

City of Stratford

Part A: Design Proposal

Redevelopment of Market Square

Request for Proposal: RFP 15-09



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**First life,
then spaces, then
buildings — the other way
around never works.**

Jan Gehl

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**What attracts
people most,
it would appear,
is other people.**

William H. Whyte



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Market Square: The Heart of Stratford

Sitting under a canopy of Maple trees awaiting the start of a show at the Avon Theatre.

Shopping and meeting up with friends and family at the Slow Food Market.

Skating in winter; unabashedly running through cooling spray jets in summer.

This vision for a redeveloped Stratford Market Square embraces community values for a public place that inspires gathering, sharing and growing. It's a flexible plaza for programmed events and informal activities. It inspires inclusion for arts, culture, business and government.

This vision of Market Square is rooted in heritage, and inspired by the community's needs and wishes for a vibrant and welcoming space.



The Vision

The quality of a public space has always been defined by those who use it. As noted by Project for Public Spaces, “squares are time-honored places around which whole neighbourhoods and cities in every culture have developed. A movement is now afoot to re-establish public squares as major destinations where civic life flourished.”

Market Square is a unique place in the heart of Stratford. Our design is focused on a historic space that is bound by City Hall and various Downtown businesses. Our goal is to work from these historic roots to establish a progressive sustainable design that is community driven and showcases the rich heritage of the community.

The City's commitment to pursue the redevelopment of Market Square shows its vested interest in responding to the needs of the community, as expressed in the public consultations. Through the conceptual design process, we have created a concept confirming Market Square as an accessible, welcoming and active space that can be phased successfully over time, all while maintaining some parking within the Downtown core and access to public transit.



We envision Market Square as an enticing open space that embraces residents and visitors as they move through the Downtown. Features within the Square take an honest look to the community's past, yet there is an expression of a future vision set within this important urban square.



We propose to activate the edges by incorporating formal and informal seating opportunities set within a defined street tree canopy of Maple trees. Custom benches speak to the rich agricultural background that surrounds Stratford. Benches within these groves provide adequate seating options and an informal element of play. Large steel columns, paying homage to the community's railroad past, extend vertically from the ground plane to balance the height of City Hall and the large open plaza. Lights set along steel cables connect at varying heights from pole to pole, provide a theatrical lighting scheme that can be programmed to change during events or with the seasons. The steel poles have intricate voids, depicting positive and negative space and providing sections for additional outdoor lighting, digital media and installation of video projection fixtures.

*Summer Concert**Fall Market**Winter Festival*

The flexible plaza allows for the Square to function whether it's programmed or during day-to-day activities. This area can accommodate large open air concerts and theatrical plays, movies, local markets, summer evening long-table dining events, outdoor artist galleries and all sorts of other leisure activities. During hot summer months, the proposed spray jets cool users while adding an element of seasonal water to the Square. In the winter, the flexibility of the open plaza could allow for a skating rink to be installed and winter festivals along the perimeter.

The proposed paving pattern connects Market Square with the front of City Hall, playing off of the Avon River. A mixture of natural stone pavers fill the paving bands, eventually dissipating into coloured concrete as the paving reaches the edge of the proposed skating rink. Within the activated edges, the paving bands extend from behind the curb inward to the seating area and back out to the roadway. These outer paving bands include permeable paving to allow rainwater to pass through the surface into a below grade system of structural soil cells where the runoff is temporarily stored and infiltrated through the tree roots. The southern section of the Square is divided by a long formal limestone staircase accented by two large wood clad seat walls. The stairs act a visual separation from the upper plaza and the lower flexible parking area.



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Twenty-nine parking spaces have been retained as part of the overall concept, with the option to remove spaces at a later date (depending on the City's parking needs) to open up the southern section of the Square into a linear promenade with street trees, seating opportunities and local art locations.

Keeping Market Place South as a one-way road, the drive aisles connecting the parking lot to Downie Street and Wellington Street will have sleeves set within the paving to allow for flexible bollards to be installed during festivals or planned events to close off the parking area to vehicles and open up the south section to pedestrians. By keeping the drive aisles in place, this allows for business deliveries in off hours to continue as they do presently.



The flanking concrete seat walls accent the edge and provide an opportunity to integrate video projection onto the ground plane. The proposed seat walls have a subtle reveal with the base to allow for LED light bands and the ability for video projection to be cast along the ground plane.

The outer perimeter of the Square has been adjusted along Downie Street and Wellington Street in order to provide a temporary location for the City's bus services. Three spaces are proposed on both streets for bus parking, allowing for the important public transportation stop at City Hall to stay in use and uninterrupted until the future bus station can be developed. If the City transit study recommends relocating the transit hub off-site, these bus parking spaces can easily be converted to additional parking spaces – including much-needed accessible parking spaces.



Our Approach

Our approach for the redevelopment of Market Square can be separated into six distinct categories. Each category places different demands on the physical environment: identity, community, interaction, flexibility, sustainability, and culture and the arts. The development of our design takes into account all six elements to create a flexible space that will help shape the identity of Stratford.

Identity

Market Square should reflect the essence of Stratford. Because the Square is located in the heart of Stratford, it has the ability to become an outdoor destination for the City and

surrounding communities. Our concept is intended to evoke a vibrant and active space that celebrates the community's rich history and ties to the surrounding agriculture. It will celebrate the unique character, architecture, industry and heritage of Stratford in a way that is empathetic to the past and sensible to the future.

It will help foster a renewed sense of pride in this place. We aim to create an animated and cohesive identity for the overall Square, and develop a hierarchy of inviting smaller spaces that create a central destination in Downtown Stratford. The Square is designed to promote repeat visits to the space through all seasons and reintegrate the Square's relationship into the fabric of what makes Stratford so special.

Community



The Square is the heart of the City, and the community is its heartbeat. Our concept creates a central community gathering space; a place where arts and culture are celebrated and threaded into the surrounding neighbourhoods, contributing to a walkable, livable network of destinations in Downtown Stratford. Our concept reclaims some of the original function of this space, as was intended by early Stratford citizens, as a gathering place for the people and the Market.

The Square will be a genuine community amenity that is clean, sustainable, safe and inviting year round, bringing together citizens and visitors.

As noted in the Vision and Guiding Principles, our team will continue to work with the City, community and stakeholders throughout the design process to further build consensus and ensure that key priorities are implemented to develop a design that is community based and supported.

Interaction

Our concept and proposed future design development works with the established Vision and Guiding Principles, creating a Square with a variety of smaller places within it to appeal to various users and to draw people to the space regardless of the activities taking place within it. As urban designers, we want to provide a place where people naturally want to go – to enable encounters between old friends and introductions to new acquaintances. Visitors to the Square can interact with Stratford's heritage, culture and arts through historical signage and community information boards that can be used in conjunction with the Stratford Life app (and other apps as identified by City Staff). Our concept is targeted to meet the needs of a diverse group of users, of all ages and abilities. This means we are ensuring that all targeted audiences and demographics are taken into account – providing a public square that is accessible and meets all accessibility requirements.

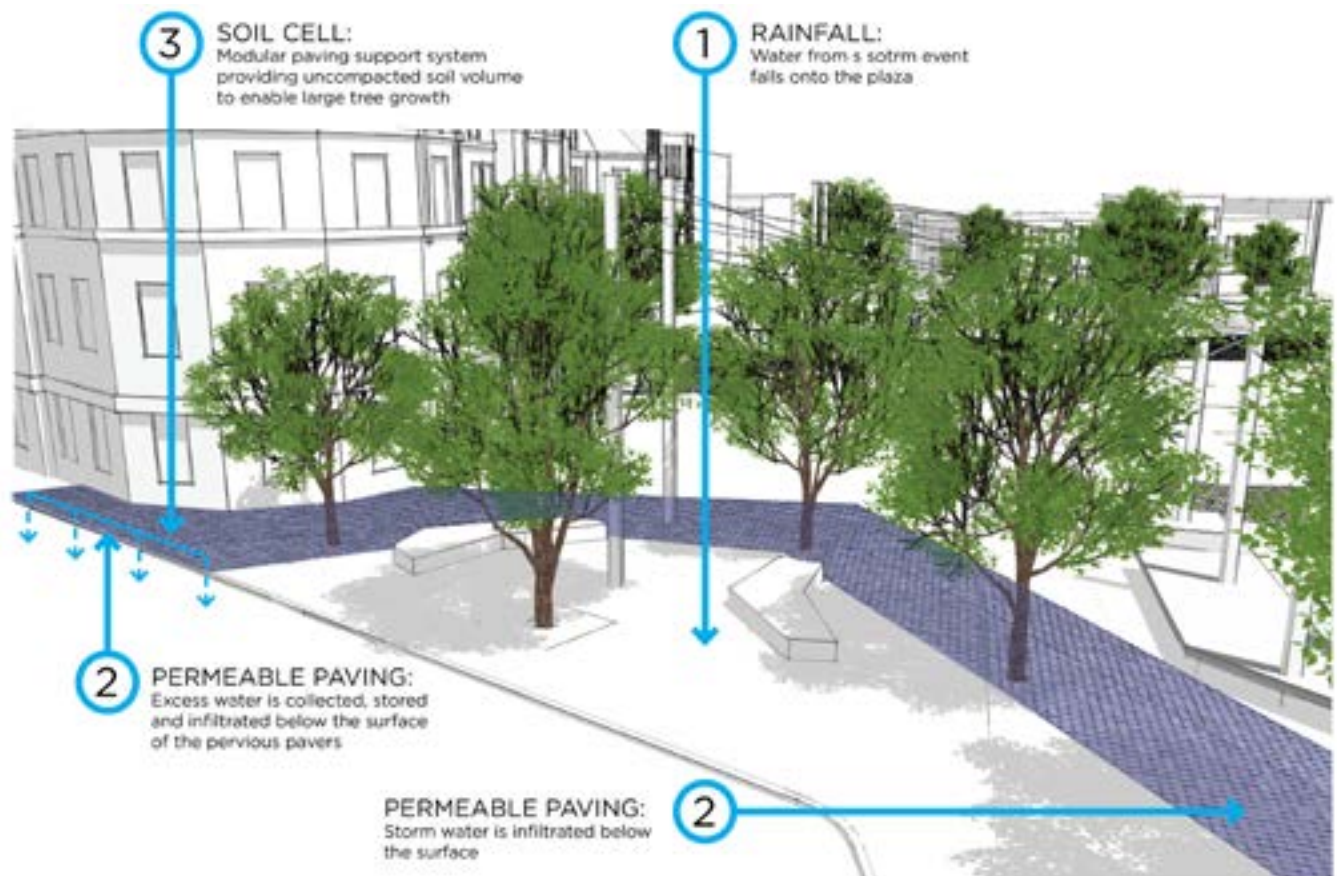
Site safety will be enhanced through the employment of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Site heritage features will be highlighted where possible to engage site users with the unique history of the Square, and will inform further design decisions related to thematic elements, material choices, and general landscaping.

Sustainability

The Square should incorporate best management practices for rainwater harvesting, water filtration and drainage. Through the detailed design process we will continue to identify opportunities for innovation to save costs, achieve multi-layered benefits, find efficiencies between project components, and to incorporate proven strategies that benefit the social, environmental, and economic bottom line of sustainability.

We are committed to the City of Stratford’s position that incorporating sustainable features into the redevelopment of Market Square is smart and responsible design. This thinking is inherent in all our work as Landscape Architects, Architects, Electrical Engineers and Civil Engineers. We will use the start-up meeting to ensure that the sustainable measures proposed in our concept meet the expectations of the City, and that those measures, along with what the City would like to see, are incorporated into the future development of Market Square. We will also discuss additional sustainable practices throughout the life cycle of the project – from design and construction, through to operation and maintenance.

For reference, there are a number of Low-Impact Development (LID) techniques that are well-suited for utilization within the redevelopment of Market Square. A few that we believe to be most applicable are described below:



Firstly, permeable pavement is a LID technique which could be implemented within the Square. Permeable pavements allow rainwater to pass through the surface into a reservoir where the runoff is temporarily stored and infiltrated. As depicted in our concept, this technique can be used to capture stormwater runoff and to reduce peak flows in the City's storm system.

Structural soil cells can be incorporated into a LID system to provide tree root growth zones as well as stormwater management quality and quantity control. A structural soil cell system could be installed below the permeable pavements areas, allowing for the majority of granulars to be replaced with planting soils. Stormwater can be directed below the permeable paving surface where the soils act as they do in a bioretention system, capturing pollutants, and additionally providing a gateway for evapotranspiration.

Alternatively, stormwater runoff could be directed to the subgrade system via trench drains or bioretention planting beds. The soil cell system also provides a significant quantity of high-quality un-compacted soil that enables large trees to survive and thrive for the long term despite being planted in an unnatural, urban environment, and thereby creating a small urban forest within Downtown Stratford.

The suitability of each technique will be judged as we move along in the design process on the basis of environmental, economic and social impacts. Together with the City, we will choose a strategy that exemplifies the best sustainable practices and inspires pride in the people who use it.

Flexibility

Within our concept and proposed detailed design process, flexibility not only lies within the capacity for the project to be implemented successfully in phases but also within the day-to-day function of Market Square. The ongoing use of the Square will change during the course of the day, week, and year. Flexibility needs to be intentionally programmed as a response to these natural and organized fluctuations.

Our concept creates a space that functions as well on a typical (unprogrammed) day as it does during a Canada Day event, during the Slow Food Sunday Market, or during an outdoor theatre presentation. Our concept accommodates springtime music festivities, summer fun in the water feature, autumn harvest markets, art crawls and winter events.



We have provided the space for a temporary stage, designed fixtures to allow for movies in the square, art presentations and other similar events. The roadway at the southern extent of the square was designed to function equally well with or without vehicular traffic, with movable bollards located at the vehicle entrance and exit that can be installed or removed depending on the needs of the event.

Our concept has been thoughtfully designed to meet today's ongoing and ever-changing functional requirements, along with those of the future.

Culture and the Arts

Market Square should evoke the energy, creativity and theatrical spirit of Stratford. It should become a place that is fun, vibrant, exciting and diverse. The development of Market Square should be a place for community and culture, a place of program, social interaction, arts, culture, and education. Local food and art festivals co-exist with artisan markets, fairs and art installations in a show of richness and complexity of Stratford's unique culture.

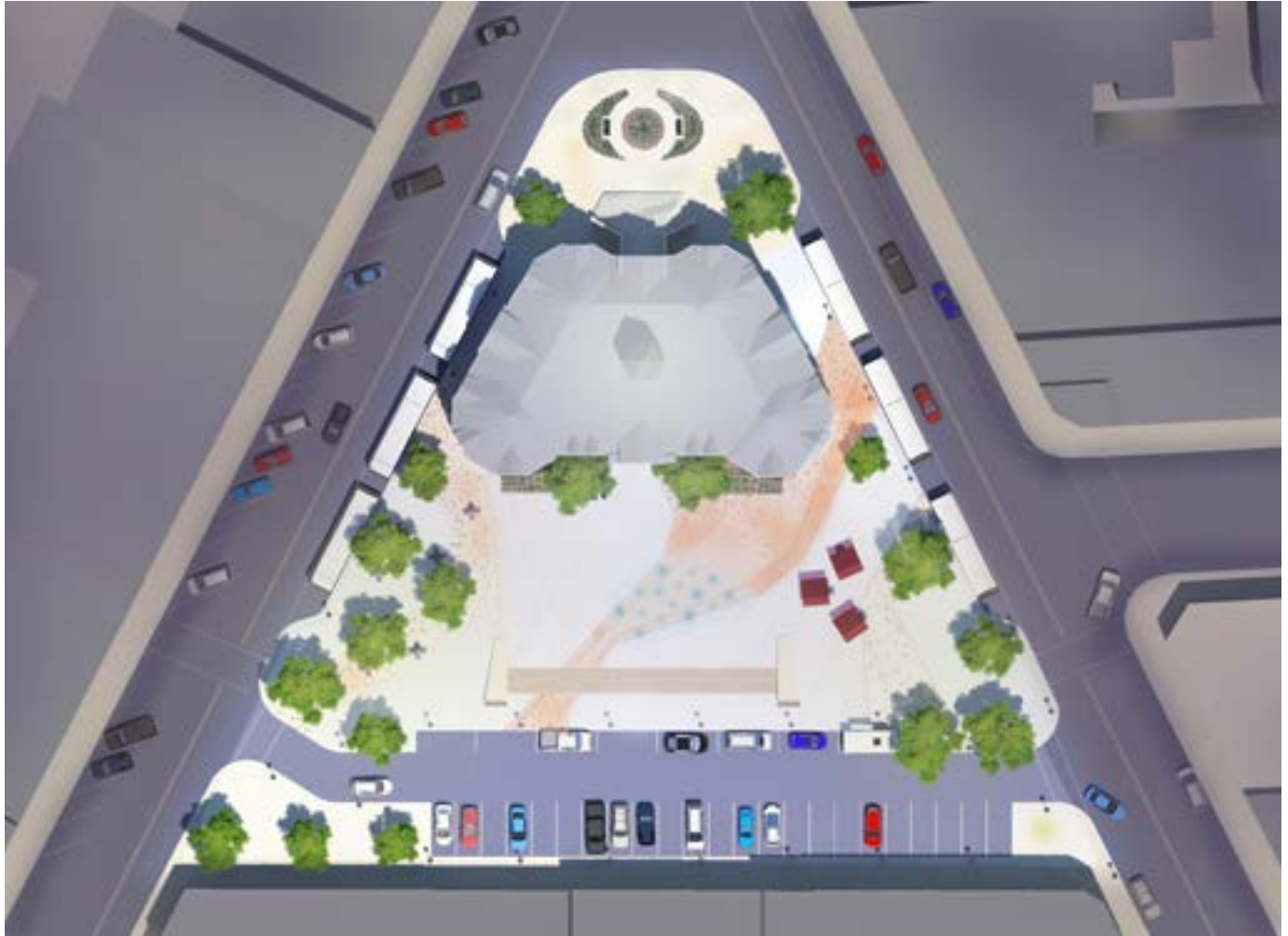


The Square should allow local artists and artisans the opportunity to showcase their craft and to publicly interact with the community. Public artwork should be installed that was designed in collaboration with the community, respecting the strong industrial history and the agricultural fabric that surrounds the City on all sides. The Square and its digital room can act as a stage for the display of new and innovative technologies, and promote the collaboration between the community and technology residencies such as the University of Waterloo – Stratford Campus Digital Media School.

Our design recognizes all these essential elements that contribute toward much of what makes the City of Stratford an artist hub.



Phase 1 Concept



In order to develop a stand-alone first phase with the flexibility of a phased approach for future development, we propose to first activate the edges along Downie Street and Wellington Street and install the long formal limestone staircase that is accented by two large wood clad seat walls. The stairs act a visual separation from the upper plaza and the lower parking area. By activating the edges and opening up the middle portion of Market Square, we are able to define a sense of place within the Square on day one, allowing for ease of expansion in the future.

The front of City Hall (Lloyd Robertson Garden) will remain as is. The only changes would be to the extents of the curb line and paving to accommodate the temporary bus parking bays along Downie Street and Wellington Street. The river-like paving pattern would begin at approximately the mid-point of City Hall and continue south toward the proposed parking area (Market Place South). Market Place South would be re-graded, paved with asphalt and the proposed parking pattern striped.

A continuous curb would have to be poured to provide a safety buffer between the pedestrian sidewalk and proposed parallel parking spots. From a site furnishings perspective, light fixtures would be installed in order to tie the drive aisle in to the existing streetscape.

Within the middle of the Square, the urban water feature would become the focal point and installed during the first phase of work. Although an important element, Phase 1 would not be able to accommodate the cost of fully installing refrigeration lines for a winter skating rink. However, we have allowed for a rough-in to be completed within the first phase in order to allow for piping to easily be installed once funding is available for the rink.

The existing transient waiting room would be renovated in Phase 1 to accommodate the mechanical pump equipment for the fountain and skating rink and also provide adequate space for City Staff to store tables, chairs, umbrellas and other site elements.

Along Wellington Street, we plan to implement the first portion of our proposed LID techniques by installing permeable paving, trench drains and below grade soil cells. As mentioned previously, we are committed to the City of Stratford's position to incorporating sustainable features into the redevelopment of Market Square and that is why this design element has been included in Phase 1.

Overall site furnishings for Phase 1 would include the proposed cafe tables and chairs, along with the large umbrellas shade structures. The custom designed wood bench would need to be installed as funds are made available, which could lead to fundraising opportunities within the community.

This proposed Phase 1 design approach is based on input from people who use, operate and maintain the Market Square space. Our goal is to support the City, citizens and visitors to redevelop this civic plaza with a design that will be supported, and championed, by the community who helped realize this vision.

The experience of the GSP Group-led consulting team to work with communities to design important public spaces, along with our familiarity and understanding of Stratford, informs the principal phase of this project. Years of consultation and study of all facets of downtown improvement have been considered in this concept phase to address the short-term and long-term priorities of the community.

- ① Market Square
- ② The Grove
- ③ Digital Room
- ④ Sesquicentennial Plaza
- ⑤ Lloyd Robertson Garden
- ⑥ Avon Fountain
- ⑦ Market Place Promenade
- ⑧ Conversation Corner



Market Square Master Plan



- ① Market Square
- ② The Grove
- ③ Parking
- ④ Lloyd Robertson Garden
- ⑤ Avon Fountain
- ⑥ Conversation Corner



Market Square Master Plan - Phase One











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Work Plan

The following phased Work Plan details when community engagement will be applied, identifies meetings that will take place, deliverables, and the responsibilities of the GSP Group-led consultant team and the City of Stratford for each phase of the project.

The development of Market Square will begin in Phase 1, so that a cohesive set of final drawings can be produced at Phase 3 of the project.

The proposed project phases are:

Phase 1 – Conceptual Design Refinement

Phase 2 – Detailed Design

Phase 3 – Construction Documents

Phase 4 – Tender Documentation and Administration

Phase 5 – Contract Administration

Phase 1 – Conceptual Design Refinement

Project Start-Up Meeting:

The project will commence with a start-up meeting between City Staff and the consultant team. The primary purpose of this meeting includes debrief on the proposed concept developed by our team, planning of the project phasing process and finalization of the project schedule. During this meeting, City Staff will be given an opportunity to brief the consulting team and recap comments received to date on the concept presented, including a detailed review of the approved vision and guiding principles for the Square improvements and next steps.

Stratford Market Committee Meeting:

As stated previously, collaboration and engagement is a key component to our design approach – we are firm believers in not designing a public space for our own purposes, but rather for the people using it. After our initial project start-up meeting, the consultant team will begin to focus our efforts on engaging the Stratford Market Square Committee. This shall be one, if not the most important elements during the initial stages of the project. Our past experience informs us that involving key stakeholders early in the process can only benefit the project in the long run. It is our intention that during this initial meeting with the Stratford Market Square Committee, we discuss in detail our design intent and planned programming for the space, while also retaining key stakeholder information in regards to the site's past history.

Conceptual Design Refinement:

Following the project start-up meeting and meeting with the Stratford Market Square Committee, our team will refine the master plan and Phase 1 concept in order to meet the immediate needs of the community and to ensure that the design that is implemented as part of Phase 1 is in line with what the City wants. The refined concept would be presented in plan view for the overall master plan and approved Phase 1 area, along with accompanying character sketches and cross-sections specifically for the Phase 1 area only. Accompanying the refined concept will be an updated Class 'D' cost estimate depicting associated costs for the proposed Square.

Following the submittal of the refined concept, a review meeting will be scheduled where comments and feedback will be discussed and next steps established. Typically, we allow for 10 working days between the submittal date and the review meeting to allow for adequate time for City Staff to review and circulate the submittal.

Phase 2 – Detailed Design

During the detailed design and design implementation phase, our team will begin to take the approved conceptual site plan and character sketches and develop those into working drawings, also known as Design Development documents. Finished site grading and servicing will be designed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and City of Stratford guidelines for the development. The proposed grades will respect portions of Market Square that are to remain as-is and support the design objectives for the space.

Design of a water service stubbed at the proposed water feature as well as trench drains and/or areas drains for collection of stormwater will be included in the design development drawings.

During this phase, we will meet with City Staff to review the current progress and discuss design items such as site layout, materials, plant species, site furnishing and additional future construction phasing options (if required).

A 100% Design Development package will be presented at a review meeting with City Staff and appointed stakeholders, and shall include

- Overall proposed site plan
- Demolition plan
- Preliminary site layout
- Preliminary site servicing
- Preliminary site grading
- Hardscape materials selections
- Planting bed layout and plant material selections
- Site furnishing selections
- Construction details

- Estimate of cost
- Outline specifications

CPTED Review:

Included as part of our 100% Design Development submittal will be a preliminary CPTED report for City records. CPTED is a proactive design approach focused on reducing the potential for crime through thoughtful design of the physical environment. CPTED is also intended to address fear of crime and perceived threats to safety. CPTED design is based around four principles: access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement and maintenance. The report will contain a CPTED analysis identifying potential for crime, and provide context-sensitive recommendations relating to the four principles of CPTED. Our CPTED review will also demonstrate that all City safety requirements are met. These recommendations will inform the final plan for the site.

Community Meeting:

Following the proposed Detailed Design review meeting, we propose to conduct a community engagement workshop (Community Meeting). This meeting will be led by the senior members of the consultant team. The City of Stratford will be responsible for developing and issuing invitations and publicity for the consultation event.

To raise awareness of the project among local residents prior to the Community Meeting, we suggest circulating a letter in the community, including postings on the City's current social media accounts. In addition, if required, the consultant team can provide content for the project web page.

The purpose of the Community Meeting is to "cast a wide net" to educate the local neighbourhood and wider community about what will be implemented from the approved master plan as part of Phase 1. The meeting will also allow stakeholders the ability to discuss what they are concerned about, along with ideas and opportunities that can be explored in the development of a construction document package or future phasing. In order to maximize attendance and opportunities for feedback, the Community Meeting should be scheduled between 7:00pm and 9:00pm on a weeknight.

Analysis of Consultation Feedback:

The key findings of the internal and external consultations will be collated as one document by the design team and reviewed with City Staff. A summary of these findings will be made available to the City of Stratford for posting on the project web page.

The analysis of the concerns and issues will help inform the work undertaken in Phase 3 of the project. The consultant team will apply the feedback as an important reference for the development of the construction document package.

Geotechnical Investigation:

If deemed a requirement, a geotechnical investigation will be undertaken in Phase 2 involving exploratory boreholes to gain insight into existing soil. This investigation will provide geotechnical recommendations for design and construction of the services proposed within the square.

It will also establish soil types and depths, water table elevations, and will provide details and recommendations related to pavement design and dewatering requirements during servicing.

Phase 3 – Construction Documents

Working closely with the City during this integral phase, the GSP Group-led consultant team will develop construction drawings based on the approved Phase 1 project area and detailed design package.

A draft Construction Drawing (CD) package will be presented to City Staff at 75% completion, accompanied by a Class 'B' cost estimate. The purpose of this meeting is to allow Staff to review the evolution of the construction detailing and give feedback so the consultant team has clear direction heading toward completion of the construction package. Typically, we allow 5-10 working days between the submittal date and the review meeting to allow adequate time for City Staff to review and circulate the submittal.

Following comments and feedback received from the 75% CD package, a 100% draft Construction Document package will be presented at a second meeting with City Staff. At this time, the capital cost estimate will be updated and refined to a Class 'A' estimate.

The final 100% completed construction drawing package will include:

- Cover page
- Existing conditions plan
- Demolition plan
- Site servicing plan
- Grading plan
- Electrical plan
- Mechanical plan
- Layout and materials plan
- Planting plan and schedule of plants
- Schedule of site furnishings
- Schedule of light fixtures
- Construction details
- Specifications
- 'Class A' cost estimate

Management and Operations Plan:

The redevelopment of Market Square is both a short-term and long-term process, established from a set framework and vision. The conceptual design, design development and construction documents, along with detailed costing, create a clear vision for the project and will be carried throughout the scope of work.

The construction document drawings and overall management plan will synthesize the City's goals and the public's aspirations for the Square, which will ultimately lead to a realistic and achievable plan for implementation. Development of preliminary policies, schedules and recommendations for site management and operations will be created in a culmination of the construction documents to ensure that a cohesive design is developed and can be managed and maintained properly.

As part of our deliverable, we will include operational costs and a suggested management structure for the overall maintenance of the Square.

Phase 4 – Tender Documentation and Administration

The construction documents and specifications will form the content of the tender package, to be administered by City Staff. It is our understanding the City of Stratford will manage and administer the Tender Phase.

The consultant team will support the City in carrying out the following tasks:

- Attend and facilitate pre-bid site meeting with potential contractors;
- Assist with responding to tender queries;
- Issue addenda (if necessary);
- Review tender responses and provide a bid tabulation;
- Provide Recommendation for Award; and
- Issue "Issued for Construction" set.

Phase 5 – Contract Administration

Project management and contract administration will be provided by the consulting team, as it relates directly to their discipline. A representative of GSP Group will act (if required) as Construction Project Manager for the contract between the City of Stratford and the Contractor.

While it is not possible at this time to predict which tasks will be required of the consulting team during construction, we have associated typical tasks and notes as they relate to a typical construction process similar to this scope of work.

Contract Administration services can include:

- Field reviews;
- Construction site meetings;
- Project documentation;
- Payment certifications;
- CCN's/CO's/SI's;
- Review of Shop drawings, Samples, Mock-ups and Project Construction QC;
- Substantial Completion Punch and Certificate;
- Final Completion Certificate; and
- Contract close-out procedures.

Within one month of receiving as-built drawings from the construction contractor, the GSP Group-led consultant team would submit a complete set of 'project record' drawings to the City of Stratford in electronic format.

Summary

This proposed five-phase work plan speaks to an approach based on key input from the Stratford Market Square Committee, stakeholders, and the community, as well as ongoing feedback and review from City Staff. Our consultant team, led by GSP Group, understands the uniqueness of this project. There is a desire to balance the day-to-day needs of Stratford's Downtown core, while addressing the underutilized space. We address the need for a flexible space that can be configured as needed throughout the year for special events and celebrations, or small gatherings and interactions.

This work plan proposes a sensible approach to cost management throughout the design and construction process to support the City with its budget considerations. It's also a forward-looking proposal. We address the opportunity for progressive sustainable design standards, while embracing technology through collaboration, including the University of Waterloo – Stratford Campus Digital Media School.

It is a community goal to celebrate Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017 at a redeveloped Market Square. With this in mind, we present a concept that improves accessibility for a more inclusive civic space, while respecting and celebrating the rich heritage of Market Square that will serve to contribute to the Downtown Stratford experience.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our design of a redeveloped Stratford Market Square.