multiple unit development that would provide a greater range of housing for all age groups may be considered in the context of a rezoning application.

4.2 Village Centre

Intent

The Village Centre area will serve as the focus for commercial activity and pedestrian activity. The intent of the Village Centre designation is to accommodate commercial, residential, and mixed-uses to further develop a main street identity.

Permitted Uses

The Village Centre designation permits a wide variety of uses to serve residents, visitors and the adjacent farming community:

1. Commercial uses and services such as stores, grocery stores, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, art galleries, banks, offices, and personal service businesses such as hair dressers.
2. Stand-alone residential uses such as detached dwellings, multi-unit dwellings, retirement homes, and mixed-use buildings with 2nd floor apartments located above businesses, and group homes.

3. Due to its proximity to the core of North Gower, Village Centre, the properties at 2361 and 2383 Church Street (H.O. Wright) will have a Village Centre designation, but with limited permitted commercial uses. This recognizes that the non-residential properties are located in a residential neighbourhood and will provide the owners with the flexibility to develop either for commercial or residential uses at a future date. Permitted commercial uses will include: office, personal service such as a hair stylist or repair business with no outdoor storage.

Policies

1. New commercial development will be located primarily in the Village Centre and will serve as the commercial focus for North Gower.
2. Development will be encouraged to respect the Village Centre heritage design guidelines found in Section 7.0 Village Centre, Heritage and Design.
3. Storefronts will be pedestrian-friendly and contribute to an active and vibrant commercial area.
4. On-site parking will be located primarily to the side or in the rear of a building, where possible, to reinforce a pedestrian-oriented environment.
5. Signage should be reflective of North Gower's village character.
6. Where possible, street trees and landscaping should be incorporated into development.

4.3 Local Commercial

Intent

The intent of this designation is to accommodate commercial areas that benefit from the availability of larger parcels of land located away from the historic centre to accommodate both building and associated parking. The uses in this zone are intended to complement, but not compete with those found in the Village Centre.

Permitted Uses

The Local Commercial designation permits a variety of uses providing services to North Gower residents and neighbouring communities.

1. The types of uses that are appropriate in this designation include those that serve the day-to-day needs of residents, requiring larger land requirements than are available with the Village Centre designation such as animal hospital, automobile service station, gas station, car sales and rental, convenience store and repair business
2. The properties at 6645 and 6649 Fourth Line Road are designated Local Commercial to recognize the existing nature of these businesses (public garage and welding operation).
3. Uses such as retail uses or small shopping plazas should be located within the Village Centre.
4. Storage yards must be visually screened on all sides from abutting uses.

4.4 Highway Commercial

Intent

This designation applies to lands at the south-west intersection of Roger Stevens Drive and Highway 416, directly adjacent to the provincial roadway. The intent of this designation is to accommodate commercial uses that are dependent on good highway access and visibility.

Permitted Uses

The types of permitted uses include those that are of a recreational and/or commercial type such as campground, automobile dealership, gas bar, heavy equipment and vehicle sales, and kennel.

In order to support the viability of the Village Centre, uses that should be located in the Village Centre will not be permitted in the Highway Commercial designation.

Policies

1. Co-ordinate development so that issues such as landscaping, signage, parking are developed to complement its rural location.

4.5 Future Commercial*Intent*

The intent of this designation is to show the general location of a future neighbourhood-oriented commercial use(s), which could have larger land requirements than is available on Fourth Line or Roger Stevens Drive. The final location and area devoted to this use will be determined through a Zoning By-law Amendment and the associated studies.

Permitted uses

The types of uses envisioned for this location include those that serve the day-to-day needs of area residents, such as a grocery store and drug store.

Policies

1. This area will be developed to have a street presence, be close to the Village Centre and have pedestrian access to the street.
2. Development of the site will connect to the proposed pathway system shown on Schedule C.
3. Sufficient screening and landscaping will be provided to minimize impact on the adjacent residential land-uses.

4.6 Institutional*Intent*

The intent of the Institutional designation is to accommodate public uses that provide services to the broad cross-section of residents.

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses include place of worship, client service centre, cemetery, fire station, library, museum, school and a community and recreational facility, such as the Alfred Taylor Recreation Facility. Although this facility has a major open space component, the Institutional designation will permit future expansions of the existing building and will permit new buildings.

Policies

1. Buildings will be designed in such a way as to fit into the neighbourhood's building context.
2. Buildings will be located in a way that respects the privacy of adjacent residential uses.
3. Street trees should be incorporated into the development.

4.7 Industrial*Intent*

This designation applies to the lands located at the south-west intersection of Roger Stevens Drive and Highway 416 that have been approved for an industrial subdivision. The intent of the Industrial designation is to accommodate uses that could benefit the farming community and businesses that require visibility to the vehicular traffic on Highway 416.

Permitted Uses

The types of uses that can be accommodated within the industrial land-use include light manufacturing, building materials supply, warehouse, storage yard and farm implement sales and repair.

In order to support the viability of the Village Centre, uses that should be located in the Village Centre will not be permitted in the Industrial designation.

4.8 Open Space

Intent

The intent of the Open Space designation is to accommodate parks and recreational areas that provide leisure facilities for residents and nearby communities.

Permitted Uses

Uses permitted in this designation include public parks, stormwater management facilities, recreation facilities, and pathways.

Policies

1. New parks will be developed in accordance with Schedule B - Parks and Open Space Plan and in consultation with Parks and Recreation staff. The Plan identifies the approximate location of future parks in new subdivision development. While only the conceptual location of new parks has been identified, the City's Parks and Recreation staff will be consulted as to their size and configuration. Schedule C – Multi-Use Pathway Plan should also be consulted to ensure connectivity to other parts of the village.
2. Lands designated Open Space will be designed to be readily visible and easily accessible to the public.
3. Design of new parks will be undertaken in consultation with neighbourhood residents and residents of the village.
4. Where feasible, new parks should be located to take advantage of existing park facilities and be located adjacent to the floodplain in order to maximize existing resources.
5. The acquisition and development of lands will be in accordance with the parkland dedication by-law.
6. Where appropriate, the City will:
7. Request parkland dedication, particularly where it provides access to Stevens Creek.
8. Request cash-in-lieu of parkland where the site, by virtue of its location or other qualities, does not have potential to contribute to the park system.

4.9 Agriculture

Intent

The intent of the Agriculture designation is to continue to accommodate agricultural activities on lands located on the extensive floodplain within the village. Due to the floodplain hazard posed, limited uses will be permitted in this designation.

Permitted Uses

Permitted uses in the Agricultural land-use include:

1. Farm
2. Forestry use

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5.0 Parks and Open Space Plan

The North Gower Landscape

A predominant feature of the North Gower landscape is its sense of rural open space consisting of wide expanses of farmland framed by mature maple and elm hedgerows and vegetation along Stevens Creek. This rural character is further expressed through views and vistas that focus on local landmarks including church steeples, barns, silos and shed rooflines. The Park and Open Space Plan (Schedule B) respects and reinforces this rural quality and the Multi-Use Pathway System (Schedule C) connects the parks and open spaces within neighbourhoods to the Village Centre, Alfred Taylor Recreation Facility and to areas beyond the village.

Parks and Open Space Plan

The Parks and Open Space Plan identifies the location of existing neighbourhood, community parks and identifies possible future parkland in the village. Existing school and cemeteries are shown as “civic” open space. The Stevens Creek floodplain, which is primarily under private ownership, is an extensive “natural” open space corridor with potential for public access and enjoyment. Combined, these landscapes containing playgrounds, playing fields, woodlots, hedgerows, meadows, fields, manicured lawns, and vegetation along the creek and creek shoreline, form an impressive open space system in the village.

At the same time, the village open space system and nearby agricultural lands together form part of the rural landscape that extends beyond the village boundary.

Future parks are shown conceptually and are based on a review of land available for development and its relation to existing park locations, open space and community needs. In some cases, the proposed locations of parks are adjacent to existing parks to expand on recreational opportunities within one site and to facilitate on-going maintenance. In other situations, future neighbourhood parks are located adjacent to the Stevens Creek natural area, but not within the floodplain. Park size cannot be identified at this time since it depends on the amount of land to be developed and this is only known at the time of a development application.

As the village grows, new parkland can be acquired through the subdivision process as required by the Planning Act. The development charges obtained through the planning approvals process fund the cost of new park construction.

The community’s largest existing park is the Alfred Taylor Recreation Facility, which has a variety of sports fields and recreational amenities including a community hall. The site is used by numerous clubs and organizations for league and tournament play and has been incrementally built over the years. There is a master development plan and it outlines future plans for the facility.

Existing parks can be improved through life-cycle maintenance. Other means available to improve parks in North Gower include:

1. Life-cycle maintenance of existing parks where specific items are replaced at the end of their life span as identified by staff
2. Minor and major capital park improvements (single park feature) that are identified and requested by the community, Councillor or staff
3. Park development/redevelopment to enhance more than one feature in a park

4. Community partnerships between residents and the City where costs are shared on a 50/50 basis
5. Cash-in-lieu of parkland funds from the subdivision development process, which can fund park improvements
6. Sports fields – development or improvement
7. Outdoor rink infrastructure

Policies

1. Schedule B - Parks and Open Space Plan, shows the conceptual location of new parks, and will serve as a guide during the development approvals and park planning process. Other park locations may be considered, but will conform to the intent of the Parks and Open Space Plan.
2. In North Gower, there will be two types of municipal parks. At the local level, there will be smaller scale “neighbourhood parks” which serve the surrounding residential areas. The Alfred Taylor Recreation Centre is a well used “community park” that serves a diverse population of village residents and communities from outside the village. Any new parks will be developed as either “neighbourhood” or “community” parks.
3. The design of future parks and the enhancement of existing parks will involve community consultation.
4. Developers and residents should consider naming parks using names of early pioneers as a means of respecting their heritage and rural roots. Some existing parks could also be renamed, as there is a discrepancy in the community as to the “official” park name. All proposed park naming must follow the City’s established commemorative naming process.
5. In order to ensure that trees are planted in a manner that still allows for future park improvements, new tree plantings should be coordinated between residents and Parks and Recreation staff.
6. New plantings in parks should enhance and add to the existing rural tree patterns of shade trees and hedgerows characteristic of the community.

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6.0 Multi-Use Pathway Plan

A multi-use pathway system that will accommodate walkers, runners and cyclists will connect and link parks and open spaces within neighbourhoods to the Village Centre and to areas beyond the village (Schedule C). This multi-use pathway system will provide links to Roger Stevens Drive, Prince of Wales Drive and Fourth Line Roads, which have been identified as future cycle routes in the City of Ottawa’s draft Cycling Plan. It will also tie into the rural major recreational pathways identified in Schedule J of the Official Plan for the City of Ottawa.

There are few public pathways in North Gower; however, there are a number of informal pathways on private property used by residents. These can range from well-beaten trails beside hedgerows located on the edge of active farmland to informal driveways. There are many opportunities to provide a multi-use pathway system across and along the shore of Stevens Creek. To implement the entire system, pedestrian bridge crossings will be required across the Creek and associated drains.

Most of the multi-use pathway system is located in the village. Future pathways have also been identified linking residents on McCordick Road, Third Line Road and Stratton Drive, who are part of the “greater” North Gower community to the village.

New sidewalks have also been identified throughout the village and form part of the pathway system by interconnecting existing sidewalks and future pathways. In one case, a sidewalk extension on Church Street would not only complete a pathway circuit, but would also create a safer pedestrian environment for children walking to school from nearby neighbourhoods. Improvements to sidewalks will also benefit transit riders since they all start and end their trip as pedestrians.

It should be noted that while pedestrians will have access to both sidewalks and pathways, cyclists will be limited to use of the pathway system only since it is the only legal form of off-road facilities. On road cycling facilities with signage are proposed for the three arterial roads in North Gower (Roger Stevens Drive, Fourth Line Road and Prince of Wales Drive).

Creation of a public pathway system will be predicated on two processes:

1. The subdivision process whereby the City can identify lands that would be required to be dedicated to the City for a pathway
2. The willingness of property owners to allow public access to their lands since publicly-owned lands are limited to parks and municipal buildings

To date, subdivision applications have been infrequent and it is anticipated that there will not be a significant number of pathways created through this planning process. Residents, possibly through a village-wide association, will need to play a lead role in initiating and implementing the pathway system through their village and beyond.

Only general comments can be made to identify how the Multi-use Pathway Plan should be implemented. The following are some of the criteria in deciding which parts of the Plan should proceed:

1. Landowner agreement to have pathway cross their lands
2. Pathways in core should have priority
3. Complete circuits should be the goal
4. Complete pathways not requiring large capital outlay, such as bridges to cross water courses, should be considered first

The proposed multi-use pathways will be constructed in accordance with City standards. A pathway is typically two metres wide, but a multi-purpose pathway is about three metres wide constructed of asphalt or granular material. A yellow stripe generally runs down the middle of a multi-use asphalt pathway.

Liability

Liability is a major concern to landowners as a result of allowing public access to their lands. One way of dealing with these concerns is a legal agreement between the private landowner and the City, which can be created to address such concerns.

Policies

1. The Multi-Use Pathway Plan shows the conceptual location of new pathways and these may be implemented in the short term through existing farmed areas and along hedgerows. When redevelopment is proposed pathways will be provided within the development.
2. Pathways will be clearly identified to ensure users are aware that the system crosses private lands where the land is privately owned.
3. North Gower's village rural character should be reflected in the detailed design of the pathway system. This includes entry points to the pathway system, markers, directional signage and possible amenities such as benches and litter containers.
4. The pathway system shall be implemented in a way that maximizes accessibility throughout the entire village and surrounding area.
5. Rideau Valley Conservation Authority approval will be sought during the design phase of pathway construction in the vicinity of the floodplain of Stevens Creek to ensure that the pathways are properly sited and constructed.

Implementation

Pathways

1. The Parks and Open Space Plan and Multi-use Pathway Plan will be consulted during development review so that the proposed parks and pathways are incorporated in development applications in North Gower. The City will seek opportunities to complete the pathway system in consultation with the landowner. In certain situations, existing or proposed sidewalks may complete the pathway links.
2. Priorities for the multi-use pathway system should focus on the Village Centre to benefit as many residents as possible such as: proposed pathway located to the north of the Alfred Taylor facility and proposed pathway linking residents from Craighurst Drive to Roger Stevens Drive.
3. Residents, in consultation with City staff, could initiate discussions with landowners as a start to building the pathway system.

Sidewalks

1. The City will consult the list of sidewalk extensions for inclusion in any future road works.
2. Implementation priorities for proposed sidewalks should focus on the issue of safety. The first priority should focus on creating a sidewalk from the Farmstead Ridge neighbourhood to walk to the North Gower – Marlborough Public School on Church Street. Children are currently bussed a few blocks to school since there are no sidewalks along this portion of Church Street. A sidewalk would enable these children to walk to school safely. Other priorities include creating sidewalk connections within the Village Centre, such as on Perkins Drive, Roger Stevens Drive from the farmers market to just west of the Old Co-op.

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7.0 Village Centre, Heritage and Design

Buildings in the Village Centre represent North Gower's history, but change is also desired. One significant means of reflecting the village's history while also looking towards the future is through the use of design guidelines. Design guidelines have been developed as a means of encouraging development that is compatible with the Village Centre's character. These guidelines will be applied to additions to existing buildings or new construction to replace a demolished building. The intent of the Village Centre design guidelines is to provide direction and assistance to developers and City staff in reviewing development applications and for future improvements to North Gower's core. These guidelines apply to the area shown in Schedule E.

Heritage Residential Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines have been developed to encourage development that is compatible with the character of the streetscape:

1. Driveways to the side of the house and garages to the rear of the property are encouraged.
2. The garage or other outbuildings should be simply finished and have gable or gambrel roofs.
3. Landscape features, such as informal hedges along property lines, mass plantings of perennials and the use of large tree species, are encouraged.
4. Planting large tree species just within the front property line, but away from overhead lines, is encouraged. This will help to preserve the shade and visual amenity provided by the tree canopy of large street trees.
5. House forms such as the symmetrical 1 ½ or 2 storey, side gable roof, or the 2 storey, front gable roof, or the 2 storey house with multiple gables and bays are encouraged.
6. Porches at the front of the house with shed roofs are encouraged.

7. Adequate landscaping should be provided in order to preserve the subordinate relationship of the house to the landscape in the streetscape.
8. The design of infill development should be compatible with the proportions, roof design and the site plan of the existing buildings in the streetscape.
9. The use of simulated heritage detailing and decoration is discouraged.
10. Designers are encouraged to use contemporary materials and to use contemporary methods of architectural expression. New buildings should be of their own time.

Heritage Commercial Design Guidelines

1. The following design guidelines have been developed to encourage development that is compatible with the character of the streetscape:
2. Adaptive-use of existing farm and commercial buildings is encouraged.
3. Retention of early signage is encouraged.
4. Projecting or bracketed signs are encouraged. Backlit signs are discouraged. Exterior lights may be used to illuminate signs at night.
5. Thick plantings of informal hedges and wide side yards are encouraged as a buffer between commercial and residential use.
6. Porches with shed roofs or shed roof awnings are encouraged.
7. Large garage-type doors, functioning as loading bays for example, are encouraged.
8. Domestic building forms for commercial uses on Fourth Line are encouraged. Refer to the three building forms identified in the residential use guidelines.
9. Designers are encouraged to use contemporary materials and to use contemporary methods of architectural expression. New buildings should be of their own time.

Streetscape Improvements in Village Centre

Significant work has been undertaken to improve the village's environment including tree plantings in the Alfred Taylor Recreation Facility, along Perkins Drive and in neighbourhood parks and creation of a small park at the intersections and seasonal planters and banners.

Several physical changes could significantly improve the overall impact of the main commercial area.

Policies

1. During road reconstruction of Village Centre roads, street furniture, such as garbage receptacles, bicycle parking, lighting and benches, should be installed that is in keeping with the rural heritage village character.
2. Continue to create pedestrian-friendly areas along Roger Stevens Drive and Fourth Line road.
3. Through the development approvals process, encourage new businesses to create attractive storefronts contributing to development of a main street.
4. Where possible, plant trees on Fourth Line Road and Roger Stevens Drive to create a pleasant pedestrian atmosphere.
5. Create murals on prominent building walls that reflect the rural character and heritage that residents wish to preserve.
6. Business people and residents should investigate the possibility of an information kiosk in the Village Centre.

Village Landmarks and Gateways

Roger Stevens Drive is connected to Highway 416 and carries both local and outside traffic through the Village Centre. Businesses recognize this and, as a result, the intersection of Fourth Line Road and Roger Stevens Drive

Surrounded by agricultural land, the gateways into the village are identified by “North Gower” village signs.

Prominent landmarks in North Gower are its tallest structures: the North Gower United Church steeple and the Holy Trinity Anglican Church steeple on Church Street. Both tall white spires are visible landmarks that can be viewed at a distance from many locations throughout the village. New development throughout the village should aim to retain views to these buildings.

Perkins Lumber is an important business in the village and occupies a significant and sizeable location in the centre of North Gower at Roger Stevens Drive and Fourth Line Road. It is understood that the business could relocate to larger premises and redevelopment of its current site will significantly impact the village. Any development proposal for the site should be reviewed in accordance with the policies below.

Policies

1. During the development review process, be cognizant of landmark views to the village’s church steeples and surrounding pastoral areas. All new buildings should be designed to be less tall than these buildings.
2. Non-residential uses within the Village Centre should be adequately landscaped and screened from residential uses. All open storage areas should be screened from public view.

7.1 Village Economic Development

This Plan establishes the planning framework to accommodate new commercial development in the Village Centre and throughout North Gower. There is resident and business interest to actively market village and to attract new businesses to the village, including neighbourhood-serving uses. A possible location is the area near the Village Centre to the northwest of Roger Stevens Drive and Fourth Line Road (see Schedule A – Future Commercial).

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8.0 Stevens Creek, Servicing and Infrastructure

8.1 Stevens Creek

A subwatershed study of Stevens Creek is needed to fully understand the role of Stevens Creek in the larger Rideau River watershed, to understand its make-up and impact of human activities on the water system and the recommendations to improve the system. Until the study is completed, the policies below will apply.

The floodplain mapping in North Gower has been recently updated and completed by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority. If a proponent wishes to discuss the location of the floodplain on a site-specific basis, this may be done at the time of development application with the conservation authority.

Policies

1. Natural vegetation along Stevens Creek and its tributaries will be encouraged through restoration of natural vegetation, to improve wildlife corridor function, water quality and fish habitat. Steep slopes along the Creek will be protected through the development review process and volunteer efforts.
2. Floodplain, slope stability, and setbacks based on setbacks for water quality objectives established in the Official Plan will be considered when determining development limits for lands adjacent to Stevens Creek and its tributaries.

8.2 Servicing and Infrastructure

8.2.1 Private Wells and Private Septic Systems

The following policies will apply with respect to private wells and wastewater systems in North Gower:

Policies

1. All future development in North Gower will be on the basis of private wells and private septic systems unless the City reassesses the situation and decides to support alternative systems in villages.
2. Development must be in accordance with Official Plan for the City of Ottawa Section 4.4.2 Private Water and Wastewater Servicing. Development will be reviewed in accordance with current guidelines for hydrogeological and terrain analysis studies. Final subdivision design must conform to the requirements of these studies.

8.2.2 Stormwater Management

The following stormwater management (SWM) guidelines are to be implemented during the development application review process for subdivisions. These guidelines are not intended to replace the guidance or technical detail provided by the Ministry of the Environment's Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual or other generally accepted design practices and they do not provide a prescriptive approach. For the most current stormwater management policies and practices, refer to the Official Plan. The intent of these guidelines is to provide a methodology to be followed when planning and designing SWM practices for village subdivisions. This methodology emphasizes the maximum use of site design measures, lot level, and conveyance controls to achieve SWM objectives before consideration is given to the use of end-of-pipe facilities. Ultimately, it remains the proponent's responsibility to assess the SWM requirements associated with each site and recommend appropriate SWM practices to mitigate the impacts of the development on receiving watercourses.

Policies

The following Interim Stormwater Management Guidelines will be used during the review of plans of subdivision until further study is undertaken in North Gower:

1. Environmental Constraints: As noted in Appendix A of the MOE SWM Planning and Design Manual: Good planning integrates the design of a site and the design of the stormwater management facilities in one process. In conjunction with assessing the SWM approach for the site, environmental and natural hazard constraints should be mapped on the site plan to determine the limits of development. Requirements for this exercise are detailed in the MOE Manual, the City's Official Plan (Section 4) and other detailed guidance documents.
2. SWM Design Criteria: SWM design criteria must be developed on a site-specific basis to address changes to water balance, water quality and water quantity resulting from the proposed development. However, subject to the approved minimum lot sizes (as per detailed hydrogeological studies), the preferred emphasis will be on site design measures and lot level and conveyance controls to achieve the required SWM objectives. (Site design measures refer to 'low impact development' methods such as reducing the extent of clearing/grading; maximizing overland sheet flow; increasing site and lot vegetation cover, etc.)

2.1 Water Balance: A water balance exercise should be completed to assess the post-development change in runoff volume. The initial target should be to match the pre-development runoff volume by applying appropriate site design measures, and lot level and conveyance controls.

2.2 Water Quantity: Subject to adequate demonstration that pre-development runoff volumes cannot reasonably be achieved via site design measures, lot level, and conveyance controls, the need for water quantity control (erosion and two to 100 year flood flow impacts) must be assessed. This will include a characterization of the ability of Stevens Creek to adequately convey any increase in peak flows and runoff volumes resulting from the development. This characterization will extend for a sufficient distance downstream of the site such that potential impacts from the site become negligible. After maximizing the use of site design measures, lot level and conveyance controls, should the increase in peak flows or runoff volumes from the development result in unacceptable impacts, or the existing capacity of the receiver is insufficient, the proponent will recommend measures to mitigate this impact on-site through appropriate SWM practices.

3.3 Water Quality: Every effort will be made to achieve water quality design criteria through the use of site design measures, lot level controls and conveyance controls before proposing end-of-pipe facilities.

8.3 Future Roads

For the most part, existing residential areas have developed independently of one another with few physical links with adjacent neighbourhoods. The Parks and Open Space Plan and the Multi-Use Pathway Plan identify ways in which the community can be physically linked through pathways and show opportunities to expand existing parks through the subdivision process. Another way to integrate existing residential areas with future ones is to identify a conceptual future local road network, shown in Schedule D, tying existing and new local roads together.

The Future Road Plan was developed with regard to the location of developable land, floodplain, future pathways and parks.

Policies

1. In subdivision application review, staff should consult the Future Roads Plan so that new residential neighbourhoods are linked and integrated with existing ones.
2. The future roads shown on Schedule D are conceptual and will guide staff in the review of subdivisions. Other road configurations could be considered if they achieve the goal of having integrated and connected neighbourhoods.

8.4 Transit

Additional transit service should be extended to North Gower as the village evolves and demand warrants it.

8.5 Traffic, Parking and Utilities

As the Village Centre commercial area matures and there is a demonstrated need for the parking measures, public parking lots will be considered.

Natural gas is available in North Gower and there is desire to see this extended to all parts of the village.

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9.0 Implementation

The North Gower Secondary Plan is a land-use planning policy document that will guide future development using planning tools provided by the Planning Act. Many elements shown in the Plan are conceptual including location of parks, multi-use pathway locations, and boundaries of land-use designations. Modifications are anticipated in implementing the Plan as long as the general intent of the Plan is maintained.

Interpretation Section

The land-use plan is a statement of land-use planning policy that will be used to guide the development and the long-term growth of North Gower. Precise boundaries for the land-uses will be set out in the Zoning By-law. The land-use plan will provide direction in the preparation of development proposals by developers and will be used by City staff in reviewing applications such as subdivision, rezoning and site plan control.

The North Gower Community Design Plan approved by City Council on January 23, 2008 provides the basis for this Secondary Plan and should be consulted for background purposes.

Any changes to the North Gower Secondary Plan will require an Official Plan Amendment and City Council approval.

Amendments to the North Gower Secondary Plan will not be required for zoning amendments to permit residential uses other than detached dwellings.

Any change to the village boundary will require an amendment to the Official Plan.

Implementation Strategy

Recommendations of the North Gower Secondary Plan are implemented primarily through planning tools such as zoning by-laws, subdivision, and site plan control. Residents, business people and the Design Group will help implement the Plan through their participation in development review and through other means identified in the Plan.

Listed below are distinct action items with responsibilities categorized by theme: land-use, parks, open space and multi-use pathway, village centre plan, economic development Stevens Creek, servicing and public services.

NORTH GOWER SECONDARY PLAN Implementation Strategy		
Recommendation	Responsible	Timeframe
Land-use		
1. Approve North Gower Community Design Plan (CDP)	City Council	2007
2. Approve Official Plan Amendments: i) to expand village boundaries, ii) to remove North Gower Village Plan replacing it with the North Gower Community Design Plan iii) to incorporate the North Gower Community Design Plan in the Official Plan as a Secondary Plan	City Council	2007
3. Implement Schedule A – Land-use through zoning by-law amendment	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	2007/08
4. Implement policy direction in CDP in development applications	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
Parks and Open Space Plan/Multi-use Pathway Plan		
1. Acquire land for future parks and implement Multi Use Pathway Plan through review of development applications and other means	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department Community and Protective Services Department	On-going
2. Upgrade existing parks	Residents	On-going

	Community and Protective Services Department	
3. Initiate discussions with land owners and implement Multi-Use Pathway Plan	Residents Community and Protective Services Department	On-going
4. Convey list of sidewalk extensions to Public Works and Services to their list of future sidewalk work	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	2007
5. Review Alfred Taylor Recreation Facility Masterplan (1993) and investigate issues and opportunities associated with expansion and land acquisition for recreational and other needs	Community and Protective Services	2008
Village Centre, Heritage and Design		
1. Implement Heritage Residential and Commercial Design Guidelines through development applications Planning, Transit and the Environment Department Property owners	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
2. i) Implement streetscape improvement recommendations, including sandwich board issue ii) Improve existing sidewalks and add new sidewalks and streetlights Public Works and Services North Gower Improvement Society Residents and Businesses Owners	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
3. Implement village landmark and gateway policies during development approvals process	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
4. Investigate placement of an information kiosk for Village Centre	Residents	2007
Economic Development		
1. Initiate work to market and attract businesses to North Gower	Business owners Residents	On-going
Stevens Creek		
2. Encourage restoration of natural vegetation to improve its wildlife corridor function and protect steep slopes during development approvals process	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department Rideau Valley Conservation Authority Property Owners	On-going
3. Request that Rideau Valley Conservation Authority investigate condition and role of dam on Stevens Creek	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	2007
4. Assess and prioritize need for a subwatershed and a reach study for Stevens Creek	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
Servicing		
1. Review development applications in accordance with current guidelines for hydrogeological and terrain analysis and in accordance with Interim Stormwater Management Guidelines in CDP	Planning, Transit and the Environment Department	On-going
2. Staff to review core development in villages and	Planning, Transit and the	2007/2008

private services in context of rural development strategy	Environment Department	
Public Services		
1. Investigate the traffic-related requests to determine appropriate follow-up action and implement as deemed appropriate.	Public Works and Services	2007

9.1 Monitoring

Monitoring the North Gower Secondary Plan will indicate whether the recommendations are being carried out as intended. Should there be any changes to the North Gower Secondary Plan, amendments will be necessary.

The North Gower residents and the City should monitor the performance of this plan to assess whether the recommendations have been carried out and resulted in the intended effect.

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