

Revitalizing Stittsville Main Street

A discussion paper



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Photo by Andre Hallam

COUNCILLOR **CONSEILLER**
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1. Introduction

Stittsville Main Street is the centre and soul of our community. It links neighbourhoods from north to south and intersects with important east-west routes including Hazeldean Road and the Trans Canada Trail.

It has been the commercial hub of this area since the 19th century when Stittsville was a small railway village serving a large rural area. For many years after the end of railway service in the 1990s, the economic health of the street has been on the decline, but in the last five years we have seen an encouraging mix of small independent businesses moving back to the street.

In many ways Stittsville Main is what differentiates Stittsville from other Ottawa communities outside of the Greenbelt. Ask residents why they moved to Stittsville and many will tell you “the village feel”. To this day, the historic village remains visible through the 19th century buildings found around the intersection of Abbott and Stittsville Main where a busy rail station was once a magnet for commerce and employment. Stittsville’s rail history lives on at Village Square Park – a community gathering place; and the Trans Canada Trail, the former rail route, that is now an active corridor for walking, cycling, running and skiing.

One of the street’s defining features is its variety. Travel from north to south and you’ll see buildings and architecture spanning at least 125 years, including restaurants, retail and offices; private homes; retirement residences; public spaces including schools, parks and a library; churches and service clubs; natural areas like Poole Creek and Trans Canada Trail; a community garden; RV sales centres; and drive-thru restaurants.

Over the past few decades there have been several initiatives to shape the future of Stittsville Main street. The former Goulbourn Township adopted the Stittsville Main Street Master Plan and Urban Design Guidelines in 1988, and Ottawa City Council adopted a new Stittsville Main Street Community Design Plan (CDP) in 2015. The CDP process was initiated after a contentious development proposal made it clear that a more robust zoning and planning framework was needed to protect and enhance the distinct character of the street.

The street has a lot of challenges. As a transportation corridor, it currently functions as an arterial road, moving a high volume of vehicles between the north and south ends of Stittsville. The speed and volume of

traffic prevent Stittsville Main Street from reaching its potential as a safe and pleasant street serving businesses and residents. A lack of vision over the decades has led to a patchwork of styles and designs that are not always complementary. Large gaps between existing businesses prevent the critical mass of retail that’s needed to attract residents, while at the same time present an opportunity for healthy new development.

Still, I have a lot of optimism for this street. There is no shortage of ideas from residents and other stakeholders on what the street needs to kickstart some healthier development. One of the challenges is that beyond the CDP – which is primarily a bureaucratic land-use document – there is no cohesive plan for revitalization. In fact, there hasn’t yet been any real effort to even bring the various stakeholders together to discuss the ideas and set some priorities.

This paper isn’t a plan quite yet, but I hope it’s a starting point to get us there. Readers should consider this a “first stab” at identifying current challenges and listing some of the good ideas generated so far. Through a series of engagement activities, I want to hear from you about what we got right with this document, where it needs expansion, and a discussion around where we should start to move things forward.

My goal is to help Stittsville Main Street grow into one of Ottawa’s most exciting and vibrant main streets, so that it continues to be a point of civic pride for our community.

I’m looking forward to hearing from you!



Glen Gower
City Councillor, Stittsville
January 2020

2. Objectives

This discussion paper is a starting point to engage the community (residents, businesses, community groups, and others) in a discussion about the future of Stittsville Main Street.

The existing Stittsville Main Street Community Design Plan (CDP), approved by City Council in 2015, provides a good framework for land use planning, but we don't yet have a plan that looks beyond land use into other elements like economic development, beautification, and activities on the street.

Where the CDP guides how the City should *react* to new land use planning applications, this document is intended to identify more *pro-active* initiatives to encourage revitalization along the street.

This paper will help anchor engagement activities over the coming months to bring stakeholders together to begin evaluating and prioritizing initiatives to continue improving Stittsville Main Street.

This document is divided into five different areas, and for each one we have suggested objectives, described current conditions, suggested potential short- and long-term initiatives, and identified key stakeholders who could be allies in realizing the goals. The five focus areas include:

- A. Economic development
- B. Transportation and mobility
- C. Beautification
- D. Activities
- E. Municipal planning

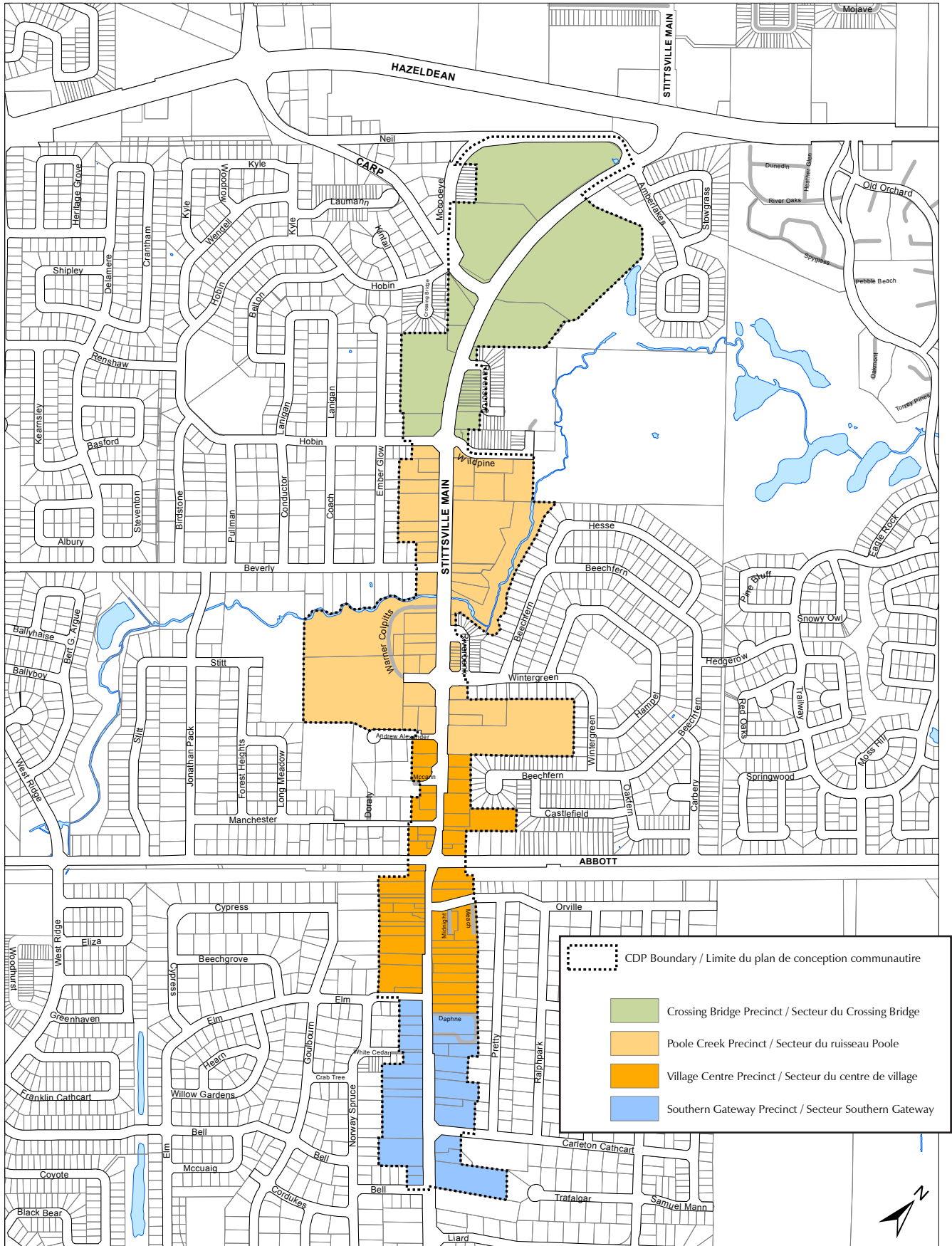
This isn't a final set of ideas – it's just the beginning. We want to hear from you! We've posted a survey, along with a list of workshops and engagement opportunities planned for early 2020 where you can share your feedback and comments.

Please visit glengower.ca/stittsville-main for more information.



Photo by Barry Gray

3. Map & Precincts



From the Stittsville Main Street Community Design Plan (2015)

4a. Economic Development

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attract a healthy and vibrant mix of businesses with a focus on serving local residents.• Create a sustainable business environment.• Create local employment opportunities. |
| Current Conditions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses on the street include a variety of retail, service and professional organizations.• Most retail activity is clustered on the north end of the street (between Hobin and Hazeldean) in the strip mall retail area.• Several independent businesses have been established, particularly in the Village Centre Precinct and south part of the street.• A small medical cluster has been established just north of Carleton Cathcart (pharmacy, labs, imaging, etc.).• There are several gaps between established businesses along the street, which hinders cohesion between businesses.• We continue to see strong interest from entrepreneurs in establishing businesses on the street.• The newly-formed Stittsville Business Association is not focused specifically on Stittsville Main Street, however they support initiatives that encourage overall economic growth and support for businesses in our community. |
| Stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stittsville Business Association (SBA)• Stittsville Main Street business owners• City of Ottawa economic development staff• Provincial and Federal Governments |
| Potential Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic development study• Marketing & business development plan• Municipal incentive programs• Other government incentive programs |

4b. Transportation & Mobility

Objectives

- Establish effective transportation infrastructure that serves the mobility needs of businesses and local residents.
- Create a more pedestrian-friendly environment along Stittsville Main Street and adjacent streets.
- Reduce vehicle speed and traffic volume to better support the needs of local businesses and residents.

Current Conditions

- The street is not functioning efficiently. There is congestion during peak hours, high vehicle speeds, and since it is designated as a truck route, there are many heavy vehicles.
- The current sidewalk/pedestrian infrastructure is inadequate. The last major update was in the 1990s and does not meet current-day best practices for pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- There are very few safe crossing points for pedestrians, especially along the southern part of the street.
- In general, bike infrastructure in the area is poor with the exception of the Trans Canada Trail.
- Drivers have difficulty turning in and out of local businesses during peak hours and weekends, due to the volume of traffic and roadway configuration.

Stakeholders

- City of Ottawa Transportation and Roads departments
- Developers/builders

Potential Initiatives

- Reduce truck traffic
- Widen sidewalks
- Cycling infrastructure / parallel bike routes
- Adjust traffic signal timing
- Better pedestrian connections to adjacent neighbourhoods
- Pedestrian crossovers (PXOs) on Stittsville Main street
- Better integration with Trans Canada Trail
- Application of CDP policy & guidelines
- Pedestrian access to Johnny Leroux Arena
- Pedestrian connection to Pretty Street
- Municipal parking lot integration & connections

4c. Beautification

Objectives

- Create an engaging and welcoming environment on the street, including public and private spaces.
- Protect and enhance greenspace and natural areas.

Current Conditions

- Most streetscape elements date back to the 1990s when Goulbourn Township last updated the street. There have been few improvements to the infrastructure since then and the street is showing its age. (For example, several of the decorative lamps in the Village Square Precinct are missing, but there are no matching replacements available.)
- There is a lack of continuity from north to south. We see different approaches for lamp posts, street furniture, etc. from district to district.
- Some recent major projects include: Kavanagh Green (including the new “Stittsville” sign at Hazeldean intersection); new Trailhead project on the western Trans Canada Trail; upcoming revitalization of Wyldeewood sign.

Stakeholders

- Local businesses
- Residents
- Service clubs and volunteer organizations
- Stittsville Business Association (SBA)
- City of Ottawa Parks & Recreation department

Potential Initiatives

- Establish a beautification committee
- Tree planting programs
- Acquisition of and investment in new public spaces
- Landmark public art
- Municipal infrastructure improvements – benches, lighting
- Signage
- Heritage protection
- Enhance heritage storytelling
- Pageantry (banners, seasonal decor)
- Upgrades to Village Square Park
- Poole Creek pathway connection north of Wildpine
- Trans Canada Trail – signage and enhancements
- Enhancing access to Poole Creek
- Burial of overhead wires

4d. Activities

Objectives

- Bring more people to the street at all times of the day.
- Create a vibrant, exciting district that functions as a civic gathering place for the growing Stittsville community.

Current Conditions

- There are several annual events that take place on or near Stittsville Main Street. These events are usually anchored at Village Square Park and include Arts in the Park (summer); Councillor’s Movie Night (summer); Pumpkin Parade (November); Remembrance Day Parade & ceremony at Johnny Leroux Arena (November); Parade of Lights (December).
- A small “First Thursdays” pilot was started in the summer of 2019 focused on activities at Village Square Park and involvement of nearby businesses.
- Jo-Jo’s Pizza hosts several free public events each year (Movie Night, Summer Fun Day, Fall Pumpkin Party) that attract large crowds to the south end of the street.
- The Barn, a privately-owned building east of Village Square Park, has hosted a small weekly market in spring-summer-fall and the owners are working on a broader event program starting in 2020.

Stakeholders

- Stittsville Village Association (SVA)
- Local businesses
- Other service clubs and volunteer organizations
- Residents

Potential Initiatives

- Farmers’ market
- Music/concert series
- Movie nights
- Skating rink at Village Square Park
- Yearly street festival
- Sunday bike days
- Seasonal events
- Bike festival
- First Thursdays
- Business-organized events
- Schools & community group activities

4e: Municipal planning

- Objectives**
- Apply policies from the Stittsville Main Street Community Design Plan (CDP) and the City of Ottawa Official Plan (OP).
 - Ensure that best practices for urban design are being followed.
 - Take advantage of programs to improve physical infrastructure.
- Current Conditions**
- The CDP and associated zoning by-law amendments were approved by City Council in 2015 and form the major framework for land use planning in the area.
 - The CDP focuses on Stittsville Main from Neil Avenue to Bell Street and is used by city staff, the community and proponents to inform the planning and review of development proposals occurring on public and private lands in the study area, and also forms the basis for any future zoning for the land. The CDP also assists in identifying and prioritizing capital projects undertaken by City departments.
 - The City is also undertaking a major review of the city-wide Official Plan, with a new plan expected to be approved by Council in 2021. New policies and direction could apply to Stittsville Main Street planning in the future.
- Stakeholders**
- City of Ottawa (planning staff)
 - City of Ottawa (other departments and services)
 - Local businesses
 - Residents
 - Builders/developers
- Potential Initiatives**
- Education / engagement to help raise awareness about what is allowed under the current zoning and planning policy (building height, setbacks, roads and sidewalks)
 - Protection of heritage buildings
 - Road reconstruction
 - Future capital investment in infrastructure
 - Adaptive use of public spaces: schools, rec centres, and other existing public buildings
 - Enhancement of urban natural areas / greenspace improvements
 - Encourage and invest in more housing on the street

5. Next steps

We'll be gathering feedback on this paper in a number of ways, including:

- Community workshops
- Councillor Chat events
- Social media engagement
- Online survey
- Stakeholder consultation

For more information visit our web site:

glengower.ca/stittville-main

You can download a digital copy of this document, complete the online survey, and see a list of upcoming public events and activities.

Reach us by email or phone:

glen.gower@ottawa.ca
613-580-2476

We will collect your feedback until March 31, 2020, and then publish a summary later this spring.

Stakeholder groups

Here's a sample of some of the local groups and organizations that we will engage in the consultation:

- Stittville Business Association (SBA)
- Community associations including the Stittville Village Association (SVA)
- Service clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Stittville Legion
- Local schools
- Churches
- Local media including *The Community Voice* and *StittvilleCentral.ca*
- Greater Ottawa Homebuilders Association
- Ottawa Board of Trade
- City of Ottawa (Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development; Transportation, Traffic Services, Parks & Recreation)



Photo by Andre Hallam