



Plains Road is worth **celebrating!**



"The Plains Road Village Vision Committee has played a tremendous role in bringing about major changes to Plains Road while maintaining its community identity, spirit and quality of life.

We believe that the Plains Road Village Vision Committee is beginning to make a real difference. We are well aware of the importance of our broad based public support to the promotion of Aldershot as a Village."

- Linda Cupido, Life Long Resident of Aldershot, PRVV Committee member

Plains Road Village Vision – Not Just A Good News Story – But A Great News Story!

Aldershot's Plains Road Village Vision (PRVV) thinks you should hear the news! The progress we are making on Plains Road is worth celebrating!

After more than a decade of work, it is now clear that the PRVV is working. Our Committee had a vision. We established a plan. We raised the dollars to make it happen and we are achieving results, one-step at a time. In short, the story of the PRVV is the story of our community coming together to rescue Aldershot's main street.



By Way of Background – In Case You Didn't Know

Aldershot has a rich history, reaching back to the mid 1700's. In the middle of that history sits Plains Road, the heart of Aldershot.

Plains Road has been an important transportation link between the west end of Burlington and Hamilton since the 1800's. It has evolved from rural road to provincial highway and now, a "main street."

When Plains Road was Highway 2, almost anything was allowed to be built including motels, gas stations, used car lots, and strip plazas and adult entertainment facilities. Development occurred randomly and seemingly without direction. By the late 1990s, the result was an unattractive streetscape that felt and looked like an old highway. *It was an old highway!* It was not welcoming to either pedestrians or retailers and it was burdened with fast moving traffic and a decreasing customer base. Without a growing number of customers, the businesses could not hope to succeed.

Planning experts agreed that the problem was three-fold:

- the lack of an alternative east/west route to reduce traffic that used Plains Road to 'cut through' Aldershot;
- insufficient population to attract new businesses;
- failure to build on strengths such as Aldershot's closeness to the Royal Botanical Gardens.

In 2001 community members realized that if Plains Road was ever going to be the vibrant heart of Aldershot, local residents and businesses needed to take charge. They had to create a vision and a plan to ensure the changes worked for the whole community... and the changes needed to be managed... the Plains Road Village Vision Committee was born.

The goal was simple: *"To revitalize Aldershot's heart through community involvement with a vision for the future, for the benefit of all".*

The Aldershot Business Improvement Area (BIA) - What an accomplishment!

The Aldershot Business Community BIA is a not-for-profit organization representing 250 businesses and property owners along the Plains Road corridor in Burlington. The B.I.A.'S efforts have been dedicated to ensuring a healthy economic environment for the community along Plains Road.

Since the BIA began just five years ago, the business and surrounding community has witnessed a number of streetscape improvements. Their efforts have helped to initiate the transition from strip mall development along the former Kings Highway 2, to the early stages of a viable and growing main street. Plains Road is now a blend of new and attractive spaces offering residential and commercial opportunities. The street boasts an array of professional services, excellent dining, specialty shops, and the Royal Botanical Gardens.



A Time Line for Success - One Project at A Time!

The Plains Road Village Vision was established as a residents group, growing out of earlier work initiated by the Aldershot Community Council. After countless hours of discussion, public meetings and technical input, a series of goals were identified:

- Completing the proposed new interchange at Waterdown Road and Highway 403 to relieve Plains Road of the burden of “cut-through” traffic.
- Involving the City of Burlington in a strategic plan for Plains, including the introduction of Urban Design Guidelines.
- Developing a Business Improvement Area (BIA) to ensure the cooperation and support of business.
- Engaging the Royal Botanical Gardens.
- Setting an example by building a “Demonstration Garden Project” at King and Plains Roads to be followed by similar projects at other locations such as Maplehurst School.
- Encouraging private sector investment to redevelop some of the sad, old building sites.
- And keeping local residents and businesses informed and involved – every step of the way.

On the advice of urban designers, the rules slowly changed. Mid-rise buildings (no higher than 6 stories) were allowed on Plains Road since 1999 to encourage the population growth that would attract new business and new customers. These new buildings would be required to be architecturally pleasing, include more landscaping and be closer to the street. Parking lots that traditionally stood between the sidewalks and buildings would have to be relocated. Sidewalks would be widened, allowing pedestrians to be closer to the stores without crossing fields of asphalt, lined with parked cars.

Some recent examples of this new design include ...



- Bernardinos: “The first new building to be consistent with the PRVV.”



- McDonalds: “An early convert to the idea of a new Plains Road.”



- The Maplehurst Project: “A cooperative effort with the School Board, BIA, City of Burlington and others.”



- Dovercourt Condos: “Bringing more residents within walking distance of new stores on Plains.”



- Mosaic Project: “14 new retail stores that are close to the street, creating a pedestrian atmosphere.”



- Burlington Gardens: “A wonderful example of combining the old with the new.”

But A Great News Story!

The Award Winning Royal Botanical Gardens

The Royal Botanical Gardens is the anchor for Plains Road in the west. Early in its development, the PRVV recognized that the community had failed to take full advantage of the economic potential that could be created by such close proximity to the RBG. After all, the Royal Botanical Gardens is the largest tourist attraction between Toronto and Niagara Falls.

The RBG has had a variety of construction projects during its long history. The most important in recent years has been the new Atrium - the centrepiece of a major rejuvenation plan and a jewel in the Plains Road Village Vision. In addition to the 16,000 square feet, \$9 million glass-clad structure, the project included expanded parking and a new grand entrance off of Plains Road. The Atrium now serves as a year-round destination for art shows, horticultural displays, weddings, conventions and other functions. The new Interchange will firmly establish Plains Road as the gateway to the Royal Botanical Gardens.



- Shoppers Drug Mart: "After long negotiations with the City, Shoppers agreed with the principles of the PRVV."



Before
←



After
→

"Looking ahead, we need to build and rebuild our cities in a more compact form that consumes less space and is more supportive of public transit so that people have real options for getting around. That means building vibrant communities with a mix of uses including higher density residential uses along major transportation corridors like Plains Road."

- Rob MacIsaac, President Mohawk College

- The Demonstration Garden Project: "We raised \$100,000!"

Frequently Asked Questions... *and answers!*

Why are new buildings on Plains Road taller than older buildings?

The taller buildings at the site of the old A & P grocery store and Zellers are a result of a zoning decision that was made in 1999. The PRVV inherited that decision and as a result had to adjust. The former plaza was dying and was no longer financially viable. But the new buildings, with their many apartments, will serve to stimulate the micro economy in the west end by building up the customer base and attracting new business. The final building that will be constructed on the site will include 30,000 square feet of retail space. City planners agree that in order for a 'main street' to develop, more residents are needed to support the retailers in the neighbourhood. The taller buildings are doing just that.

Is it true that Plains Road will eventually be "lined with 6 storey buildings"?

No, with the exception of the former Zellers site, zoning regulations allow for 6 storey buildings, but this is the limit, not the goal. In fact, most new buildings will be lower.

Does the PRVV support mid-rise development in subdivisions adjacent to Plains Rd?

No. The PRVV is only focused on properties that face Plains Road.

Why are new buildings on Plains closer to the street?

Placing parking lots in front of stores is a 60s, 70s, and 80s, style of urban planning. It was all about the car. The new idea is to move the parking to the side or rear of the buildings, bringing the stores closer to the street, so that pedestrians have a more pleasant shopping experience. It's really all about people and walkability.

What about parking?

Parking lots are very expensive and certainly not the best use of our declining land base. Studies show that existing parking lots are seldom full. In the long run, however, we should require a little less parking as more people will eventually be living on our main street, within walking distance of shops, restaurants and churches.

What about all the temporary, mobile signs on Plains Road?

There is a plan to eliminate these signs. We are working with the City and the Business Improvement Area to make this happen.

What is being done to attract a liquor store, beer store and another grocery store?

All these businesses have clearly told local officials that the only thing that will attract them to Aldershot is a growing customer base. This is one reason why the new apartment buildings and condominiums are important to the future of our community.

The Plains Road Village Vision has had a positive impact on the community.

I am a Business Owner. I can see that the PRVV invests in projects that make a difference to the community. More people coming to Plains Road to live and work brings more customers to my business. The Main Street atmosphere creates that small town feeling. Plains Road is also a hub, providing easy access to Niagara, Buffalo, Toronto and Southern Ontario. Plains Road is a great place to do business!

I have a Family. The new streetscape is warm and friendly. We can easily get to shops and services, churches and schools. We can walk, bike, hop on a bus, or get on the GO train. Plains Road is a great place to live!

I am Senior. There is every type of housing I will ever need, from apartments and condos when I downsize, to assisted living and retirement homes, to long term care facilities. I have met new friends through many programs and groups. I have access to church activities, health and wellness programs, safe walking routes, buses, and even weekly transportation to get my groceries. There are more and more amenities within walking distance. Best of all – I can stay near my friends and family. I love living on Plains Road!

"Burlington Engineering and Planning staff are delighted to be involved in the transformation of Plains Road... we are already showcasing the Plains Road revitalization as an excellent example of what can be done in a suburban community to make our arterial roads more pedestrian friendly and attractive."

- Tom Eichenbaum, Director of Engineering, City of Burlington

Our New Interchange is Coming!

It was always understood that the number one priority was completion of the new interchange at Waterdown Road and the 403. Although not ON Plains Road, planners understood that this project would be critical to the eventual success of Plains Road. Traffic experts agreed that up to 1,000 heavy trucks could be removed from Plains Road every day if we built the interchange. Approval for the interchange involved years of budget, political and community discussions. The interchange will open this fall and provide long-term relief to Plains Road.

The Future, Lots To Look Forward To!

The individuals, organizations and supporters working on Aldershot's Plains Road Village Vision know that they have only scratched the surface in its transformation. It may take years before we see all the results we want. However, much has been accomplished and exciting projects are on the horizon!

Construction is about to begin on the new LaSalle Terrace Retirement Home at Plains and LaSalle Park Roads. This attractive new building will include a clock tower that will highlight the intersection. New landscaped medians will dress up Plains Road near IKEA in 2011 and more new retail stores are undergoing planning approvals at City Hall.

After completion of the new 403 interchange in Fall 2010, and the new King Road underpass in 2011, we can look forward to construction of a South Service Road. It is anticipated that this new South Service Road will further reduce traffic on Plains creating the potential for more creative use of road allowance and boulevards with landscaping, streetscaping, bike lanes and wider sidewalks.

You can get involved!

The PRVV is all about community participation. We welcome your involvement at our meetings and to help out with various projects. Get in touch with us at tmoskal@cogeco.ca.

The BIA is all about business participation. For information on getting involved with the Aldershot BIA, contact Barb Rusnak at 905-637-6930 or by email at info@aldershotbia.com.

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