



Downtown
Central Business District

Community Improvement Plan

FINAL
September 2010



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The City of Port Colborne retained RCI Consulting in association with GSP Group Inc. to prepare a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Central Business District (CBD) in Port Colborne, referred to in this report interchangeably as the “Downtown CBD”, “Downtown” or “CBD”. Working closely with a project steering committee that included the Mayor, senior City staff, and representatives from the Downtown BIA and the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority, the preparation of this CIP was informed and guided by an extensive program of stakeholder and community consultation.

The purpose of this CIP is to:

- a) Identify the physical, economic, and other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the revitalization of the Downtown CBD;
- b) Articulate a Vision for the Downtown CBD;
- c) Specify a Public Realm Improvement Plan that contains recommended improvements to various elements and features of the Downtown CBD in order to improve the pedestrian environment and promote private sector investment activity; and,
- d) Develop a toolbox of incentive programs that can be offered by the City to directly stimulate private sector investment in the revitalization and redevelopment of the Downtown CBD.

1.2 Project Area

The Council of the City of Port Colborne designated the existing Central Business District (CBD) Community Improvement Project Area on July 27, 2009. This area, also referred to in this report as the “Project Area”, is shown in **Figure 1**. While not yet exhibiting evidence of wide spread blight or deterioration, the Project Area does exhibit signs of stagnation and early signs of deterioration. A number of critical community improvement needs were identified in the Project Area through the detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) contained in Section 5.0 of this report. While the Project Area was designated prior to the preparation of the CIP, the SWOT Analysis confirmed that the Project Area boundary is appropriate and captures only those areas requiring community improvement.





Revised Map
July 27, 2020

 <p>Downtown Central Business District Community Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Figure 1</p> <p>Port Colborne Central Business District Community Improvement Project Area</p>
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1.3 Methodology and Reports

A number of tasks were completed in order to provide a comprehensive foundation for the preparation of the CIP and to prepare the other reports specified in the project terms of reference. First, a Background Report (September 2009) was prepared. This report includes a review of relevant legislation, and provincial, regional and local planning and policy documents.

Next, a Directions Report (April 2010) was prepared, included completion of the following tasks:

- a) Several walking tours of the Downtown CBD in June, July and September of 2009 during which consulting team members took photographs, made observations and took notes with respect to built form, physical characteristics and conditions, urban design, land uses and economic activity;
- b) Preparation of a comprehensive SWOT Analysis of the Downtown CBD, including input received from the project steering committee, and from workshops held with the Downtown BIA and the public on November 24, 2009;
- c) Formulation of a Vision and directions for public realm improvements and incentive programs based on input received from the project steering committee, and from workshops held with the Downtown BIA and the public on November 24, 2009;
- d) A review of best practices utilized by other Niagara Region and other Ontario municipalities to promote revitalization and redevelopment in their downtowns; and,
- e) A review of the Smarter Niagara Incentive Programs.

As required by the project terms of reference, a Traffic Study of the potential conversion of West Street within the Project Area to one-way traffic was prepared. This study examines the potential benefits, challenges, feasibility and impact on the Downtown CBD of converting West Street from two-way operation to one-way operation. There are a number of reasons for examining this potential conversion of West Street to one-way traffic, including:

- The relatively narrow sidewalk on the west side of West Street from Clarence Street to Charlotte Street constraining the pedestrian activity in this section;
- The enhanced opportunities to provide wider sidewalks, more space for streetscape amenities, and more opportunities for on-street activities (which includes outdoor retail display and outdoor patios); and,
- Improving traffic operating conditions at the constrained intersection of Clarence Street and West Street.

Based on the SWOT Analysis and Vision contained in the Directions Report, a Draft Urban Design Strategy and Preliminary Financial Incentive Programs were also prepared. The Draft Urban Design Strategy and Preliminary Financial Incentive Programs were presented to the project steering committee and revised as required before being presented at a second workshop held with the Downtown BIA and the public on June 3, 2010. Input from these workshops was used to revise and finalize the Financial Incentive Programs contained in this CIP, and the Urban Design Strategy (including a Public Realm Improvement Plan, Private Realm Improvements and Façade Improvement Guidelines).

In summary, addition to the CIP, the following reports have been prepared by RCI Consulting in association with GSP Group Inc. and are available under separate cover:

- Background Report (September 2009);
- Directions Report (April 2010);

- Downtown CBD Traffic Study (June 2010); and,
- Downtown CBD Urban Design Strategy (July 2010).

1.4 CIP Content

This CIP is divided into the following fourteen sections:

- Section 2.0 provides a review of the legislative authority and framework to prepare a CIP for the Downtown CBD in Port Colborne.
- Section 3.0 contains a summary of the general planning and other policies that apply in the Community Improvement Project Area and thereby provide guidance for preparation of the CIP.
- Section 4.0 contains a description of the community and stakeholder consultation process that was undertaken to provide input to the preparation of the CIP.
- Section 5.0 contains a summary of the results of the analysis of the Downtown CBD, including the characteristics of the area and the SWOT Analysis.
- Section 6.0 contains a summary of the Vision for the Project Area.
- Section 7.0 contains a brief summary of the Urban Design Strategy.
- Section 8.0 presents a summary of the Public Realm Improvement Plan contained in the Urban Design Strategy.
- Section 9.0 contains a number of recommended policy, regulatory and other initiatives designed to support implementation of the CIP.
- Section 10.0 contains a comprehensive tool kit of municipal Incentive programs specifically designed to help achieve the vision for the Downtown CBD.
- Section 11.0 contains an Implementation Strategy that outlines the priorities for implementation of the various actions required to achieve the Vision for the Downtown CBD contained in this CIP.
- Section 12.0 contains a Monitoring Program designed to assist the City in monitoring progress on implementation of the CIP and the economic and other impacts of the programs contained in the CIP.
- Section 13.0 contains a basic Marketing Strategy for the CIP.
- Finally, Section 14.0 provides a brief conclusion to the CIP.
- The Appendices contain a number of supporting documents, including administrative guidelines for the incentive programs contained in Section 10.0 of the CIP.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This section of the CIP summarizes the legislative framework for the preparation and adoption of community improvement plans by municipalities in Ontario. This includes the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the *Planning Act*. Other Acts that allow municipalities to offer financial incentives are also briefly summarized.

2.1 Municipal Act, 2001

Section 106 (1) and (2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* prohibits municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses. Prohibited actions include:

- Giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money;
- Guaranteeing borrowing;
- Leasing or selling any municipal property at below fair market value; and
- Giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee.

This prohibition is generally known as the “bonusing rule”. Section 106 (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides an exception to this bonusing rule for municipalities exercising powers under subsection 28 (6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or under section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. It is the exception under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* that allows municipalities with enabling provisions in their official plans to prepare and adopt community improvement plans (CIPs). CIPs provide municipalities with a comprehensive framework for the planning and provision of economic development incentives in areas requiring community improvement.

Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* operates within the framework of Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. A municipality with an approved community improvement plan in place that contains provisions specifying tax assistance for environmental remediation costs will be permitted to provide said tax assistance for municipal property taxes. Municipalities may also apply to the Province to provide matching education property tax assistance through the Province’s Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP).

Section 107 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* describes the powers of a municipality to make a grant, including the power to make a grant by way of a loan or guaranteeing a loan, subject to Section 106 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. In addition to the power to make a grant or loan, these powers also include the power to:

- sell or lease land for nominal consideration or to make a grant of land;
- provide for the use by any person of land owned or occupied by the municipality upon such terms as may be fixed by council;
- sell, lease or otherwise dispose of at a nominal price, or make a grant of, any personal property of the municipality or to provide for the use of the personal property on such terms as may be fixed by council.

In order to encourage good stewardship, maintenance and conservation of locally designated heritage properties, municipalities may, under Section 365.2 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, pass a by-law to establish a local Heritage Property Tax Relief (HPTR) program to provide tax relief (10 to 40 per cent) to owners of eligible heritage properties, subject to an agreement to protect the heritage features of their property. This financial tool is designed to help owners of heritage properties maintain and restore their properties. An eligible heritage property for this program is a property or portion of a property that is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* or is part of a heritage conservation district under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* and that is

subject to a heritage easement agreement. The province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. Municipalities that adopt the HPTR program contribute to the program by funding their portion of the tax relief.

2.2 Planning Act

2.2.1 Section 28 – Community Improvement

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities with provisions in their official plans relating to community improvement to designate by by-law a “community improvement project area” and prepare and adopt a community improvement plan for the community improvement project area. Once the community improvement plan has been adopted by the municipality and comes into effect, the municipality may exercise authority under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in order that the exception provided for in Section 106 (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* will apply.

According to 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”. It is important to note that there are a variety of reasons that an area can be designated as an area in need of community improvement. The criteria for designation cover physical deterioration, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings and any other social or community economic development reasons.

Section 28 (1) of the *Planning Act* defines “community improvement” as “the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of 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”.

Once a CIP has come into effect, the municipality may:

- i) acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28 (3) of the *Planning Act*);
- ii) construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28 (6));
- iii) sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28 (6)); and
- iv) make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area, 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 any part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan (Section 28 (7)).

Section 28 (7.1) of the *Planning Act* specifies that the eligible costs of a community improvement plan for the purposes of Subsection 28 (7) may include 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.

Section 28 (7.3) of the *Planning Act* specifies that the total of all grants and loans made in respect of particular lands and buildings under Section 28 (7) and (7.2) of the *Planning Act* and tax assistance provided under Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in respect of the land and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement plan with respect to those lands and buildings.

Section 28(11) of the *Planning Act* allows a municipality to register an agreement concerning a grant or loan made under subsection 28(7) or an agreement entered into under subsection 28(10) against the land to which it applies and the municipality shall be entitled to enforce the provisions thereof against any party to the agreement and, subject to the provisions of the *Registry Act* and the *Land Titles Act*, against any and all subsequent owners or tenants of the land.

2.2.2 Section 69 – Reduction or Waiver of Fees

Section 69 of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities to reduce or waive the amount of a fee in respect of a planning application where it feels payment is unreasonable. Municipalities can use this tool to waive all matter of planning application fees to promote community improvement without inclusion in a CIP. Alternatively, a municipality can collect fees and then provide a partial or total rebate of fees in the form of a grant, but this must be done within a CIP.

2.3 Ontario Heritage Act

The purpose of the *Ontario Heritage Act* is to give municipalities and the provincial government powers to conserve, protect and preserve heritage buildings and archaeological sites in Ontario. While the heritage property tax relief program under Section 365.2 (1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* is designed to assist property owners in maintaining and conserving heritage properties, Section 39 (1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows the council of a municipality to make grants or loans (up-front or tax-increment basis) to owners of designated heritage properties to pay for all or part of the cost of alteration of such designated property on such terms and conditions as the council may prescribe. In order to provide these grants and loans, the municipality must pass a by-law providing for the grant or loan.

Grants and loans for heritage restoration and improvement can also be provided under a CIP. One of the key administrative advantages of Section 39 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* is that it requires only passing of a by-law by the local council rather than the formal public meeting process under Section 17 of the *Planning Act* required for a CIP. One of the disadvantages of the *Ontario Heritage Act* is that unlike the *Planning Act*, it does not allow municipalities to make grants or loans to assignees, e.g., tenants who may wish to undertake heritage improvements.

Another advantage of the *Ontario Heritage Act* is that interpretation of Section 39 (1) of the *Heritage Act* suggests that this section does not restrict grants and loans only to heritage features. Section 39 (1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* refers to "...paying for the whole or any part of the cost of alteration of such designated property on such terms and conditions as the council may prescribe." Consultations with provincial staff and legal experts have confirmed that this section of the Act does not restrict grants and loans only to heritage features.

Section 39 (1) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* can also be used to provide grants and loans for the undertaking of professional design studies as these can be considered “part of the cost of alteration”. A design study is certainly an important precursor to, and key component of, any major heritage feature alteration. Section 39 (2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows the council of a municipality to add the amount of any loan (including interest) to the tax roll and collect said loan in the same way that taxes are collected, for a period of up to 5 years. This section of the Act also allows the municipality to register the loan as a lien or charge against the land.

2.4 Development Charges Act

Section 5 of the Development Charges Act allows a municipality to exempt a type(s) of development from a development charge, but any resulting shortfall cannot be made up through higher development charges for other types of development. This allows upper and lower tier municipalities to offer partial or total exemption from municipal development charges in order to promote community improvement such as downtown redevelopment and/or brownfield redevelopment. Because this financial incentive is normally offered before construction, i.e., at the time of building permit issuance, it is a very powerful community improvement tool.

3.0 POLICY REVIEW

This section of the report provides a summary of the provincial, regional and city planning policies that apply to the Downtown CBD Project Area.

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement, 2005

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and is intended to provide policy direction on key Provincial interests to municipalities as they make planning decisions. The *Planning Act* requires that municipal decisions in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter “shall be consistent with” the PPS. Municipal official plans are required to be consistent with all applicable Provincial policies by adopting appropriate land use designations and policies. As well, community improvement plans must be consistent with the PPS.

The Province of Ontario adopted a new PPS in 2005. This PPS is premised on sustainability principles and the stated vision of this PPS is the wise management of growth. For example, section 1.1.3.3 of the PPS 2005 states “planning authorities shall identify and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated taking into account existing building stock or areas, including brownfield sites, and the availability of suitable existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities required to accommodate projected needs”. Other policies in PPS 2005 (Sections 1.1.1 a), 1.1.1 g) and 1.6.2) support the management of growth to achieve efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term.

3.2 Growth Plan for the Greater Horseshoe

Places to Grow, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is a Provincial initiative to manage growth across the GGH, including the Niagara Region, to ensure that planning decisions are coordinated with strategic investments in community infrastructure. This plan provides a framework to build stronger and more prosperous communities through the better management of growth to 2031. The Growth Plan provides policy directions that:

- Direct growth to built-up areas where the capacity exists to best accommodate the expected population, household and employment growth while providing strict criteria for settlement area boundary expansion;
- By the year 2015 and every year thereafter, require at least 40% of all residential development occurring annually within a municipality to be in the built up area;
- Require municipalities to establish intensification targets;
- Promote transit-supportive densities and a healthy mix of residential and employment land uses;
- Preserve employment lands for future economic opportunities;
- Identify and support a transportation network that links urban growth centers through an extensive multi-modal system anchored by efficient public transit and highway systems for moving people and goods;
- Plan for community infrastructure to support growth;
- Ensure suitable water and wastewater services are available to support future growth; and,
- Identify natural systems and prime agricultural areas, and enhance the conservation of these valuable resources.

3.3 Regional Niagara Policy Plan

The Regional Niagara Policy Plan provides the strategic direction for all land use decisions in Niagara. The Policies of Section 3, Regional Strategy for Development and Conservation are of particular relevance to this CIP. Section 3, Regional Strategy for Development and Conservation, identifies seven strategic objectives. These objectives and their supporting principles are designed to preserve and enhance Niagara's unique characteristics and quality of life, while achieving a balance between accommodating growth and development and conserving resources and protecting the environment. Of these objectives, four are of particular relevance to this CIP. These objectives include:

- To recognize the diversified opportunities and needs in Niagara by balancing both urban development and conservation of natural resources. The relevant principles are the development and efficient use of lands within urban boundaries first, and minimization of conflicts between incompatible land uses;
- To facilitate and maintain a pattern of distinctive and identifiable urban communities. The relevant principles are maintaining and developing integrated urban communities and the recognition of historical features;
- To improve regional self-reliance through long-range economic development planning and economic diversification. The relevant principles are relating employment and residential areas to discourage commuting; and,
- To undertake and support those activities which improve the quality of life for Niagara.

3.4 Regional Policy Plan Amendment 2-2009

In 2006, the Region of Niagara initiated its Growth Management Strategy ("Niagara 2031") to provide an updated higher level direction for Niagara regarding issues of regional concern in keeping with recent Provincial legislation for growth management. The stated goal of Niagara 2031 is as follows:

Niagara's Growth Management Strategy will examine land use and supporting infrastructure to set the stage for where and how Niagara will grow until 2031. The Strategy will focus on healthy and sustainable growth. An important component of the Strategy will be gaining community input to help plan for our common future.

Amendment 2-2009 to the Official Plan for the Niagara Planning Area was adopted by Regional Council in May of 2009 (but has recently been appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board). The Amendment updates the Region's Policy Plan, including Section 5 where Urban Policies were replaced by Sustainable Community Policies, in order to implement the strategic directions of Niagara's Growth Management Strategy (Niagara 2031), and align the Regional Official Plan with the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the PPS. It establishes a new urban vision for the long term growth and development of Niagara and new policies to foster the development of sustainable, complete urban communities.

Of particular interest to the Port Colborne Downtown CBD CIP, Regional Policy Plan Amendment 2-2009 amended Section 5 of the Regional Official Plan to include policies that:

- i) Encourage mixed and integrated land uses;
- ii) Support intensification;
- iii) Promote compact, transit supportive development friendly to active transportation; and,
- iv) Direct growth in a manner that promotes efficient use of existing land and infrastructure.

3.5 Smart Growth in Niagara

The Region has undertaken to define a vision for urban growth and community redevelopment and revitalization through its Smart Growth initiative, Smarter Niagara. This report was fully endorsed by Regional Niagara and its member municipalities, including the City of Port Colborne. The Region's Smart Growth initiative is defined through ten principles and an associated list of supporting criteria. These ten principles, all of which apply directly or indirectly to the Port Colborne Downtown CBD CIP, are:]

- 1) Create a mix of land uses;
- 2) Promote a compact built form;
- 3) Offer a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- 4) Produce walkable neighbourhoods and communities;
- 5) Foster attractive communities and a sense of place;
- 6) Preserve farmland and natural resources;
- 7) Direct development to existing communities;
- 8) Provide a variety of transportation choices;
- 9) Make development predictable and cost effective; and
- 10) Encourage community stakeholder collaboration.

The Smarter Niagara Incentive Programs were endorsed by Regional Council in 2002. The Smarter Niagara Incentives Program contains several incentive programs as described below. The Region has established that it will provide a matching proportionate share of any financial incentive offered by an area municipality, subject to a maximum share from the Region as specified in the Smarter Niagara Incentive Programs. Efforts have been ongoing to implement these programs since 2002 and the Region has budgeted funds for the implementation of these programs. The Region and area municipalities in Niagara have established a Region/Area Municipality Incentive Coordinating Committee to coordinate the provision of these incentives through local community improvement plans.

3.5.1 Reduction of Regional Development Charges

In Downtown Areas, the Region offers a reduction of 50% of the Regional development charge for new residential, commercial or institutional development or conversion of existing buildings to those uses. An additional 50% Development Charge reduction is available to developments that include Smart Growth design principles into the proposed development. While the Region encourages local municipalities to establish a reduction program for local development charges in central urban areas, the Reduction of Regional Development Charges is available even if the local municipality does not have a similar program. Under the City of Port Colborne's current Development Charges By-law, the Downtown Core Area is exempted from paying development charges. The boundary of the Downtown Core Area includes the entire Downtown CBD Community Improvement Project Area.

3.5.2 Property Rehabilitation and Redevelopment Tax Increment Funding Program

The purpose of this grant is to stimulate building and property rehabilitation or redevelopment. This includes downtown sites and brownfield sites. The Region will match the percentage of the tax increment generated by a rehabilitation or redevelopment project that is paid by the municipality in the form of a grant to the applicant. Because the Regional tax share is larger than the local municipal tax share, this means that the Region will contribute more to the tax increment based grant than the local municipality.

3.5.3 Building and Facade Improvement Grant/Loan Program

The purpose of this program is to promote the structural improvement of buildings and/or the improvement of building facades. The Region will provide a matching grant or loan on a cost shared basis with the local municipality to a maximum grant from the Region of \$5,000 per property, or a matching loan from the Region of \$10,000 per property.

3.5.4 Residential Grant/Loan Program

The purpose of this program is to promote residential conversion, infill and intensification. The Region will provide a matching grant or loan on a cost shared basis with the local municipality to a maximum grant from the Region of \$5,000 per unit and 20 units per property, or a matching loan from the Region of \$10,000 per unit.

3.5.5 Heritage Restoration and Improvement Grant/Loan Program

The purpose of this program is to promote the restoration and improvement of buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Region will provide a matching grant or loan on a cost shared basis with the local municipality to a maximum grant or loan from the Region of \$2,500 per residential property and \$10,000 per commercial or industrial property.

3.5.6 Environmental Assessment Study Grant Program

The purpose of this program is to promote the undertaking of environmental site assessments so that better information is available with respect to the type of contamination and potential remediation costs on brownfield properties. The Region will provide a matching grant on a cost shared basis with the local municipality to a maximum grant from the Region of \$5,000 per property to promote the completion of Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, Remedial Action Plans and Risk Assessments.

3.5.7 Public Domain Incentives Program

This program was introduced in 2007. The Region will provide a matching grant on a cost shared basis with the local municipality to a maximum grant from the Region of \$100,000 per project to support public realm improvements already identified in or in compliance with municipal planning documents including CIPs, Secondary Plans or Official Plans. This program is based on a competitive evaluation process whereby the project must meet the Region's eligibility criteria. These criteria include a "green component" constituting a minimum of 6% of overall project cost and compliance with local or Regional urban design guidelines. Preference will be given to projects that include heritage and/or public art components.

3.6 Regional Municipality of Niagara Model Urban Design Guidelines

The Model Urban Design Guidelines for the Regional Municipality of Niagara were finalized in April of 2005. The document, in part, implements the Region's "smart growth" agenda by providing a series of smart growth principles and a comprehensive set of design guidelines. The "Model" urban design guidelines are intended to be used by area municipalities either during the planning and development review and approval process, or as a guide when preparing more specific design guidelines for particular areas within the Region. While the Model Urban Design Guidelines are principally oriented to new developments or neighbourhoods in greenfield areas, Section 4b does provide design guidance for main street environments, including guidelines for renovations and preservation and for infill developments. Section 3c provides design guidance for sidewalks and

streetscaping in the public realm, including commentary on commercial area sidewalks. The Region's Model Urban Design Guidelines were reviewed and taken into consideration in preparing the Urban Design Strategy for the Port Colborne Downtown CBD.

3.7 City of Port Colborne Official Plan

The Current Official Plan for the Port Colborne Planning Area was adopted by the City of Port Colborne in June 1978 and was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in June 1980. Port Colborne City Council adopted a revised Official Plan in 2006 (the "New Official Plan"), which at the time of writing of this CIP is awaiting Regional approval and is therefore not yet in effect. As such, relevant sections in both Official Plans have been reviewed in this CIP.

3.7.1 Current Official Plan

In addition to providing the general goals and objectives for planning and development in the City of Port Colborne, there are three primary policy themes within the Current Official Plan that are relevant to the preparation of the Downtown CBD CIP: land use, urban design, and community improvement. These relevant policies along with the objectives of the current Official Plan are discussed below.

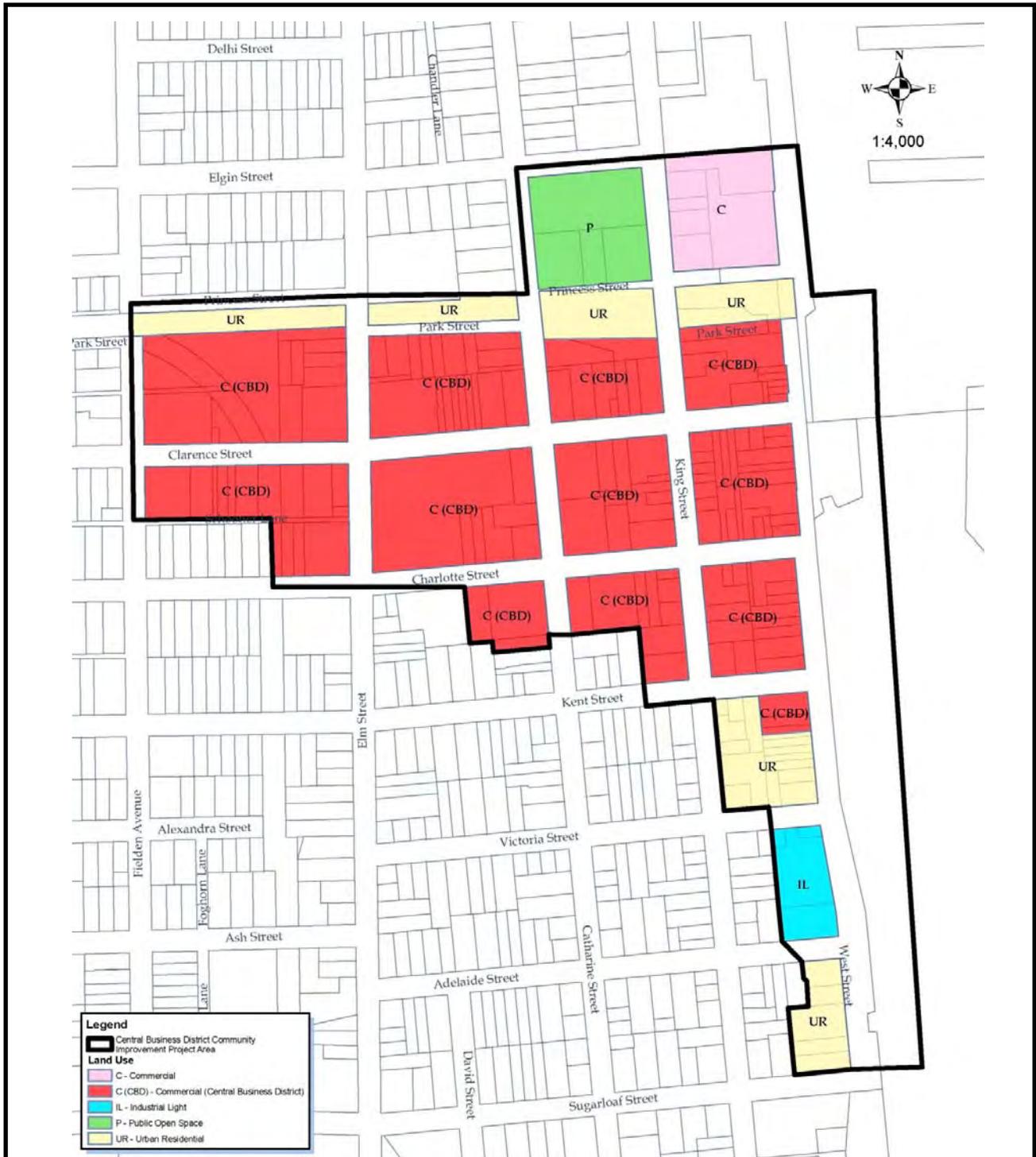
3.7.1.1 Objectives

The identified purpose of the Current Official Plan is *"to maintain the City of Port Colborne as a separate and identifiable community within the Region, one which is planned and directed toward the best interests of its citizens, and one which provides a pleasant, efficient and economical environment."* The Current Official Plan identifies the following objectives to achieve this purpose:

- a) To define the Urban and Rural Areas of the City and to provide amenities and services that are appropriate to these areas, but that are within the City's financial limits.
- b) To encourage a balance between residential, commercial and industrial growth.
- c) To minimize conflicts between incompatible land uses.
- d) To encourage an adequate supply/choice of housing for people in all income groups living in the City.
- e) To provide for expanded and more diversified employment opportunities through the encouragement of commercial, manufacturing, agricultural, natural resources and tourist development.
- f) To protect and improve recreational, natural, scenic and historic amenities of the area, recognizing their importance to the residents and to the tourist industry.
- g) To support a comprehensive transportation system which is safe, convenient, economical and efficient, one which maximizes travel choice and minimizes damage to the environment.
- h) To co-operate and co-ordinate planning responsibilities with the Region.

3.7.1.2 Land Use Policies

Most properties within the Project Area (those between the rail right-of-way to the north and Kent Street to the south) are designated "Central Commercial" on Schedule "C" of the Current Official Plan (see **Figure 2**). Properties to the north of the rail right-of-way are designated "Urban Residential", "Commercial" and "Public Open Space". Properties to the south of Kent Street are designated "Urban Residential" and "Industrial Light". As the predominant land use designation in the CBD, the Central Commercial designation policies are described below.



Downtown Central Business District
Community Improvement Plan

Figure 2
Current Official Plan Land Use Designations in the Project Area

The Central Commercial designation is intended to primarily accommodate the provision of goods and services, with a broad range of retail commercial, service commercial, residential uses and other community related uses organized in a pedestrian-friendly manner. To this end, the following Central Commercial policies are relevant to the preparation of the CBD CIP:

- An Official Plan Amendment is required for new automobile service stations, repair garages, car sales establishments in the CBD.
- Pedestrian continuity within the CBD is key and new commercial establishments that create a discontinuous streetscape and excessive traffic movement are to be directed to other, more appropriate commercial areas.
- Mixing of commercial and residential uses is supportable provided building and site design incorporate the appropriate amenities to accommodate each use.
- Dwelling units are permitted in an existing building within the CBD.
- New apartment buildings, with commercial ground floors, are permitted in the CBD where servicing exists to a limit of 6 storeys.

3.7.1.3 Urban Design Policies

The Current Official Plan does not have a specific section devoted to urban design policies. Each land use designation has some general, although limited, direction on design issues related to that designation, as seen above in the Central Commercial designation policies.

3.7.1.4 Community Improvement Policies

Section L of the current Official Plan contains the Community Improvement policies (see Appendix A). The objectives of this section include promoting development and revitalization of the downtown core and encouraging development and redevelopment along the Welland Canal. A number of criteria for the designation of community improvement project areas are specified and those criteria that apply to the Project Area include the:

- a) Presence of deficiencies in hard services;
- b) Need for upgrading of the overall streetscape and aesthetics;
- c) Presence of vacant buildings and lands and/or underutilized buildings or lands that could be developed, renovated or converted to another use.
- d) Need for upgrading goods and services within a commercial area in order to meet consumer requirements;
- e) Presence of buildings or lands of architectural and/or historical merit; and,
- f) Evidence of decline in the retail tax base of a commercial area.

Schedule D of the current Official Plan identifies five (5) Community Improvement (Project) Areas (see Appendix B). The CBD is shown as Area 1 in Schedule D. The boundary of the designated Community Improvement Project Area (**Figure 1**) does not exactly coincide with the boundary of Community Improvement Area 1 in the current Official Plan. The designated Project Area is actually larger than Community Improvement Area 1 in the current Official Plan. This would normally necessitate the requirement for an Official Plan Amendment were it not for the new Community Improvement Policies in the New Official Plan.

The Implementation section of the current Community Improvement policies specifies a range of methods Council can use to achieve the goals and objectives of community improvement. This includes activities such as acquiring lands and buildings, encouraging private rehabilitation and redevelopment, and making application

for senior government funding programs. Owing to the age of the current Official Plan, the Community Improvement section does not explicitly contemplate the provision of grants and loans by the municipality to promote community improvement or other more proactive leadership type activities that could be undertaken by the municipality to promote community improvement. This issue has been addressed in the new Community Improvement policies contained in the New Official Plan.

3.7.2 New Official Plan

The New Official Plan was adopted by the City of Port Colborne in October 2006 to replace the Current Official Plan for the City, and has not, as yet, been approved in full by the Region of Niagara. However, the Region has approved the new Community Improvement Policies in the new Official Plan (see Appendix C) as an amendment to the existing Official Plan and these now apply.

In addition to providing the vision statement and strategic directions for planning and development in the City of Port Colborne, there are also three primary policy themes within the Port Colborne that are relevant to the preparation of the CIP: land use, urban design, and community improvement. Furthermore, Section II-C4 of the New Official Plan contains strategic planning policies with respect to Servicing and Section II-C7 contains strategic planning policies with respect to Transportation. These relevant policies along with the Vision and Strategic Direction specified in the New Official Plan are discussed below.

3.7.2.1 Vision and Strategic Direction

The New Official Plan contains a Vision Statement that forms the basis and framework for the land use and growth management policies within the Plan. This Vision Statement includes the following components:

- **Pride:** in the quality of life, community services and facilities, urban design, cultural and natural heritage assets, viable marine industries, waterfront and canal lands.
- **Leadership:** in environmental issues and following cleanup of contaminated soils.
- **Hub:** expanded role as a transportation centre, offering unique multi-modal transportation links, supports growth of the local economy as well as the international movement of goods and people.
- **Agriculture:** that continues to prosper and is supported by complementary economic activities.
- **Economy:** expansion of the manufacturing, transportation, and tourism sectors that attracts new residents to the community.
- **Choice:** a range of housing choices that meet the needs and lifestyles of existing and new residents.

The New Official Plan identifies six “Strategic Directions” that will seek to implement this Vision Statement for the City of Port Colborne. These Strategic Directions are as follows:

- **Enhancing the Quality of Life:** we will promote a compact urban form; a good mix of housing types and land uses; efficient and cost effective infrastructure and transportation; and, good urban design for neighbourhoods and business areas.
- **Developing an Economic Gateway:** Port Colborne deserves its fair share of regional economic growth in manufacturing, marine transportation, tourism, agriculture and retailing. With the anticipated extension of Highway 406 and development of the Niagara to GTA Corridor, there is a need to envisage and plan for the community's economic gateway and linkages to existing business and tourist areas.

- **Strengthening and Integrating Natural, Cultural and Heritage Resources:** Port Colborne's natural, historical and cultural setting is an important asset, enhancing the quality of community life and supporting tourism development. The City will take an aggressive approach to the preservation of these assets.
- **Enhancing Public Areas:** residents want an attractive and walkable community. Further attention to the waterfront, the canal, the downtown, Main Street and other important corridors and places in the municipality is required to support tourism, economic development, and quality of life.
- **Protecting Rural Areas and Agricultural Lands:** rural life and farming are a vital economic and cultural component of the community. The hamlets are the focus for residential development and community facilities while greater flexibility is needed for farm-related activities.
- **Taking Advantage of Underutilized Lands:** the City has been addressing a number of environmental challenges and will turn this experience to its advantage. Through innovative approaches to brownfield and waterfront development, downtown revitalization and community improvement, the City will demonstrate leadership in this field.

The New Official Plan emphasizes the role and function of the CBD (or "Downtown") in the City. The New Official Plan recognizes the CBD as a primary commercial district in Port Colborne which the City intends to collaboratively enhance together with stakeholders in the area. Policies identify that beautification and enhancement efforts in the CBD will continue while maintaining and increasing the supply of housing.

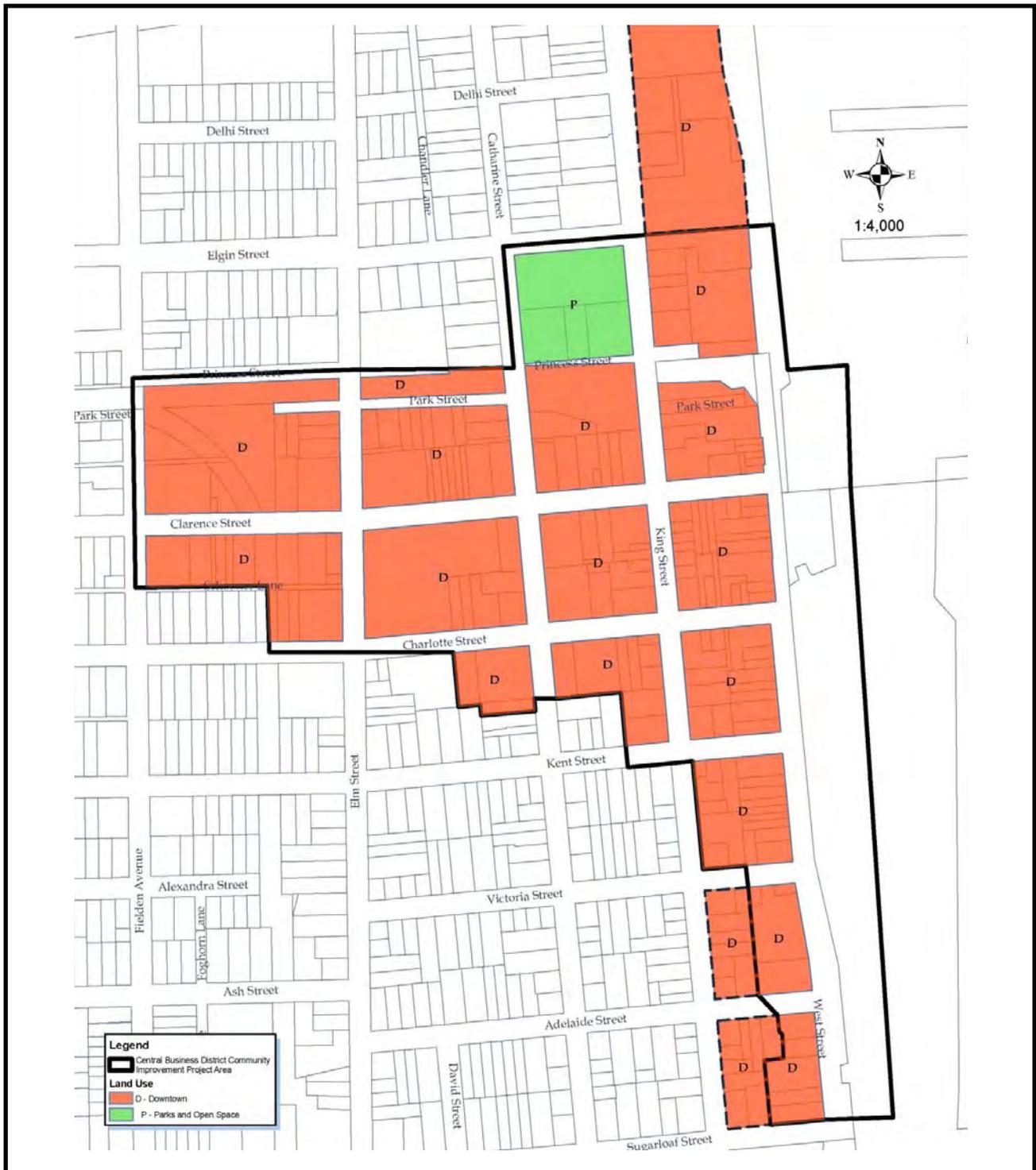
3.7.2.2 Land Use Policies

With the exception of one block north of the rail right-of-way designated "Parks and Open Space", all properties within the Project Area boundary are designated "Downtown" on Map "1" of the New Official Plan (see **Figure 3**). One notable difference in the land use schedules between the New Official Plan and Current Official Plan, other than the establishment of the single land use designation throughout the Project Area, is the extension of the Downtown designation in the New Official Plan northwards along King Street to the south side of Killaly Street West.

The Downtown designation reflects "the historic core areas and central business districts of the former Town of Port Colborne and Township of Humberstone". Permitted uses within the Downtown designation include retail stores, professional offices, personal service shops, restaurants without take-out or drive-through facilities, existing residential uses, residential uses above commercial uses, medium density residential on existing vacant lots, high density residential on existing vacant lots with first floor commercial, and community facilities, parks and public open space.

3.7.2.3 Urban Design Policies

The principal urban design direction within the New Official Plan is provided by the specific urban design guidelines contained within the various land use designations. The Downtown designation contains a comprehensive set of urban design guidelines that are intended to guide new development, renovations and alterations to existing development (see **Table 1** for a summary). However, the New Official Plan also has a number of general policies and guidelines that apply to particular "character areas" within the City.



Downtown Central Business District
Community Improvement Plan

Figure 3

New Official Plan Land Use Designations in the
Project Area

Table 1: Urban Design Guidelines for the Downtown Designation

Character, Scale and Proportions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development will be consistent with the placement and character of the surrounding built form. • The maximum height of buildings is six (6) storeys. • Fourth, fifth and sixth storeys of buildings will be progressively stepped back. • Building alterations and new building design should complement the proportions of surrounding heritage buildings. • Large building blocks should have facades that appear to be a collection of smaller buildings in keeping with the narrow proportions of the heritage built form. • Buildings should generally maintain the established building line for the front yard setback. • All buildings should front on and be oriented to the street.
Façades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side elevations of corner buildings should be given equal design treatment as the main street facade, and the building identity at corner locations will be reinforced by taller building elements. • Buildings at the terminus of streets should, where appropriate, employ building elements and details that reinforce the landmark position of the buildings. • Canopies and awnings are encouraged as a means of weather protection for pedestrians. • Buildings with commercial uses at grade should maximize the amount of glazing and entries to create visual interest and to animate the sidewalk. • Commercial signs should be of high quality, complementary to the historic character of the Downtown, and not backlit.
Access and Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where vehicular access is required from the front to the rear of the property reduced standards for driveway widths should be encouraged. • Where pedestrian access is required from the front to the rear of the property a minimum 3.0 metre walkway and outdoor lighting should be provided. • All parking areas should be placed at the rear of buildings and accessed from side streets so as to maintain a continuous building edge and a pedestrian friendly street environment. • Where parking areas are adjacent to side streets, a landscaped buffer such as hedge or tree planting should be placed between the sidewalk and parking area. • Service and loading areas should be oriented to the rear of the building.
Landscaping and Buffers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening should be provided between parking areas and adjacent residential properties. • Buffers should be located at the perimeter of the property line adjacent to parking areas and laneways to accommodate landscaping and tree planting. • Buffering shall be provided between commercial establishments and other land uses, including grassed areas and appropriate planting of trees and shrubs, and / or the provision of other suitable screening materials. • Landscaped islands should be placed at the ends of all parking aisles. • Parking aisles with a length of more than 15 stalls should be broken up with landscaped islands. • All parking islands should be planted with hardy, strongly branched and salt tolerant trees. • Large parking areas should be broken up with linear pedestrian sidewalks planted with a consistent row of trees.
Non-Commercial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible community facilities and institutional uses should be located adjacent public open spaces or at the termination of primary streets or view corridors to emphasize civic presence. • Townhouses and multiple-unit housing without at-grade commercial uses should have frontage on a local road, be aligned parallel to the street from which the principal entrance should be visible and accessible, and be composed of a consistent and attractive variety of building elements.

3.7.2.4 Community Improvement Policies

Section VI of the New Official Plan contains policies on Community Improvement (see Appendix C). These policies are based on the report on Official Plan policies submitted to the City by RCI Consulting in October of 2005. The new Community Improvement policies specify the conditions on which designation of a community improvement project area may be based. These conditions are similar to those in the current Official Plan, but those that apply to the CBD Project Area include:

- a) Building facades, entire buildings, or structures in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment;
- b) Deficiencies in physical infrastructure, including streetscapes,
- c) Poor overall visual quality and/or urban design;
- d) Existing or potential business improvement areas;
- e) Vacant lots and underutilized properties which have potential to better utilize the land base; and,
- f) Presence of deficiencies in hard services.

However, the schedule showing the five community improvement areas has been deleted, thereby addressing the issue of non-conformity between the designated CBD Community Improvement Project Area and the Community Improvement Area 1 shown in Schedule D of the Current Official Plan.

Section VI-A3b of the New Official Plan specifies that CIPs shall contain at a minimum:

- a) Statement of purpose;
- b) Goals and objectives;
- c) Clear description of the community improvement project area;
- d) Description of all incentive programs;
- e) An implementation action plan; and,
- f) Justification for the delineation of the project area and the design of the incentive programs.

The Implementation section of the Community Improvement policies in the New Official Plan specifies a range of actions the City can undertake to implement a CIP. These explicitly include the acquisition and preparation of land and/or buildings for community improvement, the provision of monetary and non-monetary incentive programs, and application for and participation in senior government funding programs.

In November of 2008, as part of the Brownfield Strategy and CIP, the Community Improvement policies in the New Official Plan were reviewed in light of changes to Section 28 of the *Planning Act* since October 2005 and Community Improvement policies adopted by other municipalities in the Region of Niagara since October of 2005. This review concluded that the policies in Section VI of the New Official Plan remain current and do not require any revisions. This conclusion is still applicable.

3.7.2.5 Servicing Policies

The servicing policies in Section II-C4 of the New Official Plan require that all new development in the urban area be on full municipal water and wastewater servicing. All stormwater must be managed on site and Policy II-C4b2 of the New Official Plan states that the City will endeavour to separate existing combined storm and sanitary sewers.

The City has advised that when evaluating underground infrastructure for removal and/or replacement, the criteria for evaluation are based primarily on repair history (i.e., number of repairs made on the section of the

system), age of the infrastructure, and size of the infrastructure. As such, these same criteria have been utilized to help determine the need for repair, replacement or relocation of infrastructure in relation to any streetscape design improvements recommended as part of the CIP.

3.7.2.6 Transportation Policies

Some of the transportation policies in Section II-C7 of the New Official Plan have implications for the CIP. For example, Policy II-C7a1 notes that non-automobile modes of transportation are the preferred methods of commuting within the City and full consideration will be given to accommodating pedestrians and cycling in the design and evaluation of any new development.

Policy II-C7b1 specifies the function of the various roads in Port Colborne under the jurisdiction of the City, Region and Province via reference to Map 3 and a table. Clarence Street, Sugarloaf Street and King Street are identified as arterial roads, while West Street is designated as a local road. This policy would imply that through vehicular traffic mobility would have higher priority on Clarence Street, Sugarloaf Street and King Street. It would also imply that local property access would have a higher priority on West Street.

3.8 Port Colborne Zoning By-law

Zoning By-law 1150/97/81 (the "Zoning By-law") implements the policies of the Official Plan by regulating the *"use of lands and the character, location and use of buildings and structures"*. The Zoning Bylaw regulates, among other elements, permitted uses, building height, parking requirements, and building setbacks. The Zoning By-law was adopted by City Council in 1981 and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in 1984.

The majority of properties within the Project Area are zoned "Central Commercial (CC-31)" in the Zoning By-law (see **Figure 4**). The CC Zone permits a broad range of different land use types and specific land uses. Principally oriented to uses of a commercial nature, the CC Zone permits:

- Retail-related commercial uses (such as retail stores, restaurants, showrooms, supply outlets);
- Service-related commercial uses (such as animal hospitals, financial institutions, personal service shops, business and professional offices, hotels);
- No new, only existing, gas stations, vehicular repair shops, and vehicular service stations;
- Community-related uses (such as assembly halls, studios, theatres, churches, commercial schools, and any public uses);
- Residential uses (only in combination with other permitted uses and only above the ground floor); and
- Accessory uses (uses accessory to any permitted residential or commercial use).

The CC Zone is relatively flexible in terms of built form regulations. **Table 2** provides a summary of the principal regulations of the CC Zone from the Zoning By-law.

The site-specific exception to the CC Zone (the "-31" exception) that applies to the majority of properties in Downtown Port Colborne identifies that the non-residential portion of buildings are exempt from the parking and loading requirements of the Zoning By-law, whereas the residential portions remain subject to applicable residential parking and loading requirements. For residential uses, the Zoning by-law requires 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit for block townhouses and apartments, and 1 parking space per dwelling unit for street townhouses, single detached dwellings, and semi-detached dwellings.

Table 2: Summary of the “Central Commercial” Zone Built Form Regulations.

ZONE REQUIREMENT	REGULATION
Minimum lot area	No minimum
Minimum lot frontage	No minimum (except 6.0 metres where any part of the building is residentially used)
Minimum lot depth	No minimum
Minimum front yard	No minimum
Minimum interior side yard	No minimum (except 2.5 metres where the interior side yard abuts a Residential Zone)
Minimum exterior side yard	No minimum
Minimum rear yard	No minimum (except 10.0 metres where any part of the building is residentially used or where the rear yard abuts a Residential Zone)
Maximum gross floor area	The greater of 100 percent of the lot area or 1000 square metres
Maximum building height	20 metres

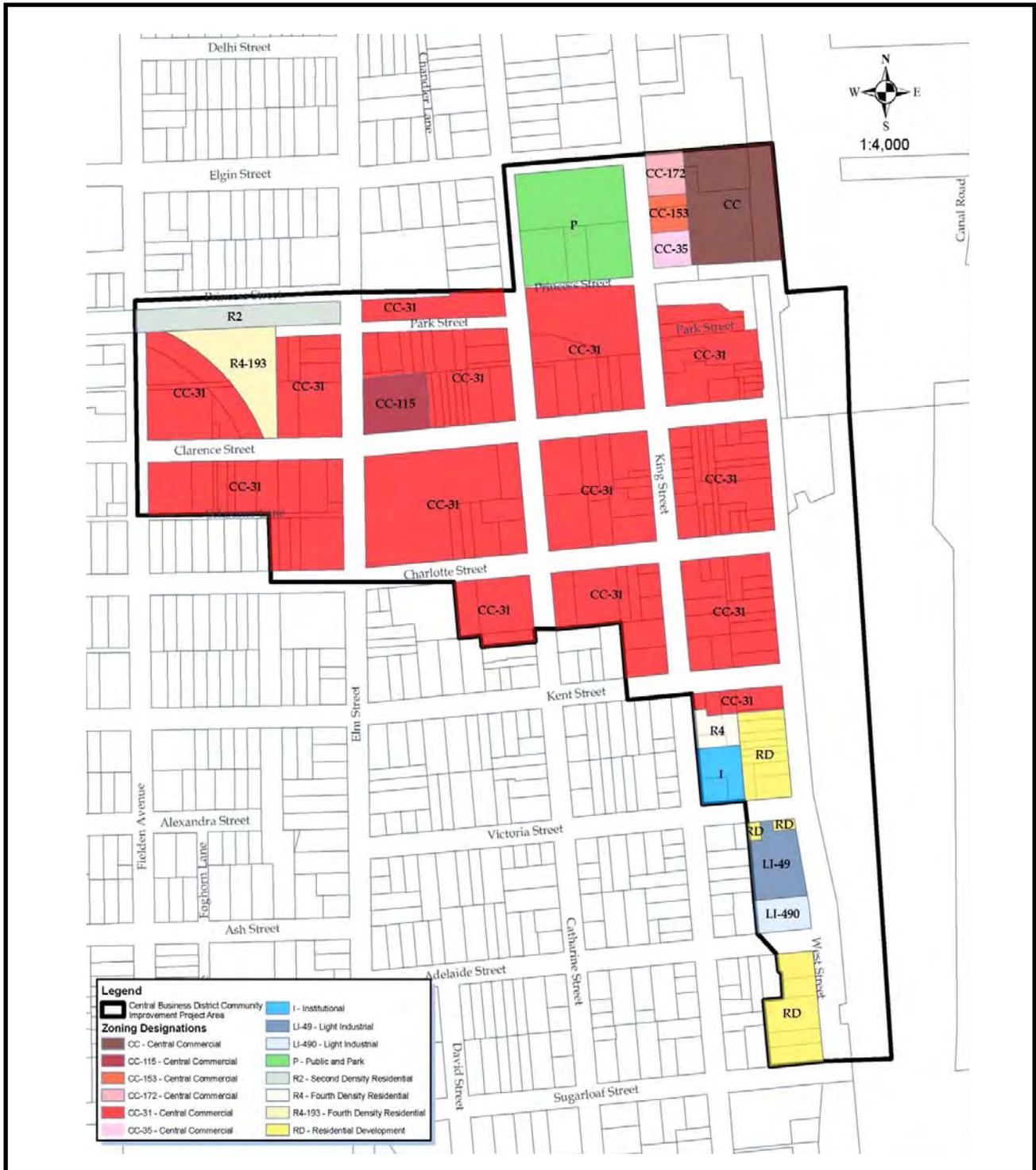


Figure 4

Zoning By-law in the Project Area



Downtown Central Business District
Community Improvement Plan

3.9 City of Port Colborne CAIP CIP

In December of 1985, the City of Port Colborne completed an assessment of the commercial, residential and industrial areas of the city that was conducted to determine the needs and priorities for public works improvements. The study resulted in the City adopting the community improvement policies in the Current Official Plan. The results of the study highlighted the CBD of the City as the top priority for these improvements. As such, the City made application to the Province for funding under its Commercial Area Improvement Program (CAIP). That application specified \$1,000,000 in improvement works within the CBD. In the Spring of 1986, the Province awarded the City a \$250,000 grant which was matched by the City's contribution, totaling \$500,000. The CAIP CIP was prepared in 1987 to provide details of the improvements to be made in the CBD.

The CAIP CIP public works were implemented from 1987 to 1989 as follows:

- Streetscaping including the installation of benches, decorative lighting, brick paving, trees and planters along Clarence Street and Charlotte Street (Between West and King Streets) and along West Street (South of Charlotte Street); expenditure \$175,000 plus \$30,000 contributed by the Business Improvement Area members;
- The improvement and extension of Harbourview Park in conjunction with streetscaping improvements, to create an area to service both the community and the boating public, to include trees, benches, lighting, docking facilities and a kiosk to supervise the dock and provide tourist information; expenditure \$75,000;
- Abandoned CN lands between King and Park Streets converted to parking, augmenting that which was already available in the CBD; expenditure \$35,000; and,
- Hard servicing improvements to King Street and Clarence Street including storm and sanitary sewers for King Street (between Clarence and Charlotte Streets), and storm sewers, sanitary sewers and watermains for Clarence Street (between West and King Streets).

3.10 City of Port Colborne PRIDE CIP

In late 1988, the City made application under the Province's Program for Renewal, Improvement, Development and Economic Revitalization (PRIDE) for \$800,000 in works within the CBD intended to continue the works already completed. In the Spring of 1989, the City of Port Colborne was awarded a \$250,000 grant under the PRIDE program which was matched by the City's contribution of \$289,000 for a total of \$539,000. The PRIDE CIP was prepared in April of 1990 to provide details of the improvements to be made in the CBD. The following provides a description of the public works undertaken in the CBD under the PRIDE program:

- Streetscaping complimentary to that already completed under the CAIP program, including the installation of benches, decorative lighting, brick paving, trees and planters along Clarence Street and Charlotte Street (between King and Catherine Streets on west side) and along Catherine Street (between Clarence and Charlotte Streets); expenditure \$283,000; and,
- Hard servicing improvements including sanitary sewer and watermain replacement along Clarence Street (between King and Catherine Streets), and replacement of the sanitary sewer on Charlotte Street and the sanitary sewer connecting Clarence and Charlotte Streets along the laneway between the two streets; all roads were resurfaced upon completion of the works; expenditure \$256,000.

The intent of the over \$1 million in capital improvements undertaken in the CBD during the late 1980s and early 1990s under the CAIP and PRIDE programs was to facilitate ongoing economic development and aesthetic

improvement of the CBD, directly through public investment. This public investment was also intended to catalyze private sector property and business investment in the area.

3.11 West Street Promenade Study

The West Street Promenade Study was completed in 2001 by a consulting team led by Peter J. Smith & Company Inc. The need for the study resulted from the Welland Canal Multi-Use Trail study completed in 2000 which recommended the development of a waterfront promenade in Port Colborne along West Street from Clarence Street in the north to Sugarloaf Street in the south. This waterfront promenade was intended to *"capitalize on the West Street's urban waterfront location and build upon the City's rich canal-heritage."* The study involved two principal responsibilities: developing a detailed concept plan for the promenade; and preparing detailed tender documents for the promenade.

The "West Street Waterfront Concept Plan" developed as part of the Study included a number of design features including entrance signage, interpretive feature areas, timber deck seating areas, continuous wall railings, bollard lighting, concrete paved ramps, armour stone walls, landing interpretive panels, linkages to multi-use trails, and potential future docks and access stairs for day-use docking. The Concept Plan identified West Street as a southbound one-way street, with new angled parking and curb alignment on the east side of West Street and a dedicated bicycle lane along the west side of West Street. The Study recommended the extension of the West Street Promenade concept to the north side of Clarence Street to further capitalize on the waterfront's heritage and recreational opportunities and to accommodate further commercial development.

The Concept Plan was divided into two phases. Phase 1 included construction of the hard surfaces and features from Harbour Master Building to Sugarloaf Street, and was completed in 2000. Phase 2 was proposed to include completion of the Promenade from the Harbour Master Building north to Clarence Street, all landscape plantings, bollard lighting, and the remainder of the site furnishings. Phase 2 was also identified as the potential opportunity for accommodating the suggested traffic and parking improvements for West Street, which were deemed to need further study to assess their feasibility.

4.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

4.1 Project Steering Committee

A project steering committee was formed to help guide preparation of the CIP. The committee was comprised of the mayor, senior City staff, and representatives from the Downtown BIA and the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority. Several meetings of the steering committee were held throughout preparation of the CIP. These meetings allowed the consultant to:

- provide the steering committee with progress updates;
- discuss results of the SWOT Analysis and other key components of the CIP with the steering committee;
- obtain comments and input from the steering committee on draft reports prior to presentation of these reports to the Downtown BIA and the public; and,
- coordinate public meetings and other steps required to complete the CIP.

4.2 Public Meetings, Workshops and Open Houses

Two separate workshops were held on November 24, 2009. The first, held in the afternoon, was for members of the Downtown Port Colborne Business Improvement Area (BIA). The second, held in the evening, was for members of the general public and took place at an advertised public meeting. The format of both workshops was a presentation by the consultant of the SWOT Analysis, followed by a workshop session to:

- i) receive input on the SWOT Analysis;
- ii) develop a Vision for the Downtown CBD; and,
- iii) explore ideas to promote renewal and revitalization of the Downtown CBD.

Approximately 13 people attended the BIA Workshop and approximately 10 people attended the public meeting workshop. After the results of the SWOT Analysis were presented to both groups, attendees were asked during the workshop session to answer the following questions:

- 1) What do you think are the most significant weaknesses and threats in the Downtown CBD?
- 2) What do you think are the most significant strengths and opportunities in the Downtown CBD?
- 3) What is your vision for the Downtown CBD? If you went away and came back in 10 years, what would you like to see?
- 4) What types of public improvements would you like to see in the Downtown CBD?
- 5) What types of financial incentives do you think would be most attractive and utilized in Port Colborne's Downtown CBD?

Attendees were also provided with comment sheets containing the above noted questions. Seventeen completed comment sheets and two free form comment letters were received and reviewed. The input received during both workshops and the completed comment sheets and letters were used to finalize the SWOT Analysis and prepare the Vision and directions for planning, urban design and incentive programs contained in the Directions Report.

Once the Draft Urban Design Strategy was prepared, an open house session was held on May 14, 2010 at the weekly public farmer's market held in the parking lot in front of City Hall. Several panels showing the proposed public realm improvements were put on display and two members of the consulting team were available to

answer questions. Approximately 30 people stopped by the display during the three hour open house. A few of these people asked questions, and many of those who stopped to discuss the public realm improvement concepts and designs expressed support for the proposals and the CIP initiative as a whole.

On June 3, 2010, the Draft Traffic Study, Draft Urban Design Strategy (including the Public Realm Improvement Plan) and Preliminary Financial Incentive Programs were presented at a second workshop held with the Downtown BIA (afternoon) and the public (evening). Approximately 16 people attended the BIA Workshop and approximately 5 people attended the public meeting workshop. After the presentation, attendees were asked during the workshop session to answer the following questions:

- 1) Which of the recommendations in the Draft Urban Design Strategy do you think are most important?
- 2) What changes/additions to the Draft Urban Design Strategy would you like to see?
- 3) Which of the proposed preliminary incentive programs recommendations do you think are most important?
- 4) What changes or additions to the proposed preliminary incentive programs would you like to see?

Once again, attendees were also provided with comment sheets containing the above noted questions. Two free form comment letters were received and reviewed. The input received during both workshops and from the letters received were used to finalize the Urban Design Strategy (including a Public Realm Improvement Plan, Private Realm Improvements and Façade Improvement Guidelines) and the Financial Incentive Programs contained in this CIP.



5.0 ANALYSIS

5.1 Purpose

A thorough and comprehensive assessment of the current conditions and characteristics in the Community Improvement Project Area was undertaken. This assessment included several walking tours by the consulting team members to identify current conditions and key characteristics of the area, including:

- Land/building use;
- Building heights;
- General condition of buildings, facades, signage, properties and landscaping;
- Heritage/historical buildings;
- General land use compatibility;
- Streetscaping and sidewalks;
- Traffic and parking; and,
- Retail and commercial business operations and vacancies.

The assessment of current conditions and characteristics was used to conduct an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT Analysis) of the Project Area. The SWOT Analysis was then revised based on input received from the project steering committee, the Downtown BIA and the public.

A summary of the assessment of current conditions in the Downtown CBD is contained in Section 5.2. A summary of the SWOT Analysis is contained in Section 5.3.

5.2 Current Conditions and Characteristics in the Downtown CBD

5.2.1 Land Use

The Downtown CBD is a relatively complete area containing retail and service commercial, residential, recreational, open space, and institutional uses. It contains a range of retail and commercial uses that provide the goods and services needed by residents on a day-to-day basis, such as grocery stores, financial institutions, and personal service businesses. Additionally, it contains several non-commercial “anchor” uses that draw people to Downtown, including City Hall, the Farmers Market, the Post Office, churches, institutional uses, and the Canal. All uses are supported by a significant amount of on-street parking and off-street parking (publicly and privately owned).



While Downtown Port Colborne has many of the elements necessary for a vibrant downtown area, it does lack a few key elements. Downtown has a relatively higher percentage of service commercial uses and relatively lower percentage of retail shops and stores selling goods. Retail uses, particularly more distinct or specialty retail businesses, act as a community destination that draws residents and visitors to the Downtown, and creates a more vibrant area throughout the day. This vibrancy can be further enhanced by capitalizing on some of the vacant or underutilized upper stories of buildings by providing further residential opportunities which ensures more people on the streets throughout the day.

5.2.2 Urban Design

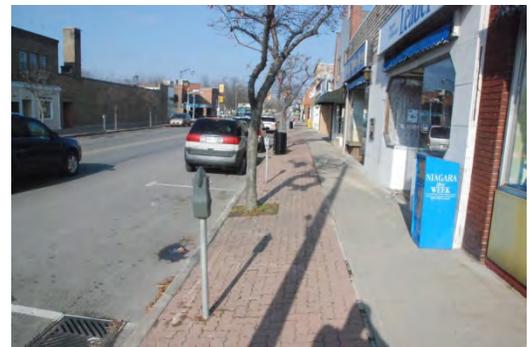
Buildings in the Downtown CBD are generally situated close to the street edge and represent the tight urban form desired for a downtown. Most buildings appear to be in relatively good physical condition. There are a large number of multi-storey buildings that provide height and the comfortable feeling of enclosure along the streetscape, while providing additional activity and floor space above the ground floor businesses. There are a number of landmarks that form part of the visual identity of the area, including the Clarence Street Bridge, West Street, and views to the Welland Canal. Also, there are several heritage buildings that reflect Downtown's historic identity and provide design cues to new development and improvements to existing facades.



While the foundation of the physical environment in the Downtown CBD is strong, the quality of the image and visual impression is not. The façades of buildings, including building signage are generally worn, dated and do not convey the character, identity and vibrancy that is traditionally desired in a downtown setting. Streets are solely functional in nature, generally lacking the consistent pattern of streetscape amenities that help make streets great public spaces. The entrances, or “gateways”, to Downtown are lacking a strong first impression, while the lack of directional and wayfinding signage makes it difficult for new visitors to navigate the area.

5.2.3 Streetscapes

Streets are important public assets in any downtown area. The visual appearance of streetscapes greatly influences how visitors use a downtown and their impressions of a downtown as a whole. Downtown Port Colborne has a grid pattern of streets with short blocks. This creates a compact urban form that is conducive to walking with multiple connections and routes. There is no single main thoroughfare in the Downtown CBD and therefore, the Downtown CBD is more of a commercial node than a strip, which distributes traffic on several different routes. Consequently, there do not appear to be any major traffic volume issues and traffic speeds are relatively calm throughout the Downtown. Again, this is conducive to a safe environment for pedestrians. Street right-of-ways throughout Downtown are fairly wide, which can accommodate a range of streetscape elements and amenities, including the on-street parking spaces throughout the area.



Despite the potential that the streets have in the Downtown CBD, the quality of the streetscapes and amenities is generally lacking. There are no streetscape elements along the streets that visually tie together the different parts of the Downtown CBD. The Downtown also does not have a coordinated and consistent streetscape amenity package that makes streets great public spaces and comfortable walking environments. Such a streetscape amenity package includes elements such as street trees, greenery and plantings, benches, bike racks, garbage receptacles, pedestrian lighting, wayfinding signage, and public art. Such high quality streets and streetscapes help to create high quality public spaces with a defined character and identity.

5.2.4 Heritage

Older heritage buildings within a downtown contribute significantly to the local character and “sense of place” for the particular area. They provide an immediate visual connection to the historical past and identity of the downtown, and are key visual assets given they provide design cues to new development and improvements to existing façades. Downtown Port Colborne has 57 properties that are currently identified as heritage buildings, either designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (1 property) or listed under the City of Port Colborne’s Heritage Property Registry (56 properties). Heritage properties are generally concentrated on West Street and King Street, but there are some properties further west along Clarence Street and Charlotte Street. They generally date from the later 19th Century and earlier 20th Century and represent a mix of different architectural styles. Preservation and restoration of these buildings and their façades are key components in enhancing the character of the area.



5.2.5 Traffic and Parking

The City of Port Colborne provided a detailed traffic operations study for Port Colborne that was completed in December of 2003. This study provided data and analyses of traffic conditions in the City, including the Downtown area. Additional traffic counts were conducted by the consulting team in August 2009 to help further assess traffic patterns during summer months. The consulting team members also made observations regarding downtown traffic conditions during the walking tours.



The established grid street pattern within the Downtown CBD provides convenient circulation and mobility. Peak traffic volumes are relatively low in relation to the downtown street capacity. The primary streets such as King Street and Clarence Street have a potential capacity of about 12,000 to 14,000 vehicles per day (vpd). The current traffic volumes on the downtown streets range from approximately 1,000 vpd on the minor streets up to about 6,000 vpd on streets such as King Street and Clarence Street. The downtown intersections generally operate at high levels of service without extensive delay.

Downtown Port Colborne contains a range of different parking options, in terms of type, ownership and location. There is a substantial supply of public on-street parking throughout the Downtown CBD, with spaces essentially along every block. In addition, there are a number of off-street parking spaces within a municipally owned parking lot. Altogether there are in the order of 330 municipal public parking spaces in the Downtown CBD. There is also a considerable supply of privately owned off-street parking lots.

Although the quantity of the parking supply seems sufficient, there are some concerns in the community regarding the location of said parking supply. Particularly, this concern relates to some areas, such as West Street, not being as well served by parking as other areas in the Downtown CBD. Opportunities do exist to provide additional public parking in areas that are deemed in need. Additionally, there are a large number of individual parking space meters (in the order of 100 meters) for on-street parking spaces along Downtown’s

streets. These meters present both operational and maintenance issues for the City as well impacts on the streetscape design and appearance throughout the area.

5.2.6 Economic Activity

The statistics on business activity below are based on data collected in February of 2010 and provided by the Downtown BIA. There are approximately 137 occupied businesses in the Downtown CBD Project Area. These businesses include a broad range and mix of business types, including:

- 19 restaurants/cafes/fast food outlets;
- 13 beauty salons/hairstylists/spas/massage therapy;
- 10 financial services, insurance, real estate offices;
- 10 dental/medical clinics/offices;
- 9 gift stores;
- 6 professional offices;
- 6 banks/credit unions;
- 5 clothing stores;
- 5 bargain/thrift/vintage stores;
- 3 travel agencies;
- 3 gasoline/automobile service stations; and,
- 3 art galleries/museums.



This represents a large number of businesses for a downtown of this size. The presence of a significant number of financial services offices, professional office and five banks/credit unions is also a very positive sign. The Downtown CBD contains an abundance of service commercial uses. The Downtown CBD also contains a strong civic presence with the City Hall, and a number of other anchor uses where people meet and interact and therefore provide drawing capacity for the Downtown. These anchor uses include:

- a large grocery store and 5 specialty food stores;
- a weekly farmer's market;
- a post office;
- 4 churches;
- 3 pharmacies/drug stores;
- 2 legion halls; and,
- Several institutional uses.



While containing a large number of service commercial businesses, retail shops selling consumer goods and higher order retailers are relatively under-represented in the Downtown CBD. There is also limited distinct or specialty retailing such as jewellery, electronics/computer, antiques, furniture and home décor stores.

There are eight vacant commercial buildings, plus several vacant upper and ground floor commercial units in the Project Area. In total, there are 19 vacant business addresses out of approximately 156 business addresses in the Project Area. This represents an approximate 12% commercial vacancy rate. This rate is cause for concern because a normal commercial vacancy rate attributable to business turnover in a downtown is about 5%-6%.

Several of the vacant commercial buildings are located on King Street and Clarence Street. A number of vacant upper floor commercial units are located on West Street. These commercial vacancies represent a concern and any increases in the vacancy rate would pose a threat to the economic health of the Downtown CBD. However, the vacant commercial buildings also represent an opportunity to introduce new (currently underrepresented) commercial uses into the Downtown CBD and also to convert these vacant spaces into residential units to encourage more people to live downtown. This would provide a larger customer base for the business in the Downtown CBD.

5.2.7 Servicing

A review of the need for replacement/upgrading of underground services (water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer) in the Downtown CBD concluded that overall, servicing is not a major issue in the Downtown CBD. A number of streets in the Downtown CBD require storm sewer replacement. Only a few streets require sanitary sewer replacement. There are no watermain deficiencies, but there are a number of cast iron watermains that may require replacement as they age.

5.3 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT Analysis was based on the comprehensive assessment of the current conditions and key characteristics in the Project Area, input from the project steering committee, and input from the Downtown BIA and members of the public during and after the workshop sessions held on November 24, 2009. 'Strengths' and 'Opportunities' are those characteristics and conditions that are beneficial to Downtown Port Colborne thriving, whereas 'Weaknesses' and 'Threats' are those characteristics and conditions that are detrimental to Downtown Port Colborne's vitality. A summary of the key findings of the SWOT Analysis is provided below, organized by Strengths and Opportunities (5.3.1) and Weaknesses and Threats (5.3.2).

5.3.1 Strengths and Opportunities

The following strengths and opportunities were identified for the Downtown CBD:

- **Authentic:** area is a "real" downtown;
- **Complete:** broad range of uses and activities that serve the day-to-day needs of residents;
- **Loyalty:** many residents and visitors are attached to shopping downtown;
- **People:** residents living in and around downtown that shop in downtown;
- **Attachment:** many residents and business owners are interested in improving the downtown;
- **Landmark:** Bridge No. 21 over the Canal is attractive and a landmark feature in the downtown;
- **West Street:** strong heritage street with quality architecture;
- **Promenade:** great public space for residents and visitors;
- **Canal:** focal point within the community that residents may take for granted;
- **Friendly:** very friendly community and shop owners;
- **Neighbourhoods:** quality architecture in residential neighbourhood that are well maintained;
- **Reasonable:** affordable market and building prices;
- **Condition:** physically buildings are generally in good shape;

- **Proximity:** close to other communities in Niagara Region to draw visitors;
- **Specialty:** some great specialty shops but they need to be nurtured and expanded on;
- **Draws:** number of activities that draw visitors to downtown (farmer's market, museum, and library);
- **Safe:** a safe and accessible downtown for visitors;
- **Walkable:** numerous walking paths and sidewalks to and within the downtown;
- **Form:** good urban form with buildings close to the street edge;
- **Parking:** good quantity of off-street and on-street parking;
- **Cyclists:** a lot of bicycle traffic accessing shops and services;
- **Traffic:** traffic is calm with relatively low traffic volumes; and
- **Tourism:** number of draws for visitors in the municipality including beaches, marinas, and cottages.

5.3.2 Weaknesses and Threats

The following weaknesses and threats were identified for Downtown Port Colborne:

- **Financing:** obtaining financing for purchasing property and upgrades is difficult;
- **Overlooked:** West Street gets the focus for improvements while others areas are overlooked;
- **Tired:** business façades and signage are largely dated and tired;
- **Trees:** not enough trees in the downtown for comfort and a wind break;
- **Employees:** too many business employees are parking in prime spaces in the downtown;
- **Wayfinding:** lack of directional signage directing visitors to downtown features and confusion for visitors thinking Main Street is the downtown;
- **Connection:** transition between West Street and rest of downtown does not encourage visitors to "turn the corner" and continue;
- **Image:** the perception of Port Colborne from potential visitors is a problem;
- **Evenings:** there is a lack of evening activity and shops open in the evening;
- **Parking:** parking is not readily accessible to the businesses needing it;
- **Vacancy:** vacant storefronts give the wrong impression to visitors and need to be utilized;
- **Support:** with close neighbouring municipalities there is a need to focus on supporting businesses in Port Colborne;
- **Focus:** a lack of a central gathering space for residents, visitors and events;
- **Coordination:** better coordination of business activities and promotion of shopping opportunities in the downtown is needed;
- **Activity:** limited activities to do in downtown, particularly for youth;
- **Amenities:** few amenities along most streets including bike racks and benches;
- **Impression:** lack of a good first impression for visitors entering downtown;
- **Services:** much higher percentage of services as compared to the sale of goods;
- **Canal:** bridge closures interrupt connectivity between east and west sides of Canal;
- **Accommodation:** downtown needs more short-term accommodation options for visitors; and
- **Hours:** hours of operation of shops and service are inconsistent.



6.0 VISION

A “vision” is a long-term strategic statement that identifies how the community, including property owners, business owners, and residents, wants their downtown to look, feel and function. A vision includes a broad range of elements, including the type and nature of uses and activities within the downtown; desirable features and amenities; opportunities for moving people around the downtown; the feel or character of the buildings and spaces; and the overall identity and image of the downtown. Establishment of a vision is a critical component of the CIP process because it provides the overarching, long-term foundation that directs the improvements and programs that form the CIP.

The basis for the Vision for the Downtown CBD Colborne was generated at the visioning workshops with the BIA and the public on November 24, 2009. The critical needs identified in the SWOT Analysis were synthesized with the workshop findings and comments to establish a general overarching vision for the Downtown CBD. This vision was then used to guide the development of the Urban Design Strategy including the Public Realm Improvement Plan and the development of the Incentive Programs.

The Vision states that over time, the Port Colborne Downtown CBD will:

1. Maintain and enhance its real and authentic feel and character;
2. Be an active and vibrant commercial area at all times throughout the day and the year.
3. Have a greater variety of stores open longer hours;
4. Have a broad range of uses and activities on West Street that activate the street and the Welland Canal.
5. Have a strong visual and physical relationship with the Welland Canal and celebrate its history as a working port;
6. Be a more pedestrian and cycling friendly environment with sidewalks that have benches, street trees and street furniture;
7. Have updated building facades and signage that are creative yet provide continuity and respect the historical context;
8. Have more people living downtown in a diverse range of housing opportunities;
9. Have great streetscapes with a visually interesting, accessible and clean public realm;
10. Have more public gathering spaces;
11. Be easy for residents and visitors to travel within and navigate around; and,
12. Have better connections with the Canal, waterfront, marina, the Olde Humberstone Commercial Area, and the community east of the Canal.



7.0 URBAN DESIGN STRATEGY

The Urban Design Strategy for the Downtown CBD was completed in July of 2010 as part of the CIP process. The Urban Design Strategy provides a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that directs future City decisions related to physical improvement, both public sector (City and Region) and private sector (property owners and business owners), in order to help achieve the Vision for the Downtown CBD. The principal objectives of the Urban Design Strategy are to:

- 1) Establish the critical needs and overall vision for physical improvement in the Downtown CBD;
- 2) Identify a series of public realm enhancements;
- 3) Identify opportunities for intensification and redevelopment;
- 4) Identify appropriate land uses for existing undeveloped or underutilized properties;
- 5) Provide design guidelines for façade improvements; and,
- 6) Identify any necessary amendments to the existing policy and regulatory documents.

Section 4.0 of the Urban Design Strategy contains the Public Realm Improvement Plan. This Plan illustrates a series of improvements that are recommended for public places and spaces within the Downtown CBD. This includes recommendations on gateway signage, wayfinding signage, streetscapes, a civic square, the Clarence Street bridge, public art; the Port Promenade; and West Street.

Section 4.0 of the Urban Design Strategy forms the basis of the Public Realm Improvement Plan contained in Section 8.0 of this CIP. While Section 8.0 of this CIP provides a general summary of the Public Realm Improvement Plan, readers are directed to Section 4.0 of the Urban Design Strategy itself for the full Public Realm Improvement Plan, including a more fulsome description of the specific public realm improvements and design considerations that are recommended for the Downtown CBD.

Section 5.0 of the Urban Design Strategy contains the Private Realm Improvement Plan. This Plan illustrates a series of improvements recommended for private buildings and properties within the Downtown CBD. This includes recommendations on development and redevelopment, and improvements to building facades, private parking lots/areas, and property edges.

Section 6.0 of the Urban Design Strategy contains Façade Improvement Guidelines that are intended to be used by various participants in the façade design process in the Downtown CBD. This includes both the City when reviewing planning applications; and developers, landowners, business owners, and their consultants, when undertaking site and building improvements.

Section 7.0 of the Urban Design Strategy contains an Implementation Strategy that specifies the priority of the various public realm improvements (by type) in the Public Realm Improvement Plan. Section 7.0 of the Urban Design Strategy also recommends a number of revisions to the City's planning and regulatory documents, as well as several other initiatives designed to help implement the Urban Design Strategy and achieve the Vision for the Downtown CBD. These revisions to the City's planning and regulatory documents and other initiatives are described in Section 9.0 of this CIP. The Implementation Strategy in Section 7.0 of the Urban Design Strategy along with priorities developed for the implementation of the financial incentive programs forms the basis of the Implementation Strategy contained in Section 11.0 of this CIP.

8.0 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

8.1 Purpose and Objective

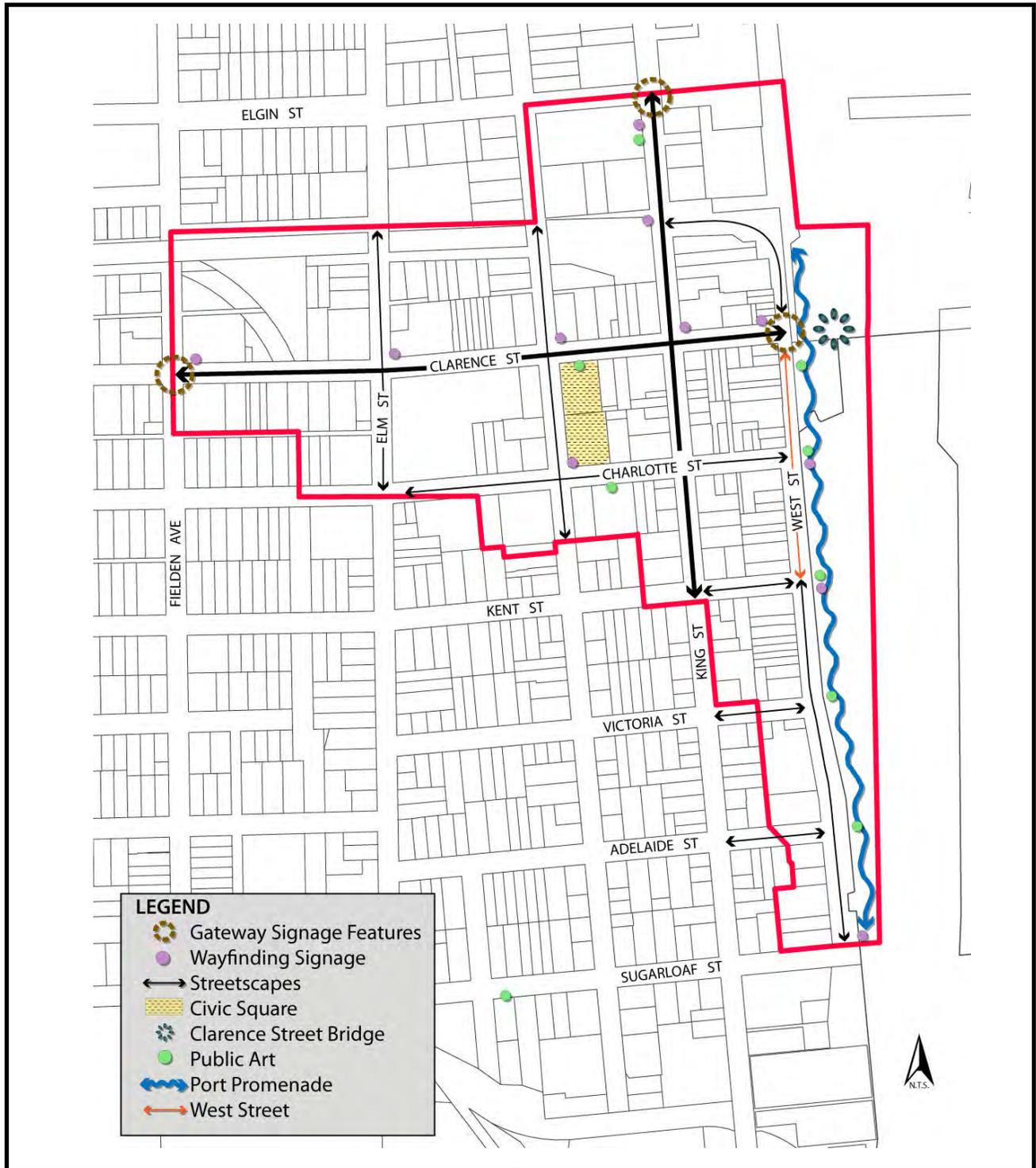
The “public realm” is the set of publicly-owned assets within a downtown, including its streets, open spaces, parks, plazas, promenades and public buildings. The public realm in vibrant and active downtowns often provides the most immediate lasting impression both residents and visitors have of a particular area. The public realm creates a particular “sense of place” for an area. A high quality public realm, where residents and visitors gather to experience a wide range of uses and activities, is crucial to the success of any downtown.

This section of the CIP establishes the framework for improvement of the public realm in the Downtown CBD by specifying recommended improvements to a broad range of elements and features within the public realm such as streets and streetscapes, public spaces, public buildings, and parking areas. The primary objective of the Public Realm Improvement Plan is to make the Port Colborne Downtown CBD a comfortable and safe walking environment that is visually interesting and engaging. This investment in the public realm is intended to spur and mutually reinforce private sector investment in the buildings and properties to generate further activity Downtown.

8.2 Recommended Improvements

Altogether, there are eight general themes of public realm actions that comprise the Public Realm Improvement Plan as summarized below. **Figure 5** shows the general location of these public realm improvements. Readers are directed to Section 4.0 of the Urban Design Strategy itself for the full Public Realm Improvement Plan including a more fulsome description of the specific public realm improvements and design considerations that are recommended for the Downtown CBD.





Downtown Central Business District
Community Improvement Plan

Figure 5

Public Realm Improvement Plan Components

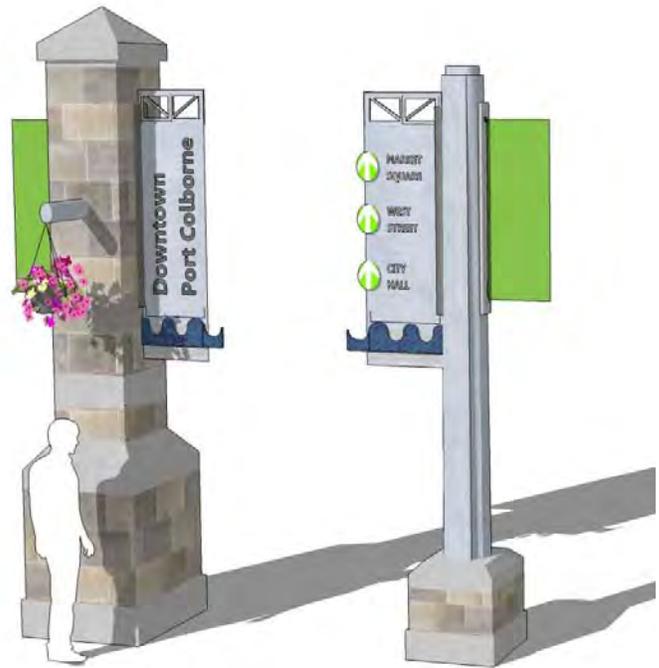
8.2.1 Establish Gateway Signage Features

The “gateways” to a downtown are located at key arrival points. Downtown currently has no prominent entrances that appropriately introduce and welcome visitors to the area, in a sense conditioning them to the space that they are entering. Gateway features, including downtown specific signage, present significant opportunities to provide a positive first impression of a downtown by introducing visual interest along the streetscape reflective of the particular character or features of the community.

It is recommended that a system of gateway features be installed at the key entrances to the Downtown CBD to create an enhanced first impression of the area. The objective of these gateway features is to announce arrival to residents and visitors alike, while enhancing the Downtown’s identity and improving the sense of place in the Downtown for both residents and visitors. Three key locations (see Figure 5) are identified for these gateway features:

- 1) the eastern gateway on Clarence Street surrounding Bridge No. 21;
- 2) the western gateway at the Clarence Street and Fielden Avenue intersection; and,
- 3) the northern gateway at the King Street and Elgin Street intersection.

Additional gateway feature locations could be installed over time (such as on Elm Street or Sugarloaf Street) as the public realm improvements take place.



8.2.2 Establish Wayfinding Signage

Successful downtowns enable people to easily, safely and comfortably move around the streets and spaces, whether arriving by foot, bicycle, or automobile. Downtown Port Colborne has a number of significant destination features that help establish and sustain a vibrant and active commercial area, but there is no comprehensive system to direct visitors to such features and link these amenities. Therefore, it is recommended that a comprehensive system of wayfinding signage be established within the Downtown CBD. The objective of such a system is to establish a comprehensive method to direct visitors to key destinations within the Downtown CBD and the surrounding area. Eleven specific locations for wayfinding signage features have been identified in the Downtown CBD (see Figure 5). These wayfinding locations are principally at Clarence Street intersections, but also along West Street, King Street and Charlotte Street. Key destinations that in a wayfinding signage program, at a minimum, include the civic buildings (City Hall, museums, library); the public open spaces (Port Promenade, market square); the public parking lots and spaces; other commercial areas (Olde Humberstone Main Street area); and key recreation destinations in the surrounding area. Other locations may be added as needed in the future.

8.2.3 Improve Streetscapes

The experience of travelling the streets of a downtown, whether by walking, cycling or driving, is a key component of one's overall impression and enjoyment of a particular downtown. Vibrant, active and interesting downtowns feature public streets that are great public spaces. The existing visual quality, appearance and condition of the streetscape in the Downtown CBD was identified as one of the key weaknesses in the SWOT Analysis. Therefore, it is recommended the principal streets (Clarence Street, King Street, and West Street) as well as the secondary streets (such as Catharine Street and Charlotte Street) in the Downtown CBD be redesigned and reconstructed.



In terms of priorities for street redesign and reconstruction, Clarence Street and King Street are the highest priorities: Clarence Street given its role as the “main street” of Downtown in connecting the entire commercial area, and King Street given its role of connecting Downtown with the Olde Humberstone commercial area. The focus for the recommended street redesign and reconstruction should be a consistent treatment and design for all streets in order to unify the Downtown CBD. This includes a consistent approach with respect to

streetscape elements and amenities. Specific design considerations for these streetscape improvements are outlined in Section 4.0 of the Urban Design Strategy.

8.2.4 Establish Civic Square

In addition to their principal commercial function, downtowns also serve as key areas within a community for gathering, socializing and passive recreation purposes. Thus, downtowns need appropriate spaces that can accommodate such functions. Downtown Port Colborne currently has an existing memorial space (“King George Memorial Park”) and a central parking lot in front of City Hall. However, this combined space does not capitalize on the full potential of its central location for a multi-purpose and multi-functional focal point within Downtown Port Colborne.

It is recommended the existing memorial space and public parking lot on Catharine Street between Clarence Street and Charlotte Street be re-purposed, through redesign and reconstruction, as the Downtown's civic focus and gathering place. The objective of these improvements is to provide a true civic square (“Market Square”) that will be a central, multi-purpose gathering space that can accommodate a range of different public and civic functions throughout different times of the year.



8.2.5 Accentuate Clarence Street Bridge

The Clarence Street Bridge over the Welland Canal, known as Bridge No. 21, physically and prominently symbolizes the identity and character of Downtown Port Colborne. The bridge's character, form and style, in addition to its scale and height, create an impressive visual focal point within the community. Additionally, the bridge feature provides an impressive vista looking eastwards along Clarence Street as one approaches the Welland Canal. Bridge No.21 is a unique landmark feature in the Downtown CBD. Therefore, it is recommended that this key landmark be enhanced by:



- a) installing lighting surrounding the bridge that improves the visual appearance and prominence of the bridge at night;
- b) adding formalized sitting areas in the vicinity of the bridge on both sides of Clarence Street to enable users of the Port Promenade opportunities to comfortably view the operations of the bridge.

8.2.6 Incorporate Public Art

Public art can play a strong role in creating a sense of place for a downtown by creating, or adding to, a unique or distinct identity for an area. Public art serves a number of roles, including enhancing public awareness and interest in the visual arts; providing a mechanism for resident involvement in the design of their downtown; and, most importantly from a design perspective, enhancing the visual interest and vibrancy of the downtown environment.

It is recommended that a series of public art features be incorporated into the streetscape improvements and improvements to public spaces, including the civic square and the Port Promenade. The objective for the



installation of public art is to add visual interest to the public realm that reflects the particular historical and cultural identity of Downtown Port Colborne. These public art features may take different forms (architectural features, sculptures, landscape features, street amenities, public works); may utilize different artistic mediums (metal, stone, paint); and may have different themes (functional, interpretive, abstract, or historical). While public art is recommended through the entirety of the Downtown CBD, eight prominent locations have been identified for consideration for public art installations (see Figure 5). Design competitions and involvement of the community is highly recommended for any public art installation process.

8.2.7 Enhance Port Promenade

The City has undertaken extensive redesign and reconstruction efforts for the east side of West Street along the Welland Canal over the last ten years. The resulting Port Promenade represents a key feature within the Downtown CBD. The Port Promenade performs a number of functions, including being a destination for residents and visitors, a linear recreation linkage, and a key social



space along the edges of the Welland Canal. It provides a very good connection between West Street and the Welland Canal.

It is recommended that small scale enhancements be made to the Port Promenade to improve its visual quality and comfort for pedestrians. These enhancements include enhancing the vistas from the east-west side streets; adding more plantings and greenery; providing wayfinding signage; and adding more visual interest with public art installations. The objective of these enhancements is to further incorporate and connect this public space with the remainder of the Downtown CBD, principally visually, as well as providing a greener and more comfortable walking and sitting area next to the Canal.

8.2.8 Capitalize on West Street

West Street, directly facing the Welland Canal with buildings on one side only, is a unique street within Port Colborne and the Niagara Region presenting a prominent opportunity to improve activity levels in Downtown Port Colborne and enhance its identity. West Street contributes to the character and draw of the Downtown CBD given the architectural character of the buildings fronting the street, the Port Promenade along the east side of the street, and the street's historic function and significance. However, the current condition of West Street prevents the street from achieving its full potential as a distinct character street within Downtown Port Colborne, and the Niagara Region for that matter.

The terms of reference for the Downtown CBD CIP included a traffic study that examines the potential benefits, challenges, feasibility and impact on the Downtown CBD of the conversion of West Street to one-way operation. The consideration for a one-way West Street stems from interest in expanding the sidewalk and boulevard realm along the west side of West Street, in order to allow more private use (i.e. cafes, patios, goods display) of streetscape space, and to accommodate more streetscape amenities.

The Downtown CBD Traffic Study (June 2010) started with seven options for traffic flow on West Street. Of these, three options were identified as suitable for West Street. These "options" include:

- **Option 1:** Retain two-way operation (Status Quo);
- **Option 2:** One-way (south) conversion from Clarence Street to Charlotte Street; and,
- **Option 3:** One-way (south) conversion from Clarence Street to Kent Street.

Based on a detailed assessment of traffic flow and operational impacts of the three options, the Traffic Study concludes that both one-way conversion options (Options 2 and 3) are feasible and yield similar results in terms of capacity for the road network, and also that the existing road network can accommodate the changes in traffic patterns related to the one-way operation of West Street in a fully satisfactory manner. Given these conclusions, there are no traffic-related reasons why West Street cannot be converted to one-way operation.

Based on this conclusion, the Urban Design Strategy used Option 1 and Option 3 (the preferred one-way option given it extends two blocks) to illustrate possible streetscape designs for West Street. Three design "alternatives" are illustrated in the Urban Design Strategy to graphically show the potential streetscape design elements for West Street (one alternative for two-way operation, two alternatives for one-way operation), ultimately to aid in making a recommendation for a preferred design and operation of West Street. These alternatives include:

- Alternative 1 (“conventional” two-way concept):** is a two-way concept that offers a modestly wider sidewalk and boulevard area in some areas along the west side of West Street that could accommodate various outdoor activities throughout the year. Alternative 1 provides this added sidewalk and boulevard space through the reduction of the width of existing traffic lanes between Clarence and Charlotte (between Charlotte and Kent they may stay the same or may have to be reduced given the existing tight widths). Alternative 1 has two different operational scenarios in which West Street could operate during various times of the year: full operation and full closure.



- Alternative 2 (“flexible” one-way concept):** is a one-way design that can adapt during different times of the year to accommodate different functions. Alternative 2 provides an additional “flexible” parallel parking lane on the west side of West Street, through the conversion to a southbound one-way traffic flow. This parallel parking lane could be converted to additional sidewalk activity space throughout the year. Alternative 2 has three different operational scenarios in which West Street could operate during various times of the year: full operation, partial closure, and full closure.



- Alternative 3 (“conventional” one-way concept):** is a one-way design that offers a substantially wider sidewalk and boulevard space along the west side of West Street that could accommodate various outdoor activities throughout the year. Alternative 2 provides this added sidewalk and boulevard space through the conversion to a southbound one-way traffic flow. Alternative 3 has two different operational scenarios in which West Street could operate during various times of the year: full operation and full closure.



The Urban Design Strategy provides a detailed assessment of the three design alternatives using a range of different criteria, which include the effects of each alternative on on-street parking, traffic flow, traffic operations, sidewalk space, active uses, and streetscape amenities. Based on these criteria, a conversion to a one-way southbound traffic flow between Clarence and Kent Street is recommended given it provides the best opportunity for significantly improving the streetscape quality and activity along West Street, in keeping with the overall vision expressed in Section 6.0.

Alternative 2 was specifically recommended as the preferred streetscape design alternative for West Street since it offers significant opportunities for improvements to streetscape quality along West Street while providing the greatest flexibility for accommodating a variety of activities on West Street throughout the year. However, the Urban Design Strategy notes that should the separation of the outdoor activity space from the building front preclude Alternative 2, particularly in relation to the operation of outdoor patios, then Alternative 3 presents a suitable design option for West Street, albeit with somewhat less flexibility in terms of how the street can be used.

Specific design considerations and details, including overhead and cross section views for each of the three design alternatives for West Street are outlined in Section 4.3.3 of the Urban Design Strategy.

*** Note:** *On September 13, 2010 Council adopted By-law 5525/122/10 which approved the Downtown Central Business District Community Improvement Plan and Option 1 as the preferred option for West Street*

8.3 Public Domain Incentives Program

The Region of Niagara currently offers a “Public Domain Incentives Program” as part of their “Smarter Niagara Incentives Program”, which seeks to foster distinct and attractive communities with a strong sense of place. The Public Domain Incentives Program offers grants to local municipalities to undertake infrastructure projects and public realm improvements that are identified, or comply with municipal planning documents including community improvement plans.

Once the CIP is adopted, the City of Port Colborne can make an application for any of the public realm improvement actions identified in this CIP. Grant applications must meet certain eligibility requirements and a competitive process supported by a business case justification is used to evaluate the applications. Funds are based on a matching basis with the Region’s share, and may not exceed 50% of the overall project cost to a maximum grant for any individual project of \$100,000.

9.0 POLICY, REGULATORY AND OTHER INITIATIVES

The City of Port Colborne has a number of planning and regulatory documents that direct land use planning and urban design within the City. Section 7.0 of the Urban Design Strategy recommends a number of revisions to these documents in order to better implement the Urban Design Strategy. These revisions to the City's policy and regulatory documents are summarized below. Section 7.0 of the Urban Design Strategy also recommends a number of other initiatives that should be considered by the City and other groups to enhance activity and vibrancy in the Downtown CBD. These other initiatives are also summarized below.

9.1 Policy and Regulatory Initiatives

9.1.1 Official Plan

The Official Plan provides the policy framework that directs overall development within Port Colborne. The currently in-force Official Plan was approved in 1980; the more recent "new" Official Plan was adopted in October 2006, but has not yet been fully approved by the Region. The new Official Plan is particularly important given it is the land use and design direction that will likely apply as the Urban Design Strategy recommendations are being implemented. Three elements of the Official Plan are particularly important for Downtown:

- i) the overall direction for Downtown;
- ii) the land use policies for Downtown; and,
- iii) any design direction or guidance for Downtown.

The Urban Design Strategy identified that no revisions or additions to the policies of the new Official Plan are required because the existing policies already:

- a) provide a strong strategic direction recognizing the CBD as primary commercial district;
- b) encourage further enhancement and beautification to the CBD;
- c) contain a single comprehensive "Downtown" designation that accommodates the broad range of uses desired for the Downtown; and,
- d) contain a comprehensive set of general design guidelines that promote the desired urban form.

However, with this in mind, should there be significant further delay in receiving full approval for the new Official Plan, the City might consider amending the existing Official Plan to incorporate the new direction and policies for Downtown Port Colborne as expressed in the new Official Plan.

9.1.2 Zoning By-law

The City's Zoning By-law, Zoning By-law 1150/97/81, approved in 1984 and amended from time to time, is a primary planning tool for implementing the vision of the Official Plan. Although the Zoning By-law dates from the 1980s, the "Central Commercial" zone that applies to the majority of properties within Downtown has a desirable and contemporary approach with regulations that are appropriate and flexible to encourage the tight urban form desired for Downtown. This includes permitting a broad range of commercial uses as well as residential uses above the ground floor; specifically prohibiting new automobile-related uses such as gas stations or service garages; accommodating a relatively flexible set of built form regulations that enables the full use of properties to be maximized; containing an appropriate building height limit of 5 to 6 storeys; and exempting non-residential uses from parking requirements for most properties in Downtown.

The Urban Design Strategy does recommend the City should consider making an amendment to the Central Commercial zone to add a maximum front yard setback (and exterior side yard setback for corner properties) for Downtown to ensure a tight built form edge along the street and to allow space for display of goods or other outdoor space. A maximum between 0.5 to 3.0 metres is appropriate.

9.1.3 Sign By-law

The City's Sign By-law (By-law No. 97-45) regulates the design and placement of signs throughout the municipality. It is principally concerned with regulating the type, location, and size of signs, and does not speak to the character and details of signs. Traditionally, signs in downtown areas were typically attached to the buildings and scaled to the building's size, form and proportions. However, the sign by-law does not necessarily support this desired signage character in the Downtown CBD. It permits a number of signs that are not appropriate for a main street environment, such as pole signs and roof signs, while for those desirable sign types, it permits signs that are generally much larger in size and scale than what is desired for a downtown environment.

The Urban Design Strategy recommends the City amend its Sign By-law to achieve a traditional form and character of signage in Downtown. This amendment could be a Downtown-specific amendment that:

- Limits the permitted types of signs within Downtown to A-frame, awning, fascia and projecting types;
- Restricts banner, billboard, ground, pole signs, and portable signs (replacement of existing only);
- Permits projecting signs to encroach over the public sidewalk where buildings have a zero setback and provided that an encroachment agreement is entered into with the City; and,
- Restricts the maximum sign area of the four permitted sign types in keeping with the façade improvement guidelines.

9.1.4 Encroachment Agreements

There are a number of instances where private encroachments into the public realm are warranted and recommended in the Downtown CBD. The Urban Design Strategy recommends opportunities for outdoor activity space (i.e. cafes, patios, retail displays) and projecting signage within and over the public sidewalk of the street right-of-ways within the Downtown CBD. In respect to the above, the City should encourage such activities in the public right-of-way, subject to applicable design guidelines and standards, to provide additional vibrancy and activity along the public streets.

Encroachment agreements would be required for property owners to locate such elements within the public right-of-way. These agreements are between a municipality and a property owner in respect to items that are placed or erected in the public right-of-way. Any encroachment agreement program for the Downtown CBD needs to be standardized and simple for both the City to administer and the property owners to understand. Such a program would need to clearly identify:

- Who may apply;
- What portions of the public right-of-way are authorized for encroachment;
- The process for submission and approval of applications;
- The different types of encroachments;
- Minimum design standards for encroaching items;
- The timelines for approval; and
- Any required submission details or information.

9.1.5 Façade Improvement Guidelines

Section 6.0 of the Urban Design Strategy provides a comprehensive set of guidelines related to façade improvements to buildings in the Downtown CBD. The Façade Improvement Guidelines are intended to be a flexible and comprehensive guide for the design and development of new façades and façade improvements in the Downtown CBD. They are not are not meant to be a “checklist”, but rather written with the understanding that the guidance offered is to be used on a case-by-case basis, recognizing that context and different situations will affect how the guidelines are relevant and how they will be applied. There is flexibility in the interpretation and application of the guidelines, provided it is in keeping with the spirit of the overarching design vision and principles for the Downtown CBD identified in this CIP.

Recognizing this role, the Urban Design Strategy recommends that City Council formally adopt the Façade Improvement Guidelines as a standalone document to serve as a guidance document for the development approvals process and the façade improvement works undertaken using financial incentive programs that may be offered by the City. Formal adoption of the Façade Improvement Guidelines would enable City staff to fully use the guidance offered by the Façade Improvement Guidelines.

9.2 Other Initiatives

While the Urban Design Strategy focuses primarily on physical improvements in the Downtown CBD, there are a number of other initiatives that should be considered by the City (in collaboration with the BIA) to enhance the Downtown’s vibrancy and activity. The following other initiatives are recommended:

- 1) **Establish a Downtown CBD Advisory Committee:** the establishment of an advisory committee, comprised principally of members of the public (such as the business community, local developers, heritage and design interests, BIA, Chamber of Commerce, local councilors and staff as needed) to provide input into and advance the recommendations of the Urban Design Strategy.
- 2) **Undertake a parking supply and management study:** a study that assesses the quantity and location of parking spaces, both off-street and on-street; establishes a strategy for addressing parking deficiencies; and investigates options for a revised parking meter system.
- 3) **Undertake a retail marketing study:** a study that assesses the existing conditions of the retail market in the Downtown CBD; identifies deficiencies in the retail market’s offerings; identifies the key characteristics and preferences of customers; and produces an action plan for businesses going forward, including a strategy for marketing and branding of the Downtown CBD.
- 4) **Set consistent operating hours:** a BIA initiative working with members to establish a consistent core working hour period when businesses are open to customers.
- 5) **Undertake ongoing promotional activities:** other BIA initiatives that seek to promote the overall vibrancy and activity in the Downtown CBD, whether it is organizing special events or general promotion and marketing materials.

10.0 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

10.1 Approach

The Downtown CBD CIP financial incentive programs below represent a comprehensive tool kit of programs specifically designed to help address a number of the key weaknesses and threats identified during the SWOT Analysis. The financial incentive programs are designed to encourage private sector investment, rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, redevelopment, and construction activity in the Downtown CBD in order to help achieve the Vision for the Downtown CBD. The types of incentive programs and program funding levels are also based on comments received from City staff, the BIA and public regarding financial incentives, and best practices in other municipalities both within and outside the Niagara Region.

The incentive programs contained in the CIP are referred to as a “toolkit” because once the CIP is adopted and approved, the incentive programs in the CIP can be activated by Council, one or more at a time, based on Council approval of the implementation of each program, subject to the availability of funding. The programs are also referred to as a “toolkit” because once activated, these programs can be used individually or together by an applicant. General requirements that apply to all the programs contained in this CIP and program specific requirements have been included in this CIP to help ensure that the Vision for both downtown areas will be achieved while protecting the financial interests of the City of Port Colborne.

Prior to development of the incentive programs for the Downtown CBD CIP, the incentive programs contained in the Olde Humberstone Main Street Area CIP were reviewed. The Olde Humberstone CIP contains eleven (11) incentive programs, all of which have low to very low funding levels when compared to successful incentive programs in other municipalities both inside and outside Niagara Region. While some argument can be made for consistency of incentive programs between the two commercial area CIPs (Main Street and the Downtown CBD), the number of programs included in the Olde Humberstone CIP is not required for the Downtown CBD, and the funding levels recommended for the Olde Humberstone CIP incentive programs would simply not be effective in the Downtown CBD. Therefore, the approach taken to development of incentive programs in the Downtown CBD is to include a smaller core group of well funded, competitive incentive programs that target the key weaknesses in the Downtown CBD, rather than using a large number of less than competitive incentive programs.

Consequently, the Downtown CBD CIP contains the following incentive programs:

- 1) Urban Design Study Grant Program;
- 2) Facade Improvement Grant Program;
- 3) Residential Rehabilitation, Conversion and Intensification Grant/Loan Program;
- 4) Property Revitalization (Tax Increment) Based Grant Program; and
- 5) Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant Program.

Table 3 provides a summary of the incentive programs contained in this CIP. Administrative guidelines for each of the incentive programs contained in this CIP are provided in Appendices D to H. These appendices do not form part of the CIP, and therefore may be changed from time to time, as required, without amendment to this Plan.

Table 3: Summary of Incentive Programs

Program	Description	Regional Participation (current as of date of CIP)	Recommended Program Duration ¹
1. Urban Design Study Grant Program	Grant equal to 50% of the cost for an urban design study and/or professional architectural/design drawing(s) to a maximum grant of \$1,750 per property/project.	N/A	Approximately ten (10) years, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.
2. Facade Improvement Grant Program	Grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible facade and storefront improvement/ restoration works to commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings to a maximum grant per property/project of \$10,000. At discretion of Council, the maximum grant can be increased by \$5,000 per property/project for properties designated under the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> . At discretion of Council, a separate grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible side and/or rear facade improvement/ restoration works to commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings up to a maximum grant of \$5,000 per property/project may be provided for properties where the side and/or rear facades are highly visible.	Region will match City grant to a maximum of \$5,000 from the Region.	Approximately ten (10) years, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.
3. Residential Grant / Loan Program	Grant equal to \$10 per sq.ft. of residential space rehabilitated or created to a maximum grant of \$10,000 per unit and a maximum of 4 units per property/project (maximum grant per property/project is \$40,000); OR Loan equal to \$15 per sq.ft. of residential space rehabilitated or created to a maximum loan of \$15,000 per unit and a maximum of 4 units per property/project (maximum loan per property/project is \$60,000)	Region will match City grant to a maximum of \$5,000 per unit. Region will match City loan to a maximum of \$10,000 per unit.	Approximately ten (10) years subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.
4. Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program	Annual grant equal to 80% of the increase in municipal property taxes for up to 10 years after project completion. The project must result in an increase in assessment and property taxes.	Region will match the percentage of the City grant for the same time period.	Approximately ten (10) years.
5. Planning and Building Fees Grant Program	Grant equal to 100% of the fees paid on planning/development applications, building permits and sign permits to a maximum total grant of \$5,000 per property/project.	N/A	Approximately five (5) years, with option to extend for five (5) years, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

¹ Council may reduce or extend the program duration of any or all of the programs beyond what is shown without amendment to the CIP.

10.2 General Program Requirements

All of the financial incentive programs contained in this CIP are subject to the following general requirements as well as the individual requirements specified under each program. The general and program specific requirements contained in this CIP are not necessarily exhaustive and the City reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis:

- a) Application for any of the incentive programs contained in this Plan can be made only for properties within the Downtown CBD Community Improvement Project Area;
- b) With the exception of the Planning and Building Fees Grant Program (no application required), an application for any financial incentive program contained in this CIP must be submitted to the City prior to the commencement of any works to which the financial incentive program will apply and prior to application for building permit;
- c) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;
- d) An application for any financial incentive program contained in this CIP must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports and other details as required by the City to satisfy the City with respect to costs of the project and conformity of the project with the CIP;
- e) Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by City staff, who will then make a recommendation to City Council or Council's designate. The application is subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate;
- f) Each program in this CIP is considered active if Council has approved implementation of the program, and Council has approved a budget allocation for the program (as applicable);
- g) As a condition of application approval, the applicant may be required to enter into a loan or grant agreement with the City. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the incentive to be provided. This Agreement is also subject to approval by City Council or Council's designate;
- h) Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, CMHC, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, etc...) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the application. Accordingly, the grant/loan may be reduced on a pro-rated basis;
- i) The City reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;
- j) The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant and/or loan;
- k) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the City, the City may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant and/or loan, and require repayment of the approved grant and/or loan;
- l) The City may discontinue any of the programs contained in this CIP at any time, but applicants with approved grants and/or loans will still receive said grant and/or loan, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements, and applicants with approved loans will still be required to repay their loans in full;

- m) All proposed works approved under the financial incentive programs and associated improvements to buildings and/or land must conform to any Façade Design Guidelines put in place by the City, and all other City guidelines, by-laws, policies, procedures, and standards;
- n) All works completed must comply with the description of the works as provided in the application form and contained in the program agreement, with any amendments as approved by the City;
- o) Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with applicable Official Plan(s), Zoning By-law and other planning requirements and approvals at both the local and regional level;
- p) All improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit, and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals;
- q) When required by the City, outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply, and/or other charges from the City must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant and/or loan approval/payment;
- r) Property taxes must be in good standing at the time of program application and throughout the entire length of the grant/loan commitment;
- s) City staff, officials, and/or agents of the City may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the City;
- t) Eligible applicants can apply for one, more or all of the incentive programs contained in this CIP, but no two programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost. Also, the total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the particular property for which an applicant is making application under the programs contained in this CIP and any other CIPs, shall not exceed the eligible cost of the improvements to that property under all applicable CIPs; and,
- u) Eligible applicants can apply for one, more or all of the incentive programs contained in this CIP and incentive programs contained in other applicable CIPs, e.g., the Brownfield CIP. However, no "double dipping" will be permitted, i.e., no two incentive programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost.
- v) In order to avoid double dipping between the Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program contained in this Downtown CBD CIP and the Brownfield Rehabilitation Grant (Tax Increment) Grant Program available under the Brownfield CIP, application can be made for only one of these grant programs, per property, site or project.
- w) The total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the particular lands and buildings of an applicant under the programs contained in this CIP and any other applicable CIPs, shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating said lands and buildings.

10.3 Urban Design Study Grant Program

10.3.1 Purpose

To help offset the costs of preparing professional urban design studies and architectural/ design drawings required by the City.

10.3.2 Description

This program will provide a matching grant of 50% of the cost of preparing professional urban design studies and architectural/design drawings required by the City to a maximum grant per property/project of \$1,750. Only one Urban Design Study Grant application per property/project will be allowed.

10.3.3 Program Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) All studies/drawings must be submitted to the City in electronic and hard copy format for the City's review and retention; and,
- b) All studies/drawings must be to the satisfaction of the City and must meet the City's Downtown CBD Facade Design Guidelines and any other City guidelines, by-laws, policies, procedures, and standards.

10.4 Façade Improvement Grant Program

10.4.1 Purpose

To promote the rehabilitation, restoration and improvement of the front, rear and side facades of commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings, including retail storefront display areas and signage.

10.4.2 Description

This program will provide a grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible front facade and storefront improvement and restoration works to commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings up to a maximum grant per property/project of \$10,000. At the discretion of Council, the maximum grant can be increased by up to \$5,000 per property/project for properties/projects that are also designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

At the discretion of Council, a separate grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible side and/or rear facade improvement and restoration works to commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings up to a maximum grant per property/project of \$5,000 may be provided where said rear and/or side facades are highly visible.

10.4.3 Program Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) The following types of building façade restoration and improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- i) repair or replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
 - ii) repair or repointing of facade masonry and brickwork;
 - iii) repair or replacement of cornices, parapets, eaves and other architectural details;
 - iv) repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
 - v) facade painting and cleaning/treatments;
 - vi) addition of new lighting/upgrading of existing fixtures on exterior facade and in entrance and storefront display areas;
 - vii) installation/improvement of signage (as permitted by the Sign By-law);
 - viii) landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum of 15% of the approved grant amount);
 - ix) architectural/design fees required for eligible works (to a maximum of 10% of the grant amount);
 - x) other similar repairs/improvements as may be approved; and,
 - xi) items i) to x) above as they apply to side facades and rear facades that are highly visible.
- b) In addition to the eligible costs specified in a) above, the following types of building façade restoration and improvement works on commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act are also considered eligible for a grant under this program:
- i) works that conserve or enhance elements specified in the Reasons for Designation accompanying the designating by-law under the Ontario Heritage Act;
 - ii) original siding and roofing materials including repair and replacement where necessary of wood clapboard or board-and-batten, repair and repointing of masonry buildings, stucco repair, repair or replacement of original roofing materials (slate, wood shingles, tile, etc.);
 - iii) removal of modern materials and replacement with documented original materials;
 - iv) reconstruction or construction of former and significant architectural features for which the appearance can be clearly determined from documentary sources (photographs, drawings, etc.);
 - v) cleaning of masonry buildings if it is necessary for the building's preservation;
 - vi) all final finishes, such as paint and masonry are eligible for funding subject to approval; and,
 - vii) works required to maintain or preserve significant architectural features.
- c) For commercial, institutional and mixed use buildings designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, the facade restoration and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed.

10.5 Residential Grant/Loan Program

10.5.1 Purpose

To promote the renovation of existing residential and construction of new residential units through;

- a) Renovations to existing residential units in mixed use buildings;
- b) Conversion of excess commercial and vacant space on upper stories of commercial and mixed use building to residential units;
- c) residential intensification; and,
- d) the infilling of vacant lots with new residential units.

10.5.2 Description

This program may be offered in the form of a grant or a loan.

10.5.2.1 Grant Program

The Residential Grant Program will provide a grant equal to the cost of rehabilitating existing residential units and/or constructing new residential units on the basis of \$10 per square foot of habitable floor space rehabilitated or constructed, to a maximum grant of \$10,000 per unit, and a maximum of 4 units per property/project (total maximum grant of \$40,000 per property/project).

The Residential Conversion Grant Program can be used for rental or ownership units. If used for ownership units, the grant may apply to buildings that fall under the *Condominium Act*. The Grant will be paid once all construction is complete and the City has conducted all final inspections.

10.5.2.2 Loan Program

The Residential Loan Program will provide a 0% interest loan on the basis of \$15 per square foot of habitable floor space rehabilitated or constructed, to a maximum loan of \$15,000 per unit, and a maximum of 4 units per property/project (total maximum loan of \$60,000 per property/project). The loan will be repayable in equal monthly payments over 5 years and a lump sum payment of outstanding funds at the end of the 5-year term.

The Residential Loan Program can be used for rental or ownership units. If used for ownership units, the loan may apply to buildings that fall under the *Condominium Act*. If the loan is used for ownership units, upon closing of the sale of any unit, the loan for that unit will be due in full. If the unit is a rental unit, the loan term is the full 5 years, but the loan may be repaid early without penalty.

10.5.3 Program Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) The following types of projects are considered eligible for a grant under this program:
 - i) renovations to existing residential units in a mixed use building to bring these units into compliance with the Building Code, Property Standards By-law and the Fire Code;
 - ii) existing commercial or mixed use building where two or more net residential units are created; and,
 - iii) vacant lot (including parking lots) converting to mixed use or residential use where two or more net residential units are created.
- b) The City may require the applicant to submit for approval impact studies such as traffic studies and studies of microclimatic conditions (sun, shadow, wind).
- c) As a condition of loan approval, the City may require the applicant to:
 - i) post such security as may be required to secure a commercial loan, including registration of such security against title of the property; and,
 - ii) meet specific insurance terms to protect the municipality's interests.

- d) If during the loan period, a building receiving a Residential Loan is demolished, all loan advances from the City shall cease, and all loan advances already made by the City will be repayable to the City; and,
- e) If during the loan period, a building designated under the Ontario Heritage Act receiving a Residential Loan is demolished or any of the heritage features are altered in any way that would compromise the reasons for designation, all loan advances from the City shall cease, and all loan advances already made by the City will be repayable to the City.

10.6 Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant

10.6.1 Purpose

To encourage and support rehabilitation, redevelopment, infill and intensification projects by providing a financial incentive that reduces the property tax increase that can result from these various types of development. This incentive is also designed to assist in securing project financing.

10.6.2 Description

This program will provide a tax increment based grant equivalent to 80% of the municipal (City and Region) property tax increase for up to 10 years following completion of an eligible project where that project creates an increase in assessment, and therefore an increase in property taxes. The grant will be paid annually once the eligible project is complete, building inspection has taken place, the property has been reassessed, and the new property taxes have been paid in full for the year.

Pre-project Municipal taxes will be determined before commencement of the project at the time the application is approved. For purposes of the grant calculation, the increase in Municipal taxes will be calculated as the difference between pre-project Municipal taxes and post-project Municipal taxes that are levied as a result of re-valuation of the property by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) following project completion. The grant will be recalculated every year based on post-project Municipal taxes in that year. Grant payments will cease when the total grant along with all other grants and loans provided equals the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings, or after 10 years, whichever comes first.

10.6.3 Program Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements and the following program requirements:

- a) The following types of projects are considered eligible for this program:
 - i) existing commercial, residential and mixed use buildings, vacant properties and parking lots where the redevelopment or rehabilitation project results in an increase in the assessed value and taxes on the property²;
- b) The City may require the applicant to submit a Business Plan, with said plan to the municipality's satisfaction;

² This program does not apply to any residential project that creates less than two net residential units.

- c) The City may require the applicant to submit for approval impact studies such as traffic studies and studies of microclimatic conditions (sun, shadow, wind).
- d) If during the grant period, a building receiving a Revitalization Grant is demolished, all grant payments shall cease and the City reserves the right to require repayment of the grant payments; and,
- e) If during the grant period, a building/property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act receiving a Revitalization Grant is demolished or any of the heritage features are altered in any way that would compromise the reasons for designation, all grant payments shall cease and the City reserves the right to require repayment of the grant payments.

10.7 Planning and Building Fees Grant Program

10.7.1 Purpose

To facilitate and spur adaptive re-use, infill, intensification, and redevelopment through the provision of an additional financial incentive that will complement and augment the other incentive programs within the CIP.

10.7.2 Description

This program will provide a grant equal to 100% of the fee paid on planning and development applications, building permits and sign permits. The Planning and Building Fees Grant will be paid after all construction is complete and the City has conducted all final building inspections.

10.7.3 Program Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) The following types of planning and development applications and building permits are considered eligible for this program:
 - i) Official Plan amendment;
 - ii) Zoning By-law amendment;
 - iii) Minor Variance;
 - iv) Consent to Sever;
 - v) Site Plan Control and Development Agreements;
 - vi) Plan of Subdivision/Condominium;
 - vii) Parkland Dedication Fee;
 - viii) Rental Housing Protection Act;
 - ix) Sign Permit;
 - x) Sidewalk Café Permit;
 - xi) Encroachment Agreement;
 - xii) Demolition Permit; and,
 - xiii) Building Permit.

Other permits issued by the City that are not listed above, but which advance the purpose of this program, may be considered. This program does not apply to security deposits or cash-in-lieu payments.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Implementation Strategy is to set the priorities for implementation of the recommendations contained in this CIP, including the Public Realm Improvement Plan and the Financial Incentive Programs. Table 3 below summarizes the priorities of the actions recommended in this CIP.

11.2 Basis

Sections 28(3), 28(6) and 28(7) of the *Planning Act* identify that once a Community Improvement Project Area has been designated and a CIP is approved, a municipality may undertake a number of different actions, including:

- a) Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;
- b) Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- c) Sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan; and,
- d) Making grants or loans to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area.

Once adopted, the Port Colborne Downtown CBD CIP will enable the City to engage in any of these activities and use its powers under the *Municipal Act, 2001* to undertake all of the recommendations in this CIP, including the public realm improvement plan and the financial incentive programs.

11.3 Public Realm Improvement Plan

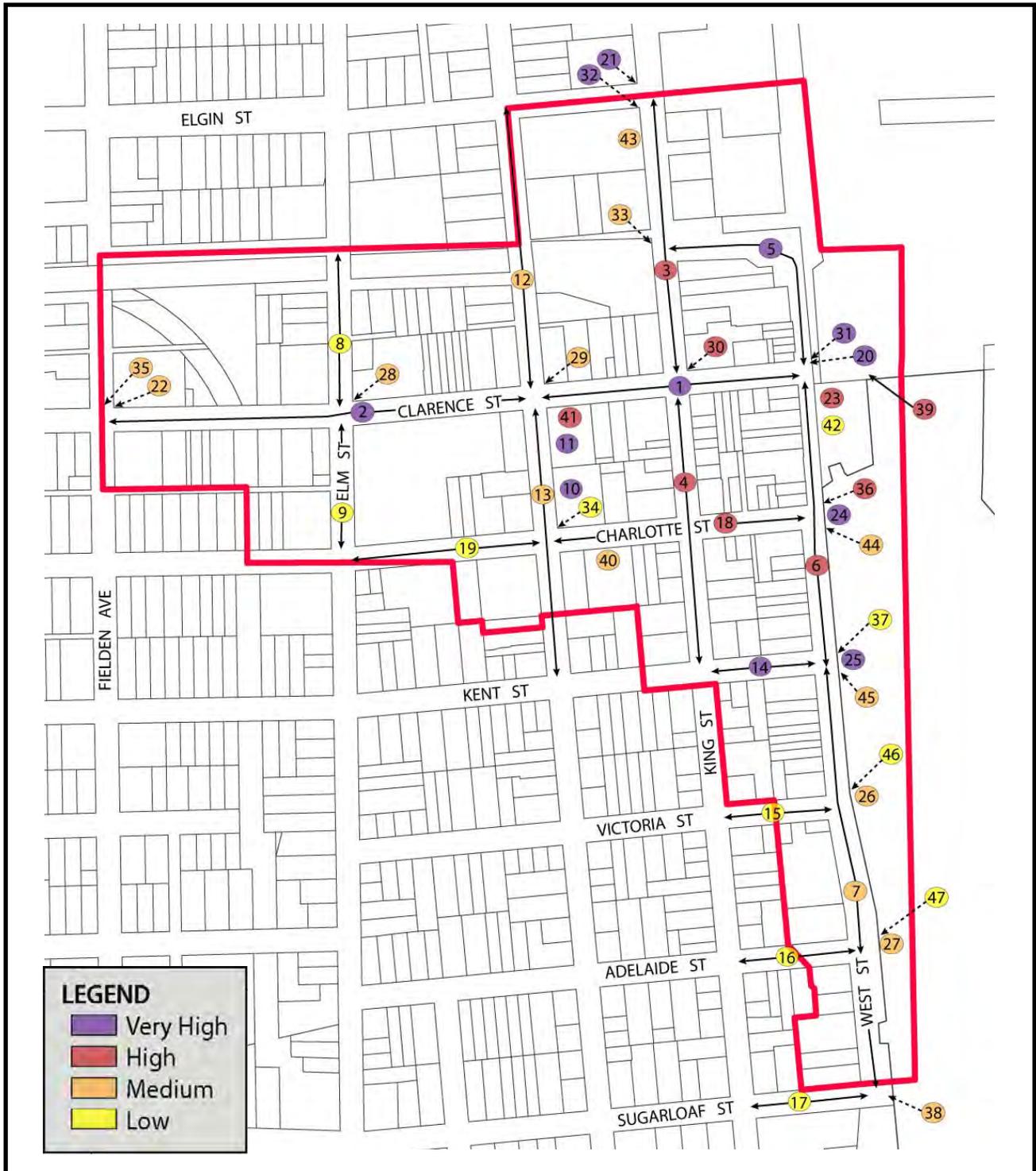
Public realm improvements and high quality urban design are important elements for fulfilling the Downtown CBD's role as a safe, comfortable, attractive, and interesting space. Public Realm improvements reflect City Council's commitment to the Downtown CBD as a central commercial area. Public realm improvements also typically represent the largest investment in a CIP, and take the longest in terms of timing. Acknowledging this, the prioritization of the various public realm improvements, and budgeting over the long term for these improvements, is a very important step in the successful implementation of this CIP.

The section on the Public Realm Improvement Plan in **Table 4**, together with **Figure 6**, provides the general framework for prioritizing the various public realm improvements recommended in this CIP (as taken from the Urban Design Strategy). These priorities are organized according to the five general categories of improvements: gateway features; street improvements; public spaces; municipal parking areas; and wayfinding signage. The priorities assigned to the public realm improvement actions reflect the guiding principle that those actions that will have the most significant positive impact are the highest priority, and should therefore be completed first. The priority framework for the public realm improvements is intended only as a general guide for the preparation of a long-term capital program that will necessarily provide more detail in terms of specific costs, phasing and priorities.

Table 4: Implementation Strategy Actions and Priorities

Public Realm Improvements			
#	Location	Type	Priority
1	Clarence Street (Catharine to West)	Streetscape	Very High
2	Clarence Street (Fielden to Catharine)	Streetscape	Very High
3	King Street (Elgin to Clarence)	Streetscape	High
4	King Street (Clarence to Kent)	Streetscape	High
5	West Street (King to Clarence)	Streetscape	Very High
6	West Street (Clarence to Kent)	Streetscape	High
7	West Street (Kent to Sugarloaf)	Streetscape	Medium
8	Elm Street (Princess to Clarence)	Streetscape	Low
9	Elm Street (Clarence to Charlotte)	Streetscape	Low
10	Market Square	Open Space	Very High
11	King George Memorial Square	Open Space	Very High
12	Catharine Street (Princess to Clarence)	Streetscape	Medium
13	Catharine Street (Clarence to Kent)	Streetscape	Medium
14	Kent Street (King to West)	Streetscape	Very High
15	Victoria Street (King to West)	Streetscape	Low
16	Adelaide Street (King to West)	Streetscape	Low
17	Sugarloaf Street (King to West)	Streetscape	Low
18	Charlotte Street (Catharine to West)	Streetscape	High
19	Charlotte Street (Elm to Catharine)	Streetscape	Low
20	Clarence Street and West Street intersection	Gateway signage	Very High
21	King Street and Elgin Street intersection	Gateway signage	Very High
22	Clarence Street and Fielden intersection	Gateway signage	Medium
23	Northern Port Promenade	Open space	High
24	Charlotte Street termination	Open space	Very High

25	Kent Street termination	Open space	Very High
26	Victoria Street termination	Open space	Medium
27	Adelaide Street termination	Open space	Medium
28	Clarence Street and Elm Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	Medium
29	Clarence Street and Catharine intersection	Wayfinding signage	Medium
30	Clarence Street and King Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	High
31	Clarence Street and West Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	Very High
32	King Street and Elgin Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	Very High
33	King Street and Princess Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	Medium
34	Catharine Street and Charlotte Street intersection	Wayfinding signage	Low
35	Clarence Street and Fielden Avenue intersection	Wayfinding signage	Medium
36	Charlotte Street terminus	Wayfinding signage	High
37	Kent Street terminus	Wayfinding signage	Low
38	Sugarloaf Street terminus	Wayfinding signage	Medium
39	Bridge No.21	Open Space	High
40	City Hall	Public Art	Medium
41	King George Memorial Square	Public Art	High
42	Northern Port Promenade	Public Art	Low
43	Public Library	Public Art	Medium
44	Charlotte Street terminus	Public Art	Medium
45	Kent Street terminus	Public Art	Medium
46	Victoria Street terminus	Public Art	Low
47	Adelaide Street terminus	Public Art	Low



Downtown Central Business District
Community Improvement Plan

Figure 6

Public Realm Improvement Priorities

Table 4: Implementation Strategy Actions and Priorities (Cont'd)

Policy and Regulatory Initiatives		
#	Action	Priority
48	Amend existing Official Plan if significant delay in approval of new Official Plan	Low
49	Amend Central Commercial Zone	Medium
50	Amend Sign By-law	High
51	Establish Encroachment Agreement Program	Medium
52	Adopt Façade Improvement Guidelines	Very High

Other Initiatives		
#	Action	Priority
53	Establish a Downtown CBD Advisory Committee	High
54	Undertake a parking supply and management study	Medium
55	Undertake a retail marketing study	Medium
56	Set consistent operating hours	High
57	Undertake ongoing promotional activities	High

Financial Incentive Programs		
#	Action	Priority
58	Implement the Urban Design Study Grant Program	High
59	Implement the Façade Improvement Grant Program	Very High
60	Implement the Residential Grant/Loan Program	Very High
61	Implement the Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program	High
62	Implement the Planning and Building Fees Grant Program	Medium

12.0 MONITORING PROGRAM

12.1 Purpose

The Monitoring Program set out in this section has several purposes. It is designed to monitor:

- a) Funds dispersed through the CIP incentive programs so as to determine which programs are being most utilized, and use this information to adjust the programs, as required;
- b) Feedback from applicants to the incentive programs so that adjustments can be made to the incentive programs, as required; and,
- c) The economic impact associated with projects taking advantage of the CIP incentives programs.

The Port Colborne Downtown CBD CIP is not intended to be a static planning document. It is intended to be a proactive plan for economic and community renewal and revitalization in Downtown Port Colborne. Therefore, information obtained through the Monitoring Program should be used by the City to periodically adjust the incentive programs to make them even more relevant and user friendly. Information collected through the Monitoring Program should be utilized to provide regular reports to Council on the amount of private sector investment being leveraged by the municipal incentive programs and the economic benefits associated with these private sector projects.

12.2 Description

Monitoring of the uptake and performance of the incentive programs should be done on a regular basis and these monitoring results reported to Council annually or even semi-annually. As well, feedback from users of the incentive programs should be considered and utilized to adjust the incentive programs in order to improve their effectiveness and ensure that the incentive programs are effective for a range of project types and sizes in the Project Area. Similarly, monitoring of progress on implementation of the Public Realm Improvement Plan should be done regularly and reported to Council on an annual basis.

Table 5 presents a list of the variables that should be monitored on an individual project and aggregate basis for the incentive programs contained in this CIP. In addition to these quantitative economic measures, the City should also attempt to monitor the qualitative results of the CIP in terms of its social and community benefits. This could include the impact of public realm improvement projects on existing businesses and community pride, and the number and size of public/community events held in Downtown Port Colborne. Regular qualitative observations should be conducted by City staff of the individual and cumulative impact of both public and private CIP projects on the Downtown CBD. These qualitative measures should be regularly monitored and reported to Council along with the quantitative measures specified in Table 5.

12.3 Program Adjustments

The individual incentive programs contained in this CIP can be activated, deactivated or discontinued by Council without amendment to this Plan. Over time, feedback from monitoring of the CIP may lead to minor revisions to the programs contained in this CIP. Therefore, the City may periodically review and adjust the terms and requirements of any of the programs contained in this Plan, without amendment to the Plan. Such minor changes will be provided to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for information purposes only. Increases in funding provided by the financial incentives contained in this CIP, the addition of any new incentive programs to this CIP, or an expansion of the Community Improvement Project Area will require a formal amendment to this Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

Table 5: Monitoring Variables

Program	Monitoring Variable
Urban Design Study Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications; • \$ amount of grant • Total cost of urban design study/ architectural/design drawings; • Number of Urban Design Study Grants leading to facade/construction projects; and • Number and \$ amount of program defaults.
Facade Improvement Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications by type of facade improvement (front/side); • \$ amount of grant; • Type and cost (\$) of total facade improvements; • Total Cost (\$) of other building improvements/construction; • Increase in assessed value of participating property; • Increase in municipal (City and Region) and education property taxes of participating property; and • Number and \$ amount of program defaults.
Residential Grant/Loan Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications by type (conversion, intensification, infill) • \$ amount of grant or loan; • Total \$ value of construction; • Number of residential units created by type (rental/ownership, 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom, 2+ bedroom) and square footage of residential space rehabilitated, converted or added; • Increase in assessed value of participating property; • Increase in municipal (City and Region) and education property taxes of participating property; and • Number and \$ amount of loan/program defaults.
Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications and \$ amount of grant; • Total \$ value of construction; • Number of residential units by type and square footage of residential space converted, rehabilitated or constructed; • Square footage of commercial and institutional space rehabilitated or constructed; • Number of new businesses successfully occupying space (1 year post completion); • Jobs created/maintained; • Increase in assessed value of participating property; • Increase in municipal (City and Region) and education property taxes of participating property; • Number and \$ amount of program defaults.
Planning and Building Fees Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number, type and \$ amount of planning application fees grant • Number and \$ value of parkland dedication fee grant • Number and \$ value of demolition and building permit fees grant • Square footage of habitable floor space created; • Square footage of commercial space rehabilitated or constructed; • Total \$ value of construction; • \$ value of building permit fees paid; and • \$ value of building permits issued.

13.0 MARKETING STRATEGY

13.1 Key Objective and Messages

It is very important to the successful implementation of this CIP that the City's incentive programs and the leadership role being taken by the City through the Urban Design Strategy, including the Public Realm Improvement Plan be effectively communicated to property owners, business owners, developers, potential end users, and residents within the Project Area, within the City of Port Colborne, within the Region of Niagara, and beyond. The purpose of this Marketing Strategy is to proactively and regularly advertise and market the City's incentive programs and the planned improvements and actions being taken by the City to actively support revitalization within the Downtown CBD.

It is recommended that the City budget for and implement a Marketing Strategy to:

- a) provide direction on how to obtain information on available incentive programs, including program guides and application forms, as well as assistance and advice from City staff on making application for the incentive programs;
- b) inform property and business owners and developers with regard to actions planned and being undertaken by the City to improve the investment environment within the Project Area; and,
- c) publicize recent development and business activity and success stories within the Project Area.

13.2 Target Audience

The Marketing Strategy should be targeted to:

- a) Existing property owners and business owners in the Project Area;
- b) Business owners outside the Project Area, both within the City of Port Colborne and within the Region;
- c) Business associations both within and outside the Project Area;
- d) Support professionals, including real estate professionals, lending institutions such as banks and trust companies, planning consultants, architects, and others; and,
- e) the general public.

13.3 Marketing Tools

The marketing of the CIP programs and Public Realm Improvement Plan should be a comprehensive multi-media campaign containing information, education and advertising components. The following key tools are recommended to implement the Marketing Strategy:

- a) A Publication, e.g., a newsletter, containing a description of the financial incentive programs available from the City, including general program requirements and how to apply, highlights of planned public realm improvements and updates on public realm improvements that are under construction, and profiles of projects and new/ expanded businesses that take advantage of the CIP incentive programs;

- b) Profiling of the incentive programs and downtown revitalization success stories in planning and economic development publications, newsletters and other publications published by the City of Port Colborne and Region of Niagara;
- c) Stories in local media (newspaper, radio, web) on the CIP, public realm improvements and revitalization success stories in the Project Area.
- d) Enhancement of the City's web page via addition of access to information on the available incentive programs and the aforementioned newsletter;
- e) Periodic presentations to the target audience for the CIP regarding available incentives programs, City activities/ public realm improvements, business and redevelopment success stories in the Project Area; and,
- f) Media Releases and profiles of successful projects and initiatives should be sent to local and outside media.

14.0 CONCLUSION

This CIP is based on a community developed Vision for Downtown Port Colborne. The programs and actions contained in this CIP have been developed specifically to address the key weaknesses and threats and take advantage of the strengths and opportunities identified during the detailed SWOT Analysis. The preparation of this CIP has benefitted greatly from extensive community consultation through input provided by the project Steering Committee, and the Downtown BIA and the public through two workshop sessions.

The adoption and approval of this CIP will provide the legislative basis and comprehensive policy framework to guide the public realm improvements and incentive programs needed to achieve the Vision for Downtown Port Colborne. Successful implementation of this CIP will require a commitment by Council to capital funding for implementation of the Public Realm Improvement Plan. A financial and resource commitment will also be required to implement, administer and monitor the incentive programs.

Experience in other municipalities has shown that early and effective implementation of the Marketing Strategy will help to make property and business owners in the Project Area aware of the City's plans and the incentive program opportunities that are available. This will result in a more successful CIP. Ongoing monitoring of the performance of the incentive programs and adjustment of the programs as required will also help to ensure the effectiveness of this CIP.

The investment made by the City in this CIP will be augmented and supported by the Region's Smarter Niagara programs which are designed to support local community improvement plan initiatives. In summary, the revitalization of the Port Colborne Downtown CBD will benefit not only business and property owners in the Downtown CBD, but also residents, business and property owners in Port Colborne and the wider regional community as a whole.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Current Official Plan

Community Improvement Policies

SECTION L

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT POLICIES

(All of Section L Constitutes O.P.A. 9)

(a) Goal Statement

The general goal of the community improvement policies is to continue to encourage the processes of maintenance, revitalization and rehabilitation in the residential, commercial, and industrial sections of the City.

(b) Objectives

The City of Port Colborne shall:

1. Establish and maintain the physical infrastructure required in residential, commercial and industrial community improvement areas.
2. Ensure the maintenance of the existing building stock, and encourage rehabilitation, renovation and repair of older buildings.
3. Provide and maintain adequate social and recreation facilities and services.
4. Encourage improvement activities that contribute to a strong economic base including both industrial development and tourism.
5. Promote the development and revitalization of the downtown core, and improve its identity as a major business and commercial centre for the City.
6. Promote the development and redevelopment of the North End commercial area, and encourage its role as a neighbourhood commercial and tourist commercial shopping/service area.
7. Improve parking and traffic patterns to make them more compatible with surrounding areas.
8. Where feasible, reduce existing land use conflicts.
9. Where feasible, encourage development and redevelopment along the Welland Canal in order to enhance the unique attributes of these lands for community and tourist use.

(c) Criteria for Area Selection

Various sections of the City have potential for improvement, redevelopment and revitalization. These areas may be designated as Community Improvement Areas in accordance with the following criteria:

1. The presence of building stock and/or housing units that do not meet minimum occupancy standards as set forth in the City's Property Standards By-law.
2. The presence of deficiencies in hard services including roads, sidewalks, storm and sanitary sewers, and water services.
3. The presence of lighting or other public utilities that fail to meet municipal standards, or that are not energy efficient.
4. The overall streetscape or aesthetics of an area requires upgrading.
5. The presence of vacant buildings and lands, and/or underutilized lands or buildings that could be developed, renovated or converted to another use.
6. The need for upgrading goods and services within a commercial area in order to meet consumer requirements.

7. Limited on-site expansion potential for established businesses within a community improvement area.
8. The presence of incompatible land uses.
9. Inadequate recreation facilities and/or a lack of public open space.
10. Inadequate social facilities, i.e., library services.
11. The presence of buildings or lands of architectural and/or historical merit.
12. Limited or poor accessibility to residential/ commercial/industrial lands within a community improvement area.
13. Inadequate on-street and off-street parking space.
14. Evidence of a decline in the retail tax base of a commercial area.
15. Evidence of environmental concerns with regard to a particular industrial/commercial operation within a community improvement area.
16. The presence of points of interest, and amenities (i.e. canal) which would benefit from protection or enhancement and provide an opportunity for tourism.

(d) Community Improvement Areas

The criteria outlined in Section (c) were applied to the City which resulted in the identification of 5 community improvement areas. These areas are illustrated on Map Schedule D. The boundaries of the community improvement areas have been established by utilizing natural and artificial features such as roads, property lines and the canal. Where a boundary is shown along a road it shall be interpreted that all properties fronting on both sides of the street shall be included within the area.

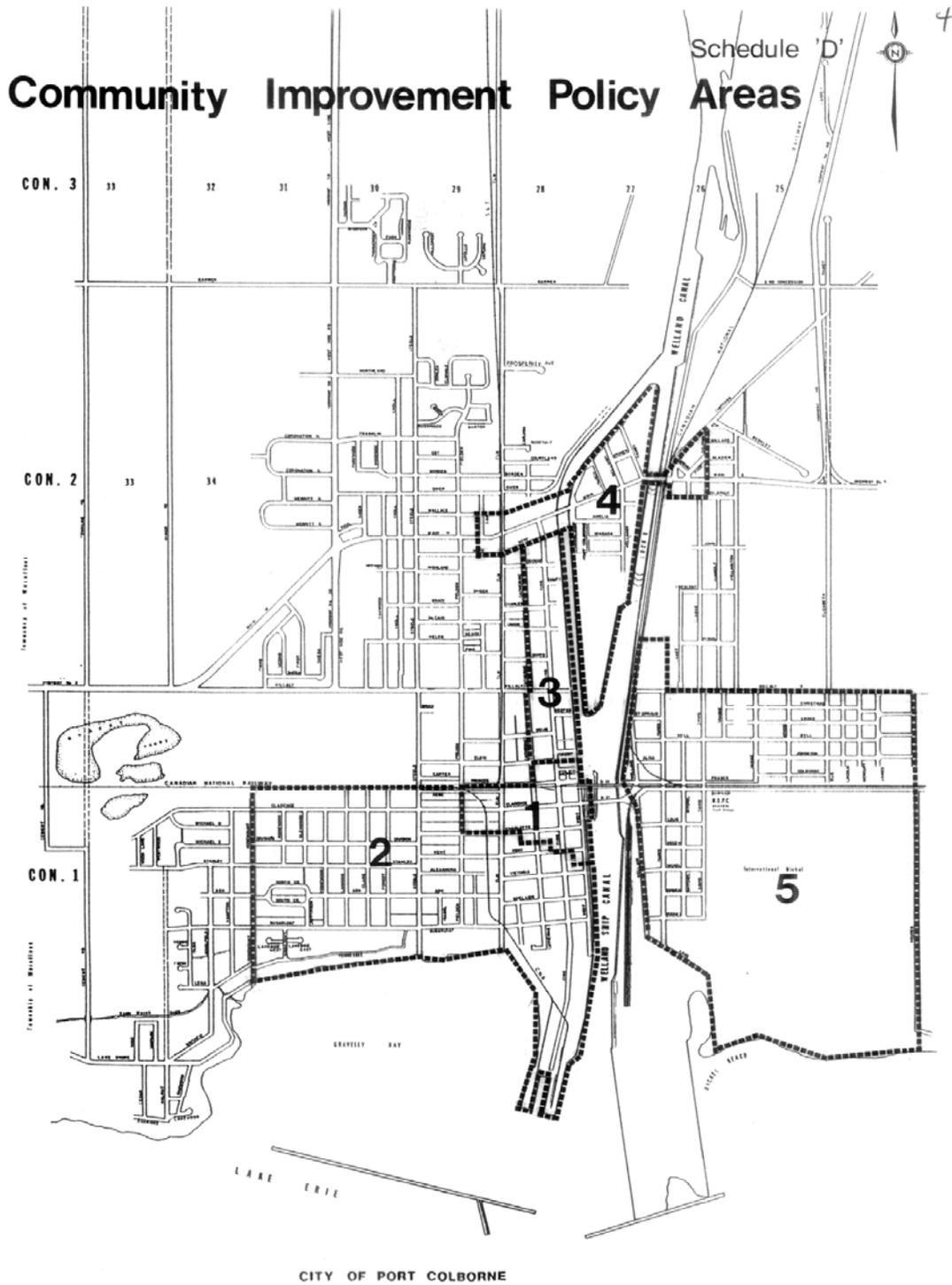
(e) Implementation

The methods Council may consider to achieve community improvement goals and objectives are listed below.

1. Council may by by-law designate community improvement project areas, and direct the preparation of community improvement plans for the project areas in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act, S.O. 1983.
2. When determining capital expenditures, consideration shall be given to the information contained in the background report to this amendment in order to ensure appropriate integration and scheduling of community improvements with all municipal departments.
3. Continue to support existing Business Improvement Areas (BIA), and encourage the formation of new BIAs in their efforts to maintain strong and viable business areas.
4. Continue to enforce the property standards by-law with respect to residential, commercial and industrial building stock and lands.
5. Continue to make applications to participate in all appropriate senior level government programs.
6. As specified in Section G-8(c), Council shall undertake a comprehensive parkland study in order to identify current and future recreation/parks needs in the City.
7. In order to encourage development and redevelopment along the Welland Canal banks, Council may consider the formation of a Task Force to undertake discussions with the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority in order to develop plans of benefit to the City's residents and tourist industry.
8. Consider a more flexible approach to zoning in community improvement areas, where community improvement objectives are supported.
9. Where feasible, acquire lands and buildings to carry out community improvement objectives.
10. Encourage private rehabilitation, redevelopment and conversion activities, and where appropriate, support infill development.
11. Consider the establishment of a Social Services Advisory Committee to keep council and municipal staff informed of community needs and activities.

12. Continue to support the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) and heritage conservation through the application of the Heritage Act.
13. As specified in Section G-11A(d), G-11B(d), G-11D(d), and G-12(j), Council shall continue to encourage buffering techniques to reduce the impact of incompatible land use within the community improvement areas.
14. In order to assess the potential role of the tourism industry in Port Colborne, Council may consider commissioning a detailed Tourism Feasibility and Impact Study.
15. Encourage various committees and groups active within the City in their efforts to strengthen the image of Port Colborne as a place to live, work, shop and visit.

APPENDIX B
Current Official Plan
Schedule D - Community Improvement Areas



APPENDIX C

New Official Plan

Community Improvement Policies

VI. Community Improvement

VI-A. Policies and Project Areas

VI-A.1. General

VI-A.1a. The City will accomplish community improvement through:

VI-A.1a.1. Ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation, redevelopment and upgrading of areas characterized by: deficient, obsolete or deteriorated buildings; land use conflicts; deficient infrastructure; deficient social, community, or recreational services; and / or economic instability;

VI-A.1a.2. Establishment of programs to encourage private sector redevelopment and rehabilitation that addresses identified economic development, land development, environmental, housing, and/or social development issues/needs;

VI-A.1a.3. Designation of Community Improvement Project Areas, the boundary of which may include all or part of the city's urban area;

VI-A.1a.4. Preparation, adoption and implementation of Community Improvement Plans.

VI-A.2. Community Improvement Project Areas

VI-A.2a. The designation of Community Improvement Project Areas may be based on one or more of the following conditions being present:

Section 28 of the Planning Act allows municipalities to plan for areas that due to age or other reasons, require revitalization and rehabilitation of lands and buildings. Once a community improvement plan is adopted by the City and approved by the Province, incentives may be offered to encourage private sector reinvestment in lands and buildings. The City may also undertake a wide range of actions for the purposes of implementing the community improvement plan.

-
- VI-A2a1. Building facades, entire buildings, or structures (including those of heritage or architectural significance) in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;
 - VI-A2a2. Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching, or incompatible land uses;
 - VI-A2a3. Deficiencies in physical infrastructure, including but not limited to servicing, roadways, and streetscapes;
 - VI-A2a4. Poor road access and/or traffic circulation;
 - VI-A2a5. Deficiencies in community services, including but not limited to social services, open space and/or recreation facilities;
 - VI-A2a6. Inadequate mix of housing types;
 - VI-A2a7. Known or perceived environmental contamination;
 - VI-A2a8. Poor overall visual quality and/or urban design;
 - VI-A2a9. High commercial vacancy rates;
 - VI-A2a10. Existing or potential business improvement areas;
 - VI-A2a11. Vacant lots and under-utilized properties which have potential to better utilize the land base;
 - VI-A2a12. Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-way, building expansion, parking and/or loading facilities;

VI-A2a13. Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of under-utilized land and/or buildings; and,

VI-A2a14. Any other environmental, social, or community economic development reasons.

VI-A2b. Priority for the designation of Community Improvement Project Areas, and the preparation and adoption of Community Improvement Plans shall be given to those area where:

VI-A2b1. The anticipated improvements achieves the Vision and Strategic Directions in this plan;

VI-A2b2. The greatest number of conditions (as defined in [VI-A2a] above) are present; and/or

VI-A2b3. One or more of the conditions (as defined in [VI-A2a] above) are particularly acute; and/or,

VI-A2b4. One or more of the conditions (as established in [VI-A2a] above) exists across the entire urban area of the City.

VI-A3. Community Improvement Plans

VI-A3a. Community Improvement Plans (CIP's) shall be prepared and adopted to meet one or more of the following objectives:

VI-A3a1. Encourage the renovation, repair, remediation, rehabilitation, or other improvement of lands and/or buildings;

VI-A3a2. Encourage the preservation, restoration, adaptive reuse and improvement of

-
- historically or architecturally significant buildings and properties;
- VI-A3a3. Encourage the restoration, maintenance, improvement and protection of natural habitat, parks, open space, and recreational amenities;
- VI-A3a4. Encourage residential and non-residential in-fill and intensification;
- VI-A3a5. Encourage the construction of a range of housing types;
- VI-A3a6. Encourage the construction of affordable housing;
- VI-A3a7. Reconcile and ameliorate existing land use conflicts and minimize or avoid future land use conflicts;
- VI-A3a8. Maintain, upgrade and improve municipal services and public utilities;
- VI-A3a9. Improve vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow;
- VI-A3a10. Encourage transit supportive land uses (such as higher densities of development around a planned transit node) and improve the quality and accessibility to transit;
- VI-A3a11. Encourage off-street parking, provide municipal parking facilities where feasible and appropriate, and accessibility to parking facilities;
- VI-A3a12. Promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the downtown, waterfront,

and other general areas requiring community improvement;

VI-A3a13. Encourage the remediation and redevelopment of brownfields;

VI-A3a14. Support existing or potential business improvement areas;

VI-A3a15. Improve environmental conditions;

VI-A3a16. Improve social conditions;

VI-A3a17. Promote cultural development;

VI-A3a18. Facilitate and promote community economic development; and

VI-A3a19. Improve community quality, safety and stability.

VI-A3b. CIP's shall contain at a minimum:

VI-A3b1. Statement of purpose;

VI-A3b2. Goals and objectives;

VI-A3b3. Clear description of the community improvement project area;

VI-A3b4. Description of all incentive programs;

VI-A3b5. An implementation action plan explaining how individual components of the CIP will be completed; and,

VI-A3b6. As a technical appendix, the justification for the delineation of the project area and the design of the incentive programs.

VI-A3c. CIP's and amendments to plans will be undertaken in accordance with the City's public consultation policies.

VI-A4. Implementation

VI-A4a. The City may undertake a range of actions to implement CIP's, including but not limited to:

VI-A4a1. The municipal acquisition of land and/or buildings within Community Improvement Project Areas; and subsequent:

- (a) Clearance, grading or environmental remediation;
- (b) Repair, rehabilitation, construction or improvement;
- (c) Sale, lease, or other disposition to any person or government authority; and
- (d) Other preparation of land or buildings for community improvement.

VI-A4a2. Provision of monetary incentive programs such as grants, loans, waiving or exemption of application fees, and other financial incentives;

VI-A4a3. Provision of non-monetary incentive programs such as exemption from parking requirements and/or exemption from parkland dedication requirements;

VI-A4a4. Application for financial assistance from senior level government programs;

VI-A4a5. Participation in senior level government programs that provide assistance to private

landowners for the purposes of community improvement; and,

VI-A4a6. Support of heritage conservation through the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

VI-A4b. All participants in the programs and activities of a CIP shall conform to all municipal, regional, and Provincial policies, by-laws, legislation and regulations.

VI-A4c. Council shall be satisfied that its participation in community improvement activities will be within the financial capabilities of the City.

APPENDIX D

Urban Design Study Grant Program Administration

Step 1 Application Submission

Applicants will be required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, and project timing, among other details. Staff may perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the building/property (as necessary).

Before accepting an application, staff will screen the proposal and application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or the application clearly does not meet the program eligibility criteria, the application will not be accepted. If staff determines that the application is not acceptable for one or more of the above noted reasons, the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the City in no way implies program approval.

Applications will include:

- a) a work plan and cost estimate for the urban design study and/or architectural/design drawings, prepared by a qualified professional as determined by the City; and,
- b) a description of the planned redevelopment, including reference to any planning applications that have been submitted/approved.

Step 2 Application Review and Evaluation

Applications and supporting materials will be reviewed by staff against program requirements. Staff will determine the eligible works and costs. A recommendation report will be prepared by staff.

All urban design studies and architectural/design drawings approved under the Urban Design Study Grant Program shall be completed by a qualified professional as determined by the City. All completed project design studies and architectural/design drawings must comply with the description of as provided in the grant application form.

One (1) electronic and one (1) hard copy of the urban design study and/or architectural/design drawings along with the original invoice indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full shall be submitted to the City for review. Applicants must agree at the time of application to provide the City with permission to provide the design study and architectural/design drawings to a subsequent owner(s) of the property and interested parties should the applicant decide not to proceed with the work that is subject of the study grant.

Step 3 Application Approval

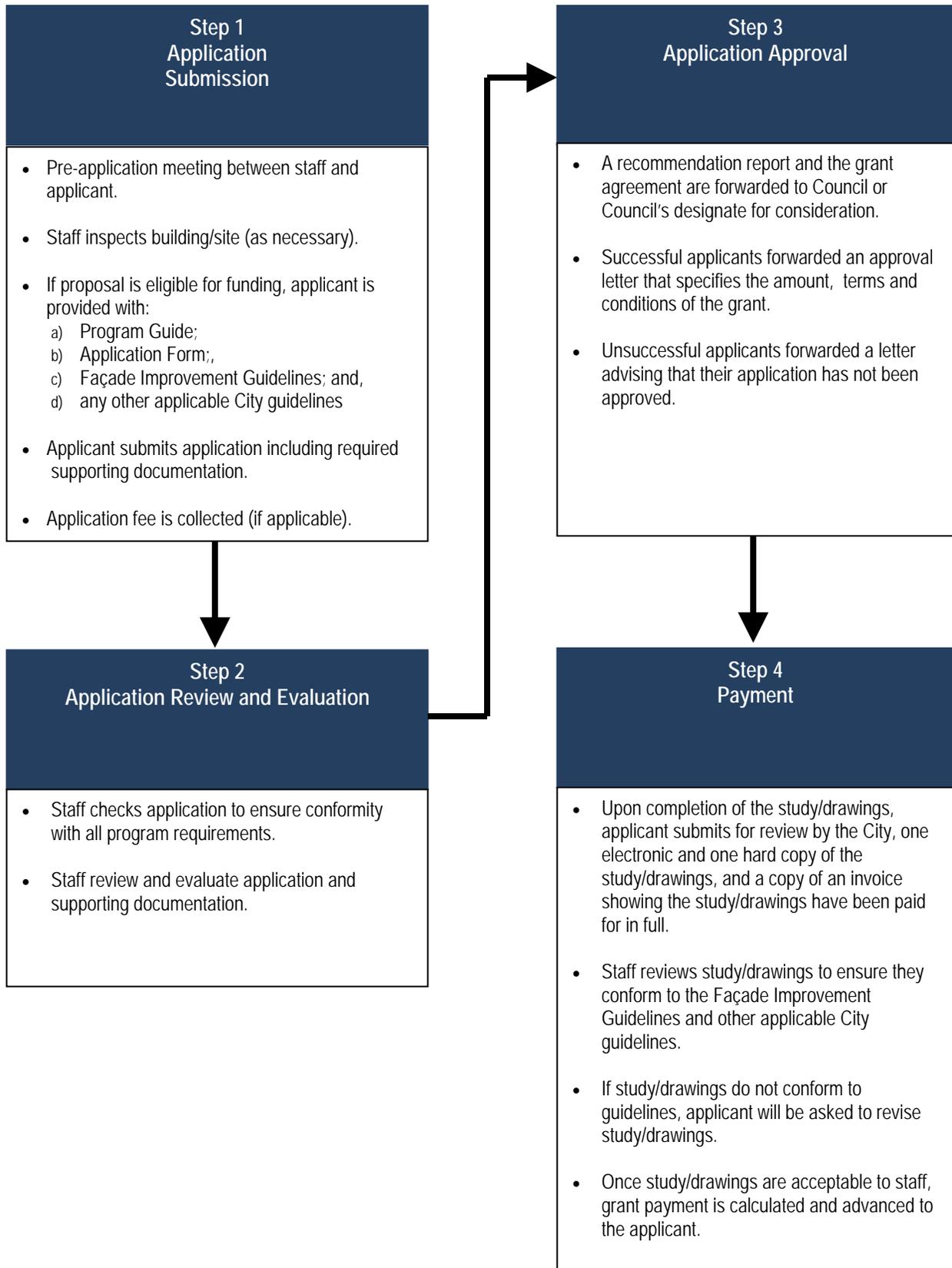
The recommendation report will be forwarded to City Council or Council's designate for consideration. If Council or Council's designate approves the application, the applicant will be sent a letter that outlines the terms and conditions and the amount of the grant. If the application is not approved, the applicant will also be advised by letter. The grant amount will be based on 50% of the estimated cost of the study (excluding taxes) or 50% of the actual cost of the study (excluding taxes), whichever is less.

Step 4 Payment

Grants approved under this program will be paid to applicants following submission to the City for review of one hard copy and one electronic copy of the final completed urban design study, architectural, and/or design

drawings with the original invoice, indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the study/drawings are not completed, not completed as approved, or if the consultant(s) that prepared the study/drawings has not been paid.

Figure D-1 Urban Design Study Grant Program Administration



APPENDIX E

Façade Improvement Grant Program Administration

Step 1 Application Submission

Applicants will be required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, and project timing, among other details. Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the building/property, as necessary.

Before accepting an application, staff will screen the proposal and application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or the application clearly does not meet the program eligibility criteria, the application will not be accepted. If staff determine that the application is not acceptable for one or more of the above noted reasons, the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the City in no way implies program approval.

The City may accept applications all year round for this program or the City may issue a Request for Applications (RFA) for this program once or twice per year depending on availability of funding and program interest.

The City may request that applications for this program be accompanied by supporting documentation, including but not necessarily limited to:

- a) photographs of the existing building facade;
- b) historical photographs and/or drawings;
- c) a site plan and/or professional design study/architectural drawings;
- d) specification of the proposed works, including a work plan for the improvements to be completed and construction drawings;
- e) two (2) cost estimates for eligible work provided by a licensed contractor.

If the application is approved, and the applicant elects to engage the contractor who provided the highest cost estimate, the City's grant contribution will be based on the lowest cost estimate. An application fee may be collected at the time of application.

Step 2 Application Review and Evaluation

Applications, supporting materials and documentation will be reviewed by staff against program requirements. Staff will determine the eligible works and costs.

The determination of eligible works and costs and the recommendation on the application will be guided by the City's Façade Improvement Guidelines and any other applicable City guidelines, and other appropriate reference material as determined by staff.

For buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the facade restoration and improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed.

A recommendation report will be prepared by staff. If this report recommends approval of the application, a grant agreement satisfactory to the City Solicitor will also be prepared. This agreement will contain conditions

to ensure that the project is commenced and completed in a timely fashion. This agreement will be forwarded to the applicant to be dated and signed. Once the signed agreement has been returned to the City, the Council application approval process can commence.

Step 3 Application Approval

The recommendation report will be forwarded to City Council or Council's designate for consideration. If Council or Council's designate approves the application, the grant agreement will be executed (signed and dated) by City officials and a copy is provided to the applicant.

Step 4 Payment

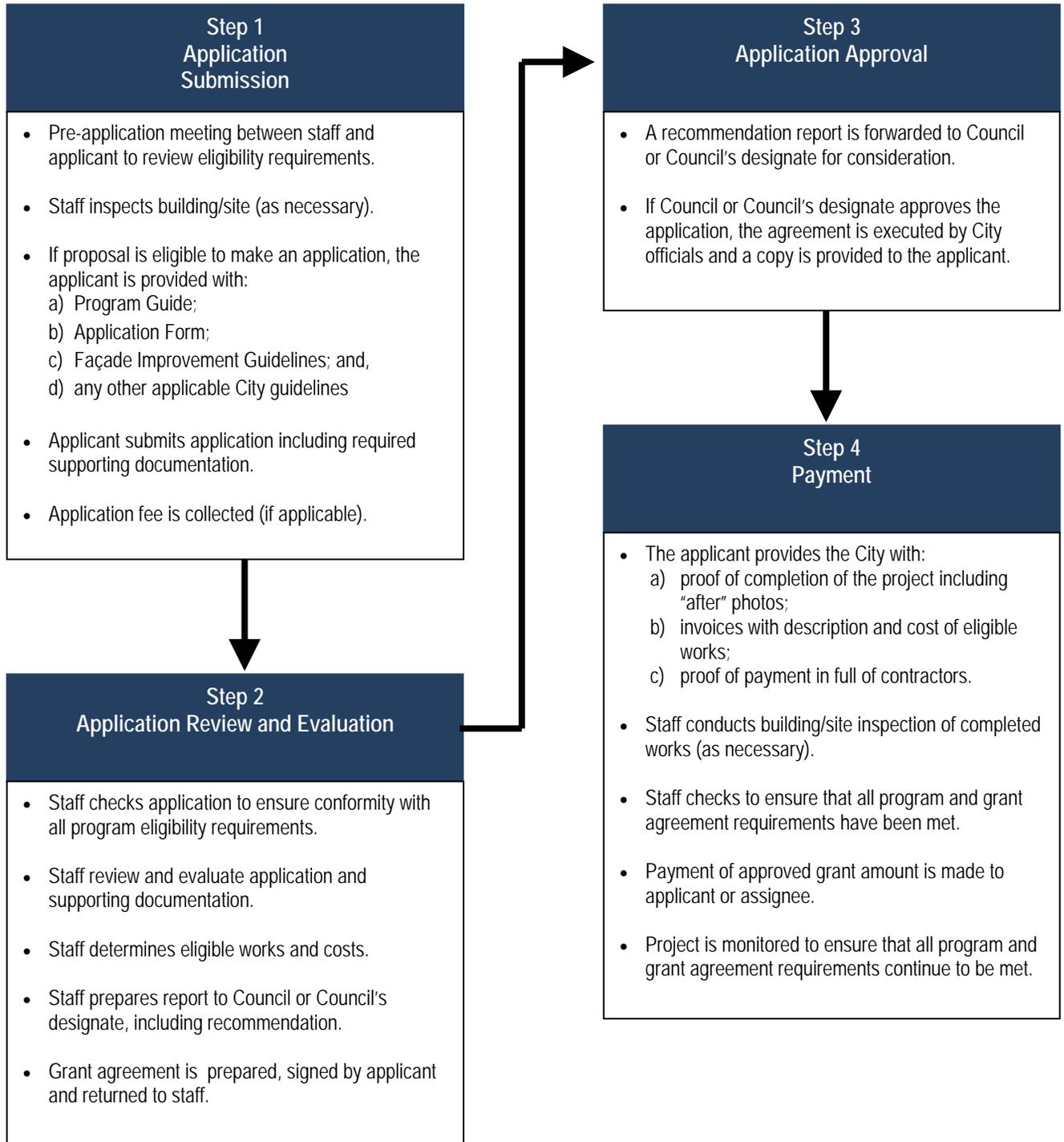
Payment of the grant shall not take place until:

- a) the grant agreement has been executed by the applicant and the City;
- b) construction of the eligible works is completed;
- c) photographic evidence of the completed works (satisfactory to the City) has been submitted;
- d) staff have inspected the completed works (as necessary) to ensure that the project has been completed in accordance with the program application and grant agreement;
- e) invoices clearly showing the amount paid for all eligible works have been submitted;
- f) written verification that all contractors have been paid in full has been provided; and,
- g) staff are satisfied with all reports and documentation submitted.

Prior to issuance of the grant payment, staff will check to ensure that all program requirements (general and program specific) and grant agreement requirements have been met. If all program requirements and grant agreement requirements have been met to the City's satisfaction, then the City will issue payment of the approved grant in conformity with the grant agreement.

Staff will monitor the project, periodically checking that the project is in compliance with the grant agreement requirements. Staff will take appropriate remedies as specified in the grant agreement if the applicant defaults on the agreement.

Figure E-1 Facade Improvement Grant Program Administration



APPENDIX F

Residential Grant/Loan Program Administration

Step 1 Application Submission

Applicants will be required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work and project timing, among other details. Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the building/property, if necessary.

Before accepting an application, staff will screen the proposal and application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or the application clearly does not meet the program requirements, the application will not be accepted. If staff determines that the application is not acceptable for one or more of the above noted reasons, the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the City in no way implies program approval.

The City may request that applications for this program be accompanied by supporting documentation, including but not necessarily limited to:

- a) a site plan, landscape plan, and/or professional design study/architectural drawings;
- b) photographs of the existing building facade;
- c) historical photographs and/or drawings;
- d) specification of the proposed works, including a work plan for the improvements to be completed, construction drawings, and number and size of units to be constructed;
- e) two cost estimates for eligible work provided by licensed contractors, including a breakdown of costs;
- f) impact studies such as traffic studies and studies of microclimatic conditions (sun, shadow, wind);
- g) environmental reports and/or a record of site condition;
- h) financial information, including but not necessarily limited to:
 - i) sources and uses of funds;
 - ii) financial statements;
 - iii) purchase price and appraised value of property (for loan program demonstrating a minimum 25% equity);
 - iv) owner equity;
 - v) registered mortgages;
 - vi) details of primary construction lending and secondary financing;
 - vii) projected unit sales prices and/or rental rates.

The applicant must provide evidence of financial capability to develop the property according to the terms of the program. An application fee may be collected at the time of application.

Step 2 Application Review and Evaluation

Applications and supporting materials and documentation are reviewed by staff against program requirements and applicable City guidelines. City staff will then determine eligible works and costs. The determination of eligible works and costs and the recommendation on the application will be guided by City guidelines, and other appropriate reference material as determined by staff.

A recommendation report will be prepared by staff. If this report recommends approval of the application, a grant agreement satisfactory to the City Solicitor will also be prepared. This agreement will be forwarded to the applicant to be dated and signed. Once the signed agreement has been returned to the City, the Council application approval process can commence.

Step 3 Application Approval

The recommendation report is forwarded to Council or Council's designate for consideration. If Council or Council's designate approves the application and grant agreement, the agreement is executed (signed and dated) by City officials and a copy is provided to the applicant.

For the loan program, the City registers or causes to be registered on title security for the loan, usually in the form of a second mortgage.

Step 4 Payment

Prior to payment of the grant, the applicant must provide the City with:

- a) photographic evidence of the completed works satisfactory to the City;
- b) invoices for all eligible work done clearly showing the amount paid for eligible works; and,
- c) proof of payment of contractors in full.

Prior to release of 60% of the loan, the applicant must provide the City with:

- a) proof that the development is at least 60% complete. This will take the form of photographic evidence satisfactory to the City and an engineer's report;
- b) proof that equity and financing required to that stage of completion has been injected into the project;
- c) progress and final reports and documentation as required to the City's satisfaction.

For a grant, staff will conduct a final building/site inspection (as necessary) to ensure that the project has been completed in accordance with the grant application and agreement. For a loan, staff will conduct a building/site inspection (as necessary) to ensure that the project is 60% complete.

Prior to issuance of the grant/ loan advance payment, staff will check to ensure that all program requirements and grant agreement requirements have been met. If all program requirements and grant/loan agreement requirements have been met to the City's satisfaction, then the City will issue payment of the approved grant in conformity with the grant agreement or advance 60% of the loan to the applicant in conformity with the loan agreement.

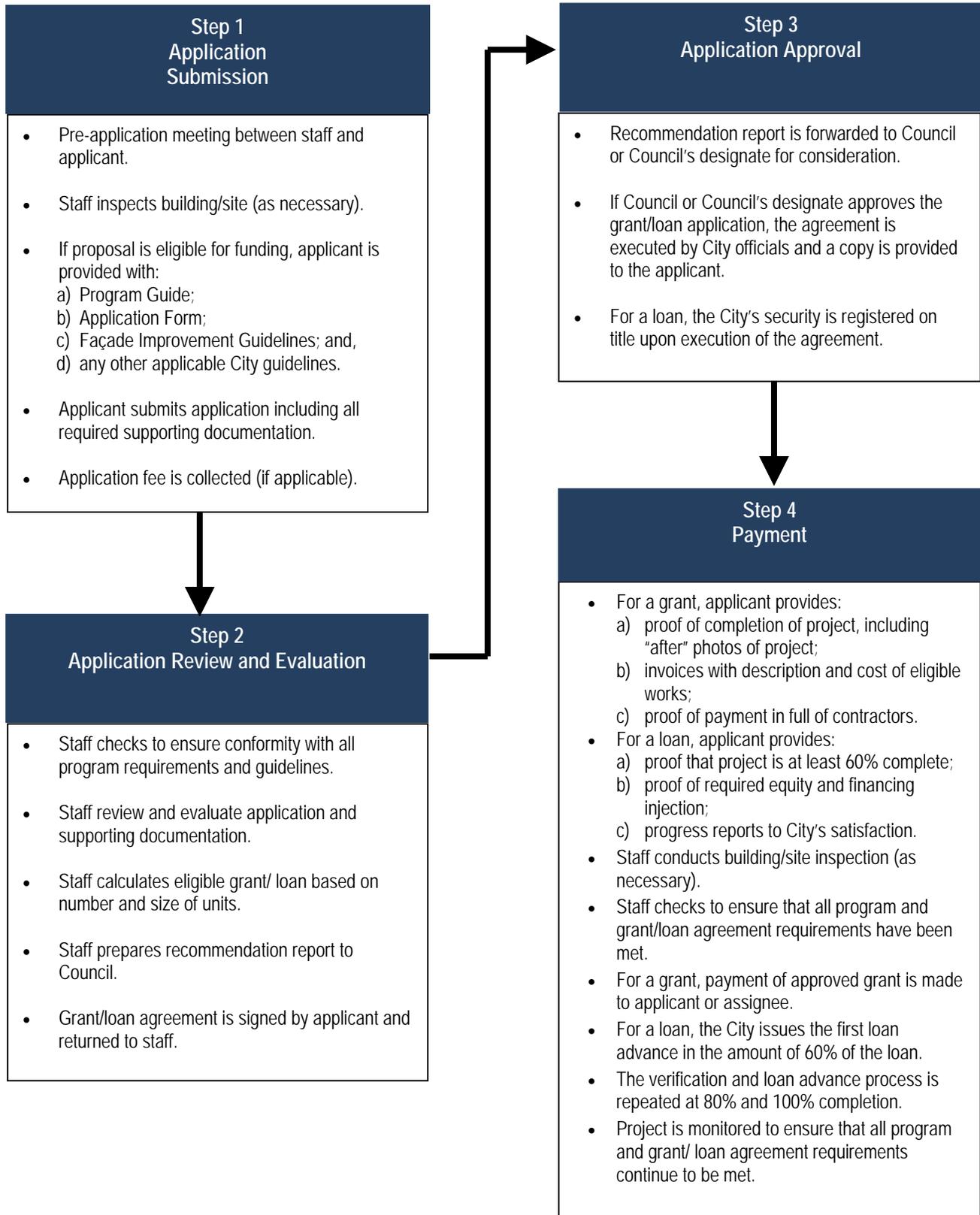
For a loan, the above noted progress verification and loan advance process, including building inspection by staff (as required) will be repeated at 80% completion and 100% completion. At 80% completion and 100% completion, if all program requirements and loan agreement requirements have been met to the City's satisfaction, then further advances of the loan will be made to the applicant.

Prior to issuing the final loan advance, staff will conduct a final building/site inspection (as necessary) when the project is 100% complete to ensure that building occupancy is possible.

Upon the closing of sale on any unit participating in the program, the loan for that unit is due. The loan is repayable in equal monthly payments over 5 years with 15% of the loan repayable every year and a lump sum payment of outstanding loan funds at the end of 5 years.

Staff will monitor the project, periodically checking that the project is in compliance with all program and grant/loan agreement requirements. Staff will take appropriate remedies as specified in the grant/loan agreement if the applicant defaults on the agreement.

Figure F-1 Residential Grant/Loan Program Administration



APPENDIX G

Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program Administration

Step 1 Application Submission

Applicants will be required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, and project timing, among other details. Staff will perform an initial site visit(s) and inspection(s) of the building/property (if necessary).

Before accepting an application, staff will screen the proposal and application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or the application clearly does not meet the program eligibility criteria, the application will not be accepted. If staff determine that the application is not acceptable for one or more of the above noted reasons, the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the City in no way implies program approval.

The City may request that applications for this program be accompanied by supporting documentation, including but not necessarily limited to:

- a) photographs of the existing building facade;
- b) historical photographs and/or drawings;
- c) a site plan and/or professional design study/architectural drawings;
- d) specification of the proposed works including a work plan for the improvements to be completed and construction drawings;
- e) professional design study/architectural drawings;
- f) estimated project construction costs, including a breakdown of said costs;
- g) impact studies such as traffic studies and studies of microclimatic conditions (sun, shadow, wind)
- h) environmental reports and/or a Record of Site Condition (RSC);
- i) a Business Plan; and,
- j) any other financial information.

An application fee may be collected at the time of application.

Step 2 Application Review and Evaluation

Applications and supporting materials and documentation are reviewed by staff against program requirements and applicable City guidelines. Staff will determine the eligible works and costs. The determination of eligible works and costs and the recommendation on the application will be guided by City guidelines, and other appropriate reference material as determined by staff.

For buildings designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the facade restoration and building improvement works should be supported by documentation in the form of historic photographs or drawings clearly showing the feature(s) to be restored or reconstructed.

As an option, staff will utilize the actual pre-project property taxes and estimated post-project assessed value and applicable tax rates to calculate the estimated post-project property taxes, increase in City and Regional property taxes, and the estimated annual and total grant amount to be provided.

A recommendation report will be prepared by staff. If this report recommends approval of the application, a grant agreement satisfactory to the City Solicitor will also be prepared. This agreement will contain conditions to ensure that the project is commenced and completed in a timely fashion. This agreement will be forwarded to the applicant to be dated and signed. Once the signed agreement has been returned to the City, the Council application approval process can commence.

Step 3 Application Approval

The recommendation report is forwarded to Council or Council's designate for consideration. If Council or Council's designate approves the application, the agreement is executed (signed and dated) by City officials and a copy is provided to the applicant.

Step 4 Payment

Prior to payment of the grant, the applicant must provide the City with:

- a) photographic evidence of the completed project satisfactory to the City;
- b) other documentation proving completion of the project, e.g., engineer's report (if required);
- c) all final reports and documentation as required.

Staff will conduct a final building/site inspection (as necessary) to ensure that the project has been completed in accordance with the grant application and agreement.

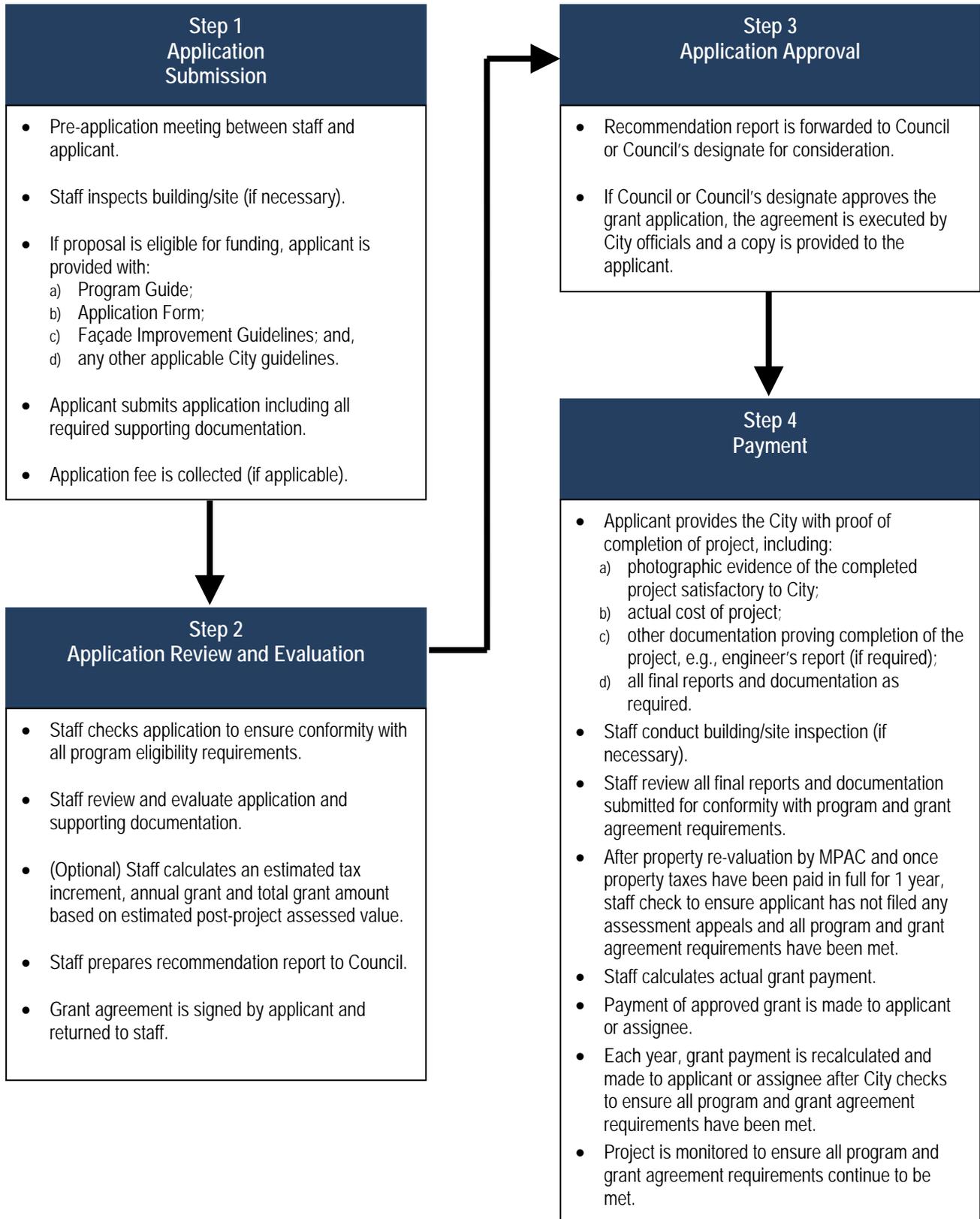
Once the project is complete, an occupancy permit has been issued, and the property has been re-valued by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, the property owner will be sent a new tax bill. After the property owner has paid in full the new property taxes for one (1) year, the City will check to ensure that:

- a) the applicant has not filed any assessment appeals; and,
- b) all program and grant agreement requirements have been met.

If all program and grant agreement requirements have been met to the City's satisfaction, then the City will calculate the actual tax increment and grant payment. The City will then issue payment of the grant in the form of a cheque in the amount specified as per the calculation of the actual grant payment.

City staff will monitor the project, periodically checking that the project is in compliance with all program and grant agreement requirements. City staff will take appropriate remedies as specified in the grant agreement if the applicant defaults on the agreement.

Figure G-1 Revitalization (Tax Increment) Grant Program Administration



APPENDIX H

Planning and Building Fees Grant Program Administration

Step 1 Application Submission

Upon completion and substantial occupancy of the project, an application for a Planning and Building Fees Grant can be made.

Before accepting an application, staff will screen the application. If the application is not within the Community Improvement Project Area, or the application clearly does not meet the program requirements, the application will not be accepted. If staff determine that the application is not acceptable for one or more of the above noted reasons, the application will be returned to the applicant with a letter explaining the reason for not accepting the application. Acceptance of the application by the City in no way implies program approval.

Applications will include receipts for all eligible development and building fees paid to the City.

Step 2 Application Review and Evaluation

Applications and receipts materials will be reviewed by staff to determine eligible costs. A recommendation report will be prepared by staff.

Step 3 Application Approval

The recommendation report is forwarded to Council or Council's designate for consideration. If Council or Council's designate approves the application, the applicant will be sent a letter that outlines the amount of the grant. If an application is not approved, the applicant will also be advised by letter.

Step 4 Payment

Grants approved under this program would be paid to the applicant at the same time as the approval letter referenced in Step 3 above.

Figure H-1 Planning and Building Fees Grant Program Administration

