

#4 Creative Redevelopment

The city of Peterborough is a rapidly growing urban area¹. With population growth occurring in our city, it is important to think ahead and consider how we can add housing and services to our downtown, while maintaining the character of local neighbourhoods.

As a centrally-located neighbourhood, Downtown Jackson Creek has potential to densify and change in the coming years. In particular, Downtown Jackson Creek is home to church buildings that are positioned on large plots of land, some of which have declining congregation numbers, and one of which has already been decommissioned as an active church. These church sites, along with under-utilized pieces of land, such as the former Baskin Robbins ice cream factory and large parking lots, provide potential for **infill development** in the neighbourhood.

As this neighbourhood transitions, residents would like planners, developers, and policy makers consider the design concepts presented in this section.

"I am homeless and want better housing on Park Street."

1. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/stats-can-population-census-1.5075855>

Preserve architectural heritage

Downtown Jackson Creek is full of beautiful heritage buildings, including the churches, Cox Terrace, Hutchison House, and many heritage homes. They add character to the neighbourhood, and residents want to maintain this architectural heritage as new development occurs.



Community-Oriented

What is infill development?

Infill development is an urban planning term. It refers to the process of repurposing vacant or underused pieces of land that are within an already built up urban area, and using these sites for new developments. It is a way of adding additional housing and services to neighbourhoods that already exist, rather than building new neighbourhoods on undeveloped land outside the city (e.g., suburban developments). Infill can help keep housing close to services. It also helps to avoid urban sprawl, and promotes healthier transportation choices by creating denser and more complete communities.



Encourage creative redevelopment and use of church buildings.

As church congregation numbers decline, encourage innovative uses of the buildings, including mixed-income housing or community space.



Community-Oriented



In 2016, the former Knox United Church was redeveloped into a 41-unit affordable housing building. This redevelopment was an example of a partnership between a private developer and the City of Peterborough.

Promote mixed-use

Housing is critically important in the Downtown Jackson Creek neighbourhood, but residents also want to see a mix of uses available in the area. Since many people do not drive, people want to be able to access shopping, services, and employment opportunities close to home.



Community-Oriented



Connected



George St. is an example of a mixed-use area in Peterborough. As the population grows, there is an opportunity for new developments in neighbourhoods like Downtown Jackson Creek to include a mixture of uses.

Reduce and re-purpose surface parking lots

Since the neighbourhood is very walkable, has great transit access, and has a growing cycling network, people would like to reduce the amount of space taken up by parking lots. Further, many people in the neighbourhood do not drive because of factors including income, age, ability, or choice to use alternatives.

Reducing parking requirements for new residential buildings could free land for other uses.



Natural & Green



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Why do parking requirements matter?

Minimum parking requirements for new developments are set out in the City's Zoning By-Law. Most of the Downtown Jackson Creek neighbourhood falls within an area just outside the downtown core, known as "Parking Area 2" in the current Zoning By-Law. For new residential developments in this area, 1.5 parking spaces must be provided per unit. Commercial buildings also have minimum parking requirements.

These parking requirements mean that large pieces of land in the downtown are set aside as parking lots, whether or not there is an actual need for such a high number of spots.

Reassuringly, parking requirements may be changing in our downtown. The Draft Official Plan supports exemptions for some parking requirements for developments within the Central Area, which includes all of the Downtown Jackson Creek neighbourhood.

Keep housing affordable and accessible

It is important that the people who live in Downtown Jackson Creek currently are not displaced as the neighbourhood changes. Promote the development of affordable housing units, particularly within **mixed-income buildings**, to keep the neighbourhood affordable for current residents and other lower-income people looking to move to the neighbourhood.



Community-Oriented



Accessible

How can we focus on mixed-income housing?

Currently there seems to be little that a municipality can do to require that affordable housing is prioritized. In 2016, amendments to the Planning Act allowed municipalities to implement a new tool called inclusionary zoning, which would require affordable housing units to be included in residential developments. In 2019, Bill 108 restricted municipalities so that they can now only implement inclusionary zoning in special transit areas.

Inclusionary zoning was providing the jumping off point for conversations about affordable housing, geared-to-income housing, mixed-income neighbourhoods, and mixed-income buildings. Now cities must find other tools to ensure that equitable housing options that provide for inclusive communities are planned for and built within their boundaries.



This is an example from Detroit where parking lot has been re-purposed for a community garden.



The Mount Community Centre, a former convent, is a housing, food, and services hub. The Mount is an example of a not-for-profit-led mixed-income housing project.

Resident Action!

Residents have already taken action to advocate for some of the ideas in this section of the Vision. The Downtown Jackson Creek resident committee submitted a response to the City's Official Plan review process in September 2019.

"Re-developing [the church] buildings is my #1 choice, as I am homeless"

"Along Church Row [there are] key opportunities for infill and repurposing, with community space"

RESIDENT QUOTE

"[We need] better quality housing and more responsive and responsible landlords"

