

City of Hamilton

Downtown and Community Renewal **Community Improvement Plan**

Planning and Economic Development Department
Economic Development Division
Urban Renewal Section

February 2014 Consolidation

This February 2014 Consolidation incorporates the following amendments to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan, originally adopted and approved by Hamilton City Council on November 16, 2011 (By-law 11-273):

- **Amendment No. 1, adopted and approved by Hamilton City Council on February 13, 2013 (By-law 13-029)**
- **Amendment No. 2, adopted and approved by Hamilton City Council on September 25, 2013 (By-law 13-239)**
- **Amendment No. 3, adopted and approved by Hamilton City Council on November 13, 2013 (By-law 13-278), in effect as of February 25, 2014 pursuant to Section 17(30) of the Planning Act**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan (the Plan) provides the basis for community improvement programs and initiatives within designated Community Improvement Project Areas in the City of Hamilton. It focuses on Hamilton's various downtowns, commercial business districts, mixed use corridors and neighbourhoods targeted for community improvement, including parts of the west harbour area, as designated in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law. Community improvement plans, programs and initiatives support the planning and financing of development activities that effectively use, reuse and rehabilitate lands, buildings and infrastructure. They prioritize municipal investment and are intended to stimulate private sector investment, property maintenance and revitalization within the Project Areas.

In addition and complementary to this Plan, the City of Hamilton's Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement (ERASE) Community Improvement Plan provides a comprehensive set of programs designed to encourage and promote brownfield redevelopment. As its name suggests, the ERASE Plan is designed to "erase" brownfields by providing financial incentives to clean them up and replace them with productive economic land uses, thereby improving both economic opportunities and environmental conditions in the City. These two Community Improvement Plans help to implement the City's vision and goals expressed in approved policies and strategies, such as VISION 2020, the Official Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, and the Corporate Strategic Plan.

The Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan is organized in the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Purpose
3. Legislative Authority
4. Previous Plans, Programs and Initiatives
5. Supporting Policy and Strategies
6. Community Improvement Project Areas
7. Goals and Objectives
8. Programs and Initiatives
9. Monitoring
10. Approval and Amendment Process

2. PURPOSE

Community improvement programs and initiatives should facilitate development/redevelopment in targeted locations in need of revitalization, improved public benefits/amenities, and stimulation of private sector investment. While community improvement primarily deals with land and buildings, it in turn

can affect social, economic and environmental matters by supporting physical changes that can result in more socially cohesive, economically sound and environmentally friendly communities.

The purpose of the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan is:

- to provide the framework for City programs and initiatives within the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area, in a manner that meets the legislative requirements of the *Planning Act's* Community Improvement provisions, including those that permit a municipality to provide financial assistance to private enterprise (see Section 3 of this Plan);
- to outline a set of financial incentive programs designed to encourage and stimulate private sector investment and redevelopment; and,
- to focus and co-ordinate municipal action and investment that promotes and enhances the physical, social and economic environments in Hamilton's various downtowns, commercial business districts, mixed use corridors and neighbourhoods targeted for community improvement, as designated in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law.

This Plan functions as an implementation tool. It builds upon the City's past community improvement efforts in Hamilton's downtowns, commercial business districts and mixed use corridors, as noted in Section 4. The programs and initiatives provided in Section 8 are meant to encourage development activities that complement and implement the vision and policies established in related plans and strategies, such as VISION 2020, the Official Plan, the Economic Development Strategy, and the Corporate Strategic Plan. These and other supporting documents are reviewed in Section 5 to provide rationale for the Community Improvement Project Areas described in Section 6, as well as the context for this Plan's goals and objectives stated in Section 7.

Monitoring the Plan's implementation is undertaken through the City's performance measurement reporting as noted in Section 9. This Plan may be amended from time to time in accordance with Section 10.

3. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The primary legislative framework for community improvement planning in Ontario is established in the *Planning Act* and the *Municipal Act*. This legislation sets the parameters which govern how municipalities may prepare community improvement plans and programs, including financial incentives that would otherwise be prohibited.

3.1 Provincial Legislation

Section 106(1) of the *Municipal Act* states: “a municipality shall not assist directly or indirectly any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses for that purpose.” Providing financial or other assistance, often referred to as bonusing, is normally prohibited, including the following actions:

- giving or lending money or municipal property;
- guaranteeing borrowing;
- leasing or selling municipal property below fair market value; or,
- giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee.

There are exceptions to the rule against bonusing. For community improvement initiatives, an exception is made in Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act* for municipalities exercising powers under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or under Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act*. This exception provides the legislative basis for the financial incentive programs described in Section 8.1 of this Plan.

The *Planning Act* (Section 28) allows municipalities that have provisions in their Official Plan relating to community improvement to designate by by-law a community improvement project area. As per Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act*:

- a *community improvement project area* is defined as “a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason;”
- *community improvement* is defined as “the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement or energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary.”

A municipality may engage in the following actions within a designated community improvement project area:

- acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28(3));
- prepare a community improvement plan for the project area (Section 28(4));

- construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the approved community improvement plan (Section 28(6));
- sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the approved community improvement plan (Section 28(6)); and,
- make grants or loans, in conformity with the approved community improvement plan, to the registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan (Section 28(7)).

Section 28(7.1) defines *eligible costs* as “costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities.”

In addition, Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act* allows a municipality to provide property tax assistance to properties within a designated community improvement project area for environmental remediation purposes, where a community improvement plan is in effect containing provisions respecting such tax assistance. The City of Hamilton exercises this power through the Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement (ERASE) Community Improvement Plan and the ERASE Tax Assistance Program.

The maximum amount of financial assistance that a municipality may offer is limited by Section 28(7.3) of the *Planning Act*. The total of the grants, loans and tax assistance provided to particular lands and buildings under the *Planning Act* (Section 28) and the *Municipal Act* (Section 365.1) shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement plan with respect to those lands and buildings. The financial incentive programs provided in Section 8.1 of this Plan therefore contain eligibility criteria and financial assistance maximum limits to ensure that the total assistance offered to a property does not exceed eligible costs.

3.2 Municipal Authorization

Community improvement policy is contained in the City of Hamilton’s Official Plan (including both the Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan currently in effect and in the new Urban Hamilton Official Plan approved but under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board). As noted in Section 3.1 of this Community Improvement Plan, municipalities must have provisions in their Official Plan relating to community improvement in order to designate a community improvement project area and prepare a community improvement plan.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan states that all or part of the City's Urban Area may be designated as a community improvement project area. It suggests that one or more of the following characteristics may be present in a project area:

- a) building stock or property in need of rehabilitation;
- b) buildings and structures of heritage or architectural significance;
- c) encroachment of incompatible land uses or activities;
- d) deteriorated or insufficient physical infrastructure such as, but not limited to, sanitary and storm sewers and water mains, public transit, roads/streets, curbs, sidewalks, street lighting and utilities;
- e) deteriorated or insufficient community services such as, but not limited to, public indoor/outdoor recreational facilities, public open space and public social facilities;
- f) inadequate mix of housing types;
- g) known or perceived environmental contamination;
- h) deteriorated or insufficient parking facilities;
- i) poor overall visual amenity of the area, including, but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design;
- j) existing Business Improvement Areas or potential for inclusion in a Business Improvement Area designation;
- k) inappropriate road access and traffic circulation;
- l) shortage of land to accommodate building expansion and/or parking and loading facilities;
- m) other barriers to the improvement or redevelopment of underutilized land or buildings; and
- n) any other environmental or community economic development reasons for designation.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan states that community improvement shall be accomplished through:

(1) the upgrading and ongoing maintenance of communities or areas characterized by obsolete buildings, and/or conflicting land uses and/or inadequate physical infrastructure and community services; and

(2) the establishment of policies and programs to address identified economic, land development and housing supply issues or needs throughout the Urban Area.

The Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan also outlines actions that may be undertaken through the preparation and implementation of community improvement plans in Hamilton, including:

- a) allocation of public funds such as grants, loans or other financial instruments for the physical rehabilitation, redevelopment or improvement of land and buildings;

- b) municipal acquisition of land or buildings and subsequent clearance, rehabilitation, redevelopment or resale of these properties or other preparation of land or buildings for community improvement;
- c) encouragement of infill and rehabilitation where feasible;
- d) promotion of historic preservation through appropriate local, Provincial and Federal legislation;
- e) promotion of the viability of Commercial areas through the establishment and support of Business Improvement Areas; and
- f) other municipal actions, programs or investments for the purpose of strengthening and enhancing neighbourhood stability, stimulating production of a variety of housing types, facilitating local economic growth, improving social or environmental conditions, or promoting cultural development.

It is important to note the Official Plan states that all developments participating in programs and initiatives contained within community improvement plans shall conform to Official Plan policies and shall comply with all municipal codes and regulations of the City.

(All of the community improvement policies noted above in Section 3.2 have been carried forward from the Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan, which adds “inadequate affordable housing” to the list of potential project area characteristics and the following text to the list of actions which may be undertaken: “identification of cultural heritage resources which shall be, wherever possible, conserved through appropriate adaptive reuse and alterations. Demolition of heritage structures shall be discouraged.” As noted, the Urban Hamilton Official Plan is under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board.)

4. PREVIOUS PLANS, PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

This Plan (2011) replaces the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan approved in 2007, as subsequently amended and formerly known as the Downtown Hamilton, Community Downtowns and Business Improvement Areas Community Improvement Plan. The 2011 update ensures that the Plan remains relevant to current policy direction, including the City’s Corporate Strategic Plan and the new Urban Hamilton Official Plan. It incorporates changes identified through a review of the previous Plan (2007) and programs, as amended.

Various community improvement plans have been in place within Hamilton prior to the amalgamation of Hamilton-Wentworth Region and its local area municipalities in 2001. The 2007 Plan combined twelve plans into one new plan. Those individual plans and associated project areas were focused on Downtown Hamilton, the community downtowns of Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown, as well as the Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). The 2007 Plan also introduced additional community improvement project areas in the Ancaster

Village Core, Binbrook Community Core, and the Locke Street BIA. It was then amended to extend programs to various commercial corridors within the City.

Past community improvement initiatives included the Downtown Convert/Renovate to Residential Loan Program, the Gore Heritage Program, and the Commercial Façade Program, which was established in 1986 to provide loans for the rehabilitation of commercial property façades in BIAs. This program has evolved over time into the present Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program.

Programs and initiatives introduced over the past decade have laid the foundation for continued revitalization that this Plan builds upon. They include the following six programs, described in more detail in Section 8.1:

1. *The Hamilton Downtown Multi-Residential Property Investment Program (formerly the Hamilton Downtown Residential Loan Program)* – From 2002 to year end 2010, the City loaned over \$13 million to support the creation/renovation of 747 dwelling units, at an interest cost to the City of approximately \$1.6 million. The building permit construction cost of participating projects is \$85 million.
2. *The Hamilton Downtown Property Improvement Grant Program (formerly the Enterprise Zone – Municipal Realty Tax Incentive Grant Program)* – From 2004 to year end 2010, over \$3.1 million in combined grants were issued to 15 projects with a collective building permit construction value of \$68 million.
3. *The Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program* – From 2002 to year end 2010, over \$1.6 million in combined grants were issued to over 230 projects with a collective construction value of \$3.8 million in various Business Improvement Areas across the City.
4. *The Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program* – This program introduced in 2007 has supported the conversion of vacant commercial and institutional space to residential use and the renovation of existing residential units.
5. *The Hamilton Heritage Property Grant Program* – Since 2008, this program has provided grants to support the restoration and maintenance of eight heritage properties.
6. *The Hamilton Downtown Office Tenancy Assistance Program* – This program introduced in 2010 has provided loans to support leasehold improvements for new business locating in Downtown Hamilton.

As suggested above, the various programs contained within Section 8.1 of this Community Improvement Plan may be reviewed and amended from time to time, and new programs added, in accordance with Section 9.

Over the past several years there have been other notable initiatives and investments in the Community Improvement Project Areas where this Plan

applies. They facilitate the creation of an investment-friendly environment and demonstrate the City's commitment to the revitalization of the Project Areas:

- The waiving of development charges in the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area;
- The approval of the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan, to guide development within the area bounded by Queen, Cannon, Wellington and Hunter streets;
- The Downtown Zoning By-law, introduced in 2005 as the first phase of the new Zoning By-law for the City of Hamilton;
- The approval of the new Urban Hamilton Official Plan, which provides the foundation for completing the new Zoning By-law for the rest of the urban areas of the City (pending resolution of the Official Plan appeals now before the Ontario Municipal Board);
- The approval of Downtown Heritage Character Zone Design Guidelines, Site Plan Guidelines, Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines, Binbrook Village Community Core Urban Design Guidelines, to provide further direction for implementing land use policies and zoning;
- The conversion of one-way streets to two-way streets along with streetscape improvement projects that enhance the pedestrian environment and urban street life, in accordance with the Transportation Master Plan and Downtown Mobility Streets Master Plan, streetscape master plans for York Boulevard, King Street West, Hughson Street and King William Street, and the Urban Braille System Guidelines;
- The 10-year Downtown Capital Budget Plan, which establishes priorities in relation to infrastructure and public space improvements within the Downtown core;
- Downtown Hamilton capital projects, including the renovation of City Hall, the Hamilton Farmers Market and Public Library, Lister Block revitalization, and MacNab Street Transit Terminal development;
- Capital projects in the community downtowns including Ancaster Square, Dundas Memorial Square, and new parks in Stoney Creek and Binbrook; and,
- The completion and updating of Commercial Market Analysis and Action Plans for various Business Improvement Areas, as well as the design and installation of BIA gateway features.

5. SUPPORTING POLICY AND STRATEGY

The documents reviewed in this Section provide the direction and policy basis for this Plan's goals, objectives (see Section 7) and programs (see Section 8). It also provides rationale for the community improvement projects areas in which the programs may apply (see Section 6).

5.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (2005) sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining strong communities, a clean and healthy environment, and economic growth. It recognizes that the wise management of development may involve directing, promoting or sustaining growth, and so encourages efficient development patterns that optimize the use of land, resources and public investment in infrastructure and public service facilities. It promotes intensification and redevelopment that takes into account existing building stock or areas, including brownfields.

The Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan addresses the following particular Provincial interests:

- optimizing the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities (PPS Policy 1.6.2 and 1.7.1(a)), including existing and planned transportation infrastructure (PPS 1.6.5.2);
- maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets (PPS 1.7.1(b));
- conservation of significant building heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes (PPS 2.6.1); and
- promoting the redevelopment of brownfield sites (PPS 1.7.1(e)).

5.2 The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places To Grow) and Hamilton's Density Targets

Places to Grow (2006) provides growth management policy direction from the Province to municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including Hamilton. It envisions increasing intensification of existing built-up areas, with a focus on urban growth centres, intensification corridors, major transit station areas, brownfield sites and greyfields. To this end, the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area is included within the built up area designation, and Downtown Hamilton has been identified as an urban growth centre in both the Growth Plan and the City's Official Plan.

The Growth Plan encourages intensification and transit-supportive, mixed use development to make better use of existing, underutilized infrastructure. It directs growth to specific intensification areas by establishing minimum density targets that municipalities must identify in their Official Plans. Hamilton's density targets are as follows:

- By the year 2015 and each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 percent of all residential development occurring annually within Hamilton will be within the built-up area;

- The Downtown Hamilton Urban Growth Centre will be planned to achieve, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density target of 250 residents and jobs per hectare. (The Growth Plan identifies a target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare in the Downtown Hamilton Urban Growth Centre; however, it also permits municipalities to establish higher targets, which the City has done in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan).
- Additional density targets are identified in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan for the following intensification areas, each subject to adjustment through future secondary plans:
 - 100 to 150 residents and jobs per hectare in the sub-regional service nodes at Limeridge Mall and Eastgate Square;
 - 100 residents and jobs per hectare in the community downtown nodes of Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown; and
 - 50 residents and jobs per hectare in the community downtown node of Ancaster.

The Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan would help the City meet these targets through its programs designed to stimulate development and rehabilitation of residential and commercial lands and buildings in specific project areas.

5.3 Vision 2020

VISION 2020 is a vision of a strong healthy, sustainable Hamilton shared by citizens, Council, businesses and organizations. First developed and adopted in 1992, VISION 2020 was renewed by the community in 1997 and 2003 and re-adopted by Council in 2003. In addition to a vision statement, VISION 2020 provides a set of goals to guide planning and decision-making that considers social/health, economic and environmental impacts. It has been integrated into the City's primary decision-making processes, including the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS), the Master Plans for Transportation, Stormwater, Water and Wastewater, the new Urban and Rural Official Plans, the Corporate Strategic Plan and the Social Development Strategy.

These are some specific VISION 2020 goals of particular relevance to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan:

- To encourage development which makes efficient and economical use of infrastructure and services
- To preserve our natural and historical heritage
- To redevelop Hamilton's central core as the regional centre
- To promote Hamilton's environment as a desirable place to live and work
- To reduce the consumption of non-renewable energy and eliminate the excessive and wasteful use of energy

- To identify and virtually eliminate sources of potential chemical contamination (This goal is addressed primarily by the ERASE Community Improvement Plan.)

5.4 Official Plan

The Official Plan implements the vision and principles expressed by VISION 2020, the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS), and the Corporate Strategic Plan. It also implements Provincial land use policy at the municipal level. In addition to the community improvement policies in effect through the Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan, as outlined in Section 3.2 of this Community Improvement Plan, the Urban Hamilton Official Plan includes land use policy that would establish an urban structure based on nodes and corridors, overlaying land use designations guiding the development/redevelopment of commercial and mixed use areas, neighbourhoods, open spaces, institutional and employment lands.

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan has been approved by Council and the Province but is under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board. As such, the Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan and the Official Plans of the former area municipalities now within the amalgamated City of Hamilton, as may be amended from time to time, are in effect until such time as the Urban Hamilton Official Plan is approved by the Board. The area municipalities include Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook, Hamilton and Stoney Creek.

While not currently in effect, the Urban Hamilton Official Plan is a document that provides Council-approved direction in support of this Community Improvement Plan's goals, objectives and programs, and which is not inconsistent with the principles found in the various Official Plans in effect, such as compact, mixed-use development/redevelopment that makes more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and vacant and/or under-utilized land and buildings in the built-up area.

The Urban Hamilton Official Plan promotes the development of compact, mixed use environments that support transit, cycling and pedestrian movement, where people can live, work, learn and play. It notes that residential intensification is a key component of Hamilton's growth strategy and is essential to meeting the City's growth targets. Nodes and corridors are identified as the primary intensification areas and focus of reurbanization activities (i.e. population growth, private and public infill and redevelopment, and infrastructure investment).

Specifically, the Urban Hamilton Official Plan states that the City shall consider the creation of new, or expansion of existing programs, to encourage and/or facilitate residential intensification. It also recognizes the benefits that arts and culture bring to the local economy and quality of life, including their role in the adaptive reuse of older buildings and the transformation of deteriorated

neighbourhoods and commercial areas. Additional Official Plan policy is highlighted in Section 6 of this Community Improvement Plan, specific to the sub-area of the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area described.

5.5 Hamilton Economic Development Strategy 2010-2015

This Community Improvement Plan is supported by the Community Development component of the 2010-2015 Economic Development Strategy. The Community Development component is focused on downtowns, brownfields and the waterfront area, all three of which are traditional centres of economic activity. The primary objectives in the Strategy's community redevelopment component include:

- improving the image of Hamilton and stimulating investment;
- utilizing existing infrastructure;
- increasing residential and non-residential assessment; and,
- creating high-quality jobs.

The Strategy advocates partnerships/collaboration between the public sector, local businesses, residents and the broader community. It notes that local government needs to assume a leadership role in creating an investment-friendly environment through the application of innovative planning practices, investment in physical infrastructure (hard services and facilities), and establishing special purpose programs/policies that encourage redevelopment and attract investment to strategic areas of the city. They include delivery of targeted financial incentive programs to assist and encourage residential and non-residential assessment growth, as well as physical and social investments that will address real and perceived issues like safety and cleanliness.

Specific deliverables include: continued implementation of the Downtown Office Strategy, which has led to this Plan's Office Tenancy Assistance Program; partnerships to attract higher education establishments and post-secondary graduates to Downtown Hamilton; creating linkages between Downtown and the waterfront; development of a creative corridor on King William Street through Artwalk and support for a creative/cultural precinct by encouraging the adaptive reuse of older underutilized buildings.

5.6 City of Hamilton Corporate Strategic Plan

The Corporate Strategic Plan developed by Council identifies strategic priorities for the City's future, including the following themes and focus areas:

Themes

- Image – changing the perception of Hamilton and promoting the City as a great place to live, work and play

- Job Creation – ensuring the City has a thriving and diverse business economy with sustainable jobs and employment for its residents

Focus Areas

- Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization
- Financial Stability
- Effective Inter-governmental Relations
- Growing Our Economy
- Social Development
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Community

To help implement the Corporate Strategic Plan, a series of desired end results and related key activities have been identified for the various City departments. This Community Improvement Plan's contribution toward achieving desired end results is outlined in Section 9, Monitoring, linking the performance measures to be monitored with the Corporate Strategic Plan.

5.7 Transit-related Development Initiatives

5.7.1 Transit-Oriented Design (TOD)

The City has prepared *Transit-oriented Design Guidelines* for Hamilton to assist with the design of development/redevelopment along transit corridors. The document recognizes that “transit alone is unlikely to create a market demand, but it can act as a catalyst and direct the demand” to appropriate areas. It recommends “[establishing] partnerships when developing TOD areas to leverage the strengths of different groups (private, public, community)” and suggests that incentives such as tax increment financing programs can help to implement TOD development.

5.7.2 Rapid Transit

In collaboration with the City's planning, engineering and design studies for rapid transit, a secondary planning process was launched for lands along the B-Line Corridor (Main-King-Queenston). It recognizes that investment in intensification along the corridor is important to meet the City's Official Plan goals and to the long term success of a rapid transit system. As part of a broad consultation process, a focus group with development industry representatives was held. It was suggested that to stimulate investment that would realize the vision for the corridor expressed in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan (and to be detailed in future secondary plan policy), development incentives and a more streamlined application process are needed.

6. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AREAS

This Community Improvement Plan applies to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area. The Project Area is designated in a By-law approved by City Council. The Project Area includes sub-areas in which various programs and initiatives may be offered, as detailed in Section 8 and the program descriptions provided in the appendices to this Plan.

The sub-areas that collectively comprise the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area are described below. For specific property reference, the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law should be consulted. The Project Area may include abutting properties provided they are part of the comprehensive redevelopment of an eligible property.

6.1 Downtown Hamilton

The Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area includes the historic core of the City of Hamilton and has been the traditional centre of commercial and cultural activity, institutional uses and government for the broader region. As such, the Downtown Hamilton Urban Growth Centre, contained within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area, is recognized in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan as the City's pre-eminent node for commercial and office development that will also accommodate a large and diverse population, major cultural facilities and entertainment uses, and function as a major transit hub. The area includes the central hub of the City's transit system at the MacNab Transit Terminal, the Hunter Street GO Transit station, as well as future GO service on the CN railway at James Street North. Key features include Gore Park, City Hall, the Central Public Library, Hamilton Farmers Market, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Dofasco Centre for the Arts, Copps Coliseum, Hamilton Place and Convention Centre, the Jackson Square/City Centre complex, and commercial districts including James Street North and South and Hess Village. The limits of the Downtown Hamilton BIA, International Village BIA, King West BIA and Main West Esplanade BIA are each contained within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area boundary.

The Downtown Hamilton Urban Growth Centre includes properties within and abutting the area bound by Cannon Street, Victoria Avenue, Hunter Street and Queen Street, and also includes the properties fronting onto James Street north to the CN railway and south to Charlton Avenue. The Growth Centre has defined the past limits of the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area; however, in addition to the Growth Centre, the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area now includes precincts to the north, east, south and west. These additional downtown precincts are generally described as follows:

- Northeast: the balance of the Beasley downtown neighbourhood to the north of Cannon Street, east of James Street, south of the CN railway, and west of Wellington Street, as well as properties to the north of Cannon Street, east of Wellington Street, south of the CN railway, and west of the alleyway that runs parallel between Victoria Avenue and East Avenue, excepting the General hospital block and including all of the former Royal Oak Dairy lands on both sides of the alleyway;
- Northwest: the balance of the Central downtown neighbourhood to the north of Cannon Street, west of James Street, south of the CN railway, and along and east of Queen Street;
- East: the mixed-use commercial area along and between King Street East and Main Street East from Victoria Avenue to Wentworth Street;
- South: the mixed-use commercial area adjacent to James Street South, and parts of the Corktown downtown neighbourhood further east of James Street to Ferguson Avenue, from Charlton Avenue to Hunter Street;
- West: the mixed-use commercial areas along King Street West and Main Street West (including the limits of the Main West Esplanade BIA), from Queen Street to Highway 403.

The strength and vitality of Hamilton's downtown is a clear signal of the strength and vitality of the City as a whole. The area has been influenced by broad economic, social and physical change and continues to represent an important area where municipal financial resources, planning initiatives and City Council support have been and will be continually dedicated. As noted in the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan, vibrant parks, streets and public spaces enhance the value of properties in their vicinity. Investment in the public realm is a key priority in the Downtown and benefits the many underutilized or undeveloped properties. The Secondary Plan also notes the ring of parking lots and vacant land that isolate the central core from the adjacent neighbourhoods, and recognizes that strengthening and providing more residential development is a key to Downtown revitalization. It promotes the use of municipal incentive programs to encourage the retention, conservation, rehabilitation, restoration or adaptive reuse of the Downtown's many heritage properties.

The conversion of former industrial and warehouse buildings to residential and/or commercial use is also promoted by the Downtown Hamilton Secondary Plan, as well as the West Harbour (Setting Sail) Secondary Plan which would apply to land now within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area to the north of Cannon Street. The northern precincts in the Beasley and Central neighbourhoods include areas in transition from past and declining industrial use, including vacant land and buildings. The Corktown neighbourhood to the south also contains scattered vacant land and buildings suitable for infill and redevelopment. Although this Plan's programs have supported notable improvements to numerous properties in the Downtown core, it remains evident that there is a continued need to support the upgrading and improved

maintenance and appearance of underutilized commercial buildings within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area.

6.2 Community Downtowns and BIAs

Hamilton is a city of many communities. In addition to Downtown Hamilton, it features a variety of commercial areas and civic centres reflective of the past development and history of the former Hamilton-Wentworth Region. They include the downtown areas of the former municipalities of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough (Waterdown), Glanbrook (Binbrook) and Stoney Creek and commercial corridors between them. Certain parts of these community downtowns and corridors have established Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to co-ordinate promotion and beautification. To varying degrees, the Community Downtowns and BIAs face many of the same issues as Downtown Hamilton that can be addressed through community improvement, such as the conservation/adaptive reuse of heritage buildings, making better use of underutilized land and buildings through infill and redevelopment, and increasing the number of residents to support local business in mixed-use, transit-oriented environments.

The Community Improvement Project Areas for the community downtowns of Ancaster, Binbrook, Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown are described below. Each area is identified as a Community Node in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan's urban structure, except Binbrook which is identified as part of the Neighbourhoods element of the urban structure. However, Binbrook is also designated as the Community Core in the Binbrook Village Secondary Plan, and has historically served much of the surrounding area in the former Glanbrook Township as a downtown. A BIA is contained within part or all of each downtown area except Binbrook.

- The Ancaster Village Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Ancaster BIA. Within it is the area described in the both the Town of Ancaster Official Plan and the Urban Hamilton Official Plan as the Ancaster Village Core, consisting of the properties fronting on Wilson Street from the Old Mill Restaurant to the west end of the Stoneham Plaza/Dalley Drive.
- The Binbrook Community Improvement Project Area – This area is referred to as the Community Core in the Binbrook Village Secondary Plan.
- The Dundas Community Improvement Project Area – This area includes the area designated Downtown Mixed Use, as indicated on Schedule A, Land Use, Town of Dundas Official Plan, and also includes the area defined by the limits of the Dundas BIA.
- The Downtown Stoney Creek Community Improvement Project Area – This area is designated within the City of Stoney Creek Official Plan as Downtown, as indicated on Schedule A, General Land Use Plan and Schedule A5, Olde

Town District Secondary Plan. The Stoney Creek BIA is contained within the Downtown Stoney Creek Community Improvement Project Area boundary.

- The Waterdown Community Improvement Project Area – This area includes the Downtown commercial area defined in the Town of Flamborough Official Plan as “the historic core area designated BUSINESS DISTRICT, and the URBAN COMMERCIAL areas along Hamilton Street North, and Dundas Street west of Hamilton Street” (Town of Flamborough Official Plan, Section A.3), as indicated on Schedule A, Waterdown Urban Area, Land Use Plan, and Schedule A-2, West Waterdown Secondary Plan, and also includes the area defined by the limits of the Waterdown BIA.

The following Community Improvement Project Areas are located outside of a designated downtown area and are defined by the boundaries of the corresponding BIA:

- The Barton Village Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Barton Village BIA (to the east of the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area).
- The Concession Street Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Concession Street BIA.
- The Locke Street Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Locke Street BIA.
- The Ottawa Street Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Ottawa Street BIA.
- The Westdale Community Improvement Project Area – This area is defined by the limits of the Westdale BIA.

6.3 Commercial Corridors

In addition to the Downtowns and BIAs, commercial corridors with “main street” characteristics are also designated in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law. Although they are not located within a designated downtown area or organized in a BIA, these corridors exhibit similar characteristics and may face similar challenges. They generally have a mix of land uses predominated by ground-floor commercial uses, in buildings situated close to the street upon relatively small properties. The identified areas are primarily located within the lower, inner City where the population has been declining and buildings are underutilized, and in areas close to McMaster University and Mohawk College where there is a need to provide student housing alternatives along the corridors outside of interior, established residential neighbourhoods. There is opportunity for community improvement initiatives to address these issues, and make use of existing infrastructure and transit routes along the corridors.

The corridors comprising the Commercial Corridors Community Improvement Project Area are identified more precisely in the Downtown and Community

Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law, and are generally described as residential and commercial properties along the following streets:

- Barton Street East, between Sherman Avenue and Walter Avenue;
- Dundurn Street South, from Aberdeen Avenue to Chatham Street;
- James Street North, from Strachan Street to just north of Burlington Street;
- Kenilworth Avenue, between Main Street and Barton Street;
- King Street East, between Main Street at the Delta and Wentworth Street;
- King Street West, between Highway 403 and the Westdale BIA;
- Locke Street South, between the Locke Street BIA and the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area at Main Street West;
- Main Street East, between Wentworth Street and Rosewood Road;
- Main Street West, between Highway 403 and Osler Drive, also including abutting properties designated 'Mixed Use' on the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan Land Use Plan;
- Parkdale Avenue, between Queenston Road and Barton Street;
- Queenston Road, between the Main Street traffic circle and Reid Avenue;
- Upper James Street, between Queensdale Avenue and Fennell Avenue;
- Upper Wellington Street, from just south of Brucedale Avenue to just north of Inverness Avenue; and,
- York Boulevard, between the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area and, Dundurn Street on the south side or Inchbury Street on the north side.

Properties abutting those listed above may also be included in the Commercial Corridors Community Improvement Project Area provided that they are situated between the "main street" and a parallel, public alleyway.

6.4 Designated Heritage Properties

A heritage property that is not otherwise included in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area as described in Section 6.1, 6.2 or 6.3 above, is designated as part of said Project Area by the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law, provided that the property is:

- a) located within the older City, below the Niagara Escarpment and between Highway 403 and the Red Hill Valley Parkway Parkway; and
- b) designated under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act; and
- c) used or to be used for commercial, institutional, and/or multi-residential purposes.

6.5 Mount Hope Airport Gateway

The Mount Hope Airport Gateway Community Improvement Project Area includes a portion of the lands designated District Commercial in the Mount Hope

Secondary Plan, as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area By-law. The area's current characteristics, cultural heritage as the seat of the former Glanford Township, and unique location adjacent to the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport, make it a fit with the redevelopment objectives of this Plan. The area possesses building stock and property in need of rehabilitation; buildings and structures of heritage or architectural significance; deteriorated or insufficient physical infrastructure; and encroachment of incompatible land uses or activities affecting development opportunities. Although the proximity to the Airport provides a high degree of visibility, there are conflicts between existing uses and close Airport operations.

The Mount Hope Airport Gateway Community Improvement Project Area is focused on the existing and historic built up commercial and mixed use area of Mount Hope at the intersection of Airport Road and Homestead Drive and north to Upper James Street (former Highway 6), where community improvement programs and initiatives may help facilitate the transition from residential to other permitted uses for properties abutting the airport, address long standing vacancies and poor building conditions, and promote infill of vacant lots within that area.

7. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With consideration to the broader policy and geographic context outlined in Sections 5 and 6 of this Plan, the goals of the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan are:

- To create safe, clean, socially, economically and environmentally healthy areas where people want to live, work, shop, play and learn;
- To ensure a viable population of residents, jobs and visitors to the Project Areas that provide local business support, employment and economic opportunities;
- To make more efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- To encourage the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage resources;
- To increase the value of land and buildings within the community improvement project areas.

To help realize those goals, the following objectives of the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan will guide the development of its programs and related initiatives:

- To increase and improve the supply of residential units in the Project Areas;
- To facilitate the redevelopment of underutilized buildings, vacant sites, brownfield and surface parking lots;

- To improve the accessibility, functionality and marketability of the built environment, including the rehabilitation, maintenance and adaptive re-use of built heritage resources;
- To improve the aesthetics and design of streetscapes and public and private building façades;
- To support streetscape improvements and pedestrian amenities that encourage walking, cycling and transit use;
- To support the upgrading of physical services and social, recreational and cultural facilities;
- To encourage the provision of unique or specialized attractions and community events;
- To identify and address regulatory, social, environmental and economic barriers and/or restrictions to development and investment opportunities;
- To provide loans, grants and other economic incentives to stimulate private property reinvestment activity;
- To encourage the co-ordination of municipal expenditures and planning and development activity;
- To promote the continued development of Downtown Hamilton as the primary business, administrative, cultural and creative centre of the City;
- To promote and enhance the unique environments established in the community downtowns of Ancaster, Binbrook, Dundas, Stoney Creek and Waterdown, Business Improvement Areas, and other mixed-use corridors.

8. PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Section 8 outlines programs and initiatives that may foster and support revitalization and renewal within the associated Community Improvement Project Areas.

8.1 Provision of Loans and Grants

Through its financial incentive programs, the City of Hamilton will provide grants and/or loans to registered/assessed owners and tenants of land and buildings, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or part of the eligible costs of a project as described in this Community Improvement Plan.

Approval of all loan or grant program applications is at the absolute discretion of the City and subject to the availability of funds.

Depending on the specific program, project costs that may be eligible for financial assistance relate to:

- the creation of new dwelling units and/or commercial space upon vacant land and parking lots or within building additions;
- the renovation of existing dwelling units and/or commercial space;

- the conversion of existing but underutilized space to accommodate another permitted use;
- interior and/or exterior building improvements, including commercial façades and signage;
- the conservation and restoration of heritage features of designated heritage properties.

Projects will contribute to the achievement of this Plan's goals and objectives by:

- providing new residential and/or employment opportunities that support intensification and the efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- assisting the rehabilitation, maintenance and adaptive re-use of built heritage resources; and,
- increasing the value, utility and aesthetic appeal of land and buildings.

In addition to the following program summaries, Council shall adopt by resolution detailed implementation measures to allow for the efficient administration of each financial incentive program. These administration procedures are contained in the appendices to this Plan, providing detailed program descriptions, terms and administration process.

8.1.1 Hamilton Downtown Multi-Residential Property Investment Program

The Hamilton Downtown Multi-Residential Property Investment Program supports residential development within Downtown Hamilton as defined by the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area. The Program offers financial assistance to projects that result in predominantly residential development, including:

- the creation of a new multiple dwelling upon vacant land or parking areas; and/or
- a building addition containing at least three (3) new dwelling units; and/or
- the conversion of existing commercial, industrial, institutional space into a multiple dwelling; and/or
- renovations to existing multiple dwellings.

A multiple dwelling must contain at least three (3) dwelling units. Projects involving fewer than three (3) dwelling units may be eligible for the Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program which is also available within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area (see Section 8.1.4).

The maximum loan is based on 25% of the project's Cost to Construct Budget, including uses accessory to the dwelling units (e.g. parking, laundry, gym/pool used by residents); for mixed use projects, only the residential component of the project's Cost to Construct Budget, together with uses accessory to the dwelling units, is factored into the loan amount.

The maximum loan term is five years and six months from the date of the final advance exclusive of holdback. The loan interest rate will be 0% for the first five years. For the last six months of the loan, interest shall be payable on the principle outstanding at the then prevailing rate established by Council for interest on tax arrears. Alternately, when the loan is \$5 million or more, or the project involves the conservation and/or adaptive re-use of significant heritage buildings, the maximum loan term may be extended to fifteen years, with an interest rate at the City's five-year borrowing rate plus 1% applied after the first five year interest free period. Approval of the loan application, including a loan term extension, is at the absolute discretion of the City and subject to the availability of funds.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Hamilton Downtown Multi-Residential Property Investment Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'A' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.2 Hamilton Tax Increment Grant Program (formerly the Hamilton Downtown Property Improvement Grant Program)

The Hamilton Tax Increment Grant Program provides an economic incentive for developing, redeveloping or renovating residential and/or commercial land and buildings located within Downtown Hamilton, the community downtowns, active and dormant Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Mount Hope Airport Gateway, and the commercial corridors along Barton Street east of the Barton Village BIA and along Kenilworth Avenue North, as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area.

The Program offers a five year grant, subject to City Council approval, in an amount related to the increase in municipal realty taxes realized by a completed project. The grant shall not exceed 100% of the municipal realty tax increase during the first year, 80% in year 2, 60% in year 3, 40% in year 4, and 20% in year 5. For purposes of determining the eligible amount of the increase in municipal realty taxes, special charges including BIA levies shall be excluded from the calculation. The grant would reduce the effect of an increase in municipal (City portion only) realty taxes attributable to the differential between the pre-development assessment and the post-development assessment.

A limited assignment of the grant under the terms of the Program may be made from a registered or assessed owner of the property to the initial purchaser of a new condominium unit. An applicant may assign the grant to the City of Hamilton as payment of their loan under the Hamilton Downtown/West Harbourfront Remediation Loan Program or its successor program, provided though the City's Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement (ERASE) Community Improvement Plan.

Before any grant is provided to the applicant for a property for which a satisfactory grant application has been received and approved, realty taxes are required to have been paid as billed each year.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Hamilton Tax Increment Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'B' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.3 BIA Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program

The BIA Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program (CPIG) provides financial assistance to commercial property owners/authorized tenants within all active Business Improvement Areas in the City of Hamilton. An active BIA is not considered dormant as defined by the Dormant Business Improvement Area Status Procedure.

The Program aims to improve upon the appearance of numerous BIA commercial properties, recognizing their visibility and contribution to Hamilton's image, for both residents and visitors. It is understood that smaller scale commercial activities contribute greatly to the economic vitality and health of the commercial sector within the City. The Program seeks to build upon these successes, to result in long lasting physical improvements to the assets of commercial property owners/authorized tenants, and to bring about aesthetic improvements to the commercial areas as defined by the Business Improvement Areas.

For buildings that have a linear foot street frontage greater than twenty-five feet (25'), grants will be paid on a matching basis of \$400 per linear foot of street frontage up to a maximum of \$20,000 for eligible work under the Program. For buildings that have a linear foot street frontage of twenty-five feet (25') or less, grants will be paid on a matching basis to a maximum of \$10,000 for eligible work under the Program. As a further incentive for corner properties and properties where at least one side of the property is exposed to a public street, regardless of the measurement of the street frontage, the City may increase the maximum grant amount to \$25,000, on a similar matching basis for eligible work under the Program to recognize the importance of flankage facades. The grant amount will be determined by the measurement of the street frontage and the measurement of the corner/exposed wall multiplied by \$400 per linear foot.

In addition to the grant amounts noted above, artfully designed façade improvements and art pieces placed on private property that are openly accessible to public view may be eligible for a supplemental grant through the Program's art component. The grant will be paid on a matching basis up to a maximum of \$10,000 per property for eligible art works, and may be provided in addition to other CPIG program grants for other eligible improvements. These

applications will be evaluated and recommended through a juried review process prior to approval, as per the terms of the CPIG Program.

Architectural, design or engineering fees may be eligible up to \$1,500 as part of the total grant awarded for completed construction. Interior improvements relating to display windows and entrance areas are eligible to an amount of \$2,500 of the total grant payable.

Restoration/conservation of heritage features on commercial properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are not eligible for this program; however, improvements other than those to designated heritage features are eligible subject to the approval of a City heritage permit.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the BIA Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'C' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.4 Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program

The Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program is designed to stimulate residential development within Downtown Hamilton, the community downtowns, active and dormant Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Mount Hope Airport Gateway, and other commercial corridors as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area.

The program provides financial assistance for converting existing built commercial space into residential units or renovations to existing residential units. It also provides assistance for the costs of creating new residential units via building additions and new construction on vacant land and parking lots. Preference will be given to buildings with direct frontage on a main street.

The maximum loan amount is \$15,000 per dwelling unit to a maximum of \$600,000 per property. A minimum of 50% of the loan per unit must be spent on developing/renovating the unit. The remaining 50% can cover the cost of common elements of the property, such as roofing, HVAC, central air conditioning, fire escapes, foundations, furnaces and entranceways.

The maximum loan term is five years and six months from the date of the final advance exclusive of holdback. The loan interest rate will be at 0 % interest for the first five years. For the last six months of the loan, interest shall be payable on the principal outstanding at the then prevailing rate established by Council for interest on tax arrears. In addition to the loan, the program has a grant portion of \$5,000 per application, for professional fees such as architects, lawyers, engineers, and surveyors. The grant portion is allocated to professional fees only upon presentation of paid receipts to the City's satisfaction.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Commercial Corridor Housing Loan and Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'D' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.5 Hamilton Heritage Property Grant Program

The Hamilton Heritage Property Grant Program provides financial assistance for structural/stability work required to conserve and restore heritage features, the conservation and restoration of heritage features, and for heritage reports/assessments/studies, for designated heritage properties.

The Program offers a grant contingent on the property being designated under Parts IV or V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, or the property being eligible for designation pursuant to Ontario Regulation 9/06. A condition of the grant will be that the property is designated under Parts IV or V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* prior to grant monies flowing to the applicant. Eligible properties must be located within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area, or one of the community downtown community improvement project areas, or an active Business Improvement Area, Mount Hope Airport Gateway, or be a designated heritage property used or to be used for commercial, institutional or multi-residential purposes and situated within the older, lower City between the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario, between Highway 403 and the Red Hill Valley Parkway Parkway.

For projects valued at \$40,000 or less, the grant will be based on 50% of the total project cost to a maximum grant of \$20,000 for eligible work under the program. For projects valued over \$40,000, the grant will include \$20,000 (i.e. 50% of \$40,000), plus an additional grant based on 25% of the total project cost over \$40,000, to a maximum additional grant of \$130,000. In total, no more than \$150,000 will be granted for eligible work under the program. The heritage related reports/assessments/studies component provides an additional grant that will fund 100% of the cost of the document(s) to a maximum of \$20,000 per application. The applicant must be the property owner or any person to whom the owner has assigned the right to receive the grant.

Grants will be based on municipal addresses, identifying multiple and separate units with ground floor street frontages and entranceways.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Hamilton Heritage Property Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'F' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.6 Office Tenancy Assistance Program

The Office Tenancy Assistance Program provides financial assistance to either building owners or tenants for eligible leasehold improvements to office buildings located within Downtown Hamilton, the community downtowns, active and dormant Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Mount Hope Airport Gateway, and the commercial corridors along Barton Street east of the Barton Village BIA and along Kenilworth Avenue North, as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area. The intent of the program is to facilitate the increased attractiveness and marketability of the office buildings in downtowns and other commercial areas. It aims to reduce the office vacancy rate by attracting new office tenants and owner-occupied office uses from outside the City, and to assist existing office uses to expand.

The maximum loan amount offered through this program will not exceed \$450,000 per application. The loan amount will be based the lesser of either:

- a) 90% of invoiced eligible leasehold improvement costs; or
- b) i) in the case of applications by an owner or tenant involving a lease, the square foot area multiplied by up to \$25 per square foot depending on the term of the lease, or
ii) in the case of applications by an owner not involving a lease (i.e. owner-occupied office space), the square foot area multiplied by \$25.

The maximum loan term is the term of the lease and shall not exceed five (5) years from the date of the final loan advance. In the case of applications for owner-occupied office space, the maximum loan term shall not exceed five (5) years from the date of the final loan advance. The annual interest rate on the loan will be 1% below the prime rate as established by the Royal Bank of Canada.

City Council at its sole discretion may, when initially approving a loan commitment, provide a grant or forgivable loan when an applicant is a not-for-profit publicly-funded educational establishment establishing its presence in Downtown Hamilton.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Office Tenancy Assistance Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix 'E' to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.7 Gore Building Improvement Grant Program

The Gore Building Improvement Grant Program is intended to support the maintenance, attractiveness, functionality and viability of the historic building stock that fronts onto King Street East between James Street and Catharine Street, known

as “the Gore.” It provides assistance to improve building appearance, utility and accessibility, and to meet Property Standards and current Sign By-law requirements.

Grants will be based on municipal addresses, identifying multiple and separate units with ground floor street frontages and entranceways and will be up to a maximum of \$50,000 per municipal address on a matching basis for eligible work under the terms of the Program. The matching basis ratio may be increased to provide 75% of the cost of replacing legal non-conforming signage with new signage that is in conformity with the current Sign By-law.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Gore Building Improvement Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix ‘G’ to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.1.8 Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program

The Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program provides financial assistance for façade improvements that will improve the appearance of commercial properties in Downtown Hamilton, the community downtowns, dormant Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), Mount Hope Airport Gateway, and the commercial corridors along Barton Street east of the Barton Village BIA and along Kenilworth Avenue North, as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area.

The grant will be paid on a matching basis to a maximum of \$10,000 for eligible work under the Program. As a further incentive for corner properties, the City will increase the maximum grant amount to \$12,500 on a similar matching basis for eligible work under the Program to recognize the importance of flankage facades. Restoration/conservation of heritage features on commercial properties designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* are not eligible for this program; however, improvements other than those to designated heritage features are eligible subject to the approval of a City heritage permit.

The detailed program description, terms and administrative procedure for the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program, as adopted by City Council resolution, are provided in Appendix ‘H’ to this Community Improvement Plan.

8.2 Municipal Property Acquisition and Disposition

The City of Hamilton may acquire and prepare property, including land and buildings, for the purposes of redevelopment within any Community Improvement Project Area. The City may also dispose, including sale, lease, or otherwise, of municipal land and buildings within any Community Improvement Project Area for the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives of this Plan.

8.3 Other Strategies

The following programs and initiatives are not provided under the authority of the community improvement provisions of the *Planning Act*, Section 28, but are intended to augment and support the goals, objectives and financial incentive programs contained in this Community Improvement Plan.

8.3.1 Relief from fees and charges

The City of Hamilton may offer relief from fees, levies and charges associated with redevelopment. For example, all or part of a development charge may be waived within a community improvement project area via the City's Development Charge By-law under the authority of the *Development Charges Act*.

8.3.2 Co-operation/Participation with Private Sector Entities

The City of Hamilton may participate financially or otherwise with private sector entities for the objective of furthering the goals and objectives of this Plan. For example, the City may enter into public/private partnerships with developers where appropriate to achieve a desired public good such as the development and operation of a parking structure within Downtown Hamilton.

8.3.3 Capital Improvements

The City of Hamilton will undertake capital improvements in order to enhance the attractiveness of the pedestrian environment along streets and public spaces within the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Areas. These improvements may include but are not limited to expanding the Urban Braille system and providing street furniture, street lighting and pole upgrades, and wayfinding signage. The entrances to the downtown areas and BIAs will be identified by appropriately designed and located gateway features.

8.3.4 Arts and Culture

Downtown Hamilton is seen as the arts and cultural centre of the City, and numerous cultural events are also held within the various community downtowns and commercial districts. The City will continue to encourage cultural and recreational activities as well as festivals and other events in these areas. The City may partner with arts and culture groups to promote and support such events through initiatives such as services in kind.

The City's Public Art Master Plan identifies and prioritizes potential sites and opportunities for new public art projects, including locations within this Community Improvement Plan's Project Areas. The Public Art Master Plan also recommends the use of partnerships with the other public institutions, local cultural organizations and the private sector to facilitate the development of

public art. To this end, community improvement initiatives such as arts component of the Commercial Property Improvement Grant Program will promote partnerships with the private sector for the purpose of implementing exterior art works on privately owned land accessible to the public.

8.3.5 Marketing and Promotion

In accordance with the Economic Development Division's Marketing Plan, the City of Hamilton may promote and advertise or contribute to the promotion or advertisement of programs, initiatives and events in Downtown Hamilton, the Community Downtowns, BIAs and other commercial corridors for the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives of this Plan.

8.3.6 Neighbourhood Development Strategies

The Neighbourhood Development Strategy approved by Council in 2011 takes a holistic approach to neighbourhood planning and how best to maximize investments and deliver services in areas exhibiting poor health, social and economic outcomes. Neighbourhood/community strategies may address issues such as access and equity, access to housing and services, health inequalities, property maintenance, environmental issues, community appearance, economic stability, and crime. Such issues are often complex and require a multi-agency and community-based approach for their resolution.

Key activities of the Neighbourhood Development Strategy include increasing investment in neighbourhoods to support the implementation of priority projects identified by residents and key stakeholders. As part of the integrated team of City and community staff and resources, Urban Renewal staff will work with the Director of Neighbourhood Development Strategies when the Strategy is introduced to specific neighbourhoods, to ensure that existing and future opportunities related to community improvement are considered where appropriate.

9. MONITORING

Monitoring the Plan's implementation is undertaken through the City's performance measurement reporting, and the annual report prepared by the Economic Development Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department.

Performance measures are based the desired end results and key activities set out in the Department's business plan, in alignment with the City's Corporate Strategic Plan. They address the following desired end results:

- improve non-residential assessment ratio
- increase the number of brownfield sites redeveloped

- increase the number of new businesses
- increase taxable assessment growth
- increase the value of non-residential building permits (to improve the non-residential assessment ratio)
- increase the number of visitors, conventions and events
- meet growth targets (population and employment)
- decrease office vacancy rates in the Downtown core
- support waterfront redevelopment
- newly created or revitalized employment sites (to increase the employment rate)
- increase the number of residential units with the Downtown core;
- increase alternative transportation usage in areas such as transit, walking and cycling

10. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENT PROCESS

This Community Improvement Plan will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it is current and adequately reflects existing City policies and priorities, as well as Provincial policies. Monitoring and applicant feedback regarding the Community Improvement Plan and its programs may also lead to amendments and/or minor revisions to the financial incentive program descriptions and terms.

10.1 Formal Amendments

A formal amendment to this Community Improvement Plan is required in the following instances:

- to introduce any new financial incentive programs, to be added to Section 8;
- to increase the amount of financial assistance that may be provided to registered owners, assessed owners, and tenants, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, as described in Section 8; or,
- a change to the Community Improvement Project Area as it is described in Section 6.

Formal amendments will require approval by City Council, and shall be undertaken in accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act* and the City's Public Participation and Notification Policies contained in the Official Plan. As per the Official Plan, notification of the required public meeting for Community Improvement Plan amendments shall be given at least 17 days prior to the date of the meeting. The notice shall be given in accordance with the applicable requirements of the *Planning Act* regulations. Council decisions shall take place no sooner than a minimum of 17 days from the time the first notification is given. Proposed amendments will be circulated to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing prior to approval for consultation purposes. In addition, the City may undertake other communication methods to provide information and seek input,

such as public information open houses, workshops, and direct or electronic mail outs and surveys.

10.2 Other Changes

Council has adopted by resolution detailed implementation measures to allow for the efficient administration of each financial incentive program. These administration procedures are contained in the various program description and terms provided in the appendices to this Community Improvement Plan. Changes to the appendices not requiring a formal amendment will be adopted by City Council by resolution. In addition, Council may discontinue any of the programs contained in this Plan, without amendment to the Plan. Formal amendments, including public meetings under the *Planning Act*, shall not be required for minor administrative amendments to this Plan such as format changes, typographical errors, grammatical errors and policy number changes.

10.3 Transition

Program applications will be processed under the terms of the program in effect at the time the application was approved by Council. When program terms are revised, applications submitted and approved under the former terms of the program will be processed under the former terms unless the City receives a formal cancellation of the application.