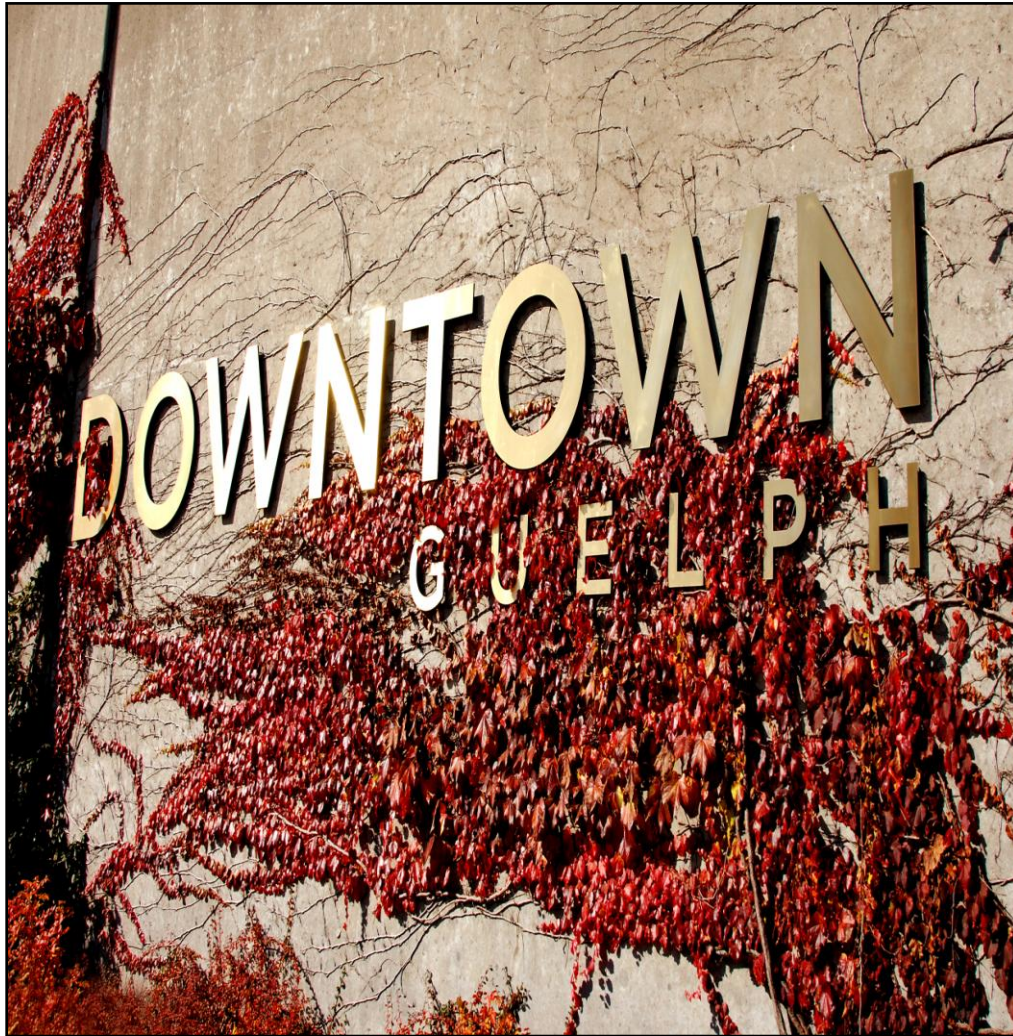


Downtown Guelph

Community Improvement Plan



November 7, 2011

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that is intended to stimulate the revitalization of and investment in the Downtown to achieve positive change to the existing physical and social landscape, either through direct public sector investment or through private sector investment including municipally driven incentive-based programs. CIP's are used widely across Ontario, and particularly in downtowns, to focus and initiate change and redevelopment. In accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, Guelph's Downtown CIP encourages investment in the Downtown by providing for financial incentives that may be applied to eligible properties for purposes that conform to the goals, objectives, and policies of the CIP. Eligible properties must be located within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area designated by Council by-law following the approval of the Amendment.

The 2010 Downtown Guelph CIP prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements of Section 17(15) (a) of the *Planning Act* and had the benefit of a full consultation process. Comments from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministry of Culture, and Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure were received and incorporated. The Amendment to the Downtown Guelph CIP was prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements of Section 17 (15) (a) of the *Planning Act* and circulated to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Comments were received and incorporated.

The Downtown Guelph Business Association and the City of Guelph Downtown Advisory Committee have played an integral and supportive role.

An open house, which included a presentation of the Amendment of the Downtown CIP, was held on July 27, 2011 and September 19, 2011.

The statutory public meeting required under the *Planning Act* was held on November 7, 2011.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this CIP is to revitalize and enhance the Downtown as a focal area for public and private investment. The CIP provides City Council with broader authority to encourage and implement public and private investment in the Downtown. The Downtown Guelph CIP focuses on delivering municipal incentive programs to support private sector investment in the form of façade improvement,

feasibility study grants, and larger scale renovation and redevelopment programs called the minor and major downtown activation grants.

Public Sector Investment

The passage of a by-law (2011-xxxx) designating the Downtown as a community improvement project area and the CIP provides the City with the ability to become more directly involved in the redevelopment of land within the Downtown for the purpose of community improvement, including:

- the acquisition or preparation of property for community improvement;
- construction, rehabilitation or improvement of buildings on land held by the City; and
- the sale, lease or disposal of land and buildings held by the City for the purpose of carrying out the CIP.

Private Sector Investment

In order to stimulate private investment, the CIP provides for financial incentive programs that will make grants or loans available to Downtown properties to:

- improve the appearance of streetscapes and buildings, including built cultural heritage resources, through facades improvements;
- promote sustainable development including energy efficiency through façade improvements;
- undertake feasibility studies;
- provide assistance for underutilized or vacant properties; and/or
- encourage large-scale commercial and residential redevelopment to promote the intensification of Downtown Guelph.

1.2 Community Improvement Project Area

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities, if they have 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 (CIP) for such an area.

The *Planning Act* defines a “community improvement project area” as
“a portion of the municipality, or the entire municipality itself,
where municipal council deems community improvement is needed
given reasons of *age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement,*

unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”.

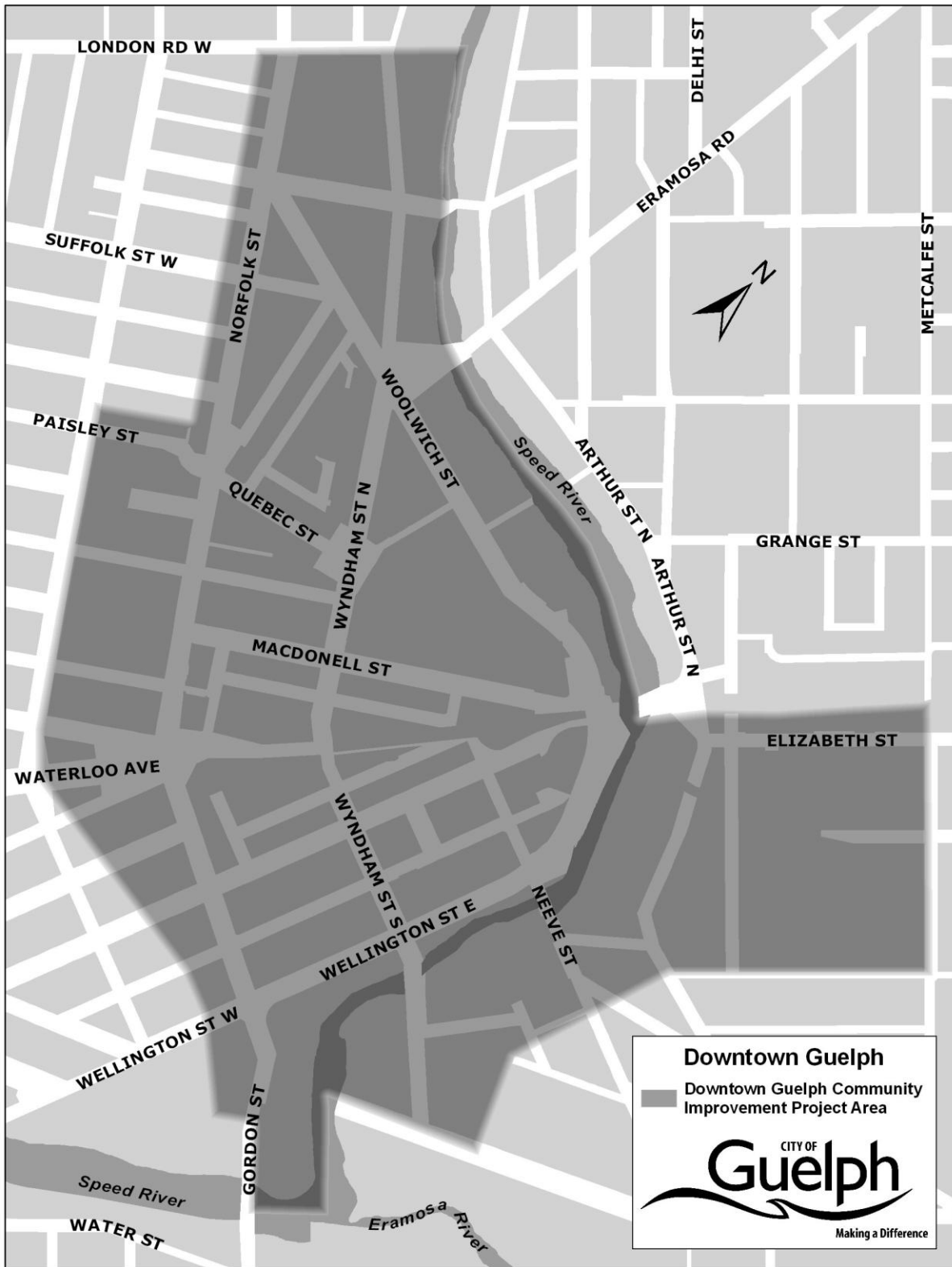
Subsection 28(4) of the *Planning Act* requires that the Community Improvement Project Area be designated by a by-law prior to approving a CIP.

The revised Community Improvement Project Area, as shown in Figure 1, is based on the Downtown Guelph Urban Growth Centre set out in OPA 39. Properties that straddle the CIP Project Area boundary are considered to be entirely within the Community Improvement Project Area. A CIP By-law must be passed by Council to expand the CIP Project Area.

The CIP By-law designating the Downtown, as shown on Figure 1, as a Community Improvement Project Area pursuant to Section 28(2) of the *Planning Act* will be enacted at a subsequent Council meeting following the adoption of Amendment 1 to the DGCIP.

However, once the area for Downtown Guelph is refined through the current Secondary Planning process, the Official Plan, CIP by-law, and this CIP will be amended to reflect the new boundary.

Figure 1: Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area



1.3 Downtown Opportunities and Challenges

The Downtown has been the economic and cultural centre of Guelph since its establishment in 1827. It is the focus of a broad range of public and private uses that make the Downtown the civic, cultural, social and economic centre of the City.

Downtown Guelph supports a broad mix of uses within a 119 hectare area with an estimated 3750 people and 7200 jobs. The area consists of 675 parcels in the downtown with 466 of them considered cultural heritage resources (69%) of which 33 are formally designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

The City of Guelph is committed to a healthy and vibrant downtown as a desirable place for people to live, work, conduct business, engage in civic and social activities, and pursue cultural and recreational interests. This commitment is evidenced through public investment in community facilities such as the, Farmer's Market, River Run Centre, library, museum, transit terminal, Civic Square projects and City Hall, and major infrastructure investment in roads, bike lanes, sidewalks, and parking.

The health and vitality of a downtown is also measured by its desirability as a place to live as well as do business. However, the Downtown has not seen the necessary growth in residential population needed to maintain this vitality. While the City wide population grew by 8.2% between 2001 and 2006, the residential population base Downtown declined by over 6% and the number of dwellings by almost 5%.

The revitalization of the Downtown, however, will also require the complementary participation of the private-sector, through the reinvestment and establishment and expansion of new office and retail businesses and the development of new residential projects.

The purpose of this Plan is to attract more public and private sector investment to help ensure the long-term economic, social and cultural vitality of Downtown Guelph. To achieve this, the City is committed to taking a role in stimulating Downtown investment to attract private development and redevelopment in Downtown Guelph.

During the development of the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan and Amendment, the public requested the City to consider:

- Waiving or reducing development charges;

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- Enlarging the size of the project area;
- Examining neighboring municipalities and their CIPS; and
- Finding effective methods to jump start projects.

In addition, the infusion of additional residential development is critical to the health of a downtown. The establishment of a CIP is critical if the Official Plan objectives & policies of the Downtown Urban Growth Centre, as established through OPA 39 are to be achieved.

A Secondary Plan is currently underway for the Downtown to help meet this growth challenge. Once this Secondary Plan is adopted by Council and has come into effect, it may provide additional policy guidance regarding implementation of this CIP.

1.4 Need for Incentives

Attracting growth and redevelopment to the Downtown requires a more participatory role by the City. There is no single planning tool, municipal investment project or Council decision that, by itself, will result in the realization of the City of Guelph's objectives for the Downtown. It will be a combination of positive activities that will tip the balance to favour an attractive environment for redevelopment. This can be done by both strengthening the appeal of the Downtown as well as mitigating some of the extra costs associated with downtown development.

Redevelopment and revitalization of existing buildings can be costly. Municipal assistance in offsetting these costs may include granting back fees, sponsoring feasibility studies as well as providing financial incentives for façade improvements and minor renovation and rehabilitation projects. Funding larger scale redevelopment through tax increment based grants addresses properties that are either vacant and/or under-utilized.

In addition, the Downtown Guelph CIP may be implemented in conjunction with other existing financial incentives such as the Heritage Redevelopment Reserve Fund and the Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan provided that the same work is not being funded and that eligible costs are not exceeded as per the *Planning Act*.

1.5 Other Financial Incentives

The City of Guelph currently has two other programs in place, which may provide financial incentives in the Downtown: the Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan; and the Heritage Redevelopment Reserve Fund.

1.5.1 The Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan

The Brownfield Redevelopment Community Improvement Plan contains financial incentive programs to stimulate private sector investment in the redevelopment of underutilized or vacant contaminated properties. The program is designed to partially offset the cost of site assessment and remediation through the following programs: Environmental Study Grant; Tax Assistance during Rehabilitation; Tax Arrears Cancellation; and Tax Increment-Based Grant.

1.5.2 Heritage Redevelopment Reserve Fund

The City of Guelph has also established a Heritage Redevelopment Reserve Fund that is intended to reduce costs associated with the retention of heritage features during redevelopment projects by providing incentives to encourage the preservation, restoration or re-use of designated cultural heritage features.

The Downtown Guelph CIP will complement the existing incentive programs. While the various incentive programs available to Downtown properties may be applied concurrently, the financial incentives for any particular eligible cost cannot be provided through two different incentive programs (e.g., a grant for façade masonry repairs must be provided through either the Downtown Guelph CIP or the Heritage Redevelopment Reserve Fund, but not both). The eligibility criteria for Downtown Guelph CIP programs are addressed in Section 4.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The legislative authority for Community Improvement Plans and related incentives and powers is derived from the *Planning Act* and the *Municipal Act*.

2.1 Planning Act

The *Planning Act* is the primary vehicle and provides for the establishment of community improvement project areas where the official plan contains provisions relating to community improvement and the “community improvement project area” is designated by by-law pursuant to Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

Once a “community improvement project area” has been designated by by-law, a municipality may then prepare a “community improvement plan” for the project area.

Under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, “Community Improvement” means:

“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.”

For the purpose of carrying out a Community Improvement Plan that has come into effect, a municipality may engage in the following activities within the Community Improvement Project Area:

- a) *acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (28(3));*
- b) *construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area in conformity with the community improvement plan (28(6));*
- c) *sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area to any person or government authority for use in conformity with the community improvement plan (28(6)); and*

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d) *make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands 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 (28(7)).*

Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act* provides for grants and loans for eligible costs established in an approved CIP related to:

- environmental site assessment;
- environmental remediation;
- development;
- redevelopment;
- construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes; and
- the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities.

The *Planning Act* restricts the total value of all grants and loans made under the *Planning Act* and tax incentives under the *Municipal Act* (where applicable) from exceeding the eligible costs defined in the CIP. The total of all grants, loans and tax assistance provided through all financial incentive community improvement programs cannot exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings (Section 28(7.3) of the *Planning Act*). Programs within the CIP further refine levels of assistance.

2.2 Municipal Act

Pursuant to Section 106 (3) of the *Municipal Act*, municipalities are exempt from the prohibition on providing assistance through the granting of bonuses when exercising its authority under Sections 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* within Community Improvement Areas. Bonusing includes: giving or lending any property of the municipality including money, guaranteed 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.

3.0 Guiding Planning Policies

3.1 Guelph Official Plan (November 2006 Consolidation)

The Official Plan places high priority on the enhancement of the Downtown. The following is a “major goal” of the Official Plan:

- *Maintain and strengthen the role of the Central Business District (downtown) as a major focal area for investment, employment and residential uses. The Central Business District will be a vibrant multiple function district and community focus of the city.*

The Official Plan sets out a vision statement that promotes the Downtown as a beautiful, vibrant, multiple-functional urban centre that is a focal area for investment, employment and housing. The official plan policies that aim to achieve this vision and support the objectives of the CIP include:

- *Encouraging and co-operating with the private sector in a full and long term program supporting downtown revitalization to ensure a favourable climate for commercial and residential activity in the core;*
- *Considering municipal lands for development, generally by way of lease arrangements;*
- *Encouraging the rehabilitation and renovation of the upper stories of existing buildings and their conversion to residential use;*
- *For the purpose of encouraging residential development downtown, the City may consider incentives, such as providing financial assistance as part of a community improvement plan or other program; and*
- *The City will encourage the conversion or redevelopment of existing obsolete industrial buildings and sites.*

Section 4.7.3 a) identifies the CBD as a priority area for the preparation of a CIP. In the implementation of any CIP, Section 4.7.6 of the Official Plan states that the City of Guelph will make full use of the authority granted in the *Planning Act* and

other Provincial and Federal legislation to prepare and carry out a Community Improvement Plan.

3.1.1 Official Plan Amendment No. 39 (November 20, 2009)

Official Plan Amendment No. 39 was adopted by Council on June 10, 2009 and approved by the Province on November 20, 2009, to bring the City's Official Plan into conformity with the planning framework of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan identified the need for investment in order to accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth. City Council adopted a Local Growth Management Strategy in 2008 recognizing the need for increased Downtown density to better balance the ratio of residents to jobs. OPA 39 added a new Schedule to the Official Plan which illustrates growth plan elements including an Urban Growth Centre (UGC). The Urban Growth Centre represents an expanded downtown area that is currently the subject of a Secondary Plan study. The boundaries of the UGC may be further detailed through the Downtown Secondary Plan.

3.1.2 Official Plan Amendment No. 47 (September 6, 2011)

Official Plan Amendment No. 47 was adopted by Council on September 6, 2011. OPA 47 allows for the DGCIP to expand the community improvement project area to encompass all lands within the larger Downtown Urban Growth Centre as set out by the City's Growth Plan Conformity Amendment Official Plan Amendment 39. This allows landowners within the expanded area to benefit from the CIP financial incentive programs. The DGCIP Project Area incorporates the City's OPA39 Growth Plan Conformity shape for the Urban Growth Centre (UGC), approved by the Province on November 20, 2009. The UGC area is larger, includes both sides of streets and includes the areas of the Ward which are now part of the Downtown Secondary Plan process. DGCIP will continue to recognize that further refinements to the area may come about as a result of the detailed planning studies, including the Downtown Secondary Plan.

3.2 Downtown Secondary Plan (Underway)

The Downtown Secondary Plan has been initiated in response to the Growth Plan and City's Growth Management Strategy as well as other recent planning studies. It will provide policy direction for public and private sector development, initiatives,

and actions that will form the basis for the revitalization of the Downtown. The plan horizon for the Secondary Plan is to 2031.

The Downtown Secondary Plan preparation is currently underway, and once approved, will articulate the vision and objectives and detailed policies for the Downtown. The Secondary Plan will provide land use designations and policies that address land uses, density, urban design, infrastructure requirements, and directions for implementing intensification. Financial incentive programs developed as part of the CIP will assist in the implementation of the Secondary Plan policies.

3.3 Provincial Policy Statement (2005)

The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. This CIP is consistent with the applicable provisions of the PPS, and implements the following policies:

- 1.1.3.1 Settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted.*
- 1.1.3.4 Appropriate development standards should be promoted which facilitate intensification, redevelopment and compact form, while maintaining appropriate levels of public health and safety.*
- 1.4.3 c) Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range of housing types and densities to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the regional market area by directing the development of new housing towards locations where appropriate levels of infrastructure and public service facilities are or will be available to support current and projected need.*
- 1.6.2 The use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized, wherever feasible, before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities.*

1.7.1 b) *Long-term economic prosperity should be supported by maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets.*

1.8.1 c) *Planning authorities shall support energy efficiency and improved air quality through land use and development patterns which focus major employment, commercial and other travel-intensive land uses on sites which are well served by public transit where this exists or is to be developed, or designing these to facilitate the establishment of public transit in the future.*

2.6.1 *Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.*

3.4 Downtown Action Plan (2007)

The Downtown Action Plan was approved by City Council in April 2007 as a framework for developing implementation programs for investing in Guelph's downtown. The Plan specifically called for the creation of a Downtown CIP to establish incentive programs to encourage private sector investment. The creation of a Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan will provide the legislative basis for the establishment of incentive programs that will assist in meeting the long-term vision, goals and objectives for the Downtown. The creation of a CIP will help crystallize and properly position opportunities to ensure Guelph's downtown will be positively positioned to leverage a higher level of private sector investment.

3.5 Guelph Strategic Plan (2007)

The Strategic Plan is a guiding document that provides a long term vision under which all City of Guelph initiatives are intended to be aligned. The Strategic Plan places high importance on the health and vitality of the Downtown through the following strategic goals and objectives:

- Goal 1: An attractive, well-functioning and sustainable city.*
 - 1.3 A Local Growth Management Strategy that effectively guides where and how future growth will take place.*
 - 1.5 The downtown as a place of community focus and destination of national interest.*

Goal 3: A diverse and prosperous local economy.

3.2 One of Ontario's top five and Canada's top ten places to invest.

3.6 The city as a tourist destination of choice.

This CIP will contribute to meeting these strategic goals and objectives.

3.6 Guelph Market Place Strategic Urban Design Plan (2008)

Guelph City Council adopted the Guelph Market Place Urban Design Plan in May 2008. This plan was commissioned to provide urban design guidance and recommendations for several city-initiated capital projects centred around the New City Hall which subsequently opened in 2009. These upcoming projects include the Civic Square, the Inter-modal Transit Terminal, and the Wilson Parkade. This report was the basis for Council to allocate capital funds towards the reconstruction of Carden and Wilson Streets as part of the Civic Square project. This reconstruction work engages the properties on these streets directly and will reposition them as fronting onto the newly created public space. The Plan notes that façade improvement and other investment programmes should be developed under the Downtown Guelph CIP to encourage private sector investment adjacent to these projects.

3.7 Urban Design Action Plan (2009)

Guelph City Council adopted the Urban Design Action Plan in May 2009. The plan recommended that a Community Improvement Plan be prepared for the Downtown that includes:

- financial incentives for façade improvements, building rehabilitation and redevelopment; and
- policies permitting the City to acquire vacant or underused properties for redevelopment.

In addition, the objectives for the Downtown articulated in the Urban Design Action Plan include increasing the number of new housing units in the Downtown and ensuring a significant proportion of Downtown housing is affordable to moderate and low income households.

4.0 DOWNTOWN GUELPH COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

4.1 Goals and Objectives

The downtown of any city is both a measure of the general health of the municipality as well as an indicator of economic health, civic pride and history of a community. A healthy downtown is a significant factor in attracting knowledge based workers and new economy business to the City.

This CIP will help to enhance the Downtown as the community's focus for public and private sector investment.

4.1.1 Goals

The overall goals of the CIP are to ensure that Guelph's downtown is:

- a) An attractive, vibrant multiple-functional urban centre.
- b) A focal area for investment in residential, employment, retail, entertainment, recreational, arts and cultural, institutional, civic and public service uses, and major infrastructure investment.

4.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the CIP for Guelph's downtown are:

- a) Providing for public sector investment.
- b) Stimulating private sector investment.
- c) Improving the appearance of the Downtown streetscape and buildings, including built cultural heritage resources, through façade improvements.
- d) Promoting the renovation and reuse of underused properties.
- e) Promoting sustainable development including energy efficiency and district energy ready design.

4.2 Public Sector Investment in Downtown Guelph

The implementation of the goals and objectives of the Plan will be achieved through the City acting on its own initiative or with private or public sector organizations within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area to:

- a) acquire or hold land within the Downtown;
- b) clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;

- c) construct, repair, rehabilitate, conserve or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the City in conformity with the Downtown Guelph CIP;
- d) sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the City in conformity with the Downtown Guelph CIP; and
- e) make grants or loans, in conformity with the Downtown Guelph CIP in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

Pursuant to Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act*, the City may also choose to grant bonuses within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area when exercising its authority under Sections 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act*. Bonusing includes, giving or lending any property of the municipality including money, guaranteed 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.

4.3 Private Sector Investment in Downtown Guelph

The following outlines the programs to be implemented and establishes the related guidelines, eligible costs, and application procedures. The administrative details of the specific programs may be changed by Council without requiring a formal amendment to the Community Improvement Plan as outlined in Section 5.4.

4.3.1 Façade Improvement Grant Program

4.3.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant Program is to stimulate reinvestment in the Downtown and to improve the appearance of the Downtown streetscape and buildings, including built heritage resources, as defined by the Official Plan. This Program will leverage public sector investment by providing a grant towards eligible private sector expenses spent on façade improvements. It is understood that independent businesses are the basis of the economic vitality of Downtown Guelph. The Façade Improvement Grant Program will encourage long lasting physical improvements to the assets of property owners as well as bring about aesthetic improvements to Downtown street facades.

4.3.1.2 Program Overview

The program will assist property owners and tenants with the financing of street-oriented building façade improvements to implement the City's urban design and Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan

heritage conservation policies, and support the significant public investment taking place in Downtown Guelph. The program provides a financial incentive, in the form of a grant, to promote exterior façade restoration and improvements. Additional program details are further described in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.1.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Façade Improvement Grant, applicants must be:

- the property's registered owner, assessed owner or tenant (or their assignee/agent); and
- located within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area, as shown on Figure 1.

Additional eligibility criteria and eligible works are subject to meeting detailed requirements in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.1.4 Funding

Funding and financial mechanisms will be established within the entire plan on the basis of the Implementation Guidelines through the budget process, subject to Council or delegated approval authority.

4.3.1.5 Implementation

The program will be implemented through Council approval of detailed Implementation Guidelines and budget allocation. The guidelines will outline details such as eligibility, evaluation, application procedure, conditions, restrictions, and any further funding limitations or conditions.

4.3.2 Feasibility Study Grant Program

4.3.2.1 Purpose

The intent of this program is to stimulate private sector investment in the renovation and reuse of underused buildings within Downtown Guelph. The Grant will assist in determining the feasibility of the renovation and reuse of existing buildings in the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area. Potential proponents hesitate to take on these projects as costs associated with the renovation and reuse of these buildings are difficult to estimate due to many unknown factors. This grant allows property owners to determine if building renovations or upgrades are physically or financially feasible.

4.3.2.2 Program Overview

The program will assist property owners and tenants with the financing of feasibility studies to promote redevelopment opportunities for underused building stock within Downtown Guelph. It will support studies required to obtain information and cost estimates related to rehabilitating, retrofitting and reusing buildings and land within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan Project area. Additional program details are further described in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.2.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Feasibility Study Grant, applicants must be:

- the property's registered owner, assessed owner or tenant (or their assignee/agent); and
- located within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area, as shown on Figure 1.

Additional eligibility criteria and eligible works are subject to meeting detailed requirements in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.2.4 Funding

Funding and financial mechanisms will be established within the entire plan on the basis of the Implementation Guidelines through the budget process, subject to Council or delegated approval authority.

4.3.2.5 Implementation

The program will be implemented through Council approval of detailed Implementation Guidelines and budget allocation. The guidelines will outline details such as eligibility, evaluation, application procedure, conditions, restrictions, and any further funding limitations or conditions.

4.3.3 Minor Downtown Activation Grant Program

4.3.3.1 Purpose

The intent of this program is to support the redevelopment of under-utilized and vacant properties in order to activate these properties within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan Area. The Minor Downtown Activation Grant assists

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with the capital costs needed to convert and/or rehabilitate under-utilized and vacant properties into viable commercial or residential uses. This program will help create more intensity of uses in Downtown Guelph and support retail and street vibrancy.

4.3.3.2 Program Overview

The Minor Downtown Activation Grant will provide developers and property owners with financial support to convert and/or rehabilitate underutilized and vacant properties into viable commercial or residential uses. This program provides a percentage of funding for capital costs including project and construction costs and other works as determined in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.3.3 Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants for the Minor Downtown Activation Grant must be:

- a registered owner or assessed owner (or their assignee/agent) of a property; and
- located within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area, as shown on Figure 1.

Additional eligibility criteria and eligible works are subject to meeting detailed requirements in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.3.4 Funding

Funding and financial mechanisms will be established within the entire plan on the basis of the Implementation Guidelines through the budget process, subject to Council or delegated approval authority.

4.3.3.5 Implementation

The program will be implemented through Council approval of detailed Implementation Guidelines and budget allocation. The guidelines will outline details such as eligibility, evaluation, application procedure, conditions, restrictions, and any further funding limitations or conditions.

4.3.4 Major Downtown Activation Grant Program

4.3.4.1 Purpose

The intent of this program is to support the redevelopment of under-utilized and vacant sites and activate these properties within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Plan Area. The Major Downtown Activation Grant encourages

owners/developers to undertake large-scale residential and commercial redevelopment within Downtown Guelph.

4.3.4.2 Program Overview

The program will support the redevelopment of under-utilized and vacant sites and enable larger scale improvements to significantly increase the business and residential tax base. The grant will be in the form of a tax increment based grant which is a grant equal to the full amount, or a portion of the amount of the estimated municipal property tax increase after the property is redeveloped. The TIBG represents between the current tax level of a property - before any redevelopment work - and the future tax level after development is complete and reassessed. Additional program details are further described in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.4.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Major Downtown Activation Grant, an applicant must be:

- a registered owner or assessed owner (or their assignee/agent) of a property; and
- located within the Downtown Guelph Community Improvement Project Area, as shown on Figure 1.

Additional eligibility criteria and eligible works are subject to meeting detailed requirements in the Implementation Guidelines.

4.3.4.4 Funding

Funding and financial mechanisms will be established within the entire plan on the basis of the Implementation Guidelines through the budget process, subject to Council or delegated approval authority.

4.3.4.5 Implementation

The program will be implemented through Council approval of detailed Implementation Guidelines and budget allocation. The guidelines will outline details such as eligibility, evaluation, application procedure, conditions, restrictions, and any further funding limitations or concerns.

This program may be granted in addition to existing grants secured through the City's Heritage Redevelopment Reserve or the Brownfield Redevelopment CIP Programs. Further details are described in the Implementation Guidelines.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

This Plan will be implemented through the provisions of the Official Plan, Section 106 of the Municipal Act and Section 28 of the Planning Act. The implementation of the CIP will be outlined in the Implementation Guidelines, as approved by Council.

The Plan will be administered by the Downtown Renewal Office. Additional information including review and approval process will be described in the Implementation Guidelines.

5.1 Marketing

Marketing of the program may be promoted through a number of means including:

- website and newspaper advertisement;
- program notice distribution to all eligible properties;
- preparation and distribution of Program Guidelines; and
- meetings with key stakeholder groups, including the Downtown Guelph Business Association and interest groups.

5.2 Plan Monitoring

Monitoring of program participation and performance will be conducted annually to provide the basis for decisions regarding program design and funding. Potential monitoring items include Downtown tax assessment totals and contribution to the City's total tax base, storefront vacancy levels, and building permits issued.

Potential program specific measurements are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Downtown Program Monitoring

Program	Measures
Façade Improvement Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of applications• Total financial cost of grants• Type and cost of façade improvements approved• Type and cost of façade improvements not approved and reason(s) for refusal• Increase in assessed value of approved properties• Increase in municipal taxes of approved properties• Participant satisfaction levels with program

Feasibility Study Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications • Total financial cost of grants • Type and cost of feasibility study grant • Type and cost of façade improvements not approved and reason(s) for refusal • Number of properties that proceed on work studied • Total cost of work done based on feasibility study • Increase in assessed value of approved properties • Increase in municipal taxes of approved properties • Participant satisfaction levels with program
Minor & Major Downtown Activation Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of applications • Total financial cost of grants • Type and cost of major and minor downtown activation grants approved • Type and cost of major and minor downtown activation grants not approved and reason(s) for refusal • Increase in assessed value of approved properties • Increase in municipal taxes of approved properties • Participant satisfaction levels with program

5.3 Plan Amendments

This CIP may be periodically reviewed and adjusted based on feedback obtained through program administration. Minor changes to the CIP require Council approval, without undertaking a formal amendment in accordance with the *Planning Act* provided the change(s) conform(s) to the Official Plan and applicable Provincial Policy and legislation. These minor changes may include, but are not limited to:

- minor changes that arise as a result of amendments to legislation or the Official Plan;
- removal of a financial incentive program(s);
- minor changes to the application procedures of any financial incentive program; and
- minor text changes that clarify any part of the CIP.

Formal amendments to the CIP will be required in accordance with the *Planning Act* when substantive changes to the CIP are made. Substantive changes may include, but are not limited to:

- changes to the Community Improvement Project Area;
- the addition of any new objectives and/or public/ private investment actions in response to a Secondary Plan completed for the Downtown;
- the addition of a financial incentive program(s); and

- any change that may result in a financial impact to the City of Guelph.

The City will consult with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning any amendments to the Community Improvement Plan that deal with the following:

- changes to the Community Improvement Project Area;
- changes to program eligibility criteria;
- addition of a new financial incentive program; and
- changes to program funding details.

The City will conduct periodic reviews of the CIP to assess its effectiveness, need for continuation, and suggested changes that may be considered by way of minor or formal amendment.

Any changes located within the Implementation Guidelines, are approved by Council or the delegated approval authority.

5.4 Program Duration

The program duration will be outlined within the Implementation Guidelines.