

**EVALUATING DOWNTOWN DESIGN:
A comparative assessment of Cornwall and Belleville, Ontario.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1– INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to compare the physical design of four case study downtowns in Eastern Ontario. Kent Robertson’s principles provide a guiding framework discussed below. The dearth of literature in this area unfortunately means that there are no recognized tools for evaluating the physical design of small downtowns. Thus, this report employs a number of unrelated tools to comparatively evaluate the case studies. Following the presentation of these findings is a discussion of the implications for the successful revitalization of the case studies, as well as recommendations for improving their physical design. Finally, this report concludes with a consideration of the limitations of the methods used and suggestions for improving the method in future research.

2 – CASE SELECTION

Four case study downtowns were selected for this report, two from the City of Belleville and two from the City of Cornwall. These cities were selected because of their broad range of similarities, including population and development history. Belleville’s current downtown has a distinct appearance and a notably “Main Street” building typology, showing evidence of # y
Downtown Belleville Master Plan (DBMP) in 2006. The *DBMP* received an award from the Canadian Institute of Planners the

4 – ANALYSIS

Robertson’s principles provided an effective guideline for the comparison of the case study downtowns. Data collection consisted of a document and policy review to examine any downtown plans adopted by the cities, followed by one visit to each downtown to conduct the necessary evaluations and take photographs as needed. The evaluation criteria and tools helped to identify the design strengths and weaknesses in the selected downtowns. The downtowns were then compared according to their treatment of each criteria or principle described by Robertson. The table below shows the relative performance of each downtown with respect to the given criteria.

Table i-1–Comparison of Case Study Downtowns

Criteria	<i>DBMP</i>	Downtown Belleville	Le Village	Downtown Cornwall
Plan/Vision for Downtown				
Downtown Heritage				
Waterfront Linkage				
Pedestrian Friendliness				

5 – CONCLUSION

The *DBMP* was found to be the most representative of Robertson’s criteria for successful downtowns, as expected. Recommendations for improving the *DBMP* emphasized the need to expand on the implementation of the *Plan*’s vision and design guidelines. It was also recommended that infill development bridging the waterfront and downtown be of an appropriate building type, and that the range of appropriate building types be extended to better reflect the diversity of buildings currently present in Downtown Belleville. Finally, a set of enforceable design guidelines should be incorporated into the *DBMP*