

Best Practices Review

Jurisdictions providing direction on Scenic Corridors beyond Official Plan policies

City of Mississauga

Mississauga Road Scenic Route Study (1997)

Mississauga Road Scenic Route Urban Design Guidelines (2017)

The Mississauga Road Scenic Road Study (1997) established criteria for the ‘Scenic Route’ in order to assess the impact of development on Mississauga Road.

The study identified four key features that make Mississauga Road a scenic route:

1. Existing street trees and greenbelt vegetation
2. Road type
3. Residential character
4. Heritage quality

The study recommends a number of initiatives to maintain Mississauga Road as a scenic route, including introducing new district policies with specific Special Site Area urban design guidelines, not allowing road widening on Mississauga Road and amending the Site Plan Control By-law to require site plan control on residential lots within the Special Site Area to allow for the review of building massing, preservation of trees and existing landscape features, control of driveway access and location of utilities and on-site connections.

In 2012, Mississauga City Council passed a resolution directing staff to undertake a review of the policies within the Mississauga Road Scenic Route Study and the associated official plan policies that emerged from the 1997 study (Policies 9.3.3.11 and 9.3.3.12), with the intent of strengthening the existing policies in the context of increasing residential intensification pressures along the Mississauga Road corridor.

A city-initiated official plan amendment (OPA) was adopted in February 2017, which updated the existing urban design policies in the city’s official plan specifically related to the Mississauga Road Scenic Route (Policy 9.3.3.11).

At the time of the OPA approval, urban design guidelines for the Mississauga Road Scenic Route Study Area were recommended to be prepared in response to increasing redevelopment pressure and to provide guidance for future development along the route. The Mississauga Road Scenic Route Urban Design Guidelines were subsequently adopted in October 2017.

Review Summary:

The Mississauga Road Scenic Route shares similarities with the ‘look and feel’ of Lakeshore Road and Trafalgar Road, particularly the residential neighbourhoods, heritage elements, and mature street trees and vegetation. The Mississauga Road study and associated design direction emerged from local concerns about the impacts of large-scale residential redevelopment and large-lot severances abutting the corridor.

Their design guidelines focus on managing changes to the design and placement of buildings on private property to ensure that new development is compatible with the surrounding context. The guidelines, however, do not specifically address managing or guiding change within the municipal right of way.

In the Oakville context, local concerns are focused on potential changes to the character of the roadway and boulevard resulting from proposed modifications to the public right of way for enhanced vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian movement. Development proposed on private properties abutting the scenic corridors is currently managed by the Livable Oakville Plan policies, implementing zoning regulations and urban design direction, Private Tree Protection By-law, Heritage Conservation District Plan policies where applicable, and in some instances, the site plan process.

Region of Waterloo

Context Sensitive Regional Transportation Corridor Design Guidelines (2010)
Scenic Roads and Special Character Streets Resource Document (2011).

Waterloo's Regional Official Plan includes policies regarding scenic roads which state:

- 3.G.27 The Region recognizes that many Regional Roads are characterized by natural, cultural heritage and recreational features that contribute to the scenic value of Regional Roads. During any construction or upgrades, the Region will, wherever feasible, endeavour to protect and/or enhance the scenic value of such features along Regional Roads.
- 3.G.28 Area Municipalities are encouraged to establish policies in their official plans to protect the scenic values of Regional Roads, including the view from the road to prominent heritage buildings or natural landscape features.
- 3.G.29 Area Municipalities are encouraged to protect the scenic values of roads under their jurisdiction.

As an official plan implementation tool, the Region of Waterloo developed *Context Sensitive Regional Transportation Corridor Design Guidelines* in 2010 to provide direction on how to design and plan Regional Transportation Corridors that are context sensitive and reflect the variety of road types and conditions found across the Region.

The guidelines include a section about Special Character Streets/Scenic Roads (Section 4.4.5). It directs that Regional transportation corridors through such areas should be designed to reflect and protect the specific history and/or visual or natural character of each place. Some of the specific guidelines include giving priority to maintaining those features which are special or scenic and preserve the character of the street, including built form, heritage planting, scenic road configurations such as bends or valleys, and open space connectivity. It also calls for the identification and preservation of the key characteristics or scenic features of scenic corridors, however, without including a description of key characteristics or scenic features.

The Scenic Roads and Special Character Streets Resource Document (2011) supplemented the guidelines to provide further direction on scenic roads and their defining features. Specific elements were evaluated, including: vegetation, road cross section, landforms and waterways, cultural built environment, bridges, cultural landscape, and traffic. Using this evaluation information, the document identifies a large number of specific scenic roads in the Region, detailing their existing character and outlining conservation recommendations.

The focus on heritage conservation throughout the document was developed in part to contribute to the development of a Regional Heritage Conservation Toolbox. The resource also outlines steps to consider following the initiation of a corridor design process, including confirming the corridor classification, producing high level objectives for the corridor, identifying street priorities, and building the corridor section.

Review Summary

The process of identifying specific scenic elements and attributes on roadways throughout the Region of Waterloo is similar to the process undertaken by town staff by documenting and assessing the view shed along the corridors. The Waterloo work focused on a regional scale that is largely rural and includes some small historical main street areas that are not protected by a heritage conservation policy framework, which is different from the Oakville context.

By comparison, Oakville has a Heritage Register and Heritage Conservation District Plans to manage change along Trafalgar Road and portions of Lakeshore Road within the downtown. The three traditional commercial areas have also been extensively studied and managed through bespoke policies and design direction. In addition, Oakville's scenic corridors are identified as an element of the town's urban structure, and all roadways and lands in the scenic corridors study area are contained within Oakville's designated 'Urban Area' and 'Built Boundary'.