



Executive Summary

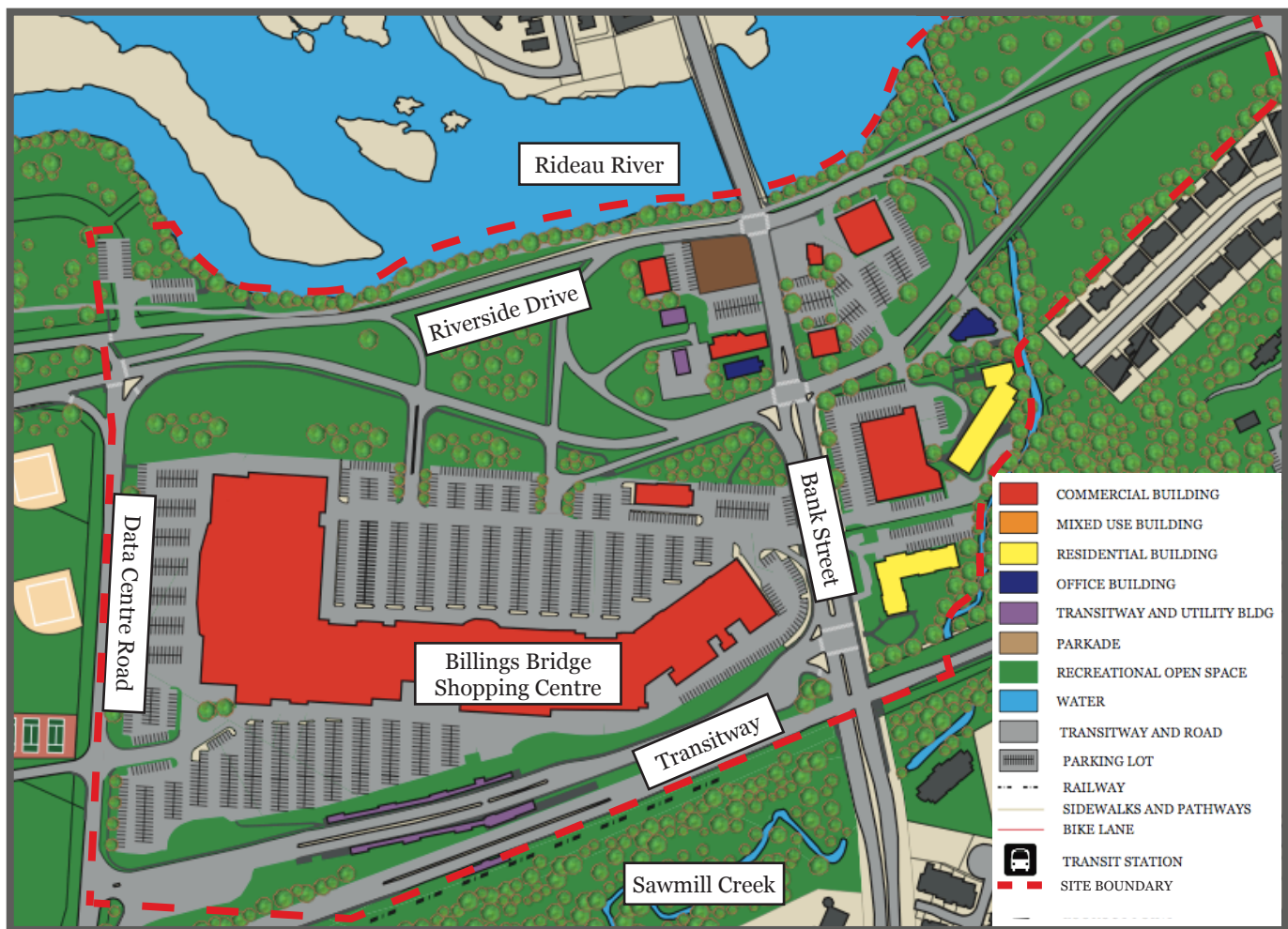
INTRODUCTION

Like many aging community shopping centres across North America, Billings Bridge Shopping Centre in Ottawa, Ontario, holds enormous potential for redevelopment. This report examines the Shopping Centre and surrounding area, and proposes two urban design concepts based on best practices from other greyfield redevelopment initiatives across the continent.

KEY EXISTING CONDITIONS

Prior to producing the redevelopment plan, existing conditions were surveyed:

- Automobile-oriented built environment;
- Confusing layout of Riverside Drive;
- Segregated land uses, buffered by large parking lots;
- Deep building setbacks and long blocks;
- Abundance of single-storey buildings;
- Limited pedestrian or cycling connectivity;
- High-traffic transit station attached to the Shopping Centre;
- Sensitive natural and heritage environments (Sawmill Creek, Rideau River, and Billings Estate);
- Generous open space along southern bank of Rideau River;
- Limited market for office space, but strong retail and residential markets.



Current site plan for Billings Bridge Redevelopment Study Area.



STRENGTHS – WEAKNESSES – OPPORTUNITIES – CHALLENGES (SWOC) ANALYSIS

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Area-specific	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Location on major traffic artery 2. Diverse housing and income mix 3. Key natural/heritage features and open space 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Road layout not pedestrian-friendly 2. Traffic congestion and confusing road configuration 3. Little 'sense of place' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vacant lots and large setbacks conducive to intensification 2. Natural features & open space suitable for recreation 3. Connectivity between diverse range of transportation modes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stringent zoning, parking & development requirements 2. Floodplain and water table limits locations of development
Shopping Centre-Specific	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Location next to rapid transit 2. Currently a popular shopping destination 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aesthetics; blank walls and large parking lots 2. Limited pedestrian, cycling connectivity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipality supports intensification 2. Sustainable building and neighbourhood design 3. Designation as a Mixed-Use Centre provides policy framework 4. Large lot allows for diverse uses & intensification 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fierce competition in retail market 2. Necessity of parking provision 3. Stakeholder aversion to change (can include tenants, community, government agencies, etc)

PRECEDENTS

Project	Location	Most Successful Feature
Shops at Don Mills	Toronto, ON	Strong emphasis on public space; new streets and blocks
New Kitchener Market	Kitchener, ON	Commercial traffic kept internal to the site
Olde Thornhill Village	Markham, ON	Road network facilitates pedestrian travel
CityCenter Englewood	Englewood, CO	Development oriented towards public transit connectivity
Belmar	Lakewood, CO	Developed with highest standards of environmental sustainability
Mizner Park	Boca Raton, FL	Full integration of vertical and horizontal land uses
Paseo Colorado	Pasadena, CA	Doors and windows establish relationship with the street
Winter Park Village	Winter Park, FL	Human-scale buildings attract residents to the area

The principal lessons learned from the precedents became the underlying goals of the design concepts:

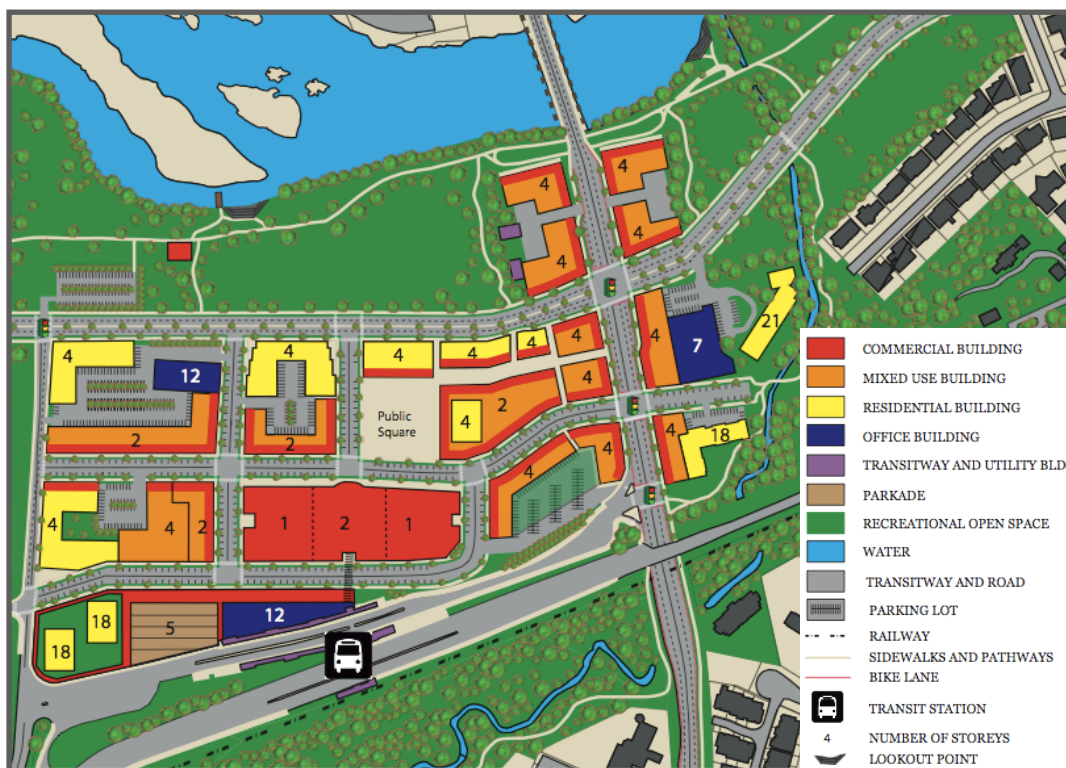
1. Evolve from a single space & use to a compact district with a wide variety of housing opportunities, buildings, uses, & users.
2. Introduce new street patterns that integrate with, and encourage growth in, surrounding communities.
3. Alternative transportation options should be encouraged, with traffic flows and parking dispersed.
4. Foster a unique identity with public amenities and high urban design standards.
5. Adaptively re-use infrastructure and encourage green buildings, while phasing development.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Two proposed design concepts, the Billings Centre Design and the Mainstreet Design, are informed by the above lessons, and incorporate objectives and actions developed through an analysis of existing conditions and stakeholder consultation.

Billings Centre Design

The Billings Centre design concept (Shown below) focuses primarily on the intensification of the Shopping Centre site. A grid street system placed over the current parking lot increases pedestrian and vehicular connectivity, while a central square encourages lively social interactions. New mixed-use buildings with retail at grade line the new streets, complemented by residential towers and low-rise units. An office tower adjacent to the Transitway station injects new employment space into the site, alongside a parking garage containing Park & Ride facilities. Riverside Drive is consolidated into a single roadway to reduce congestion and enlarge green space along the riverbank. Bank Street's urban character is enhanced by providing continuous retail frontage on both sides, and by connecting bicycle lanes. Finally, expanded green space and protected natural areas improve opportunities for recreation along the Rideau River.



Proposed site plan for the Billings Centre design



Mainstreet Design

The Mainstreet design (Shown below) is oriented towards developing Bank Street. The Transitway station is moved eastward over Bank Street in order to facilitate pedestrian access and expedite bus transfers. The eastern portion of the existing Shopping Centre is extended to meet Bank Street, with an office tower placed next to the Transitway station to enable pedestrian access. Abundant residential units strengthen economic viability for retail on the site. A large parking garage on the Shopping Centre site permits further development of the surrounding surface lot. The public square, which is surrounded by retail on three sides, is moved eastward toward Bank Street to improve access and visibility.

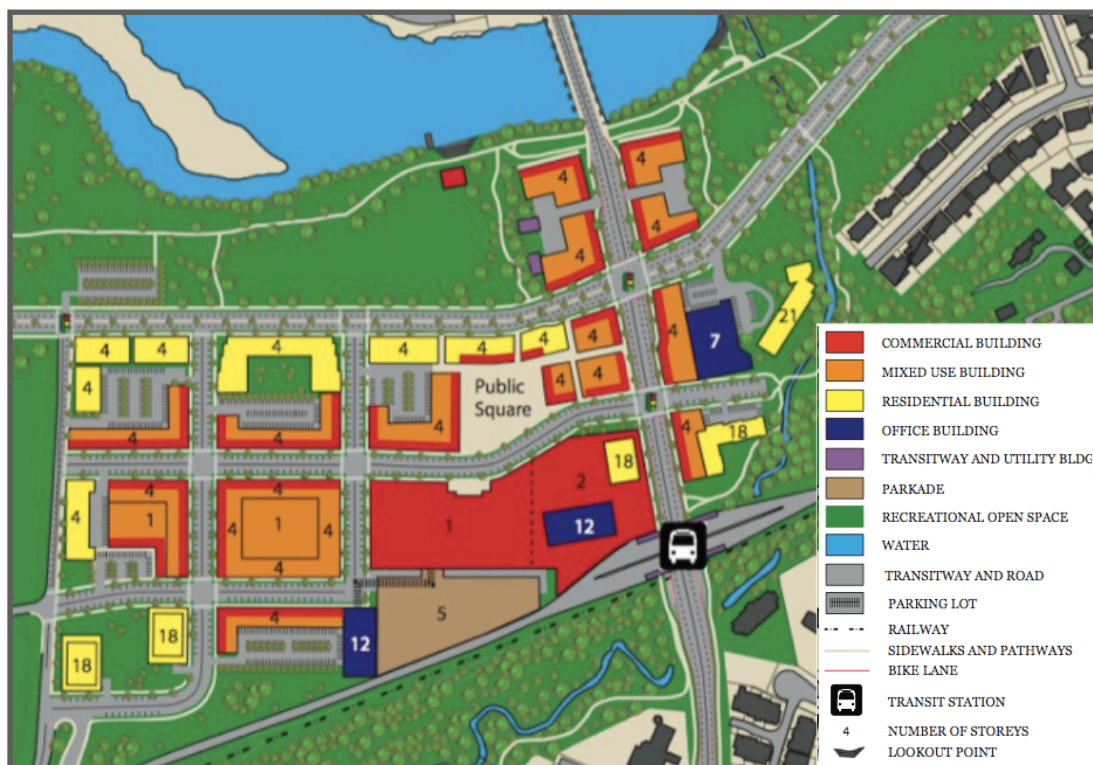
EVALUATION

Both designs were evaluated using greyfield redevelopment and transit-oriented development performance criteria. Based on this evaluation, the Mainstreet Design is preferable and recommended. Its advantages lie in the relocation of the Transitway

station, which facilitates pedestrian access, improves bus movement, and places community focus on Bank Street. Furthermore, there is a greater mix of uses through the provision of additional residential units, and more internal park space.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The new Community Design Plan (CDP) should incorporate the recommended Urban Design Guidelines, which apply to built form, road layout, amenities, connectivity, and land uses.
- Amend Mixed-Use Centre, Arterial Mainstreet, Minor Institutional and DR2, and Community Leisure Facility Zoning By-Laws, as recommended.
- Adopt sustainability principles for the site, which apply to building and neighbourhood design, environmental protection, transportation infrastructure, and energy generation.
- All stakeholders (National Capital Commission, 20Vic Management Inc., community residents, OC Transpo, Billings Estate National Historic Site) should take part in the preparation of a new CDP for Bank Street, commissioned by the City of Ottawa.



Proposed site plan for the Mainstreet design



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project team wishes to thank those who have donated their time and effort to the completion of this report:

- To Jillian Savage, for her support as our primary contact at the City of Ottawa;
- To the Planning and Growth Management and Mapping Departments at the City of Ottawa; for providing us with invaluable information and resources;
- To Professor David Gordon, for his advice throughout the term;
- To the representatives from various stakeholders, who met with us in September and provided useful feedback at our final presentation in December:
 - o Alain Miguelez, City of Ottawa
 - o Hugues Charron, Madeleine Demers, and Christopher Meek, National Capital Commission
 - o Bruce Pickersgill, 20Vic Management Inc.
 - o Nancy Meloshe, Meloshe and Associates Ltd., on behalf of 20Vic Management Inc.
 - o Donna Silver, on behalf of Clive Doucet (Capital Ward 17)
 - o Darren Taubman, on behalf of Councillor Peter Hume (Alta Vista Ward 18);
- To the guests who shared their expertise at our Mid-Term Open House:
 - o Ajay Agarwal, Sukriti Agarwal, John Andrew, Carl Bray, Graham Whitelaw, Preston Schiller, Jason-Emerly Groen
 - o Steven Boyle, Douglas Bridgewater, Cheryl Brouillard, Amy Falkner, Rose Kung;
- To Angie Balesdent and Jo-Anne Rudachuck for their administrative and logistical support;
- To Jeff Moon at Stauffer Library at Queen's University, for his assistance with demographic data; and
- To our classmates, for providing useful feedback at our presentation rehearsal and moral support throughout the term.

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