

April 29, 2010



D'AMBROSIO
architecture + urbanism

Burns Lake Village Plan + Urban Design Guidelines

Prepared for the Village of Burns Lake

Jointly prepared by Boulevard Transportation Group and D'Ambrosio architecture + urbanism

This document is formatted for double-sided printing.

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INTRODUCTION



This document, that has been prepared in conjunction with the Burns Lake Active Transportation Plan, provides an analysis of current conditions in and around the village. Principles and goals emerging from this analysis, along with the work of the village staff and thoughtful input from the residents, are summarized and described to provide guidance for future development.

Building on the assets of the village, design guidelines are presented for buildings, street right-of-ways and public spaces, to create an attractive and healthy village centre that will be enjoyable for all. Sample transformations are shown in a number of locations throughout the village as examples of what could be done.

Illustrated through a rendered town plan, future public and private development is envisioned to be concentrated within the existing village centre. This will encourage property owners to improve existing buildings and sites as well as focus community activity in the village centre.

This document culminates in a two-part pilot project that is intended to serve as an example and a catalyst for future developments. Through definition of sidewalks and parking areas, increased use of plantings and street trees along with a new public square, Burns Lake would be moving toward becoming more appealing to residents and visitors.

The pilot project includes suggested improvements to existing public infrastructure and directions for new initiatives. Relatively simple strategies outlined in this plan include safe sidewalks, screened and organized parking, street trees and a new public square.

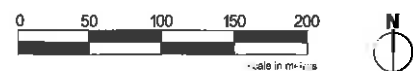
OBSERVATIONS + ANALYSIS

Prompted by residents and community leaders, an integrated team of urban designers and transportation planners were retained by the Village to consult and assess the community's potential and recommend strategies for improving transportation, pedestrian circulation and poor conditions in the village centre. The residents and Council of Burns Lake are aware of the need to improve the performance, appearance and vitality of the village's downtown. It is acknowledged that these improvements must include the layout, form and character of the streets, pathways, buildings and open spaces within and adjacent to the village centre.

To this end, the following is an analysis of the current conditions in the village centre, and identifies areas as well as some typical conditions, that could be improved.



The Village of Burn's Lake



The next three pages are photos taken in October 2009 along with short observations of the aspects that could be improved.



A large amount of uninterrupted parking with no provisions for pedestrians or landscaping is both unsafe and unsightly.



This historic sign lacks explanation. The story would be interesting and give meaning to a special place in the Village.



Spirit Square is easy to miss from the downtown, but great once you get there.



Reflective glass disconnects inside activities from outside activities and parked cars segregate building entrances from the view.



All buildings require regular maintenance such as window and wall cleaning and repair, painting, etc.



Parking areas are inefficient and consume large amounts of land when spaces and aisles are not marked.



A fence divides this already meager sidewalk and physically and visually separates the pedestrians from the shops.



Oversized driveway entrances result in oversized paved areas, unattractive sites and unsafe streets. Too much impermeable surface area is a poor stormwater management strategy.



A nicely planted park without seating offers limited opportunities to enjoy it; No other adjacent amenities or attractions makes this square totally dependent on programmed events.



Parking up to the face of buildings results in no room for pedestrians, a severe and separate 'face' to the street, and unattractive views from the interior.



Confusing intersection diverts traffic away from downtown and is not walkable. The effort to manage highway 'through' traffic has spoiled the village entry.



Sidewalks are unshaded and immediately beside parking, creating unpleasant and unsafe areas. No incentive to walk.



Holiday lights left in place all year sends a negative and uninviting message to visitors and contributes to the uncared for appearance of downtown.



The railway beside a wide roadway looks abandoned and insecure. One cannot tell that this is the village centre.



This laneway has little vegetation and no indication that this is a public lane for pedestrians and drivers. It looks and feels 'left-over' and unloved.



Unnecessary yellow curb paint visually clutters the street and signals 'caution' unnecessarily. It is recognized that this is a snow removal guiding device. However it is excessive and obtrusive.



Carelessly located and unscreened garbage areas convey a message. Is this a sign of loss of civic pride?



Low quality or inauthentic building materials and poor workmanship do not age well and quickly fall into disrepair reflecting poorly on the area they are in.



Large scale, driver-oriented signage in the downtown is unpleasant for pedestrians and unattractive. It conveys the wrong message about the place and its activities.



Walking in the downtown is discouraged by inattention to the pedestrian domain adjacent to buildings and in street rights-of-way.



Uncared for buildings convey a negative message and reflect poorly on the area they are in. This entrance is as visible as the front door.



Empty planters are unattractive; pole lighting/signs carelessly and inconsistently placed and of a large highway size undermine the human scale desirable for a village.



Large expanses of paving with no marked vehicle lanes, parking or pedestrian areas create confusing and unsafe conditions for both driver and pedestrian. Streets can be shared.



A sidewalk that is often interrupted excessively by wide driving lanes is unsafe and unpleasant for pedestrians. Streets that are designed for driving only make ugly and unsafe spaces for people, especially the elderly, the young and those who may be physically challenged.

PRINCIPLES FOR A BETTER VILLAGE CENTRE

These principles are intended to foster character and themes that emerge from Burns Lake's unique setting, history and people. All planning and design for public and private redevelopment should be guided by these principles.

Inspiration from the community



- 1 Improve Public Infrastructure, Buildings and Rights-of-way:**
Use design guidelines to improve the appearance and performance of buildings and streets.
- 2 Treat Streets as Public Spaces:**
Balance convenience and appearance of street right-of-ways with the needs of pedestrians and drivers.
- 3 Make it Easy for People to Walk Around Town:**
Connect destinations with pedestrian traffic improve safety and convenience of sidewalks.
- 4 Integrate Landscape with Townscape:**
Bring the surrounding nature into the village with trees and landscaping.
- 5 Take Pride in being a Small Town:**
Plan and invest to maintain the small scale and appearance of the historic village.
- 6 Encourage a Beautiful and Healthy Village:**
Use good design to promote a livable community, one that is sustainable for its residents and attracts visitors.
This includes finding opportunities to commission artists to contribute to every new building and public space.
- 7 Make the Village a Place to Serve the Out-lying Villagers:**
Encourage a mixed-use integrated village centre that meets the needs of the entire community.

Inspiration from other communities: Setting, Landscape and Local Building Materials



GOALS FOR THE VILLAGE CENTRE

The goals listed here have emerged from discussions with people of the community.

- 1 To make and maintain higher quality, beautiful buildings



- 5 To revitalize the village centre socially and economically to make it the pride of the town



- 2 To enhance public spaces including sidewalks and paths



- 6 To attract visitors and tourists to stop in Burns Lake for shopping and vacations



- 3 To increase and improve landscaping along streets, paths and highways



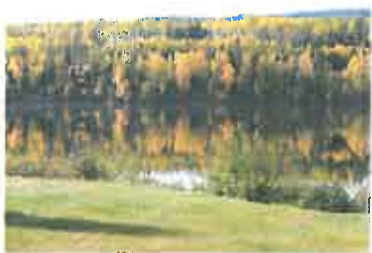
- 7 To improve pedestrian and driver safety at intersections, parking entrances and driveways



- 4 To make more and better green space in the village



- 8 To bring the beauty of the surrounding area into the village



URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Ways to make positive improvements and positive changes in the village.

Implementation of these recommendations will only be possible through the commitment and cooperation among private property owners, the business community, civic leaders and the population at large. Their success will depend on the collaboration and shared desire to make Burns Lake a better, more successful, and more beautiful place to live and to visit.



1 Public Space & Place

Public open spaces in a village are important to the social and economic life of a place. Every building and street project should be designed to make and enhance adjacent open spaces that will attract use. A community's identity and health are directly reflected in its public open spaces.



2 Wall Cladding

- Wood siding - vertical or horizontal board and batten
- Beveled siding – narrow or wide
- Preference for wood window casings, trim and fascia

Note: Professional advice should be sought regarding air barriers, vapour barriers, or insulation when applying new finishes over existing cladding.



3 Roof Material and Shape

Preferred materials:

- Cedar Shingles
- Galvanized metal

• Roof lines in keeping with traditional Burns Lake structures (sloping) and built to perform well in snowy conditions.

4 Sill and Parapet Flashings

Preferred material:

- Galvanized metal

5 Windows and Doors

- Wood preferred
- Painted or stained

See colour palette - Appendix B



6 Footings and Foundations

- Poured in place concrete with or without local stone cladding
- Avoid fake, reconstituted stone and stone that is imported from far away.



7 Paving

- Local stone or sand set concrete unit pavers are preferred



8 Awnings

- Retractable or fixed fabric awnings in a traditional, simple shape
- Gimmicks and trendy or odd styles of awnings should be avoided as they become dated and are often dictated by generic corporate identification graphics

See colour palette - Appendix B



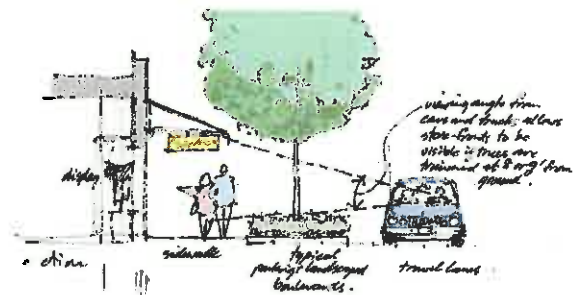
9 Signage



- Building signage located on an exterior wall or freestanding should be a maximum of 4m (13ft) above adjacent grade to the top of sign, with lettering up to 150mm (6") in height (max)
- Total sign area on a building façade can be up to 5m² and should be parallel to the building
- Signs should be front lit with high efficiency lighting and should be top shielded to avoid unintended light pollution

Not permitted:

- Rear illuminated signs
- Electronic signboards



10 Landscape



- Above ground concrete planters, while attractive when flowers are in bloom, require costly maintenance to plant, prune, water and drain. It is recommended that boulevard planting of locally compatible shrubs and trees should be prepared in ground.
- Hardy plantings requiring little maintenance are recommended wherever possible
- Professional advice should be sought to implement planting strategies regarding soil preparation and drainage, maintenance requirements, species selection, etc.
- **Street trees of local species should be planted along all appropriate streets to provide shade and an enjoyable pedestrian experience.**

11 Wayfinding

- The intent of a wayfinding strategy is to promote and encourage the use of the downtown for social, community and recreational purposes. Wherever possible, local area maps and/or interpretive signage should be located at significant and appropriate locations describing historic conditions, views, orientation, directions, distances and walking, cycling and driving travel times from points of interest to the downtown.
- Professional advice should be sought for an effective wayfinding strategy to be designed for the village



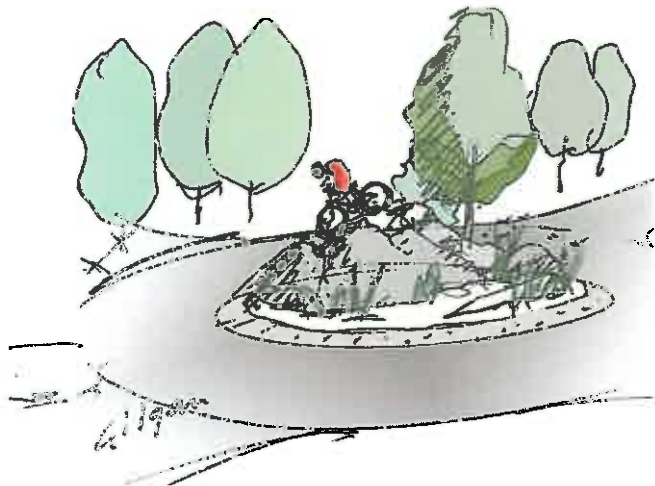
12 Glazing

- The use of reflective glass, coatings or films is discouraged to allow visual connection of sidewalk activity to activities within the buildings.
- Sunlight and glare can be controlled through operable sunshades and blinds.



13 Infrastructure / Roadworks

- Where appropriate, define and separate pedestrian pathways and sidewalks from adjacent parking and driving lanes with the appropriate device(s) such as curbs, bollards, planted boulevards, decorative walls or fences.
- Yellow paint to mark parking restrictions should be conservatively applied only where the design of the road or pathways cannot be clearly understood. This will reduce the amount of clutter in the streetscape.
- The design of traffic management devices such as concrete barriers, curbs, roadway signs, signals and lighting should be coordinated.





Sample Screening Strategy:

A split birch fence could be used in combination with shrubs and trees to form a screen or barrier to control views and access.

14 Parking

Accessibility and convenience of parking is important to the success of the downtown. This means that there should be adequate but not excessive area dedicated to parking. Provision of excess parking is detrimental to both appearance and safety. People become accustomed to and eventually prefer to park vehicles once to attend to a number of errands and shopping trips. Better located and more efficient parking layouts will reduce the area required. Parking areas and access points currently dominate the village and take precedence over pedestrian movement and green areas. By clearly defining parking areas and delineating between vehicle space and pedestrian space, the streetscape can be improved in both performance and appearance.

a) Paving

- Paving for parking areas should be constrained to a modest area required for vehicle access and maneuvering
- Where driveways interrupt sidewalks, textured paving can be used to encourage drivers to move more carefully and pedestrians to have a continuous path.

b) Screening

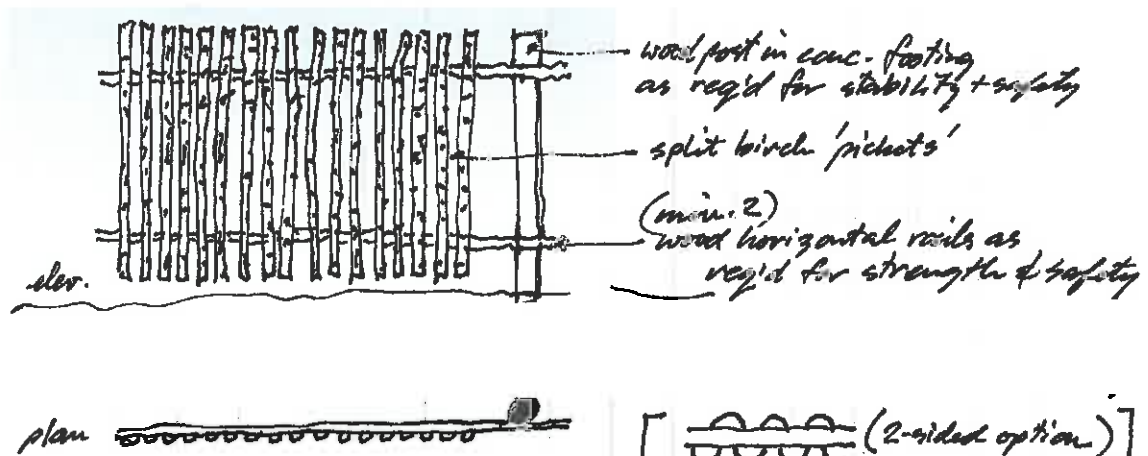
- Whenever possible and without impeding public awareness of parking, the actual parking areas should be screened from view by planting and/or decorative walls or fencing.
- Where possible parking should be located at the side or rear of buildings

c) Lighting

- Lighting of parking areas should provide a safe environment for users while limiting the amount of light pollution.

d) Driveways

- Limit accesses to parking areas and share driveways wherever possible.
- Ensure access is evident to users without becoming a dominant element.

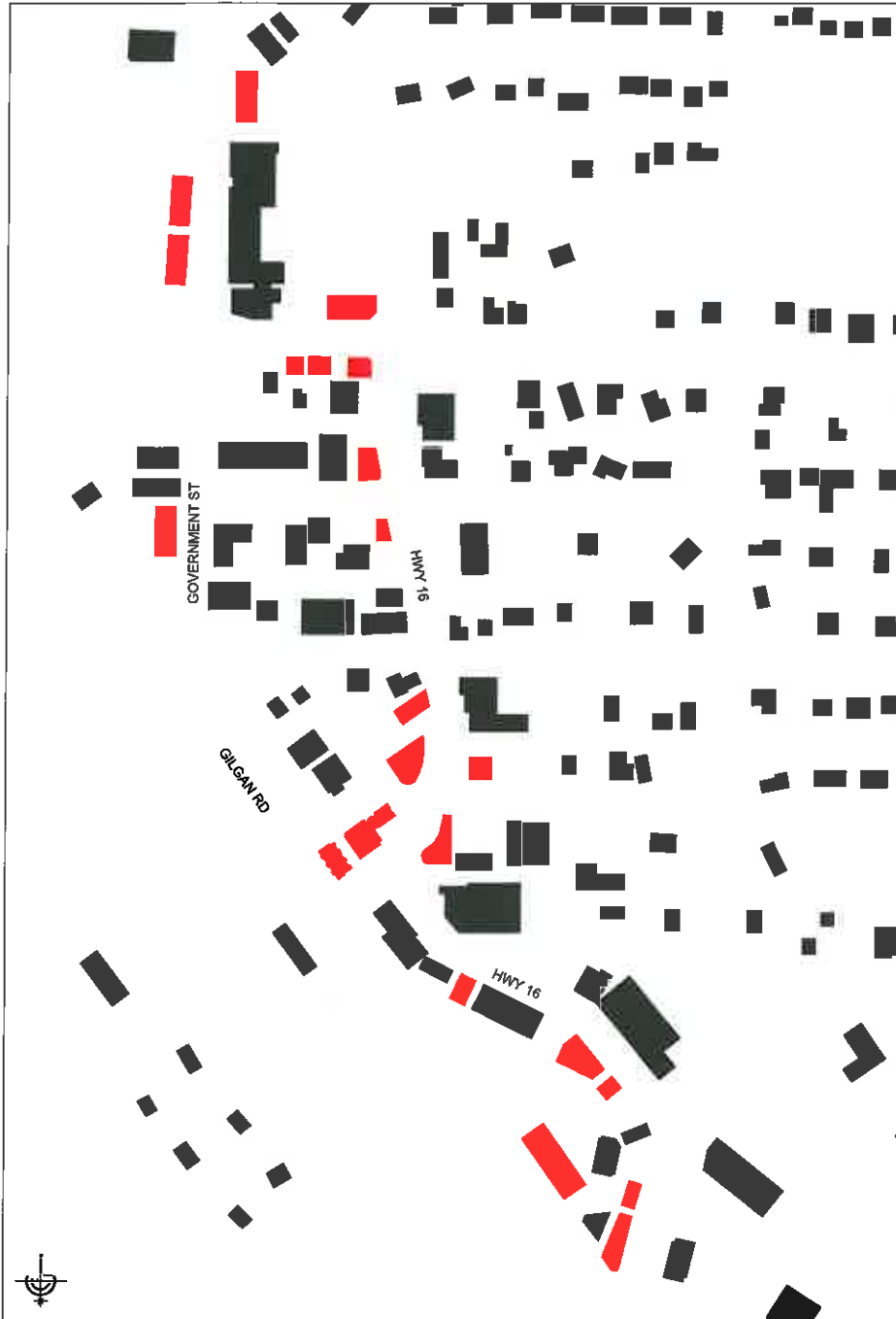


15 Underdeveloped Lots

Beyond the improvement of elements that make up the downtown such as buildings, streets, and landscape, the theme and character of a pedestrian friendly downtown comes from the arrangement of these elements, their continuity and their location relative to each other. To that end, the following plan indicates locations and potential footprints **in red** of future development.

Through development of empty lots or redevelopment of derelict buildings within the established village centre, Burns Lake can reinforce itself as a destination. The ability for residents and passersby to make one stop for shopping, lunch and errands all in the same area has the opportunity to strengthen the village core.

In contrast, if new development is concentrated on the edges of the village where few amenities exist, users may not be drawn into the downtown and thus provide little benefit to the village.



INTERVENTIONS

The transformations shown on the following pages are samples of what could be done to improve the appearance and use of the downtown through simple and more complex interventions

BEFORE



Convenient to drive...

AFTER



...but also beautiful and inviting to walk around

1. Infill buildings; add awnings
2. Tree bulges with birch trees

BEFORE



An entry to town...

AFTER



...that looks like an entry.

1. Plenty of trees and shrubs
2. A clear place for pedestrians
3. Signs to notify residents and visitors

BEFORE



AFTER



1. Clean street with furnishings and green space
2. Tidy shopfront - add awning and replace trim
3. Think about appearance and performance in all seasons

BEFORE



AFTER

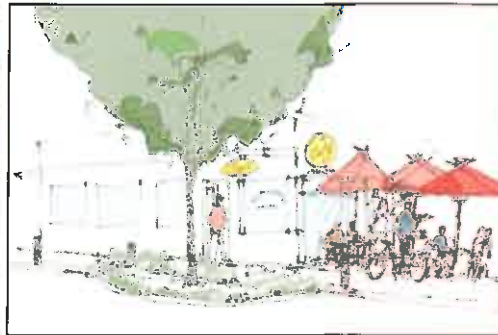


1. Define, green and screen parking
2. Divide wide streets wherever possible with trees and landscape boulevards

BEFORE



AFTER



1. Clear window glazing
2. Exterior space for informal gatherings
3. Sidewalks and street trees

A VILLAGE CENTRE



As part of the Burns Lake transportation, planning and urban design initiative, a number of issues were identified that would be useful to address in the interest of the renewal and revitalization of the village.

More than cosmetic beautification, the reordering and re-planning of the streets and public spaces would have significant and meaningful impact on the performance, form and character of the village. The definition, landscaping and shared use of streets is a fundamental part of renewal and, together with guidelines for the location and design of buildings, will be a critically important contribution to the community's initiative to improve the village centre.

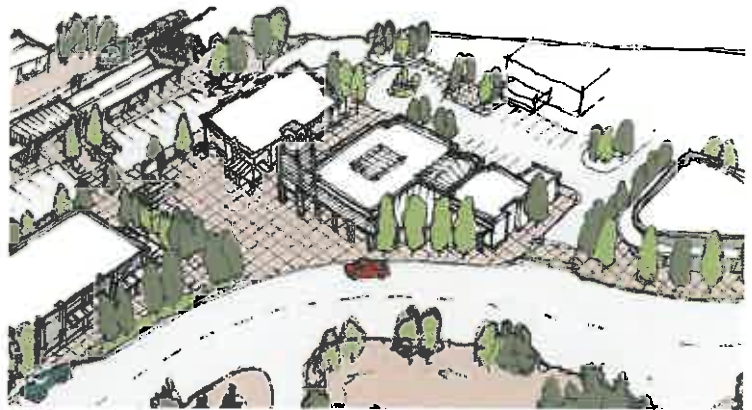
With any revitalization plan, it is important to have a clear starting point. A 'pilot project' that can introduce, demonstrate and set an example for subsequent developments to follow over time.

It is also important that this be done by and for the public through civic and public infrastructure. By showing leadership, the Town Council, through its departments, can set the standard and serve as an example for private development to follow.

To that end, a two-part project has been identified that sets-out redevelopment concepts that will significantly revitalize the most prominent village locations while improving the vehicle circulation, pedestrian and bike access, parking, landscape, and appearance of the village centre.



Part one of the pilot project is the renewal of the Gilgan Road right-of-way. This will see the public thoroughfare developed with a dedicated pedestrian and bike path, improved lanes, dust and drainage control, traffic speed calming and organized parking. Street trees, village-scaled lighting, crosswalks and a new round-about intersection at 3rd Avenue will make this a desirable route to and through the village centre.



Part two of the project is Gateway Square, a new public open space that will be a new focal point for the village on what is now public land occupied by an unsafe and redundant street intersection.

Along with the designation of the square, the historic 'Gateway to Tweedsmuir Park' sign will be restored and refurbished, and it is proposed that the original bronze bell will be reinstalled on a new plinth. In addition to this commemorative landmark, the Square is the proposed new location for the Burn's Lake military Cenotaph monument. This would be rebuilt and/or, relocated from its current site to a new plinth on the 'Memorial Lane' adjacent to the new Gateway Square.

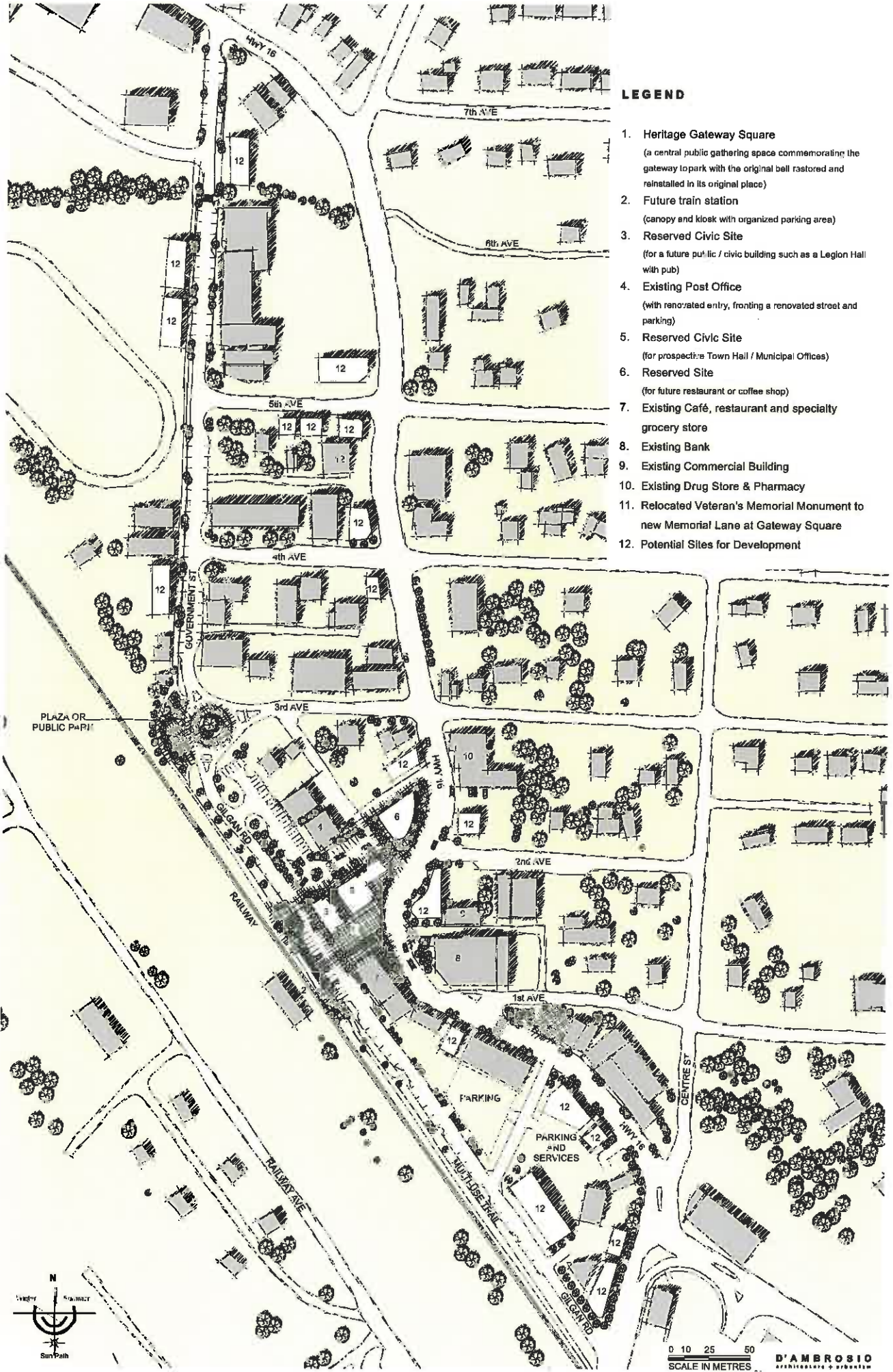


Defining and animating the new square will be an important part of its success. The existing New Leaf café and natural food store will be key attractions and gathering places at the south side of the square. To the north, the existing post office with its reordered parking lots will also attract people to the square.

The Gateway Square idea presented a significant long term opportunity to relocate some civic and community functions to define and animate the square and to transform this central location into the principal landmark for Burn's Lake Village. This illustrative plan shows a new Town Hall and another civic site for a small community building.

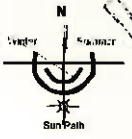


Along with new public development, this urban design plan shows the potential for new private development in the village centre. These building footprints illustrate the preferred locations for infill development that will add economic vitality while contributing to the unique form and character of Burn's Lake Village.



LEGEND

1. Heritage Gateway Square
(a central public gathering space commemorating the gateway to park with the original bell restored and reinstalled in its original place)
2. Future train station
(canopy and kiosk with organized parking area)
3. Reserved Civic Site
(for a future public / civic building such as a Legion Hall with pub)
4. Existing Post Office
(with renovated entry, fronting a renovated street and parking)
5. Reserved Civic Site
(for prospective Town Hall / Municipal Offices)
6. Reserved Site
(for future restaurant or coffee shop)
7. Existing Café, restaurant and specialty grocery store
8. Existing Bank
9. Existing Commercial Building
10. Existing Drug Store & Pharmacy
11. Relocated Veteran's Memorial Monument to new Memorial Lane at Gateway Square
12. Potential Sites for Development

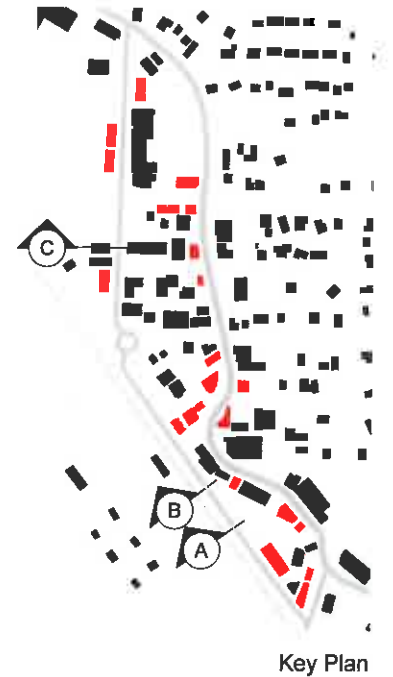
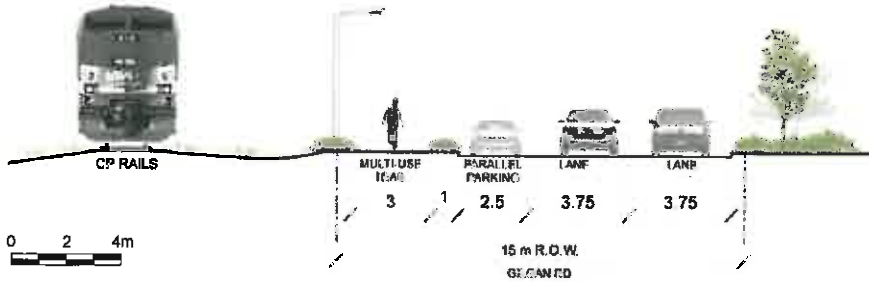


STREET SECTIONS

These sections show street improvements to both control and share the rights-of-way through the village centre.

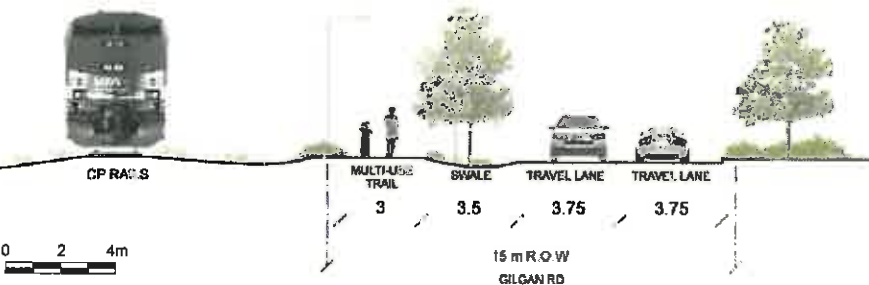
A Gilgan Road with Parking

Gilgan Road accommodates parking on either side of the road where possible. This street parking is delineated by traffic-calming tree bulges, improving the pedestrian realm and providing shade for the vehicles. Beside Gilgan Road will be a multi-use trail for joggers, cyclists and pedestrians.



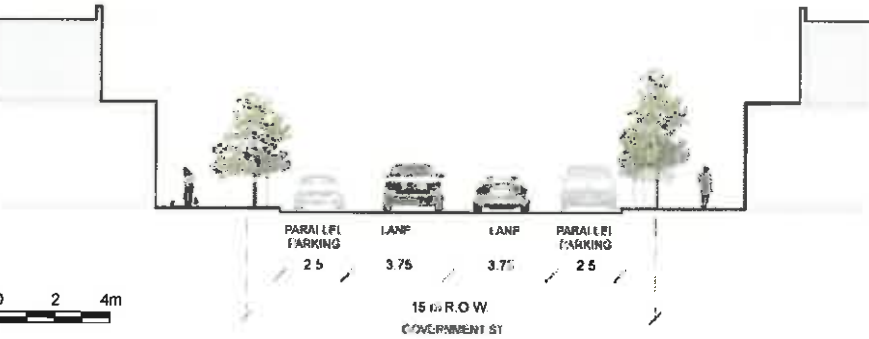
B Gilgan Road with Bioswale

Along Gilgan Road, the tree bulges could be planted with shrubs and designed as bioswales to manage rain-water.



C Government Street

Government Street accommodates parallel parking on either side of the road where possible. Street trees and hardy plantings clearly define the edges.



D Gilgan Road / Government Roundabout

A roundabout marks the intersection of Gilgan and Government Street, helping to calm traffic and create visual interest. Trees, signage, rocks and/or sculpture placed at the centre restrict direct views across, aiding in the proper and safe use of the roundabout.



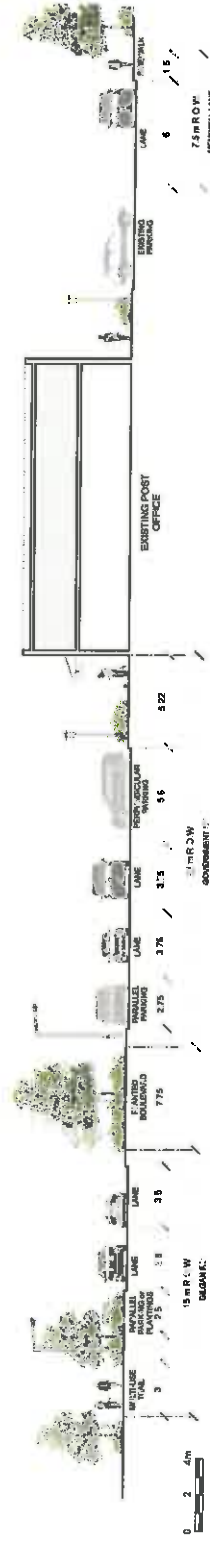
E Gilgan Road - Town Square - HWY 16

The multi-use trail continues beside the new train station. Beside this, perpendicular parking is provided along Gilgan Road at the town square. The town square, framed by the existing cafe and new civic buildings becomes an important formal and informal gathering space for the community. To the east, the square is bounded by HWY 16, giving those passing through a glimpse into this attractive public space and another reason to stop.



F Gilgan Road - Government Street - Laneway

Government Street is separated from Gilgan Road by a planted boulevard, complete with street trees and lighting. Perpendicular street parking replaces the parallel street parking in front of the post office, along with a planted area to separate the parking from the sidewalk. The existing laneway is defined by delineated parking areas, vegetation and a sidewalk.



Appendix A • Aerial Photographs

Existing Burns Lake



Burns Lake with Future Development



Appendix B - COLOUR PALETTE

Local Inspiration

Through a selective study of the existing buildings in the village core, a character and colour palette specific to Burns Lake emerges.



Paint Colours

The following paint colours are samples from Benjamin Moore's "Historical Colors" Collection. These colours, shades of off-white and those from the collection, used in combination with contrasting trim will help to unify the look of the town. Colours of windows and doors, cladding, awnings and signage should all be considered when making a paint selection.

