

## Amended Community Improvement Plan Town of Minto

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 Council approved a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates after significant community development work with Downtown Committees, staff, Council and stakeholders including business operators and landowners.

A Plan must be in place for a Town to offer a development incentive. Section 106 of the Municipal Act prevents municipalities from “directly or indirectly” helping a “manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise” by granting financial incentives. Section 28 of the Planning Act allows incentives to businesses to complete development outlined in a community improvement plan and incentives for upgrades to municipal land, selling or leasing land to businesses, providing grants or loans to businesses, and property tax incentives. Section 365 of the Municipal Act covers the Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program to help landowners redevelop contaminated land.

The 2009 Community Improvement Plan is a quality working document that successfully supports downtown redevelopment. Performance measures for the program demonstrate for every \$1 invested by the Town, the private sector invests \$ \$4.12 (as of end of 2014). Minto Commercial assessment has increased by over 9%, and since 2010 there was over \$2.4 million in commercial construction value to the benefit of the community. The positive performance measures are attributed to the strong overall program developed by Economic Development and Tourism staff, the Committees who support this work, business “buying in” to producing in Minto, and successive Councils who supported the program.

### 2.0 PURPOSE

This Community Improvement Plan amendment is intended to achieve the following:

- a) Enhance and extend the Stempski Kelly Plan approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 so that original plan remains in effect in its entirety;
- b) **Add locations** along Main Streets in Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston within which the Town may offer incentives outlined in Stempski Kelly Plan approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 **as well as add a Direct Grant for Structural Work as an additional incentive in these Main Street areas.**
- c) Identify new areas in Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston within which the Town may offer a menu of additional incentives under this amendment to the Community Improvement Plan; and
- d) **Define new incentives that may be offered by the Town within its three urban areas for Commercial, Residential, Industrial, or Institutional without losing focus on core areas, and maintaining downtown cores as key focal points.**

Areas in Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston subject to the Stempski Kelly Plan approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and to this amendment to the Community Improvement Plan are shown on Maps 1, 2, and 3.

### 3.0 GOALS

The amended Community Improvement Plan goals are as follows:

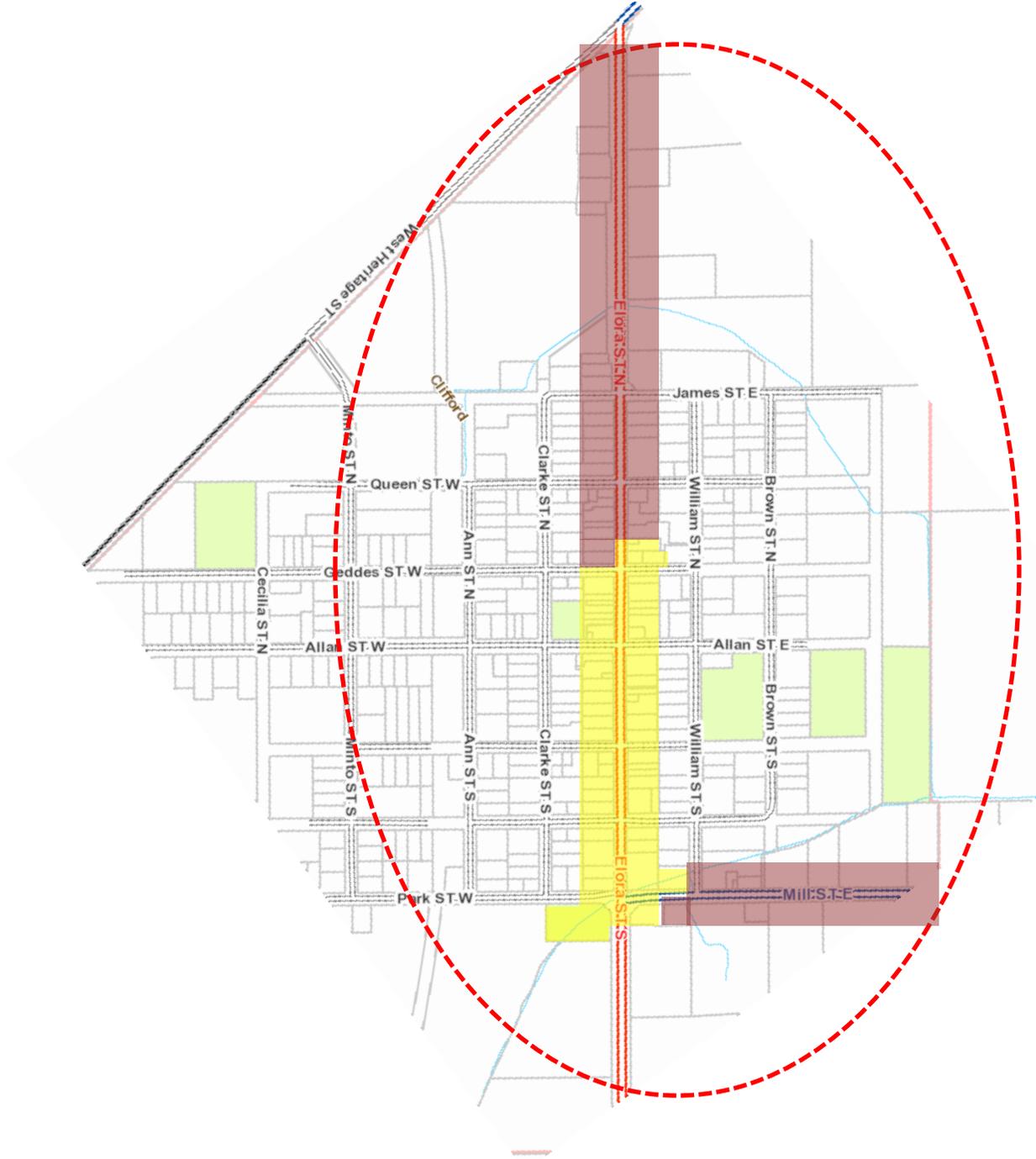
- a) To confirm goals set out in Section 1.3 a) through e) of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 continue to apply to the areas identified in that plan, and to the Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives shown on Maps 1, 2, and 3 of this plan;
- b) To extend the timeframe set out in Section 1.3 f) of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from December 31, 2014 to December 31, 2020 for those areas identified in that plan and for the Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives shown in Maps 1, 2, and 3 of this plan;
- c) **With a focus on downtown or commercial core areas, promote incentives that encourage and support** a healthy long term mix of land uses that improve, develop and sustain services in Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston to the benefit of Minto urban and rural residents, businesses, and visitors to the area.
- d) **To provide specific incentives in downtown or commercial core areas that ensure these locations remain key focal points in the community, and offer an enhanced menu of incentives in downtown or commercial core areas as well as broader urban areas that the Town may approve for significant industrial, commercial, residential or institutional re-developments that further municipal urban design, servicing, environmental and other economic development interests.**
- e) Ensure all incentives offered are consistent with Provincial Policy, comply with County Official Plan, implement Town strategic directions, and promote the best interests of the community.

#### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the amended Community Improvement Plan are as follows:

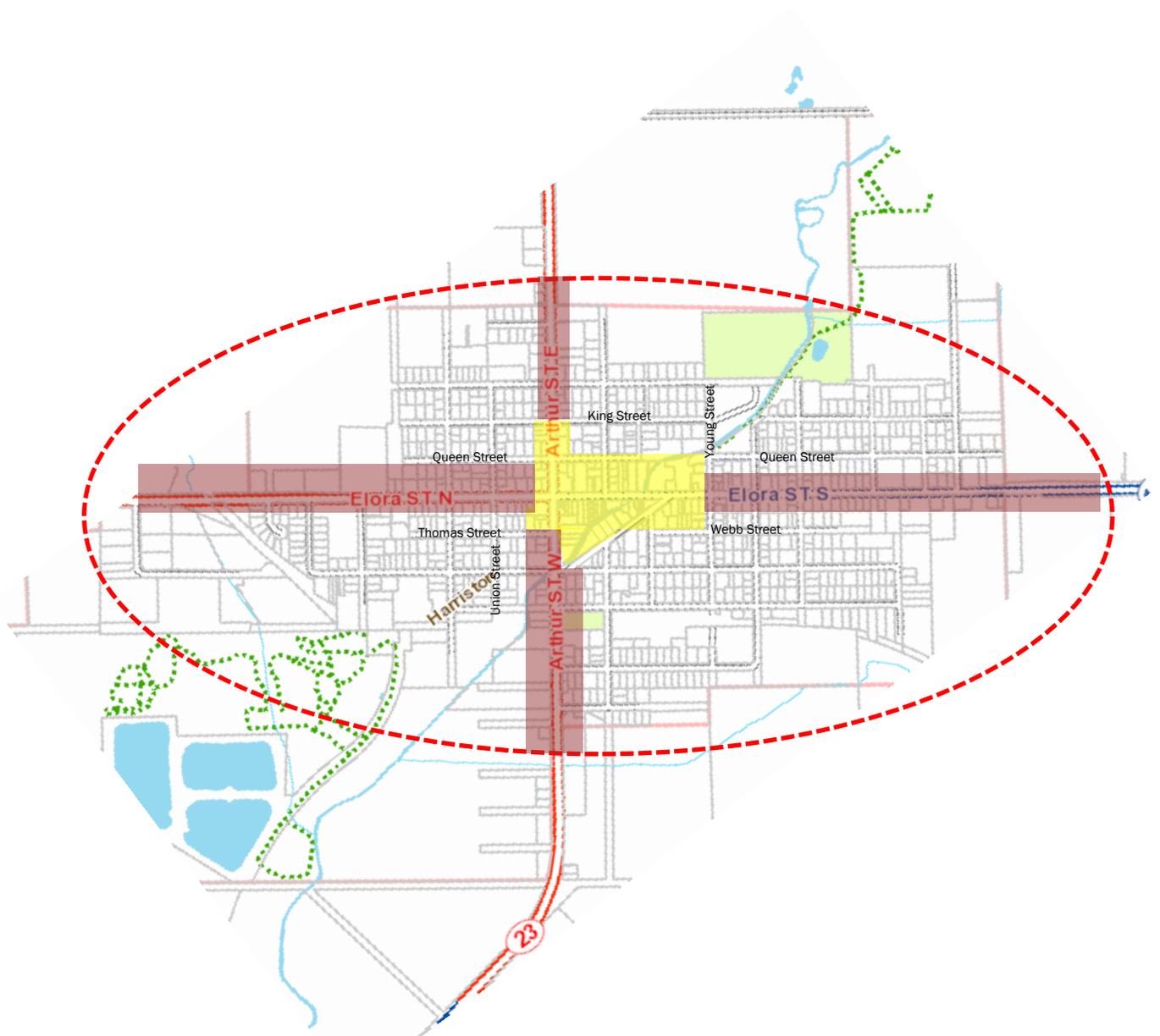
- a) As set out in Section 1.4 (a) through (c) of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 for the areas identified in the original plan and the Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives specified Maps 1, 2, and 3 of this plan.
- b) **To add a Direct Grant for Structural Work as an additional incentive for areas set out in the Stempski Kelly Associates Plan and the Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives specified on Maps 1, 2, and 3 of this plan to help retain, upgrade and enhance the existing building stock.**
- c) **Permit, approve and encourage development that contributes to downtown and commercial core areas growing in form and function as viable and critical focal points in the community.**
- d) Within the Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area permit the Town to offer incentives to landowners, businesses and developers that propose **significant commercial, industrial, residential or institutional projects that substantially renovate, restore, improve and upgrade a prominent building or structure or key vacant property, and accomplish more than one of the following:**
  - i) address **structural and life safety issues** to create **usable and efficient floor space**
  - ii) improve **property standards** or preserve **architectural significance**
  - iii) remediate a **brownfield** site, or improve the environment by **planting trees, protecting habitat**, or other methods to enhance the **natural ecosystems**,
  - iv) upgrade **public infrastructure** such as sewer, water, storm, roadway, sidewalks

Map 1: Clifford Community Improvement Project Area



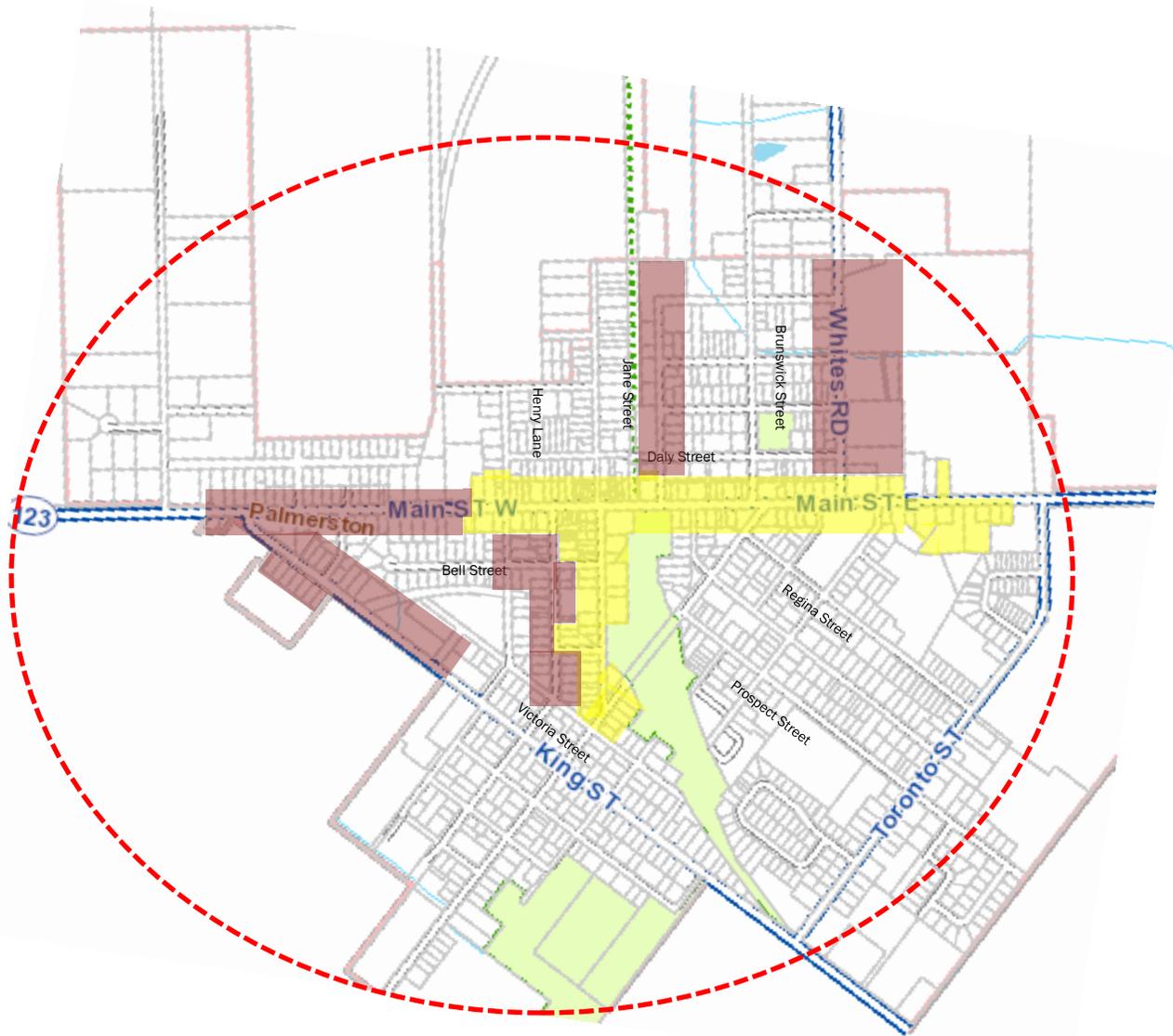
-  Approximate Community Improvement Project Area Set out in By-law 09-09
-  Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives
-  Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area in By-law 2015-\_\_\_ where incentives are set for Downtown, Commercial, Residential, Industrial, and Institutional Areas

Map 2: Harriston Community Improvement Project Area



-  Approximate Community Improvement Project Area Set out in By-law 09-09
-  Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives
-  Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area in By-law 2015-\_\_\_\_ where incentives are set for Downtown, Commercial, Residential, Industrial, and Institutional Areas

Map 3: Palmerston Community Improvement Project Area



Approximate Community Improvement Project Area Set out in By-law 09-09



Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives



Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area in By-law 2015-\_\_\_ where incentives are set for Downtown, Commercial, Residential, Industrial, and Institutional Areas

- v) preserve or enhance **employment opportunities**
  - vi) create **affordable housing in a range of occupancies**
  - vii) enhance **fire protection** such as **sprinkler systems**, fire separations and similar;
  - viii) improve **energy efficiency** or reduce water and sewer needs
  - ix) enhance **urban design** on and around the subject lands and **adjacent public space** as well as linkages to **trails, parks, core areas** and other **focal points**.
- d) Confirm that incentives within the Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area may include to a grant in lieu of application and permit fees, reduced or eliminated site plan or subdivision securities, development charge reductions or credits where requirements for water or sewer services significantly decreases direct grant for structural work, sale of Town owned lands at below appraised value, subsidized or front ended water, sewer and storm sewer installation as set out in Section 7.0 of this plan.
  - e) Ensure the requirements of sections 4.1 of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 are met, and an agreement has been executed with the Town approving the specific upgrades proposed for the site or building on the subject lands, the exact nature of the incentive provided, and other requirements of the Town including but not limited to tax arrears, work orders, property liens and similar are met.
  - f) Seek County and Provincial participation in Community Improvement Plan initiatives including where available matching or leveraging direct grants, payments in lieu of certain fees, development charge credits, tax incentives and similar.

## 5.0 STRATEGIC PLAN:

The following Strategic Plan initiatives support revitalized downtowns and urban areas:

- Ensure there is sufficient serviced/serviceable land for a variety of uses in Minto's three urban areas, and maintain a supply of municipally owned serviced industrial land for sale to business in accordance with Town policies.
- Encourage a healthy, clean, appealing quality of life to attract and retain engaged citizens, and create a welcoming environment for creative and entrepreneurial people to expand and develop small business.
- Continue retention and attraction strategies to help secure and stabilize existing business, and identify expansion and development opportunities from these contacts.
- Promote and maintain strong commercial cores with a healthy land use mix in urban areas of Clifford, Harriston and Palmerston to provide goods and services required by local residents and business.
- Support and expand Community Improvement Plan incentives to strengthen the Town's core commercial districts including programs to enhance maintenance of the existing building stock and encourage re-use of vacant buildings.
- Increase awareness of Minto as a place for family friendly businesses with thriving commercial districts, and a location to visit and shop. Approach outside retailers and promote benefits of relocating or establishing a business in Minto.
- Through Downtown Committees and political representatives, meet with local retailers to facilitate and develop themes, improvements and specials (ie. sidewalk sales, passport campaigns, heritage days, rental property promotions, loyalty programs, Christmas lights, Think Minto First etc.)

- Establish and maintain streamlined planning approval processes that use innovative and cost effective tools to protect Town and public interest and ensure development proceeds quickly and affordably.
- Provide grants for businesses that improve the building facades, address structural improvements, and promote re-use and redevelopment of existing buildings where architectural and heritage features are maintained.
- Enhance funding and increase the range of qualifying projects in the Community Improvement Plan, such as structural improvements, and promote existing incentives for Brownfield redevelopment and tax increment financing while encouraging the County and Province to participate. Review the Plan's geographic area to assess whether to include areas beyond the downtowns.
- Support policies and practices such as creative and flexible zoning by-laws to encourage commercial intensification, expansion and building re-use in downtown areas. Apply a combination of strict enforcement, and strong incentives to maintain and enhance the building stock.
- Continue to invest into maintaining and improving the visual appeal of downtown cores, ensure future development links into the design character of public space, and strengthen the 'one-town' feel with consistent visual design in original urban communities. (ie. similar colours, light standards, planters).
- Inventory, maintain and recognize heritage buildings in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, and consider the benefits of heritage designations and districts where there is proven economic and community benefit.
- Provide a structure to support a "one Town" identity to improve communication between related town services, organizations, businesses, education, healthcare and tourism, while still allowing local stories and heritage to be recognized and flourish.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

When the Town's Community Improvement Plan program approached five years old, Council initiated a program to update the Plan to address changes during the first implementation some of which are summarized below:

- New County Official Plan, and funding through Economic Development
- New Provincial Policy Statement and options for possible Provincial support
- Enhanced Planning Act Controls
- Property Standards By-laws Best Practices
- Completion of Streetscape Improvements Palmerston, Clifford
- Scheduled Streetscape Improvements Harriston
- On-going issues with vacant building in all urban areas
- Considerable uptake in facade and signage program
- Public discussion of land banking options (public-private partnership)
- Feedback on commercial industrial land sales on Town owned lands
- Class Environmental Assessment underway for Harriston Industrial Park
- Town community development land sales such as Harriston Senior School, Old Clifford Ball Diamond, and Ann Street Clifford

The main group reviewing the results of the first five years under a Community Improvement Plan were Downtown Revitalization Committees in Palmerston, Harriston and Clifford. During the review process minutes of these meetings were considered by the Economic Development and Planning Committee. Among the areas investigated are the following:

- Expanding the boundary of the Community Improvement Area to the urban service boundaries, or something less depending on issues.
- Enhanced funding and/or participation either from the Town, the County, or Province.
- Amending the Property Standards By-law to enhance standard maintenance requirements for buildings awaiting re-development, particularly at streetscape level.
- Additional financial incentives such as building permit and development charge rebates, structural improvements, affordable housing, land banking etc.

In the process of considering input from the Downton Committees, Economic Development and Planning recommended an enhanced budget for direct grants for 2015, and Council ratified the amount through its budget process. In early 2015 the Town initiated an amendment to the County Official Plan to recognize the enhanced community improvement plan work being completed at the committee level.

## 7.0 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRAMS

a) Programs outlined in Section 4.0 of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 continue to apply to the areas identified in that plan, and to the Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives identified within this Plan as well as the following new programs:

- i) grant in lieu of application and permit fees
- ii) reduced or eliminated site plan or subdivision securities
- iii) development charge reductions or credits where requirements for water or sewer services significantly decreases
- iv) direct grant for structural work
- v) sale of Town owned lands at below appraised value
- vi) subsidized or front ended water, sewer and storm sewer installation

b) The following chart summarizes additional programs available under the amended community improvement plan and anticipated benefits:

Program	Benefits
<p><i>Grant in Lieu</i> Grant equal to all or part of normal fees for Planning Act applications (rezoning or minor variance) fees for agreements or waiving conditions of severance or subdivision, engineering or planning consulting fees, or building permits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease upfront costs preserve architectural significance, increase urban design, upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards</li> </ul>
<p><i>Reduced or Eliminated Securities</i> Securities required under severance agreements, pre-servicing agreements, site plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease upfront costs, preserve architectural</li> </ul>

agreements, subdivision agreements may be reduced or waived	significance, increase urban design, upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards
<i>Development Charge Reduction, Credit</i> Town portion of development charges set out in the relevant by-law may be reduced or eliminated where the new development does not increase the net demand for trunk services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease upfront costs preserve architectural significance, increase urban design, upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards</li> </ul>
<i>Direct Grant for Structural Work</i> Where a project requires substantial structural work to preserve building stock a grant up to 50% of the total cost of improvements may be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support upfront costs preserve architectural significance, increase urban design, upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards</li> </ul>
<i>Sale of Town Lands below Appraised Amount</i> Industrial lands, property acquired through tax sale, or those purchased by the Town with a specific purpose of facilitating neighbourhood improvement may be sold at or below cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease upfront costs upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards</li> </ul>
<i>Subsidized or Front Ended Services</i> Town may assist with installing water, sewer and/or storm water services on existing road allowances only to facilitate major community development projects to address issues of developer timing,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease upfront costs preserve architectural significance, increase urban design, upgrade public infrastructure, improve energy efficiency, revitalize a brownfield site, or upgrade property standards</li> </ul>

c) The following outlines where such incentives may be approved by the Town:

- i) Community Improvement Areas Stempski Kelly Plan
  - All incentives under Section 4.0 of the March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009
  - All incentives under Section 7.0 of Community Improvement Plan 2015
- ii) Expanded Area for Downtown Incentives
  - All incentives under Section 4.0 of the March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009
  - All incentives under Section 7.0 of Community Improvement Plan 2015
- iii) Areas within Limit of Expanded Community Improvement Project Area
  - Incentives under Section 7.0 of Community Improvement Plan 2015 may include grant in lieu, reduced or eliminated securities, development charge reduction or credits, sale of Town Lands below Appraised Amount, direct grant for structural work.

## 8.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- a) The eligibility requirements for any program under the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 or the 2015 Community Improvement Plan shall be as set out in Section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 of the Stempski Kelly Associates Plan apply where necessary.
- b) The application and approval process under the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by Stempski Kelly Associates and approved by Council March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 or the 2015 Community Improvement Plan shall be as set out in Section 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 with the following noted additions and or exceptions:
  - I. Business and Economic Development Department Staff shall coordinate the application and approval process with recommendations from the applicable Downtown Revitalization Committee and/or Economic Development and Planning Committee as the case may be. Council must approve any incentive permitted under any Community Improvement Plan, and where a Committee recommendation is not available staff may consult with members electronically, or otherwise, prior to making a recommendation to Council.
  - II. To qualify for a structural improvement grant, applicants must employ the services of an architect or registered professional consulting engineer to design, approve and implement the construction work for which a grant is requested. No grant will be paid for a structural improvement unless a valid building permit is issued, all requisite inspections and certifications have been provided, final approval has been issued by the Chief Building Official, and certification is received that all accounts related to the construction work have been paid to the Town's satisfaction.
  - III. To effectively implement any incentive offered under this program the Town may require an agreement with the applicant to outline the nature of incentives approved by the Town, requirements to be met before payment is received, and on-going obligations of an applicant with respect to incentives received.
  - IV. In the event any improvement to a building for which an incentive has been provided is destroyed or not properly maintained by an applicant, the Town may at its sole discretion rescind the approval provided within 5 years and seek to collect any payment under this program from an applicant in a like manner to taxes.
  - V. Where a security under an agreement is waived by Council under this program such waiver shall be set out by resolution of Council.
  - VI. Where an application fee or development charge is to be waived under this program as an incentive to the development, applicants must pay the relevant fee or development charge as required by Town procedures in place at that time. Following completion of the project for which incentives were granted in accordance with the terms of the approval, and written certification by Town staff, payment equal to the applicable fee or charge shall be made from the budgeted proceeds of the Town's Community Improvement Plan program directly to the applicant who paid the relevant fee or development charge.