EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Guelph retained BLSB Consulting to conduct a land use study of an area in Guelph bounded by York Road, Elizabeth Street, the Canadian National (‘CN’) rail line, and Stevenson Street (the ‘Study Area’).

This land use study provides a detailed overview of the Study Area in terms of what is physically happening on the ground, forces that may impact the future of the area, what changes are likely to occur, the roles of local and provincial policies, where and what changes should be promoted, and what existing land uses should be protected.

The proximity of established residential, industrial, and natural systems creates potential compatibility issues and could constrain the Study Area’s future development in several respects. Initial review of the Study Area and its surroundings reveals a complex neighborhood that - in many ways - is thriving in respect to its currently designated land uses. Many of the industrial and service commercial businesses are successful and, in some cases, expanding. However, existing and proposed sensitive land uses, such as new residential, may have an inadvertent impact on the viability of some industries and/or the ability to attract new employment uses to the Study Area but will be a catalyst for change.

In conducting this study, it became apparent that the Study Area is comprised of two distinctive neighborhoods; distinguished in character, landscape, backstory origin, and land use. It would be inappropriate to use the same brush to apply fixes or solutions to both neighborhoods, as greater divergence of these two neighborhoods will strengthen the character of each.

BLSB Consulting has developed a comprehensive report analyzing the Study Area in terms of:

- How the land use functions contribute to several separate areas; and
- What the future of these landscapes might hold.
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1.0. Introduction

1.1. Background

The City of Guelph (the ‘City’ or ‘Guelph’) requested that BLSB Consulting prepare a land-use study of an area in Guelph bounded by York Road, Elizabeth Street, the Canadian National (‘CN’) rail line, and Stevenson Street (the ‘Study Area’) (Map 1). Situated approximately 2 kilometers east of Downtown, the Study Area borders the northern portion of the Guelph Innovation District (‘GID’). The Study Area consists of two distinct neighborhoods: the eastern portion of St. Patrick’s Ward (‘The Ward’), and what BLSB refers to as ‘The Annex’, the part of the Study Area east of Victoria Road which is distinct from the former in several respects.

The City’s Official Plan (‘OP’), which is “a statement of goals, objectives, and policies that guides Guelph’s growth and development in the years leading to 2031” (City of Guelph, 2018), designates most of the Study Area for Industrial, Mixed Business, and Service Commercial uses. However, low density residential units, two railways, and natural systems are coextensive here. Developments taking place within and near the Study Area will induce change over the coming years. The employment areas and neighborhoods are subject to an array of development constraints, but they also possess
untapped potential and opportunity that can benefit the neighborhood and the community more broadly.

This study was conducted to understand this complexity, assess its various aspects, and formulate a series of findings and observations that will improve the City's understanding of the Study Area for future planning applications.

### 1.2. Scope

This study addresses the following topics related to land use in the Study Area:

- What is physically happening on the ground;
- What forces may impact the future of this area;
- Where and what change is likely to occur; and
- What role does local and provincial policy play in these circumstances.

To address the above-noted topics, this study delves into the following research areas:

- The nature and extent of the Study Area’s land uses;
- Resources that support current and potential land uses;
- The Study Area’s history;
- Contemporary factors likely to influence development in the Study Area;
- The influence of development occurring in surrounding neighborhoods; and
- Relationships between current policies and multiple, competing objectives.

Findings are further analyzed and presented as opportunities and constraints for future planning and development in the Study Area. As Guelph has yet to undertake a *Growth Plan* conformity exercise, the City also requested that this research project assess the designation of some portion(s) of the Study Area as employment area lands\(^1\).

This study has limitations, namely:

- there is no analysis of market conditions other than citing high-level trends in the industrial and commercial sectors from existing City research;

\(^1\) As defined by the Provincial Growth Plan (2019)
• zoning and parcel-specific conditions have not been addressed except as an illustration of broader trends occurring;
• findings are based largely on collected qualitative data; and
• there has been no public input into this study other than informal interviews with a few business owners that may not be determinative.

Given said limitations, this study’s outcomes are findings and observations related to:

• Proposing a delineation of the Study Area’s employment area lands; and
• Citing areas and/or policies that require further consideration or study.

1.3. Purpose

The goal of this study is to inform the City’s understanding of the Study Area’s current and potential land uses in the context of broad ongoing trends and local and provincial policy frameworks. The objectives of this study are fivefold:

• To determine the likely impact of proposed developments on current land uses, where these proposals might result in:
  o negative impacts for existing and/or potential users of the Study Area;
  o non-conformity with existing local and provincial planning policies;
• To determine where sensitive uses might ideally-locate and/or where further consideration is needed to demonstrate compatibility with and/or mitigate impacts on existing industry;
• To tie together historical and contextual factors to provide a sense of identity for the Study Area that will inform future efforts at ‘placemaking’;
• To determine where and how existing land use designations and other local policies might unintentionally lead to conflicting development outcomes; and
• To determine where and how existing land use designations and other local policies might unintentionally lead to conflicting development outcomes; and
  o To delineate the Study Area’s employment lands and identify a mix of employment uses that should be encouraged.

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Residential, institutional, and community uses that tend to be incompatible with industrial and commercial activities
These objectives inform the City’s short- and long-term planning efforts in the Study Area. A focus on compatibility issues related to employment areas, transportation corridors, and natural areas reveals where opportunities and constraints currently exist and/or are likely to emerge as the Study Area and its surroundings undergo transition.

The rest of the study is organized as follows:

This section (Section One) concludes with an overview of methodological approaches and the primary sources that information was drawn from.

Section Two explores the Study Area’s history and broad contextual factors. This provides a sense of how current conditions came to be and the influences shaping the Study Area’s present and future.

Section Three provides a general overview of the Study Area, complete with visual references, to set the stage for analyses occurring in subsequent sections.

Section Four reviews provincial and local policies, background studies and ongoing projects shaping the Study Area’s development. Attention is paid to:

- aspects of the Province’s planning framework related to conformity with employment area, transportation corridor, and resource protection policies; and
- policies related to the Mixed-Business land-use designation and the brownfield (200 Beverley Street) as per appropriate development of vacant lands near rail.

Section Five analyzes the land-uses occurring throughout the Study Area using a zone-based approach to achieve appropriate granularity. This section reviews existing conditions to inform an understanding of development opportunities and constraints. A community resource inventory supports the analysis.

Section Six synthesizes the contextual, policy, and land-use findings of previous sections to assess the complex array of factors that provide opportunities and constraints for development in the Study Area.

Section Seven suggests a delineation of the Study Area’s Employment Lands along with recommendations for employment uses that would be ideal to encourage. The study concludes with a proposed name for part of the Study Area and some points for the City to consider as it moves forward with planning for The Ward and The Annex. These can help forge a sense of social and economic cohesion both in and between these distinct neighborhoods.
1.4. Methodology

Given the scope of this study and the research areas set out in Section 1.2 above, analyzing this complex range of factors requires an approach sensitive to the broader planning context. The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the Study Area’s current land uses and what contributes to these?
2. How do these current uses align with the applicable Official Plan designations?
3. What changes will likely impact the Study Area in the short- and long-term?
4. What opportunities and constraints exist:
   1. To maintain existing land uses, and/or
   2. To attract new or different land uses into the Study Area?

b. What role does policy play in the Study Area’s opportunities and constraints?

The following outlines our methodological approach to answering these questions for land use analyses, including a community infrastructure and resource inventory, field observation, spatial analysis using GIS and Google Earth and a document review were the primary means of data collection and analysis. The same data sources, complemented by stakeholder interviews, were used to assess ongoing and potential impacts and changes affecting the Study Area. Research involving a review of primary and secondary sources from the City’s library, archives and museum informed the analysis of the Study Area’s history. Finally, the policy context was derived from consideration of Provincial and local policy documents relevant to the Study Area. The document sources reviewed are listed in Appendix 1.

2.0. THE STUDY AREA: HISTORICAL AND CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The current form and character of the Study Area results from both macro and micro level changes occurring in Guelph since its founding (1827). Understanding these changes and their meaning to the Study Area is critical to assess its current
and future uses. The following analyzes the Study Area’s history before major contextual factors are reviewed.

2.1. Historical Analysis

The Study Area has been commercially and industrially active since rail was introduced to the region. Rail has played a vital role in Guelph’s history. Prior to the Grand Trunk Railway’s construction (1856), Guelph had yet to grow past village status [CITATION Irw08 \m Placeholder3 \l 1033 ]. The introduction of the railway quickly spurred Guelph’s development into a town, and then into the city it is today. Guelph is one of several Canadian municipalities to own its own railway: the 39km Guelph Junction Railway (‘GJR’). Roughly a kilometer of the GJR runs through the Study Area and is one of the Study Area’s defining features.

The Study Area includes the eastern portion of St. Patrick’s Ward (‘The Ward’) (figure 1), a large parcel of land that borders the Downtown, Eramosa River, and Victoria Road. The Ward is a historic neighborhood known for supporting industry, affordable housing, and a large cohort of European immigrants in the early 20th Century; its historical and cultural value continues to draw residents to support its businesses. Historically, the Ward sustained the interwar in-migration of many persons of Italian descent, who often worked in various local industries. Several Study Area businesses, such as Durose Manufacturing (1944) and Bernardi Precast (1961) were founded by Italian-Canadian residents. Both firms are still active along Elizabeth Street and harken back to the era where mixing residential and industrial uses was commonplace and encouraged in the Study Area; workers lived close to their work and industries often built housing for their workers.

Figure 2 – Annexation Map

Figure 2 – “Annexation Map”
Atlases dating back to 1906 indicate that Elizabeth Street did not originally extend east of Stevenson Street. Since Elizabeth supports the Study Area’s businesses, its extension to York Road suggests that early road improvements supported these industries. Further, until the City made several annexations - the first in 1952 and another in 1966 (figure 2) - half of the Study Area (east of Victoria Road) was part of the Township of Guelph. During this latter period, the 1964 Official Plan focused on industrial and residential expansion. Thus, the eclectic legacy of uses in the Study Area was greatly influenced by road extensions, the annexations of these lands to the City, and the long-range goals of this Official Plan.

The Study Area’s history reveals how it has served Guelph over time: it was a landing place for incoming residents to establish a foothold in Canada and pursue their economic interests yet preserve cultural values. Relatively inexpensive property, permissive storage and use conditions, and access to road and rail continue to allow the area to play an ‘incubator’ role for up-and-coming businesses. Similarly, affordable housing in and near the Study Area is vital for young families, first-time buyers, those with strained incomes, and

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Figure 3 – Historical York Road

Figure 4 – Historical, International Malleable Iron Co.

Top photo: B&W. Glossy. City of Guelph showing York Road diagonally from upper left to lower right; Victoria Road from lower left, intersecting with York Rd. at right. c. 1948.
Bottom photo: Black and white aerial photograph of International Malleable Iron Co. (IMICO) looking north from York Road towards Elizabeth Street. C. 1948.
(importantly) those who choose to work out of their homes. These historical and contemporary trends inform the Study Area’s character and identity.

2.2. Contextual Analyses

2.2.1. Community Geography

A concern in the Study Area is the apparent incompatibility between existing industrial and existing residential uses. Although the industrial and residential uses initially appear to be incompatible, they manage to coexist. Continued investment by the owners of the industrial, commercial and residential properties and their general upkeep indicates that the property owners see a future for themselves in the Study Area.

Discussed in more detail as part of the land use analysis in Section 5, there are several clusters, or ‘campuses’ of successful businesses across a range of commercial and industrial sectors in the Study Area. This includes a recycling yard; a landscaping company; a storage facility; a used car lot; and, an outdoor statue manufacturer. Further, the infrastructure for goods movement, namely the GJR and the arterial road network reinforces the attraction of the Study Area for these businesses. Having consulted with some of these business owners, many of the businesses appear to be viable and are expanding. Some businesses commented that Elizabeth Street suits the need for businesses that transport goods via semi-trailer. The nature of Elizabeth Street contains low levels of traffic and allows for off-site vehicle maneuvering to back into loading docks (of which several businesses have in this location).

Global economic trends (e.g. a long-term decline in manufacturing) have affected how some of the businesses in the Study Area operate. In the past, manufacturing companies required land for inventory purposes, but the need for stockpiling has shifted because of increased economic uncertainty. The Study Area has seen certain businesses renting sections of their properties to other business owners who benefit from affordable rents, instead of letting space they are paying for go unutilized. Said shift adds to the campus-like quality of businesses here and is instrumental in creating an incubator-like environment in the Study Area.

The Study Area is a gateway to Guelph’s Downtown from the east. York Road, a major arterial road, connects the Study Area to the Downtown, as does Elizabeth Street. Downtown is growing quite rapidly, with its activities starting to spill over into adjacent areas e.g. several niche shops can now be
found opening here. Said growth is likely to drive the need for housing and space in surrounding neighborhoods, including the Study Area. Both road and rail infrastructure connect the Study Area’s industrial and commercial activities to the rest of Guelph and regions beyond, turning it into a hub for the movement of people and goods. This gateway function is likely to increase as the GID lands to the south develop further in coming years.

2.2.2. Active Policy Considerations

Nearly a third of the Study Area falls within The Ward. The Official Plan includes a Community Improvement Plan (‘CIP’) for The Ward intended to support the neighborhood’s character while promoting better pedestrian connectivity to the Downtown. Although roughly 16 years old, this CIP is still referred to as part of the planning framework applicable to the Study Area and is one of several potential influences on its future direction.

There is no Secondary Plan for the Study Area, nor does it belong to any neighborhoods with Secondary Plans; however, it borders the GID along York Road. The GID Secondary Plan encourages these lands to develop into a key area for residential and employment growth. The Official Plan designates York Road as an Intensification Corridor, and the parcels along the road’s northern edge as Service Commercial. This designation anticipates redevelopment, including road widening, the installment of bike lanes, and improved pedestrian access. By designating this portion of the Study Area both Service Commercial and an Intensification Corridor, the City introduces a challenge to the Study Area’s previous emphasis on industrial use.
3.0. THE STUDY AREA: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

The Study Area is comprised of a variety of employment uses from office to manufacturing, a wide variety of retail and service uses, and pockets of low density residential (figures 5, 6, 7, and 8). The current land uses largely mirror the applicable Official Plan designations: Industrial, Service Commercial, Mixed Business, Mixed Office Commercial, and Low-density Residential (Map 2). The Study Area is bordered on the north, east, and south by a mix of natural heritage areas and established neighborhoods.
3.1. Topography and Natural Systems

Map 3 - Study Area: Topography

Source(s): City of Guelph, Grand River Conservation Authority

Map 4 - Study Area: Natural Systems

Source(s): City of Guelph, Grand River Conservation Authority
While most of the Study Area is flat, its northernmost parcels are defined by steep topography that moves downhill in a southerly direction from a ridge upon which the CN-GO rail line rests (Map 3). While portions of this area have been developed with some low and medium density residential, future development must contend with issues related to this topography (e.g. soil and slope stability) and the fact that it is very difficult to screen an elevated noise source.

Both the northern edge of the Study Area (roughly parallel with the CN-GO rail line) and the land across York Road to the east are Provincially recognized Significant Natural Areas (Map 4). These areas are linked together by Hadati Creek, which flows from the north and into the Study Area southeast towards the intersection of Elizabeth Street and Suburban Avenue; it then flows along the latter as a (mostly) daylit watercourse before crossing under York Road to join Clythe Creek (which runs parallel to York). Along the northern edge of the Study Area, further west towards Elizabeth Street’s intersection with Victoria Road, a Significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) also forms part of the Study Area’s natural heritage system.
Most of the natural heritage system in the Study Area’s is co-located with the regulatory floodplain except for a portion extending from Downtown into the area’s western edge (Map 5). While the City’s Official Plan (2018) states that one zone and two zone floodways severely restrict development to certain temporary or recreational uses, two zone fringe can be built upon (except for certain sensitive and essential uses) with adequate flood proofing.

Floodplains and the natural heritage system are co-located in the Study Area because the Hadati and Clythe Creeks flow through the area. Both creeks are considered cool water fish habitats. As such, the City’s Official Plan designates all lands within 120m as “adjacent” and subject to the same policies as the natural heritage system. These lands are illustrated in (Map 4).

An area surrounding the City’s watercourses that mandates varying degrees of restriction on development that can occur there.
6), along with the adjacent land ranges of the ANSI (50-120m) and the natural heritage system (50m)\(^5\).

### 3.2. Transportation Infrastructure

The Study Area hosts several transportation corridors. Referring to Map 7, York Road, Victoria Road, and Stevenson Street (hereinafter referred to as ‘York’, ‘Victoria’ and ‘Stevenson’) are arterials with high volumes of traffic. Elizabeth Street (referred to as ‘Elizabeth’) to as is also an arterial, but transitions to a collector road crossing east over Victoria (City of Guelph, 2019). York is further designated a ‘connecting link’\(^6\) of the Provincial highway system (City of Guelph, 2019). York, Victoria, and the arterial portion of Elizabeth form part of the City’s permissive truck route system wherein the features in the Study Area are considered Significant Valleyland (City of Guelph, 2018).

\(^5\) The Ministry of Transport (MOT) term for highways that connect through communities. Highway 7 enters Guelph from the east as York Road, and proceeds into the City's Downtown. This status requires the province be involved in planning decisions which might impact the road and its surroundings.
Emphasis on goods movement gives the Study Area a vehicle focused character. However, the area is not without transit service and sidewalks (Map 8), even if the latter are sporadic.

Further, the Official Plan outlines improvements to the major roads and their intersections (Map 9) that should reduce the gap in service between vehicles and users of active transportation in the Study Area. For instance, reconstruction of York in the next few years is proposed to:

- Widen from two to four traffic lanes;
- Add bicycle lanes on both sides of the road;
- Add sidewalks, curb and gutters;
- Add traffic lights to and improve the York Road-Elizabeth Street intersection; and
- Close the Beaumont Crescent entrances onto York Road7 (City of Guelph, 2019).

This marks a significant change in traffic flow patterns for users of those affected zones’ businesses and residents.
There are two rail lines in the Study Area: the CN-GO line which defines its northern edge, and the GJR which bisects it east-west, crossing York, Victoria, and Stevenson, and a small GJR railyard (Map 10). Supporting Guelph’s economy generally, and the Study Area’s industries more particularly, both the CN-GO line and the GJR may:

- constrain development: due to required separation distances;
- compatibility issues: potential for adverse effects due to noise, vibration, and particulate emissions; and
- traffic circulation: at grade crossings of arterial roads is disruptive, a source of delay, and potential safety issues.

Map 10 showcases the 300m and 30m building setbacks recommended by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Railway Association of Canada\(^8\) for railyards and primary rail lines. The GJR and the CN-GO rail lines qualify as primary rail lines in the Railway Operations Manual. Trains travelling along the GJR - typically 2-4/daily from Monday-Friday - also cross the Study Area’s major arterials (York, Victoria, and Stevenson), at level crossings and therefore impact the use of such roads. Any development in proximity to these rail lines must be assessed considering

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\(^8\) in their Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations (2013)
the impacts of the rail operations on the project and the project on the railways’ function.

3.3. Employment Land-Uses

There is a diverse mix of businesses in the Study Area: large-scale manufacturing and logistics / warehousing firms; automobile repair shops and used car sales; and several smaller office and service-based businesses, with many operating from homes (Figures 10, 11, 12, and 13). Business owners mention the relatively cheap rent in the Study Area compared to the rest of Guelph, favorable zoning that allows outdoor storage and access to road and rail, as being the main reasons for their location in the Study Area.

Several Study Area employment uses maintain Environmental Compliance Approvals, or ‘ECAs’. Under s.9 of the Environmental Protection Act (the ‘EPA’), all facilities (which may include industries and commercial land uses) that discharge ‘contaminants’ into the environment (including noise from air handling equipment) are required to obtain ECA approvals/registrations. Map 11 shows where ECAs exist by type. For example, those cited ‘Air’ denote sites where business activities produce emissions that must be detracted and demonstrably mitigated. Introducing sensitive uses[1] in proximity to

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[1] Gathered through informal interviews with several local business owners. To maintain confidentiality, personal information is not disclosed in this report.
industries can put industries into non-compliance with their ECAs, increase the risk of complaint and the potential for an adverse effect, without the industry having made any changes to its operations, its facility, or its production in any way.

3.4. Presence of Residential Land-Uses

Although economic functions are the Study Area’s prominent activity, homes are scattered throughout, and several established neighborhoods border on the Study Area. Some of these housing areas emerged from joint Provincial-Federal initiatives in the post-war period to provide low-cost housing; for example, the purchase of 165 acres near Victoria and Eastview Roads resulted in roughly 600 affordable housing units that lie north of the Study Area [CITATION Irw08 \ 1033].

The introduction of new housing units in the Study Area may negatively impact existing industries and/or discourage vacant employment lands from being used for their intended purpose. The impacts from such an introduction may include: further investment in at-source mitigation being required (assuming that the source can be mitigated - otherwise facility closure), restrictions on operations, uncertainty in being able to obtain ECAs in the future, and increased uncertainty for such uses due to the increased likelihood of complaint, and potential nuisance/adverse effect (qualitative) claims and actions. Introducing sensitive land uses in proximity to vacant employment area lands, means additional expense for required at-source mitigation and uncertainty concerning ECA permissions that may “sterilize”
such lands from being developed for the purpose for which they are designated.

As for residences in the Study Area, several are found in designated employment areas and there is a certain level of incompatibility between these uses. *Figures 13 and 14* show two residences within the Study Area that are designated *Mixed Business* and surrounded by industrial uses and storage yards. Also, since many residences play host to businesses in the home or on the property, the distinction between employment and residential functions is blurred in the Study Area.

![Figure 13 – Photo: Residential Units](image1)

![Figure 14 – Photo: Auto-Shop (behind the residential in Figure 13)](image2)

### 3.5. Built Heritage

The residential neighborhoods of The Ward to the southwest are considered by the City to be candidate cultural heritage landscapes (‘CHLs’). CHLs are significant as they have “…cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of place, an event, or a people” (PPS, 2014). The Study Area also contains properties within the City’s Couling Inventory. These properties are identified in the Couling Inventory as being of historical interest for the City but aren't currently listed or designated.
4.0. POLICY REVIEW

The following is a review of provincial and municipal planning policies relevant to the Study Area, beginning with the PPS and the Growth Plan as they relate to employment, transportation, and resource protection. Key sections of Guelph’s Official Plan and other local plans, studies, and development initiatives are considered. Best practices for development near rail and industrial facilities are referenced and the Mixed-Business and Special Study Area policies are reviewed in terms of development criteria for vacant lands next to railyard.

4.1. Provincial Planning Framework


The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. As a key part of Ontario’s policy-led planning system, the PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The PPS requires municipal-level planning decisions to be consistent with the provisions of the PPS. It establishes the core framework and definitions upon which major provincial plans such as the Growth Plan rely, although the Growth Plan takes precedence over the PPS where there is a conflict. The following outlines employment, transportation, and resource protection policies as these inform the Growth Plan and Guelph’s Official Plan policies that apply to the Subject Lands.

Employment

Section 1.3.2 of the PPS directs municipalities to plan for, protect and preserve employment areas for current and future uses and to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (i.e. road, rail, utilities) is provided to support current and projected needs. Municipalities are also required to protect employment areas in proximity to major goods movement facilities and corridors for employment uses that require those locations.

Lastly, section 1.2.6.1 of the PPS requires that major facilities (includes industries and infrastructure like rail lines and rail yards) and sensitive land uses should be planned to ensure they are appropriately designed, buffered and/or separated from each other to prevent or mitigate adverse effects from odor, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term viability of major facilities.
The PPS limits the conversion of employment areas to non-employment uses through the requirement for a comprehensive review and demonstrating compliance with established conversion criteria.

**Transportation**
Sections 1.6.7 and 1.6.8 of the PPS outline transportation systems and corridors, respectively, with the former focused on movement of people and the latter on the movement of goods in support of economic functions. Generally, all transportation and land-use planning are to be coordinated for safety, efficient connectivity, to minimize the number and length of vehicle trips, and to support compact urban development.

Given their role in supporting employment areas, the PPS provides municipalities with firm direction on the preservation of transportation corridors; no development shall be permitted in “planned corridors that [may] preclude or negatively affect the use of the corridor for the purpose(s) for which it was identified” (section 1.6.8.3). Further to this:

    New developments proposed on [lands adjacent to] existing or planned corridors and transportation facilities should be compatible with, and supportive of, the long-term purposes of the corridor and should be designed to avoid, mitigate or minimize negative impacts on and from the corridor and transportation facilities.

This includes protecting facilities such as the GJR railyard from incompatible sensitive uses through effective separation and buffering as per the PPS’s general policy guidelines for land use compatibility (section 1.6.9, citing 1.2.6.1 as referenced above).

**Resource Protection**
Section 2 of the PPS guides the use and management of resources, which in the Study Area pertains to both natural and built heritage features. Relative to other policy areas, section 2 of the PPS is more restrictive of where and what development can occur.

**Natural Heritage**
Section 2.1 promotes the protection and improvement of natural heritage, specifically its diversity and the connectivity between features of the system. Specifically, development and site alterations are prohibited on lands
adjacent to identified natural heritage features unless both the following have occurred:

- Evaluating the adjacent land’s ecological function(s); and
- Demonstrating no negative impacts on features or their ecological function(s) (section 2.1.8).

Similarly, development or alteration of fish habitat, relevant to Hadati and Clythe Creeks, is prohibited except in accordance with Provincial and Federal statutes (section 2.1.6). A considerable portion of the Study Area is thus subject to layers of environmental review and the mitigation of impacts before development can proceed.

**Built Heritage**

Section 2.6 of the PPS protects built heritage resources and significant cultural landscapes by limiting the alteration of lands adjacent to these features, barring their conservation (section 2.6.3). Strategic municipal management of these features is also promoted (section 2.6.4).

**4.1.2. The Provincial Growth Plan (2019)**

The Growth Plan provides population and employment forecasts for all municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan is about accommodating forecasted growth in complete communities. Because of its function, the Growth Plan is specific and planning decisions must conform to its provisions (section 5.1). As the City’s Official Plan was consolidated in 2018, the Growth Plan’s recent update introduces potential conformity issues based on the introduction of new requirements. While establishing a broad provincial policy context, this section also informs delineation of the Study Area’s employment area(s).

**Employment Areas**

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10 Of which there are currently three candidates surrounding the Study Area, to be discussed subsequently

11 an exercise the City is currently undertaking with its Cultural Heritage Action Plan (currently in draft form)

12 To occur in a subsequent section, once opportunity and constraint analyses have been presented
The Growth Plan outlines how employment areas will be supported and protected to host current and expected employment (until 2041). It also reinforces PPS conversion criteria in that municipalities must meet Growth Plan employment targets (section 2.2.5.9).

Section 2.2.5 provides additional protection for employment areas. Municipalities must prohibit or limit sensitive land uses that are not ancillary to primary employment uses (section 2.2.5.7.a). Section 2.2.5.8, new to the Growth Plan as of 2019, mandates the following:

The development of sensitive land uses, major retail uses or major office uses will, in accordance with provincial guidelines, avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts on industrial, manufacturing or other uses that are particularly vulnerable to encroachment.

This limits certain land-uses adjacent or even proximal to employment areas when their presence would negatively impact the viability of the area’s employment use(s). Another new policy requires the City to “establish minimum density targets for all employment areas” with said targets meeting the following requirements (section 2.2.5.13):

- [be] measured in jobs per hectare;
- reflect the current and anticipated type and scale of employment that characterizes the employment area to which the target applies;
- reflect opportunities for the intensification of employment areas on sites that support active transportation and are served by existing or planned transit; and
- be implemented through [OP] policies and designations and zoning by-laws.

The summed densities of all the City’s individual employment areas must still equal or exceed the Growth Plan employment targets. The unique development character and uses of each employment area in Guelph are to be assessed and reflected in a target density. In respect to the Study Area, many current industries represent relatively low employment density per hectare and this is an important feature to be maintained.

Transportation
The Growth Plan provides standards for planning the movement of people and goods. Section 3.2.3 prioritizes public transit, active transportation, and goods movement over single-occupancy vehicle use.

The Province favors:

- Improving and protecting the long-term viability of major goods movement facilities and corridors; and
- Integrating multimodal goods movement, freight-supportive land use, and transportation system planning (section 3.2.4).

Referring to infrastructure corridors (section 3.2.5.b), the Growth Plan requires they be:

protected to meet current and projected needs in accordance with the transportation and infrastructure corridor protection policies in the PPS (as per the PPS’s section 1.6.8.3, as cited above).

The combined policies of the Provincial planning framework obligate municipalities to protect freight-dependent employment clusters such as those found in the Study Area, specifically by limiting the intrusion of sensitive uses that affect their ability to function.

**Resource Protection**

Section 4 of the Growth Plan guides planning related to resource use and management, including subsections on natural and built heritage features. Other than mandating the provincial natural heritage system’s inclusion in municipal official plans, the Growth Plan largely defers to the policy guidelines of the PPS.

**4.2. The City of Guelph Planning Framework**

**4.2.1. The City of Guelph Official Plan (2018)**

Consolidated in 2018 to include several secondary plans, the City’s Official Plan covers several policy areas that are applicable to the Study Area. General development policies are outlined before specific policies e.g. land use designations.

**General**

Development policies for the built-up area (which the Study Area is wholly part of) and general intensification (Section 3.7.3) promote:
Infill and/or redevelopment of underutilized lots, greyfield, and brownfield sites;
- A diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment;
- A range and mix of housing including affordable options;
- Appropriately transitioned intensification of areas to generally higher densities;
- Use of site and urban design to create high quality public open spaces;
- The support of transit, walking, and cycling for everyday activities; and
- An appropriate type and scale of development within Intensification Areas

Intensification Areas are designated districts, nodes, or corridors the City considers ideal for redevelopment. The segment of York Road falling within the Study Area is considered an Intensification Corridor:

[meaning, an] area identified along major roads, arterials or higher order transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development consistent with planned transit service levels (p.358).

The City intends Intensification Corridors, ‘where appropriate’, to have (Section 3.10.2):

- increased residential and employment densities that support and ensure the viability of existing and planned transit service levels;
- a mix of residential, office, institutional, and commercial development; and
- a range of local services, including recreational, cultural and entertainment uses.

This designation indicates policy support for a considerable change in the intensity, character and land use in the portion of the York corridor within the Study Area. Intensification Corridors may contain employment uses but are not employment areas as defined by the PPS and the Growth Plan because of the sensitive land uses that are permitted therein.

Section 3.13.1 proposes targets to provide housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households and, more generally, supports the
development of residential units for all need types i.e. social and special needs housing. Several of these types of projects exist or are in various stages of development within the Study Area.

Section 3.14 outlines the City’s approach to meeting provincially projected employment growth through the protection and promotion of employment areas. These provisions largely mirror the PPS and Growth Plan, although the Official Plan further mandates that:

- Employment areas should be transit-supportive, of a compact built form, and minimize surface parking (3.14.1.vii); and
- Low job density employment uses should locate on suitably designated lands where there is convenient access to provincial highways or rail lines (3.14.8).

**Natural Area Policies**
Consistent with the Provincial mandate, the Official Plan contains policies for protecting natural heritage features and areas. Given their development is prohibited, the Official Plan also prescribes protections to their adjacent lands:

> lands contiguous to natural heritage features or areas where development or site alteration would likely have a negative impact on the former (4.1.1).

Developing properties within those lands adjacent to natural heritage features or areas triggers the requirement to complete an Environmental Impact Study (‘EIS’) or Environmental Assessment (‘EA’) to demonstrate that the proposed development will not negatively impact the feature or area. For reference, the “adjacent” land standards to a natural heritage feature or area in or near the Study Area are:

- **ANSI:** 50-120m
- **Significant Wetlands:** 120m
- **Surface Water Features and Fish Habitat:** 120m
- **Significant Valleylands:** 50m

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13 Major types within / near the Study Area include: Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI), Significant Wetlands, Surface Water Features and Fish Habitat, and Significant Valleylands.

14 These are also visually represented in Map 6, found in Section Three of this report.
The regulatory floodplain permeating the Study Area restricts development. There are two types of zones (one and two), the former of which shall not be developed (4.4.1.14). Two zone consists of floodway and fringe; the former, part of the natural heritage system, prohibits development, although existing structures are legal non-conforming (4.4.1.18). Two zone fringe permits development that meets floodproofing requirements. However, essential emergency service, institutional, and/or hazardous substance related land uses are not permitted in any part of the floodplain (4.4.1.7).

**Transportation Policies**

Generally, the City’s transportation policies satisfy provincial requirements by setting targets for reducing the transportation system overall auto-mode share and energy consumption\(^\text{15}\). There are numerous policies for active transportation and public transit infrastructure (5.4 and 5.5), and their role in supporting employment areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>Right-of-Way</th>
<th>Widening Specifics</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Street</td>
<td>24m</td>
<td>Up to 2m both sides</td>
<td>Arthur St S to Garibaldi St</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Street</td>
<td>30m</td>
<td>2-5m both sides</td>
<td>Garibaldi St to York Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson Street</td>
<td>26m</td>
<td>3m both sides</td>
<td>York Road to Lane Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Road</td>
<td>30m</td>
<td>2-5m both sides</td>
<td>Woodlawn Rd E to York Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Road</td>
<td>26m</td>
<td>3m both sides</td>
<td>York Rd to Eramosa River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Road</td>
<td>30m</td>
<td>2-5m both sides</td>
<td>Victoria Rd to Watson Road S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Road</td>
<td>24m</td>
<td>Up to 2m both sides</td>
<td>Wyndham St S to Victoria Rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

York, Victoria, and the westerly portion of Elizabeth are part of the City’s permissive trucking route system (5.9.1). Section 5.10 protects rail infrastructure: developers must address federal and local requirements for safety, noise and vibration\(^\text{16}\), and mitigation/buffering. Section 5.10 appears

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\(^{15}\) Increasing non-auto mode shares for average daily trips to 15% for transit, 15% for walking and 3% for cycling; and reducing the amount of energy used for transportation energy use by 25% from 2007 levels by 2031 (Section 5.1.1.i, ii)

\(^{16}\) These policies (Section 4.4.5) put the onus upon the developers of sensitive land uses to assess impacts and undertake mitigation related to noise and vibration produced by transportation corridors as well as employment uses
to be consistent with provincial criteria for land use compatibility between major facilities and sensitive uses (PPS Section 1.2.6.1), however, the City must continue to demonstrate that their development decisions are consistent with the PPS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Name</th>
<th>Name of Intersecting Street Where Improvements are Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Street</td>
<td>Stevenson Street, Victoria Road, York Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson Street</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street, York Road, GJR Crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Road</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street, York Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Road</td>
<td>Elizabeth Street, Stevenson Street, Victoria Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Urban Design Policies**

When commercial or mixed-use development occurs at major street intersections, such as York and Victoria Roads, corner parcels “minor gateways”, are required to incorporate neighborhood-scale gateway features\(^\text{17}\). Vehicle-oriented uses require site planning (8.10.1) and there are specific provisions for locating drive thus and service bays (8.10.2). Sections 8.12 and 8.13 outline policies for parking and access, circulation, loading and storage areas; these are particularly relevant for the establishment of new employment uses in the Study Area.

**Land-Use Designation Policies**

Section 9 of the Official Plan addresses land use designations. While zoning are the standards that regulate what development and uses may occur on a

\(^\text{17}\)“[T]his shall be accomplished through high-quality built form and may include pedestrian linkages into the site at the intersection”, as well as features such as: trees, landscaping, feature lighting, paving, and public art (Sections 8.47 and 8.4.8)
parcel, an Official Plan designation is both macro level land use planning and visionary as to how the community should evolve over time. Designations within or near to the Study Area include:

- **Low Density Residential**
- **Employment Designations**
  - Industrial
  - Mixed Business
- **Service Commercial**
- **Neighborhood Commercial Centre**
- **Mixed Office / Commercial**
- **Significant Natural Areas and Natural Areas**

The following discussion highlights relevant aspects of these designations as they relate to the Study Area, both for present conditions and in the future.

**Low Density Residential**

Home occupations are permitted in dwelling units subject to certain limits (9.2.6). However, as per the City’s Zoning By-law, the *Low-Density Residential* designation of the Official Plan is more permissive of home occupations given that the potential impacts of hosting a business are easier to mitigate in single-detached homes. As noted, home businesses are prevalent throughout the Study Area. Similarly, limited non-residential uses are permitted in all residential designations; schools, parks, places of worship, and convenience commercial uses are allowed (9.3.1.2.1.v). While designated *Low Density Residential*, most businesses in this designation within the Study Area are zoned B.4 Industrial (City of Guelph, Zoning By-law) indicating that there are conformity issues that have yet to be resolved.

This designation allows detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings, as well as multi-unit residential buildings to a maximum height of three storeys and minimum-maximum density of 15-35 units/ha. However, up to six storeys and 100 units/ha are permitted on arterial and collector roads, such as York or Stevenson, if development accords with the Official Plan’s height and density bonusing provisions (9.3.2).

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18 The first of these two findings apply to all residential designations
19 small-scale commercial and personal service firms that serve the local neighborhood’s daily needs i.e. a convenience store; these are limited to a maximum gross floor area of 400sq.m
20
**Employment Designations**

Both *Industrial* and *Mixed Business* designations are part of the City’s employment designations to which general policies apply. The two designations are similar in that the *Mixed Business* designation permits the same uses as the *Industrial* designation, as well as several other uses to accommodate a broader range of economic activities that have emerged in the City’s established employment areas.

**Industrial**

The Official Plan outlines the City’s approach to providing attractive, high-functioning industrial areas, even sanctioning the purchase, development, and marketing of industrial lands (9.5.2.1.i). Besides mandating compatibility between *Industrial* and sensitive uses (9.5.2.4), several policies specifically relate to Guelph’s ‘more prominent’ industrial areas e.g. the Hanlon Creek Business Park. Study Area lands that are subject to an *Industrial* designation are permitted to have “commercially-oriented uses” through a zoning by-law amendment (9.5.2.9). Existing industries in non-designated areas are recognized as legal conforming but will be encouraged to relocate to designated areas over time (9.5.2.10). Permitted uses allow for a broad range of industries\(^{21}\) and complementary uses\(^{22}\) if the latter are compatible with and do not impact industrial uses (9.5.2.11).

**Mixed Business\(^{23}\)**

The *Mixed Business* designation is specific to the southern portion of the Study Area and reflects The Ward’s historical integration of business and residential uses. Stated objectives for the *Mixed Business* designation include providing opportunities for small scale entrepreneurial activities and uses supportive of businesses, employees, and residents in the surrounding area. These activities are also seen to promote reinvestment in and intensification of the Study Area (9.5.5.a-g).

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**Section 10.7:** development can exceed height and density limits if projects are consistent with the OP, compatible with surrounding uses, and provide community benefits i.e. affordable housing, transit infrastructure over and above base requirements

\(^{21}\) E.g. manufacturing, processing, warehousing, research, servicing, transportation, contracting

\(^{22}\) E.g. corporate offices, open space and recreation facilities, restaurants, financial institutions, childcare centers, public and institutional uses and utilities

\(^{23}\) Briefly outlined here, this designation subsequently receives a more focused review as per the City’s request

37
The *Mixed Business* designation allows the same uses as well as office, institutional, and convenience commercial (9.5.5.5) and a limited range of retail commercial uses (9.5.5.7, 8). However, the City exercises considerable discretion, requiring land use compatibility analyses when industrial and sensitive uses are proposed in proximity to one another (9.5.5.1) and the application of urban design and site planning (9.5.5.3 and 9.5.5.4). While this seems predisposed towards permitting sensitive land uses, said uses are not permitted in this designation if they detract from its primary business function (policy 9.5.5.9). This policy is potentially problematic where the proposed sensitive land uses are also employment uses. Although the *Mixed Business* designation is considered an employment designation in the Official Plan, such a designation is not an employment area as defined by the PPS and the Growth Plan because of the sensitive land uses that are permitted.

**Service Commercial**
The *Service Commercial* designation provides suitable locations for highway or service-oriented commercial activities (and complementary uses) that cannot readily locate Downtown or in a shopping Centre. These intensive uses are often incompatible with residential areas. The City limits permitted uses in *Service Commercial* areas to protect the viability of other commercial areas (9.4.5.2) and requires that adequate vehicle circulation infrastructure be provided (9.4.5.3). Retention of existing areas is promoted to avoid further designation of *Service Commercial* lands. Where adjacent to residential areas, mitigation is required (9.4.5.7).

**Neighborhood Commercial Centre**
The *Neighborhood Commercial Centre* designation allows “local convenience and neighborhood commercial uses” to service residential areas (9.4.4). This designation requires 500m of separation from other *Neighborhood Commercial Centre* designated lands to prevent strip commercial

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24 The parcels designated Mixed Business within the Study Area are also zoned for B.4 Industrial, one of the most permissive in terms of uses; for instance, outdoors storage is permitted.

25 Note that employment uses such as educational facilities, day cares, clinics, hospitals, medical offices, places of worship, correctional facilities and retirement/senior’s homes are considered non-residential sensitive uses.

26 They require large surface areas for parking or display; service high volumes of vehicle traffic; and/or require colocation with certain industries as their primary clientele

27 Two fall within the Study Area at Victoria and Elizabeth and Victoria and York; the latter of these is up for re-designation and will be discussed in more detail subsequently
development (policy 9.4.4.1) and has a limited permitted gross floor area (4,650 sq.m) except for a subset of ‘major’ centers with a 10,000 sq.m gross floor area allowance (9.4.4.3 and 9.4.4.4). Further, these centers are subject to ‘high’ urban design and accessibility standards. While emphasizing commercial uses, some office and residential is permitted if part of a mixed-use building (9.4.4.11). A six storey maximum height limit is flexible as per the Official Plan’s height and density bonusing provisions.

**Mixed Office / Commercial**
The Mixed Office/Commercial designation, featured along York Road’s frontage between Stevenson and Victoria, permits a range of “commercial (small scale) office, residential [and/] or mixed-use buildings” that:

- Achieve a compatible, yet diverse mix of uses;
- Transition effectively into residential areas; and
- Promote designated areas revitalization and intensification (9.4.6.a-d).

Uses that serve local needs are encouraged (9.4.6.2), as is the integration of residential units with said uses\(^{26}\) (9.4.6.3). Preserving existing streetscapes and compatibility with surrounding residential areas is emphasized, in part by limiting non-residential uses to a small and/or convenience-based scale (9.4.6.6), along with height and net density at a maximum of four storeys and 100 units/ha, respectively (9.4.6.7 and 9.4.6.8). In the Study Area, this designation is intended to provide a transitional buffer between employment and industrial uses that can also accommodate some modest intensification, however, because of the sensitive uses permitted in this designation, it is not a transition buffer for employment and industrial uses but is only a transition for residential areas.

**Significant Natural Areas and Natural Areas**
The Official Plan references to the broad policies applicable to the *Natural Heritage System* are found in this report at p.30.

### 4.2.2. Background Studies

The following outlines two recent reports conducted on the City’s behalf that pertain to employment i.e. industrial and commercial areas generally, and which also specifically reference the Study Area. Findings related to general trends in these sectors are outlined as part of this study’s contextual analyses (p.13). Here, each reports’ broad policy findings and

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\(^{26}\) so long as they are not front-ground floor
recommendations are summarized before their content related directly to the Study Area is explored in more depth.

4.2.2.1. Interim Employment Lands Update (2018)

Watson & Associates Ltd. conducted an Interim Employment Lands Update (the ‘Update’), to update the 2010 Employment Lands Strategy for the City. The Update was completed in 2018. This Update informs decision-making on the City’s employment area policies, in terms of the City’s projected employment growth to 2041. Based on forecasted employment land demand and identified vacant employment land supply\(^\text{29}\), Guelph is expected to have a surplus of 186ha of employment land by 2041, suggesting the City has a sufficient supply of vacant designated employment lands to accommodate forecasted demand.

\(\text{Figure 17 – Interim Employment Lands}\)
The Update specifies part of the Study Area for potential conversion to non-employment uses *(Figure 17)*. The following provides an overview of the Update’s findings:

*The site is occupied by several single- and multi-tenant manufacturing, utilities, construction, self-storage, and business and commercial service uses. It has a long history of heavy and general industrial use; like many older industrial areas, the site is undergoing economic transition. Many of its traditional heavy and general industrial sectors have declined while light industrial and commercial sectors geared towards knowledge, research and innovation, are a primary focus of employment land development in Guelph.*

*A “low-order” industrial area, many parcels are underutilized or vacant, subject to varying degrees of prohibitive contamination. Many active parcels host older obsolete buildings with generally low market rents and relatively higher vacancies, generally discouraging new investment. Compared to the rest of Guelph, this area has experienced limited development in recent decades and is not viewed as competitive. While low rents may impede investment, they also create affordability for industrial uses that are cost sensitive start-ups, or which have minimal industrial design requirements.*

This depiction, while not entirely inaccurate, casts a negative outlook on the area and overlooks locational attributes such as high vehicular access and the presence of the GJR. Further, what might appear to be underutilized
property are the large amounts of space actively being used for outdoor storage and processing by many of the area’s businesses. Further, land left under- or (un)utilized might be serving as a buffer for industries between their activities and nearby sensitive uses, might be land for future expansion and/or required to be vacant because of adjacency issues to natural features. The Update summarizes why the area is suitable for conversion:

- Site is located outside an established or proposed industrial/business park;
- Site is isolated from surrounding designated employment lands;
- Site is surrounded by non-employment land uses on at least three sides;
- Conversion would not create incompatible land uses;
- Conversion of site will not negatively affect employment lands in the areas;
- Site offers limited market choice for employment lands development due to size, configuration, physical conditions, or other reasons; and
- Site does not offer potential for future expansion on existing or neighboring employment lands.

Recommendation to convert these lands was withheld, however, because it was unclear (without further study) if said conversion would be consistent/supportive of and/or not contravene the City policy planning objectives (Watson & Associates, 2018 p.37-39).

These findings overgeneralize the site’s alleged weakness. For instance, there are employment uses adjoining the area across Victoria Road, such as PDI and the York Business Center. The finding that conversion would not lead to incompatibility is also questionable without the area having undergone a formal land use study. While conversion would not directly contravene the City’s policies, it does not adhere to the Province’s mandate:

*To provid[e] opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses (PPS, 2014 Section 1.3.1.b)*

The affordability and permissive use and development standards of the Study Area is a valuable asset for many firms in certain sectors of Guelph’s economy, especially those in their start-up phase; therefore, undermining
the area’s stability through the conversion to non-employment uses would limit the diversity of the City’s employment lands and destroy the niche the Study Area accommodates.

4.2.2.2. Commercial Policy Review

Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd., Tate Economic Research, and Brook McIlroy Inc were retained by the City to conduct a Commercial Policy Review of Guelph (the Review). This Review began in 2016 and is currently ongoing. To accommodate shifting trends in Guelph’s commercial economy, the following required assessment:

- Local commercial conditions both in the present, short and long term;
- Guelph’s ability to accommodate anticipated demand for commercial space; and
- How the City’s current policies support and/or impede this objective.

The review led to several recommendations to renew the City’s commercial policy objectives, including specific update of the floor space allowances for Community Mixed-Use Centers, the City’s higher-order commercial centers. It was proposed that:

the east side of Victoria Road at York Road be re-designated to Community Mixed-use Centre ... to expand the range of commercial opportunities available within the east end of the City (Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd. et al, 2019 p.21)

Proposed amendments to the OP’s commercial policies are set to go before City Council in the coming months especially the increasing prevalence of mixed-use development that introduces residential space in commercial areas, limiting overall potential floor space for retail and service activities

Updated to Commercial Mixed-Use Centers as part of the OP amendments borne of this review
While part of this area - referenced in Figure 18 - is designated Neighborhood Commercial Center, and hosts active uses of this type, portions of it are also designated Service Commercial and Industrial, hosting either lower-order retail functions or sitting vacant. While these features are outlined more thoroughly in the subsequent land-use analyses, Figure 19 compares Community Mixed-Use Centers and Neighborhood Commercial Centers to better understand what the proposed change will allow for on this site. The latter’s increased permissions are highlighted in red in Figure 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land-Use Designation</th>
<th>Neighborhood Commercial Centers</th>
<th>Community Mixed-Use Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permitted Uses</td>
<td>i) commercial, retail and service uses; ii) small-scale offices; iii) community services and facilities; iv) live/work; v) multiple unit residential within mixed-use buildings; and vi) urban squares.</td>
<td>i) commercial, retail and service uses; ii) live/work; iii) small-scale professional and medically related offices; iv) entertainment and recreational commercial uses; v) community services and facilities; vi) cultural, educational and institutional uses; vii) hotels; viii) multiple unit residential [as a stand-alone building]; and ix) urban squares and open space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permitted Gross Floor Area of commercial development</td>
<td>10,000 sq.m</td>
<td>16,300 sq.m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permitted Storeys</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proposed changes allow for a broader range of uses at a larger scale than at the site. Increasing access to commercial and service amenities as well as revitalizing the area are worthy policy objectives, however, as the land-use analysis details more closely (p.41), this site is also adjacent to the GJR and several industrial employment uses.

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33 City of Guelph Official Plan Sections 9.4.2 and 9.4.4;
The additional permissions highlighted in Figure 19 include several sensitive uses that would potentially impact or be impacted by these transportation and employment land uses and facilities, both of which are to be protected from such infringement by the PPS and the Growth Plan. While allowing for such uses does not mean they will develop, further consideration should be given to this potential compatibility issue as re-designation of this commercial node proceeds.

4.3. Review of Best Practices for Development Near Rail Infrastructure

The Study Area’s railways, particularly the GJR directly serving local employment uses, are a vital component of Guelph’s economy. However, these benefits require accommodation of its infrastructure and associated activities. Passing directly over roadways and through neighborhoods, railways interrupt traffic flows and produce noise, dust, and vibration; further, while rare, the potential for derailment and other accidents still increases risk for people and property. Railways can also be negatively impacted by adjacent activities, if these interrupt their ability to operate safely and efficiently. Planning for the mitigation of railway impacts is crucial for their viability.

In a compact urban areas like Guelph, the proximity of rail infrastructure to residences, employment uses, and transportation systems cannot be ignored by either existing or potential development; as cities “continue to urbanize, and ... place a greater emphasis on curbing urban sprawl [as per the PPS and Growth Plan], demand for new forms of infill development is growing, including on sites [close] to railways“ (FCM-RAC, 2013 p.1). The City wants to encourage appropriate infill development and revitalization of the Study Area; however, said development will be problematic both for potential users and for the railways if consideration is not given to ensuring their long-term viability and compatibility.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (‘FCM’) and the Railway Association of Canada (‘RAC’) partnered in 2013 to produce their “Guidelines for New Development in Proximity to Railway Operations”. The following outlines their recommendations to inform analyses of the Study Area’s opportunities and constraints.

**Building Setbacks**
Standard building setbacks for freight rail yards and principal main lines are 300m and 30m, respectively, measured from the rail property line to proposed buildings. Setbacks can be reduced by installing crash walls i.e. a 10m crash wall reduces the horizontal distance required to 20m. Safety berms and elevation differences, if the rail line is below the building, also influence setback distance. Appropriate uses in setbacks include:

- Public and private roads;
- Park land and other outdoor recreational space;
- Unenclosed gazebos;
- Garages and other parking structures; and
- Storage sheds (p.28).

**Noise Mitigation**

The recommended minimum distance to be considered by noise studies is 1,000 and 300 meters for freight rail yards and principal main lines, respectively. The Canadian Transportation Agency report, “Railway Noise Measurement and Reporting Methodology” (2011) is suggested to development proponents for further guidance. Although noise barriers reduce impacts to a degree, their effect is limited in nature and typically require walls that are quite high (5.5m above a principal main line assuming flat topography). Proposed building height and setback distances also mediate exposure to noise, as do building podiums (Figure 20). Effectively, considerable foresight in terms of site planning, building layout, installing mitigation infrastructure, and the use of (more expensive) building materials and features (wall and facade materials, windows, air conditioning) is required to mitigate long-term impacts of rail noise on the inhabitants of proposed developments.

**Vibration Mitigation**

Vibration is site-specific because it depends on “soil and subsurface conditions, the frequency [and speed] of trains, [and] the quantity and type

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34 These apply to the GJR railyard and both rail lines; the railyard is small relative to those considered by FCM-RAC as part of their guidelines means that a greater degree of discretion can be applied to the recommendations
of goods transport[ed]” (p.33); however, 75m is the recommended minimum distance for study of these impacts. Effective mitigation requires consideration of vibration at every stage of construction, from foundation-setting, layout of walls and their materials, and installing cushioning in rooms; these all contribute to cost increases for development projects.

**Safety Barriers**

Given potential train derailment, safety barriers are recommended as part of the overall setback interface. Earthen berms 2.5 meters above grade with side slopes no steeper than 2.5 to 1 are outlined for principal mainline. Where berms (and setbacks) are not technically or practically feasible, due to site conditions or constraints, then:

> a Development Viability Assessment should be undertaken by the proponent to evaluate the conditions specific to the site, determine its suitability for development, and suggest alternative safety measures (p.38).

The Study Area is an urban setting where the presence of existing structures, roadways, and protected vegetation is likely to require this type of assessment. Further, residential development next to railways must include a 1.83m chain link fence along the entire mutual property line at the owner’s expense. (p.41).

In addition to these requirements, railway operators should be included in the initial stages of development proposals to ensure projects (during construction and operation) do not interrupt the performance of rail infrastructure. Including rail stakeholders can also provide invaluable insight into how operations might impact potential projects and, more generally, ensures development and rail coexist to the benefit of all. Municipalities must engage both stakeholders and ensure their planning frameworks include provisions to maintain compatibility between rail and development.

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35 These count as 5m of the minimum setback, noting that berms end up being as many as 15m end to end once constructed
4.4. Focused Policy Review

The following looks at the OP’s Mixed Business designation and Special Study Area\(^36\) (200 Beverley Street) policies with respect to development of vacant lands near rail.

4.4.1. Mixed Business

The relatively unique conditions and needs of the older industrial area bound between Stevenson and Beverley Streets and York and Victoria Roads (in Zone 5) informs the Mixed Business designation, as the Study Area is the only part of Guelph designated as such. The designation also applies to a cluster of mostly vacant parcels to the northwest on the other side of the IMICo brownfield; this cluster is bound by the GJR railyard and line, a residential neighborhood, and Stevenson Street. The policy is meant to:

- Provide a flexible policy framework permitting a mix of business land uses (p.34);
- Promote reinvestment, intensification and efficient use of existing business lands;
- Provide opportunities for smaller-scale entrepreneurial enterprises and land use activities that support the needs of business, employees and local residents;
- Discourage land uses that detract from the designation’s planned functions;
- Promote business land uses that minimize incompatibility with adjacent areas; and
- Improve the area’s image via streetscape improvements and site plan approval\(^37\)

The “St. Patrick’s Ward Land Use Strategy” (2003) claims the area’s prior designation led to the “mixing of incompatible uses and the reintroduction of heavy industry” adjacent to residential neighborhoods (p.18). Recognizing that residential units would “not be allowed on ‘defined business lands’”, it was proposed that mixed-use residential should be “permitted along Stevenson Street to act as a buffer and transition[al]” use (p.19)\(^38\). The designation’s broad range of permitted uses is meant to

\(^{36}\) Former IMICo brownfield at 200 Beverley Street

\(^{37}\) (Official Plan 2018 Section 9.5.5).

\(^{38}\)
• Stimulate new investment in and redevelopment of this business campus; and
• Transition traditional industries to business uses more compatible with the area.

These goals are supported by provisions mandating the following for new development:

• Land use compatibility analyses;
• Streetscape improvements;
• Adherence to the City’s urban design guidelines
• Adherence to applicable off-street parking, circulation and loading requirements
• Discretionary imposition of site plan approval conditions requiring:
  ○ Landscaped buffers
  ○ Screening of outdoor storage, parking, loading and refuse areas; and
• Increased setbacks and buffering where businesses’ land uses are adjacent to existing residential or sensitive land uses (Official Plan, 2018 Section 9.5.5.1-4).

Further, retail commercial and institutional uses are subject to limited permission. The latter are considered on a case-by-case basis via Zoning By-law amendment and associated approval conditions to address land use compatibility, railway, and property clean-up requirements (9.5.5.7-8). New sensitive land uses will not be permitted if they detract from the designation’s business functions (9.5.5.9). These requirements are meant to assure property and business owners that the area will be maintained for certain employment uses without infringement by viability-threatening uses (City of Guelph, 2003 p.19).

At this time, the B.4 Industrial zone allowance for outdoor storage was deemed inappropriate for a central city context. While still permitted, outdoor storage is an asset for firms reliant on the combination of cheap ground rent to operate their businesses without the need to erect structures; thus, removing or augmenting outdoor storage should be considered relative

The Zoning Bylaw indicates this proposal was not adopted: no B.4 Industrial-zoned properties here permit residential units
to the impact on Guelph's capacity to provide suitable spaces for a diversity of business types and activities.

In terms of appropriate uses for vacant lands and development next to rail, the *Mixed Business* designation’s influence applies solely to the vacant parcels northwest of the IMICo brownfield. Surrounded both by sensitive uses and rail infrastructure, with road access limited to Stevenson (or none for the northernmost parcel), developing industrial employment uses here is unlikely to be feasible. The parcel adjacent to the railyard is proposed as an ideal site for a stormwater management pond (City of Guelph, 2017 p18), leaving the vacant parcel fronting Stevenson for consideration. While not permitted under its current *Mixed Business* designation, there may be an opportunity to encourage residential development on the parcel: the site has considerable buffering from the railyard because of natural vegetation and a barrier of shipping containers (two high) constructed by the GJR. It is distant enough from the adjacent rail line that recommended safety setbacks are a non-issue (Map 10, p.25). Noise and vibration from rail traffic and the impact of development on the GJR are primary considerations for such a project, as well as the parcel’s edges being within the regulatory floodplain’s *two zone fringe*.

### 4.4.2 Special Study Area (200 Beverley Street)

While lacking any uses, or structures, that would restrict redevelopment, the *Special Study Area* is subject to constraints based on a) the policies applied to it; and b) its location relative to other uses (and the policies which protect these).

The Official Plan requires the City to formally study the property’s future land use in a report that “address[es] brownfield status. . . and other relevant planning and technical considerations” (9.9.2.1). The property’s history of industrial uses, detailed in the land use analysis, makes ongoing remediation of its contamination subject to provincial oversight and approval conditions before development can proceed. The most recent assessment of its soil and water indicated contamination (Decommissioning Consulting Services, 2014). According to the Zoning By-law, this brownfield site is zoned B.4 Industrial, similar to the adjacent parcels. Of relatively minor concern, yet still to be considered, the western corner of the property sits in the regulatory

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39 the only vacant parcels in the mixed business campus to the southeast are designated *Mixed Office Commercial*.

40 a place of worship, a community center, and residential neighborhoods
floodplain’s *two zone fringe*. Since the assumption of the property 1997, the City has prepared a site management plan and other documents related to its remediation and redevelopment; further, the following site-specific Council resolutions have passed:

- Roughly 3-4 acres of the redeveloped site will be dedicated to park purposes;
- Identified uses for the site include any of:
  - Community Use as a Single Use;
  - Community, Medium Density Residential and Commercial Uses;
  - Railway Use; or
  - Community and Government Uses (City of Guelph, 2019).

Most recently (2017), the City signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Habitat for Humanity Wellington, Dufferin, Guelph and ARQi R&D Inc. to guide joint development of the site; while non-binding, this signals the City’s intentions for the Special Study Area, with the development goal being medium-density and/or mixed-use residential, or a community use (City of Guelph, 2019).

Adjacent to this brownfield property on all sides are land uses that present potential development constraints. To the east and south, a *Mixed Business* campus contains employment uses that make introducing sensitive uses on this site potentially problematic. Provincial policy is to protect the employment uses from such infringement. The most impactful constraint is the close proximity of the GJR rail line bounding the property’s western edge and - more so - the GJR rail yard located just to the northwest. In terms of land use compatibility, the potential for this infrastructure to impact proposed uses, and likewise for proposed uses to impact the GJR is considerable. As with the brownfield’s adjacent employment uses, this infrastructure has some provincial policy protection from infringement.

Considering all these factors, appropriate development of this brownfield site is challenging. First, ongoing contamination must be adequately addressed. While proceeding with residential (whether stand-alone or as part of a mixed-use development) is possible, a considerable portion of the northwestern edge of the property adjacent to the GJR would have to sit vacant as a setback and/or for the installation of other mitigation measures\(^\text{41}\). This would be the most suitable location for the property’s parkland dedication.

\(^{41}\) said interventions, discussed in Section 4.3 (p.41) may make such a project cost-prohibitive for potential investors / developers
Development would thus need to be located largely on the property’s frontage with Beverley Street. This, however, places potentially sensitive uses closer to the employment uses in the business campus across the street. Under the City’s *Mixed-Business* designation, this has and will continue to transition from traditional industries towards land uses a) more compatible with residential and/or b) less likely to host activities wherein nearby sensitive uses would negatively impact.

In light of constraints, the City may have to reconsider and/or be more flexible in its current approach to the area. Given access to road and rail, and its adjacency to existing employment uses, supporting employment uses on the property is not unreasonable; it would avoid introducing sensitive uses that impact the GJR, the mixed business campus and that are impacted by sensitive use close proximity. A mix of live/workspaces and employment uses compatible with these might be worth exploring, given these would adhere with the Study Area’s character and can still contribute to housing supply. These suggestions are exploratory in nature and provide an alternative direction for the site more compatible with existing conditions. The City’s intention to proceed with residential, mixed, and/or community uses on the property is not unfeasible, but needs to be considerate of the host of constraints present if negative impacts on the surrounding area and on the eventual inhabitants / users of such uses are to be mitigated to provide a reasonable residential environment.
5.0. LAND-USE ANALYSES

For the following land use analyses, the Study Area has been organized into a series of zones to allow for a more granular exploration of current uses and other considerations for future planning initiatives. The analyses draw from the study’s general overview of the Study Area and makes reference to City policies where appropriate. This analysis emphasizes qualitative description that will inform the subsequent analysis of the Study Area’s opportunities and constraints.

5.1. Organizing the Study Area into Zones

Data from several site visits and a preliminary scan of land-use and policy information led to a division of the Study Area into eight distinctive zones to organize and facilitate the following land use analyses (Figure 21). The zones are as follows:

- Six zones that are largely distinguished from each other by:
  - Roads and other harder edges;
  - Land use and general character of place;
- The Official Plan designated Special Study Area (200 Beverley Street)
- The recently proposed Commercial Mixed-Use Center
While the zones were treated as distinct for this analysis, the zones themselves are not discrete units. The overall ‘sense of place’ within the Study Area reflects the same character. Delineating the Zones were based on either geographical and infrastructure components, the dominant type(s) of uses, and distinctive features or landmarks (i.e. the York Business Centre in Zone 5, or the Special Study Area).

5.2. Zone-Based Analysis of the Study Area

Zone 1- Residential Neighborhood (Cityview)

Zone 1 is approximately 8.7ha in size and is located in the northernmost portion of the Study Area. It is bound to the west by the CN-GO rail line, York Road to the east, and Cityview Drive to the south. It is defined largely by a steep incline from the northwest which slopes towards York Road. The area is well-treed, screening the single-detached homes from traffic along York. Much of its northeastern portion falls within the City’s natural heritage system.

Zone 1 hosts several businesses, including Lewis Upholstery, JB Holmes Contracting, and Four-Star Motors. There are also 28 affordable housing units in the form of townhomes/condominiums provided by Habitat for Humanity adjacent to the CN-GO rail line. The northwestern portion of the area along
Sloan Avenue, White Street, and Cityview Drive consists of single detached residential homes. There is also a medium density residential complex of 38 townhouse/apartment units fronting onto York Road. There are currently two vacant lots (roughly 0.5 and 0.25 ha in size) within the zone; the reason they remain undeveloped is unclear, although a development further west on Cityview Drive hints at the likelihood that these parcels will be intensified in due time.

To the west of Zone 1, across the rail line, is an established residential neighborhood connected by a walking trail on Cityview Drive. The GID’s natural amenities (lake, trails) are located to the east. Residences, which transition into an industrial area, and highway commercial uses are to be found in Zones 2 and 4, respectively, to the south.

Zone 1 is currently accessible from York Road and through local roads. While two bus routes operate along York, there is little infrastructure for pedestrians. A segment of the City’s trail network also runs through the zone. The intersection of Cityview Drive and York Road will be closed by the road improvements along York Road. This closure will reroute local vehicular traffic through Beaumont Crescent to Elizabeth Street.

The following Official Plan land use designations are found in Zone 1:

- **Service Commercial**;
- **Low Density Residential**; and
- **Significant Natural Areas**
Zone 2 - Industrial Campus -North

Zone 2 is approximately 9.9 ha and is bounded by the CN-GO rail line to the north and Elizabeth Street and Beaumont Crescent to the south and west, respectively. A Significant Natural Area occupies the midwest portion of this zone; it hosts most of the zone’s vegetation and Hadati Creek. This put Zone 2’s western portion within the regulatory floodplain. Its slope inclines northwest gradually towards the CN-GO rail line.

Zone 2 shares the Study Area’s industrial campus with Zone 3 and 4. Zone 2 includes several successful businesses, such as Durose, a company that manufactures industrial parts and that has been located in the Study Area.
since 1944. Surveys of the property show that Durose has several loading-docks to ship and receive goods. Elizabeth Street accommodates the movement of commercial vehicles due to low volume of traffic and the ability to conduct wide turns on Elizabeth to access loading. Further, upkeep of the property suggest that Durose is a successful business operating in the Study Area. Hadati Creek runs directly through the property, yet Durose has designed its main entrance around it through attractive landscape design.

Zone 2 accesses both Victoria and York Roads via Elizabeth Street, which provides its varied industries transit options for customers, employees, and goods. The City has identified a potential future trail that would cross the railway north into the natural area and residential neighborhoods on the other side, although a structure is required.

The following Official Plan land use designations are found in Zone 2:

- **Industrial**;
- **Low Density Residential**; and
- **Significant Natural Area**.

Zone 2 industrial lands are zoned Industrial B.4 (City of Guelph, Zoning By-law), supporting outdoor storage e.g. a contractor’s yard. Several single-family homes designated Low-Density Residential contain home businesses and non-residential uses.
Zone 3, approximately 31.7ha in size, is bound to the north and south by the CN-GO and GJR rail lines, respectively, and is intersected by York and Victoria Roads. The land in this Zone is largely flat except for the sloping of its northern edge down from the CN-GO rail line into the back lots of several businesses along Elizabeth Street. The northeastern corner of the Zone falls within the regulatory floodplain. Other than a strip of Significant Natural Area
running along the CN-GO rail line at its northern edge, the majority of vegetation in Zone 5 consists of the trees located in the small residential neighborhood on Simcoe Street at the Zone’s southern corner; this portion of the zone is quite distinct from its surroundings in terms of character and land uses.

Zone 3, part of the industrial campus with Zones 2 and 4, hosts industrial activity on both sides of Victoria Road and Elizabeth Street, with some larger service commercial uses mixed in. East of Victoria, along Elizabeth, are large-parcel industrial uses such as a scrap metal recycler, a contractor's yard, and a statue manufacturer. Many of these uses have large amounts of outdoor storage and/or processing. Bernardi Precast, for example, not only uses outdoor space for storage, but also for marketing purposes (Figure 24-Zone 3, c). Products are put on display to showcase for those passing by. Bernardi Precast has been located in the Study Area since 1961 and have another location in Palm Springs, Florida to meet demand in U.S. markets. Also, Bernardi Precast is one of the Study Area businesses that rents part of its land to other businesses; in this case, a landscape company that also relies on outdoor storage.

Likewise, the scrap metal yard relies on outdoor storage for its business. (Figure 24-Zone 3, c) demonstrates that, while aerial footage suggests it is an intrusive use, it is visually compatible with the Study Area from street view. The company’s success has led to its expansion to neighboring lots where it intends to pursue direct access the GjR.

The portion of Zone 3 located to the west of Victoria Road hosts the GJR’s active rail yard in its southwestern corner along with PDI: a large manufacturing and shipping facility located next to the railyard with access to both Elizabeth Street and Victoria Road. PDI uses the GJR in this zone and at a facility located to the south of the Study Area to export its products out of the region.

North of the Zone from the CN-GO rail line lies a natural area with residential neighborhoods beyond. The eastern portion of the zone melds with the rest of the Study Area’s industrial campus, with York Road and the GID beyond that. The portion of Zone 3 west of Victoria Road is part of “The Ward” - a historic Guelph neighborhood that continues towards Downtown.

Zone 3 is well-serviced by arterial and collector roads. The intersection of Victoria Road and Elizabeth Street creates considerable traffic throughout Zone 3, making the area a major hub between different parts of the City.
Zone 3 consists of the following Official Plan land use designations:

- **Industrial**;
- **Service Commercial**;
- **Low Density Residential**; and
- **Significant Natural Areas**.

Zone 4 - Industrial Campus/ Intensification Corridor

*Figure 25 – Zone 4: a), b), c), and d)*
Zone 4 is approximately 9.3ha in size. The lands are largely developed, flat, and contain minimal vegetation throughout. Zone 4 is bound to the west by Beaumont Crescent and Elizabeth Street. To the east is York Road and the GID and to the south by vacant lands within the Commercial Mixed-Use Center. Hadati Creek runs through here along Elizabeth Street, putting much of the zone in the regulatory floodplain.

Zone 4 is comprised of the industrial campus which also occupies Zones 2 and 3. Zone 4 is dominated by the automotive sector as per the abundance of car dealerships and auto repair shops. There are also two eateries, a roofing company, a welding company, and a steel/brass foundry. The used automobile dealerships seem successful, being busy and well-kept properties. This shows the Study Area’s industrial campus remains an important incubator for automotive businesses and supporting firms i.e. repair shops.

Zone 4 is accessible through local roads. The intersections of Beaumont Crescent and York Road will be closed in the near future, altering traffic flow and accessibility by making Elizabeth Street the only road in and out of the area. York Road supports two public transit routes, one circulating directly to Downtown. Although these routes increase accessibility, York is not particularly pedestrian friendly as there are no sidewalks or bike lanes.

This zone consists of the following Official Plan land-use designations:

- Service Commercial;
- Industrial; and
- Significant Natural Areas.

The Service Commercial and Industrial designated properties on Industrial and Hayes Streets contain several homes, some of which appear to host business activities.

Zone 5- York Business Center/ Mixed-Campus Business
Zone 5, approximately 10.8 ha in size, is located in the southwest portion of the Study Area. In addition to being the eastern part of The Ward, the zone is bound by the Special Study Area brownfield and the GJR rail line to the north, and by York Road with a residential neighborhood to the south. The zone’s terrain is predominantly flat with subtle sloping towards the south-east. It is composed mostly of sidewalks, streets, and paved surfaces. There is minimal vegetation with trees, shrubs, and grasses found mostly on front lawns of homes, businesses, and along major arterials.

The zone is comprised of a mix of commercial, industrial, and service-based businesses, with the York Business Center occupying its northern portion, a small business complex in its westernmost portion across Stevenson, and a strip of office and commercial uses along York Road. Its center is a mixed business campus that covers several blocks. Its eastern and southern portions meld into residential neighborhoods. There are a few residences right in the zone’s center in the midst of several industrial uses. The range of businesses here is extensive: an indoor climbing gym, a fitness center, a skate-park, a brewery, a security company, landscapers, a flower shop, car dealership, offices and service providers. Some businesses appear much more invested in than others, and there are vacant parcels scattered throughout.
Zone 5 wraps around the Special Study Area (Zone 7) to the west, with the GJR rail line and yard laying just north beyond that, as well as a residential neighborhood on Simcoe Street (Zone 3). Across Victoria Road is the commercial center proposed for re-designation (Zone 8). The residential neighborhoods of The Ward lie to the south and east.

Zone 5’s northern portion borders the intersection of Victoria and York Roads, with the latter also passing through it to meet Stevenson Street in the south. Its bounding by these three arterial roads creates considerable traffic flow around its edges, with vehicles entering its local roads to access the mixed businesses here as both clients and employees. Transit to and from downtown runs along York and the zone’s arterial streets feature sidewalks on both sides of the street to facilitate pedestrian movement.

Zone 5 hosts the York Business Center, a former industrial site (formerly the Guelph Stove Company) that now supports an array of businesses, including a brewery, an accountant’s office, and indoor skatepark. The change in employment uses here reflect large scale changes in Guelph and its changing demographics. It is also of note that the York Business Centre has its main entrance and parking located on the York Road.

This Zone consists of the following Official Plan land-use designations:

- **Mixed Business**;
- **Low-Density Residential**; and
- **Mixed Office / Commercial**.

The **Mixed Business** designation forms the core of Zone 5’s designated land uses, with **Mixed Office / Commercial** meant to buffer these uses from surrounding neighborhoods.

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**Zone 6 - Residential Neighborhood**
Zone 6 is approximately 7.7 ha in size. This zone is bounded by the CN-GO, and GJR rail lines on both two sides, a railyard, and the Special Study Area (Zone 7) to the south, and residential uses to the west, across from Stevenson Street. Zone 6 is predominantly flat, with the zone southeastern edges, vacant, covered in dense vegetation that screens and buffers some impact of the rail lines and the railyard. The regulatory floodplain extends into the zone’s western edge.

Although largely residential, there are home businesses and non-residential uses interspersed throughout the zone. This includes two catering services, a high-end grocery store, a dance studio, a place of worship, and a small community center. The vacant parcels here help buffer impacts from the GJR and the City proposes siting a stormwater management pond on the northern parcel bordering the railyard. The City also considers the cluster of residences here to be part of The Ward - North, one of the candidate cultural heritage landscapes identified as part of its Cultural Heritage Action Plan (2019, currently in draft form).

The local streets here connect to two main arterials (Elizabeth and Stevenson) providing for good circulation. Non-vehicular traffic is supported by a bus route to and from Downtown and sidewalks along most roads.

This zone consists of the following Official Plan land-use designations:
Low-Density Residential; Mixed Business; and Neighborhood Commercial Center

The vacant parcels are currently designated Mixed Business, flexible in its permission of employment uses; the “St. Patrick’s Ward Land Use Strategy” (2003) suggests permitting residential on Stevenson to buffer employment uses from surrounding neighborhoods.

Zone 7 - Special Study Area

Zone 7 is an approximately 5.2 ha empty brownfield in the Study Area’s southern portion. It is bounded by Stevenson and Beverley Streets to the south and east, with the GJR rail line bounding its northwestern edge. The site is currently vacant of any built facilities or active infrastructure. Fencing along its edges combined with three/shrub vegetation, mostly along its outer edges, screen the remains of its former uses (Figure 28- Zone 7 a). It is paved over in some areas, although vegetation has grown through here (Figure 28- Zone 7 b). The western corner of the property is in the regulatory floodplain.

Designated a Special Study Area in the City’s Official Plan, this property (200 Beverley Street) was formerly used for various industrial and waste storage
purposes until the City assumed ownership in 1997. The property has since undergone considerable remediation of contamination and the City has found several partners with whom to pursue its redevelopment. Ideal development outcomes include affordable housing and/or a community center (City of Guelph, 2019). Since removal of buildings, debris/waste, and contaminated soils and installation of groundwater testing wells occurred, work here has mostly been policy-based. The City has highlighted potential uses for the site as:

- residential
- commercial
- community uses

Two of the four partners involved in the site’s MOU are not-for-profit housing providers, indicating development of the site is being actively pushed towards affordable housing alongside park and (potentially) commercial and community uses.

*Figure 28 - Zone 7 c*) cites a preliminary site plan envisioned in the City’s Six Categories of Infrastructure Priorities document (2017). However, the most recent Phase II Environmental Assessment conducted on the site in 2014\(^{42}\) highlights the need for continued remediation of ongoing soil and water contamination at the site.

To the north of the site are several vacant parcels with residential beyond further north (Zone 6) and the GJR’s railyard (Zone 3); the GJR rail line separates the site from both uses. To the east is the

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\(^{42}\) By Decommissioning Consulting Services
York Business Center and to the south and west, the mix of businesses that make up Zone 5’s business campus. Beyond these uses are established residential neighborhoods. The zone is accessible from Stevenson and Beverley Streets, with the latter connecting to the grid of local streets that service the businesses in Zone 5.

As a Special Study Area, Zone 7 is subject to several special policy prescriptions and requirements outlined previously in the policy review section (p.58).

**Zone 8 - Commercial Mixed-Use Center**

Zone 8 covers approximately 6.9 ha on the north and east corners where York and Victoria Roads intersect. The zone’s southern edge is bounded by Victoria Road and York Road and the GJR rail line. This zone area is flat and developed; except for a vacant, vegetated parcel at its very north it is largely devoid of trees and shrubs.

Zone 8 largely consists of retail / service functions and their parking lots. Moreover, a mid-sized commercial center occupies the zone’s southeastern portion and is its most prominent use. Moving west is a small strip of vacant property on the west side of York and three lower-order retail establishments across the street. North, across the GJR tracks that divide the zone, is a vacant parcel with a large communications tower (*Figure 29- Zone 8 a*). While not technically ‘in’ the zone, a new retail storefront is currently under construction immediately to the east (*Figure 29- Zone 8 b*).

The zone is bordered to the north by industrial and commercial uses in Zones 3 and 4, respectively. Across Victoria Road, an established residential neighborhood shifts abruptly into the York Business Center. Bordering the zone’s eastern edge is PDI, an industrial manufacturer. Beyond this to the
northeast are natural areas that make up the northern portion of the GID.

Zone 8’s re-designation to a Commercial Mixed-Use Center is recommended as part of the City’s recent Commercial Policy Review. This intended to expand upon commercial opportunities available in Guelph’s east end by increasing:

- The range of permitted uses;
- The maximum permitted gross floor area permitted; and
- The maximum height from (from six to ten storeys)

This zone consists of the following Official Plan land-use designations:

- Neighborhood Commercial Center;
- Service Commercial; and
- Industrial.

5.3. Community Infrastructure and Resource Inventory

Figure 30 displays different community services at set ranges from the center of the Study Area of 0.5, 1, and 2 kilometers including:
The Study Area lacks substantial community infrastructure. There are numerous soft services (e.g. schools and stores) within relatively close proximity of the Study Area if one travels by vehicle. Many of these services are closer to Guelph’s Downtown, roughly 1.5km away along York or Elizabeth.

The Study Area contains several places of worship in close proximity, including a Gurdwara in Zone 6. The York Business Center contains several fitness uses, including standard gyms and less conventional athletic facilities (an indoor climbing gym, a dance studio, and an indoor skate park) (Figure 31). However, grocery stores and other daily needs providers in and near the Study Area are relatively scarce.

The physical infrastructure here, i.e. the Study Area’s roads, rail access and servicing, is sufficient to support its existing uses. However, both York Road and York Sewer Trunk are undergoing expansion to facilitate further development both here and in surrounding areas such as the GID (City of Guelph, 2019).

While few natural amenities exist in the Study Area, a natural area - including a lake and trails - lies immediately to the east across York Road, providing a great view for residents of the Cityview neighborhood (Zone 1). Further, it attracts residents of surrounding areas seeking its environmental quality. The major natural feature in the Study Area is Hadati Creek, which has been left largely naturalized as opposed to being developed as a community amenity e.g. part of the trail network.
5.4. Conclusions

Dividing the Study Area into zones allows for a more thorough understanding of what binds or separates its different functional areas. The above analyses show how different landscapes in the Study Area have been shaped by geographic circumstances, proximity to major transit ways, policy, and historical functions. The findings from this exercise have led to the delineation of two distinct neighborhoods within the Study Area: The Ward and The Annex.

- The Ward consists of Zones 3 (part of), 5, 6, and 7
  - Bounded by Stevenson Street, Elizabeth Street, and Victoria Road.
- The Annex consists of Zones 1, 2, 3 (part of), 4, and 8
  - Bounded by York Road, Victoria Road, and CN rail line.

Analyses of each zone show that the proposed road improvements along York Road will impact each neighborhood differently. While The Annex can physically support this infrastructure improvement, The Ward is more limited by the tight confines of existing businesses and homes fronting the street. This is because:

- There are residential homes on the south side of York Road which limit substantial physical changes to these lots; and
- There is a business campus north of York Road that similarly limits in how much of the road widening these lots can accommodate. These firms rely on access to and from York Road for the movement of goods and circulation of customers and employees.

The physical differences of York Road in The Ward versus The Annex do not suggest that York Road cannot be improved; they simply illustrate that the Study Area’s zones have different functions and characteristics that define them into two distinguishable neighborhoods and each neighborhood has a different capacity to accommodate change.

A major difference defining The Annex is its prevalence of natural features compared to The Ward:

- The Annex has an elevated topography;
- The Annex supports Hadati Creek, a fish habitat, surrounded by Significant Valleyland (City of Guelph, 2018); and
The Annex lies in the regulatory floodplain because of the creek’s presence and its sloping shifting topography.

In contrast,

- The Ward is mostly flat; and
- The Ward supports little vegetation other than trees on residential lots and overgrowth in the former IMICo brownfield and vacant parcels west of GJR’s railyard (Zone 6).

The natural systems context, especially in The Annex, has led to divergence in their development, with many of the industrial uses surrounding Hadati Creek typically leaving significant portions of their properties underutilized to buffer the creek from their activities.

The Study Area has a legacy of industrial uses. However, the industrial campus of Zones 2, 3, and 4 demonstrate characteristics binding them together as a unique industrial campus. This industrial campus relies on open storage zoning (B.4 Industrial; City of Guelph, Zoning By-law). Said zoning has encouraged:

- Several automotive businesses;
  - repair and parts shops
  - dealerships
- Specialized businesses such as;
  - a scapyard
  - a statue manufacturer
- Landscapers and contractors.

Another defining feature of this industrial campus is shared access to Elizabeth Street which offers low-volume traffic, and which allows better access for large commercial and freight vehicles serving these firms. This, coupled with the nature of the businesses resulting from open storage zoning permissions, has consolidated Zones 2, 3, and 4 into a functional industrial campus which has clear separations from The Ward activities.

The distinct character of The Ward is largely due to its history, which plays two important roles:
The Ward’s history has cultural value to the City; a history that is largely defined by the mixing of residential and industrial space thus shaping the community’s functions. We see these emerge in Zone 5 and Zone 6 and the surrounding areas; and

Much of the built form and infrastructure in The Ward was established over a century ago. This is true of residential space, the railyard, and York Business Centre.

The railyard is a key piece of infrastructure and is fixed in place and therefore not subject to changing forces in the same way that Elizabeth Street has over time. While it marks a shared interest with the lands east of Victoria since the GJR passes through, the activity is distinct as it acts a major node for high-level logistics and freight.

Also, within the Ward is the site that used to be the Guelph Stove Company. This site is now the York Business Centre and supports a variety of different businesses, many of which are not industrially based. Further, the development of this business campus has been shaped by its proximity to Downtown which has ‘spilled-over’ into The Ward.

Historical images found in Section 2 show that by the late 1940s, industrial activity in The Ward was well underway (figure.4), whereas those lands in The Annex had yet to be developed (figure.5). Such speaks to the defining characteristics between the two and how they deserve clear separation for future planning.

6.0. OPPORTUNITY AND CONSTRAINT ANALYSES

The following draw from this study’s historical, contextual, policy, and land-use findings to analyze the Study Area’s opportunities and constraints on future development.

**Industrial and Commercial Incubator**

Review of the Study Area indicates several business campuses in the Study Area could be and are filling an ‘incubator’ role for employment uses. Supported and protected, these clusters can continue to fulfill this role in Guelph’s economy. This incubation function results from several converging factors:

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At least one business in Zone 3 (the scrapyard) wants to access the GJR better movement of goods and materials.
● Access to road, rail and location at the hub of major arterials;
● Industrial and Mixed Business designations that facilitate some unusual uses, i.e. commercial allowances in industrial areas;
● Residential designations permitting home businesses and non-residential uses;
● Zoning permissive of a range of business functions, i.e. one of the few areas in Guelph to permit outdoor storage and processing;
● A range of parcel sizes;
● Low rents relative to other industrial and commercial areas in the City; and
● Proximity to other businesses in related/supportive sectors, i.e. vehicle sales near mechanics.

These features combined are quite unique to Zones 2, 3, 4, and 5 relative to the rest of Guelph. This makes the Study Area valuable for start-up, small, home-based, and/or unconventional businesses that would have difficulty locating elsewhere due to cost or compatibility constraints. These features deserve support and protection. The former includes continued improvements to infrastructure and servicing throughout the area, as well as ‘soft’ interventions such as fiscal incentives or encouraging collaboration between Study Area property owners and businesses. Increasing access to the GJR would promote a unique locational advantage the City can encourage (discussed below).

The York Business Center is one such business incubator. Located in the former site of the Guelph Stove Company (Zone 5), York Business Center rents commercial space, office space, and studio space to a range of firms. As a former manufacturing facility, York Business Center demonstrates how adaptive reuse can support changing market demands in Guelph. The availability of different uses supports some the outgrowth of activity from Downtown, including fitness centers, restaurants, and leisure activities. Further, owners of the Royal City Brewery preferred their location here because:

● The industrial space provides the infrastructure to produce their product;
● They can ship their product with an available loading dock; and
● They can host clientele who have space to park their vehicles.

This illustrates how the York Business Center and the Study Area generally have and can continue to adapt to external market changes using existing resources.

Protecting employment areas and their supporting infrastructures is consistent with the PPS. Primary to protection is avoiding the introduction of sensitive uses not only within employment areas, but as of the Growth Plan’s update in 2019, avoiding their introduction in lands adjacent. Buffering the Study Area’s employment uses and surrounding residential neighborhoods is critical for compatibility. However, given the presence of residential units in the vicinity of active industrial uses throughout parts of the Study Area, it would appear that further consideration to strengthen the employment areas in the Study Area may appropriate. Even current land use designations and proposed developments seem to overlook the need for meaningful buffers between employment and sensitive uses; for instance, the Mixed Office / Commercial land use designation permits sensitive land uses next employment uses, the former indicating mixed use residential would be an ideal transition between Zone 5’s Mixed Business designation and surrounding neighborhoods. This proposed buffer, however, would effectively sterilize the employment area in proximity by causing potential non-compliance issues for current business owners, making mitigation cost prohibitive or not feasible, deterring potential business investment and potentially driving away new business users. A review of this policy incompatibility is worth the City’s consideration.

Some portions of the Study Area are limited in their incubator function given their presence on / proximity to natural features and/or the regulatory floodplain; this largely applies to The Annex, leaving the York Business Center and the adjacent mixed business campus (Zone 5) free of said limits. Potential constraints imposed on this area, however, include close proximity of some sensitive uses and impacts related to the GJR rail line (discussed in more detail subsequently).

**Accessibility and Road Improvements**

The Study Area has a good road network. Easy circulation of vehicular traffic and goods makes it ideal for many current and potential employment uses. Planned road improvements will not only improve the efficiency and safety of vehicular flow but make public transit and active transportation more viable for moving people to and from Downtown, the City’s eastern limits, and
points in-between. However, these upgrades could also potentially constrain existing properties and their users.

Widening York Road will remove 2-5m of frontage from existing commercial uses in Zones 1 and 4 (Section 4.2.1, Figure 16), which impacts their viability: they depend on lot size for parking, internal circulation, and goods display. Further, closing Beaumont Crescent at York Road will reduce access to the area. The Study Area’s industrial campus (Zones 2, 3, and 4) relies heavily on the arterial and collector roads, as is the York Business Center in Zone 5 heavily reliant York Road. Increasing overall traffic flow and ‘completing’ these streets for non-vehicle users could potentially impact the safe and timely movement of goods and people through the Study Area. Studies show that policies directed at creating better active transportation networks, or ‘complete streets’, tend to overlook the activity of commercial vehicles. This is true of large commercial vehicles operating in industrial zones as it is with smaller commercial vehicles that support local retail and commercial establishments (Ferguson et al., 2015).

Consideration should be taken to mitigate these impacts on the Study Area’s employment uses, transportation corridors, and major goods movement facilities. While changes to York Road will support the City’s broader planning objectives, overlooking the Study Area’s production and goods movement functions may jeopardize the role these play in Guelph’s economy. Given, the protectionist Provincial policies for transportation corridors/goods movement facilities/major facilities, implementation of road improvements should carefully consider local impacts on the Study Area before proceeding.

Introduction of Mixed-Use / Residential - Constraints
Designating York Road as an Intensification Corridor and promoting residential development of the Special Study Area both have considerable negative ramifications. These include the following:

- Operation of the GJR rail line and yard will have noise, vibration and particulate impacts on any housing units and sensitive uses, leading to increased likelihood of complaints and adverse effect.
- While the PPS and Growth Plan require sensitive land uses, employment uses, and transportation infrastructure be planned to avoid adverse effects on all three, the City’s conversion of York to an intensification corridor and proposals for the Special Study Area to

although the York-Elizabeth intersection will remain open
permit residential and other sensitive uses indicates the City views these sensitive uses to be feasible and any negative impacts mitigatable.

- The introduction of residential and sensitive uses in proximity to employment designated lands will sterilize the employment lands for their intended industrial purpose.
- The residential and sensitive use permissions may cause existing industries in proximity to have ECA compliance approval issues and increase the likelihood of complaint; and
- For reasons of compatibility, the residential developments may require at-receptor mitigation which adds to the cost of the housing and constrains the design of the housing. This will potentially result in costly affordable housing and a less than ideal residential environment.

York Road is ideal for intensification because of its function, and access to transit service. However, most parcels on the north side of the road where this would occur are designated for and host, active service commercial uses and back directly onto active industrial uses. The intensification of York requires the service commercial to be re-designated, which may be in contradiction of Official Plan policy\textsuperscript{45}. As for the active industrial uses, Provincial policy mandates that “\textit{sensitive land uses ... avoid, minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts on industrial, manufacturing or other uses that are particularly vulnerable to encroachment}” (Growth Plan, Section 2.2.5.8). Mixed-use\textsuperscript{46} and/or residential uses are not ideal here; however, a modified interpretation of ‘intensification corridor’ could still be applied: eschewing sensitive uses to focus on intensifying office and commercial uses would increase employment densities and support transit service along York Road with uses that are more compatible with industrial activities.

The Special Study Area is in early stages of redevelopment for some mix of residential, commercial, and/or community uses. However, employment uses to the south and the GJR rail line and yard to the immediate north are supported by the PPS and the Growth Plan from encroachment by sensitive uses. While both the \textit{Special Study Area} and the GJR are City-owned, meaning that there is potentially more flexibility to mitigate, mitigation requirements might limit development feasibility. Given clear provincial

\textsuperscript{45} further supported by the Commercial Policy Review predicting an inadequate supply of commercial properties by 2041
\textsuperscript{46} Without conducting a market analysis, it remains unclear whether mixed-use would even be viable in this location, given the relative lack of population density to support ground floor retail or services
policy direction, further consideration of site-specific requirements and long-term impacts on Study Area employment uses are needed.47

**Introduction of Mixed-Use / Residential - Opportunities**

While limited by these constraints, the Study Area is not without opportunity to introduce residential units, either alone or as part of a mixed-use development. While the whole of York Road is an *Intensification Corridor*, much of it is too close to industry to condone sensitive uses without impacting both uses. However, the two vacant lots in Zone 1 (*Figure 32*) are suitably distant from active industrial and may have some potential for residential development.

Since residentially-zoned parcels with frontage on major arterials are allowed increased heights and density,48 potential opportunity exists along Stevenson Street, at the Study Area’s southwestern edge in Zones 5 and 6 for intensification. As alluded to in Section 4.4.1 of this study (p.43), residential infill could be suitable for one of the vacant parcels currently designated Mixed Business in Zone 6. The York *Intensification Corridor*, where this...
arterial intersects Stevenson Street (Zone 5), is also subject to this intensification policy, although existing structures and the relative proximity to employment uses here should constrain this. If the City intends to move this area away from traditional industry\textsuperscript{49}, permitting uses associated with the Mixed Office / Commercial designation - minus residential units - is a more appropriate interim transition and buffer between uses while leaving the option open to introduce residential in the future.

\textbf{The Guelph Junction Railway}

The GJR provides the City and the Study Area with a crucial goods movement service and has done so since before the turn of the 20th Century (Canada Rail, 2019). Its presence has very much defined the Study Area’s development trajectory and its current land uses. Some firms, such as PDI - one of the Study Area’s major employers - located here precisely for open access to rail at two sites (Zone 3 and outside of Zone 8). In turn, PDI supports other local businesses. The role played by rail in Guelph shows why Provincial planning policy emphasizes protecting the integrity of goods movement facilities and transportation corridors from various infringing land uses.

The Study Area is also considerably impacted by the rail infrastructure cutting through it in several places, including across its major arterials: the rail line serves as the functional edge of several zones developed in this study. The noise, dust and vibration of its activities continually impact existing properties and have likely deterred certain uses from locating here. Further, business activities and potential development must consider its impacts on the railway’s ability to function; the GJR is here both as a major goods movement facility (rail yard) and a transportation corridor (rail line) protected by Provincial planning policies. Noise and vibration studies, as well as consulting the GJR, are necessary components of a compatibility study and land-use planning in Zones 3, 5, 6, 8, and the rail’s close proximity constrains further development of the Special Study Area (Zone 7).

Given that the GJR is an active railway that is growing in capacity\textsuperscript{50} and is not an asset that can be moved or replaced, the question is: how to best mitigate the development constraints while cultivating further opportunities for the GJR to support the Study Area and Guelph more broadly. The City is in

\textsuperscript{49} As per its “St. Patrick’s Ward Land Use Strategy” (2003)

\textsuperscript{50} As per the Guelph Junction Railway Business Plan 2015-2017 and discussion with the GJR’s General Manager

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a unique position, as it owns the railway and can oversee close coordination of planning for both the GJR and development taking place in its vicinity. The FCM-RAC guidelines summarized earlier (p.69) inform the GJR’s management team, who take a proactive role in projects occurring along the length of the line and near its several shunting yards.

A primary means of increasing the railway’s benefits for the local economy is to open up locations where potential users can access it. Two opportunities for this within the Study Area are the former IMICo brownfield (Zone 7) and the vacant parcel in the northern portion of the proposed Commercial Mixed-Use Center (Zone 8). Both are currently empty, are adjacent to the GJR, have direct access to one if not two arterial roads, and are in close proximity to areas designated Industrial and Mixed Business. Zone 7, tightly constrained by rail and employment uses, might best be adapted to support these uses with rail access rather than infringe on them with the sensitive uses currently proposed (City of Guelph, 2019). Interestingly, conversations with the City indicate that Benmet Steel, the metal recycling firm in Zone 3, is actively pursuing access to the vacant parcel in Zone 8 to ship metals and other recycled goods out of the Study Area. Whether or not the firm is successful - given their ‘plan’ contradicts the City’s intended re-designation of the property for commercial uses - this indicates an active interest by Guelph’s industrial firms to access the GJR, which for the Study Area is a relatively unique locational asset to be protected and further promoted.

**Natural Areas**

Given the constraining role played by the Natural Heritage System and the regulatory floodplain are discussed extensively in previous sections, a potential ‘natural area’ opportunity is discussed here. The Study Area’s primary natural feature is Hadati Creek and the surrounding Significant Valleyland in the northern part of the Study Area’s industrial campus (Zone 2) (Figure 33); currently constraining surrounding uses via natural area adjacent lands policies (Section 4), if developed although an arm’s-length relation exists between the two for transparency’s sake.

Stevenson Street for the brownfield and York and Victoria Roads for the vacant parcel in zone.
to serve as a link in the City’s trail network (as proposed in the OP, Schedule 6), it could be a natural amenity for the Study Area that increases overall pedestrian accessibility, while not unduly constraining surrounding uses.

Figure 33 – Zone 2: Aerial
7.0. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Delineating the Study Area’s Employment Lands

As per the City’s request, BLSB proposes a delineation of the Study Area’s employment lands. Analysis and accompanying recommendations support the delineation. The latter are informed by considerations unique to the Study Area and are meant to both:

- Protect its unique attributes; and
- Accommodate emerging and expected changes

The delineation, constrained by the same limitations applicable to the rest of the Study Area, draws on the synthesized findings of land-use, contextual, and policy analyses. Map 12a depicts properties within the Study Area that fall fully or partially\(^{53}\) in the OP’s employment designations of Industrial (blue) and Mixed Business (red). Purple properties are those designated otherwise (either Service Commercial or Low Density Residential), but that are zoned for industrial uses (City of Guelph, Zoning By-law)\(^{54}\).

\(^{53}\) The OP’s designation map provides a general depiction: some properties are ‘half’ employment designated i.e. several parcels along York are half Mixed Business, with their street frontage designated Mixed Office / Commercial

\(^{54}\) Acknowledging that the employment designated properties shown on the map are accordingly zoned for industrial uses
These are typically at the edges of OP-designated property clusters, demonstrating areas of transition between employment and other uses. The two clusters reflect the Study Area’s two main employment areas: the industrial campus in Zones 2, 3, and 4 - comprised of larger lots and typically heavier industrial uses - and the York Business Center and its associated campus (Zone 5), comprised of smaller parcels, but a larger, more eclectic range of employment uses.

Map 12b takes these employment designated parcels and distinguishes them into ‘core’ and ‘transitional’ employment uses. Further illustrated in the map are certain physical and contextual factors acting as a constraint on said properties:

- Established residential neighborhoods (in green) as a sensitive use;
- The adjacent land range of Fish Habitats in and near the Study Area (in pink);
- The approximate influence of the York Intensification Corridor (in red outline).

Defining ‘core’ and ‘transitional’ is not based on a property’s specific use(s) so much as observations from field work and spatial analysis that incorporate the above factors. ‘Core’ properties are those generally suitable for employment uses because they:

- Are mainly active in their uses i.e. not vacant;
- Are adjacent to other active properties and/or compatible uses;
- Are subject to limited constraint because:
  - uses are sufficiently distanced and/or buffered from sensitive uses; and/or
  - uses are long-established and constraints are well-accommodated; and
- Are unlikely to transition in use in the near future.

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55 For reference of specific uses, please refer to the relevant zone descriptions in Section 5 of this report.

82 Given the 120m extent of this natural feature, its prevalence throughout the Study Area, its colocation with the regulatory floodplain, and that it more regulated than Significant Valleyland, Fish Habitat is a proxy for the City’s Natural Heritage System.
‘Transitional’ properties are those less suitable for industrial employment uses; typically, they are:

- Are less active in their uses i.e. vacant or underutilized\(^{57}\);
- Are adjacent to other less-active uses and/or incompatible uses;
- Are subject to constraint because uses are close to and/or poorly buffered from sensitive uses;
- Constraints are not well-accommodated; and
- Are likely to transition in use in the near future.

Reference to *Map 12b* indicates clusters of ‘transitional’ properties at the edge of the larger ‘core’ employment areas, in closer contact with non-employment uses. Some discussion of each provides context, beginning at the east of the map and moving west.

- This pocket at the corner of the Durose Manufacturing property contains two home businesses and a gravel lot. Its parcels are small,
and it is close to the Cityview neighborhood and York Road, which is planned for intensification.

- This large cluster of properties, part of the Study Area’s industrial campus, is its weakest segment. It has a larger share of vacant and underutilized parcels than the rest of the campus; its lots are small, limiting potential use, and have relatively poor access\(^{58}\); it has several residences that are sensitive uses and limit economic potential; and it is in the Fish Habitat adjacent lands to Hadati Creek which runs through it along Elizabeth. These factors have deterred investment, creating opportunity for conversion to higher value uses.

- The western portion of the mixed business campus (Zone 5) is directly adjacent to existing residential, limiting the feasibility of industry uses and the City wants a more suitable transition between the residences and the business campus internal core. Proximity to Stevenson and York, the latter to be intensified indicates higher-value uses will emerge. Briefly, *Mixed Office / Commercial* use might be a buffer use to encourage intensification yet maintain local character.

- Discussed previously (p.45), these parcels are vacant and adjacent to sensitive uses. Since no uses are established, existing OP compatibility policies would make development of many employment uses difficult here.

Unlike these ‘transitional’ clusters, the ‘core’ properties feature active firms (such as PDI, Durose, Bernardi’s Precast, Benmet Steel, and the York Business Center) surrounded by complementary uses. As well-established uses, they already mitigate the impact of constraints such as Hadati Creek and the proximity of residential, e.g. the established Simcoe Street neighborhood between PDI and the York Business Center.

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\(^{58}\) The map fails to indicate that Hayes Street (shaped like an inverted ‘L’) is actually blocked from joining the intersection with Elizabeth Street, leaving it with a single point of access at York Road
Map 12c proposes delineation of the Study Area’s employment lands (outlined in red). The transitional properties are excluded while Service Commercial designated parcels at the York-Victoria intersection in the industrial campus (Zone 3) are included.

- While the ‘transitional’ properties can still host employment uses, they do not warrant employment area protection and better serve Guelph as uses that buffer the Study Area’s employment uses from their surroundings. Development of the ‘transitional’ properties will require compatibility/mitigation studies to be undertaken to ensure that neither the residential neighborhoods or the employment areas and major facilities in proximity will be impacted.

- Including the Service Commercial properties maintains employment area continuity and limits uses that infringe on neighboring industries.

Unique aspects of the Study Area’s employment uses warrant some consideration:
While seemingly underutilized, these business activities require space for storage, vehicle circulation, and buffering / accommodation of existing constraints;

- this should be factored into the employment density targets now required of the Growth Plan (Section 4.1.2).

Outdoor storage should gradually transition from the *Mixed Business* designated area (zone 5) to the industrial campus (zones 2 and 3), where it is better-suited.

While an asset to some firms, outdoor storage can be a primary cause of incompatibility with surrounding areas; this business campus (close as it is to York) is more likely to experience land use change. Land use compatibility will have to be managed.

Proposals outlined in this study, i.e. intensification of York Road, must minimally impact these employment uses and supporting infrastructure.

Consideration must be given to introducing proper buffer uses between the delineated ‘core’ employment area and its surroundings.

### 7.2. Establishing a Name and Identity for the Study Area

The Study Area is unified by a drawn boundary and several commonalities, such as:

- A contemporary emphasis on vehicle circulation;
- A history of eclectic industrial uses; and
- A common overarching development history influenced by railways.

However, the portion of the Study Area that is part of The Ward has a strong existing identity. That residents and consumers who interact with this neighborhood refer to it fondly as ‘The Ward’ demonstrates it is a distinct community in Guelph. Meanwhile, the portion of the Study Area east of Victoria Road currently has no identifiable name or community recognition.

This report recommends that the City consider the Study Area as divisible into two distinct areas for purposes of certain planning and place-making initiatives. BLSB clearly defines the western portion of the Study Area as The Ward, and the eastern portion as The Annex.
The Annex has received its name after a review of the Study Area’s history and the character of its current land uses. Historical sources show that Victoria Road used to mark the eastern boundary of the City of Guelph. This boundary was extended, however, with the annexation of land from the Township of Guelph in 1952, and then again in 1966 (where its current border lies). The annexation of these lands is important because it coincides with development in the Study Area. For example, the annexation that occurred in 1966 follows the 1964 Official Plan developed by the City which focused on residential and industrial growth. As such, the industrial expansion to occur in the potion of the Study Area being referred to as The Annex, coincides with urban development occurring in the mid-1960s.

The purpose of branding The Annex is first and foremost to recognize the success of economic activity occurring in this part of the Study Area. The name speaks to the history and how changing circumstances have shaped the Study Area. The purpose of separating The Annex from The Ward is to recognize the distinct quality of the landscapes separated by Victoria Road. The Ward does have a history of industrial use and has likewise been shaped by the rail lines that bound it, but its character is different. As such, this study recognizes the strong sense of community that The Ward has for residents, which is why this report recommends that this portion of the Study Area continue to be associated with the rest of The Ward and not be annexed into the Study Area for future planning initiatives. The Annex remainder of the Study Area is a unique name with which to brand this neighborhood. Future planning initiatives for this area should consider what is currently operating successfully as these components are what distinguish The Annex and give it identity and should be promoted.

7.3. The Ward and The Annex: Looking Forward

In separating The Ward and The Annex, this study illustrates that due to a series of factors, the lands known as the Study Area cannot be properly understood if treated as one homogeneous neighborhood. The Ward and The Annex reflect different legacies and purposes in the history of planning in the City of Guelph. These purposes need to be addressed and understood as the City aims to bring about changes that address issues of compatibility between land uses - whether these be real or perceived. For all intents and purposes, the two combined are a functioning economic area, with unique locational attributes as well as considerable potential to support Guelph’s economy into the future through adapting to changing commercial and industrial trends.
A factor common to both The Ward and The Annex is that they have both largely been overlooked in broader planning initiatives for several decades. Except for the CIP and Land Use Strategy developed for St. Patrick’s Ward in 2003, there has been little in the way of policy that is specific to any part of the Study Area. This has left history and market forces to act uninterrupted, creating two separate trajectories and leading to two distinct neighborhoods, which from the City’s perspective, informs a lack of cohesion between the two. This has both positives and negatives.

The creation of two distinct neighborhoods, from a planning and community-building perspective, repositions ‘The Ward’ portion of the Study Area to better cohere with the rest of its namesake district. Likewise, clear delineation of The Annex will allow for a more focused planning decisions that will better reflect internal needs, constraints, and potential. As this study indicates, The Ward and The Annex serve important economic functions in the City. Yet, the nature of their activities differ and planning concerns in each vary enough that distinct approaches the Study Area’s component neighborhoods would prove useful.

Economically and politically, business and political decision-making sees no distinction between The Ward and The Annex: there is no line drawn down Victoria Road, with vehicles, clients, employees, visitors, trains, and importantly, economic flows passing back and forth between the neighborhoods on a daily basis. While distinct treatment can prove beneficial in respect to certain issues i.e. district-specific policymaking, creating and preserving cohesion between the two is still essential. Parting recommendations to this effect include:

- Creating better linkages between the two in terms of economic and political organization, with a shared or collaborative Business Improvement Association standing out as a means of representing the shared interests of both areas;
- Improving the ability of people to pass from The Ward to The Annex and back that is not through the arterial intersections in a vehicle;
  - Victoria Road acts as a hard line for users of this space and some effort to turn these intersections into permeable gateways between the two districts would go a long way towards connecting them more meaningfully;
- Opening access to the GJR in the Annex to share the benefits of this infrastructure with both areas, including a more open access format that is not limited solely to one firm;
● Supporting a shared approach to protecting employment uses and transportation infrastructure in both areas; permitting the infringement of sensitive uses in one area sets a poor precedent for both; and

● Treating the neighborhood’s shared employment area and surrounding land uses as a common economic environment; the uses that have emerged here have done so because of their shared need for the locational assets these neighborhoods provide.

The results of this land use study are intended to be the impetus for further planning initiatives to be undertaken and to provide support for decision making for The Ward and The Annex for years to come. The designation of a shared employment area that can stimulate various forms of community cohesion both within and between these two neighborhoods is a laudable and achievable objective for the Study Area.
8.0 GLOSSARY

Definitions

Adjacent Lands: for the purpose of the Natural Heritage System, those lands contiguous to specific natural heritage features or areas, where it is likely that development or site alteration would have a negative impact on the feature, area or ecological functions.

Brownfield means undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant.


Intensification: the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through: a) redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites; b) the development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas; c) infill development; and d) the expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Intensification Areas: lands identified by municipalities within a settlement area that are to be the focus for accommodating intensification. Intensification areas include Downtown Guelph, intensification corridors, major transit station areas, and other major opportunities that may include infill, redevelopment, brownfield sites, the expansion or conversion of existing buildings and greyfields.

Intensification Corridors: intensification areas identified along major roads, arterials or higher order transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development consistent with planned transit service levels.

Zoning By-law: a municipal by-law prepared in accordance with the Planning Act, that restricts the use of land and the manner in which buildings or structures are located on a property. A zoning by-law implements the intent of the Official Plan by specifically regulating what may or may not be done on individual parcels of land.
9.0 APPENDICES

9.1. Appendix A: Sources

The following is a non-exhaustive list of sources used as part of the study:

- City of Guelph Official Plan (2018) and applicable zoning by-law(s)
- City of Guelph Guelph Innovation District Secondary Plan (2014)
- City of Guelph Commercial Policy Review (Parts 1-3, proposed amendments)
- City of Guelph Interim Employment Lands Update (2018)
- City of Guelph (Draft) Cultural Heritage Master Plan (2019)
- City of Guelph Six Categories of Infrastructure Priorities (2017)
- City of Guelph Website and Open Data resources
- Provincial Policy Statement 2014
- Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks Environmental Compliance Approvals\textsuperscript{59}
- Various spatial datasets provided by the City of Guelph
- Secondary data retrieved from various sources (e.g. library, museum, archives)
- Primary qualitative data provided by local stakeholders
- Statistics Canada and related government agency websites

\textsuperscript{59} issued under s.9 of the \textit{Environmental Protection Act}
10.0 REFERENCES

Ferguson, M., St. Patrick’s Ward


