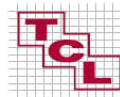




MUNICIPALITY OF
BLUEWATER

Draft
Community Improvement Plan
October 2008



Tunnock Consulting Ltd.

1 Sherbrooke St E, Suite 302
Perth, Ontario K7H 1A1

Phone: (613) 326-0040
Toll Free: (800) 924-0128
Fax: (613) 326-0030

www.tunnockconsulting.ca
info@tunnockconsulting.ca

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Municipality of Bluewater Community Improvement Plan

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COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Community improvement is a tool used by municipalities to rehabilitate and revitalize targeted areas such as specific properties, streets, neighbourhoods and entire communities. Improvements can be made to municipal infrastructure such as roads, water and sewer, to downtowns, to parks and recreation facilities and to rehabilitating abandoned industrial and commercial sites for new uses. Municipalities can encourage community improvement through incentive-based programs such as loans and grants or property assistance to help with the costs of projects such as commercial building façade improvements, structural improvements to buildings, property tax assistance for remediation or downtown core revitalization. Successful community improvement programs often include both public and private investments.

The Legislative Context

Community improvement activities are intended to achieve positive change to the existing physical landscape, either through municipally driven or incentive-based programs.

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* and sections 106 and 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provide the legislative basis for community improvement planning.

a) Section 28 of the Planning Act

The powers available to municipalities for community improvement purposes include:

- designating by by-law a specific property, area or entire community as a community improvement project area where the municipality's official plan contains community improvement provisions (ss. 28(2))

- acquiring, holding, clearing, grading or otherwise preparing land for community improvement (ss. 28(3))
- constructing, repairing, rehabilitating or improving buildings on municipal land (clause 28(6)(a))
- selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of municipal land (clause 28(6)(b))
- providing grants or loans to owners, tenants and their assignees (ss. 28(7))
- providing property tax assistance for environmental remediation purposes (ss. 28(7.1) and s. 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*)

b) Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*

To encourage the clean-up of contaminated lands, municipalities may provide property tax assistance to eligible properties to offset all or a portion of remediation costs. Municipalities may cancel or defer the municipal portion of property taxes on eligible properties and upon application to, and with the approval of the Ministry of Finance, the province may match the municipal tax treatment with the education portion of the property tax through its *Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program* (BFTIP).

c) Section 106 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*

Section 106 is also known as the “prohibition against bonusing” rule. Municipalities are prohibited from directly or indirectly assisting any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprises through the granting of bonuses. Prohibited actions include:

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

Despite this prohibition, and with the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, exceptions are made when exercising community improvement planning powers that relate to land under subsection 28(6), grants or loans under subsections 28(7) and (7.1), and property tax

assistance under subsection 28(7.1) of the *Planning Act* and section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

Heritage Property Relief Program

To encourage good stewardship, maintenance and conservation of locally designated heritage properties, municipalities may pass a by-law to establish a local *Heritage Property Tax Relief* (HPTR) program to provide tax relief (10 to 40 per cent) to owners of eligible heritage properties, subject to an agreement to protect the heritage features of their property. The province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. Municipalities that adopt the HPTR program contribute to the program by funding their portion of the tax relief.

Official Plan

The Municipality of Bluewater has an approved Official Plan whose purposes include:

- To create a planning environment that addresses the needs and aspirations of the community
- Builds a vision for the future of the Municipality which is agreed upon generally by the community and which the community has an active role in implementing
- To create a forum for community dialogue in the design, implementation and review of the Plan
- To develop a land use planning program that maximizes compatibility and minimizes conflict between different land uses
- Ensures that future development and decisions in the municipality are in keeping with the vision, goals and policies of the Plan; and
- Provides for capital works programs and implementation of Provincial legislation.

A component of the Plan's vision and policies is to provide for community improvement. Community improvement identifies any deficiencies in the Municipality relating to hard and soft services and seeks means to improvement (Section 4.2). Community improvement projects that enhance the economic and social well being of the community are encouraged. Bluewater will designate, by by-law, the Village of Hensall as a Community

Improvement Project Area in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act (Section 4.4 (3.)).

Section 9.13 – Property Standards states that the Municipality may have a property standards by-law to ensure a high standard of development, maintenance, improvement and occupancy of property.

Finally, the Plan sets out the policy basis for development in the village of Hensall: Hensall is located at the junction of Highway 4 and County Road 84. The village provides a focal point for residential, commercial and service functions and has a thriving industrial base. There is adequate land designated for residential and new development which should take place through infilling or by registered plan of subdivision on full Municipal services.

Community Needs

Hensall has a population of approximately 1,200 and a housing stock of just under 500 dwellings, of which 75% are singles and approximately 60% were built prior to 1960. The village has both municipal water and sewer services (sanitary and storm) and many community facilities including a school, arena, fire station and library. Recent improvements include the connection to the Lake Huron water supply system (September 2008).

An assessment of community needs was undertaken through consultation with Municipal personnel and two surveys. A survey distributed to residents of the community met with an enthusiastic response. The 75 respondents represent 15% of the householders and can be considered statistically reliable. A second survey was distributed to the business community of which there were 10 respondents. The survey results portrayed a high sense of community pride in the appearance or image of the community and provided a source of many excellent suggestions on needed improvements. Both the residential and the commercial survey contained similar sentiments with respect to the needs and image of the community.

The following highlights the results of the two surveys:

1. Community Attributes

- 46.6% of residents enjoy the quiet small town atmosphere of Hensall.
- 34.6% feel the village is neighbourly and a great place for families and children.
- 22.6% feel that Hensall is a very safe community.
- Other attributes cited include the quality of water and sewer services (18.6%); Hensall's small size (13.3%); its well maintained streets, affordable living, access to parks and employment, location and quality of the school, a place to retire, a Victorian image, the Library Bells and spring fair.
- 48.5% of residents feel that the branding of Hensall as the White Bean Capital of Canada was very important while a further 25.7% indicated the branding was moderately important.
- Businesses echoed the sentiments of Hensall as an affordable community with a friendly atmosphere and noted as well the affiliation and benefits with the farm community, its centrality and proximity to the customer base.

Hensall may be characterized as a small, quiet and safe community with well established community facilities and services for families and seniors alike. Hensall also has a close and important affiliation to the agricultural community as reflected in its branding as the White Bean Capital of Canada.

2. Improvements

Communities both change and gentrify over time. Community improvement provides an opportunity to assess the changes that are taking place and the ongoing needs for improvements to infrastructure, community facilities and the building stock. **Table 1** summarizes the sentiments of homeowners while **Table 2** sets out the feelings of the business sector. Property standards was overwhelmingly identified as a very important improvement. Over 80% of homeowners and 90% of businesses cited a very important need to improve the appearance of the downtown while a further 60.6% of residents expressed the need for property maintenance (i.e.

removal of junk, derelict vehicles, noxious weed control, cutting lawns and maintaining buildings). Other very important improvements cited by residents (**Table 1**) included:

- Sidewalks (46.3%)
- Residential streets (49.2%)
- Water quality (49.2%)
- Landscaping in the downtown 46.9%
- Streetlighting (28.5%)
- Installation of waste receptacles in the downtown (48.4%)
- Shade trees in residential areas (26.8%)

The concern for water quality may be misplaced in the advent of connection to the new system.

Table 1 – Suggested Improvements - Homeowners

		Improvement Not Required	Improvement Important	Improvement Very Important	No Opinion
	Suggested Improvements				
1	a. Downtown Appearance	4	10	57	
2	b. Condition of downtown streets	12	18	38	1
3	c. Condition of residential streets	13	22	34	
4	d. Condition of residential sidewalks	14	23	32	1
5	e. Streetlighting	31	19	20	1
6	f. Quality of drinking water	21	13	33	2
7	g. Number of Parks	25	27	14	4
8	h. Proximity of park to residence	39	18	2	6
9	i. Variety of recreational facilities	28	20	12	8
10	j. Shade trees in residential areas	29	20	18	3
11	k. Maintenance of residences	9	17	40	3
12	l. Waste receptacles downtown	16	17	31	5
13	m. Benches downtown	28	23	13	3
14	n. Landscaping downtown	13	22	31	3

Table 2 – Suggested Improvements - Businesses

	Improvement not required	Improvement important	Improvement very important	No Opinion
Suggested Improvements				
a. Condition of commercial buildings		2	7	1
b. Condition of roads	1	3	4	1
c. Condition of sidewalks		6	2	1
d. Condition of sewers	2	3	3	1
e. Condition of water	4	2	4	1
f. Condition of stormwater facilities	2	1	6	1
g. General appearance of the downtown			9	1
h. Streetlighting	1	2	2	1
i. Façades of commercial buildings		1	5	1
j. Commercial signs	3	4	1	1
k. Waste receptacles (location, number)	2	6		1
l. Benches (location, number)		4	2	2
m. Landscaping (trees, green spaces)		3	5	1
n. Condition of upper floor residential uses		1	6	1
o. Condition of adjacent residential bldgs		4	3	1

The surveys were designed to corroborate the information provided on improvements by offering residents and businesses an opportunity to outline more specifically the types of improvements requested. **Table 3** sets out a detailed list of the improvements requested by property owners in Hensall. The improvements have been grouped by subject heading in Column 1. Column 2 sets out the number of respondents who suggested the improvement(s). Numbers in () in the first column indicate the number of respondents requesting a particular type of improvement i.e. six (6) people identified weed control in paver stones as a concern.

The 'poor' image of the downtown was well articulated with many residents expressing the need for:

- Demolition of the former funeral home and Mike's Stop and Go
- Refurbishing the commercial façades
- Repairing sidewalks (notably near the United Church)
- Landscaping and providing a parkette

- Restricting street level uses to commercial uses (i.e. apartments should only be permitted in the upper levels of buildings)
- Providing benches and waste receptacles
- Encouraging new business development and occupancy of vacant store fronts. The need for a grocery and hardware stores were of particular concern.
- The hotel was singled out for poor maintenance, while the rear yards of businesses which face onto residential properties were seen to need a general clean up

Outside of the downtown specific improvements were identified. For example, for sidewalks, an extension to the sidewalk leading to arena, along Queen Street West and on the London Road are seen as needed as well as depressing sidewalks at street corners to facilitate access by disabled persons. Road improvements included the repair or repaving of Queen, York, Richmond North and Queen Street East as well as others. Improvements to streetlighting were requested for King Street and County Road 4, County Road 4 (London Road) and at Lorne and Queen Streets.

Suggestion for improvements to community facilities included:

- Improving the appearance of the community park through a facelift to the storage building, removing broken concrete slabs, installing park benches and fencing to prevent exposure to poison ivy
- Installing a splash pool, tennis courts, volleyball courts, a skateboard and a bike path
- Improving the parking lot and landscaping at the arena
- Adding an information kiosk at the entrance to the community to assist visitors and residents

Other physical types of improvements suggested include:

- Maintaining flower beds (location unspecified)
- Installing 'Children-at-Play' signs at Lorne and Richmond
- Adding and/or improving 'green
- Space along the rail corridor
- Installing a compost site
- Providing community gardens for residents interested in growing vegetables
- Installing 'No Engine Brakes' signs

- Installing public art
- Reviving the band shell project
- Providing better stop signs (no details provided)

Non-physical suggested improvements included:

- Better by-law enforcement for zoning infractions and the cat by-law
- Providing for more community events to stimulate community pride and involvement
- Controlling noise emissions from adjacent factories and Ice Cultures
- Profiling Ice Cultures as a tourist attraction

One of the pervasive themes of the survey was concern over the general level of maintenance of community infrastructure. Of the respondents, 22.6 % indicated a lack of regular and timely maintenance by the Municipality for such items as sidewalk sweeping, cleaning gutters and sewers, street banners, ploughing sidewalks, repairing broken sidewalks, weed control and repairs to drainage. Some residents felt that Hensall received less attention than other parts of the municipality in the maintenance of infrastructure.

Table 3 – Detailed Improvements

Hensall – Community Improvement Survey – 75 Respondents	
Improvements Identified	# Respondents
Property Standards: enforce standards for residences and buildings on King Street. Remove derelict cars	31
Downtown (King Street): improve appearance through: more frequent sweeping of sidewalks, pick up debris, clean cenotaph, improve landscaping, install parkette downtown with shade trees, improve appearance of store front façades (10)	30
Demolitions: old funeral home and convenience store (Mike’s Stop & Go)	17
General Maintenance: improve general maintenance of streets: clean gutters & sewers, storm drains, repair broken sidewalks (Main St near United Church (3), weed control in interlocking pavers (6)	17
Business development: need a grocery store, hardware store and other new businesses	11
Street Paving and Repair: resurface Queen Street (2), Albert (2), York, Richmond North, pave remainder of Brock, repair road at west end where water pipe line was installed, Nelson & Mill, repair drainage on Richmond Street North & Queen East, repair Main Street at train tracks	8
Recreational Facilities: install pool/splash park (4), install	8

indoor tennis courts, volleyball courts, install skateboard park/bike path for youth, provide more activities for youth	
Streetlighting: back streets need more street lights, maintain existing street lights, add street light at King and CR#4 (2) and lights on London Road, improve street lighting at Lorne & Queen	7
By-law Enforcement: enforce by-laws (zoning, cat) (i.e. prohibit street level apartments on King St.)	7
Sidewalks: extend sidewalks to the arena, replace sidewalk on south side of Richmond St. N., extend sidewalk on Queen St. W., add sidewalks on London Rd (3), add curbs and finish sidewalks around school, depress sidewalks at street corners, improve ploughing of sidewalks in winter	6
Community Park: improve park, storage bldg needs facelift, trim trees, fence to limit exposure to poison ivy, remove broken concrete slabs, install park benches	6
Shade Trees: trim shade trees along streets, Plant trees	4
Add green space along railroad corridor, improve appearance	3
Need 'poop & scoop' controls for sidewalks	3
Provide community events	3
Improve appearance of entrances to community, add community information kiosk	2
Improve appearance behind former store (Knechtels)	2
Install compost site	2
Arena: need improvements to parking lot and landscaping	
Develop Ice Cultures as a tourist attraction	2
Install 'Children at Play' sign at Lorne and Richmond	2
Maintain flower beds	1
Control noise from fans at grain elevators & Ice Cultures	1
Prohibit heavy trucks in residential areas	1
Install 'No Engine Brakes' signs	1
Install public art	1
Extend municipal water service to east of County Road # 4	1
Better stop signs	1
Provide community plots for gardens	1
Revive band shell project	1
Note: Survey conducted July-August 2008	

Community Improvement is everyone's responsibility. Residents and the Municipality alike can foster a positive image of their community where infrastructure and building maintenance become part of everyday living and improvements are made in response to a community's changing needs.

Community improvement implies a commitment to the expenditure of financial and human resources which are finite. The challenge is to meet a

community's needs while balancing the social and financial capital of the community.

The survey clearly indicated an interest by residents and businesses in undertaking repairs or upgrades to their properties as part of their commitment to the ongoing improvement. One half of the residents (38) indicated their intent to undertake repairs in any one or more than one of the next three years (2008-2010), while 80% of business owners expressed an intention to undertake repairs over the same period. Of the residential property owners, 78.9% expressed an interest in participating in a loan/grant program to undertake repairs. Business owners were offered several options for loan/grant programs including (1) commercial façade improvements, (2) repairs or upgrades to commercial buildings, (3) repairs or upgrades for 2nd storey residential units, (4) waiving building permit fees, and (5) funds for installing handicapped access facilities. The interest varied among business respondents in general, 75-80% expressed an interest in participating in one or more of the suggested programs.

Community Improvement Plan Components

The Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) of Hensall consists of a series of infrastructure projects, streetscaping and property standards improvements. The Plan also includes a number of financial incentives designed to facilitate the retrofitting, repair and upgrading of commercial and residential buildings within the Village.

Community Infrastructure

Sewage Lagoon (Waste Stabilization Pond)

Future growth within the village is dependent on increasing the capacity of the sewage lagoon. The Municipality has completed an Environmental Assessment, although an updating of the EA is required to validate the study undertaken in 2006. The EA indicated that there is no reserve capacity in the waste stabilization ponds which inhibits the ability of the municipality to respond to proposals for new/expanded economic opportunities. Commercial Alcohols (ethanol plant) have had to make alternative arrangements for the discharge of wastewater. The lack of reserve capacity also inhibits the

potential construction of new housing needed to accommodate new employees or to permit the general growth of the community.¹ The project to increase capacity includes the renovation of the existing lagoons including sludge removal, construction of sand filters and phosphorus removal facilities, site work including outfall construction and piping, also renovations to the main sewage pumping station and new pumps, a SCADA system and a control system. A new outfall sewer and discharge structure must be constructed as the existing location has been identified as a potential (negative) impact to fisheries resources.

The Municipality has made application for funding assistance on the expansion project under the Canada-Ontario Municipal Infrastructure Fund, although such funding has yet to be approved. The estimated cost for the expansion is \$3,850,000 (as set out in the summary **Table 4**).

Table 4 – Sewage Treatment Improvement Costs

Scope of Work	Estimated Cost
Sludge removal	250,000
Sand filters, pumping and distribution piping	460,000
Phosphorous removal facilities	190,000
Electrical	325,000
Site work	214,000
Misc works, bonds etc	135,000
Yard piping	320,000
Sewage pumping station upgrades	106,000
New sewage outfall	1,050,000
Sub-Total	3,050,000
Engineering	400,000
Project Management	50,000
Contingency (max. 10%)	350,000
Total Project Cost	3,850,000

Hensall Meeting Hall (Former Village Hall)

The former municipal building for the Village of Hensall is vacant except for a library located on the ground floor of the building. The upper storey variously served as a council chambers, concert hall or theatre and facility for community functions and meetings. While the building has not been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, its iconic presence on the 'main

¹ Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, *Municipal Sewage and Capital Works*, June 2006, pp. 8-9.

street' warrants the restoration of this facility for an adaptive reuse by the community. The 'village hall' (constructed in 1914) is also part of an institutional campus that includes the fire hall and a commemorative cenotaph. In combination, these facilities can be a focus to community improvement initiatives for King Street. No estimates have been prepared for the renovation of this facility although renovation costs of \$100 - \$125/ft.² would be in the order of \$240,000 - \$300,000. An investigation of the structural integrity of the building should be investigated along with an energy audit.



Photos of second storey of Village Hall



Improvements could also include landscaping the parking area on the west side of the village hall/fire station and installing an information kiosk.



Roads and Sidewalks

Roads are essential for vehicular traffic while sidewalks provide pedestrian linkages between residences and community facilities (parks, arena, school, commercial area). A Roads Management Study was completed for the Municipality (BM Ross, 2006). The study classified roads within the municipality and identified needs and costs for improvements and recommended a time table for the required upgrades. Within the Village of Hensall, a number of roads were identified as set out in **Table 5**. The Community Improvement Plan includes these improvements.

Table 5 – Road Improvements – Village of Hensall

Road and Section	Improvement	Cost	Year for Improvement
Albert Street – Cr 84 to Richmond	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
Albert Street – Richmond to Oxford	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
Albert Street – Oxford to York	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
Brock Street – Brock Ave to west limit	resurfacing	\$119,000	2008
Elizabeth Street – CR 84 to Richmond SW	resurfacing	\$38,000	2008
Elizabeth Street – Richmond SW to Oxford W	resurfacing	\$38,000	2008
Lorne Ave – Hensall to Queen	reconstruction	\$59,500	2011
Lorne Ave – Queen to Richmond North	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
Mill Street – Wellington to Nelson	reconstruction	\$218,000	2011
Mill Street – Nelson to Highway 4	reconstruction	\$238,000	2008

Oxford – Nelson to Albert	reconstruction	\$119,000	2008
Queen Street – Highway 4 to Lorne	reconstruction	\$59,500	2011
Queen Street West – Brock to Elizabeth	resurfacing	\$76,000	2008
Queen Street West – Elizabeth to west limit	resurfacing	\$38,000	2008
Richmond Street North – Lorne to Highway 4	resurfacing	\$59,500	2008
Richmond Street Southwest – Elizabeth to Brock	reconstruction	\$218,000	2011
Wellington Street- Queen to Richmond North	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
Wellington Street – Richmond North to Mill	reconstruction	\$59,500	2008
York Cres – Albert to south limit	reconstruction	\$178,500	2008
York Street – Albert to Nelson	resurfacing	\$76,000	2011
Total		\$1,892,000	
Source: Roads Management Study, Municipality of Bluewater, BM Ross, 2006			

Sidewalks serve most of the community but there are a number of streets without sidewalks while others have sidewalks on one side only. Suggested improvements for sidewalk construction is based on the parameters of

- At least one sidewalk on all streets
- Ensuring continuous linkages within the community that provide safe pedestrian access

Areas for new sidewalk construction in the Community Improvement Project Area are based on the parameters are set out in **Table 6**. Ongoing sidewalk maintenance should be dependent on annual Municipal budget allocations.

Table 6 – Sidewalk Improvements					
Street	Side	From	To	Length	Cost
Richmond N	South	Nelson	London	360 m	\$27,360
Queen W	North	Elizabeth	End	100 m	\$7,600
Oxford W	South	Brock	End	300 m	\$22,800
Brock	West	Richmond W	Arena	100 m	\$7,600
Elizabeth	East	King	Oxford	200 m	\$15,200
York Cres	S/W/N	Albert	End	260 m	\$19,760
Lorne	East	King	End	400 m	\$30,400
King	South	London	Lorne	100 m	\$7,600
Mill	South	Wellington	Soldan	400 m	\$30,400
Wellington	East	Queen	Mill	200 m	\$15,200
Total Cost					\$183,920
Unit Cost for new sidewalk construction = \$76/linear meter					

Streetscaping

Many of the respondents to the community improvement survey commented on the need to improve the visual image of the downtown or village core. Streetscaping in the Community Improvement Project Plan will provide the means to improve the image and can be undertaken through such measures as:

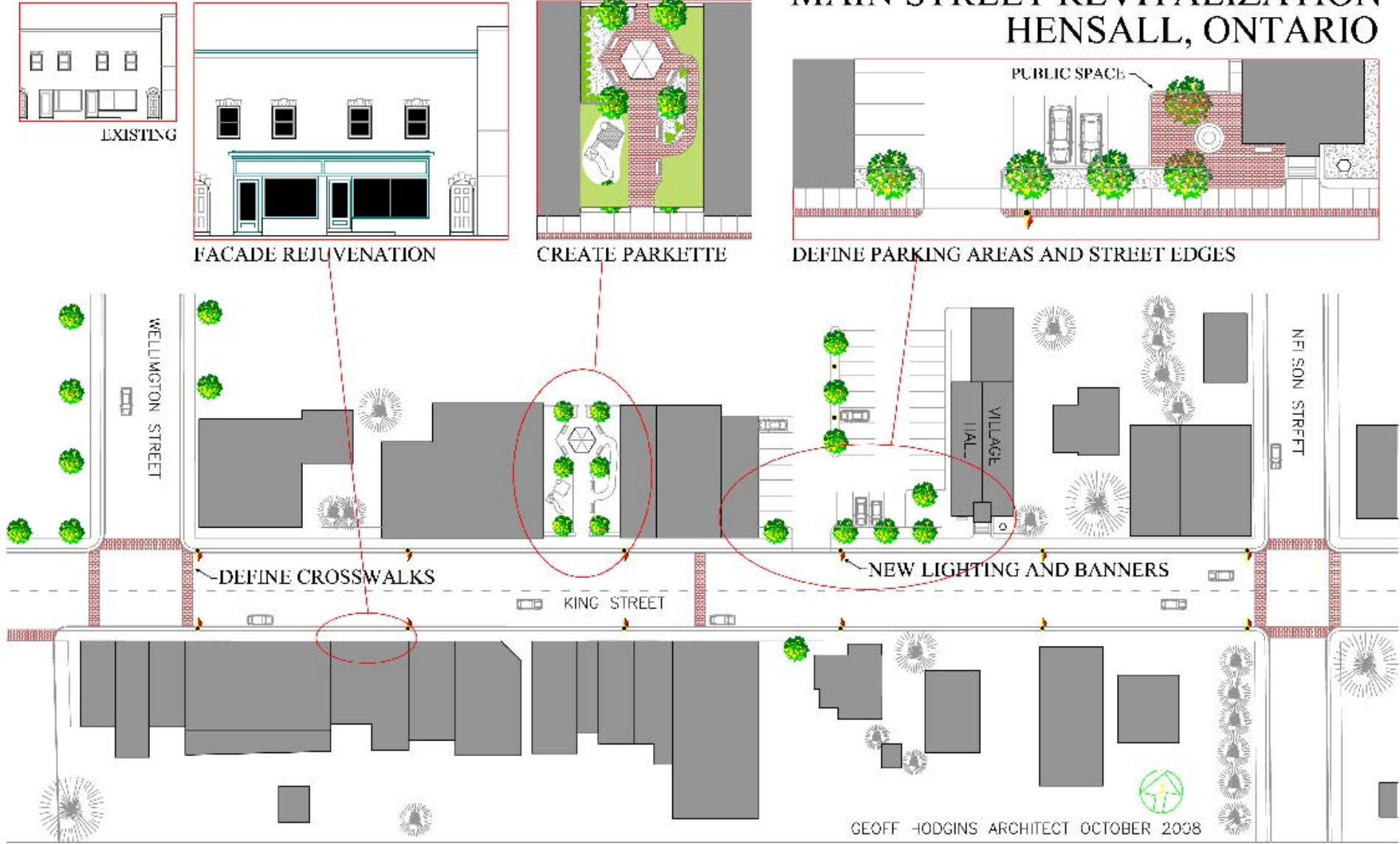
- Adding new lighting and banners
- Landscaping (trees, shrubbery)
- Rejuvenating the façades or storefronts of buildings
- Defining parking areas and street edges
- Defining crosswalks
- Adding a parkette

Figure 1 provides a schematic depiction of potential streetscaping improvements designed to enhance the image and foster pride and new investment in the downtown.

While most of the investment in downtown improvements are anticipated to be public, private investment through façade rejuvenation is a key factor. Private sector investment can be encouraged through an incentive program in the form of a grant or loan to encourage commercial property owners to undertake the rejuvenation. In other words, public incentives can be used to lever private sector expenditures. Estimated costs for streetscaping improvements are set out in **Table 7**.

Table 7 – Streetscaping		
Description	Cost	Year for Project
Heritage Lighting – 12 light standards @ \$2,000/light	\$24,000	
Banners – 20 banners at \$50/banner	\$1,000	
Waste receptacles – 6 receptacles at \$100/receptacle	\$600	
Trees – 16 trees @ \$400/tree	\$6,400	
Parking Area – Village Hall – 1,830 m ² @ \$13.50/m ²	\$24,705	
Park benches – 6 @ \$400	\$2,400	
Parkette – Land acquisition	\$33,000	
Parkette – landscaping	\$75,000	
Information Kiosk	\$3,000	

MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION HENSALL, ONTARIO



Components of the Community Improvement Plan

The Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area of the Village of Hensall shall consist of the following components:

1. Expansion of the sewage treatment capacity as a measure to increase the servicing capacity for new growth and development;
2. Reconstruction and resurfacing of roads as a means to maintain the a consistency in the quality of road services available to residents;
3. Extending the network of sidewalks to provide for safe travel by pedestrians and to enhance linkages between residential areas and community services and facilities;
4. Streetscaping in the downtown including such measures as installing heritage lighting, decorative banners, benches, waste receptacles, crosswalks, a parkette, shade trees, parking and the rejuvenation of commercial (storefront) façades;
5. Installing an information kiosk to assist visitors and to profile community events;
6. Retrofitting and rehabilitating the Village Hall as a multi-use community facility for public meetings, programs and activities;
7. Enforcement of property standards as a means to promote energy conservation and to sustain the existing building stock in a condition of good repair. Demolition of unsafe (burned out) or derelict buildings is also a component of property standards;
8. Initiating a program of financial incentives to facilitate improvements to commercial (storefront) façades, to encourage the retrofitting, repair and rehabilitation of commercial and residential buildings, to promote energy efficiency and to promote private sector investment;
9. Enforcement of zoning standards to maintain and protect property rights and land uses;
10. Preparing a leisure and recreation master plan as a means to assess the short and long-term leisure and recreation needs of the community;
11. Instituting a regularized program of street and sidewalk maintenance.

The proposed community improvement program is intended to upgrade, maintain or improve needed municipal infrastructure in Hensall such as

expanding the sewage treatment capacity, adding sidewalks and rebuilding roads. The image of the Village will be improved through streetscaping, financial incentives to upgrade storefronts and residential properties and the enforcement of property standards in the removal of unsafe buildings and the repair of the building stock in general. A vibrant community needs good community facilities, parks and leisure services. The community improvement plan proposes to make the Village Hall a focal community facility. Through an assessment of the leisure and recreation needs the municipality can enhance or add leisure and recreation facilities; examples include a skateboard park, tennis courts, splash pool, bike path.

The community improvement plan will only be successful where there is a partnership of cost-sharing between the municipality through its investment in infrastructure and financial incentives and the public (land owners) through a corresponding investment in retrofitting and repairing buildings.

Financial Incentives

The proposed package of financial incentives is intended to act as a catalyst for private sector expenditures in the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA). Municipal governments cannot be expected to finance improvements to private properties. However, in the interest of maintaining a sustainable tax base and a healthy and visually attractive community, municipalities can play a role in encouraging the private sector to improve private properties. A positive image can also lead to new investment in the community. The Municipality of Bluewater is proposing to provide a package of financial incentives designed to stimulate community improvement initiatives in the Village of Hensall.

1. Façade Improvement Grant

Program Term

The Façade Improvement Grant program will be offered subject to approval by Council of administration guidelines and funding.

Grant Purpose

Façade Improvement Grants will help improve and rejuvenate the exterior of buildings in a Community Improvement Project Area (downtown Hensall).

Available Funding

Funding will be available on a 'first come, first served' basis.

The maximum grant amount will be 50% of the eligible costs of façade improvements up to a maximum of \$5,000 per property. The value of the project must be at least \$2,000 in order that financial assistance may amount to a minimum of \$1,000.

A single property is eligible for financial assistance under the Façade Improvement Grant on more than one occasion during the lifetime of the program, provided that the total value of the grant does not exceed \$5,000 of eligible costs.

The total amount of grants will not exceed the value of the work being done.

Eligibility Guidelines

All non-residential (i.e. office, retail or commercial) and mixed-use (combination of office, retail, commercial or residential uses managed as a unit) buildings in the downtown area of the Village are eligible for a grant. In addition:

- ❑ Applicants must be the registered owner(s) of the property or owner
- ❑ Eligible facades are those adjacent to or easily visible from a public street or area.
- ❑ The property must not be in tax arrears and must not have any outstanding Municipal work orders.
- ❑ The property owner or approved applicant must not be in debt to or involved in litigation with the Municipality.
- ❑ If applicable, an approved work permit must accompany the grant application.

Examples of façade improvement work include:

- Exterior work (masonry cleaning, restoration, painting)
- Signage
- Replacement of Windows and Doors

Application process

Before undertaking any work, applicants must submit:

- ❑ A completed Façade Improvement Grant application form,
- ❑ Any additional information (i.e. drawings) detailing the exterior work,
- ❑ All applicable work permits, and
- ❑ At least two estimates for the work to be undertaken by an approved contractor

Grant applications and supporting material should be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer.

The grant commitment will lapse if the improvement work has not been completed within the fiscal year of the grant approval date. An extension may be approved if a written request is submitted prior to the end of the fiscal year explaining the reasons for the extension and providing a new date of completion.

A cheque for the grant amount will be issued to the property owner after:

- ❑ All improvement work is completed,
- ❑ Paid invoices are submitted to the Municipality and
- ❑ Work is verified by Municipal inspection.

The Façade Improvement Grant program will not be applied retroactively to works started prior to commencement of the program and/or approval of the grant application.

2. Municipal “No Fee Zone”

Program Term

The Municipal “No Fee Zone” Program will be offered subject to approval by Council of administration guidelines and funding.

Rebate Purpose

The intent of the Municipal “No Fee Zone” is to provide an economic catalyst for developing, redeveloping or renovating upper storey residential and commercial lands and buildings located within the Community Improvement Plan Areas by waiving fees for property owners and developers.

Fees to be waived

Development fees and charges as described below and as set out by various legislative authorities will be waived for developments in the Community Improvement Plan Areas (CIPA). This program would apply to most municipal fees for planning and building applications including:

- Building Permit Fees,
- Sign Permit applications,
- Demolition Permits and Tipping Fees,
- Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments,
- Minor Variances,
- Consents to Sever,
- Site Plan Control and Development Agreements,

- Parkland Dedications (or cash-in-lieu) associated with Consents to Sever

Eligibility Criteria

- Eligible lands and buildings include all non-residential (i.e. office, retail or commercial) and mixed-use (combination of office, retail, commercial or residential uses managed as a unit) located in downtown Hensall.
- The subject property must not be in a position of tax arrears and must not have any outstanding building work orders.
- The property owner must not be in debt or involved in litigation with the Municipality.
- The total value of fees waived under this program shall not exceed the value of the work done as declared on the Application for Building Permit.

“No Fee Zone” Process

1. Persons seeking to develop, redevelop or rehabilitate buildings or lands in the CIPA must apply for the appropriate permits at the Building Department at the Municipal Office (Zurich).
2. Regularly applied fees for development in the CIPA will be recorded and waived by the Building Department (subject to approval by the CAO).
3. Developers may apply for other CIP programs.

The Municipal No Fee Zone program will not be applied retroactively to works started prior to commencement of the program and/or approval of the grant application.

3. Upgrade to Building Code Grant

- ***Increased Accessibility***
- ***Upper Storey Residential Conversions and***
- ***Other Building Code Upgrades***

Program Term

The “Building Code Grant Program” will be offered subject to approval by Council of administration guidelines and subject to the availability of funds.

Program Purpose

The intent of the “Upgrade to Building Code Grant Program” is to provide an economic catalyst for developing, redeveloping or renovating

residential/commercial lands and buildings located within the Downtown fo Hensall.

The grant will assist property owners with financing of building improvements in three areas:

1. Increasing universal accessibility into and inside the building,
2. Providing upper storey residential conversions, and
3. Other upgrades bringing older buildings into compliance with the current Ontario Building Code.

Available Funding

The provision of any Upgrade to the Building Code Grant will be administered on a 'first come first served' basis to the limit of available funding.

The maximum amount of a grant shall be 50% of the eligible cost of improvements up to a maximum of:

- o \$10,000 per property for accessibility related costs,
- o \$10,000 for upper storey residential conversion costs and
- o \$10,000 for other building code related costs.

Each must be separate cost and no overlap of costs/works will be permitted.

The minimum value of a project must be \$2,000 in order that the minimum grant is \$1,000.

A single property is eligible for financial assistance on more than one occasion during the lifetime of the program, provided that the total value of the grant does not exceed \$10,000 in each of the three areas of the program.

Provided all eligibility criteria and conditions of this program are met, participation in the Upgrades to Building Code Grant program does not preclude the owner from being eligible for other financial incentive programs.

The total amount of grants or grants for all CIP programs will not exceed \$30,000 per property.

The Upgrade to Building Code Grant program will not be applied retroactively to works started prior to commencement of the program and/or approval of the grant application.

Eligibility Guidelines

All non-residential (i.e. office, retail or commercial) and mixed-use (combination of office, retail, commercial or residential uses managed as a unit) buildings in the Downtown area.

In order to be eligible for the program the subject property must not be in a position of tax arrears and must not have any outstanding building work orders. The property owner must not be in debt or involved in litigation with the Municipality.

Applicants to the "Upgrade to Building Code Grant" must be the registered owner(s) of the property or have obtained permission from the building owner (as per the application form).

Applications must include valid permits, the value of the work being done, plans, estimates, contracts and other details as may be required to satisfy the Municipality as to the cost of the project.

The compliance of each application with the criteria of this program and the amount and the property's grants (within the permitted terms of this program) is at the discretion of and subject to Municipal approval.

Eligible Accessibility-related upgrades may include:

- Improvements for barrier-free, universal accessibility
- Ramps, automatic door openers
- Elevators
- Widening of halls, washrooms, etc.
- And others accessibility related upgrades

Eligible Upper Storey Residential Conversion related upgrades may include:

- Installation of fire protection systems;
- Relocation or installation of fire escapes and entrances;
- Elevators;
- Reinforcements of floors, ceilings and/or walls;
- Required improvements to ventilation systems;
- Construction or alteration of stairs, guard rails and/or hand rails;
- Installation or alteration of required window openings for upper storey residential units; and

Other eligible building code improvements include:

- Other improvements related to Building Code upgrades that address health and safety issues or at the discretion of the Development Services Department.

Application Procedures

The property owner must submit an application form, building permit and a detailed proposal with at least two estimates to the Municipality prior to the commencement of the improvement works.

The proposal should include a:

- ❑ Description of the current deficiencies of the building with respect to the Ontario Building Code,
- ❑ Explanation of how the work will address one or more health, safety or accessibility issues,
- ❑ Estimate of the work costs (supported by a minimum of two estimates from qualified contractors and shall be consistent with the cost estimate indicated on the accompanying building permit application), and
- ❑ Drawings prepared by a Professional Engineer and/or Architect (if applicable)
- ❑ All applicable permit numbers

Following the submission of the grant application and prior to approval by the Municipality, Municipal staff will inspect the building to review the improvements proposed for the building upgrades.

The Building Department will review and recommend approval of applications by Council to the Upgrade to Building Code Grant Program. Prior to making a decision, the Municipality may request further drawings, cost estimates or other information from the applicant.

The grant commitment will lapse if a notice of completion of the improvement works has not been received within the fiscal year of commitment. An extension may be approved if the property owner submits a written request prior to the end of the fiscal year of approval, explaining the reasons for the extension and providing a new date of completion.

The grant shall be paid to the authorized person after receipt of a notice of completion of the improvement work, submission of paid invoices and Municipal inspection.

4. Energy Efficiency Grant

Program Term

The “Energy Efficiency Grant” will be offered subject to approval by Council of administration guidelines and subject to the availability of funds.

Grant Purpose

The intent of the “Energy Efficiency Grant” is to provide an economic catalyst for developing commercial and residential lands and buildings located in the Community Improvement Project Area (Village).

The program will assist property owners to improve energy efficiency of buildings and reduce cost to operate buildings.

Available Funding

The provision of an Energy Efficiency Grant will be administered on a ‘first come first served’ basis to the limit of available funding and in accordance with any administrative rules governing programs.

A grant for 50% of eligible costs, up to a maximum of \$1,000, will be available through the Energy Efficiency Grant program. Funding through this program is not to overlap with other sources of available funding.

Provided all eligibility criteria and conditions are met for this program, participation in the Energy Efficiency Grant does not preclude the owner from being eligible for other financial incentives.

The total amount of grants or rebates for all CIP programs will not exceed \$1,000 per property or residential dwelling.

The Energy Efficiency Grant will not be retroactively applied to works started prior to the applicants’ approval.

Eligibility Guidelines

All residential and non-residential (i.e. office, retail or commercial) and mixed-use (combination of office, retail, commercial or residential uses managed as a unit) buildings in the CIPA are eligible for a grant.

In order to be eligible for the program the subject property must not be in a position of tax arrears and must not have any outstanding work orders. The property owner must not be in debt or involved in litigation with the Municipality.

Applicants to the “Energy Efficiency Grant” must be the registered owner(s) of the property or have owner sign the application form.

An application must be submitted and approved prior to the commencement of improvements/rehabilitation to property.

Applications must include plans, estimates, contracts and other details as may be required to satisfy the Municipality as to the cost of the project.

Projects must be in compliance with the Municipality’s other by-laws and policies, zoning, etc.

The compliance of each application with the criteria of this program and the amount and the property’s grants (within the permitted terms of this program) is in the discretion of and subject to Municipal approval.

Eligible items include:

- Window and Door Improvements
- Insulation
- Energy Efficient lighting
- Heating and Ventilation and Air Conditioning Improvements

Application Procedure (see Appendix 1)

Applications are submitted to, reviewed and approved by the Building Department.

Applications must be submitted with at least two estimates for energy efficiency improvements. If the higher of the two estimates is the selected contractor, the grant will be provided on the basis of the average cost of the two estimates. However, if the lower of the two estimates is the successful bidder, the grant, if approved, shall be provided on the basis of the lowest estimate.

Prior to approving an “Energy Efficiency Grant”, Municipal staff may inspect the building to review its condition prior to approval. Prior to approval, the Municipality may request drawings, cost estimates or other information.

The grant will be provided to the approved applicant following a Municipal inspection of the completed work and the receipt of all related invoices.

5. Implementation and Monitoring

Council will approve annual funds for the Community Improvement Programs as they determine appropriate. Council will delegate approval of individual grants to the Chief Administrative Officer.

Building Department

The Building Department will provide a single point of contact for the public for all CIP programs. Staff person will pre-consult with potential applicants, review all applications for eligibility and completeness, and inform the applicant of information gaps as soon as possible. Staff will make recommendations to the CAO and/or Council, depending on the program and will coordinate the approval and inspection process for compliance with the programs.

Marketing

A variety of marketing materials will be employed to ensure potential applicants are aware of the programs and their impact. The Building Department will prepare brochures, website information, advertising and news releases as required. Most materials and website can be created in-house; advertising will be done through the municipal webpage and local newspaper.

- ❑ A brochure will outline the available programs, eligibility criteria, application process and deadlines and will be updated as required. Marketing materials will be distributed to area business owners, to ensure existing and prospective business and property owners are informed.
- ❑ The Municipality of Bluewater website will host an electronic version of the brochure and grant application form.
- ❑ News releases will announce program launches, program milestones and impact.

- ❑ Storefront advertising will also be used. Grant application forms will be posted in vacant storefronts and will indicate where to access more information.

Program Monitoring

The Departmental Manager of the Building Department in conjunction with the CAO and Planner will evaluate the use and effectiveness of the CIP grant programs through a number of measures and indicators. Staff will track program-specific data such as:

- ❑ Number of applicants,
- ❑ Total value of grants provided to applicants,
- ❑ Total amount spent by applicants (leveraged by the grant).
- ❑ New housing developed (where applicable)
- ❑ New businesses developed
- ❑ Expanded businesses and new employees hired
- ❑ Number of facades improved
- ❑ Number of construction and other jobs created

Staff will report to Council semi-annually or more frequently as may be determined on the uptake and impact of the program.

Review and Revisions to Community Improvement Plan

Council may make minor adjustments without amendment to the Plan, provided that the general intent of the Plan is maintained. Where considered necessary for the desirable development of the CIP. Changes may include: new program terms (e.g. grant limits, liability requirements), minor modifications to the boundaries of the target areas, and new programs that support the goals and objectives of this CIP. These changes may be permitted and added to the CIP by by-law.

Changes to the CIP, once approved by Council, will be forwarded to the County of Huron for their information.

Appendix

Grant Application Form

CIP Grant Application Form

CIP Application # _____



Municipality of Bluewater
Building and Planning Services
14 Mill Avenue
P.O. Box 250
Zurich, ON N0M 1G0
Phone: (519) 236-4351 Fax: (519) 236-4329

Financial Incentive Program Grant Application Form

Property Owner(s): _____

Applicant Name: _____

Address of Property: _____

Property Roll Number: _____

Applicant Telephone #: _____

Applicant Cell/day phone #: _____

Applicant Fax #: _____

Address of Applicant: _____

Check off the grants for which this application applies. Indicate grant amount requested.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Façade Improvement Grant (max. \$5,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| 2. Municipal Fee Rebate | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| 3. Building Code Upgrades | |
| a) Accessibility (max. \$10,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| b) Upper Storey Residential Conversion (max. \$10,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| c) Other-Upgrades-to-Building-Code Grant (max. \$15,000) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| 4. Energy Efficiency Grant (max. \$10,000) | |

Please note that there is a maximum of \$30,000 in total grants per property for the 5 year period from 2009-2014.

1. If you are not the property owner, has the owner signed this form to authorize you to make this application? YES NO

2. Related Applications for this Property

Have you applied for other CIP programs for this property in the past? YES NO
If YES, please describe:

3. Project Information

Building Permit Number (or application number): _____

Permit Application Date: _____

Building Permit Fees Paid: \$ _____

Value of Project (from Building Permit): \$ _____

Current Assessment Value of Property \$ _____

Total Amount of CIP Funding Requested: \$ _____

Please note that there is a maximum of \$30,000 in total grants per property for the 5 year period from 2009-2014.

4. Are there any outstanding work orders on this property?

- Fire Prevention YES NO
- Property Standards YES NO
- Building Code YES NO
- By-Law Enforcement YES NO
- Other YES NO

Attach copies of existing work orders to this application, if available.

5. Is the most current tax receipt attached? YES NO

6. Are taxes in arrears on this property? YES NO

7. Proposed Improvements

Describe your proposed improvements (attached drawings and other details if available).

8. Cost Estimate

Attach at least two written estimates from qualified independent contractors/suppliers for each program (if applicable). Please indicate your preferred estimate (the low estimate does not necessarily have to be selected).

9. Project Timeline

Project Start Date: _____

Project Completion Date: _____

10. Litigation

Are you presently in or do you have litigation pending with the Municipality of Bluewater?

YES NO

11. Liability

Approved grant projects will be required to add the Municipality of Bluewater as a named 'additional insured' on the property in question's insurance policy. **Applicants must have a minimum of \$1 million dollars general liability insurance.**

Do you agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Municipality of Bluewater and all claims arising out of the providing/withdrawal of funds, construction of projects or any other use of grant funds provided as a result of the grant process? YES NO

12. Share Findings

If you are applying for funding for studies, are you willing to share the results of your study? YES NO

Consent to Apply for Grant or Rebate

I/We hereby apply for a grant or rebate commitment under the Municipality of Bluewater Community Improvement Plan.

I/We agree to abide by the conditions of the program and certify that the information given herein is true, correct and complete in every respect and may be verified by the municipality.

Name of Applicant

Note: If you are not the property owner, you must include the property owner's signature below.

Relationship to Property (i.e. property owner, tenant)

Applicant Signature

Date

Name of Property Owner

Signature of Property Owner

Date

For further information please contact:

Municipality of Bluewater
Building and Planning Services
14 Mill Avenue
P.O. Box 250
Zurich, ON NOM 1G0

Phone: (519) 236-4351 Fax: (519) 236-4329

Note 1: If the applicant is not the owner of the building, the owner's written permission is required for all proposed work.

Note 2: Work, to be completed through this application, cannot be started until written approval, for the requested funding assistance is received from the Municipality of Bluewater. All required permits (e.g. building, demolition, etc) must be obtained prior to the initiation of the proposed works.

Note 3: All information provided is kept strictly confidential subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information Act* and the Municipality's financial reporting duties.

Note 4: The applicant consents to the use of their name and address in connection with any program funding announcements.