

Belle River Business Improvement Area

Community Improvement Plan

Revitalization Strategy

Corporation of the Town of Lakeshore



CIP Amendment
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Prepared By: Town of Lakeshore
Planning Services

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Belle River Business Improvement Area Community Improvement Plan is the second Community Improvement Plan undertaken in the Town of Lakeshore. As with many downtowns in Ontario, the downtown core of the former Town of Belle River has lost its vibrancy. The streetscape, particularly along Notre Dame Street in the former Town of Belle River looks unappealing and the roadways, sidewalks and several storefronts look neglected. There is no clear Town Centre or definable riverfront / waterfront area that visibly connects to a Town Centre.

The first Community Improvement Plan for the Town of Belle River was approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on February 10, 1987. Since that time, the Belle River Business Improvement Association expanded its Business Improvement Area to include an area bounded by Rourke Line Road westerly, Eleventh Street easterly, St. Peter Street southerly and the marina and Lake St. Clair northerly. In addition, changes to *Ontario's Planning Act* have provided municipalities with additional tools to manage growth and encourage investment in their communities. The Town of Lakeshore also adopted a new Official Plan in May of 2008, which was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in July 2010 and November 2010. There is a need to create a new Community Improvement Plan to reflect these changes. This second Community Improvement Plan is designed to compliment and build upon the improvements that were implemented under the previous Community Improvement Plan for the former Town of Belle River.

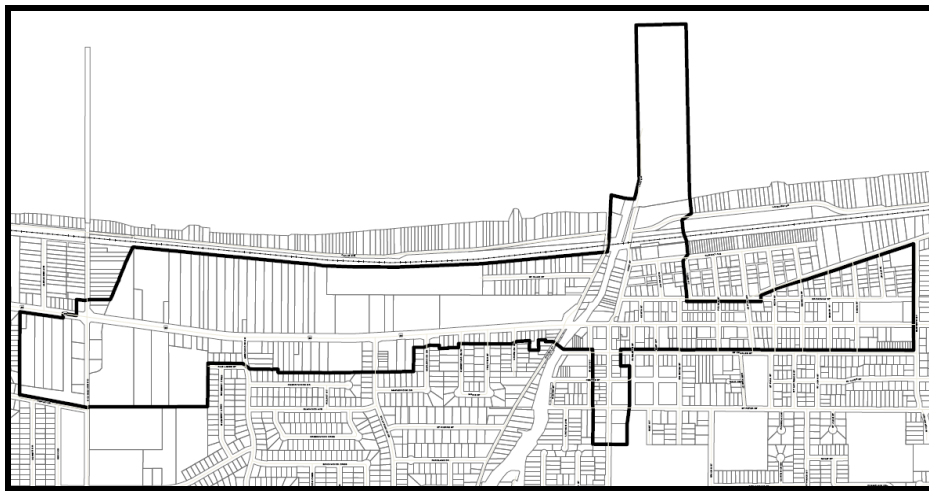
1.2 Community Improvement Project Area

The Town of Lakeshore Official Plan and the former Township of Maidstone and Town of Belle River Official Plans and the *Ontario Planning Act*, permitted Council to designate the project area to be investigated during a Community Improvement Plan study.

On August 14, 2007, Council approved an expansion to the Belle River Business Improvement Area. At its December 9, 2008 meeting, Council

approved a Community Improvement Project Area for the recently expanded Belle River Business Improvement Area, leading the way for the preparation of a new Community Improvement Plan. By-law 154-2008 designates the Belle River Business Improvement Area as a Community Improvement Project Area (See Appendix 'A'). The designated Community Improvement Project Area, is generally bounded by Rourke Line Road westerly, Eleventh Street easterly, St. Peter Street southerly and the marina and Lake St. Clair northerly (See Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Community Improvement Project Area



Source: Town of Lakeshore GIS and Belle River BIA

The Project Area incorporates the Town of Lakeshore's traditional downtown area, harbour area and highway 22 commercial area. It is characterized as a mixed use area, containing the Town of Lakeshore's core retail, service, office, cultural, institutional and transportation uses. The rationale used to determine the boundary of the Community Improvement Project Area, was to include the Town of Lakeshore's traditional downtown core or business area contained within the former Town of Belle River and peripheral lands fronting onto County Road 22, located to the west of the former Town of Belle River, that are or will be impacted in the future by population and community-related commercial or employment growth.

These lands include the following:

- The Belle River Business Improvement Area;

- The harbour lands that incorporate a marina, restaurant and waterfront area that is an important community amenity, that is linked to and abuts the core area, and;
- The traditional downtown core (Former Town of Belle River) which contains a mix of commercial, institutional, residential, office, and personal service uses and a portion of County Road 22.

By establishing a Community Improvement Project Area for the entire Belle River Business Improvement Area, there is an opportunity to implement area-wide community improvements (facade and streetscape improvements and other enhanced community services etc.). This plan and its financial incentives do not apply to single detached dwellings.

1.3 Purpose of a Community Improvement Plan

The purpose of this Community Improvement Plan is to articulate a vision for the Belle River Business Improvement Area based on an assessment of past experience and future prospects, along with a realistic plan to guide improvements.

A Community Improvement Plan is a municipal planning tool that outlines a strategy for community improvements as well as a framework for providing a coordinated plan for improvements and rehabilitation to public and private lands by establishing policies and priorities for works that enable a municipality to encourage improvements to lands, buildings, infrastructure, property acquisition or sale, land assembly, parks, signage and streetscape through municipal or financial incentive programs. Municipalities can also provide incentives for providing affordable housing and remediating contaminated lands. Improvements may be realized with the help of incentive-based programs such as grants, loans, or tax assistance.

1.4 Previous Community Improvement Plan

The Town of Lakeshore has undertaken a number of improvement projects since the approval of its first Community Improvement Plan for the former Town of Belle River in 1987. Its role was to indicate and describe projects to be undertaken by the community (assisted by provincial funding) in an appropriate and comprehensive approach to improvement.



A number of major and minor improvements have taken place through both public and private initiatives within the Community Improvement Project Area over the past 20 years. An “arrival” or “gateway feature” is now located at the western approach to the Town. In addition, small “public places” were made available to offer views of Belle River. Streetscaping works, including antique street lighting, landscaping (street trees and planters), boulevard treatments and landscaped bump-outs, sidewalk widening, sidewalk replacement, additional parking areas, street furniture and placement garbage containers are visible along Notre Dame Street, particularly at the western end, near the Belle River Bridge. Some upgrading and repair of older municipal services, including water mains, roads, storm / sewers and hydro has also been completed, in addition to some recent park and waterfront improvements.

Many of these previous improvements may need to be upgraded to enhance their vibrancy or be repaired or replaced in their entirety. In addition, these improvements also need to be extended to the other portions of the expanded Community Improvement Project Area. The intent of the previous Community improvement Plan’s ideas will be carried forward in this new Community Improvement Plan.

1.5 Community Improvement Plan Preparation

The Community Improvement Plan is governed by Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* enables municipalities to adopt Community Improvement Plans, only when there are Official Plan policies in effect that contain provisions for community improvement. The *Act* requires Council to designate a Community Improvement Project Area by By-law and then prepare a Community Improvement Plan. Once the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is in effect, the Town may purchase, lease, dispose or improve public lands and may provide grants or loans to facilitate community improvements.

The process included a number of measures to enable public input into the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan. Stakeholder public input was obtained through two surveys: A Business / Property owner Survey was mailed to all businesses and property owners within the boundaries of the Community Improvement Project Area and a similar Customer Survey was reviewed with visitors and customers within the project area (See Appendix 'C').

The survey data, plus a review of existing conditions and ideas for improvements was shared and discussed at a series of focus group meetings or visioning workshops held on December 3, 2008 and December 4, 2008 in Puce and Belle River. The workshops allowed participants the opportunity to identify problems and issues in the Community Improvement Project Area and to offer solutions (See Appendix 'D').

Stakeholder input was also obtained from the Belle River Business Improvement Association (BIA), various community groups, Council, staff, businesses, property owners and the general public.

The process also included a Public Information Session and a statutory Public Meeting held in accordance with Section 17 (15) (d) and ss. 17 (17) of the *Planning Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13. In addition, a notice of the Public Information Session and notice of Public Meeting was posted on the Town's web page. The Public Information Session and the statutory Public Meeting was advertised in the local newspaper. A copy of the

Public Information Session Notice and Public Meeting Notice are shown in Appendix 'B'.

2.0 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

2.1 Municipal Act

Section 106(1) (2), and Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act* 2001 along with Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities powers to carry out their Community Improvement Plans. The *Municipal Act* came into effect on January 1, 2003, replacing the 1990 *Municipal Act*. On January 1, 2007, the *Municipal Statute Law Amendment Act* amended the *Municipal Act*.

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.

However, 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*.

Examples include:

- Allowing improvements to buildings on Town land and selling or leasing the land to businesses (s.28(6) of the *Planning Act*);
- Leasing or selling municipal land to businesses (s.28(6) of the *Planning Act*);

- Making grants or loans to businesses for eligible costs (s.28(7) to (7.3) of the *Planning Act*); and
- Providing property tax assistance to businesses (s. 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, i.e. Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program and the Heritage Property Tax Relief*).

Section 365.1(2) and (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* allows municipalities to pass a by-law providing tax assistance to an eligible property in the form of a deferral or cancellation of part or all of the taxes levied on that property for municipal and education purposes during the rehabilitation period and the development period of the property. A municipality with an approved Community Improvement Plan in place that contains provisions specifying tax assistance will be permitted to provide tax assistance for municipal purposes.

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 365.2 of the *Municipal Act* establishes the Heritage Property Tax Relief program whereby municipalities may pass a bylaw to establish the program to provide tax relief (10% to 40%) to owners of eligible heritage properties subject to an agreement to protect heritage features.

2.2 Planning Act

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.

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”.

Community improvement also includes the provision of affordable housing.

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

- acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28 (3) of the *Planning Act*);
- construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28 (6));
- sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28 (6)); and
- 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.

2.3 Ontario Heritage Act

The conservation of heritage properties is regulated by the *Ontario Heritage Act*, R.S.O. 1990. The Act came into force in 1975 and was amended in 2005. Under this Act municipalities like the Town of Lakeshore can pass bylaws to designated properties of heritage interest. Designation helps to protect the heritage features on the property and provides a mechanism for ensuring that any changes to the property are managed appropriately. Individual properties are designated under Part IV of the Act. Designation can include buildings or structures, groups of buildings, cemeteries, natural features, cultural landscapes or landscape features, ruins, archaeological and archaeological sites. Part V of the Act enables the council of a municipality to designate an area as a Heritage Conservation District. Section 39 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipalities to pass bylaws to offer grants and loans to owners of properties designated under Part IV of the Act.

2.4 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (*PPS*) came into force on March 1, 2005 and was issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act*. The PPS provides direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Decisions affecting planning matters shall be consistent with the PPS.

The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement promotes:

- Accommodating projected employment and residential growth through intensification and redevelopment in existing built up areas;
- Planning public streets, spaces and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, and facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized movement, including but not limited to, walking and cycling;
- Conservation of significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes;

- Developing a compact urban form of development and managing change to promote efficient development and land use patterns;
- Promoting the design of streets and public spaces which facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement;
- accommodating an appropriate range and mix of uses;
- Creating a land use pattern which minimizes vehicle trips and supports alternative modes of transportation (bus and rail);
- Improving the mix of employment and housing uses to shorten commuting times and decrease transportation congestion;
- Promoting energy conservation and improve air quality;
- efficient use of infrastructure and services that protects the diversity of natural connections;
- Maintaining and enhancing the vitality of downtowns and main streets;
- Protecting corridors and rights-of-way for transit, transportation and infrastructure facilities to meet current and projected needs; and
- Planning so that major facilities such as transportation/transit rail infrastructure and corridors and sensitive land uses are appropriately designed, buffered and /or separated from each other.

2.5 County of Essex Official Plan

The County of Essex Official Plan was adopted by County Council in July of 2005. The Plan:

- Implements Provincial Policy at the County level;
- Provides a policy framework that will provide direction to the seven local municipalities in their preparation and future interpretation of updated local Official Plans and Official Plan Amendments; and

- Establishes a policy framework for coordination and cooperation between municipalities, both internal and external to the County, on planning, development, resources and inter municipal servicing issues that cross municipal boundaries.

Section 1.5 and Section 3.2 of the County Official Plan identifies principles / goals for the County Plan which are relevant to the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan:

- Maintain the well being of downtowns and main-streets and ensure long term economic prosperity;
- To maintain and attract tourism related businesses and activities that can provide well paying employment opportunities to existing and future residents;
- To maintain and enhance the town centres as focal points where a board range of community and commercial facilities and services, housing and employment opportunities are available at higher densities in a mixed use environment;
- To ensure Lake St. Clair is noted as a significant area for fishing and hunting and that future land use decisions are made with regard to maintaining access to this resource;
- To provide a board range of housing, employment and leisure opportunities;
- Local Official Plans are encouraged to provide opportunities for re-development, intensification and revitalization in areas that have sufficient existing or planned infrastructure;
- To create and maintain an improved balance between residential and employment growth in the existing communities by increasing employment opportunities where people live;
- Support the use of public transit where available or where it can be provided in the future;

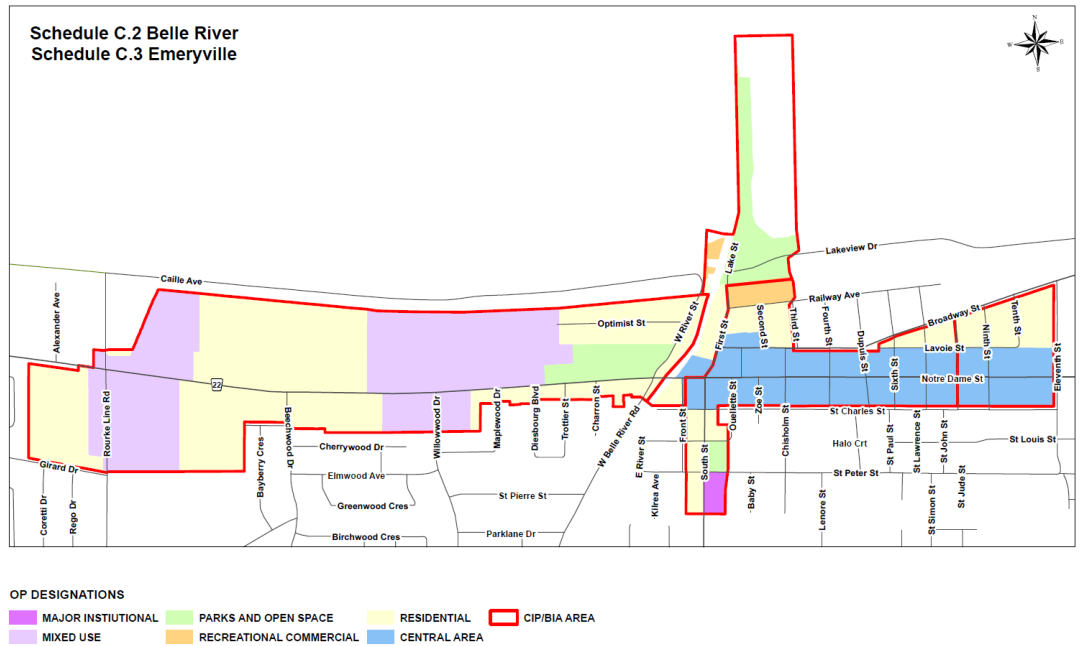
- To create more compact development within designated and fully serviced settlement areas; and
- To increase the amount of core natural area and natural buffers through restoration efforts.

2.6 Town of Lakeshore Official Plan

The Community Improvement Plan Area is located primarily within the former Town of Belle River’s downtown area and a portion of the County Road 22 Corridor, which is currently being impacted by economic forces.

The area contains a range of land use designations as delineated in the Town of Lakeshore Official Plan (adopted by Council May 26, 2008 and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on July 6, 2010 and November 22, 2010) (See Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Town of Lakeshore Official Plan Designations



Source: Town of Lakeshore Official Plan and Town of Lakeshore GIS

The former Town of Belle River is designated as a “Primary Node” which includes the existing downtown area of Belle River (Former Town of Belle

River “Historic Downtown”). Primary Nodes are envisaged as major Town-wide focal points that accommodate a range of commercial/retail/service uses; large format retail uses; offices and non-industrial and population-related employment uses; a range and mix of residential uses including special needs housing; and municipal and public services and facilities, including:

- recreation centres, schools, institutional uses, entertainment and cultural facilities.

The following policies apply to Primary Nodes:

- Primary Nodes will create a Town-wide focal point and accommodate a diverse range and mix of commercial, retail, service uses, large format retail uses, offices and non-industrial and population-related employment uses, a range and mix of residential uses, including, special needs housing; and public services and facilities, including: recreation centres, schools, institutional uses, entertainment and cultural facilities.
- Primary Nodes will develop with efficient land use patterns and densities and a mix of land uses to support the Town.

Primary Nodes will:

- Provide for medium to higher density housing forms including stacked townhouses and apartment buildings;
- Encourage a broader mix of land uses and mixed buildings, including residential buildings with commercial uses at grade and live-work units;
- Provide a range of housing types, including affordable housing and special needs housing;
- Encourage high standards of community and urban design;
- Encourage densities and development patterns that support public transit opportunities;

- Provide appropriate transitions with adjacent land uses to avoid land use conflicts;
- Promote the creation of a linked network of pedestrian pathways and public open spaces, and;
- Provide an appropriate level of transportation infrastructure and parking accommodation.

The Town will work with private landowners and development interests to enhance waterfront access opportunities, linking the Primary Nodes to the waterfront through pedestrian and open space networks.

The following additional specific policies will apply to the Belle River Historic Downtown:

- The Town will promote growth through infill, intensification and redevelopment of vacant and/or underutilized sites;
- Should the Town initiate the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan the Town will address the revitalization of the Belle River Historic Downtown as a priority, and;
- The Town will encourage a minimum of three-storey buildings on the south side of Notre Dame Street to capture significant views and vistas of Lake St. Clair, while maintaining the existing community character and main street presence.

The “Central Area Designation” represents and designates the traditional downtown main streets and new high activity centres of the Town. The “Central Area Designation” accommodates the largest and most diverse concentration of central functions, including residential, retail, office, service, entertainment and other commercial uses, as well as government, institutional and community activities. The following policies apply to the “Central Area Designation” to ensure that redevelopment and new development maintains an appropriate standard or enhances the character of the downtown core:

- The height, massing, orientation and layout of buildings within the “Central Area Designation” will promote the creation of a pedestrian scaled environment and reinforce the character of the main street;
- The site plan control policies of this Plan will apply to all development applications that include a non-residential component and multi-unit residential development applications;
- Adequate off-street parking and loading spaces will be provided in accordance with the zoning by-law. As an alternative to providing on-site parking for non-residential uses, the Town may accept cash-in-lieu of parking to improve parking conditions in a particular “Central Area Designation”;
- The height, density and massing of the development should be compatible with the adjacent low density residential uses through the use of appropriate transitions; and
- Development within the Central Area Designation will be subject to a higher standard of urban design.

The “Mixed Use Designation” applies to certain lands with frontage along County Road 22, which are located within the County Road 22 Mixed Use Corridor. The “Mixed Use Designation provides for a range of commercial and residential uses characteristic of a transit supportive and higher intensity mixed use corridor. The policies provide for a transition of density, height and built form to ensure land use compatibility with adjacent uses.

The intent of the Official Plan with respect to this area is to:

- Encourage a mix of land uses, including commercial and retail establishments, light employment uses, low density residential uses (on existing lots of record), medium density residential uses and residential uses above the ground floor of a commercial use, places of worship, neighbourhood community and cultural centres and institutional uses of similar scale, special needs housing and seniors housing; and

- Encourage the consolidation of land to create large and more comprehensive development blocks.

The Town of Lakeshore has undertaken a Secondary Plan and Design Guidelines for the County Road 22 Corridor in conjunction with the Town's new Comprehensive Zoning By-law review. County Road 22 is an important inter-regional transportation corridor within the Town of Lakeshore linking the major urban areas of the Town, including the communities of Belle River, Emeryville, Puce and Maidstone and the Town's major commercial and employment areas. County Road 22 faces similar challenges as other urban arterial road corridors in Ontario, which accommodate a diverse range of commercial, residential and business uses which have historically existed and evolved over time, including automotive dealers, industrial malls, commercial strip plazas, expansive parking areas and older residential dwellings on large lots. These Guidelines will seek to transform County Road 22 over time into an "Urban Avenue" (Source: Corridor Transformation Strategy Draft, MMM Group, July 2010).

The "Residential Designation" applies to the Urban Areas of the Town which consist of predominately residential uses in a variety of housing forms. The "Residential Designation" is expected to continue to accommodate attractive neighbourhoods and foster the creation of complete communities which provide for neighbourhood facilities and services such as elementary schools, parks, places of worship and local neighbourhood-oriented commercial uses which are integral to and supportive of a residential development. A variety of housing types are anticipated to be developed to meet the varying demands and characteristics of the population. Opportunities to provide housing for individuals or groups with special needs including the elderly and those with special physical, social or economic needs within the Town will be encouraged.

The "Parks and Open Space Designation" provides a range of passive and active recreational opportunities to residents and visitors through the uses accommodated in the Parks and Open Space Designation. Recreation needs and facilities have been identified in the Community Services and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks and Open Space Designation accommodates recreational facilities, community centres,

parks and other public open spaces. The provision of a variety of recreational opportunities is critical to maintaining healthy communities in the Town of Lakeshore. The lakefront provides the Town with a valuable recreational resource and opportunities to use this resource in an appropriate and sustainable manner is encouraged.

Recently, the Town of Lakeshore submitted an application and were awarded, under the R.I.N.C. Grant Programs funding for Lakeview Park Improvements.

The “Recreational Commercial Designation” recognizes and supports those commercial uses which have a predominately recreational focus. A range of commercial uses are permitted that directly support the recreational use and associated recreational amenity. The “Recreational Commercial Designation” reinforces the recreational tourism attributes of the Town’s waterfront and provides policies for complementary and supporting commercial uses.

The “Major Institutional Designation” is intended to recognize those major public institutions that benefit the residents of the entire Town, and occupy large and prominent sites. These major institutional uses are important sources of both specialized services and employment for the entire Town, and include uses such as hospitals, secondary schools, post-secondary educational facilities, correctional facilities, courthouses and government complexes.

2.7 Community Improvement Policies

Section 4.2.2 (Community Improvement) of the Town of Lakeshore Official Plan establishes the requirements for a Community Improvement Project Area to be established by Council and designated by by-law in accordance with the *Planning Act*. The designation of a Community Improvement Project Area will be based on one or more of the following conditions being present:

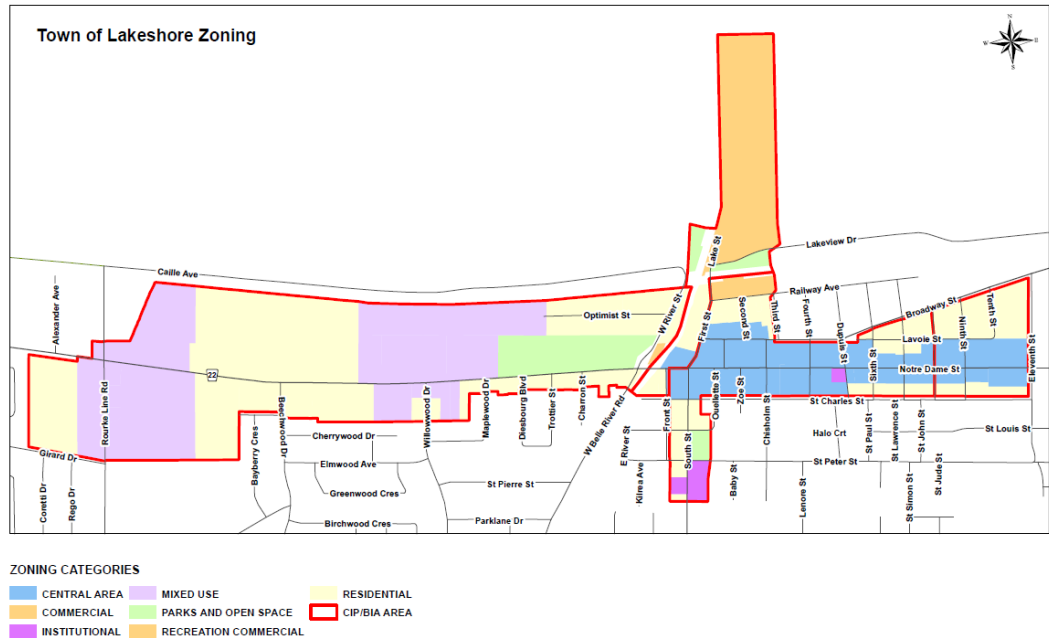
- Buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and lands of heritage and / or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;

- Brownfield or derelict properties in need of remediation and redevelopment;
- Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities;
- Deficiencies in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, streetscapes and/or street lighting;
- Poor road access and/or traffic circulation;
- Deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks neighbourhood parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and public social facilities;
- Inadequate mix of housing types;
- Known or perceived environmental contamination;
- Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design;
- High commercial vacancy rates;
- Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-ways, building expansions, parking and / or loading facilities;
- Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and / or buildings; and
- Any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

2.8 Zoning By-law

The Town of Lakeshore Zoning By-law 2-2012 is the Zoning By-law covering the Community Improvement Project Area. The present zone categories generally reflect existing land uses (See Figure 3). The zone categories primarily contain a mix of Commercial, Residential, Institutional and Parks and Open Space uses.

Figure 3- Zone Categories



Source: Town of Lakeshore GIS and Belle River BIA

2.9 Site Plan Control

Section 8.3.4 of the Town of Lakeshore Official Plan designates all areas of the Town as a Site Plan Control Area under the provisions of Section 41(2) of the *Planning Act*. Site Plan Control has been established by the Town through a Site Plan Control By-law. The Town may require proponents to execute a Site Plan Agreement to address matters such as, access points, loading, parking, walkways, building design, lighting, landscaping, garbage storage, easements, servicing, grading, drainage, snow removal etc. The Town of Lakeshore has prepared a Development Manual to inform proponents of the Town of Lakeshore’s design standards and specifications for site development.

2.10 Corporate Strategic Plan

In the Spring of 2008 the Town of Lakeshore embarked upon the preparation of a Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is the Town’s policy document which provides long-term direction and guides the Town and its residents in decision-making through its objectives. The Town of Lakeshore will ensure that our Town:

- Is well served and well equipped (Servicing and Facilities);
- Is economically progressive and successful (Economy);
- Has character and a sense of place (Community);
- Is naturally inviting and environmentally aware (Environment);
- Is responsible, accountable and influential (Administration); and
- Is on the move (Transportation).

2.11 Existing Land Use

The Community Improvement Project Area contains a major concentration of commercial, residential, institutional and recreational uses.

Industrial land use is limited in the Community Improvement Project Area. County Road 22 is the major highway that allows visitors coming from the west to enter the Community Improvement Project Area's downtown core which becomes Notre Dame Street. The Belle River Bridge forms a "distinctive gateway" to the downtown core. The commercial uses are generally located on Notre Dame Street in the former Town of Belle River and on lands fronting on to County Road 22 just west of Belle River. More recent "commercial strip type development" has occurred on Notre Dame Street between Ninth Street and Eleventh Street.

The traditional focal point of the downtown in the Community Improvement Project Area is on Notre Dame Street in the former Town of Belle River. A mix of good and services are available in the downtown core which include: banks, credit unions, grocery and convenience stores, personal services, hardware store, funeral home, real estate and insurance brokers, restaurants, lawyers, doctors / dentist offices, government offices, auto repair shops, boutique and gift shops, florists, drug store and other retail stores. The commercial buildings are older and lack a "distinct architectural character" and are typically two to three storeys in height. The Town of Lakeshore Town Hall is located in the center of Town on Notre Dame Street. Secondary commercial uses and businesses are located west of Belle River fronting onto County Road 22. Institutional uses include the post office which is located in the downtown core on Notre Dame Street and the Belle River United Church, the Town's tennis courts and a day care which are located south of Notre Dame Street and the downtown core, on County Road 27. Off street parking

areas are generally found in the downtown core along Notre Dame Street. Additional parking is located along the side streets in the downtown core and at the Lakeview Park. Parking areas are currently poorly identified.

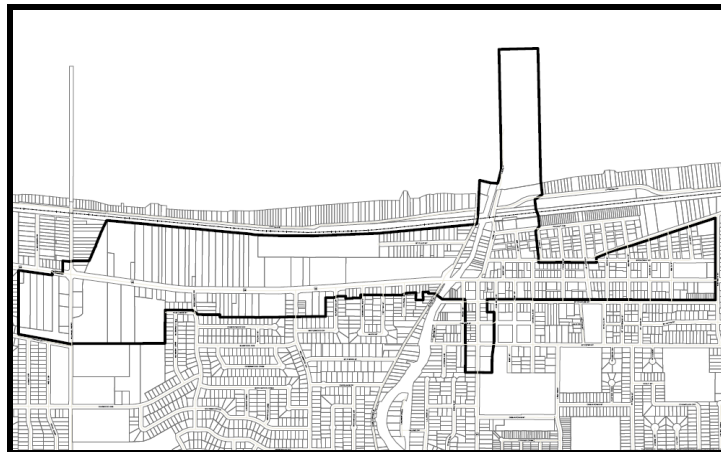
The Belle River Marina is located on Lake St. Clair. The Belle River and harbour area are “natural amenities” that provide a range of waterfront land uses including the marina and restaurant, Lakeview Park and beach. Recreational areas are also found along County Road 22 at the entrance to the former Town of Belle River (Optimist Park) and at the entrance to Belle River, along County Road 27 (Lion’s Park).

Older, low density residential neighbourhoods surround the downtown commercial core off of Notre Dame Street, County Road 22 and County Road 27. The majority of the existing housing stock is single detached dwellings, followed by semi-detached dwellings, townhouses and apartments (located in converted detached dwellings or located above commercial businesses). These residential areas are generally stable, but there are pressures for commercial conversions, particularly along Notre Dame Street and west of Belle River, along County Road 22.

2.12 Business Improvement Area (BIA)

The Belle River Business Improvement Area (BIA) was established under the *Municipal Act* and the BIA boundaries coincide with the Community Improvement Plan Project Area as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Belle River Business Improvement Area



Source: Town of Lakeshore GIS and Belle River BIA

It is an association comprised of business professionals within a designated district who join forces under the approval of the municipality, in a “self-help program” proposed at stimulating local trade and commerce. The BIA uses its own budget and resources in an ongoing effort to promote the area as a business or shopping area and to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned land, building and structures. The municipality collects money as a special levy on all industrial and commercial properties in the area. Funds are then transferred to the BIA to carry out its work.

2.13 Municipal Heritage



The history of Belle River dates back to the 1750’s when the French settlers farmed the area along Lake St. Clair. Development of the area became notable in 1854 with the construction of the

Great Western Railway (Canadian National Railway) extending through the former Town of Belle River. Belle River was incorporated as a village in 1874 and a Town in 1969. The French influence is still present in the municipality with 18.5 % of the population being able to conduct a conversation in both English and French (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission 2009).

The *Ontario Heritage Act* came into force in 1975. In 2005, the province passed comprehensive amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act* to strengthen and improve heritage protection in Ontario. Its purpose is to give municipalities and provincial governments powers to preserve cultural heritage properties. It allowed the Town of Lakeshore to identify, evaluate and protect heritage properties of value or interest to the community.

Section 27 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* requires the Clerk of every local municipality to keep a current, publicly accessible register of properties of cultural heritage value or interest. The



“municipal register” is a list of cultural heritage properties that have been

identified as being important to the community. The register must include all properties in the municipality that are designated under Part IV (individual designation) and Part V (district designation) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Currently, there are no individual properties or cultural heritage landscapes that have been designated by the Town’s Heritage Committee within the Community Improvement Project Area. Many of the Town’s historical landmarks have been destroyed by fire. However, there appears to be a very small percentage of the built environment in the Community Improvement Project Area that contains a potential for designation under Part IV (Individual Property) Ontario and limited to no potential for designation under Part V (district designation) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as identified by the community at the Visioning Workshops held in Puce and Belle River on December 3, 2008 and December 4, 2008. However, the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 399 (built in 1922 as St. James High School), Stone Garden Bed and Breakfast, Music Zone, Belle River Harbour Area, Cooper Court Hotel (built in 1920) and 592 Notre Dame Street were identified by the community as cultural properties of heritage value or interest in the Community Improvement Project Area.



Music Zone



592 Notre Dame Street



Royal Canadian Legion Branch 399



Stone Garden Bed & Breakfast



Belle River Harbour Area

Cooper Hotel

As of 2005 the *Ontario Heritage Act* also allows municipalities to include on the “municipal register” properties of cultural heritage value that have not been designated (known as the “listing” or



“wish list”). The listing is a means to formally identify properties that may have cultural heritage value or interest to the community. Examples of cultural heritage properties include: significant buildings and structures, monuments, natural features, significant landscapes and conservation districts. Designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* is the tool used by the municipality to protect the attributes of heritage properties over time. Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* can be a tool for community renewal and there are financial and planning incentives that encourage owners of designated properties in maintaining and improving their buildings or properties.

2.14 Property Standards By-law

The Property Standards By-laws (68-99 and 154-2005) for the Town of Lakeshore were approved in 1999 and amended in 2005 in order to ensure the maintenance of yards and occupancy of buildings are kept safe and habitable.

2.15 Sign By-law

The Town of Lakeshore approved their Sign By-law 107-2007 for the purpose of regulating signs, posting of notices and other advertising devices. The by-law applies to the entire Town, with no specific provisions regulating signage in the Community Improvement Project Area.

3.0 PROBLEMS AND DEFICIENCIES

3.1 Economic Indicators

The Community Improvement Project Area does not exhibit severe characteristics of economic decline, but has not maximized its potential either and as with many older Town's in Ontario, has lost its "vibrancy".



The downtown core is experiencing what many older towns in Ontario have experienced as newer residential areas and businesses have developed in other areas. As such, many merchants and business owners in the Community Improvement Project Area are trying to anticipate the changes they will have to make to maintain their market share and viability of their businesses.

Although there does not appear to be many vacant commercial storefronts and offices in the downtown core, Notre Dame Street provides a different atmosphere, a mix of store types and inventory than their competitors in nearby Tecumseh. The Community Improvement Project Area has faced strong competition for retail growth from the nearby community shopping areas located at the Manning Road and County Road 22 intersection over the years. However, the newer commercial areas are intended to supplement the retail and offices uses offered in the downtown core.



The Community Improvement Project Area, particularly the downtown core in the former Town of Belle River could benefit from leasing vacant commercial properties and vacant residential units located above the commercial units and by providing a “unique

shopping experience” in both atmosphere and goods as the average household income and per capita income in the Town of Lakeshore is substantially above both the national and provincial average, with almost 40% of all households having an income of over \$100,000 and Lakeshore residents have historically experienced a lower level of unemployment than elsewhere in the Province (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission, 2006).

Per capita retail sales by businesses in Lakeshore were also significantly higher than the national average (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission, 2006). However, the Financial Post Canadian Demographics (2009) publication estimates that retail activity within the municipality is 54% below the national average (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission).

The Town of Lakeshore has lower tax rates than many of their member municipalities making it attractive to new businesses. Favorable land acquisition prices in some areas will be attractive to individuals or organizations seeking a more suburban location for single or multi-tenant office developments and opportunities abound in the areas of agriculture-related technologies, processes and production (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission, 2006).



The Town of Lakeshore also boasts more than 35 kilometers of shoreline along Lake St. Clair, making it an attractive location for tourism-related development (Source: Windsor-Essex County Development Commission, 2006).



The Belle River Business Improvement Association (BIA) recognizes the need to build and maintain partnerships in the community and with the Town of Lakeshore Council to enhance their economic viability and market segment. Attracting new businesses and a revitalization of existing businesses in the Community Improvement Project Area will help to expand their market share.

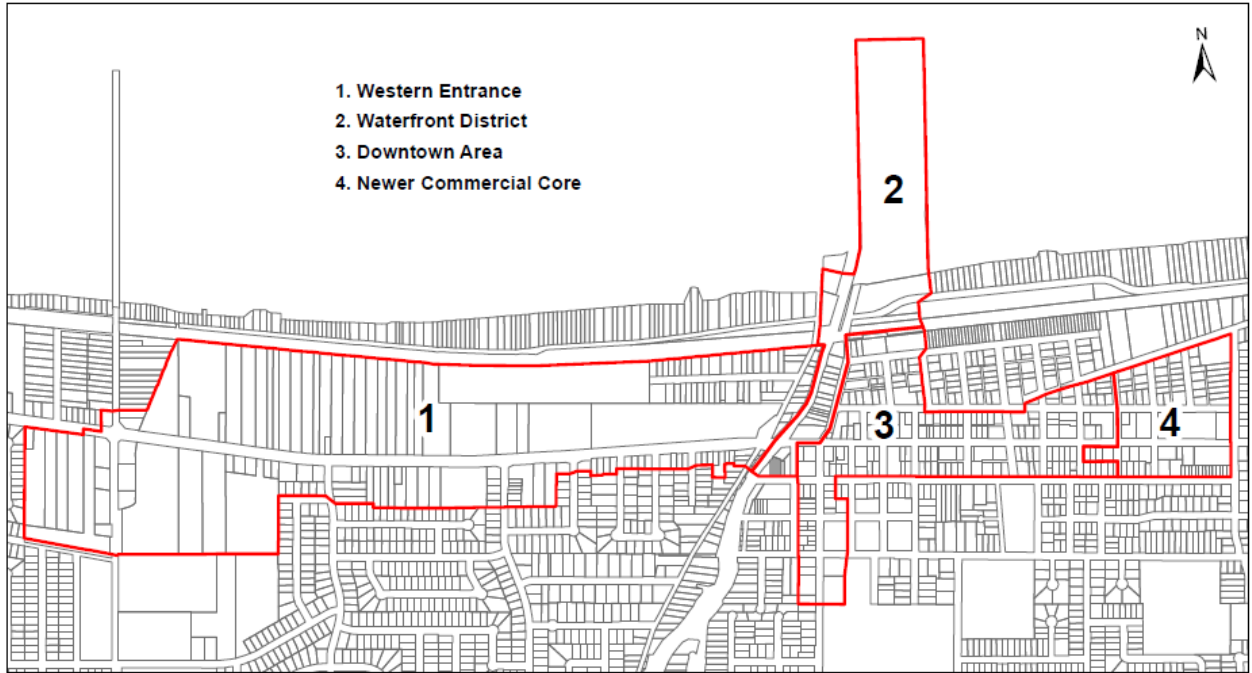
3.2 Existing Deficiencies, Needs and Potential Solutions

As part of the Community Improvement Plan, an analysis of current conditions within the Community Improvement Project Area was conducted to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats throughout the project area (SWOT Analysis). The proposed municipal and financial incentives will address the Community Improvement Project Areas needs. This analysis included a walking tour of the area, taking of photographs and inventorying the built form and conditions, land uses and economic activity. The Community Improvement Project Area was recommended based on the existence of its build form, land use and economic weakness.

The conditions within the Community Improvement Project Area were catalogued for four distinct study areas as shown in Figure 5. These are conditions that affect the visual appearance and overall economic wellbeing of the area, but can be easily addressed through a Community Improvement Plan.

Tables 1(a) to 4(a) and Tables 1(b) to 4 (b) illustrate the findings of the SWOT Analysis.

Figure 5 – Study Areas



Source: Town of Lakeshore GIS

1. The Western Entrance to the Downtown Area



This area comprises the “western gateway” to the commercial core of the Downtown from the Rourke Line to the Belle River Bridge, along County Road 22.

County Road 22 is a major arterial road linking the urban areas of Belle River, Emeryville, Puce and Maidstone and the Town’s commercial and employment areas, including some residential areas. The Town completed design guidelines for the County Road 22 corridor in conjunction with a new comprehensive zoning by-law. This urban design framework when implemented by the Town will direct development within the corridor that is “in keeping” with the Town’s vision for County Road 22. The guidelines identify the Town’s intent with respect to land

use, built form, streetscape, parking, landscaping and other urban design matters which will be addressed through the preparation and review of development applications. (Source: Corridor Transformation Strategy, County Road 22 Special Planning Area Design Guidelines, July 2010).



Coin Car Wash



Retirement Complex



Vacant Commercial Building



Vacant Commercial Land



County Road 22 / Rourke Line



Vacant Commercial Land

Table 1(a) – Western Entrance Official Plan Criteria for CIP Project Areas

Official Plan Criteria For CIP Project Areas	Condition Met
Buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and lands of heritage and / or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment.	Yes
Brownfield or derelict properties in need of remediation and redevelopment.	Unknown
Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities.	Yes
Deficiencies in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, streetscapes and/or street lighting.	Yes
Poor road access and/or traffic circulation.	Yes
Deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks neighbourhood parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and public social facilities.	Yes
Known or perceived environmental contamination.	Unknown
Inadequate mix of housing types.	Yes
Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design.	Yes
High commercial vacancy rates.	No
Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-ways, building expansions, parking and / or loading facilities.	Yes
Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and / or buildings.	Yes
Any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.	Yes

Table 1 (b) – Western Entrance to the Downtown Area SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Residential		-Vacant buildings / underutilized residential and commercial lands.	-There is future redevelopment potential for medium-density residential uses and vacant commercial uses. -The underutilized lands present an opportunity for infill development, intensification and re-development.	-Characterized by underinvestment. -Conflicting land uses.
Businesses		-Vacant buildings / underutilized residential and commercial lands. -Poor mix of commercial and employment uses.	-There is future redevelopment potential for commercial, office, related employment uses.	-The area is characterized by underinvestment.
Buildings / Structures		-There is evidence of a lack of building maintenance on some commercial buildings and residential buildings.		
Streetscape		-Lack of an attractive, consistent and unifying streetscape, including a lack of landscaping at key entrances and around parking areas. -Beautification solutions needed.	-Opportunities to promote “greening of the landscape”.	
Heritage				
Signage		-Lack of a Western “Gateway Image” coming into the Downtown Area from Windsor on County Road 22. -Uniform signage needed.	-Significant improvements to this Gateway Image and therefore the image of the Downtown Area. -Amend the Sign By-law to detail types / sizes / colours of signs to be permitted.	
Transportation / Parking		-There are some safety concerns due to existing “fruit stands” on County Road 22 that currently operate with an inadequate parking supply. -Lack of a signalized intersection at Rourke Line and County Road 22. -No transit from Windsor to Belle	-There are opportunities to promote public and private transit along County Road 22. -Increase Lakeshore Community Bus Service. -There is an opportunity to require signalization at Rourke Line and County Road 22 through	-Opposition from owners to regulating Fruit Stands along County Road 22. -Budget restrictions and or no development that would necessitate signalization at

Transportation / Parking		River, nor does the handicapped bus operate on a daily basis. -Insufficient lighting along County Road 22.	redevelopment of vacant commercial properties.	Rourke Line and County Road 22.
Amenities, Recreation and Public Spaces		-There is a lack of pedestrian / trail connections.		
Governance	-BIA			-Coordination of BIA, Town and CIP.
Other		-Mixed uses or potential conflicting uses along County Road 22. -No regulation for transient vendors.		

2. The Waterfront District

The Waterfront District comprises First Street including Lake Drive, Lakeview Park and the Marina and the Town’s beach off of West River Street. It has a prominent “tourist draw” to the area for use of the waterfront, but it is not apparent that the draw of this area is leverage to bring tourists into the Downtown. The



waterfront and the river offer a highly sought after amenity facility and an attractive, living, working and leisure environment. The area is highly accessible from the existing road network (Notre Dame Street and First Street) and will be further improved by the recent park improvements. It has the potential to be the most popular “tourist attraction in the Town of Lakeshore”. However, there needs to be a strong “visual link” with the Downtown core, as the views to the waterfront and river are obstructed by existing buildings. The benefits of the waterfront and river are currently under-valued and under-exploited.



Table 2(a) – The Waterfront District Official Plan Criteria for CIP Project Areas

Official Plan Criteria For CIP Project Areas	Condition Met
Buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and lands of heritage and / or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;	Yes
Brownfield or derelict properties in need of remediation and redevelopment;	unknown
Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities;	Yes
Deficiencies in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, streetscapes and/or street lighting;	Yes
Poor road access and/or traffic circulation;	Yes
Deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks neighbourhood parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and public social facilities;	Yes
Known or perceived environmental contamination;	Unknown
Inadequate mix of housing types;	Yes
Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design;	Yes
High commercial vacancy rates;	No
Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-ways, building expansions, parking and / or loading facilities;	Yes
Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and / or buildings;	Yes
Any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.	Yes

Table 2 (b) – Waterfront District SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Residential Businesses		-There is a lack of cafes, restaurants and specialty retail stores on Notre Dame Street and First Street for the recreational users.	-Promotion of more cafes, restaurants and specialty retail stores on First Street.	
Buildings / Structures		-There is evidence of a lack of building maintenance on some commercial buildings and residential buildings.		
Streetscape		-There is a lack of overall streetscaping, particularly landscaping and other amenities, (street furniture, lighting, etc.) -Insufficient garbage / recycling receptacles.	-First Street would benefit from streetscaping (street furniture etc.) and landscaping.	
Heritage		-Historical / significant landscapes are not designated under the Heritage Act (i.e. Belle River and Harbor)	-Could be designated under the Heritage Act.	
Signage		-There is a lack of directional and consistent street signage with a unifying theme.	-The existing directional signage could be improved and a waterfront theme for Notre Dame and First Street should be implemented (flags i.e. sails) on light standards or hydro poles).	
Transportation / Parking		-Lack of delineated pedestrian crosswalks. -Improvements to the existing pedestrian connection from the Downtown Area to the Waterfront District are needed. -No transit operation from the Marina / Park to Downtown. -Traffic speed. -Unsafe crosswalks. -No sidewalk continuity. -Substandard road condition to the Lake (First Street). -Pedestrian bridge near the railway not wide enough for vehicle rescue. -No fire hydrant at marina docks. -Need more bike racks.	-The crosswalks should be delineated and traffic signage should be improved. -Install 4 way stops and or introduce traffic calming measures. -Legalize or install well marked crosswalks. -Install accessible sidewalks from the Downtown to the Lake. -Fire Department Inspection of bridge and hydrant.	

Transportation / Parking		-Poor on-street parking delineation (confusing and not lit properly).		
Amenities, Recreation and Public Spaces	Waterfront Park and Marina.	-Lack of shops and restaurants that cater to the tourists and waterfront recreation users on First Street. -Not enough community events at the waterfront. -Not enough pedestrian pathways. -Stones or snow on walking paths or bike paths. -Lack of a tourist information centre at the waterfront.	-The improvements to the Marina and Park area should be completed. -Promotion of community events.	
Governance		Lack of shops and restaurants that cater to the tourists and waterfront recreation users on First Street.	-The current Official Plan designation and zoning could be changed to encourage more commercial uses on First Street.	
Other		There is a lack of an identifiable link from the Downtown Area to the waterfront and theme. No promotion of the waterfront.	-First Street should be re-named. -Rename Belle River to “Belle River on the Lake”.	

3. The Downtown Area



Along Notre Dame Street is the traditional retail commercial core of Downtown Belle River, stretching from the Belle River Bridge to Eighth Street. The area contains a mix of building types and uses. Buildings range in height from 2 to 3 stories. Uses are predominately office and commercial and many of the buildings have second floor apartments. The street wall consists of buildings typically built to the sidewalks, but the street wall is broken in several instances by street intersections and vacant space.

There is a need for aesthetic and functional improvement of components of major intersections, building facades, boulevards and public spaces.



Existing Crosswalk



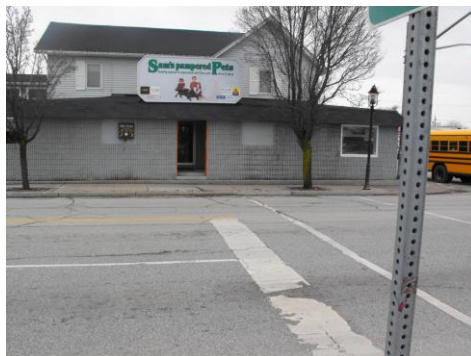
Existing Road (Notre Dame St.)



Existing Sidewalk



Existing Driveway Entrance



Existing Building Façade



Existing Brick Planter



Existing Portable Sign



Existing Building Façade



Lack of Tree Protection



Existing Boulevard Treatment



Existing Brick Pavers



Existing Parking Area

An attractive downtown space is an important variable to making the Downtown Area a destination of choice for residents and business investment. In many small communities in Ontario, with downtowns, they are typically successful, because they have a unique role which is tourism-oriented or personal service-oriented.



Pellessier Street (Windsor)



Kingsville's Main Intersection



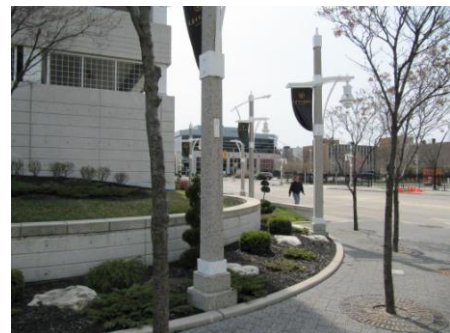
Pellessier Street (Windsor)



Pellessier Street (Windsor)



Pellessier Street (Windsor)



Cesar's (Windsor)

Table 3(a) – The Downtown Area Official Plan Criteria for CIP Project Areas

Official Plan Criteria For CIP Project Areas	Condition Met
Buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and lands of heritage and / or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;	Yes
Brownfield or derelict properties in need of remediation and redevelopment;	Unknown
Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities;	Yes
Deficiencies in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, streetscapes and/or street lighting;	Yes
Poor road access and/or traffic circulation;	Yes
Deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks neighbourhood parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and public social facilities;	Yes
Known or perceived environmental contamination;	Unknown
Inadequate mix of housing types;	Yes
Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design;	Yes
High commercial vacancy rates;	No
Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-ways, building expansions, parking and / or loading facilities;	Yes
Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and / or buildings;	Yes
Any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.	Yes

Table 3 (b) – Downtown Area SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Residential	-Lots of second storey apartments above commercial businesses.	-Improved residential space in downtown area. Poor mix of housing choices. -Some vacant units.		
Businesses	-There is a low business vacancy rate.	-No consistent theme to promote the Downtown and attract shoppers and more opportunities need to be provided for cafes, restaurants and specialty retail stores. -Residents not shopping locally.	-A consistent theme for the Downtown Area would provide a sense of community pride and ownership and attract tourists and local shopping. -Create policies regulating transient vendors.	
Buildings / Structures		-As a result of numerous alterations over time, the buildings have varied exteriors and many of the storefronts are particularly narrow. -Need public buildings to be accessible for the aging and disabled population. -Older buildings would benefit from becoming more energy efficient.	-Improvement of building facades. -A compact 2 to 3 storey main street provides for a pedestrian scale shopping environment and opportunities for live-work relationships.	
Streetscape		-The streetscape particularly along Notre Dame Street looks unappealing and the roadways, sidewalks and several storefronts look neglected. -Beautification “greening” of the Downtown Area is needed. -Streetscaping, landscaping and screening and edging of parking areas. -Need consistent street furniture, bike racks, tree grates, planters, lighting and garbage containers. -Lack of public art and or murals.	-Increasing the attractiveness of the overall area. -Repave the streets and re-construct the sidewalks and the boulevards. -Introduce Public Art or murals.	

Streetscape		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Broken or no accessible sidewalks. -Not enough or no bike racks. 		
Heritage		-Architecturally and historic significant buildings / landscapes are not designated under the Heritage Act.	-Historic Buildings could be designated.	
Signage		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No consistent directional signage and / or commercial signage. Unattractive neon or backlit signage. -Lack of a gateway feature coming into Belle River before the bridge. 	-Sign By-law could be amended with sign standards for the Downtown Areas.	
Transportation / Parking	The existing parking supply is currently adequate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of entrance ways on some commercial buildings is needed and improvement and the delineation of crosswalks is needed. -Accessibility is problem. -No transit service within municipality or to & from Windsor. -Handicap bus does not operate on a daily basis. -No local railway connection for passengers. -No enforcement of parking spaces. -No enforcement of truck parking. -Parking signage is inadequate. -Substandard Road condition on Notre Dame Street. -Traffic speed. -Unsafe crosswalks. -Queuing backups from drive-thru (Tim Horton's on Notre Dame Street). -Width of the Belle River Bridge (too narrow). -Improve signalization. -Role of Notre Dame Street and County Road 22? 	Accessibility is a high priority.	
Amenities, Recreation and Public Spaces		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of public spaces / gathering areas (urban squares or small downtown parks). -Not enough community events. -No Downtown Library. -No information board, signage or maps promoting the downtown amenities. -No promotion of the waterfront. -Lack of hotels and motels for tourists. 	-Establishing a high standard of design in public spaces is a high priority.	
Governance	BIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No Town wide governance other than the BIA. -90 Different volunteer groups. -Council's commitment to the Downtown Core. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Combine BIA / with a Chamber of Commerce. -Partner with Service Clubs. 	-Need to ensure new development is compatible with the

<p>Governance</p>			<p>-Encourage community contributions from Developers.</p>	<p>theme chosen by the BIA promoting the Waterfront Amenities. -Different owners of property buildings in the Downtown Core present challenges for a cohesive partnership.</p>
<p>Other</p>		<p>-There is no clear Town Centre / definable riverfront / waterfront area that visibly connects to a Town Centre. -Some fire hydrants have no Storz connection or steamer for ports. -No promotion of street clean-up.</p>		

4. The Newer Commercial Core

The Newer Commercial Core comprises the area from Eighth Street to Eleventh Street. The Newer Commercial Core has an important relationship with the Downtown Area and is generally healthy and reflective of an evolving commercial street. It has a very healthy stock of buildings that are well occupied. The existing retail mix is modest. The built environment is in good condition and has been responding changes in the market over the years. Future changes to the built environment and character of the area can be expected in the coming years. Community improvement opportunities, such as the promotion of and maintenance of landscaping, edging around parking areas, provision of street furniture, garbage and recyclable containers, sign standards and the delineation of crosswalks are priorities.



Valumart



Commercial Plaza



TD Bank



Beer Store



Shoppers Drug Mart



Charcoal Pit Restaurant

Table 4(a) – The Newer Commercial Core Official Plan Criteria for CIP Project Areas

Official Plan Criteria For CIP Project Areas	Condition Met
Buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and lands of heritage and / or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;	Yes
Brownfield or derelict properties in need of remediation and redevelopment;	Unknown
Non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities;	No
Deficiencies in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, streetscapes and/or street lighting;	Yes
Poor road access and/or traffic circulation;	NO
Deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks neighbourhood parks, indoor/outdoor recreation facilities and public social facilities;	Yes
Known or perceived environmental contamination;	Unknown
Inadequate mix of housing types;	Yes
Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes and urban design;	Yes
High commercial vacancy rates;	No
Shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-ways, building expansions, parking and / or loading facilities;	Yes
Other barriers to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and / or buildings;	Unknown
Any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.	Yes

Table 4 (b) – The Newer Commercial Core SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Residential		-Lack of residential space or units above commercial businesses.		
Businesses	-Very low vacancy rate.	-Residents not shopping locally. -No regulation for transient vendors. -Accessibility to buildings. - Bell not maintaining their property. -Limited opportunity for infill and redevelopment.	-	
Buildings / Structures	-Existing building stock is generally in good condition and is maintained.			
Streetscape	-	-Lack of landscaping, screening and edging around parking areas. -Pedestrian connections and or sidewalks could be improved, including accessibility connections. -Need more bike racks at retail stores. -Lack of street furniture and garbage cans.	-Improve landscaping, screening and edging around parking area. -Provide street furniture and garbage cans.	
Heritage				
Signage		-Lack of consistent sign standards.	-New sign standards.	
Transportation / Parking	.	-Existing crosswalks could be better delineated and made safer. -Traffic speed. -Substandard Road condition on Notre Dame Street. -Sightlines could be improved due to parked cars on the South side of Notre Dame Street in front of Shoppers Drug Mart. -No transit service, handicapped or otherwise.	-Improve the delineation of crosswalks. -Regulate Parking on Notre Dame Street.	
Amenities, Recreation and Public Spaces		-Lack of public amenity / gathering areas.	-Improve opportunities for public amenity / gathering areas.	
Governance				

Other	-Lack of a link to the historical Downtown Area.		-Provide a link to the historical Downtown Area.
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The Eastern Entrance to the Downtown Area comprises the “eastern gateway” to the Downtown Area from the Eleventh Street to the Duck Creek Bridge. This area is outside the limits of the Community Improvement Project Area and consists of an older residential area. Residential buildings and their properties in this area are well maintained and the streetscape is attractive. Although this area is outside the limits of the Community Improvement Project Area any theme for the Community Improvement

Project Area should be carried through this area to the Duck Creek Bridge. The “eastern gateway” would benefit from the installation of signage and a gateway feature similar to the signage and gateway feature that maybe proposed for the western gateway near Rourke Line or the Belle River Bridge.

4.0 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

4.1 Goals and Objectives

The principal goal of this Community Improvement Plan is to encourage property owners and business owners to improve properties through municipal and financial incentives or other means to build upon the character of the Belle River Business Improvement Area and to encourage growth and development of the Area as a means to attract visitors and investment.

Specific objectives of this Community Improvement Plan are:

- To improve the aesthetics of the existing building inventory;
- To preserve the heritage features in the area;

- To encourage investment in the area that improves the economic climate and increases its importance as a destination for residents and visitors;
- To encourage a range / mix of housing types;
- To promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the Downtown area, Belle River Harbour Area and the County Road 22 Area;
- Encourage the redevelopment of vacant mixed use / commercial sites on County Road 22 compatible with surrounding land uses;
- Maintain and improve access to the Marina and Lakefront park from the Downtown Area (Notre Dame Street);
- Improve accessibility;
- Promotion of tourism;
- To provide a “tool or mechanism” for the Municipality to become an active participant in providing technical support, municipal incentives and financial incentives in order to encourage private sector investment in the BIA area;
- Promote redevelopment and infill, mixed use and low to medium density development in suitable locations along County Road 22 and the Downtown Area and;
- Improve social, environmental and community conditions in the BIA area.

4.2 Mapping

The Community Improvement Project Area (Appendix 'A') shows the boundaries of the Belle River Business Improvement Area. Revisions to the CIP Area will require an amendment to the Community Improvement Plan.

4.3 Community Improvement Programs

The Belle River Business Improvement Area Community Improvement Plan applies to four areas, each with a unique set of revitalization challenges. The primary purpose of the plan is to stimulate investment and improve the streetscape and building stock. In order to implement the goals and objectives of the CIP, the Town is offering the following municipal and financial incentives.

4.3.1 Municipal Improvement Activities

The CIP recognizes the need for the Municipality to take the lead in the community and provide other municipal programs that will assist in community improvement in the BIA area. Therefore, the CIP outlines a number of municipally led initiatives that will enable the Town to provide leadership and support to enhance viability of the CIP area.

4.3.1.1 Official Plan and Zoning Review

The Waterfront District has a prominent tourist draw the the CIP area, but as mentioned it is not apparent that the draw of this area for the use of the waterfront is leverage to bring tourist into the Downtown. Further, there needs to be a strong “visual link” with the Notre Dame Street’s commercial core. Belle River and the waterfront area is obstructed by existing buildings. It is being recommended that the Town undertake a review of it’s Official Plan policies and zoning on First Street in order to promote more commercial development and to improve the link between the waterfront area and Notre Dame Street and to provide needed recreation amenities for residents and visitors utilizing the waterfront.

The Town may consider some non-traditional zoning techniques, such as height and density bonusing, which is

a process to allow buildings to exceed the height and density of development otherwise permitted by the zoning by-law, in exchange for community benefits, such as public art, a bus shelter etc.).

4.3.1.2 New Comprehensive Zoning By-law

The Town of Lakeshore has developed a New Comprehensive Zoning By-law for the entire Town. It has been prepared to ensure that the regulations that govern building and development in the Town are as up-to-date as possible. It provides one comprehensive set of zoning provisions for the entire Municipality and helps the Town to ensure development is occurring in an appropriate manner, as well as providing a consistent approach to zoning issues throughout the Town.

4.3.1.3 County Road 22 Urban Design Guidelines

The Town completed design guidelines for the County Road 22 corridor in conjunction with a new comprehensive zoning by-law. This urban design framework when implemented by the Town will direct development within the corridor that is “in keeping” with the Town’s vision for County Road 22. The guidelines will identify the Town’s intent with respect to land use, built form, streetscape, parking, landscaping and other urban design matters which will be addressed through the preparation and review of development applications.

4.3.1.4 Façade Improvement / Urban Design Guidelines

The Town shall consider preparing façade improvement guidelines and urban design guidelines for Notre Dame Street and First Street. Currently, Notre Dame Street and First Street contain a mix of building types and uses.

4.3.1.5 Signage Improvements

The Town shall undertake a review of the Sign By-law to ensure it is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Community Improvement Plan.

4.3.1.6 Capital Improvement Projects

The Community Improvement Plan identified a number of streetscaping improvements, specifically for Notre Dame Street, First Street and South Street (See Appendix 'E') in order to improve the visual quality of the area, to provide amenities favorable to a pleasing pedestrian environment, to attract new investment and retain existing businesses. These improvements would be undertaken by the Town in conjunction with the County of Essex's Notre Dame Street reconstruction project.

4.3.1.7 Sidewalk Cafes

The Town shall develop a streamlined process for the approval of sidewalk cafes within the public right-of-way. An application procedure, terms of use and sidewalk café design principles and maintenance should be developed and outlined in a handbook for applicants. Council shall adopt a *Sidewalk Café Handbook* similar to the one developed by the City of Windsor. The applications would be reviewed and processed through the Town's Engineering and Infrastructure Services Department. The applicant would be required to enter into an agreement with the Town and provide third party liability insurance, pay an annual fee, submit plans and elevation drawings, enter into an encroachment agreement for year round cafes and any other permits deemed appropriate.

4.3.1.8 Partnership Programs / Joint Venture Programs

The Town shall partner with the BIA, businesses, community groups and other agencies to obtain funding for community improvement projects.

4.3.1.9 County of Essex

The Town of Lakeshore shall partner with the County of Essex to participate in community improvement projects.

4.3.1.10 Downtown Guide

The Town shall develop a “Downtown and Waterfront Guide” with assistance from local businesses, the BIA and community groups. The guide will include maps of the downtown and waterfront area and will also including other amenities and points of interest, such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, motels, gift shops, museums, library, sports stores, clothing stores, events, heritage and other tourist information.

4.3.1.11 Marketing Strategy

The Town shall partner with the BIA, community groups and the public and other agencies to develop a marketing strategy to market the downtown and waterfront area to promote business investment and tourism.

4.3.1.12 Municipal Land Acquisition

Where the existing road network is insufficient or where there is opportunities to develop parks or open spaces (See Appendix ‘E’) the municipality shall undertake municipal land acquisition in accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

4.3.1.13 Heritage Property Tax Relief Program (Independent Program)

Owners of a property designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* and subject to a heritage conservation easement agreement may be eligible to receive tax relief for municipal and school purposes levied on their eligible heritage property. The Heritage Tax Relief Program is subject to the conditions set out in an enacting by-law passed by the Town. The Town has not yet enacted a Heritage Property Tax Relief Program.

4.3.2 Financial Incentive Programs

In order to implement the Community Improvement Plan, the Town of Lakeshore shall provide the following incentives to private property owners and business owners within the Community Improvement Plan Project Area:

4.3.2.1 General Eligibility Requirements

The property must be within the Community Improvement Project Area as identified in Appendix A to the Belle River Business Improvement Area Community Improvement Plan;

The CIP and its financial incentive programs do not apply to single detached dwellings;

Applicant(s) must be the owner(s) of the property, or an agent / tenant(s) to whom the owner(s) has provided written authorization for the application(s). Assistance is available for any building or contiguous group of buildings held in one ownership;

All proposals must meet the goals and objectives of the Community Improvement Plan;

Applications must be submitted prior to commencement of the project;

Eligible costs are specified in Section 28 (7.1) of the *Planning Act*, and 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) states that the total of the grants and loans that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the Community Improvement project with respect to those lands and buildings. Eligible Applicants can apply for one, more or all the incentive programs, but no two programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost;

A property owner who is in arrears of property tax or any other Municipal financial obligation is not eligible to participate in a program approved by Council. Outstanding work orders, and or orders or requests to comply must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant or tax assistance;

Proposed projects will conform to County and Municipal policies, Municipal by-laws, provisions, standards and guidelines and will be subject to review and issuance of all necessary planning and development approvals and building permits;

The proposed exterior design of buildings or signage may be subject to review by a control architect;

Completed projects must be consistent with the approved project description submitted by the Applicant;

The project must conform to the Town's Official Plan;

An Applicant may be required to enter into a Financial Incentives Program Agreement with the Town, which will specify the terms, duration, default and any other provisions of the incentive program among other matters. Where the agreement is between a tenant(s) and the Town, the property owner(s) must consent to the agreement;

Expansion, enlargement or improvements of existing legal non-conforming uses shall not be eligible. However, where improvements are proposed to bring uses into closer conformity with the intent of the Town of Lakeshore Official Plan and Town of Lakeshore Zoning By-law or Building Code, such improvements maybe considered for a grant;

Temporary uses, such as sales offices, scaffolding or other non-permanent structures such as tents; temporary storage areas; temporary parking lots, or properties zoned temporary use provisions of Section 39 of the *Planning Act* shall not be eligible;

Assistance granted under any of the financial incentives to a particular property is not transferable to any other property;

If a building, erected or improved with a program grant is demolished prior to the expiry of the grant period, the grant is forfeited and re-payment of the grant may be required over a period of time to be determined by Financial Services;

Properties shall not have any outstanding legal claims or liens that may affect the title of the land;

Grants will be made upon successful completion of the approved work and documentation of costs for the works;

If a property is sold in whole or part before the original grant period lapses, the owner must apply to assign the remaining grant payment under the

original agreement with the Town to the new owner, subject to Council's approval;

The Town reserves the right at any time to discontinue the program; however, participants in the program prior to its closing will continue to receive grants as approved for their property until the conclusion of their project;

All grants are subject to the availability of funding;

Costs incurred prior to the written approval of the Town will be deemed ineligible and will not be reimbursed;

Any significant changes in design or scope of the project must be approved by the Town. The Town reserves the right to decrease the total of the monies associated with the financial incentives if the scope of the work changes and actual costs differ from estimated costs;

The financial incentives will commence after the date of approval of the Community Improvement Plan, subject to funding in the Community Improvement (CIP) account.

4.3.2.2 Development Charges Grant Back Program

Details

The Development Charges Grant Back Program shall consist of a grant program, whereby registered property owners / or assignees will be eligible to receive a grant for a portion or all of the development charges owing for certain classes of development when developing underutilized sites and redevelopment on commercial and mixed use properties in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core as a means to encourage investment through additional commercial space and or residential units above commercial units.

Grant Amount is:

<u>Sliding Scale</u>	<u>Refund</u>	<u>Maximum</u>
Up to \$5,000 fee	100%	\$5,000
\$5,001 - \$10,000 fee	\$5,000 plus 75% of amount over \$5,000	8,750
\$10,001 - \$25,000 fee	\$8,750 plus 25% of amount over \$10,000	12,500

Eligible Fee:

Development Charge

Eligible Criteria

Applicants must pay for all development charges prior to undertaking the approved work;

A grant back of development charges will be made after successful completion of work, to the satisfaction of the Town;

Grant backs can be made to property owners or an agent authorized by the owner undertaking work consistent with the goals of the Community Improvement Plan, when developing underutilized sites and redevelopment on commercial and mixed use properties in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core as a means to encourage investment through additional commercial space and or residential units above commercial units.

4.3.2.3 Planning Application and Permit Fee Grant Back Program

Details

Where a property owner or authorized agent is undertaking improvements to lands and buildings in the Community Improvement Project Area, the Town shall grant back 50% of the normal application fees for approved projects in accordance with the provisions of Section 69 of the *Planning Act* and the Town of Lakeshore *Tariff of*

Fees By-law. In the case of building permits, the property owner / agent will be granted back up to 50%, to a maximum of \$1000 of the fee.

Grant Amount is:

50% of planning application fees;
50% of building fees, up to a maximum of \$1,000.

Eligible Costs: under this program applies to the fees for any of the following approvals:

- Site Plan Application
- Zoning By-law Amendment
- Minor Variance
- Consents
- Building Permit (including occupancy permits)
- Demolition Permit
- Sign Permit

The fees associated with applications that are not supported by staff, are not eligible costs under this Program.

Eligible Criteria

Grant backs can be made to property owners or an agent authorized by the owner undertaking work consistent with the goals of the Community Improvement Plan, including existing Commercial and Mixed Use buildings / properties (residential units above a commercial use / commercial) and parking lots, where the redevelopment or rehabilitation project results in Commercial or Mixed Use improvements in the Community Improvement Project Area;

The Town will request payment of fees at the time of application stage. Upon final inspection of the completed and occupied project, fees collected will be granted back to the property owner(s) / agent;

This program does not apply to any required performance securities to be posted by the

proponent, required professional studies, consultant or legal expenses required or to expenses incurred by the applicant because of an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board.

4.3.2.4 Cash-in-lieu of Parkland or Parkland Dedication Exemption Program

Details

If cash-in-lieu of parkland is being employed, 25% (to a maximum of \$5,000) of the cash equivalent paid by the owner is granted back by means of a grant, following successful completion of approved work, where land is being redeveloped for Commercial purposes in the Community Improvement Project Area.

Eligible Criteria

Assistance can be made to property owners or agents authorized by the property owner, undertaking works consistent with the goals of the Community Improvement Plan, for land that is being redeveloped for Commercial purposes in the Community Improvement Project Area.

4.3.2.5 Exemption from Parking Requirement Program

Details

The Town shall provide assistance in the form of an exemption from or reduction in the parking requirements (depending on the size of the building) established within the Zoning By-law where there are improvements, and or a change in use to an existing Commercial building in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core in accordance with Schedule "C" of the Town of Lakeshore Zoning By-law;

New Commercial buildings, additions to existing Commercial buildings and changes in use of a Commercial building will be exempt from the

parking requirements to a maximum floor space of 149 square metres of newly constructed gross floor area.

Eligible Criteria

Assistance will be in the form of an exemption from or reduction in the parking requirements (depending on the size of the building) established in the Zoning By-law, where there are New Commercial buildings, additions to existing Commercial buildings and changes in use of a Commercial building in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core in accordance with Schedule "C" of the Town of Lakeshore Zoning By-law;

Section 40 of the *Planning Act* provides municipalities the opportunity to accept cash-in-lieu of parking via agreements with a proponent where required parking cannot be accommodated for the given project. The cash-in-lieu payment is negotiated between the Town and the Owner. Typically, this payment is based on each of the total number of parking spaces being reduced. A nominal fee will be considered for the necessary reduction; however, in order to comply with the provisions of the *Planning Act*; an agreement between the parties is required;

Residential uses will not be permitted to develop on the basis of cash-in-lieu of parking.

4.3.2.6 Property Tax Increment Grant Program

Tax Increment: *The increase in taxes, or tax increment, is calculated by subtracting the municipal portion of property taxes before reassessment from the municipal portion of property taxes after reassessment. A municipality may provide any proportion of the increment for any length of time their Council deems is appropriate. The tax increment does not include any increase/decrease in municipal taxes due to a*

general tax rate increase/decrease, or a change in assessment for any other reason.

Details

The Town shall offer a grant to property owners who undertake major improvements, such as redevelopment, construction, re-construction and rehabilitation and / or the improvement of energy efficiency of Commercial or Mixed Use (residential units above a Commercial use) buildings or properties within the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core which causes an increase in municipal property tax. The incentive for property taxes (municipal share only) is based on the increase in the assessed value of the property as a result of the improvement. At the current tax rate, the municipal tax on \$100,000 is approximately \$575. Unless a building is demolished and rebuilt, the financial incentive is expected to be under \$2,000. In the event that a demolition and rebuild occurs and applies under this program, a cap will be set at \$3,500 for the first year and decrease by 10% thereafter for the remaining 9 years;

The grant to the property owner is the municipal portion of the tax rate multiplied by the increase in assessed value immediately after the improvements. The change in assessed value is determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. This grant is payable over 10 years with the first year payment equal to 100% of this amount, the second year payment equal to 90% of this amount until the tenth and final year payment equal to 10% of this amount. The difference in municipal taxes determined in year one is the base for which the remaining nine year grant will be calculated.

Eligible Criteria

Eligible Projects Will Include: the substantial redevelopment, construction, re-construction and

rehabilitation and / or the improvement of energy efficiency of Commercial or Mixed Use (residential units above a Commercial use) buildings or properties within the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core where it is anticipated that an increase in property taxes will result. Whether or not a project is considered substantial, will be determined at the sole discretion of the Municipality;

The program will provide a grant for a portion of the taxes resulting from increased assessment for development or redevelopment initiatives that further the objectives of this plan;

The municipal portion of the tax increment as a result of development or redevelopment will be determined based on the assessment increase information provided by the MPAC and grants will be funded after all property taxes for the year of the grant are paid;

The Applicant shall be the registered owner of the property;

This incentive cannot be used in conjunction with the façade improvement grant;

Assistance is available for any building or contiguous group of buildings held in one ownership;

The program shall not apply to condominium developments;

The tax grant will be in a form of a grant pursuant to subsection 28(7) & (8) of the *Planning Act RSO 1990*;

If the ownership of the property changes during the 10 year period, the relief is immediately cancelled. The Town may deem it appropriate to enter into an agreement with the new owner for continuation of the program;

For year 1, after the tax bill resulting from the increased assessment has been paid, payment will be made within 30 days of the written request by the property owner. For subsequent years, if the property is not in arrears at December 31 and upon written request of the owner, payment will be made by January 31 of the following year. If the property is in arrears at December 31, the owner will be in default and will not be eligible for the grant for that year;

Properties participating in this program are subject to penalty / interest charges if payments are not made on or before the due dates.

4.3.2.7 Façade Improvement Program

Details

A grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 50% of the renovation costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 shall be available to assist Commercial / Mixed Use (residential units above a commercial use) building owners and or assignees to improve a building façade or façade signs.

Façade: A façade is the face of a building, usually the front, which has been designed with a particular style and incorporates design elements.

Eligible Costs Include:

Professional fees (i.e. licensed contractors, architects, designers, engineers etc.) are eligible; and installation and materials.

Eligible Criteria

Building improvements (façade and façade signage) to existing Commercial and Mixed Use (residential

units above a commercial use) buildings may be eligible in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core.

Façade improvements Include: siding, brick and stone masonry, exterior woodwork, architectural metals, windows, doors, exterior lighting for building and signage, canopy / awnings, paint site preparation, interior window display areas, weatherproofing, energy efficiency upgrades and any other exterior improvements that may bring the building up to code and improve the aesthetics of the façade or signage;

This component of the program, may operate in a staged fashion, based on the timing of the request for improvements, and may be considered in advance of the completion of the Façade Improvement Guidelines / Urban Design Guidelines, subject to:

The owner/operator hiring its own architect or designer to the satisfaction of the Community Improvement Committee and the plans being reviewed and approved by the Committee.

4.3.2.8 Accessibility Program

Details

A grant is provided that is equivalent to up to 75% of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$1,500 shall be available to improve accessibility to Commercial and Mixed Use buildings may be eligible in the Community Improvement Project Area.

Eligible Costs Include:

Professional fees (i.e. licensed contractors, architects, designers, engineers etc.) are eligible; and installation and materials.

Eligible Criteria

Removal of barriers to access for people with disabilities for Commercial or Mixed use buildings in the Community Improvement Project Area;

Improvements for barrier-free accessibility upgrades that meet Provincial guidelines for accessibility;

Accessibility Improvements Include: automatic doors, handle replacement, ramps and associated landscaping immediately surrounding the ramp, clear external signage, step free access, slip resistant access, level access improvements, clear path of travel / widening of aisles and doors, handrails, lighting and other similar accessibility improvements.

4.3.2.9 Mural / Public Art Program

Details

A grant up to a maximum of \$1,000. The program provides funding for murals and public art on both public and private properties to promote community spirit and vibrancy in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core, where such art can be enjoyed by the public. Encourages artists from diverse backgrounds and range of experience to apply.

Eligible Costs Include:

Professional fees (i.e. contractor or designer /artist), materials, installation; and lighting and landscaping that highlights the public art.

Eligible Criteria

Commercial or Mixed Use buildings / properties or public spaces in the downtown area, waterfront district and newer commercial core are eligible;

The following types of art are considered eligible for a grant under this program:

- murals;
- sculptures;
- paintings;
- interactive art pieces and displays; and
- any other art piece or display as approved by the Community Improvement Committee.

Eligible Projects are to include: promotion of a “Waterfront Theme”;

Proposals must include a “sketch” indicating the type of art work, theme, size, colours, materials and location (including dimensions of proposal).

4.3.2.10 Application Process

The following provides direction to the applicant regarding the submission, evaluation and approval of a Financial Incentive Program Application(s):

Step 1 – Application Submission

Applicants are required to have a pre-application consultation meeting with Planning Services staff in order to determine program eligibility;

Applicants submit completed application(s) including required supporting documentation;

Planning staff screen the application to ensure it meets eligibility criteria;

Applicants will be notified if their submission is incomplete;

There is no application fee.

Step 2 – Application Review & Evaluation

A Community Improvement Committee (i.e. Staff from Planning, Building, Finance and the Belle River BIA) reviews and evaluates applications and supporting documentation against eligibility requirements;

Planning, Fire and Building staff will perform an initial site visit and inspection of the building / property. Any deficiencies will be required to be addressed;

The Heritage Advisory Committee and the Accessibility Committee may also review the application and provide comments to staff if deemed necessary;

The Community Improvement Committee will make a recommendation regarding the application.

Step 3 – Grant Approval

Should the application be approved, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement maybe required, which will outline the terms, duration, default and any other provisions of the incentive program;

Property owner(s) / authorized agent(s) sign the agreement.

Step 4 – Payment

Owner(s) / agent(s) provides proof that the project is complete and request payment (i.e. invoices / proof of payment of contractors, photos, confirmation from the Town's Building Department etc.);

The Municipality reserves the right to inspect the property and or audit final costs at the owner's expense;

Should the Applicant default any of the requirements of the Financial Incentive Program or the Municipality, approved assistance maybe withheld for a period of time as determined by the Municipality, canceled or the applicant maybe required to repay assistance to the Town;

Applicant(s) have 6 months to start the project and 1 year to complete the approved project from the date of the Notice of Approval. Extensions will be considered on a case by case basis. An application maybe canceled if work does not commence within the 6 month period or if the project is not completed within 1 year, in accordance with the Financial Incentive Program Agreement;

Payment will be issued as specified in the agreement with the Municipality by Financial Services.

4.3.2.11 Application Requirements

Applications for any of the Financial Incentive Programs must include the following:

1. A completed application(s) form;
2. Supporting documentation as identified in the pre-application meeting or by the Community Improvement Committee, such as:

Project Description (i.e. proposal, conceptual elevation plan, materials / colours of the street oriented facade, exterior lighting, other drawings and reports / studies). A Business Plan may be required);

Current Assessment Information;

Copy of Deed;

Photograph(s) of the existing building / property;

Three reliable cost estimates for eligible work from qualified contractors (i.e. must be acceptable to the Community Improvement Committee) and any other requirements;

A letter from the Town's Finance Department is required to ensure the property is up to date and in

good standing with respect to Municipal financial obligations.

Any additional forms of funding must be identified at the time of the application.

4.4 Implementation

These programs may apply, at the discretion of Council, to the whole or to part of the community improvement project area. The programs established under this Plan will be implemented over ten years, but Council may extend the program where Council deems it appropriate. It is intended that the Plan be implemented on July 22, 2013 and end July 22, 2023 except where Council extends the implementation of the Plan.

Nothing in this Plan shall limit the right of the Town of Lakeshore and its Council to undertake any other initiatives provided for under the Town's Official Plan to facilitate or achieve improvements to the CIP Area.

Council will determine during preparation of its annual budget the maximum contribution to be made available to the various programs under this Community Improvement Plan for the current year. The funding available on an annual basis will not require an amendment to this Plan unless funding is proposed to apply to new programs. Any unspent funds at year-end may be placed in reserves to be used in subsequent years.

4.5 Amendments

Amendments to this Community Improvement Plan will be required for:

- The addition of new municipal assistance programs involving grants, loans, tax assistance or land;
- A change in the eligibility criteria;
- An increase to a financial incentive to be offered within a municipal CIP program; and
- A change or expansion in the geographic area to which financial or land programs outlined in the CIP apply.

An amendment to the CIP would not normally be required if a municipality is cancelling or discontinuing a program, or if funding to a program is decreased.

4.6 Monitoring

Council will conduct periodic review of the programs being implemented under this Community Improvement Plan to determine their effectiveness. At that time Council may make changes to any of the programs offered in this Plan. Council shall ensure the programs operate in accordance with Provincial legislation and or policy.

4.7 Appendix E (Streetscape Plan – Downtown Core)

One of the primary objectives of the CIP is to transform the downtown core into an attractive and lively pedestrian-oriented urban core that provides a wide range of shopping, recreation, employment and entertainment opportunities. Through architecture, public art and common physical elements, the CIP aims to unify the large and diverse area, create a distinct character, foster a greater sense of community identity, and promote reinvestment. In light of these goals, a Streetscape Plan for the area has been prepared to realize the vision of the CIP. The Town, in consultation with the public, the BIA and property owners, initiated the Streetscape Plan to formulate a strategy that will unify the downtown core into a vibrant, healthy, pedestrian friendly environment. The Plan will provide detailed guidance for public and private investments in the downtown core.