

Public Realm Plan for Almonte Downtown and Ottawa Street

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Prepared for:

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Public Realm Plan

This Public Realm Plan is to guide the design of publicly accessible spaces of two key commercial sectors of Almonte:

- Downtown Almonte as designated in the Downtown Almonte Secondary Plan; and
- Ottawa Street from Paterson Street between Appleton Side Road/Ramsey Concession 11A, including adjacent lands.

In these sectors, the publicly accessible spaces considered in this Plan include municipal street rights-of-way, with an emphasis on the space utilized for sidewalks, streetscaping, plazas, boulevards, and medians. In addition, there are important publicly accessible spaces outside of street rights-of-way, including parcels of land for municipal and civic functions, as well as other publicly owned lands that are used for recreation and active transportation. Together, these spaces form a continuous public realm where people travel, interact, and participate in community life. The design, construction, and maintenance of the public realm can have a defining impact on the overall experience of residents and visitors to these areas and will most certainly establish their identity and character.

On this basis, the Plan is a strategic document that acts as a framework for enabling public realm design and operation that reflects community aspirations and captures ideas from the community, responds to the local community context, and demonstrates concepts for potential public realm interventions and investments. The Plan is not intended to be prescriptive, rather, it is meant to enable, guide, and inspire the continuous, incremental transformation of the public realm of these two commercial sectors, and to identify tools and opportunities to implement the ideas presented.

This Public Realm Plan also contributes to “How We Grow”, the planning component of the Municipality’s MM2048 project which encompasses a series of strategic planning studies that will shape how the Municipality will accommodate growth up to 2048. This Plan has been informed by stakeholders, local residents and businesses, and works in conjunction with planning documents and other MM2048 studies for Almonte, including:

- Community Official Plan, 2006; Official Plan Amendment 22 and Official Plan Amendment 32
- Almonte Downtown Secondary Plan (in-progress in 2025)
- Downtown Almonte Heritage Conservation District Plan, 2015
- Municipality of Mississippi Mills Transportation Master Plan, 2024
- Municipality of Mississippi Mills Water and Wastewater Master Plan, 2024
- Municipality of Mississippi Mills Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2020 – 2025
- Almonte Downtown Core Infrastructure Renewals Report, 2017

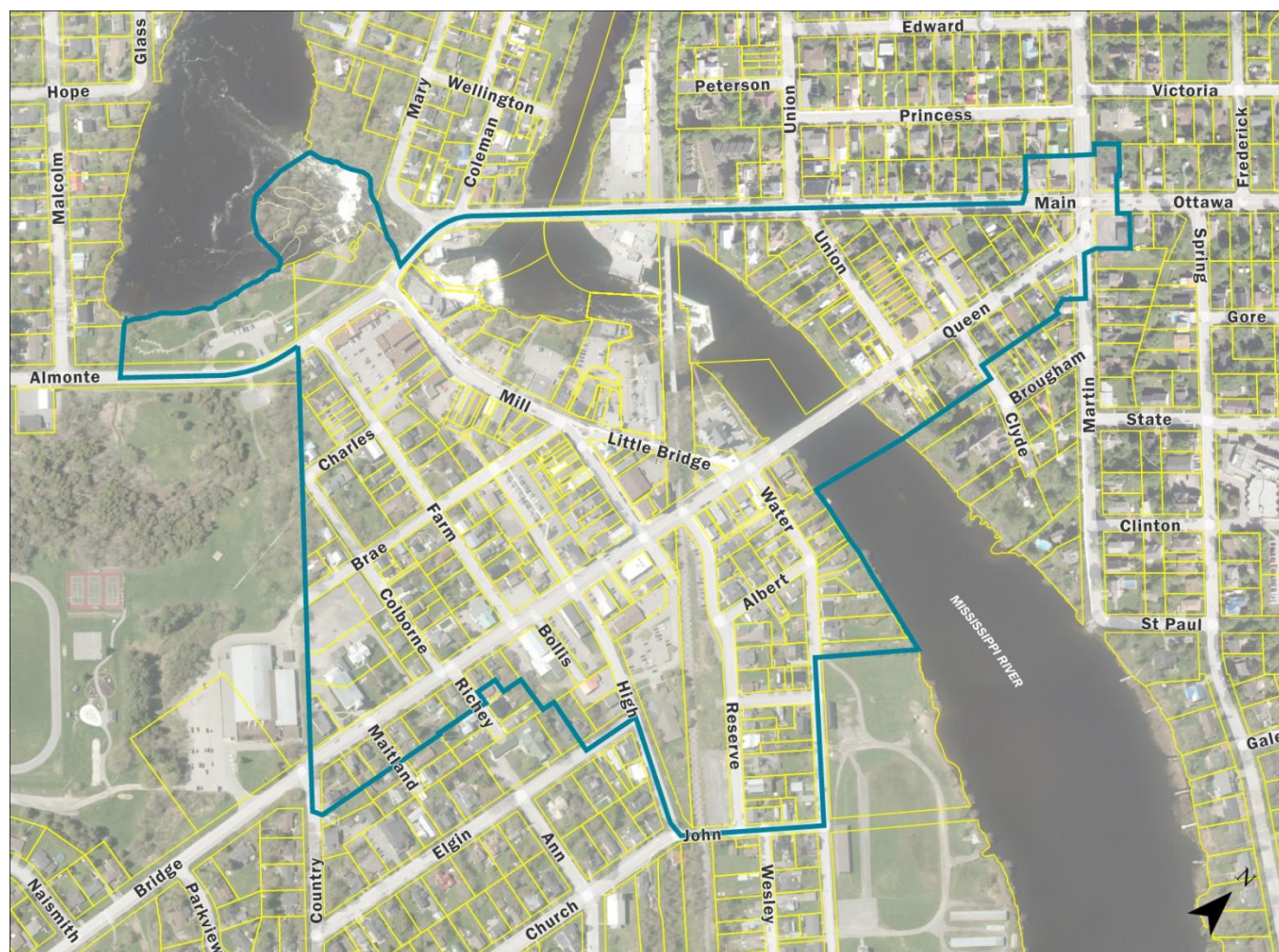


1.2 Study Areas and Context

Downtown Almonte is the first of two commercial sectors at the focus of this Plan and additionally represents one of two communities within the Municipality with a downtown-oriented designation set out in the Community Official Plan. The boundary of **Downtown Almonte** has been confirmed through the Almonte Downtown Secondary Plan (**Figure 1-1**) and is intended to provide for a mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses that come together to create a pedestrian-oriented and vibrant core. Important considerations for sustaining the image of the Downtown area, as set out in the Community Official Plan, include:

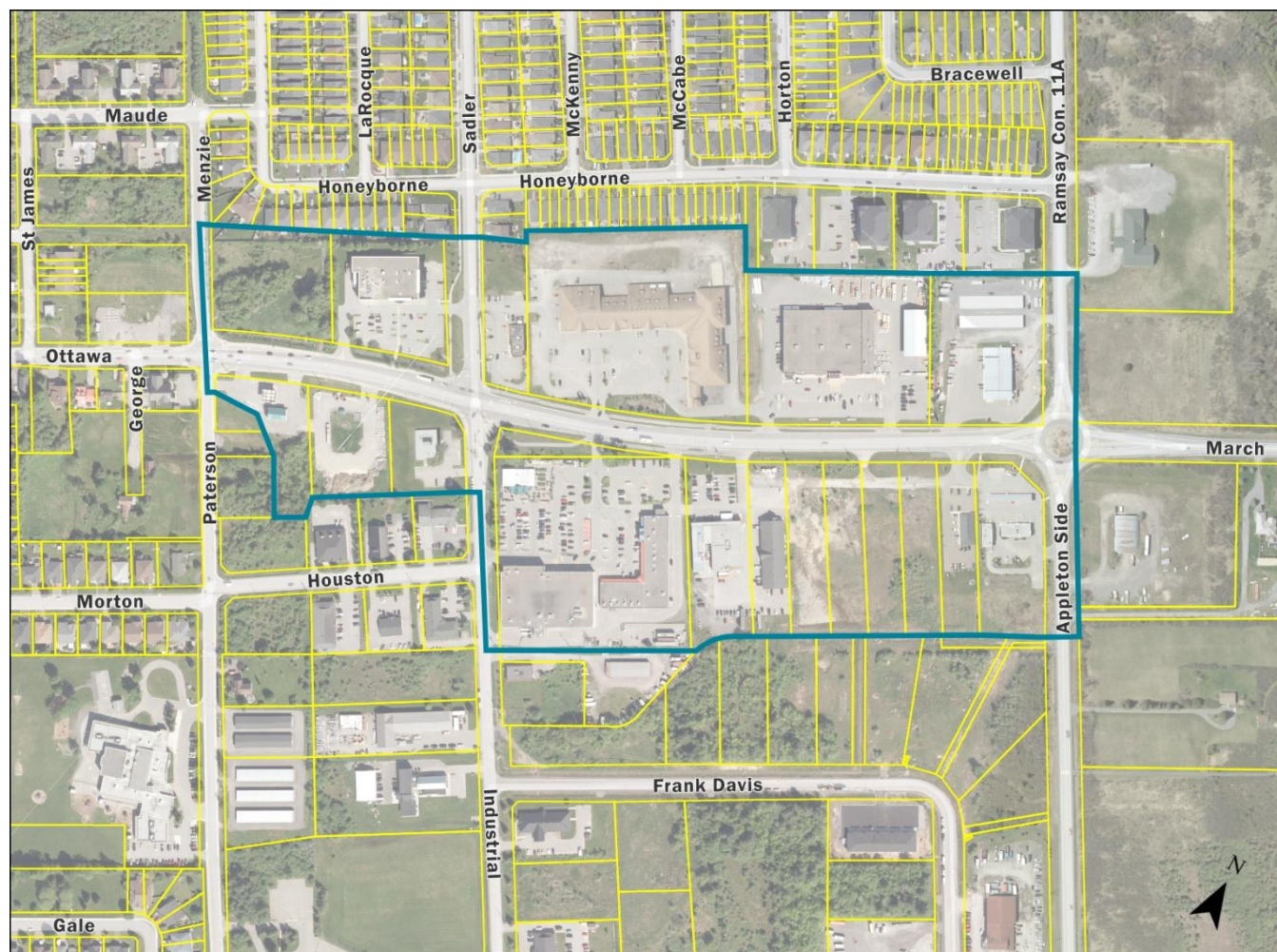
- Conserving existing buildings;
- Providing features that enhance the streetscape;
- Improving parking areas; and
- Encouraging development of people places, rest areas, parks and open spaces, walkways, and public art.

Figure 1-1: Downtown Almonte Commercial Sector



The **Ottawa Street** commercial sector, which represents the second commercial sector and the focus of this Plan, is located to the east of the Downtown, between Appleton Side Road/Ramsay Concession 11A and just west of Paterson Street/Menzie Street (**Figure 1-2**). This sector is a linear commercial corridor flanked by relatively large lots that has served historically as an automobile-oriented highway commercial strip, featuring several shopping centres, large format retail stores, cafes, food trucks, services, and associated businesses. The corridor also includes several vacant lots offering an opportunity for new uses to establish over time. Ottawa Street also acts as a primary access route from Almonte to Highway 417 to the east.

Figure 1-2: Ottawa Street Commercial Sector



This Public Realm Plan establishes a separate Vision and a set of Guiding Principles for each commercial sector, together with concept plans and associated public realm strategies that have the overall aim of strengthening the desirability and competitiveness of these areas within the larger Eastern Ontario context.

2.0 Public Realm Strategy for Downtown Almonte

2.1 Vision for Downtown Almonte

The Vision statement for the public realm of Downtown Almonte has been embodied in the Council approved Secondary Plan, as follows:

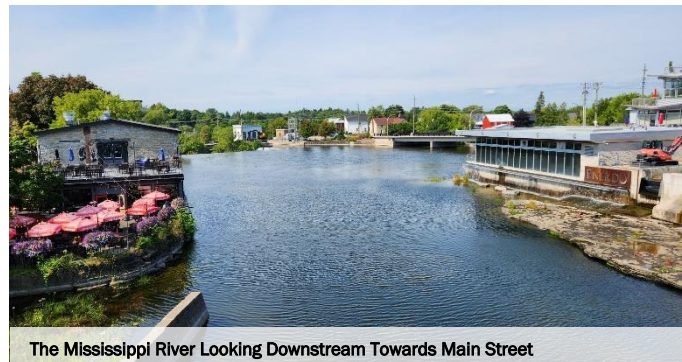
Downtown Almonte is the heart of a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community that celebrates its beautiful landscape and environment along the magnificent Mississippi River. Its rich cultural heritage and lifestyle, and opportunities for continued renewal makes it one of the most sought-after small-town destinations in Ontario. The Downtown will undergo sensitive, incremental change with a mixture of land uses and range of housing options that are well-connected and enhanced with great places, and provide opportunities for activities, events and services for residents, employees, and visitors alike, as the defining part of the complete community of Almonte.

The development of this Vision benefitted from input received from local business and property owners, and residents as part of an open, consultative public engagement process.

2.2 Guiding Principles for Downtown Almonte

The corresponding Guiding Principles that support the Vision for Downtown Almonte in the Secondary Plan can provide a basis for a supportive public realm strategy. These also draw on public input and are as follows:

1. **Leverage Downtown's riverfront setting:** The Mississippi River plays a critical role in shaping Almonte and is an ever-present and vital asset to the community. Enhancing the relationship between Downtown Almonte with the riverfront's natural beauty will play a key role in supporting local commerce, attracting tourists, accommodating cultural and recreational activities, and providing interesting opportunities for housing development.
2. **Embrace the cultural heritage and the Downtown's film-friendly appeal:** Downtown Almonte contains a rich inventory of historic buildings and distinct cultural landscapes that help define the area's character. Preservation of and reinvestment in these historic resources shall be prioritized and changes to the area should seek compatible forms that protect and celebrate the role in establishing Downtown Almonte's distinctive film-friendly appeal.
3. **Deliver a complete and livable Downtown:** Downtown Almonte accommodates a range of land uses and a mix of housing types, creating an opportunity for people to live, work and play within the overall Municipality. The Downtown will continue to provide options for development and redevelopment that will result in a wider range of available housing options for residents, while also accommodating valued and supportive commercial, institutional, and recreational opportunities to evolve as part of a complete, compact community.
4. **Activate the Downtown:** Downtown Almonte today forms the active heart of Almonte and draws residents from across the Municipality and visitors from afar. The Downtown will continue to evolve as a focus of activity, one that provides places and infrastructure to support a growing range of activities and services including shopping, dining, recreation, personal services, and other events and activities which attract residents and visitors at all times of day and throughout the year.
5. **Connect the Downtown spaces and places:** Downtown Almonte is framed by a system of historic streets and emerging active transportation routes, that hosts destinations within it. The Downtown's mobility networks will enable ease of movement for people with a wide range of abilities for all ages, in a manner that is safe and accessible and that connects important public spaces and cherished places, bolstered by improved wayfinding for visitors. Opportunities for publicly accessible parking will be provided in strategic locations so as not to detract from the walkability of the Downtown.



6. **Strengthen the Downtown economy:** Downtown Almonte is bolstered by a robust local economy that features a range of local businesses, unique shops, personal services, restaurants, and other tourism-based businesses. The economic success of the area will be continually fostered through supporting the growth of existing and future local businesses that reflect the Downtown's special character, enhancing the appeal to employees, and increasing the draw of the area to visitors.
7. **Emphasize a sustainable and climate resistant Downtown:** The Mississippi River, riverside parks, and open spaces are key resources that not only establish Almonte's identity, these also provide an opportunity to help mitigate the effects of climate change in the Downtown context. There is an opportunity for future developments to demonstrate and embrace the use of green technologies and principles such as low impact development.

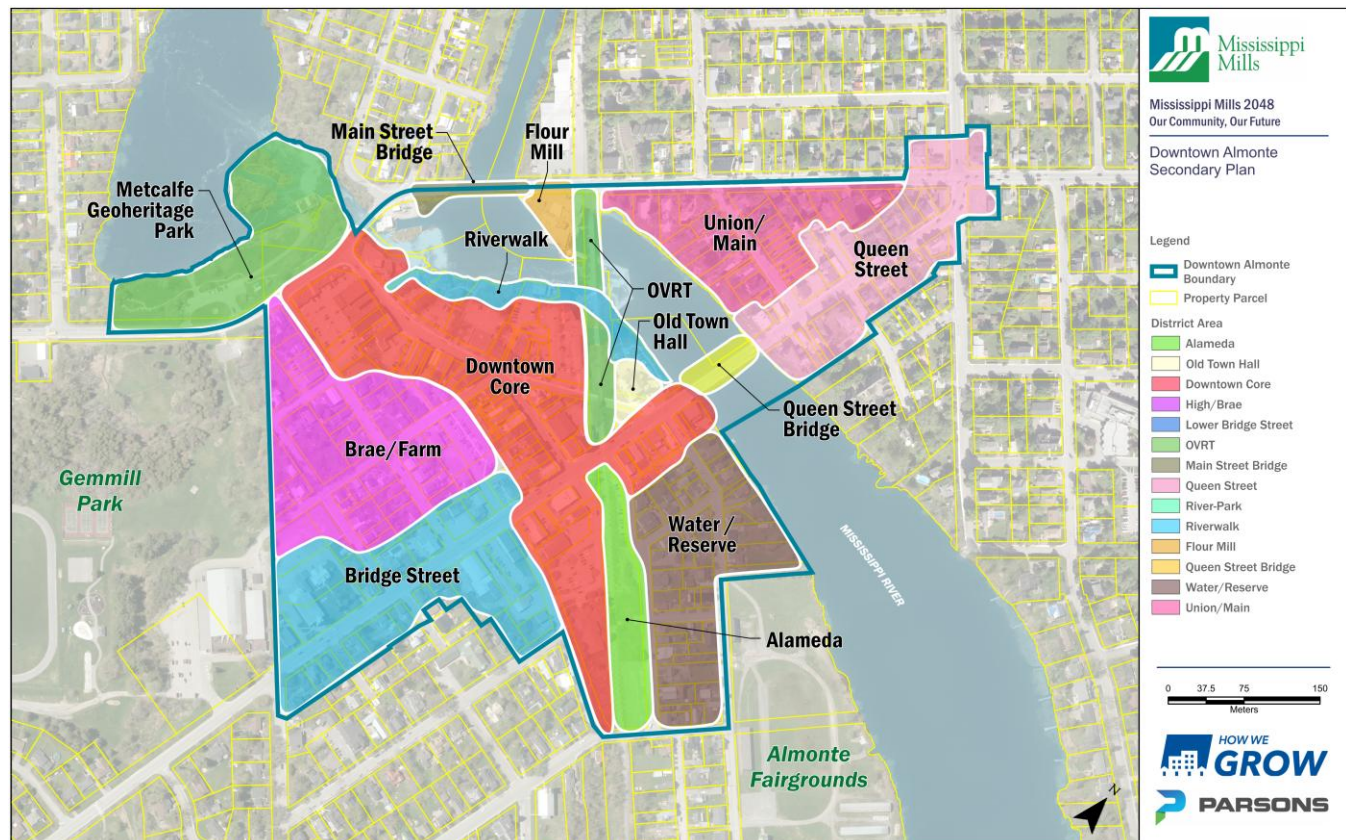
These Guiding Principles form a basis for the development of public realm strategies for different areas within Downtown Almonte, area-wide strategies, and the planning, design and review of development proposals.



2.3 Public Realm Strategies for Downtown Districts

Downtown Almonte is comprised of several distinct districts which play an individual role and work together as a whole in supporting the Vision and Guiding Principles. These districts are shown on **Figure 2-1**.

Figure 2-1: Downtown Almonte Districts



It is important to note that the boundaries of these districts are not firm or fixed, and they are not regulatory in nature. Rather, they are intended to demonstrate that Downtown Almonte is composed of several interesting and unique areas

that necessitates specific design consideration that reflects the existing and potential future look and feel of each district. Public realm strategies are proposed for these districts as presented in the following sections.

2.3.1 Downtown Core

The Downtown Core district includes some of the most important publicly accessible and visited areas in Almonte. The district, which includes Mill Street and the adjoining core areas, comes together with the nearby Almonte Old Town Hall and the Mississippi River, to form the defining elements for “Downtown Almonte”.

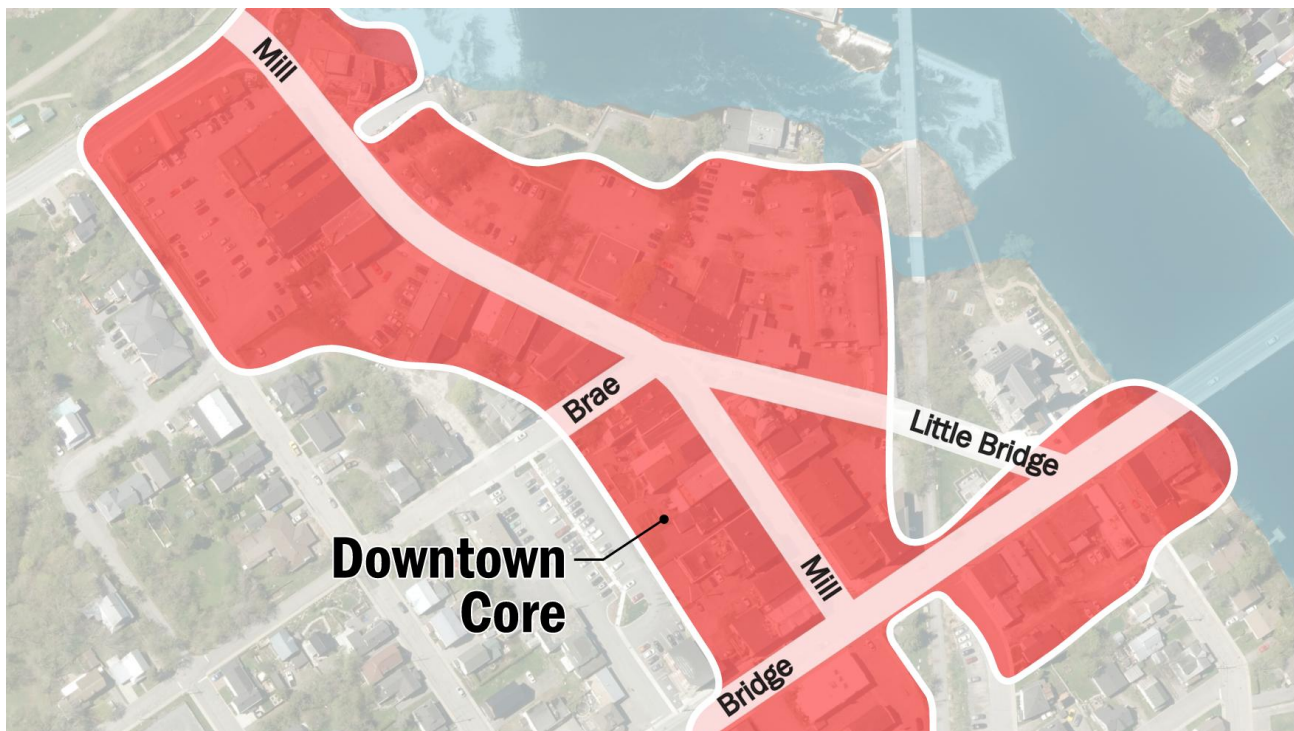
The Downtown Core has benefitted from previous planning and design activities that have prioritized improving the public realm. These improvements include the Downtown Almonte Redevelopment Plan, which established a physical redevelopment strategy, and the subsequent implementation of the Downtown Almonte Revitalization project completed in 2023. This reconstruction project renewed the physical street infrastructure, resulting in wider, smooth sidewalks, decorative streetlighting, seasonal lighting displays, street furnishings, street trees, raised planters with floral displays, and hanging flower baskets. These municipal investments celebrate the historic buildings along the street, including the iconic Post Office, and provided a new setting for the Dr. James Naismith statue. The public realm result has been transformative.

These improvements to the public realm in the Downtown Core can now be further bolstered by:

1. Continuing a similar or supportive design treatment when renewing adjoining rights-of-way (beyond Mill Street) to cover the entirety of the Downtown Core, including the rights-of-way of Bridge Street between High Street and Almonte Old Town Hall, Little Bridge Street through to Bridge Street, High Street between Bridge Street and Brae Street, and the short segment of Mill Street that extends south of Bridge Street (alongside the Alameda) (**Figure 2-2**).



Figure 2-2: Streets within the Downtown Core



2. Preparing plans for the redevelopment of the Almonte Library parking lot and lands to the north of it, so that these underutilized lots can accommodate new buildings and public spaces to extend the Downtown Core to include the Library site and complement the Mill Street experience.
3. Establishing a maintenance and operations plan that includes budgeting for the continued lifecycle upkeep of the new infrastructure.
4. Developing a wayfinding strategy (see **Section 2.4.2**) that will assist visitors in understanding, locating, and appreciating the many publicly accessible assets and attractions within the Downtown Core and within a short walking distance, including strategically placed pedestrian-oriented visitor information signs.
5. Requiring an additional “Public Realm Setback” of 2.0 metres for the large street frontage of vacant and underutilized lands along the east side of Mill Street (between the Riverwalk and 61 Mill Street). This setback will provide opportunities for a combination of sidewalk widening, street tree planting, and other public realm improvements, while transitioning to the established building line at both ends of this segment.
6. Ensuring that the spaces between buildings and the street lot line work together as part of a unified streetscape as properties are developed or redeveloped.



Mississippi Mills Public Library, Almonte Branch

Based on these improvement strategies for the Downtown Core, conceptual 3D massing drawings were prepared for key vacant and underutilized parcels along Mill Street (**Figure 2-3**) to assist in the visualization of what forms future development on these sites might take. The Mill Street conceptual massing illustrates key design elements that influence the public realm along the street and informs future development and redevelopment along the street, including those listed below. The conceptual massing drawings are not intended to be prescriptive but rather serve as a tool to develop the urban design intentions for developments in the Downtown Core.

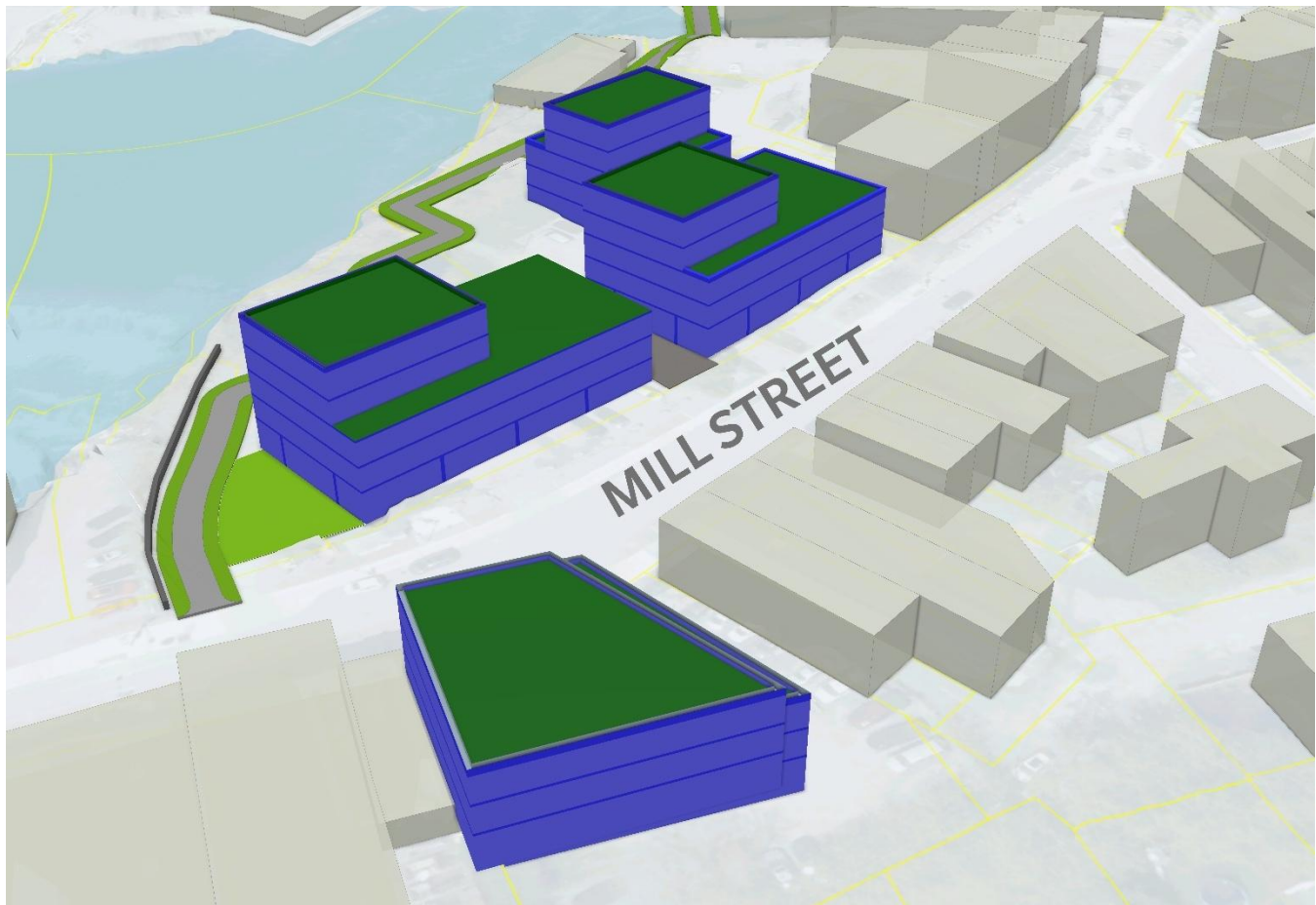
1. Complementing the existing rhythm of the street wall along the north and south sides of Mill Street and limiting feelings of monotony through providing appropriate building heights and ensuring that breaks in the street wall are accommodated;
2. Accommodating taller building heights by implementing a stepped building approach that respects the established character of the area and provides comfortable pedestrian-scale environment along the street.
3. Ensuring visitors and residents are able to effectively navigate to the Riverwalk by articulating the connections from the Downtown Core with more prominent pathways and clear signage;



4. Providing space along building frontages to accommodate building articulation, street furniture, landscaping, and other public realm improvements;
5. Rooftop greenspaces that can be seen from the ground-level that add visual dimension when observing the streetscape;
6. Accommodating privately-owned public spaces where possible that contributes to the inventory of public space and provides visitors and residents additional places to stop and gather;
7. Building footprints that are large enough to accommodate a range of unique commercial, service, and residential uses that will contribute to the continued diversification and evolution of the Downtown Core, while still being respectful of existing built form precedents and the needs of residents; and
8. Integrating parking into the footprint of the building where feasible and avoiding prominent areas such as in the front and along the riverwalk.



Figure 2-3: Conceptual 3D Massing for Potential Mill Street Redevelopment Sites



The improvement strategies presented highlight the potential to reimagine the Almonte Library parking lot to contain new buildings that extend the Downtown Core. It should be noted that feedback gathered from the public highlighted the parking lot as an important source of already limited parking spaces in the Downtown Core. The parking lot currently provides valuable space for those working at or visiting the library, Downtown Core businesses, and events, such as the weekly Almonte Farmers Market. Nevertheless, as the spatial environment and needs of the Downtown Core continue to evolve, there exists potential for this site to change and adapt accordingly. The evolution of the library property was previously analyzed in *The Almonte Library Expansion Project – Design Guidelines* completed in May 2020 on behalf of the Mississippi Mills Public Library Board. The guidelines consider potential additions to the existing

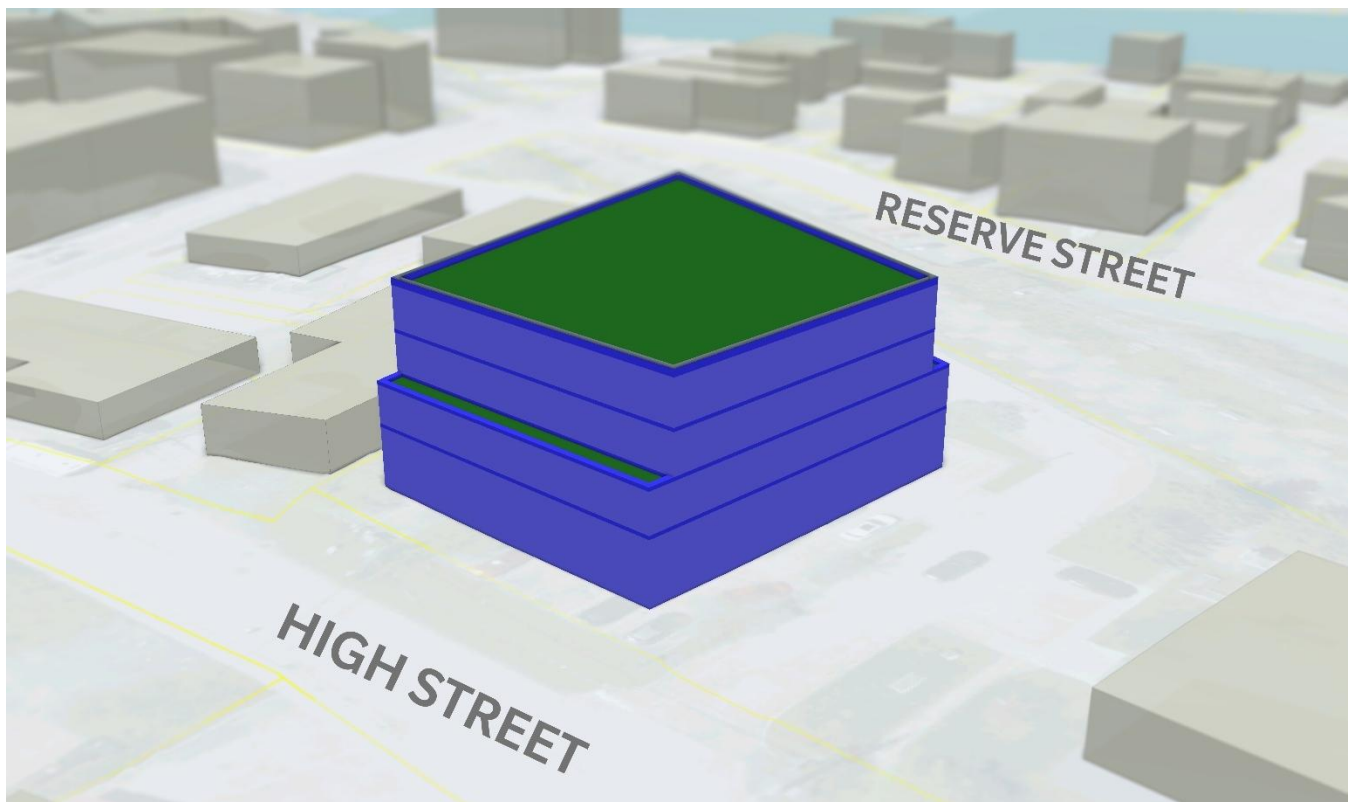
library building to accommodate more interior programmed spaces, as well as the updates to the overall property for new parking circulation and outdoor programming areas. The guidelines present several expansion options ranging both in footprint and height and were evaluated based on key considerations of:

- Landscaping and outdoor space
- Parking and access
- Connectivity with the OVRT, the Alameda, and the Downtown Core
- Interior spaces and organization for programmed spaces
- Views of the river and surroundings
- Accessibility

The conceptual massing presented in **Figure 2-4** showcases a potential redevelopment located within the parking lot that embodies these considerations and whose contribution to the public realm are highlighted by elements that include:

1. Providing appropriate building setbacks that encourages interactions with the pedestrian environment along the street and provides space for street activation elements, such as art installations, outdoor seating, and landscaping;
2. Providing the building in an area of the Downtown Core that better incorporates a taller building which provides scenic views of the River and surrounding areas from within, while maintaining a scale that is pedestrian-oriented and respectful for the heritage character of the surrounding area;
3. Allowing easier connections from the front of the original library building to the Alameda by accommodating space for pathways between buildings;
4. Utilizing a building design and building materials that are seen along other streets of the Downtown Core to reinforce the connection between the library property and the rest of the district;
5. Orienting the building towards High Street and introducing a step back to the Alameda to mitigate potential shadowing impacts of new development; and
6. Integrating parking into the building footprint where feasible and avoiding parking areas in the front along High Street and between the building and the Alameda.

Figure 2-4: Conceptual 3D Massing of a Potential Redevelopment of the Library Parking Lot



2.3.2 Almonte Old Town Hall

The Almonte Old Town Hall building at 14 Bridge Street, built in 1885, is one of the defining buildings of Downtown Almonte and is the setting of an important public space. Given its public use functions, including the auditorium which invites people to enjoy theatre, music, art, film, and other performances and activities, it is truly the civic heart of the Downtown. The building sits within a rich public setting, which includes a recently renewed open plaza at the building's frontage along Lower Bridge Street and can be considered as part of a broader public space that includes a viewing area of the Mississippi River and the start of the Riverwalk.

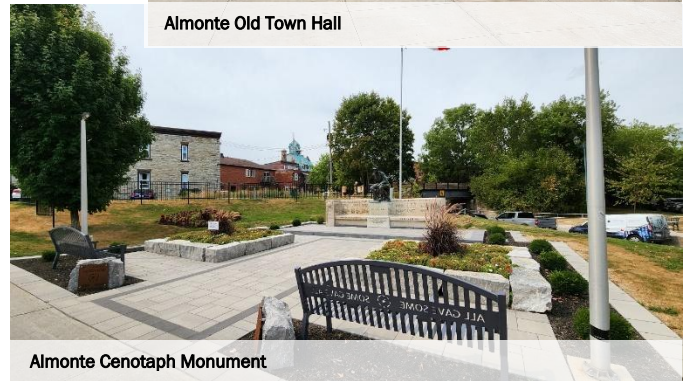
The Almonte Old Town Hall district can also be conceived as including the Almonte Cenotaph monument site across Little Bridge Street. The Cenotaph site is maintained with support from the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 240, and was updated in 2024 to provide expanded viewing area, stone flower beds, and seating.

Ongoing improvements to the public realm within the Almonte Old Town Hall district can be further bolstered by:

1. Improving Bridge Street along the Almonte Old Town Hall frontage by incorporating decorative street lighting and streetscaping that work in conjunction with the design theme of the revitalized Mill Street.
2. Installing a new Downtown Almonte visitor information sign in front of the Almonte Old Town Hall building that is integrated with an area wide wayfinding system.
3. Announcing the start of the Riverwalk, through a combination of wayfinding signage and renewed surfaces and treatments that complement the natural setting along the Mississippi Riverbanks.
4. Improving the riverside area to embellish the viewpoints of the Mississippi River and the Queen Street bridge.
5. Improving existing green spaces along the side and rear of the Almonte Old Town Hall building to improve their public use by visitors and employees, including hard-surface walking routes and features that are attractive to visitors including children and seniors. The open space area along Little Bridge Street just outside of the side door of Almonte Old Town hall presents an opportunity to reuse the stones that were removed from the base of the cenotaph as part of the update. These stones have important historic value and the close proximity of this open space area offers an opportunity for the stones to be displayed as part of the story of the cenotaph.



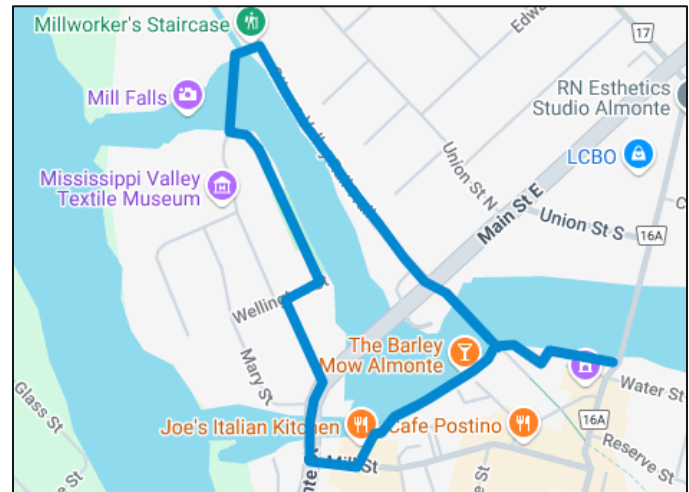
Almonte Old Town Hall



Almonte Cenotaph Monument

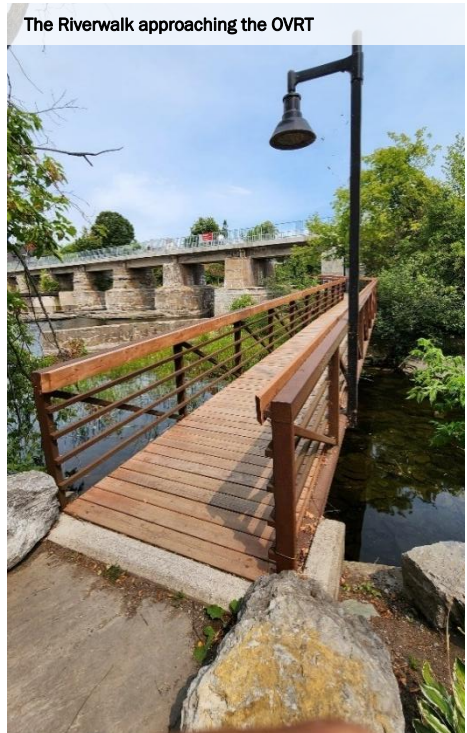
2.3.3 Riverwalk

The Riverwalk is a scenic trail along the banks of the Mississippi River that traverses several publicly and privately owned properties and buildings as a continuous pedestrian route. Consistent with its namesake, this route offers fabulous views of the River as one moves between public places, along narrow structures, through a public open space (Kirkland Park), and between buildings. The Riverwalk starts at Almonte Old Town Hall and extends beyond the Downtown to Coleman Island, the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, up/down the Millworker's Staircase, and across the river at the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT). The Riverwalk is one of many hidden gems Downtown Almonte has to offer and, for those who use it, represents one of the richest public realm experiences in the community.



The success of the Riverwalk in Downtown Almonte can be further bolstered by:

1. Featuring the Riverwalk as a foundational aspect of the circulation system for Downtown Almonte with supportive wayfinding (see **Section 2.4.2**), by directing visitors to the route, guiding visitors along it, and announcing the many attractions and destinations that are connected along its circuitous route.
2. Imagining the Riverwalk as part of the parks and open space system within the Downtown that provides opportunities for open air recreation, active uses, and placemaking.
3. Pursuing a consistent design for elements that tie together the Riverwalk as a continuous route, including walking surfaces, ramps, steps, railings, signs, seating, and supporting furnishings, as part of a Riverwalk brand identity.
4. Implementing solutions to make the Riverwalk accessible to people of all ages and abilities, including implementing alternatives to existing staircases which currently represent a barrier to movement. It is acknowledged that making the Riverwalk barrier free faces some site-specific challenges, and the corresponding investments may involve many years of incremental modifications.
5. Improving the Riverwalk to ensure that the route is a suitable hard surface that is at least 1.8 metres wide to meet accessibility requirements and ideally 3.0 metres wide where space permits. The route should be provided in a manner that is consistent with the land use context and space availability along sections of the Downtown Core and other adjacent areas.
6. Establishing a landscape strategy for the Riverwalk that identifies a palette of trees, shrubs, ground covers, floral displays, signage, etc.
7. Establishing a public art strategy that identifies potential locations for public art and other opportunities to integrate permanent or temporary art displays along the route.
8. Developing a lighting strategy, that adheres to the Municipality's Outdoor Illumination Lighting By-law in identifying targets for lighting illumination levels and uniformity, lighting fixture selections, and opportunities for architectural or artistic lighting displays. An



improved lighting environment will allow the Riverwalk to be safely enjoyed at all times of day and enable the area's history and riverside landscape to be celebrated.

9. Revitalizing the seating area to the rear of 55 Mill Street through the addition of new permanent and moveable street furniture, enhancing the existing landscaped areas and garden beds, and integrating appropriate pedestrian-scale lighting. These improvements would create an inviting setting for visitors and residents to enjoy the picturesque views of the River, which could also serve as a flexible space to accommodate different uses and events together with Kirkland Park.
10. Leveraging additional opportunities for designated river viewpoints to appreciate the river environment, ideally at locations that can be enjoyed in all seasons and with minimal winter maintenance requirements.
11. Formalizing the legal and administrative aspects of the Riverwalk, including land ownership and easement requirements, to ensure public access for future generations as well as an ongoing maintenance and operation strategy.



Public Seating Area along the Riverwalk (55 Mill Street)



The Riverwalk at Kirkland Park

The existing Mississippi Mills Urban Design Guidelines provide a general framework for the design and approval of new developments along the Riverwalk. As a supplement, the following design guidelines are provided for developments along the Riverwalk:

1. Require a dedication of land or an easement to the Municipality for pedestrian passage, to enable the continuity of the Riverwalk across privately owned lands, with a minimum width of 6.0 metres.
2. Where land dedication or easement is provided, require that the developer improve those lands with new infrastructure that is consistent with the Riverwalk brand identity, including the walking surface, landscaping, lighting, and other improvements in conjunction with the associated development.
3. Consider the Riverwalk land dedication or easement to be “parks and open space” for purposes of administering the cash in-lieu-of parkland requirement contained in the *Planning Act* as part of development agreements.
4. Require a minimum 3.0 metres building setback to the Riverwalk lot line or easement line, to provide for a spacious separation along the Riverwalk experience. Where parking areas are proposed abutting the Riverwalk, require a generous landscaping buffer and/or appropriate visual screening.
5. Integrate required parking into the footprint of the building where feasible or provide required parking in the side yards and avoid parking abutting the Riverwalk.
6. Require all new buildings have direct pedestrian connections to the Riverwalk or the publicly accessible lands alongside the Riverwalk.

A conceptual 3D massing drawing of future developments along Mill Street that also share a frontage with the Riverwalk is shown in **Figure 2-5**. This conceptual drawing helps to visualize the improvement strategies and urban design guidelines that influence how these future buildings will interact with this scenic walkway and the surrounding public spaces.

Figure 2-5: Conceptual 3D Massing of Buildings Along the Riverwalk



2.3.4 Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail

The Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail (OVRT) is a nearly 300 km long multi-use corridor running along a former railway between Smiths Falls and Mattawa and bisecting Downtown Almonte. The OVRT is publicly accessible and forms an important part of the public realm network in Downtown Almonte. The former rail corridor on which the OVRT sits is wide enough for the trail itself, plus green open spaces along it. The OVRT crosses the Mississippi River along the former railway bridge, which provides opportunities for raised, panoramic views to the Downtown and up and down the River. While the OVRT is the current vocation of this corridor infrastructure, it provides an opportunity to connect to Almonte's important railway heritage.

The success of the OVRT in Downtown Almonte can be further bolstered by:

1. Featuring it as a foundational aspect of the circulation system for Downtown Almonte with supportive wayfinding (see **Section 2.4.2**), by directing visitors to the route, guiding visitors along it, and informing how it connects to the Almonte Old Town Hall, the Riverwalk, the Alameda, and areas beyond the Downtown.
2. Acknowledging importance of the railway in the early development and shaping of the community of Almonte, through additional monuments, displays, and plaques.
3. Establishing a landscape strategy and maintenance and operation standards that addresses this relatively short segment of the OVRT within the special Downtown Almonte context, in collaboration with Lanark County, and other partners.

2.3.5 The Almonte Alameda

The Almonte Alameda has recently emerged as one of the most important publicly accessible open spaces in Downtown Almonte and indeed now forms a key part of the community's identity. This promenade and supporting public open space are located on lands formerly used for railway uses (across from the former Almonte Train Station) and co-hosts the OVRT which runs through Downtown Almonte and beyond. The primary identity of the Alameda is the continuous row of closely spaced sugar maple trees that creates an inviting, enchanting and protective green enclosure for the multi-use trail. This overhead tree canopy is complemented by at-grade public art, commemorative benches, ground-oriented low-level lighting, and clear open spaces which have flexibility for a range of uses and activities. The Alameda hosts a range of community-based activities including farmers markets, public art displays, and festivals. Parking is currently permitted along the Reserve Street frontage in informal arrangements.

The development of the Alameda project as an integral part of Almonte's public realm is the result of remarkable community efforts. A grassroots group of dedicated and imaginative resident volunteers have brought together government, private, and community resources in a variety of ways to conceive, fund, plan, and implement the incremental development of the physical infrastructure. This has progressed with negligible cost to taxpayers.



Almonte Farmer's Market, The Alameda



Commemorative Benches Along the Alameda

The continued success of the Alameda in Downtown Almonte can be further bolstered by:

1. Formalizing the property arrangements to improve and operate the existing and future Alameda land uses and infrastructure on the property.
2. Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all participants and stakeholders involved in the future of the Alameda, including the County, Municipality, Friends of the Alameda, and other organizations or groups who use the space.
3. Creating a concept plan informed by community and stakeholder ideas and suggestions that captures locations of potential modifications to the Alameda and inspires continued long-term planning of the public space.
4. Developing maintenance standards and a strategy for the operation and life-cycle maintenance of the Alameda infrastructure, to ensure its future success for generations to come.

As the future of the Alameda and its plans for investment continue to evolve, there may be an opportunity for its administration and ownership to evolve accordingly. Regardless, the success of the Alameda as a thoughtful, community-oriented public space will be linked to retaining the organic, nimble, and frugal sensibility of the project originators.

A concept plan has been prepared to assist in continuing the Alameda's current momentum and future vitality that identifies the location of existing Alameda assets and infrastructure and suggests the locations of potential future improvements, including ideas captured through public consultation. This concept plan has benefitted from ideas presented by the Friends of the Alameda volunteer group and other stakeholders as part of a community-wide consultation in summer 2025. This plan is provided at **Figure 2-6**.



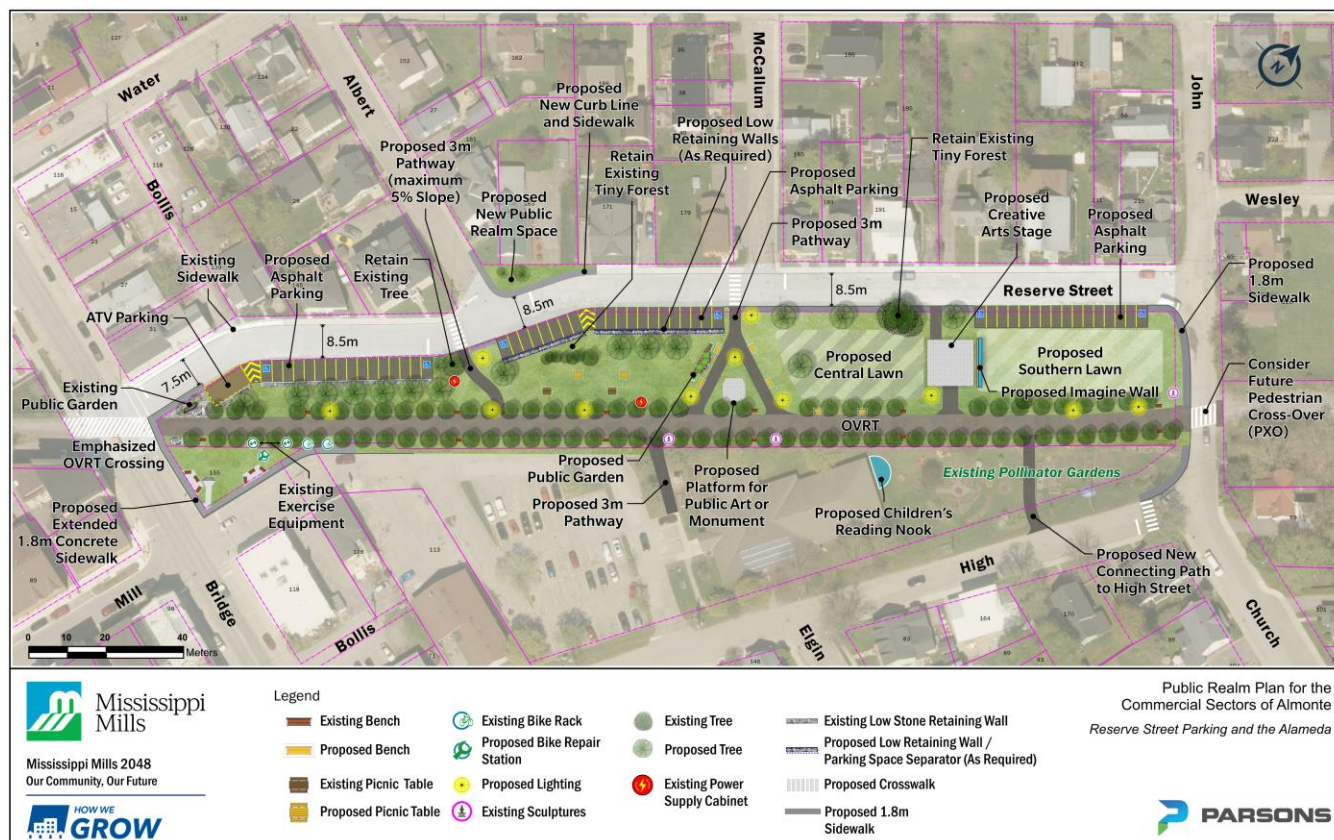
Public Art Along the Alameda

The concept plan is intended to be illustrative and enabling in nature, and not prescriptive. The goal is to help frame a discussion on the evolution of the Alameda and how the space could evolve and improve over time, understanding that the project is a work in progress, and acknowledging that its current success has been led by extraordinary volunteer efforts. Some highlights of this concept include:

1. Reinforcing the success of the continuous, linear tree canopy with strategic tree planting in other areas of the site, including along street edges of the overall property, to frame the Alameda within its greater context in the Downtown.
2. Maintaining open and accessible spaces along the length of the Alameda for a range of public programming such as market stalls, public art exhibitions, and similar activities.
3. Protecting and maintaining existing individual signature trees and tree groupings to establish “Tiny Forests” in the area, which promotes the benefits of growth of larger forested environments in an urban setting.
4. Incorporating opportunities to create new public gardens, where the community can be involved in the planting and care of a range landscaping features, including native flowers, shrubs, and trees.
5. Creating accessible pedestrian linkages “across” the Alameda site, effectively connecting the trail portion to Reserve Street, the Library parking lot, and High Street, thereby “opening up” and better connecting the Alameda to the adjoining properties and land uses.
6. Connecting the Alameda to the nearby Pollinator Gardens, by creating openings and installing a pathway to High Street, so that the two areas can be better appreciated as an integrated, cohesive public greenspace.
7. Installing municipal sidewalks along strategic portions of the Alameda’s perimeter, to enable ease of movement along and around the site.
8. Including a pedestrian cross-over of the OVRT at John Street and establishing a system where the OVRT motorized vehicle traffic could be temporarily diverted to a “John & Reserve Street Detour Route” during scheduled high-pedestrian activity events within the Alameda as required.
9. Imagining a central raised “creative arts stage” which could host an engaging performance backdrop, such as an “imagine wall” constructed with historic building remnant stones, which will be used as a focal point for performing arts, public art displays, and children’s play.
10. Providing access to electrical power sources to support the potential creative arts stage and to minimize the use of long extension cables or portable generators.
11. Identifying large, open, and flexible use “lawns”. The Central Lawn would accommodate audiences of the performance stage and other activities, and opportunities to improve the grading of this area should be considered. The Southern Lawn would serve as a multi-use, open space area and may accommodate overflow parking during large public events, such as fairs or festivals, until such time as a permanent use of this open space is determined.

In addition, the concept plan illustrates the potential arrangement of perpendicular parking spaces along the Reserve Street frontage of the Alameda. These parking spaces would serve the Alameda, Almonte Old Town Hall, and the rest of Downtown, and be connected to these areas through new municipal sidewalk segments. These parking spaces do not have to be formalized in the immediate future, however, the space presents an opportunity for the Municipality to increase formal, municipal parking in the Downtown.

Figure 2-6: The Alameda Concept Plan (Including Reserve Street Parking)



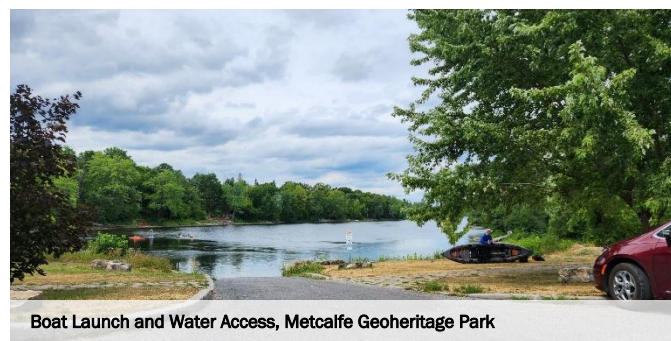
2.3.6 Metcalfe Geoheritage Park

Metcalfe Geoheritage Park is a large municipal greenspace nestled between the Mississippi River and the Downtown Core. The Park was developed in collaboration with the community to provide an interpretive space that celebrates the geological heritage of Almonte. Today, the Park is an important attraction for its function as an interpretive, recreational, and waterfront space and it links to the Downtown Core and Gemmill Park. The Park is currently accessible by car as well as through a stairway steps away from the Riverwalk trail.

Metcalfe Geoheritage Park also serves as a key entry point into Downtown Almonte for residential areas to the west and communities along County Road 29 (Christian Street).

The success of Metcalfe Geoheritage Park in Downtown Almonte can be further bolstered by:

1. Featuring the park as a key destination within Downtown Almonte in the wayfinding and signage strategy (Section 2.4.2), directing visitors to the park and its amenities that include public washrooms, open and



- recreational spaces, waterfront views and access, and public parking.
2. Providing pedestrian directional signs within the Downtown Core and along the Riverwalk, and larger destination signs at the park's driveway approaches along Almonte Street to emphasize the park location.
3. Improving accessible connections to the park from the Downtown Core and Riverwalk to enable easier access. The north side of Almonte Street has the potential to be regraded to enable the introduction of a sidewalk and replacement of the highway oriented guardrail with one that uses the design language of Mill Street, and meets the required safety engineering standards. This walking connection can be conceived as a tree-lined promenade and perhaps could be an additional spur of the Riverwalk.
4. Accentuating the western entry to the Downtown along Almonte Street by providing gateway elements such as both vehicle and pedestrian-oriented lighting, signage, and banners, while integrating some of the design language of Mill Street to conceptually and physically join the areas together.

2.3.7 Bridge Street

The Bridge Street district is located in the southern-most extent of Downtown Almonte and encompasses a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional land uses that surround Bridge Street to the southwest of High Street. Bridge Street is an important transportation corridor for the local community that provides access to and from the Downtown Core from the residential areas to the south. As a County Road, Bridge Street connects Downtown Almonte to the other communities along County Road 29 (Christian Street) and County Road 17



Bridge Street Looking South at High Street

(Martin Street) within Mississippi Mills and Lanark County. This portion of Bridge Street is envisioned to provide a main street experience that prioritizes active modes of transportation and continues to enable a mix of different uses. The area will exemplify a street design that complements the character of the Downtown Core, recognizing and taking advantage of the proximity of the area to Mill Street and inviting visitors to explore the area as an extension of Downtown Almonte.

Public Realm strategies for this portion of Lower Bridge Street include:

1. Integrating the design themes established on Mill Street and the Downtown Core area further along the blocks of Bridge Street south of High Street, to provide a sense of arrival and continuity to the Downtown Core area.
2. Pursuing the potential to promote enhanced landscaping and greenery along the street by introducing a continuous line of canopy trees that establishes Bridge Street as a green, tree-lined approach to the Downtown.
3. Integrating a banner program on existing streetlights or utility poles, to embellish the streetscape, announce the entry into the Downtown Core, and establish the Downtown Almonte character throughout the Bridge Street district.
4. Improving infrastructure for active transportation, including widening sidewalks and introducing cycling facilities, as proposed in the Transportation Master Plan.

2.3.8 Queen Street

Queen Street forms one of the gateway routes into Downtown Almonte and is part of the County Road network. It passes through a mixed-use sector, includes a crossing of the Mississippi River, and brings visitors past the Almonte Old Town Hall. This street is a common route for accessing Mill Street and the Downtown Core. There is an opportunity to reimagine the Queen Street district as a Traditional Mainstreet, that supports vehicle through-traffic to and from the Downtown Core while also providing space for active transportation facilities and opportunities for visitors and residents to live, work, and play. The district can begin to transform with a greater mix of land uses, including additional at-grade commercial retail uses with attractive storefronts, landscaping, and signage, with the objective of improving the visitor experience on this important approach to Downtown Almonte. The street also presents an opportunity for mixed use developments that will produce additional housing opportunities near the Mississippi River and within a short walk to the Downtown Core and associated services.



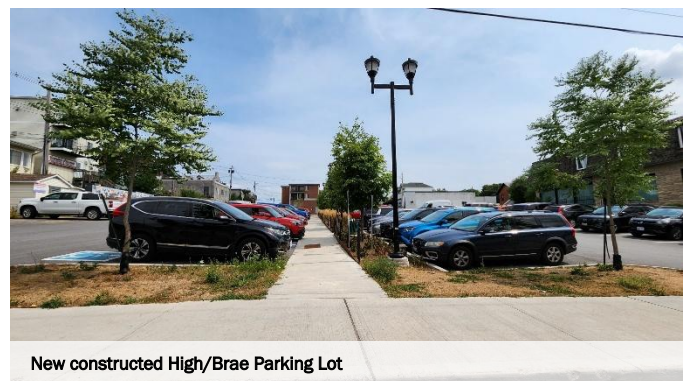
Queen Street Looking South at Union Street

Public Realm strategies for the Queen Street district include:

1. Considering land use changes to permit a greater mix of land uses along both sides of the street, including retail uses at grade, to stimulate the public realm along the street.
2. Considering a development approval requirement for a 2.0 metre right-of-way widening along each side of the street to incrementally acquire a sufficiently wide right-of-way for the sidewalk and streetscaping elements.
3. Ensuring that new buildings are aligned along or close to the established building wall along the street, with minimal setbacks to pursue continuity in the streetscape.
4. Requiring parking lots to be located behind buildings to ensure that a continuous street edge of buildings can develop.
5. Encouraging new development to be designed with features befitting a Mainstreet, including direct and accessible pedestrian access to the sidewalk, ground floor windows that encourage window shopping, and architectural detailing that provides visual interest to the street.
6. Pursuing wide sidewalks with a narrow streetscaping zone between the sidewalk and curb that can accommodate streetlights, street trees, bike racks, and other vertical streetscaping elements.
7. Improving the road and pedestrian facilities as identified in the Transportation Master Plan to increase safety, including constructing a pedestrian crosswalk at Queen Street and Union Street, and reconfiguring the Queen Street/Martin Street intersection.

2.3.9 Brae/Farm District

The Brae/Farm district is a primarily residential area situated “behind” and to the west of the Downtown Core and is an important enclave within Downtown Almonte. This district is framed by the central cross-streets of Brae Street, which provides direct connections to Mill Street, and Farm Street, which connects Almonte Street to Bridge Street. Other notable streets within the district include the portion of High Street west of Bridge Street, Colbourne Street, and Charles Street. This enclave is characterized by narrow, calm streets that are lined with a wide range of lot sizes that host a mixture of housing types and building forms. Despite most street segments having sidewalks on at least one side of the street within the district, there is an opportunity to improve existing pedestrian network conditions, as some street segments lack sidewalks entirely. Additionally, there is a noted general lack of street trees in this district due to current narrow right-of-way conditions.



New constructed High/Brae Parking Lot

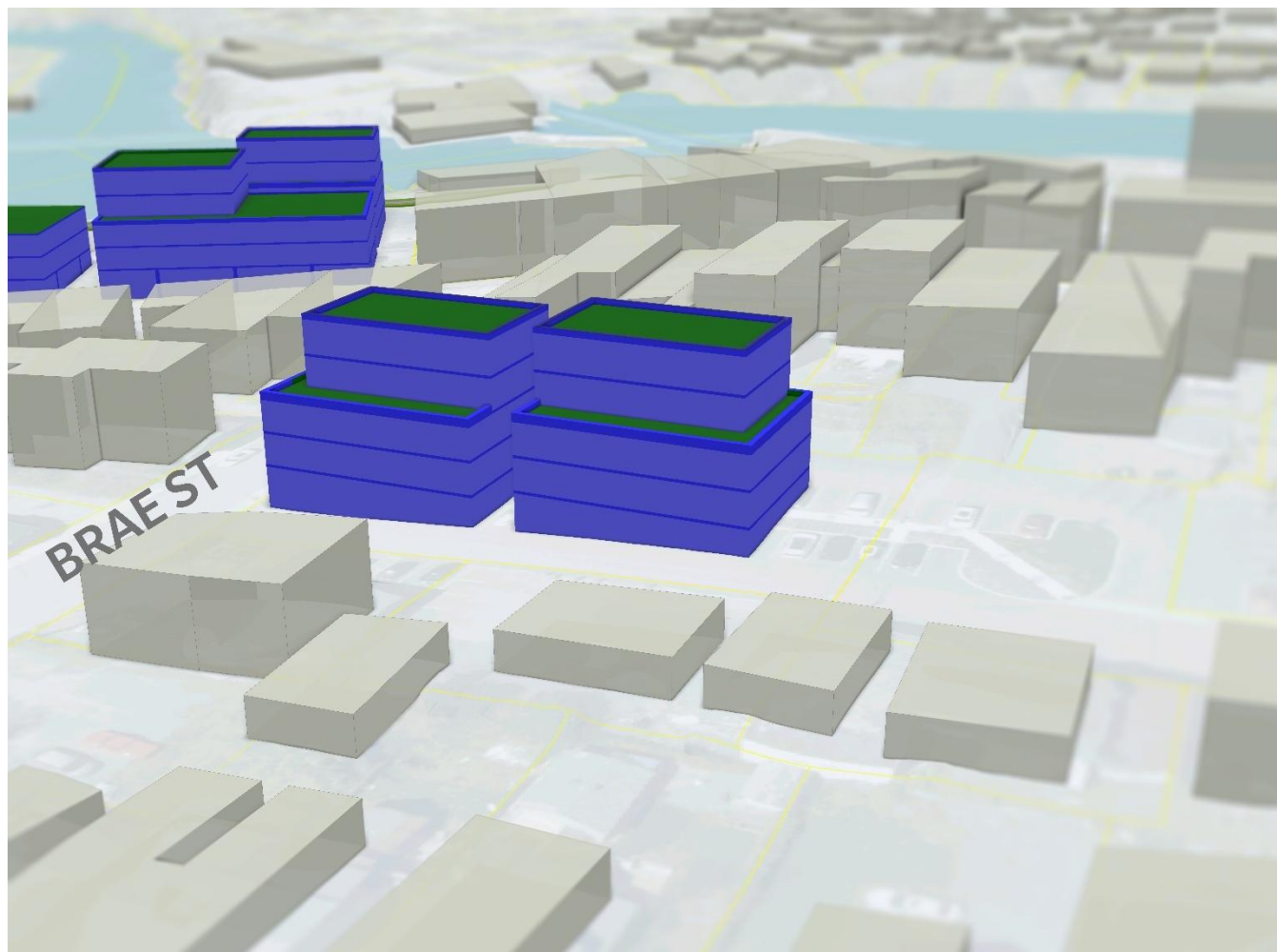
Public Realm strategies for the Brae/Farm District include:

1. Enabling the area to incrementally renew as a coveted residential enclave with a broad range of housing types, offering options for downtown living within a short walking distance to the shops, restaurants, and services of the Downtown Core.
2. Studying the potential redevelopment opportunity of the municipal parking lot located to the South of Brae Street at High Street to accommodate new built forms such as housing while continuing to provide public parking to serve the Downtown Core.
3. Reconstructing streets to include sidewalks on at least one side of all streets as part of their life cycle renewal process.
4. Identifying opportunities to green the streets by including street trees either in the right-of-way or on the frontage of private lots as permitted, with the objective of creating a continuous tree canopy in an environment constrained by narrow rights-of-way and above and below grade services and utilities.
5. Widening and improving the sidewalk conditions along Brae Street, including the inclusion of street or pedestrian-oriented lighting, to reinforce the important role that this street plays in connecting the Downtown Core to Gemmill Park and the John Levi Community Centre.

Based on these improvement strategies for the Brae/Farm district, a conceptual 3D massing drawing was prepared to demonstrate the potential development of municipal land at the intersection of High and Brae Street, currently containing a renewed parking lot (**Figure 2-7**). Given its proximity to the shops, services, and businesses within the Downtown Core district, this location presents a strategic opportunity to increase the availability of housing within the downtown in the form of a mixed-use development. The conceptual massing visualizes key design elements of a potential development and its influence on the public realm, including:

1. Mirroring the built form experienced along Mill Street by providing complementary building heights that feature building step-backs to maintain a pedestrian-oriented scale along the street and additional building heights towards the centre of the property to reduce visual overburden;
2. Continuing the building setbacks established along Mill Street to provide space for public realm elements and to maintain a sense of cohesion between the two districts, while simultaneously allowing for a gradual transition to less dense and smaller scale buildings along Brae Street into the Brae/Farm district;
3. Maintaining areas for parking spaces, vital for accommodating visitors into the Downtown;
4. Providing rooftop greenspaces that can be seen from the ground-level that add visual dimension when observing the streetscape;
5. Providing building footprints that are large enough to accommodate a range of uses that will contribute to the diversification of the district and the Downtown, while still being respectful of existing built form precedents; and
6. Integrating public and private parking into the footprint of the building.

Figure 2-7: Conceptual 3D Massing of a Potential Mixed-Use Development



2.3.10 Water/Reserve District

The Water/Reserve district is another important residential enclave that is considered to form part of Downtown Almonte. The area lies to the east of Bridge Street, north of Reserve Street, and west of John Street. The district includes buildings with frontages along the north side of Reserve Street, Water Street, Albert Street, McCallum Street, and the west side of John Street. The public realm is characterized by narrow streets with an eclectic mix of primarily residential buildings. Sidewalks are typically provided on one side of each street.

Important heritage buildings include the Sterling Apartments at 151 Reserve Street and the Almonte Baptist Church at 207 Reserve Street.

Water Street and Reserve Street provide access routes to and from the Almonte Fairgrounds which is operated by an important community partner, the North Lanark Agricultural Society.



Current Water/Reserve District Building Stock

Public Realm strategies for the Water/Reserve District include:

1. Considering a wider range of land uses in this district to leverage it as a strategic location within steps of the Downtown Core and enable uses that complement the Downtown Core. This would entail maintaining the permitted residential uses and studio and small-scale type retail uses, as well as cultivating opportunities for growing an overall arts and crafts community compatible with the residential character.

2. Improving walking and streetscape conditions along Water Street and Reserve Street, given their important functions in connecting the Almonte Fairgrounds and the Alameda to the Downtown Core and leveraging the potential to connect these important community amenities to Reserve Street and making it part of a future potential heritage walking tour route.
3. Reclaiming underutilized asphalt roadway space at the intersection of Reserve Street and Albert Street to create new public realm space that could include tree planting, space for public art or monument, or seating that offers views to the Alameda.

2.3.11 Union/Main District

The Union/Main district lies to the north of the Downtown Core, on the opposite side of the Mississippi River, as shown on **Figure 2-1**. It includes lands along the south side of Main Street, which forms one of two gateway routes to the Downtown Core from the east, working together with Queen Street as an alternate route. The south side of Main Street's right-of-way, within the Downtown Almonte limits, is characterized by a relatively narrow sidewalk that is aligned along the street's curb face, with no separation for pedestrians, and a general absence of trees. There are some intermittent mature trees along the south side which exist behind the street lot line, on private land, and some hedges on individual properties. The visual appearance of high voltage overhead power lines along the north side of Main Street is improved in part by the heritage façade of the Dungarvon building facing Main Street.



Union Street, Looking South

This district also includes the land uses along both sides of Union Street, which is lined with buildings of various setbacks, ages, and styles. The street has a sidewalk on the south side. Limited street trees are present within the right-of-way in the northwest section, southeast of Main Street, and are relatively absent in the southeast section approaching Queen Street. The lots along the southwest side of Union Street “back onto” the Mississippi River, restricting any public access along the riverfront.

Public Realm strategies for the Union/Main District include:

1. Improving the visitor experience along Main Street as one of the main gateways into the Downtown Core, by considering a range of techniques such as pedestrian-oriented lighting (along the south side of the Street), banners, and planting of additional street trees where space permits.
2. Including visitor wayfinding signage at the intersection of Main Street at Ottawa Street and Queen Street, to direct visitors towards the Downtown Core and other attractions along the route including the Metcalfe Geoheritage Park.
3. Improving walking conditions along Union Street by widening sidewalks and filling in gaps with street trees, understanding that this street can be conceived as part of a continuous walking route from the Downtown Core, across the Mississippi River, and back.
4. Evaluating the appropriateness, as a longer-term objective of acquiring property rights for construction of a publicly accessible walkway along the north side of the Mississippi River which are currently under private ownership, to supplement the Riverwalk experience and increase access to the riverfront as a public realm amenity.

2.3.12 The Flour Mill District

The Almonte Flour Mill district has a storied history along the northern shore of the Mississippi River that spans over 140 years. The building, which has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, had long operated as a mill as well as a hydroelectric plant. Today, the area continues to evolve to meet the needs and changing requirements of the surrounding communities and has been repurposed to feature a mixed-use adaptive reuse development that includes residential, commercial uses, and contemporary industrial uses.

Public Realm strategies for The Flour Mill District include:

1. Identifying potential to further develop the site with residential or mixed-use development that is compatible with the historic values with the Olde Flour Mill building.
2. Improving opportunities for public access to the river at this location.
3. Creating an inviting streetscape along the edge of Main Street through landscaping improvements and consolidating

2.3.13 The Main Street and Queen Street Bridges

Downtown Almonte is celebrated for its location along the Mississippi River which offers inspiring views and a picturesque backdrop. While the OVRT and former railway bridge may be noted for its multiple users and panoramic views of the river, waterfalls, and the Downtown Core, the Main Street and Queen Street Bridges are equally as important. These two bridges which span the Mississippi River play a key part in moving in and out of Downtown Almonte and are integral in their role as connection routes. Both bridges currently are vehicle-orientated and will require intentional and thoughtful interventions to overcome their function-forward aesthetic alignment and design. There is an opportunity to leverage their asset value, through the following public realm strategies:



Main Street Bridge

1. Pursuing opportunities to improve the public realm experience along each bridge, when future life-cycle renewal investments are planned.
2. Establishing the bridges as key public realm spaces by accentuating the visual environment and functionality along the bridge decks by including elements such as decorative street lighting, widened sidewalks, banners, hanging flower baskets, railings, and other vertical items.
3. Exploring the use of accent lighting from below the bridge deck together with pedestrian-oriented lighting on the bridge to add colour, interest, and animation to the bridge structure as a night-time attraction. **Figure 2-8** illustrates how the Queen Street bridge, just steps from Almonte Old Town Hall and at the start of the Riverwalk, could be embellished with colourful up-lighting to further advance Almonte's film friendly appeal. The design of such lighting would be prepared by professionals and would be sensitive to Dark Sky lighting principles.
4. Constructing bicycle infrastructure in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan for each crossing.

Figure 2-8: Queen Street Bridge Accent Lighting Concept



2.4 Other Public Realm Strategies for Downtown Almonte

In addition to the public realm strategies for the identified districts in Downtown Almonte, other general strategies have been identified as presented in the following sections.

2.4.1 Connectivity and Accessibility

A key aspect of the vision for Downtown Almonte is for a well-connected downtown, particularly for residents of all ages and abilities. This theme was captured in the area-specific strategies above for the Riverwalk, the Alameda, and Downtown Core in particular. As downtown infrastructure is renewed, opportunities to address these additional strategies can be pursued:

1. Setting, as a goal, that Downtown Almonte becomes known as one of the most connected, walkable, and accessible small-town destinations in Ontario.
2. Continuously making public and quasi-public spaces and routes barrier-free in accordance with municipal and provincial standards and requiring private-sector developers to ensure that developments similarly meet these applicable accessibility standards.
3. Providing a wayfinding system for pedestrians that emphasizes and improves the connectiveness of the compact downtown area and its many attractions (as outlined in **Section 2.4.2**).



Bicycle Parking and Tools Along the Alameda

4. Pursuing continuity of surfaces along routes, both to aid in wayfinding and accessibility and to enable consistency of maintenance practices.
5. Establishing capital reinvestment and maintenance responsibilities and objectives for publicly accessible routes, including winter maintenance.
6. Referencing the 2024 Transportation Master Plan which recommends cycling facilities along various streets within and approaching Downtown Almonte.
7. Providing adequate amounts of seating and bicycle parking and amenities in strategic locations, to encourage more visitors to travel to and from the Downtown by active transportation modes as opposed to private automobiles which require space-consuming vehicle parking.

2.4.2 Wayfinding

As part of this Public Realm Plan and the Economic Development Strategy (in progress), there is an opportunity to establish a strategy for visitor wayfinding that helps achieve and celebrate the vision for Downtown Almonte within the context of the entire community, as discussed in several of the Downtown district public realm strategies. Downtown Almonte draws visitors from near and far with its combination of heritage appeal, cultural buildings, natural settings and spaces, and unique destinations for eating, playing and shopping. A key to the success of Downtown Almonte is to highlight the locations of these exceptional attractions to visitors through coordinated and consistent signage to enable easy and logical movement. An example of which is shown in **Figure 2-9**.

Figure 2-9: Destinations and Walking Routes



With this as a basis, a wayfinding strategy for Downtown Almonte can be based on the following principles:

- **Navigation-focused:** A wayfinding and signage plan that guides people seamlessly to Almonte, the Downtown, and key destinations and services for pedestrians and cyclists moving throughout and motorists approaching the community.
- **Economic emphasis:** A wayfinding and signage plan that enhances visitor experience and supports local economic development by improving awareness of businesses and attractions.
- **Safety and efficiency:** A wayfinding and signage plan that promotes safe, efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles throughout the community.

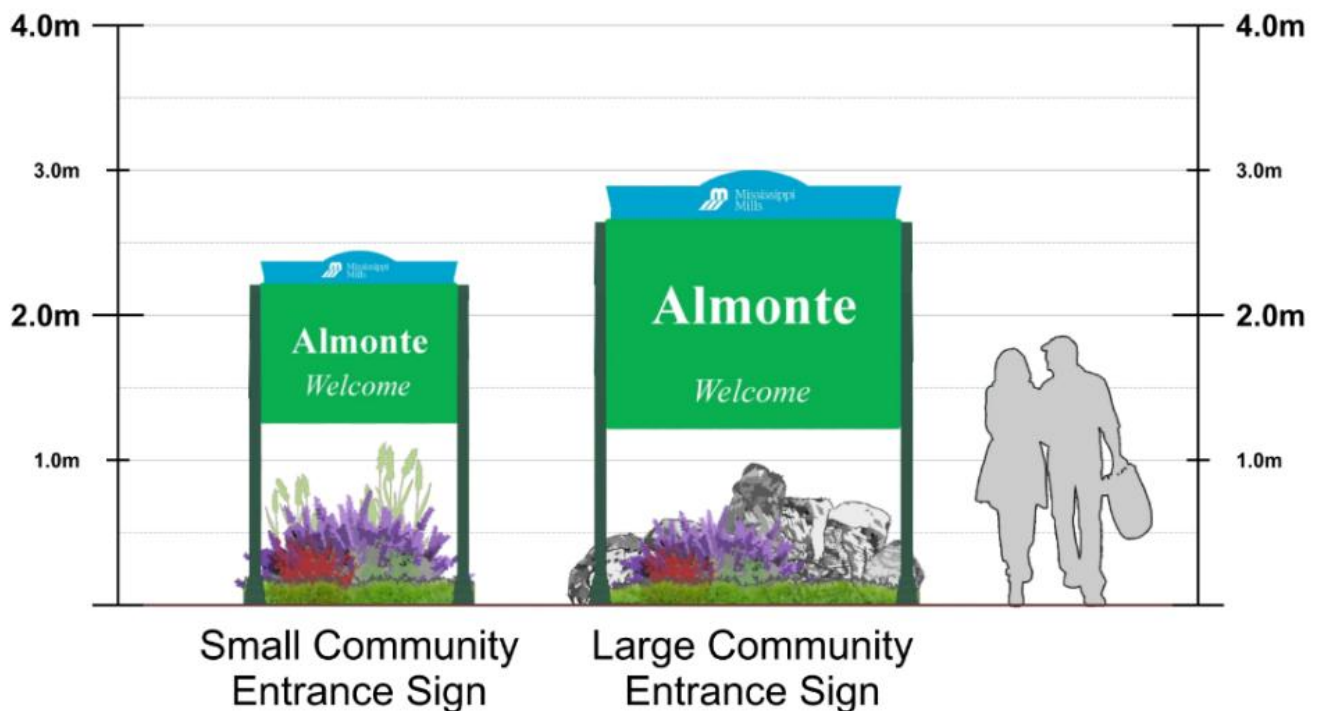
- **Community branding and identity:** A wayfinding and signage plan that strengthens the overall Mississippi Mills branding and community connectivity while reinforcing Almonte's special identity and character.

A corresponding wayfinding strategy for Almonte's downtown could include an integrated family of signs that together give a wide range of choices for attracting and guiding visitors to the Downtown destinations and routes, with an emphasis on orienting visitors to Downtown Almonte as the first priority.

An example of the first set of signs within a larger thematic family of signage are Community Entrance Signs, as shown on **Figure 2-10**. The purpose of these signs would be to:

1. Announce the entrance to the overall Almonte community at the peripheral entry points that are particularly oriented towards motorists.
2. Reinforce the Mississippi Mills branding and colours, recognizing that Almonte is one community within the larger municipality.
3. Convey the sense of Almonte as a welcoming community.
4. Be visually effective in wider right-of-way settings with visitors often travelling at higher travel speeds.

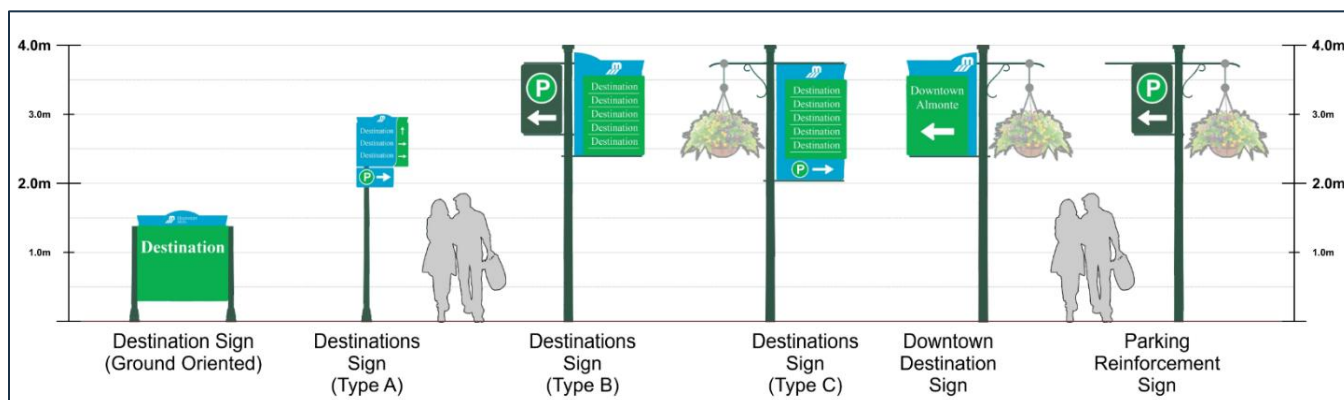
Figure 2-10: Community Entrance Wayfinding Signs



The second set of signs in the family are Destination Oriented Signs as shown in **Figure 2-11**. The purpose of these signs would be to:

1. Announce the location of key destinations, with a particular emphasis on inviting visitors to Downtown Almonte, and not just passing through on the County Road network.
2. Reinforce that Downtown Almonte is an important designation within the overall community.
3. Be placed strategically, recognizing that space may be limited for the physical installation of signs.
4. Be of sufficient size to capture the attention of motorists and guide them to the Downtown and key destinations, including the location of public parking.

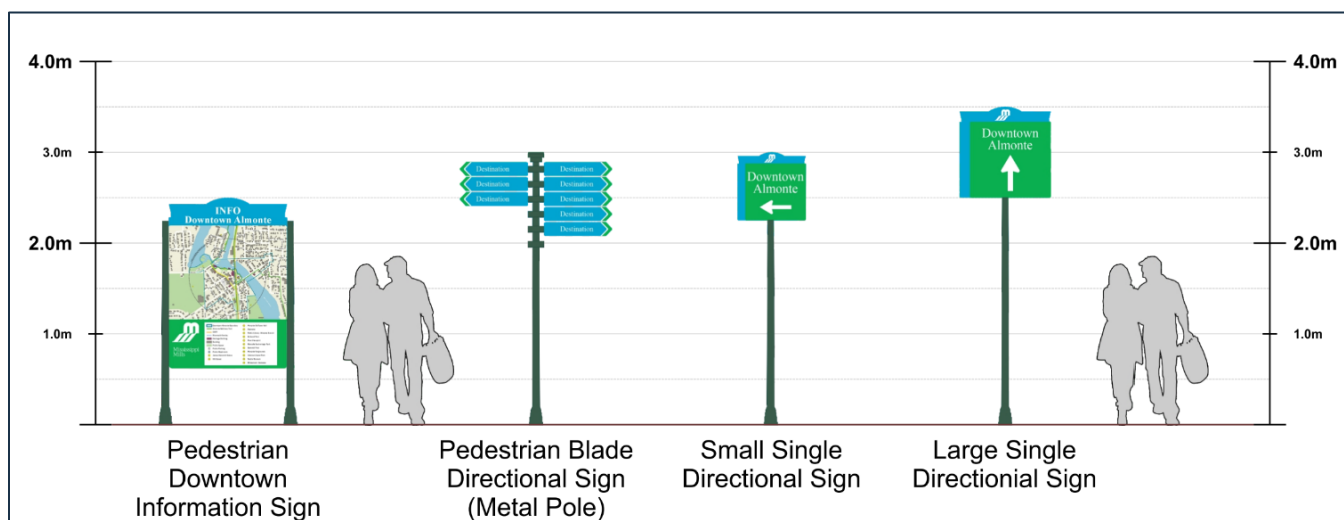
Figure 2-11: Destination Oriented Wayfinding Signs



The third set of signs in the family are Information and Route Guidance Signs as shown on **Figure 2-12**. The purpose of these signs would be to:

1. Guide visitors that have arrived in Downtown Almonte and provide more specific directions to destinations, including the Downtown Core, Almonte Old Town Hall, the Almonte Public Library, the Fairgrounds, the Alameda, and other key locations.
2. Focus on providing information and directions for visitors that are either searching for parking or are already on foot or on bike.
3. Reinforce the image of the overall community by celebrating the destinations within the Downtown.
4. Tie into the design motif of the street furnishings on Mill Street.
5. Be of a smaller, pedestrian oriented scale that recognizes the constrained spaces to locate the signs.

Figure 2-12: Information and Route Guidance Wayfinding Signs



The family of signs presented above draws on the existing municipal branding and modern style. If a more stylistic and heritage-based motif is desired, this can easily be accomplished, using the family of signs approach presented above. It is recommended that a graphic design specialist or wayfinding sign consultant be engaged to work with municipal staff to develop specific details on municipal branding requirements, sign sizes, materials and manufacturing choices, mounting details, and pole structures. Development of a wayfinding strategy should explore options for digital integration, including QR code displays on signage for quick access to maps, location data and general information. Additionally, QR codes can be included to link visitors to online features and mobile applications that can improve accessibility, such as the Be My Eyes app.

A precise plan for the logical distribution of signs at the entrances to Almonte and throughout the Downtown is another key element in a successful wayfinding strategy that would need to be established. The involvement of business interests such as the Destination Almonte Association and other agencies involved in tourism and business development will be important. Care will need to be taken to avoid an undesirable proliferation of signs in the Almonte community that prides itself on its heritage appeal and pedestrian nature.



Signage at Metcalfe Geoheritage Park

2.4.3 Lighting and Streetscaping

The recent reconstruction of Mill Street has set the stage for a high-quality physical construction of the public realm, with successful investments in street lighting, streetscaping and placemaking across Downtown Almonte. The following strategies can be considered when making future investments:

1. Imagining the public realm as the seamless integration of public and private space and requiring adjacent developments to contribute to the success of the overall space by investment in the quality of building frontages, signage, lighting, landscaping, and surface materials.
2. Extending the design motif or key elements across the Downtown Core area, including Little Bridge Street, Mill Street west of Bridge Street, Queen Street towards the Almonte Old Town Hall, and at least one block of Bridge Street south of Mill Street.



Streetscaping, Mill Street

3. Considering the extension of the decorative lighting system from Mill Street along the west side of Almonte Street, as part of a promenade linking the existing Downtown Core to the Metcalfe Geoheritage Park, in this way knitting the park into the Downtown Almonte experience.
4. Introducing shorter, pedestrian-oriented lighting along the Riverwalk and other public spaces not well illuminated by street lighting systems.
5. Using accent lighting to highlight and celebrate built heritage resources and bridges thereby adding visual interest and photogenic appeal to Downtown Almonte at night, while having regard for dark sky lighting objectives.
6. Using decorative street light poles and future decorative signage poles as opportunities for adding colour and pageantry, including specifying poles that can be improved with banner arms, hanging flower baskets.

7. Recognizing that the lighting and landscaping strategy for the Alameda may be unique to the Alameda and enabling it to continue to evolve as a distinct location within Downtown.
8. Referencing the design language of the Mill Street streetlights in the selection of wayfinding signage poles.
9. Emphasizing the importance of urban forest cover by planting new trees using contemporary planting technologies and managing mature trees to reinforce the image of Almonte within a natural setting and realize the associated benefits ecological and climatic benefits.

2.4.4 Heritage, Public Art and Placemaking

Downtown Almonte is defined by its valued heritage resources, memorable character, and the community's enthusiasm towards engaging with public art and creating special public places. These qualities are the foundation on which the public realm of the entire Downtown can continue to be bolstered and enriched. Strategies to achieve this include:

1. Referencing the key themes and policy directions in the *Downtown Almonte Heritage Conservation District Plan* and the *Property Owners Guidelines for Heritage Conservation District* when preparing or approving development and redevelopment plans or designs in Downtown Almonte.
2. Showcasing the importance of public art in contributing to community identity, character and well-being, by pre-planning locations and investments where public art can be integrated. Public art installations will ideally be created by residents of Almonte, Eastern Ontario, or Indigenous groups and draw inspiration from Almonte's geography, Indigenous and cultural history, or its future.
3. Identifying and improving small, accessible pocket spaces within the public realm where inviting and memorable spaces can be created, often involving some combination of openness, seating, lighting, landscaping, activity, play, vistas, and public art.
4. Updating the "Walking Tour of Almonte" route with new notable destinations and descriptions and modernizing the supporting materials through developing interactive mobile applications and websites accessible through QR codes provided on signage.



Heritage Mural, Mill Street

3.0 PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY FOR OTTAWA STREET

3.1 Vision for Ottawa Street

A Vision for the Ottawa Street Commercial Sector has been developed with input from community stakeholders during the preparation of this Plan. This Vision can form the basis of the public realm strategy for this area, as follows:

The Ottawa Street corridor forms a gateway into Almonte, having developed as an important commercial service sector that works in conjunction with Downtown Almonte. The area will continue to play this commercial service function while transitioning to include a wider range of uses, including mixed use developments offering homes for residents to live. The sector's renewal will leverage the corridor's strategic location within walking and cycling distance to the Downtown and as a route to and from the National Capital Region and communities accessible by Highway 417. The public realm along this corridor will support improved continuous, accessible active transportation routes. Visitors will be invited to explore new and future developments along the corridor through a new and engaging streetscaping environment.

Corresponding Guiding Principles and a supportive concept plan is provided in the following sections.

3.2 Guiding Principles

The corresponding Guiding Principles that support the Vision for Ottawa Street can provide a basis for a supportive public realm strategy. These also draw on public input and are as follows:

1. **Strengthen the eastern gateway to Almonte:** Ottawa Street serves as a notable travel route to, from, and through Almonte, connecting the community to areas to the east. Given the volume of travelers along the corridor, including those travelling to Almonte along this route, there is an opportunity to bolster the corridor's function as a gateway into the overall community; present an immediate positive, progressive, and welcoming image; attract and capture more economic activity; and orient visitors to the range of services and amenities that are offered both along Ottawa Street and further along in the community, including Downtown Almonte.
2. **Renew as a green, complete multi-modal corridor:** Ottawa Street has historically focused on moving people in vehicles and for the movement of goods, linking Almonte to Highway 417 and areas to the east. Although it will continue to play an important commuter role and arterial role in dispersing traffic to the community's system of collector roads, there is an opportunity to reimagine the corridor as a complete street lined with trees and supportive streetscaping amenities that provides for walking and cycling.
3. **Transition the commercial service function:** The automobile-oriented, highway commercial function of the Ottawa Street corridor has developed with a narrow range of primarily large format uses and retail shopping centres. There is an opportunity to implement structural changes to the retail environment and transition this area to permit and encourage infill and redevelopment, and a wider range of land uses, including medium density housing, with a supportive improved public realm.



Ottawa Street at Industrial Drive

These guiding principles can form the basis for the preparation of the supporting public realm strategies for the Ottawa Street Commercial Sector, developing concept plans for the corridor, and planning, designing and reviewing development proposals in the area.

3.3 Ottawa Street Commercial Area Public Realm Concept Plan

3.3.1 Public Realm Concept Plan

A Concept Plan has been prepared to guide the renewal and transition of the Ottawa Street commercial sector, including the Ottawa Street right-of-way and the adjacent private development lands. **Figure 3-1** demonstrates a short-term concept, focusing on how the corridor and the available and open properties might develop in the near-term. This concept plan recognizes existing commercial buildings and opportunities for infill development that establishes a building pattern that complements the intended and future functions of the corridor. Improvements to the pedestrian environment, such as pedestrian-scale lighting, street furniture, and wider pathways, are provided to establish the feeling of a multi-modal and green corridor.

Figure 3-1: Ottawa Street Short-term Redevelopment Concept Plan



Figure 3-2 illustrates a potential long-term concept of how the area could evolve over perhaps 20 years or more. This long-term concept plan builds on the improvements and infill development suggested in the short-term concept plan, envisioning a denser building pattern that facilitates easier vehicle movement between properties that reinforces a more active and pedestrian environment within the right-of-way and along property frontages.

Figure 3-2: Ottawa Street Long-term Redevelopment Concept Plan



These concept plans are intended to be illustrative and forward-thinking in nature and suggest what a reconceived Ottawa Street may resemble, not to be prescriptive of how Ottawa Street will evolve. The goal is to help frame a discussion on the evolution of the area's public realm and how the area could transition over time. On this basis, the objectives for the concept plan include:

1. Demonstrating modifications to the Ottawa Street right-of-way that will lead to the greening of the street.
2. Illustrating how adjacent private lands and driveways can be designed to work in lockstep with the design and operation of the right-of-way.
3. Recommending how active transportation can be improved throughout the area by implementing recommendations from the 2024 Transportation Master Plan.
4. Testing how vacant and underutilized spaces can be developed or redeveloped as part of a cohesive plan.
5. Displaying how changes could be implemented incrementally, having regard for a long-term vision.
6. Inspiring landowners to imagine how their properties can contribute to the achievement of the overall vision.
7. Informing the design and approval of future development applications.

Using the Concept Plan as a reference, the following public realm strategies are identified for the overall Ottawa Street Commercial Area:

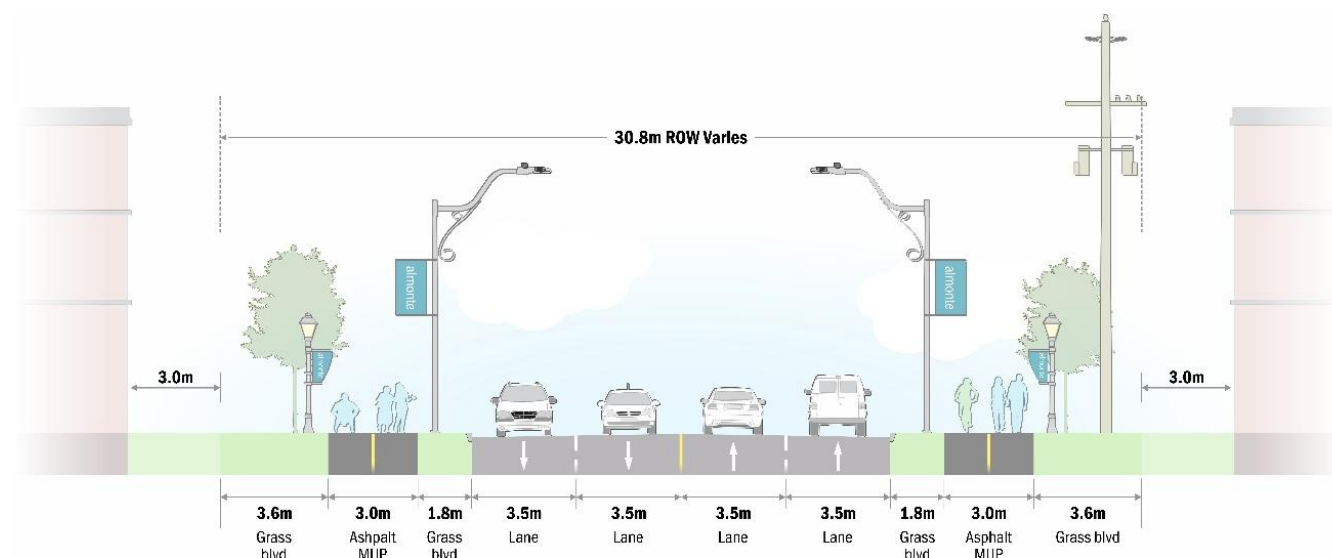
1. Reimagining Ottawa Street as a welcoming gateway for visitors into Almonte and acting as a prelude for the experiences and sights of Downtown Almonte.
2. Activating the right-of-way with active transportation facilities, lighting, landscaping, and directional signage.
3. Greening both the Ottawa Street right-of-way and the driveways and driving aisles/routes of parking lots on private lands.
4. Infilling empty or underutilized spaces with new buildings that front onto and address the street.
5. Consolidating driveways to reduce the number of intersecting driveways on Ottawa Street which interrupt the active transportation network.

6. Coordinating adjacent developments both in the siting and general arrangement of buildings and in connecting them with a parallel private lanes designed to a consistent standard. Maintaining the established connections and easements between properties to provide access to multiple properties without having to use Ottawa Street.
7. Placemaking along the right-of-way to provide opportunities for seating or enjoyment of the outdoor setting.
8. Enabling a wider range of land uses, including mixed-use developments and residential uses towards the rears of properties along the corridor.

3.3.2 Street Right-of-Way Renewal Concept

The Concept Plan illustrates proposed modifications to the Ottawa Street right-of-way. **Figure 3-3** below, is an illustration of these recommended modifications, viewed as a cross-section.

Figure 3-3: Ottawa Street Proposed Cross-Section

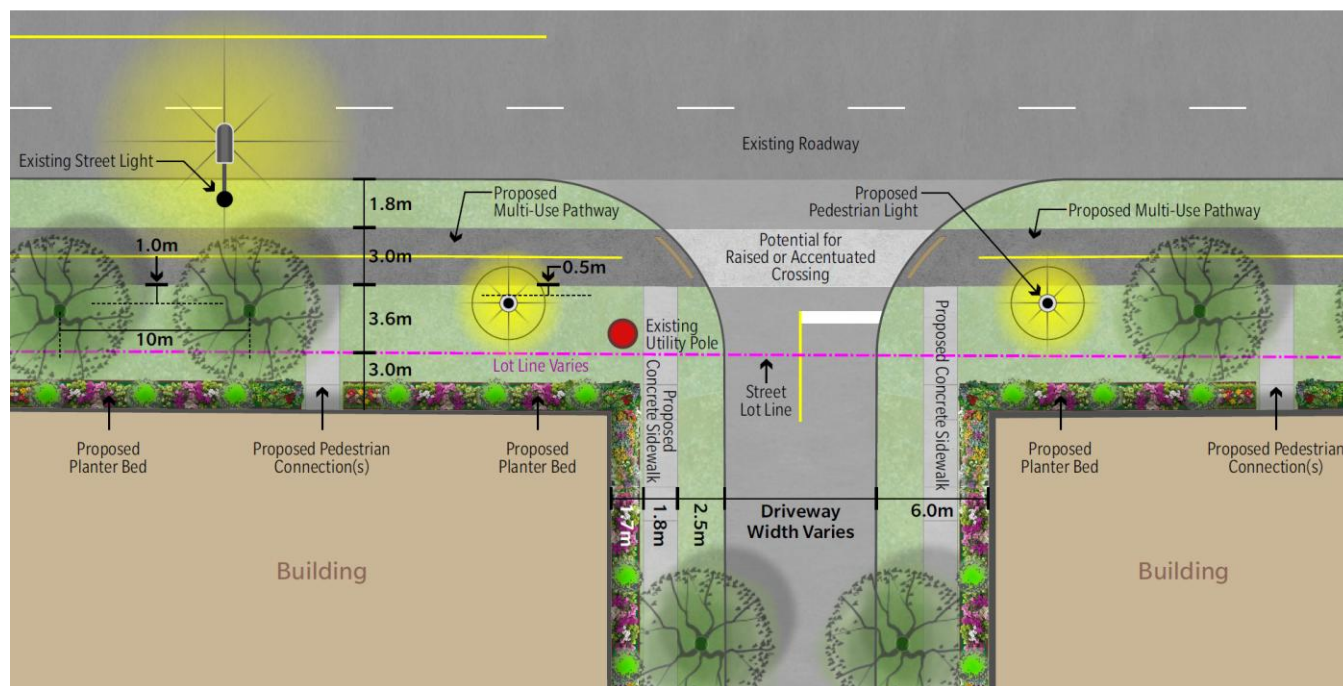


The key features of this cross-section, when demonstrated on the Concept Plans above, include:

1. Introducing a continuous multi-use pathway along both sides of Ottawa Street from one end of the commercial sector to the other, including the traffic circle.
2. Aligning the multi-use pathway with a continuous tree canopy, or at least as continuous as possible while recognizing the breaks required for driveways.
3. Acknowledging the existence of overhead utility poles, by setting trees back and away from these utilities where possible and selecting low-height trees where space is limited.
4. Installing pedestrian-oriented lighting along the multi-use pathway, to embellish existing street lighting, and provide an opportunity for including pole-mounted banners that announce this gateway into Almonte.
5. Anticipating that future buildings will be sited closer to the street lot line on either side of the street, to frame the street with buildings as opposed to parking lots.
6. Considering a new location for a protected mid-block pedestrian crossing and replacing the existing mid-block connection with a full signalized intersection that aligns with existing vehicular accesses.

3.3.3 Building Frontage and Driveway Concept

In addition to modifications to the Ottawa Street right-of-way, there is an opportunity to reimagine the design and development of lands along it to form a continuous, unified public realm along the street. **Figure 3-4** below presents a concept for the design of building frontage zones and driveways.

Figure 3-4: Ottawa Street Building Frontage and Vehicular Access Concept

The implementation of this building frontage and driveway concept can be determined as part of the Site Plan Control process as each property develops or redevelops over time. Key features of this concept include:

1. Situating buildings on either side of the driveways, to frame the driveway and give visitors the sense of entering a space for shopping, eating, and other services, as opposed to simply entering into a parking lot.
2. Requiring that developers include a landscaping strip on private land, along the street lot line, which reinforces and embellishes landscaping in the Ottawa Street right-of-way.
3. Encouraging direct pedestrian entrances into the buildings from the street, to encourage a pedestrian environment along Ottawa Street.
4. Including sidewalks along at least one side of the driveway, connecting the public active transportation network along Ottawa Street to the interior of a development.
5. Providing a row of street trees along both sides of the driveway to green the corridor, reduce the heat island effect of the access road and adjoining parking areas, and provide a comfortable walking route to and from buildings, the driveway, and Ottawa Street.

A rendering of the corresponding future result for Ottawa Street, considering the land use arrangement, street right-of-way modifications, and treatment for driveways and building frontages, is provided in **Figure 3-5**.

Figure 3-5: The Transformation of Ottawa Street as a Welcoming Gateway to Almonte



4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Relationship to the Secondary Plan and Zoning By-law and Other Plans

This Public Realm Plan is intended to be an inspirational, guiding tool to assist in the planning of Downtown Almonte and the Ottawa Street commercial sector. As a standalone document, the Public Realm Plan is not a regulatory instrument. Its value can be realized by identifying and informing:

1. Specific policies in the Municipality of Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan and Secondary Plan for Downtown Almonte and Ottawa Street;
2. Future amendments to the Zoning By-Law for these areas, both in terms of the permitted land uses and performance standards;
3. The design of new development and redevelopment through the planning application process; and
4. New municipal capital projects, grant opportunities or other activities.

4.2 Identification of Potential Projects

This Public Realm Plan introduces several ideas and concepts, many of which require an additional level of feasibility analysis, planning, design, and costing. Among these, the following potential initiatives are highlighted as future projects for the Municipality, the community, and supporting agencies to advance:

1. A Secondary Plan for Downtown Almonte, approved as an amendment to the Official Plan.
2. A municipality-wide Wayfinding Program, building on what has been demonstrated in this Plan for Downtown Almonte and Ottawa Street.
3. A Downtown Almonte Heritage Walking Tour map and mobile application.
4. A strategy to improve the accessibility of the Riverwalk to people of all ages and abilities, including the renewal of the space along the Riverwalk at the rear of the Canada Post property in partnership with Canada Post.
5. The construction of a tree-lined walking route that joins the northern portion of Mill Street to Metcalfe Geoheritage Park.
6. Streetscaping along Bridge Street, for one block north and south of Mill Street, employing the design motif of Mill Street.
7. Decorative lighting on the Queen Street Bridge.
8. Exploring an arrangement between the Municipality and Lanark County, possibly in the form of a long-term lease, for the section of the OVRT that includes the Alameda and the area adjacent to the Cenotaph so that programming of these areas and formal, municipal parking opportunities can be established.
9. Modifications to the Alameda as illustrated on the Concept Plan.
10. The installation of continuous multi-use pathways and streetscaping along both sides of Ottawa Street between Menzie Street/Paterson Street and Appleton Side Road/Ramsay Concession 11A streets, as illustrated on the Concept Plan.

4.3 Partnerships, Funding and Recognition Opportunities

The Municipality can highlight this Public Realm Plan as an important reference document when seeking opportunities for partners, funding, or recognition. Continued involvement is anticipated with partners such as, listed alphabetically:

- Almonte Legion
- Almonte Library
- County of Lanark and Lanark County Trails Sub-Committee
- Canada Post Corporation
- Destination Almonte Association
- Friends of the Alameda
- Government of Canada
- Mississippi Mills Heritage Advisory Committee
- North Lanark Agricultural Society

- Province of Ontario

Examples of funding opportunities, listed alphabetically, include:

1. Active Transportation Fund; <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/trans/index-eng.html>
2. Canada Community-Building Fund; <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/ccbf-fdcc/index-eng.html>
3. Community Transportation Grant Program; <https://news.ontario.ca/en/backgrounder/1000417/community-transportation-grant-program-recipients-and-services>
4. Enabling Accessibility Fund; <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/enabling-accessibility-fund.html>
5. Green Municipal Fund; <https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/>
6. Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program; <https://housing-infrastructure.canada.ca/plan/icp-pic-INFC-eng.html>
7. Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund; <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-community-infrastructure-fund>

Finally, it is important that efforts to renew and strengthen the public realm of Almonte's commercial sectors be guided by excellence in planning and design, with results worthy of provincial and national awards by organizations such as, listed alphabetically:

1. CIP Canadian Awards for Planning Excellence; <https://www.cip-icu.ca/honours-awards/>
2. Communities in Bloom; <https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/>
3. OALA Honours and Awards; <https://www.oala.ca/oala-honours-and-awards>
4. OPPI PlanON Awards; <https://ontarioplanners.ca/inspiring-knowledge/awards-recognition/planon-awards>
5. RAIC National Urban Design Awards; <https://raic.org/honours-awards/national-urban-design-awards>