

2.3 Uses

Centretown supports a wide variety of uses – ranging from residential (in all forms) to retail and office to parks and recreational uses. Land use within the CDP area is highly urban in nature, with a strong mix of retail, office, residential and community uses throughout.

Although typically thought of a residential area, Centretown also supports a large amount of commercial and employment uses. In fact, more than 22,200 people work in Centretown. Retail and commercial uses tend to be focused on the traditional mainstreets of the Core Study Area (Bank and Elgin) with lesser activity found along portions of Somerset and Gladstone. Most retail buildings on the mainstreets contain residential apartments or office uses on upper storeys.

Unique in Ottawa, the district also has a large institutional presence with national museums, embassies and government services. Metcalfe Street serves as an important institutional corridor that connects the Civic City to the Federal Realm.

The other major north-south streets and east-west local streets are typically more residential in nature, with a mixture of small and large-scale apartment blocks mixed in with house-form buildings. Many houses have been converted to office or restaurant uses.

A significant program of redevelopment between the 1950s and the 1970s fuelled the transition of Centretown between Cartier and Kent Streets into an area dominated by apartments and surface parking lots. During this period, single homes were replaced with a mix of purpose-built office developments, commercial conversions and mid-to-high rise apartment buildings. The introduction of the Centretown Plan in the mid 1970s helped to limit building demolition, resulting in fewer large scale apartment buildings being built in the 1980s and 1990s. However, since 2000, residential growth returned to Centretown in the form of new condominium developments, with 15 projects built or under construction providing more than 2000 units.

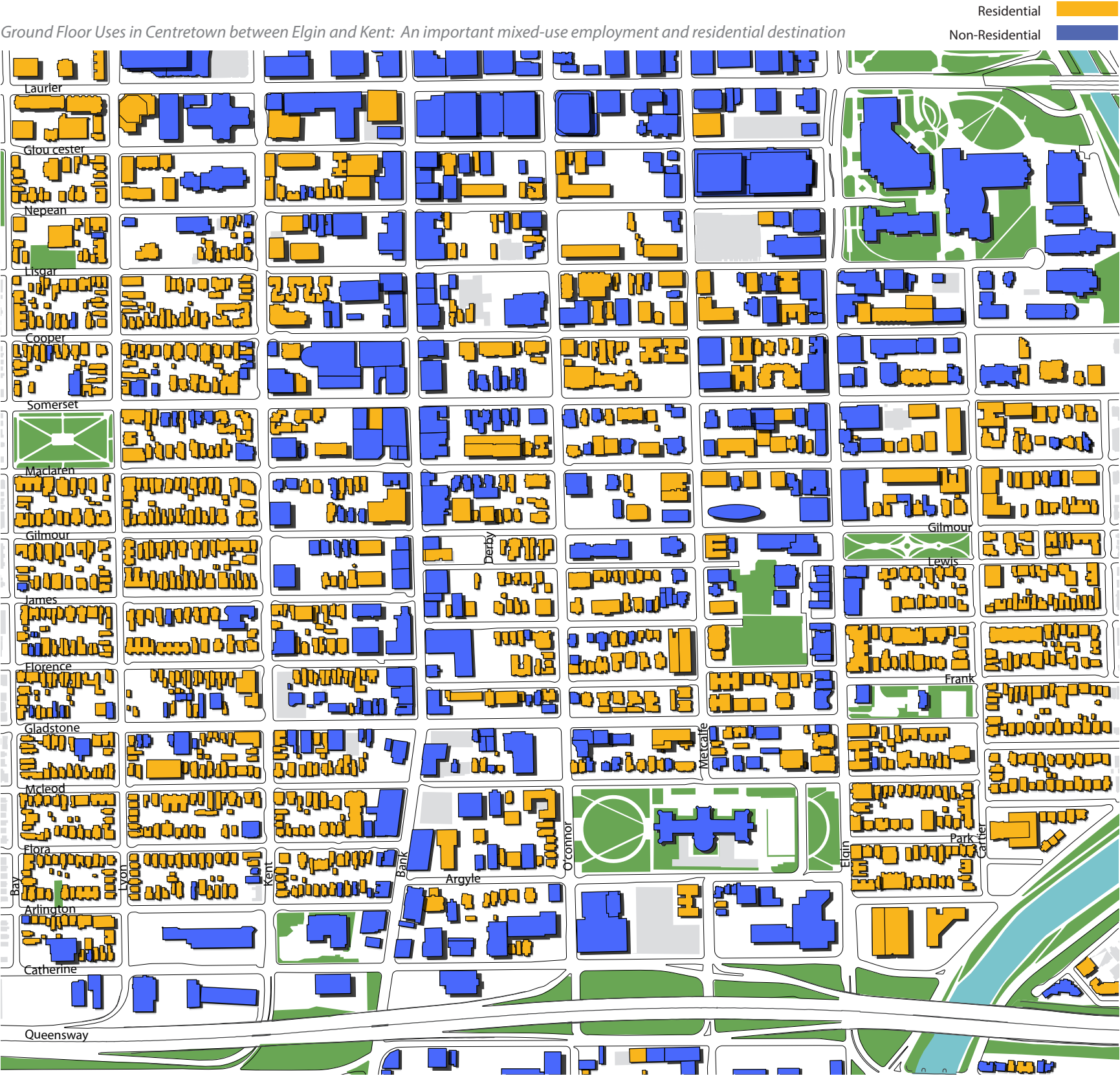
Centretown's Land Uses



This process of residential and commercial intensification has impacted not only the built form of the area, but also the function of the area, as it became a destination for apartment living in the city as well as a strong commercial zone supporting considerable employment opportunities.

Within some internal parts of Centretown, buildings are more intimate in scale and support a tighter urban pattern. This area is comprised largely of residential uses, although a variety of employment uses - such as professional services - are also present. To accommodate these new uses, many of the heritage homes have been converted into mixed-use residential and commercial buildings.

Along the Catherine Street corridor, employment uses dominate, typically comprised of office uses, light industrial, services or retail.



2.4 Heritage

Centretown is one of the oldest communities in Ottawa. Due to its long history, Centretown contains a broad mix of architectural styles. At one time, the central portion of Centretown could be described as being a predominantly ‘heritage residential’ built form of low-to-mid rise. However, over the past 15 years Centretown has undergone significant changes. Today, the present uses and character of the area are much more diverse.

In an effort to protect the heritage assets present in Centretown, much of Mid Centretown is designated as the **Centretown Heritage Conservation District (CHCD)**, which covers almost 40 blocks. Augmenting this large district is a smaller conservation district surrounding Minto Park called the Minto Park Heritage Conservation District. A third area of Centretown around Dundonald Park is subject to the Heritage Overlay (Section 60 of the Zoning By-law), but is not formally recognized as a Heritage Conservation District.

2.4.1 Centretown Heritage Conservation District

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District was designated by the City of Ottawa under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1997 following a comprehensive two-year heritage study by consultant Julian Smith Architect.

The study was carried out in conformance with the City of Ottawa Official Plan and the neighbourhood-specific recommendations of the Centretown Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Centretown Secondary Plan. It was approved by City Council and the Ontario Municipal Board. The study includes Guidelines to manage growth within the district, with a fundamental principle being respect for the existing heritage character.

These Guidelines are supported by the area zoning, which contains a ‘heritage overlay’ provision (see 2.4.2). This overlay replaced pre-existing heritage zoning for the area first introduced in 1974 as part of the draft Centretown Neighbourhood Plan, adopted by City Council in 1976. The zoning for the neighbourhood, including the heritage zoning, was implemented in 1978, and carried through in subsequent zoning by-laws, including the former City of Ottawa Zoning By-law 93-98 which changed the heritage zoning provisions in 2000 to a “heritage overlay.” The heritage overlay was carried forward in the current Zoning By-law 2008-250.

As part of a Heritage Conservation District study, all buildings were inventoried and evaluated according to the City’s “Guide to Evaluating Heritage Buildings and Areas”. The City of Ottawa has a four-tiered classification system for buildings identified as having heritage value. Systems include:

Group 1: Highly Significant Heritage Resource

Group 2: Building of Heritage Significance

Group 3: Significance as part of wider grouping or streetscape

Group 4: Little or no heritage significance

Groups 1 or 2 buildings have a higher heritage significance. A Group 3 building has significance as part of a grouping or streetscape. A Group 4 building or property means the building has little or no heritage significance. This could be because the building was of more recent construction, heavily altered or a vacant lot at the time of the district study.

It is, however, important to note that all buildings, regardless of their group classification, are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. A Group 4 building/property has the same level of protection as a Group 1 building.

2.4.2 The Heritage Overlay

The Centretown Heritage Conservation District is also subject to the zoning controls established under Section 60 of the Zoning By-law, known as the Heritage Overlay.

Adopted in 1978, a Heritage Overlay is an additional layer of zoning regulations imposed ‘over’ an area to encourage the retention of existing heritage buildings. The regulations of the Heritage Overlay over-ride any underlying zoning. Most Heritage Conservation Districts in Ottawa are subject to a Heritage Overlay.

Heritage Overlays are non-place specific and regardless of their local neighbourhood context, enforce three basic rules:

1. Where a building is removed it must be rebuilt with the same height, bulk, size, floor area, spacing and in the same location;

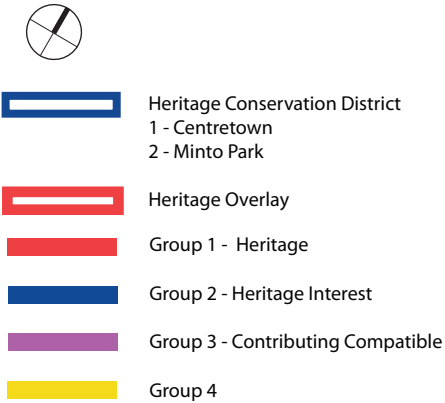
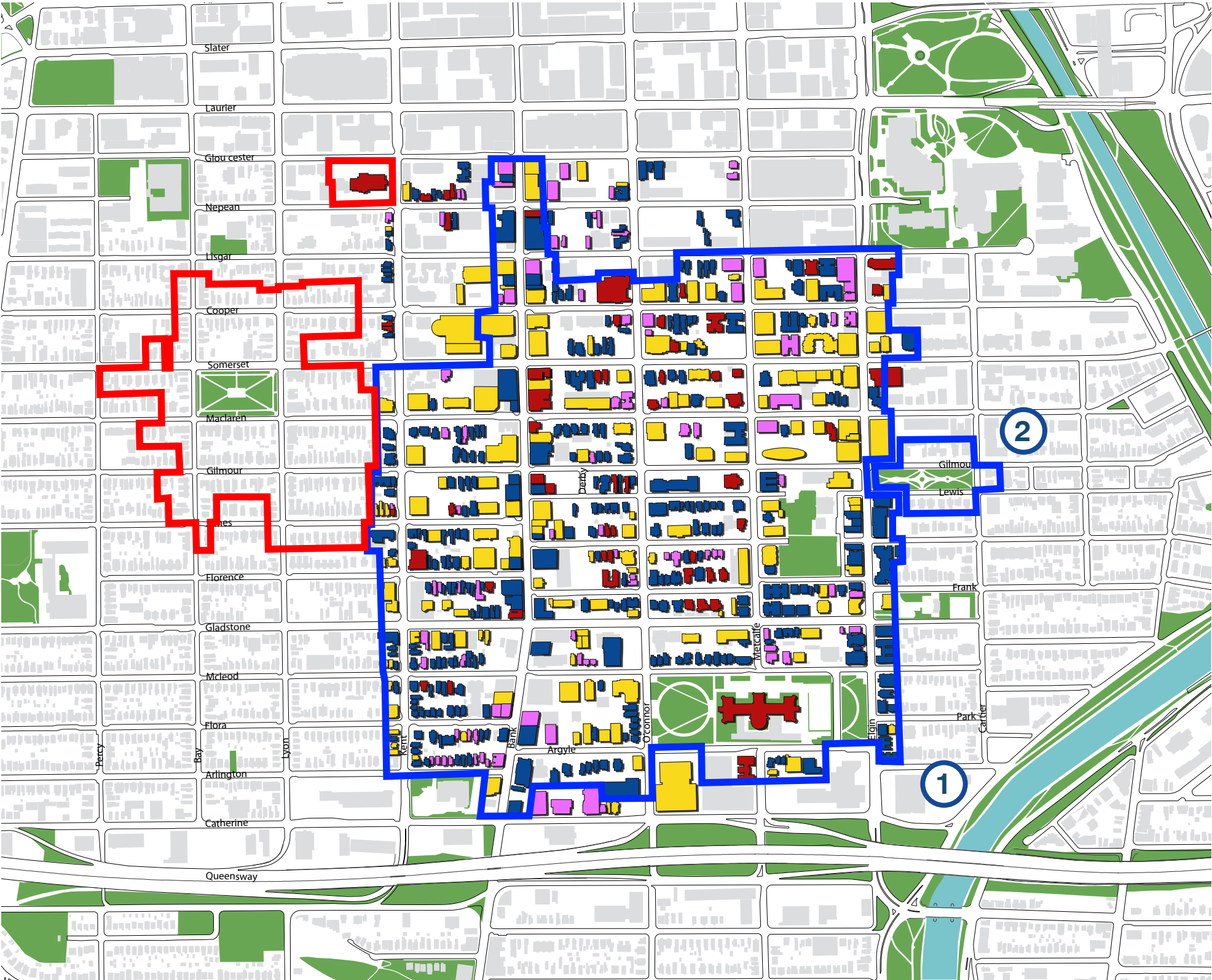
2. Additions can only be located in a rear yard behind the original building, must maintain the height and slope of the existing roof, are limited to 30% of the gross floor area of the building, and are not permitted to have projections; and
3. Parking requirements are modest.

Generally, the Heritage Overlay is an excellent control for heritage districts where the scale of the built form is intact and uniform and needs to be protected. However, when applied to some locations in Centretown - for example Gladstone Avenue that has some auto-oriented uses and parking lots - the Heritage Overlay can be seen as a disincentive to undertaking improvements and/or redevelopment.

The Heritage Overlay allows proposed development to be reviewed in terms of the heritage character of the area, and has in the past been lifted for certain proposals that are deemed to fit the character. Development proposals that the City of Ottawa deems to fit the character of the Heritage Conservation District can be granted relief from the provisions of the Heritage Overlay. This is achieved through the Committee of Adjustment.

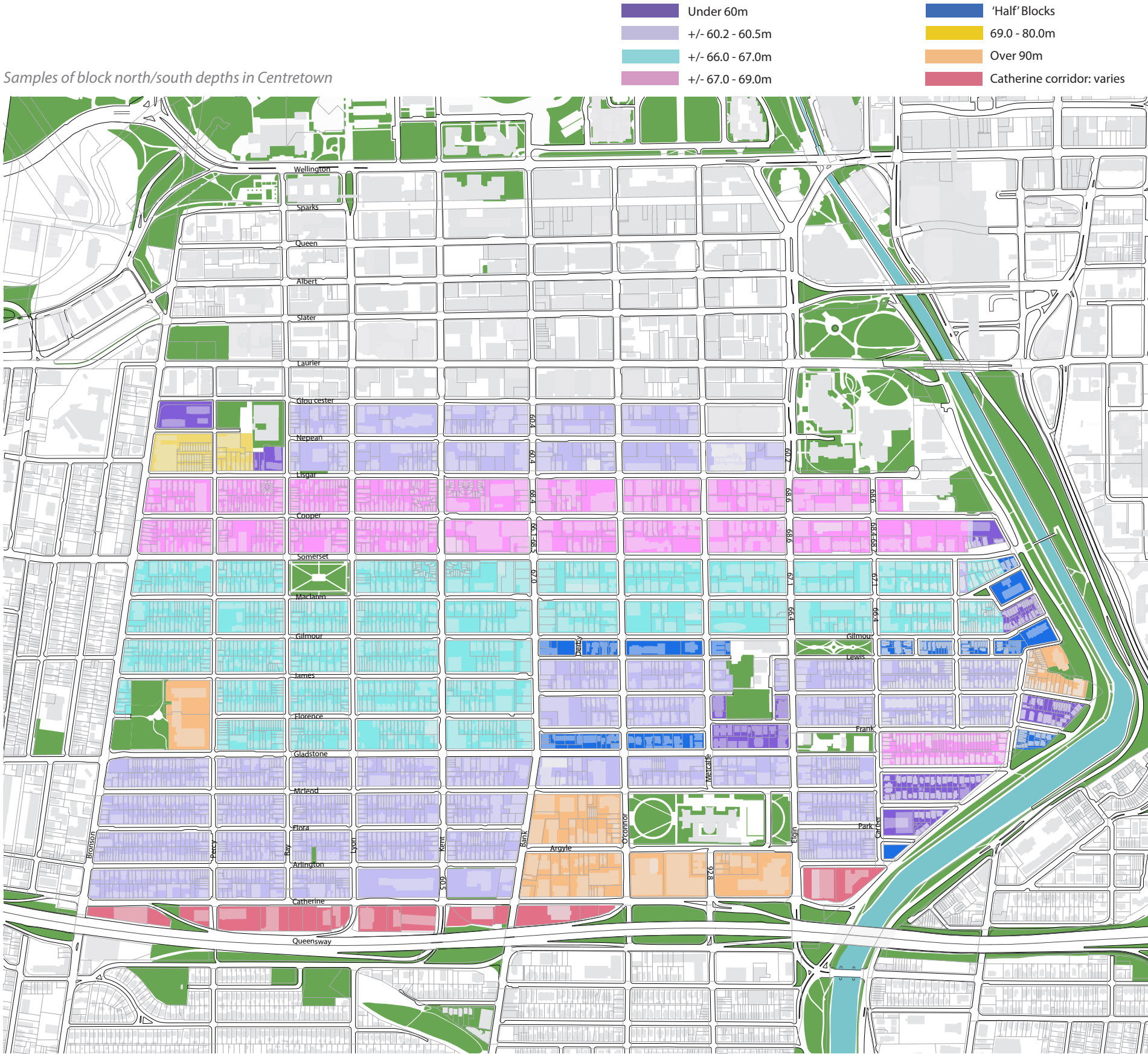


Centretown's Heritage Conservation Districts & Overlay



2.5 Block Characteristics

Centretown is characterized by narrow road right-of-ways and a narrow block pattern which creates some unique development challenges. Streets are typically very narrow at a typical width of 18.3 metres or less – meaning that separation between buildings is quite small and the area for public realm is limited. In the Northern Area (where a large number of tall buildings currently exist, are being built or are proposed), blocks typically vary between 60.2 to 68.9 metres in depth. In a few locations in the Central Area, blocks are less than half of this depth ('half block'). In the absence of a dual-fronted building, these half blocks create poor street relationships on those sides where the rear of the building is exposed to the street. Along Catherine Street and the Queensway, block depths vary greatly.



2.6 Mobility

A detailed Mobility Baseline Paper and Strategy was prepared as part of this CDP and is available as an appendix. Below is a summary of key findings:

2.6.1 Pedestrian & Road Network

Centretown has a mix of busy one-way arterial roads and more quiet local streets. The arterials that run north-south divide the neighbourhood and deliver traffic from the highway system to the downtown core. The function of the arterials, which carry high volumes of traffic between the Queensway and the core, negatively impacts the quality of development, streetscape condition and mix of uses possible along these busy roads.

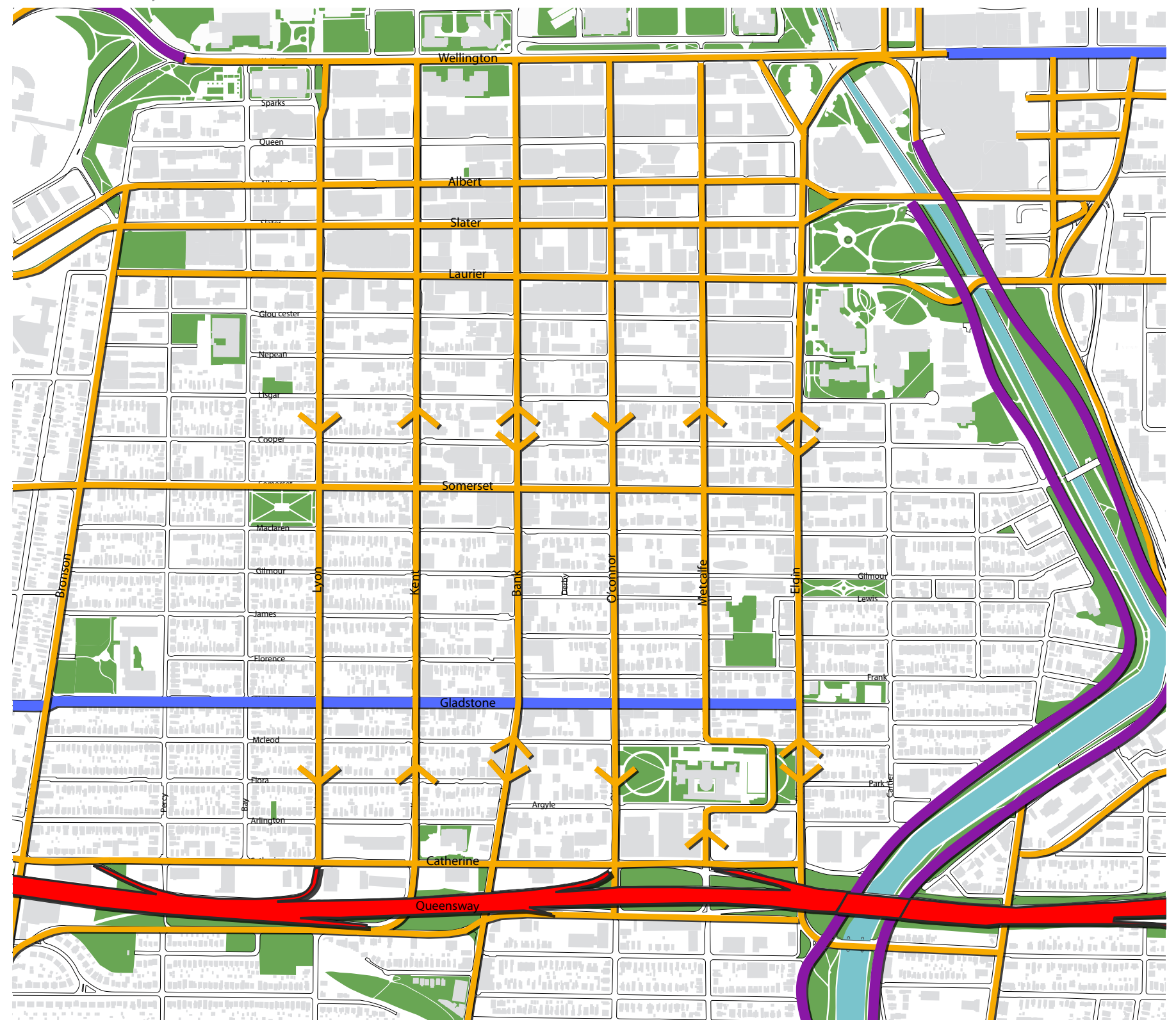
The function of arterial roads, as defined by the City, is to carry large volumes of traffic over the longest distances. The seven arterial roads that cross Centretown accommodate not only cars, pedestrians and cyclists, but also large trucks and buses. The level of traffic on these roads can be challenging environments for non-vehicular users. This is also a problematic condition along the Queensway, where pedestrian crossing opportunities are limited.

The presence of so many arterial roads that divide an established residential neighbourhood is unusual. In many other communities, these neighbourhood roads would be local roads and calmed for traffic. Within Centretown, only Elgin Street and Bank Street – the area's commercial 'Mainstreets' – function as typical mainstreets with slower two-way traffic, active uses at grade and pleasant pedestrian environments. In contrast to the north-south arterials, the local streets that run east west are quieter, slower and act as neighbourhood streets. These streets provide the setting for much of the area's residential developments.

Along the road network, the pedestrian network is comprised almost exclusively of sidewalks lining both sides of the street. Some streets however, such as Lewis, do not have sidewalks on both sides. In some locations there are significant encroachments onto the pedestrian zone from parking lots (refer to Section 4.4). Although there are some off-street pathways within parks which provide pedestrian short-cuts between blocks (e.g. Minto Park), many blocks do not provide any opportunities for mid-block cut throughs.

Across Centretown there are limited transportation demand management (TDM) systems in place (such as trip end facilities, cycle parking or carsharing). In addition, other than along Bank and Elgin Streets, additional pedestrian amenities, such as benches, bus shelters, way finding and trash facilities would improve the pedestrian experience.

Centretown's Road Systems



2.6.2 The Transit Network

Public transit services within the study area are focused on Bank Street, Somerset Street, Gladstone Avenue, Bronson Avenue, Catherine Street and Elgin Street. All local transit routes passing through Centretown provide connections to the City’s downtown rapid transit network. All bus routes operate in mixed traffic conditions and are subject to delays during peak periods caused by traffic congestion, incidents and planned/unplanned events.

Lack of sidewalk width constrains the ability to provide for amenities at many locations, and creates conflicts between people waiting for buses and other pedestrians. The City’s Transportation Master Plan identifies Bank Street, Somerset Street and the Catherine/Isabella/Queensway corridor as “Transit Priority Corridors”. Transit priority measures which could be considered include queue-jump lanes, dedicated transit lanes, transit signal priority, and improved shelters and other amenities for transit users.

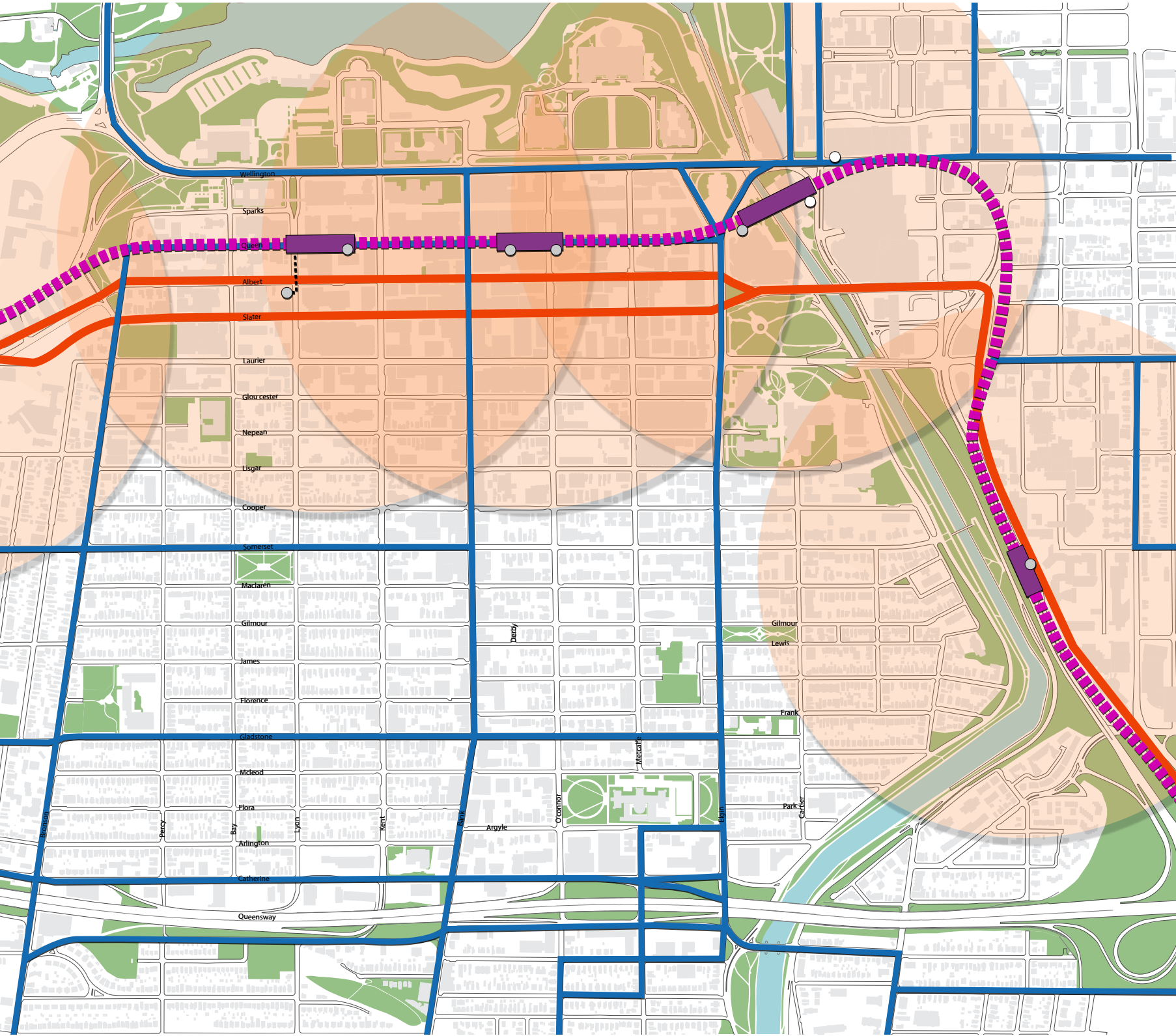
The City of Ottawa’s Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan (TMP) reflect recent trends towards the creation of more sustainable transportation networks which address current and future needs. The TMP outlines a multi-billion dollar rapid transit expansion, the centerpiece of which is the conversion of a substantial part of the existing Bus Transitway to Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology and the construction of a downtown LRT tunnel to improve the speed and reliability of transit in the downtown area while eliminating existing bus congestion issues in the Albert and Slater Street corridors.

The City of Ottawa is proposing a new 12.5 km electric light rail transit (LRT) line from Tunney’s Pasture Station in the west to Blair Station in the east via a downtown transit tunnel. Thirteen stations are proposed, three of which are in the 3.2 km tunnel which will be located under downtown Ottawa between Bronson Avenue and the University of Ottawa. The proposed Downtown Ottawa Transit Tunnel (DOTT) should help to improve the conditions in Centretown by potentially reducing traffic levels through the community.

The nearest stations to the CDP area would be Downtown West and Downtown East, which would be approximately 250 – 300 m walking distance from the northern edge of the study area along Bank and Kent Streets, respectively. Additionally, Campus Station is approximately 500 m to the east of the study area, via the Corktown Footbridge.

Preliminary Engineering is scheduled to commence immediately and be completed in early 2012 and the route operational by 2018.

Centretown’s Transit Network, September 2011



2.6.3 The Cycling Network

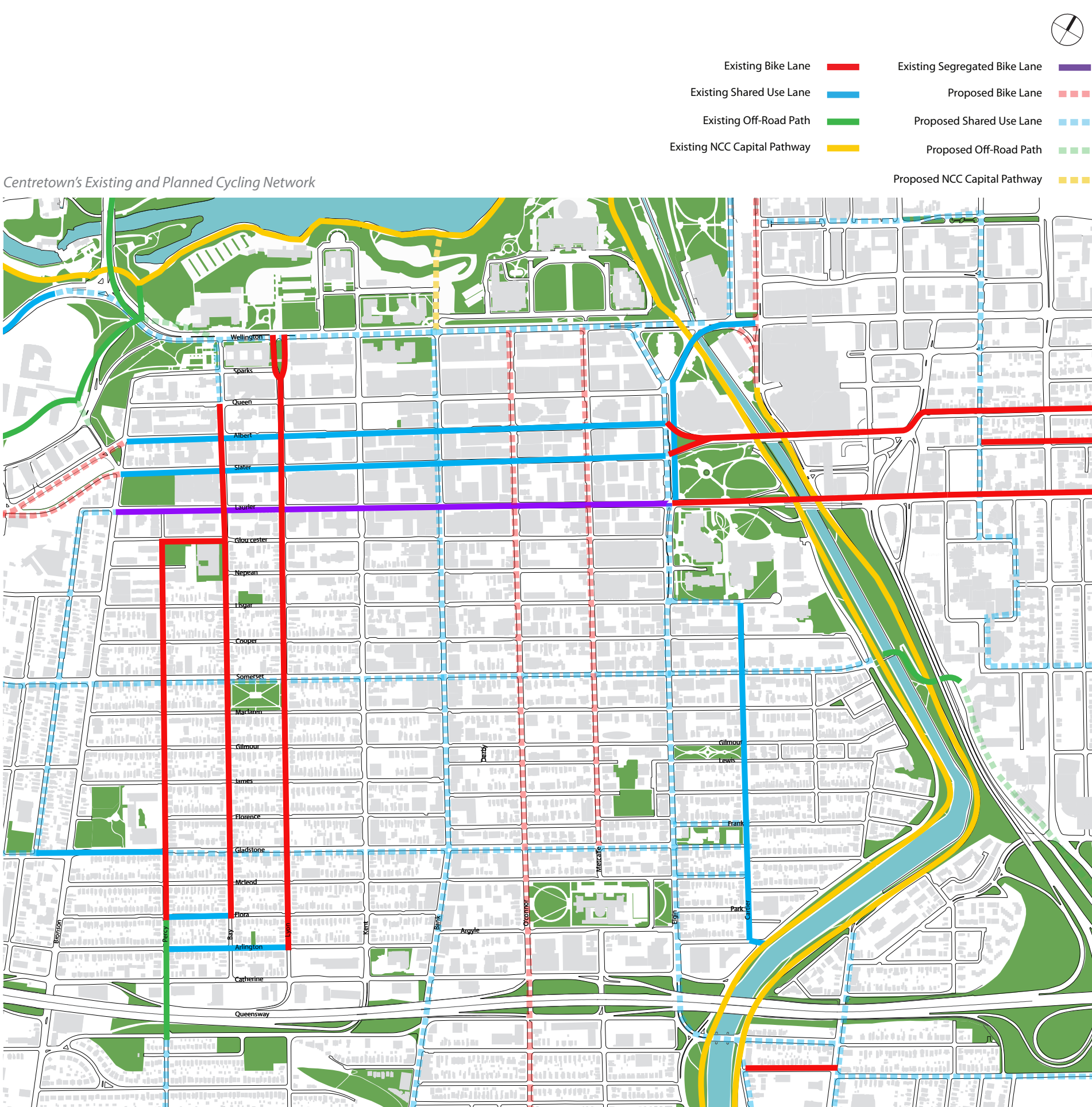
At present, the cycling network across Centretown is fragmented and incomplete. The cycling network within the core study area consists almost entirely of on-street facilities, with some multi-use pathways located within neighbourhood parks. The tight grid of streets provides for multiple route choices although the one-way network of streets has impacts on ease of bicycle circulation. One dedicated cycling facility in the core study area road network is a short stretch of bicycle lane on O'Connor Street which provides a dedicated cycling connection under the Queensway, in the southbound direction. Shared bike lanes are present on Lyon, Bay and Percy Streets.

Downtown Ottawa has a number of special bicycle-friendly facilities that have been installed where opportunities have permitted on both designated and non-designated cycling routes. Examples include bike pockets on Slater and Albert and bike channels on Cooper, Lisgar and MacLaren.

The Ottawa Cycling Plan identifies Bank, O'Connor, Metcalfe, Elgin, Somerset and Gladstone as "Spine or City-wide Cycling Routes", while Lisgar Street (east of Elgin Street) is identified as "Community Cycling Route".

In terms of planned facilities, the Ottawa Cycling Plan proposes installation of bicycle lanes on O'Connor and Metcalfe Streets, and the creation of "shared use lanes" along Bank Street, Somerset Street, Gladstone Avenue, Elgin Street and Lisgar Street. None of these facilities have been implemented to date. City Council has approved a segregated east-west downtown bike lane pilot project on Laurier with implementation taking place in 2011.

The study area is within a special area defined in the Ottawa Cycling Plan as "Proposed Cycling Network in downtown core" and is to be reviewed as part of Transportation Master Plan Update and future transit strategies that are still unresolved. The cycling network plan in downtown is therefore still in flux and is likely to change with the next OCP revision, starting in 2012.



2.7 Utilities

Some of the watermains and sewers within the area have been in use for well over 100 years and are in need of being upgraded to meet current and future servicing demands in the area.

A detailed Municipal Infrastructure Baseline Paper was prepared as part of this CDP. Below is a summary of key findings:

2.7.1 Water Distribution System

Centretown is located in the City’s 1W water pressure zone. This zone is fed directly by the Fleet Street Pumping Station, and the high lift pumping stations located at the City’s two water treatment plants. There is an east-west 1,220 mm diameter transmission main located immediately south of the Queensway. The transmission main is the main water feed to the east end of the City. There are also some 406 mm diameter watermains located on Somerset and O’Connor which improve the local distribution capacity and can augment transmission capacity to the outer pressure zones under emergency conditions.

The water distribution system within the study limits is generally capable of meeting the water demands and fire protection requirements with the exception of small areas that have fire flow limitations. The watermains within the areas with fire flow limitations will be upgraded as part of future City projects.

2.7.2 Sewer System

The City’s sewer system, north of Somerset, is generally separated (storm and sanitary sewers) with only a few combined sewers. There are no known issues with the storm sewer system issues north of Somerset. There is an issue with extraneous flows in the sanitary sewer system north of Somerset, which is being reviewed by City staff.

Combined Sewer System (South of Somerset)

There is major sewer issue with the drainage limitations of the combined sewer system south of Somerset which are part of the O’Connor Drainage Area. As a result of the drainage system limitations during intense storm events, multiple basement floodings occur at an estimated 2-year frequency, and surface flooding of private property at an estimated 4-year frequency.

The O’Connor Area is a combined sewer area and is one of the catchments that will remain combined. As such, a Combined Sewer Storage Tunnel is being planned as per Council direction to reduce combined sewer overflows to zero on an average year during Control Period (April 15 to November 15).

The O’Connor Drainage Area – Flood Control Study and subsequent Implementation Plan in 2006, identified flood control measures to improve the levels of service. The implementation plan identified a functional design and phasing plan of the flood control measures that provide incremental benefits over a period in the order of 20 years. To date, the infrastructure renewal projects on Somerset and Bank have enabled the successful implementation of flood control measures identified in the O’Connor Flood Control Study.

A total of 38 phased activities were developed for the O’Connor Drainage Area - Flood Control Measures Study with an additional phasing of 7 local storage systems. Based on these 45 phased activities for the flood control measures it is expected that the solution will provide a 100-year level of protection against basement flooding, with the exception of a few small local areas where this level of protection is considered impractical to achieve. In these areas, the expected level of protection is in the range of 25 to 50 years. Any further increase in protection would only be practical by means of protective plumbing on private property.

Wastewater Sewer System (North of Somerset)

The sewer system north of Somerset has been separated with the exception of a few sewers that still have combined flows. A majority of the sanitary sewers north of Somerset were built in the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s with the exception of a few sections on Lisgar that were built in 1935.

There are no known major sanitary sewer capacity issues north of Somerset, however, the City is reviewing extraneous flow issues in the Kent Street Sanitary Sewer.

Storm Sewer System (North of Somerset)

The sewer system north of Somerset has been separated with the exception of a few sewers that still have combined flows. A majority of the storm sewers north of Somerset were built in the 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s. There are no known major storm sewer capacity issues north of Somerset.

2.7.3 Stormwater Management

Within the O’Connor Drainage Area south of Somerset, stormwater “quality control” for the majority of the area is provided by drainage of frequent storm events to the combined sewer system, and ultimately to Robert O. Pickard Environmental Centre (ROPEC) for treatment before discharge into the Ottawa River.

To ensure that existing flooding problems in the O’Connor Drainage area are not exacerbated, stormwater “quantity control” is required as part of urban development projects. This typically involves on-site storage to ensure that there is no increase in storm flow contribution as compared to existing conditions. In some cases, the post development storm flow contribution is restricted to a lesser value than the existing conditions to mitigate sewer capacity issues.

North of Somerset, stormwater drains to the storm sewer system and stormwater “quantity control” is required as part of urban development projects to ensure that there is no increase in storm flow contribution as compared to existing conditions.

2.7.4 Utility Services

Within the Centretown area, the City will ensure that sufficient utility services, such as hydro and communications/telecommunications, are or will be in place to support urban development projects, and utility providers will be engaged early in the development process.

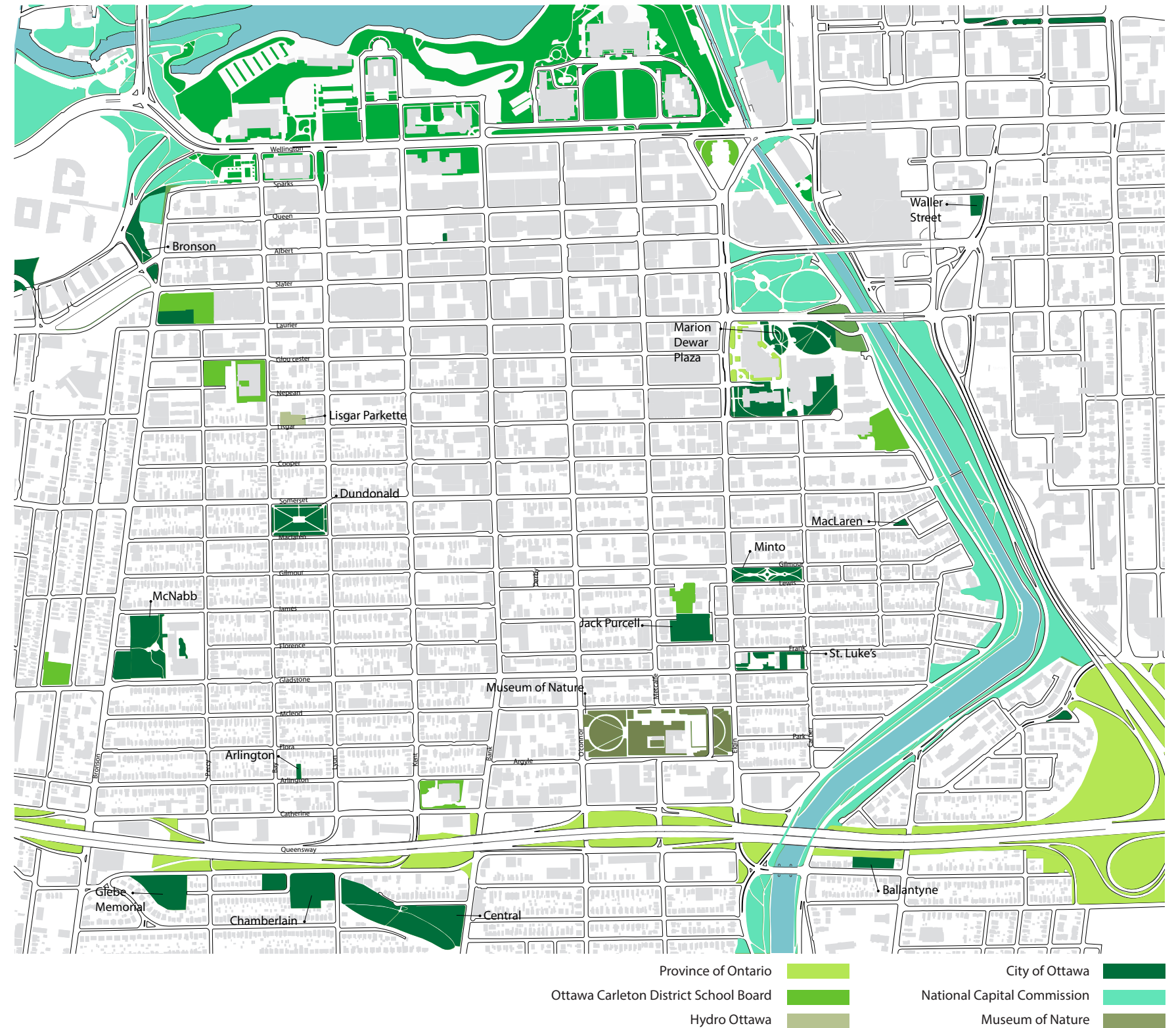
Consideration will also be given to the location of utilities within the public rights of way as well as on private property. Utilities, will be clustered or grouped where possible to minimize visual impact and utility providers will be encouraged to consider innovative methods of containing utility services on or within streetscape features such as gateways, lamp posts, transit shelters etc, when determining appropriate locations for large utility equipment and utility cluster sites.

2.8 Parks & Open Spaces

Although in relatively close proximity to the parks and open spaces provided by the National Capital Commission, there is an under-provision of usable community parks within Centretown to serve the needs of its current and future residents. This deficiency has been recognized by the City in its Official Plan. At present Minto Park, St. Luke's Park and Jack Purcell Park are the largest and most important open spaces serving the needs of the Core Study Area, while McNabb and Dundonald service the western portions of Centretown.

Even with Minto Park, St. Luke's, Jack Purcell Park, Dundonald Park and McNabb Park, there is an under-provision of usable community parks serving Centretown. This is an issue for both existing residents as well as any new residents moving into the area. Future residents will add further pressure to the existing undersupply of park space. Like many urban neighbourhoods, Centretown would benefit from additional park space for its residents. These spaces could be large or small, soft or hard surfaced.

Open Space Network Serving the Centretown Area: Ownership



2.9 Community Facilities

A sustainable community needs to be a complete, mixed-use district able to accommodate activity and vibrancy for all types of residents. It must offer the opportunity to interact, work, live, play, pray, shop and learn within a convenient walking, cycling or transit distance. Community amenities are an essential component of this mix as they provide opportunities for animating the public realm, increasing access to services, improving opportunities for activity, connecting social networks, creating community destinations and contributing to a better overall quality of life for residents.

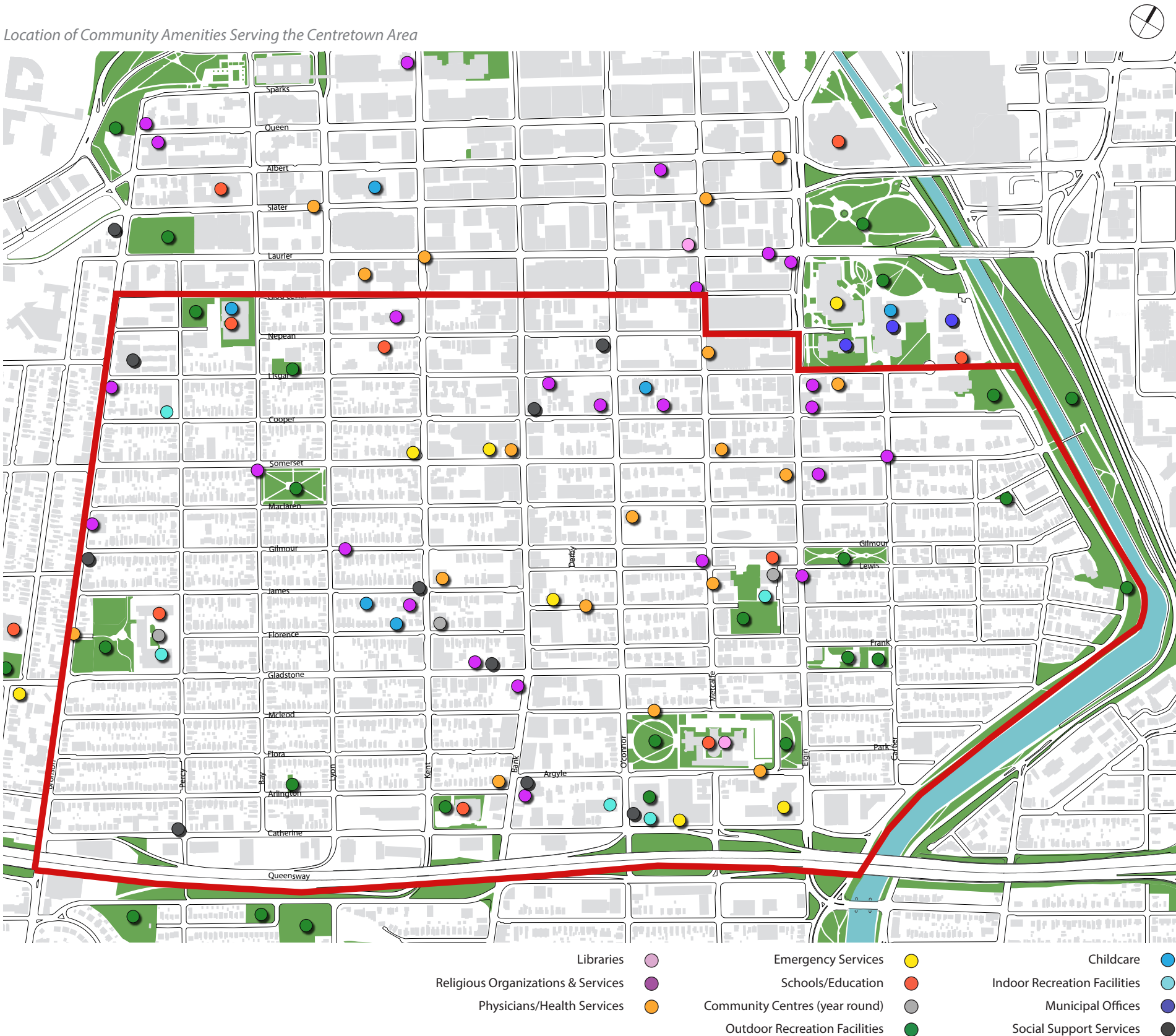
Today, Centretown benefits from easy access to many community services, both within the boundaries of the CDP area and further afield. Due to its downtown location, many of these amenities serve a wider catchment area and are not for exclusive use by Centretown residents.

As a well-established, central neighbourhood, Centretown suffers from many of the same deficiencies experienced in other urban communities, such as a lack of dedicated community centres and affordable community meeting space, dedicated youth centres and senior centres, outdoor recreation spaces and the availability of funds to invest in existing in the maintenance of existing community facilities.

However, despite these existing deficiencies, overall Centretown is generally well provided for with community facilities. The plan to the right highlights the location of a variety of important amenities serving the community. Although currently adequately provided for in many areas, if the population of Centretown continues to grow, many existing facilities will be operating at capacity and additional facilities will be required to meet the increased demand.

A Community Amenities Audit was undertaken for the study.

Location of Community Amenities Serving the Centretown Area



2.10 An Evolving Neighbourhood

Centretown is quickly becoming one of Ottawa’s most desirable destinations for downtown living. The appeal of downtown living is not unique to Ottawa. Many downtowns across Canada and around the world are experiencing a renaissance as residents choose to reduce their commute, move closer to work and be a more active part of their city’s cultural offerings.

Continued demand for housing, growth in local employment opportunities, and planned and on-going infrastructure investment in rapid transit will continue to fuel this trend in Centretown. This evolution is clearly visible through the new condominium developments currently planned and under way across the community, as mapped to the right.

Over the past 60 years, the central portion of Centretown between Cartier Street and Kent Street north of MacLaren has become a neighbourhood of apartments. Apartments have taken the form of purpose built rentals, conversions of stately single family homes into multiple units and most recently, private market condominiums. Today, between Kent Street and Elgin Street, 96% of all dwelling units are apartments.

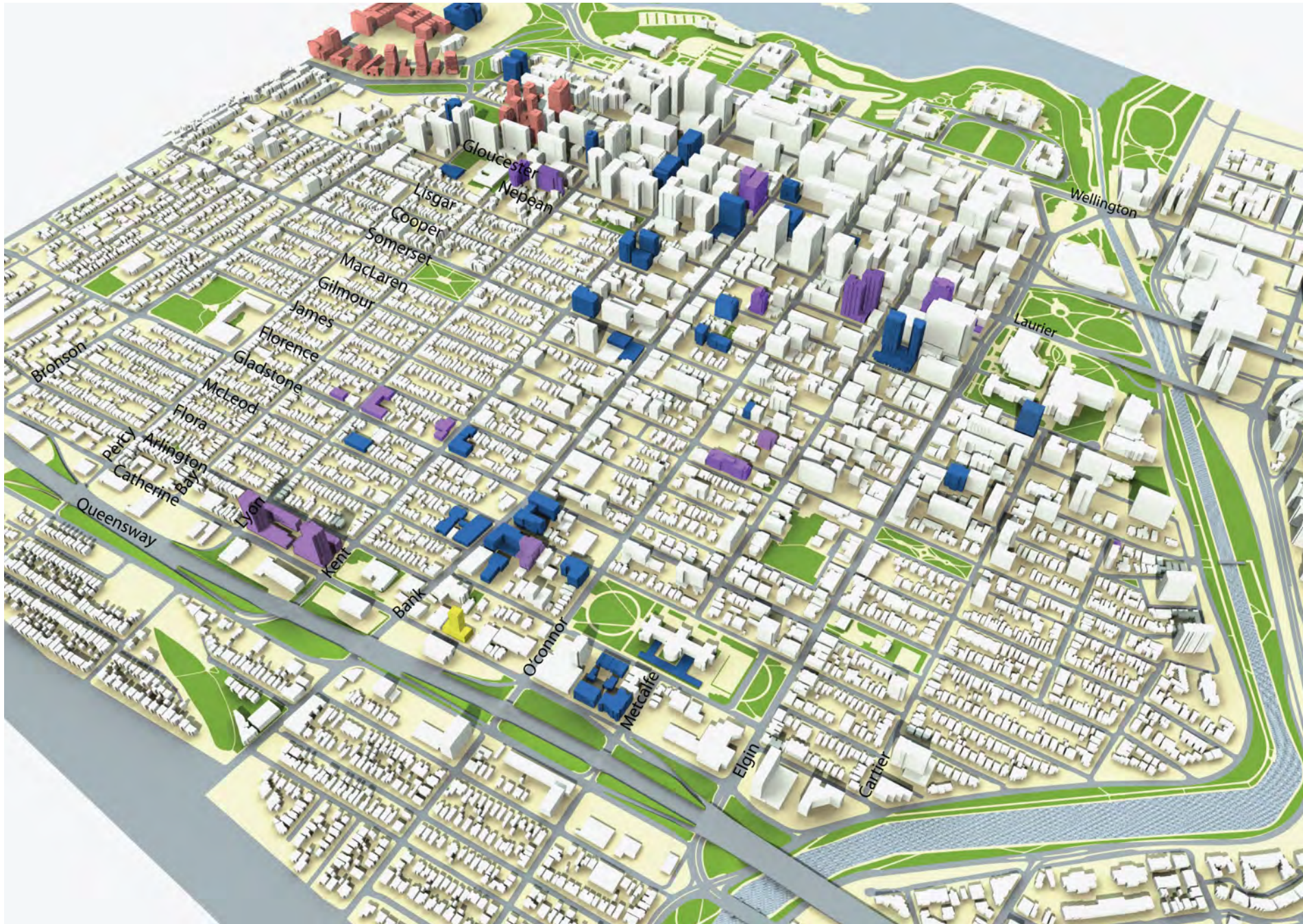
The plan to the right identifies all the new and proposed developments across the Centretown area. Many of these have been introduced on vacant and/or under-utilized sites (such as parking lots, derelict buildings, auto repair shops or garages, etc.), a trend which is expected to continue.

Planned or Approved:

Name	Address	Storeys	Status	Units
	390 Bank St.	7	Approved	57
The Bay Street	346 Gloucester	18	Approved	199
The Carillon	330 Gilmour St.	7	Approved	N/A
Central II	340 McLeod St.	9	Approved	141
	287 Lisgar St.	18	Approved	101
	89 & 91 Nepean St.	27	Approved	233
	70 Gloucester St.	27	Approved	235
	265 Catherine St.	27	Approved	460
Gotham	224 Lyon St.	17	Approved	251
Central III	340 McLeod St.	9	Approved	162
	260 MacLaren St.	7	Approved	63
So-Ba	203 Catherine	23	Approved	244

Total 2146

Built, Approved and Planned Developments across Centretown (2000-2011)



- Built in the last 10 years/Under Construction
- Approved Development
- City or NCC Sponsored Districts
- Proposed Development

The plan to the right illustrates the locations of tall buildings (10 storeys or higher), with the exception of a few office buildings, the majority of these taller buildings are ‘slab style’ residential buildings built in the 1960s and 1970s.

Today, Centretown is far from stagnant. Since the year 2000, more than 17 new condominium developments have been realized, resulting in more than 2000 new units. In addition, another dozen projects were either approved or in planning stages in 2011.

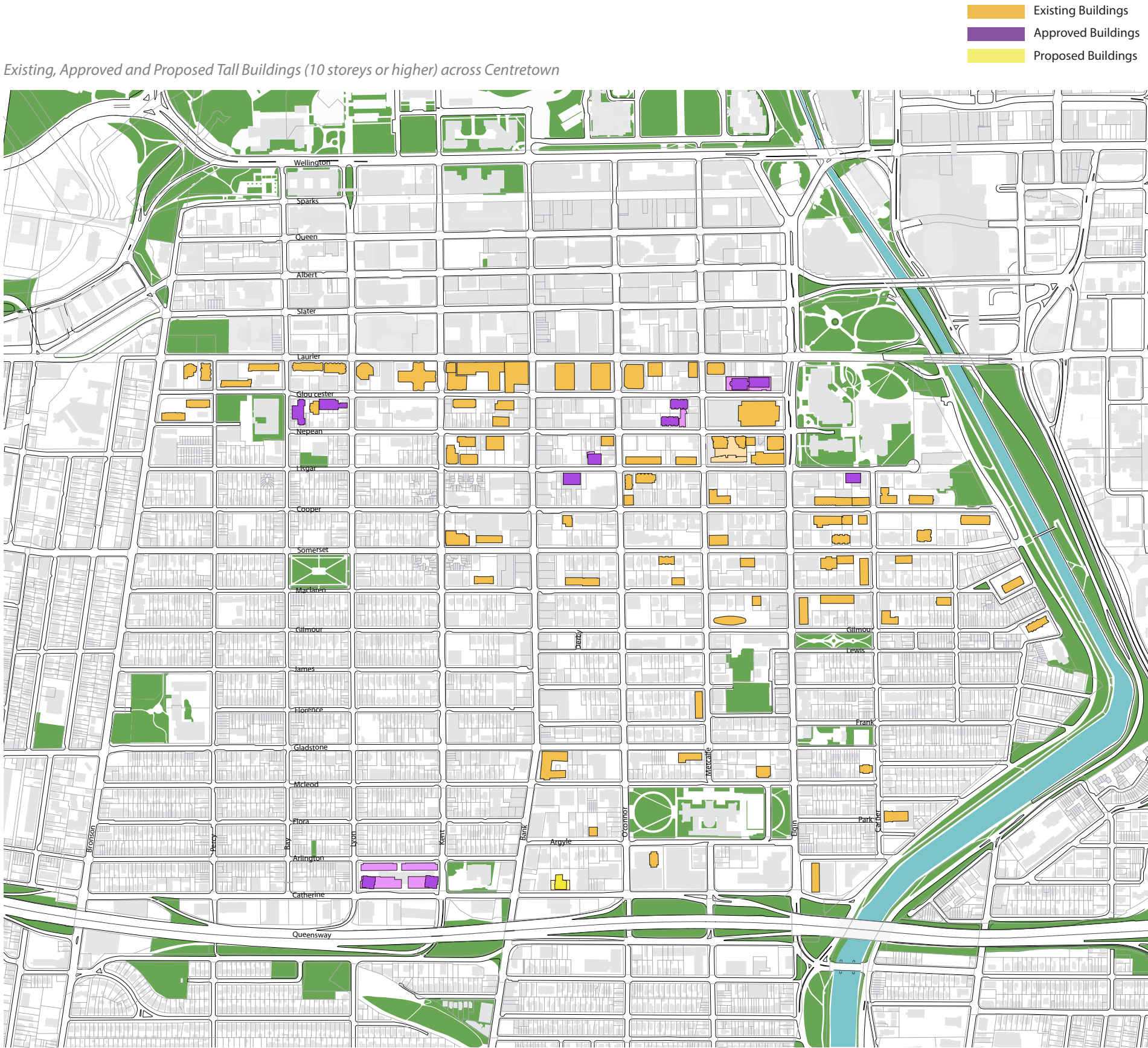
Built (As of 2000-2011):

Name	Address	Storeys	Status	Units
Opus	320 McLeod St.	9	Built	70
The Everett	375 Lisgar St.	11	Built	66
The Metropolitan Phase II	374 Cooper St.	11	Built	42
The Metropolitan Phase I	364 Cooper St.	7	Built	27
Dwell	457 McLeod St.	4	Built	35
Studio Argyle	255 Argyle Ave.	4	Built	40
The 400 McLeod	400 McLeod St.	4	Built	30
The Filmore	412 Nepean St.	4	Built	33
The Laurier	570 W. Laurier Ave.	23	Built	121
Hudson Park Phase I	235 Kent St.	20	Built	123
Somerset Gardens	138 Somerset St. West	10	Built	119
Hartman Place	380 Somerset St. West	6	Built	60
The Strand	419 W. Somerset St.	14	Built	190
Beaver Barracks Ph 1	Argyle St.	4 and 8	Built	182
Hudson Park Phase II	234 Nepean St.	20	Built	119
Total				1257

Under Construction (As of 2011):

Name	Address	Storeys	Status	Units
Central	453 Bank St.	10	Under Construction	228
Tribeca	187 Metcalfe St.	27	Under Construction	453
Beaver Barracks Phase 2	Catherine St.	7	Under Construction	72
SOHO Lisgar	300 Lisgar St.	16	Under Construction	132
Central I	340 McLeod St.	9	Under Construction	141
Centropolis	Kent and Gladstone	4	Under Construction	102
Merit	108 Lisgar St.	16	Under Construction	75
Total				1203

Combined Total (Approved, Planned , Built and Under Construction) 4606

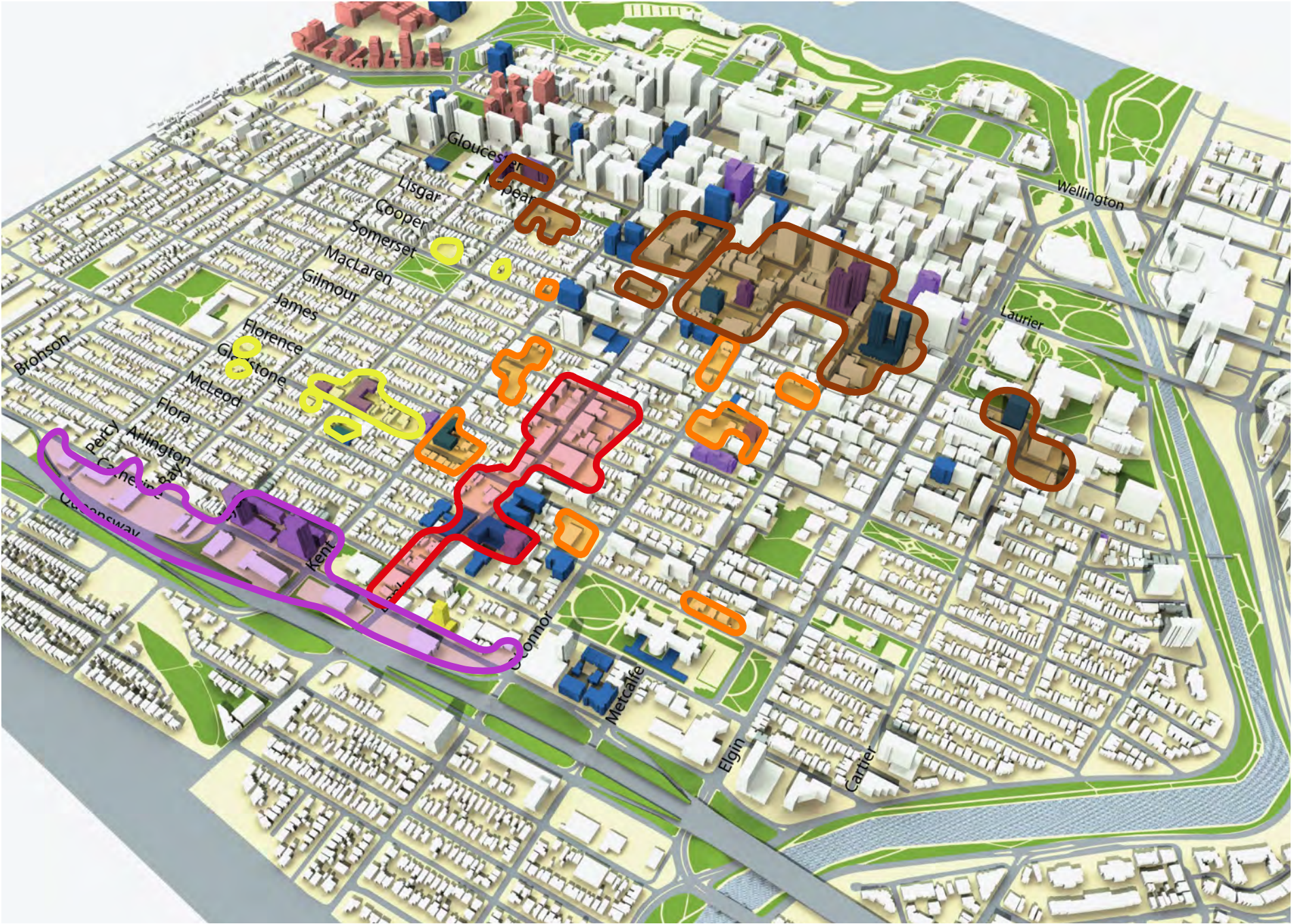






Further changes are coming to Centretown. This CDP can help direct those changes to locations best suited for growth and work to protect those areas where growth is less appropriate. The plan to the right highlights those locations where more immediate growth is anticipated. These sites tend to be served by transit, support a number of vacant or underutilized sites or are located in close proximity to area's already undergoing transformation. Four 'zones of change' have been identified in Centretown. Each zone support a different design response with regard to how redevelopment should occur (refer to Chapter 6). Zones of change include:

- > Mainstreet Corridor / Bank Street
- > Northern
- > Neighbourhood Infill
- > Southern

Not all areas of growth are illustrated. In the future, other sites may be made available for redevelopment which have not been considered today. This is inevitable as Centretown matures and development practices continue to evolve.

Zones of Change: Potential locations for appropriate infill and intensification



Southern		Residential Areas	
Northern		Mainstreet	
Central Area	