



Report to Council

Department: Planning

Date: November 4, 2013

Prepared by: Jeff Watson, Policy Planner

Submitted by: Chris Nepszy, Director of Infrastructure & Development

Report Number: Planning 2013-38

Applicant: Town of Essex

Subject: Harrow Centre Community Improvement Plan (Harrow Centre, Ward 4)

File Numbers: None

Number of Pages:

Recommendation(s)/Conclusion(s)

- That By-law 1263 (Appendix A) implementing the expanded Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Area and November 2013 Implementation Strategy be approved.
- That the following option for the further expansion of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan be adopted in principle to permit public review and comment: The east and west sides of Erie Street from King Street to the south limit of County Towing, the north and south sides of King Street from the west limit of the commercial lands (Home Hardware) to Erie Street and the north and south sides of King Street from Walnut Street to the east limit of the commercially zoned lands (the Feed Store).

Background

The expanded Harrow Community Plan was the subject of a public meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2013. The rationale for the expansion of the both the project area and the programs offered in the Plan was outlined and discussion ensued. It will be recalled that Council sought the expansion to stimulate interest in the vacant and underutilized commercial and industrial lands north of the current community improvement area that is focused on the downtown. These lands to the north are designated and zoned for commercial and industrial uses, but they have site disadvantages that hinder their attractiveness for private development. The enhanced plan introduces new programs, such as the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, to help stimulate interest in these lands. It also amends existing programs to simplify the grant process and clarify intent regarding specific land uses, such as affordable rental housing and bed and breakfast establishments.

Comments

The enhanced plan is attached as Appendix B. It includes the revised Harrow Community Improvement Plan Implementation Strategy, dated November 2013, which incorporates the expanded Project Area. By-law 1263 would implement the revised plan, pending completion of the public appeal period, tentatively at the end of November. The public response was generally quite positive. The most significant point made at the public meeting was that the plan project area did not extend far enough. It was noted that several long term and newly relocated businesses are located at the gateways to Harrow, along County Road 20 and Erie Street.

It was concluded that Planning would report on options for the further expansion of the community improvement area. In anticipation of expansion in the short or long term, the Implementation Strategy has been drafted with expansion in mind. This will alleviate the need to revise the text and programs. Only the boundaries of the project area would have to be amended.

There are several options that could be considered, but two options are recommended for consideration. It should be noted that of the four key entrances to Harrow, one at Queen Street and Third Concession is in the newly expanded project area.

With reference to the maps in Appendix B, the Project Area expansion options are as follows:

- Option 1 - The three commercial gateways – the commercial land uses on the west side of Erie Street at Dunn Road (shown in blue), the commercial land uses on the north side of County Road 20, at Roseborough (shown in red) and the commercial land uses on the north and south sides of County Road 20, up to the east limit of the Feed Store (shown in red).
- Option 2 - All of Erie Street from King Street to the south limit of County Towing and all of King Street from the west limit of the highway commercial lands to Erie Street and from Walnut Street to the east limit of the Feed Store.

The second option is the preferred option, because, it would not only add incentives for physical site improvements to the commercial and industrial properties and encourage business expansion, it would provide incentives for other desirable initiatives, such as new bed and breakfast accommodations. Both roads have advantages in that regard.

In order to implement further changes to the project area, it will be necessary to hold a public meeting for input concerning the plan. If Council adopts one of the above-referenced options in principle, Planning will be in the position to give public notice and begin the review and approval process.

While the focus of a community improvement plan is on public private partnerships devoted primarily to the revitalization and reuse of private properties, this can be combined with other municipal initiatives. As gateways, it would be desirable to consider streetscape improvements at defined entrances to Harrow, particularly if infrastructure monies become available from upper levels of government.

Financial Impact

Expanded opportunities to implement the Harrow Community Improvement Plan are positive steps toward securing Harrow's long term sustainability. The two new programs introduced to the Plan are revenue neutral.

Reviewed by: Russell Philips, Chief Administrative Officer - concurs

Chris Nepszy, Director of Infrastructure and Development – concurs

Heather (Ross) Jablonski, Town Planner – concurs

Donna Hunter, Director of Corporate Services – concurs

Appendix A

The Corporation of the Town of Essex

By-law Number 1263

Being a By-law to Expand the Community Improvement Plan for Harrow Centre

Whereas Section 28(2) of the Planning Act, R.S.O 1990, provides that where there is an official plan in effect in a local municipality that contains provisions relating to community improvement in the municipality, the council may, by by-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a community improvement project area;

And Whereas Section 28(2) of the Planning Act defines a municipality or an area within a municipality, that community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason;

And Whereas the Official Plan for the Town of Essex contains provisions enabling the Council of the Town of Essex to designate Community Improvement Project Areas, by by-law, for the purposes of preparing and undertaking a Community Improvement Plan;

And Whereas the Council of the Town of Essex has deemed it appropriate to designate part of Harrow, within the Town of Essex, in the Province of Ontario, as a Community Improvement Project Area for the purposes of establishing the Harrow Community Improvement Plan respecting the redevelopment, economic revitalization and beautification of the community of Harrow Centre, in accordance with Section 28(2) of the Planning Act R.S.O. 1990;

And Whereas the Council of the Town of Essex has fulfilled the requirements of Section 28 of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, in establishing that plan and complied with the mandates for its expansion;

Now therefore the Corporation of the Town of Essex enacts as follows:

1. The Community Improvement Plan for Harrow Centre is hereby amended by deleting the Downtown Harrow Community Plan Implementation Strategy and replacing it with the document in Schedule A to this by-law, consisting of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan Implementation Strategy, Revised November 2013, and the included map showing the expanded limits of the Harrow Community Strategic Plan Project Area.
2. That Schedule A, attached hereto, shall be declared to be part of this by-law.

Read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 4th day of November, 2013.

Mayor

Clerk

Schedule A to By-law 1263

Harrow Community Improvement Plan

Implementation Strategy

Revised November 2013



Harrow Community Strategic Plan Implementation Strategy

1.0 Community Improvement Plan Background

1.1 Harrow Community Strategic Plan

The Harrow Community Strategic Plan was initiated by Council in January 2011 to develop 'Pride of Place' for Harrow as a distinctive urban centre within the municipality and a prosperous and sustainable member of the larger community, the Town of Essex. It establishes a strategic direction for Harrow that sets goals and objectives for the community and Council to work towards. It incorporates a policy framework to be ultimately included in the Town of Essex Official Plan.

The development of the strategic plan engaged the general public, business operators, service agencies and other stakeholders in a pro-active and positive exercise to establish a vision for Harrow based on its historical roots and its association with the other urban centres in the Town, its large rural hinterland and the region. Through the development of the strategic plan, the community identified the need to commit to the rejuvenation and revitalization of the downtown core of Harrow.

The business community and cultural organizations, in particular, desired improved communication amongst various agencies and organizations, heritage preservation, new economic stimuli and tourism promotion and greater efforts to develop the downtown as a destination for commerce and culture, as well as for more residential accommodation, as important priorities.

1.2 Harrow Community Strategic Plan Background

Under Section 28 of The Planning Act of Ontario (1990), municipalities are given authority to create community improvement plans with supporting programs for identified community improvement plan project areas. In accordance with Section 28, a municipality may use any of the following strategies in administering the community improvement plan, hereby referred to as the Plan:

- Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement;
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the community project area;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any such buildings and the land associated with it in the community project area;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any lands acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area for use in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- Make grants or loans in conformity with the community improvement project area for eligible costs associated with a project within the community improvement plan project area in conformity with the community improvement plan;
- Fund the costs of an environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development or 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.

Further Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act of Ontario (2001) permits municipalities to pass a by-law providing tax assistance to eligible properties in the form of deferral or cancellation of all or part of the municipal taxes levied on new assessment for a specified period of time. It works in partnership with the provisions of Section 28 of the Planning Act and its provisions are incorporated into it.

In July, 2011 Council for the Town of Essex adopted the Harrow Community Strategic Plan. Within the Strategic Plan was a draft plan outlining the following **Goals** for the Harrow Community Improvement Plan:

- Implement the Official Plan objectives for community improvement, redevelopment and revitalization, as stated in Section 7.1 of the Town of Essex Official Plan;

- Where feasible implement other Harrow Community Strategic Plan, Council and Official Plan policies and directives related to community health and prosperity;
- Achieve the community's vision of a prosperous and active downtown where residents and visitors live, work, shop and play;
- Foster an environment to promote and support the economic rejuvenation of the downtown;
- Establish an implementation strategy, inclusive of financial incentive programs, to complement and assist private sector investment in the revitalization of the downtown, as defined in the Implementation Plan and forming part of this Plan.

From a planning perspective, the Harrow Community Improvement Plan, developed to help implement the objectives of the Strategic Plan and the wishes of residents and the business community, is a proven municipal tool that will assist the business operators and building owners of Harrow as well as the Town of Essex Council in achieving the principle goals set out above.

Within the Plan are the following **Objectives** for the Town of Essex to be an active partner in supporting and providing financial incentives to those projects that will achieve the Goals of the Strategic Plan and the Official Plan:

- To provide for rehabilitation or improvement of existing buildings and properties, building facades, signage, landscaping, parking and other physical resources, through the use of municipal assisted programs and funding sources;
- To provide for development, redevelopment and adaptive re-use of older buildings and vacant and underutilized lands through the use of municipal assisted programs and funding sources;
- To complement private initiatives, the Town is committed to improving the walkability, amenities and attractiveness of local streetscapes and to develop safe streets that meet the needs of pedestrians, non-motorized and motorized

traffic, in accordance with the goals of the Provincial Policy Statement for safe and healthy communities;

- To stimulate private investment in rehabilitation and community improvement in the downtown and elsewhere to support downtown sustainability and community health and prosperity;
- For property owners, investors and community organizations to undertake projects, programs and activities consistent with the Goals of the Strategic Plan and the Official Plan;
- To preserve, conserve and enhance the heritage and historical structures and streetscape of Harrow.

1.3 Harrow Community Improvement Plan Expansion

The boundaries of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Areas are shown on the maps accompanying this Plan. The policies and programs set out in this Plan are applicable to this plan project areas exclusively.

The implementation of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan is helping to address physical deterioration in the central core by providing grants and other financial incentives to stimulate private investment in building façade renewal and other physical improvements to make the downtown more attractive to residents and visitors. It also encourages investment in new land uses that complement existing downtown uses and activities.

More recently, Council set out to further strengthen and support the downtown and to effect a good balance of employment opportunities, varied residential accommodation and local services to benefit the entire community, in a compact urban form. In other words the aim is to achieve a balanced, healthy and sustainable community. Incentives have been adopted to stimulate new economic development downtown and elsewhere in the community. This is directed particularly to the goal of generating new and expanded industrial and commercial uses within Harrow that would provide employment opportunities and the economic spin-offs so critical for the continued health and prosperity of the community.

Harrow has 4.5 hectares of vacant industrially zoned lands and several highway commercial properties that have not been developed to their full potential. The industrially designated and zoned parcels, in particular, have limited visibility from a main road, are unserviced (but serviceable), may require environmental remediation and are bounded by mixed use development such that landscape buffering may be required, depending on the potential uses. As such, they have limited appeal without some form of stimuli to help mitigate their physical limitations. As well, current business operators on older industrial and commercial lands should be given comparable incentives to expand and enhance their facilities and businesses. Many would benefit from property beautification, more efficient use of space and enhanced support facilities.

Currently Harrow has no tourist accommodation. New and expanded program incentives will encourage boutique hotel and bed and breakfast uses within the project areas. Harrow's location in the centre of increasingly popular cycle tourism routes, wine and black history trails and other tourist related activities makes the provision of visitor accommodation a priority.

Affordable rental housing is needed. Currently, Harrow has only a very small percentage of its housing stock in the form of rental accommodation. What is offered is of modest size and configuration. In response to the mandates of the Planning Act, the Town's general zoning by-law was amended to permit second dwelling units in single-detached, semi-detached and townhome dwellings, subject to compliance with zoning regulations regarding second dwelling units. Grant incentives have been adopted to encourage such residential accommodation in suitable underutilized commercial building space and in low density residential areas within the community improvement project areas.

Overall, the expanded goals are intended to encourage and stimulate new investment in employment activities in Harrow. Recent beautification efforts in the downtown through civic streetscape improvements, the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce, Communities in Bloom and other active Harrow supporters, as well as several

community improvement grants for façade treatments, have helped to maintain the attractiveness of the downtown.

But there is a need to attract new employment activities, to re-energize existing businesses and to provide varied accommodation for residents and visitors.

Consequently, the Harrow Community Improvement Plan project area has been enlarged to meet these goals, As well existing programs have been amended and new programs introduced to make the overall community improvement plan more attractive and relevant to the needs of businesses, visitors and residents of Harrow.

2.0 Harrow Community Improvement Plan Program Strategy

2.1 Clarifications:

Acknowledgement Agreement means that all property owners making application(s) for grants are required to enter into a grant agreement with the Town of Essex. The grant agreement will specify such items as, but not be limited to, the specific purpose and amount of the grant applicable, the duration of the grant, if of the type spread out over time, and, in the event of a default of the agreement, the owner's obligation to repay through taxes or in such payment acceptable to the Town of Essex any monies received. The agreement is intended to encapsulate all of the terms and conditions included in the specified grant guidelines. It may be registered on title and applicable to present and subsequent owners of the property should the property be sold within a stated period of time.

Consistent with the Goals of the Plan refers to the overall goals of the Harrow Centre Community Improvement Plan, as described in the Plan.

Conversion means to create new affordable rental dwelling units or hotel or bed and breakfast accommodation in a dwelling or a combined use building by the addition of new building space to an existing building or the conversion of space within the existing building, in a manner acceptable to the Town and in compliance with the general zoning by-law, By-law 1037, and the Ontario Building Code.

Facade means those parts of the building directly visible from a street or public area.

Facade Improvements means any repairs or rehabilitation of the building facade as approved by the Town, including for example: the repairing, repainting or cleaning for the facade; restoration of facade masonry, brickwork or wood and metal cladding; replacing of cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features; repair and replacement of windows; entranceway modifications for improved accessibility; redesign of the store front; removal of inappropriate signage and installation of appropriate new signage; restoration of the original facade appearance; replacement or repair of canopies and awnings; installation of exterior lighting.

Final Inspection and Approval means that the work as described in the Acknowledgment Agreement has been completed in the manner approved by Council and has received final inspection and approval from the Town of Essex.

Municipal Wide Services Component of Development Charges means the municipal wide service component of the development charges fees, as set out in the Town of Essex Development Charges By-law for current rates and fees.

New affordable residential rental unit means a new multiple dwelling unit incorporated into a non-residential portion of a commercial building to provide affordable residential housing accommodation within the project area. Affordable is defined as a dwelling unit having a monthly rental rate of \$1000 or less or such other level established by Council on an individual application basis.

Project Area means the geographic area of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan delineated by by-law, as may be amended from time to time.

Property Owner means the owner of the land and or building, located in a Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Area, which is the subject of a program application within this plan. A person having signing authority and lawfully designated by the owner to make a program application on behalf of the property owner will also be deemed to be the property owner for the purposes of this Plan.

Rehabilitation means functional or aesthetic site improvements to the property approved by the Town, including for example: new information or identity signage; parking lot paving; public benches; landscaping and screening.

Urban Design Guidelines means the architectural and functional guidelines and objectives set out in subsection 5.3, Downtown Urban design Guidelines, of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan.

2.2 Program Start Date

For all Grant programs dealing with financial commitments, the program start date is based upon the annual Council approval of budget funding for the Plan.

2.3 Retroactivity

Program funding is only available after Council approval of the program(s) and the site specific application. The grant programs or architectural services will not be retroactively applied to works started prior to the commencement of the program, unless otherwise authorized by Council.

2.4 Allocation Grants and Architectural Services

Grants: All grants will be paid to the property owner after the application is approved by council and the approved work is successfully completed to the satisfaction of the Town.

Architectural Design Services: Architectural design services will be provided after the application and the requested design service and service fees are approved by Council.

3.0 Qualification Criteria for all Programs

All owners of properties within the Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Area are eligible to apply for funding, subject to meeting the following eligibility criteria, and the availability of funding as approved by Council. When an applicant is applying for a grant or architectural design service under the Plan, the following criteria must be met to the satisfaction of the Town of Essex.

The following terms and conditions apply to all programs:

- Each of the programs outlined are application based with Town of Essex staff recommending direction to Council on a site specific basis.
- The applicant must be the registered owner of the property for which the application is being made or an agent authorized by the registered owner.
- A property owner who is in arrears of property tax or any other municipal financial obligation cannot participate in a program.
- Any outstanding orders against the subject property must be satisfied prior to the grant application being made or other services rendered under this Plan, unless fulfillment of the order is part of the proposed work.
- Only one application can be made for a property under each applicable program, unless the project is phased in a manner satisfactory to Council or Council determines that a further application is merited.
- Proposed work will conform to all municipal policies, standards and procedures of the Town including: its current applicable Official Plan policies, relevant zoning, design guidelines and development manual policies and the necessary planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.
- A program application must be submitted to the Town of Essex prior to the commencement of any works and prior to application for a building permit directly related to program funding, unless otherwise permitted by Council.

- Such program application will include plans, estimates, contracts and other details as may be required to satisfy the Town with respect to the costs of the project and conformity of the project to the Plan.
- A property owner may be requested to provide a business plan for the proposed work, as part of the program application.
- As a condition of approval, the Town of Essex may also require the submission of professional design and architectural drawings, which satisfy the applicable Urban Design Guidelines of the Plan, as well as, impact studies or mitigation criteria, such as a traffic impact study or an environmental screening report.
- The Town of Essex will require the applicant to provide information on grants previously received for the subject property from all sources and the amount of the grants will be taken into account in consideration of an application.
- The total value of grants and services received from the Town of Essex for a subject property shall not exceed the total value of the project or such other minimum level established in the respective program(s).
- All property owners participating in any program will be required to enter into an Acknowledgement Agreement with the Town of Essex. The Council of the Town of Essex will be the approval authority for the execution of an agreement. The agreement will be registered on title and will specify the terms of the grant or services.
- All completed works must comply with the description of the works set out in the related Acknowledgment Agreement.
- When a grant is to be given, the owner will submit, for final approval, a copy of all paid invoices for work that is completed. Grants will be made upon successful completion of the approved work and documentation of the costs associated with the work, in accordance with the provisions of the program.
- The Town of Essex may undertake an audit of work done and associated costs if it deems it necessary. The cost of the audit will be deducted from the approved grant amount.

- Unless the Town deems it appropriate to enter into an agreement with a subsequent owner or transferee for continuation of the grant, if a building, erected or improved with the assistance of a program grant or services, is demolished, sold or its ownership transferred prior to the expiry of the grant or service agreement period, stated in the Acknowledgement Agreement, at the discretion of the Town, the grant or services are forfeited and monies will be recovered by the Town either through posting the fees on the property taxes or by the owner paying a lump sum payment to the Town of Essex.
- Failure to complete the works approved for the grant in accordance with the executed agreement may result in the grant monies being immediately forfeited and become due and payable to the Town as taxes or such other form of payment acceptable to the Town.
- The Town may at any time discontinue a program; however, any participants in the program, who have an Acknowledgment Agreement executed prior to program discontinuation, will continue to receive grants or services as approved for their property, in accordance with the provisions of the program and acknowledgment agreement.

4.0 Administration

The following general steps will guide Town of Essex staff in review, evaluation and administration of applications:

- Applicants will be required to have a pre-consultation meeting with appropriate Town of Essex staff in order to determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing and compliance with the Urban Design Guidelines.
- The Town may request that applications be accompanied by one or more of the following supporting documentation:
 - a site plan and professional design or architectural drawings;
 - specification of the proposed works, and if requested, any construction drawings;
 - estimated project construction costs, including a breakdown of said costs;
 - impact studies such as traffic and parking impact assessments;
 - environmental reports or a record of site condition;
 - incorporation documents;
 - financial information or a market feasibility study, including, but not necessarily limited to:
 - sources and uses of funds;
 - financial statements;
 - purchase price of property;
 - appraised value of property;
 - owner equity;
 - registered mortgages;
 - details of primary construction lending and secondary financing;
 - and,
 - projected unit sale prices and/or rental rates
 - projected employment levels.

- Before accepting an application, Town staff will screen the application. If the lands affected are outside of a Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Area or the application clearly does not meet the program eligibility criteria, the application will not be accepted. Acceptance of the application by the Town does not imply approval under the Plan.
- Town staff will perform an initial site visit and inspection of the building or property, if deemed necessary.
- The owner must provide evidence of financial capability to develop the property according to the terms of the program.
- If all criteria are met, staff will provide a recommendation regarding the Program Application and the execution of an Acknowledgement Agreement to Town of Essex Council or Council's designate for consideration.
- Once Council or Council's designate has approved the Program Application request and Acknowledgement Agreement, the Agreement will first be executed by the owner and then by the Town of Essex.
- Preparation for the release of grants will be processed after:
 - the Agreement has been executed and registered on title;
 - staff inspect the property and document the pre-development state;
 - staff are satisfied with all reports and documentation submitted;
 - a building permit has been issued.
- The monies or services will be advanced to the property owner on satisfactory completion of the project in accordance with the terms of the program and proof of payment of all related invoices and a copy of the invoice(s) have been presented to the Town.

4.1 Resource Implications

The allocation of grant and staff resources towards the programs included in the Harrow Community Improvement Plan will be at the sole discretion of the Council for The Corporation of the Town of Essex and:

- It is anticipated that the Harrow Community Improvement Plan will be implemented over a 10 year time period. Town of Essex Council may elect to extend the implementation period, discontinue or amend the Plan, as it deems appropriate or necessary.
- The Plan and its Implementation Strategy will be reviewed and assessed by Planning Staff annually and may be amended from time to time by a by-law amendment to the Plan, at Council's discretion.
- Council has adopted Urban Design Guidelines to provide guidance to the property owner as well as staff and Council to ensure, where applicable, that all applications conform to desired design concepts and strategies for the development of lands within the boundaries of the Plan.
- The Implementation Strategy establishes the details of and obligations under each program available. Please refer below to Section 5.2 Program Descriptions.
- Council will establish the level of incentives offered and will, as part of its annual budget process, determine if changes in the incentive levels are necessary, desirable or warranted.
- Any changes to the programs or project area boundaries of the Plan will require an amendment to the Plan by by-law.
- Based on the program package described above, the resource requirements are:
 - Staff and professional resources to administer the program package;
 - Professional architectural services to be contracted and provided by the Town;
 - Marketing, advertising and other delivery costs for the Plan;
 - Council approval to grant monies under the following programs.

5.0 Program Details

A description of each of the Plan programs is provided in this section. The allocation of resources toward all programs and to each program in the Harrow Community Improvement Plan will be entirely at the discretion of Council for the Town of Essex.

A property owner may make application for a grant or services under one or more programs, subject to eligibility. Only one application can be made for a property under any program, unless development is phased in a manner acceptable to Council.

Owners must make application in writing to the Town and meet all of the information requirements set out in the application package or as required by the Town.

All property owners participating in any program will be required to enter into an Acknowledgement Agreement with the Town of Essex. The Council of the Town of Essex will be the approval authority for the execution of an Agreement. The Agreement will specify the terms of the grant and services and set out a description of the works approved. Depending on the program, the Agreement will be registered on title. All completed works must comply with the description of the works set out in the related Agreement and the terms and conditions therein.

5.1 Program Groups

Exclusively for lands within a Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Area, an eligible property owner has access to one or more of the following eight financial incentive programs:

Development Grant Programs

- Development Permit Fee Grant Program
- Development Charges Grant Program
- Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program
- Parks Levy Equivalent Grant Program

Revitalization Grant Programs

- Façade Improvement Grant Program
- Outdoor Cafe, Patio, and Commercial Outdoor Space Grant Program

- Conversions and Rehabilitation Grant Program
- Architectural Design Services Grant Program

5.2 Program Descriptions:

5.2.1 Development Permit Fee Grant Program

The **Development Permit Fee Grant Program** provides a grant to property owners undertaking works that require approval under the Planning Act or the Building Code Act or both. This program applies to Planning Act applications or construction permits to which fees, hereby referred to as development permit fees, apply.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Owners of a dwelling or other building to be converted to a bed and breakfast dwelling or to which an affordable rental dwelling unit is to be added or of a commercial or industrial property are eligible to participate in this program.
- Eligible development permits are applications for any one or more of: an Official Plan Amendment; a Zoning By-Law Amendment; a Minor Variance; a Site Plan Control Agreement; Consent or plan of subdivision approval; Removal of the Holding (h) designation; a Demolition Permit; a Building Permit; a Plumbing Permit; a Sign Permit and a Driveway Permit.
- The property owner will receive the grant equivalent of the development permit fee or combination of fees charged by the Town for the approved project.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works.

5.2.2 Development Charges Grant Program

The **Development Charges Grant Program** provides a grant equivalent to the municipal wide services component of the development charges fee applicable to the property owner undertaking works to which Development Charges apply.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Where development charges are applicable, eligible works include: new affordable rental dwelling units; new commercial development on vacant lands or the expansion of existing commercial buildings and facilities; new industrial development on vacant lands and the expansion of existing industrial buildings and facilities.
- The municipal wide services component of development charges paid by the property owner is returned by means of a grant equivalent to 100 percent of that component.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works.

5.2.3 Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program

The **Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program** provides a grant equivalent to the municipality's annual incremental tax increase from a development that increases the assessed value of the property.

Program Specific Provisions:

- The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program applies to:
new affordable rental dwelling units; new commercial development and the expansion of existing commercial buildings and facilities and new industrial development and the expansion of existing industrial buildings and facilities, where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Council that the proposed works directly result in a net increase in employment opportunities on the lands which are the subject of a tax increment equivalent grant application.
- Grants will only be made to property owners undertaking work consistent with the Urban Design Guidelines, where applicable.
- Development of the land must result in an increase in the assessed value of the property.

- The pre-approved assessed value of the land will be the value of the land on the date of application for a building permit.
- The municipal grant amount is determined by the incremental property tax increase applied to the property as a direct result of the works set out in the grant application approved by Council.
- A maximum grant equal to 100 percent of the incremental property tax increase payable to the Town is given for each of the first 5 years following the date of final inspection and approval of the completed works. Another period of time and payment schedule may be set by Council; however, the total amount of the grant will not exceed the total grant equivalent of 100 percent of the incremental property tax increase payable to the Town for the first 5 years, nor will it be less than 100 percent of the incremental tax increase for the first year following the date of final inspection and approval of the completed works.
- Council will determine the total amount of the grant based on the net increase in on site employment, the employment generation potential of the project within the community, the level of investment, the costs of construction and land preparation, and, where applicable, the cost of building rehabilitation.
- The grant is paid annually to the property owner at such time and in such manner as approved by Council for the time period set out in the agreement; however, the date of the first payment shall be determined when the tax annual assessment increases have been formally set by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.
- If the use of the property changes while the acknowledgement agreement grant time period is in effect, such that the purpose and intent of the grant is declared by the Town to be null and void, the grant is immediately cancelled and any grant monies received become due and payable 'as taxes' to the Town, unless the Town deems it appropriate to enter into a new agreement with the property owner for continuation of the grant.

5.2.4 Parks Levy Equivalent Grant Program

The **Parks Levy Equivalent Grant Program** applies to vacant lands, to which, as mandated in the Town of Essex Official Plan, a parks levy equal to 2 or 5 percent of the predevelopment value of the property applies.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Council shall first be satisfied that cash in lieu of parkland is warranted.
- Grants will be made for new affordable rental dwelling units and new commercial and industrial development exclusively to property owners undertaking works that increase energy efficiency in new buildings above the related minimum standards applicable under the Ontario Building Code or who provide Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified or other Town approved green technologies to new developments.
- The grant is equivalent to the parks levy applied to the property as a direct result of the works set out in the grant application approved by Council.
- The monetary value of the works must equal or exceed the amount of the parks levy applicable to the property.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works or in accordance with a phasing plan approved by Council for multiple or phased projects on the property.

5.2.5 Façade Improvement Grant Program

The **Facade Improvement Grant Program** offers assistance to property owners who are undertaking commercial or industrial building façade improvements.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Eligible works include:

any repairs or rehabilitation of the front, rear or side building façade, as approved by the Town, including the repairing, repainting or cleaning for the façade, restoring a facade with masonry, brickwork, wood and metal cladding, replacing cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features, repairing and replacing windows, entranceway modifications for accessibility, redesigning the store front, removing inappropriate or out-dated signage and installing new signage, restoring the original facade appearance, replacing or repairing canopies and awnings, installing exterior lighting and installing energy-efficient fixtures or cladding.

- Grants will be made to commercial and industrial property owners undertaking façade improvements consistent with the Urban Design Guidelines of the Plan.
- The grant amount is 50 percent of the total cost of the approved works to a maximum grant of \$12,000 per building at a rate of \$250 per linear meter of exterior front facade and \$125 for each linear meter of exterior side and rear façade.
- Rear façade improvements are eligible only if the rear façade faces and abuts a public lane or a parking area accessible to the public or the rear wall provides direct access to outdoor publically accessible facilities accessory and complementary to the main use of the building.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works.

5.2.6 Outdoor Café, Patio and Commercial Outdoor Space Grant Program

The **Outdoor Café, Patio and Commercial Open Space Grant Program** offers assistance to property owners who are undertaking the construction of outdoor cafes, patios or other commercial open space, that is accessory and complementary to a commercial use within a building on the same lot.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Eligible works include: new accessible entrances to and from the designated outdoor area, new identification and directional signage, hardscape and

landscape facilities and other features to define, shelter, delineate and otherwise enhance the outdoor space.

- Grants will be made to property owners undertaking work consistent with the goals of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines therein.
- The grant amount is 50 percent of the total cost of the approved works to a maximum grant of \$4,000.
- If the use of the property changes within 5 years after the giving of the grant, such that the purpose and intent of the grant is declared by the Town to be null and void, the grant is immediately cancelled and any grant monies received become due and payable 'as taxes' to the Town, unless the Town deems it appropriate to enter into a new agreement with the property owner for continuation of the grant.
- Where the improvements encroach onto municipal property or a public right of way, the property owner and business operator must enter into an Encroachment Agreement with the Town. The property owner and business operator must indemnify and save the Corporation harmless from all claims for damages sustained by any person, by reason of the permission granted in the encroachment agreement. The property owner and business operator must maintain public liability and property damage coverage in the said encroachment area structure with the Corporation as a named insured and to provide proof thereof annually to the Town.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works.

5.2.7 Conversion and Rehabilitation Grant Program

The **conversion component of this Program** offers assistance to property owners who are creating a bed and breakfast dwelling or who intend to utilize existing above the ground floor commercial building space or an existing low density residential dwelling to create a new affordable rental dwelling unit(s), hotel rooms or suites or

bed and breakfast rooms or suites, where permitted by the general zoning by-law. When related to these conversions, grant monies may also be made available for the provision of additional on-site parking, exterior security lighting, new accessible building entrances and other external safety and accessibility features mandated by the works required to complete the conversion approved under this application.

The **rehabilitation component of this Program** offers assistance to property owners to bring existing affordable rental dwelling units up to the current minimum standards of energy efficiency under the Ontario Building Code. Grant monies can also be used by commercial and industrial business operators for new landscaping, the screening and buffering of parking areas and other works that are specifically intended to improve the aesthetic appearance of the property from the street or to mitigate nuisances impacting an adjacent residential area.

Program Specific Provisions:

- The grant amount for conversion is 50 percent of the total cost of the approved conversion to a maximum grant of \$2,000 per rental dwelling unit and \$1000 per hotel unit or suite of rooms or bed and breakfast bedroom or suite of rooms to a maximum overall grant of \$6,000 for the building.
- The grant amount for the rehabilitation of existing affordable rental dwelling units is 50 percent of the total cost of the approved rehabilitation works to a maximum grant of \$2,000 per rental dwelling unit and a maximum overall grant of \$6,000 for the building.
- If the use of the building changes within 5 years after the giving of the grant, such that the purpose and intent of the grant is declared by the Town to be null and void, the grant is immediately cancelled and any grant monies received become due and payable 'as taxes' to the Town, unless the Town deems it appropriate to enter into a new agreement with the property owner for continuation of the grant.

- For aesthetic and buffering improvements to commercial and industrial properties, the grant amount is 50 percent of the total cost of the approved rehabilitation to a maximum of \$6,000 for the property.
- The grant payment is normally made to the property owner within 30 working days following final inspection and approval of the completed works.

5.2.8 Architectural Design Services Grant Program

The Town may provide professional architectural design services to building owners for the preparation of a design study for building restoration, enhancement and preservation works. The Town will enter into a contract with a qualified architect to provide the consulting service to the applicant once the request for services has been approved by the Town. The Architectural Design Services Program Grant is intended to provide a financial incentive in the form of a grant to offset the cost of preparing professional architectural drawings required or encouraged by the Town.

The professional architectural service provided must be consistent with the Plan's Urban Design Guidelines and utilized in conjunction with the following grant programs: Facade Improvement Grant Program, Outdoor Café, Patio and Commercial Outdoor Space Grant Program or the Conversion and Rehabilitation Grant Program.

The professional services will be provided to the applicant upon staff approval of the application and fee schedule. The professional services will be contracted by the Town and will not require payment by the applicant.

Program Specific Provisions:

- Grants will only be made on behalf of property owners undertaking work consistent with the goals of the Harrow Community Improvement Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines therein.
- This program offers professional design services to a maximum fee for service of \$2,000.
- The property owner must sign an Acknowledgement Agreement form at the time that the grant is approved.

6.0 Monitoring and Assessment

The Town will conduct periodic reviews of the programs being implemented under the Harrow Community Strategic Plan and, on an annual basis, determine their effectiveness and whether modifications to a program should be made. It is anticipated that the Harrow Community Improvement Plan will be implemented over a 10 year time period. Town of Essex Council may elect to extend the implementation period as it deems appropriate or necessary.

Planning staff for the Town of Essex will monitor the DHCIP program and report to Council on an annual basis each December with a recommendation on the future level of funding to ensure funding sources are considered with each annual budget.

Planning staff will maintain a database to include the following:

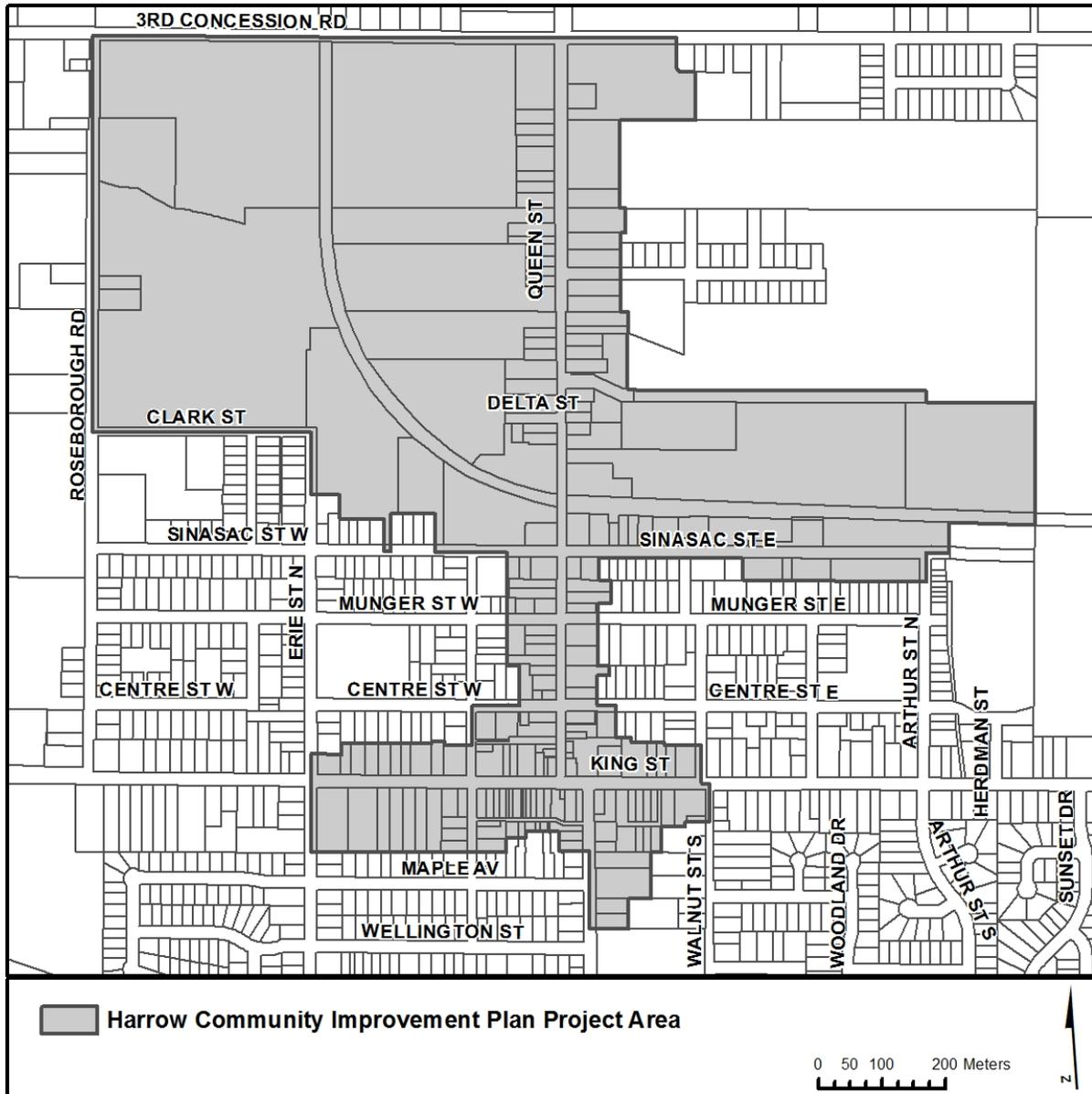
- number of approved applications and completed works for the year;
- the program utilized for each application;
- the amount of grant money provided for each program;
- the financial implications to the Town and budget for the above;
- recommendations for the next years' budget requirements.

Planning Staff report will provide an annual recommendation on the merits of continuation, expansion or cessation of the Plan and its programs. Significant changes proposed by staff or Council to the Plan will require an amendment by by-law approved by Council. Administrative changes and minor adjustments can be made without amendment.

7.0 Harrow Community Improvement Plan Project Maps

Map 1

Boundary Map of the Harrow Community improvement Plan Project Area



Appendix B

Map 1 Harrow Community Improvement Plan Gateway and Street Options

