

14.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The Community Improvement provisions of the Planning Act provide the opportunity to plan for, and co-ordinate, comprehensive physical improvements to older areas of the City. "Community Improvement Policies" are intended to give municipalities a planning mechanism, and access to, a variety of provincial cost-sharing programs, to address deficiencies within designated areas in a co-ordinated and comprehensive fashion, and to encourage private investment activity in these areas.

Under the Planning Act, municipalities may designate "Community Improvement Project Areas" within which the City may acquire lands, prepare improvement plans, and undertake various community improvement projects and works to implement these plans. The policies of this Chapter of the Plan provide a framework for the selection and designation of "Community Improvement Project Areas", and for the preparation and implementation of community improvement plans.

14.1.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

It is intended that the application of the Community Improvement Policies shall be directed towards the following objectives:

- i) Provide for the designation of "Community Improvement Project Areas" in areas of the City that exhibit problems of instability, building deterioration, inadequate municipal services and facilities, or inappropriate arrangement of land uses.
- ii) Promote the long term stability and viability of designated "Community Improvement Project Areas".
- iii) Encourage the co-ordination of municipal expenditures and planning and development activity within designated "Community Improvement Project Areas".
- iv) Stimulate private property maintenance and reinvestment activity.
- v) Enhance the visual quality of designated "Community Improvement Project Areas" through the recognition and protection of heritage buildings.
- vi) Reduce the detrimental effects of incompatible land uses in designated "Community Improvement Project Areas".
- vii) Upgrade physical services and social and recreational facilities in designated "Community Improvement Project Areas".
- viii) Promote the improvement of energy efficiency standards for residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational,

institutional, religious, charitable or other uses within the designated community improvement project areas.

- ix) Support the creation of Affordable Housing by considering any municipally-owned, undeclared surplus land for Affordable Housing before any other use is considered subject to policy 12.12.2.2. ix) of this Plan.
- x) Support the implementation of measures that will assist in achieving sustainable development and sustainable living.
- xi) Support the retention of heritage properties or areas.

(Clauses viii), ix), x) and xi) added by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09)

14.2.

SELECTION AND PHASING OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Areas within the City which are eligible for designation as residential, commercial, or industrial "Community Improvement Project Areas" are shown on Figure 14-1 of the Plan - Areas Eligible for Community Improvement. Policies of this Section of the Plan describe the basis for the selection of these areas, and outline criteria for the designation and phasing of "Community Improvement Project Areas".

14.2.1. Areas Eligible for Community Improvement

Eligible areas from which specific "Community Improvement Project Areas" may be designated, are shown on Figure 14-1 of the Plan, "Areas Eligible for Community Improvement". Additional eligible areas may be added by amendment to the Plan.

Residential

- i) The selection of areas which are eligible for residential community improvement is based on the following criteria:
 - (a) a significant proportion of residential properties in need of rehabilitation;
 - (b) average household income below City average;
 - (c) deficiency or inadequate development of parkland or social and recreational facilities;
 - (d) need for improvement to municipal services including storm sewers, sanitary sewers, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, streetlights, and watermains;
 - (e) a stable pattern of land use; and
 - (f) eligibility for designation for assistance under a neighbourhood improvement program.

Commercial and Industrial

- ii) The selection of areas which are eligible for commercial or industrial community improvement is based on the following

criteria:

- (a) older areas of predominantly commercial or industrial use, which are potentially stable and viable;
- (b) need for improvement to streetscapes and municipal services including storm sewers, sanitary sewers, sidewalks, curbs and gutters, streetlights and watermains;
- (c) a significant proportion of commercial properties in need of rehabilitation;
- (d) traffic or parking problems;
- (e) land use problems associated with incompatible uses or an under-utilization of land, which detracts from the functioning and viability of the area; and
- (f) a demonstrated interest in community improvement by the private firms within an area.

**14.2.2.
Designation of
Community
Improvement
Project Areas**

Council may designate, by by-law, "Community Improvement Project Areas" from the areas shown on Figure 14-1 - Areas Eligible for Community Improvement. These areas are eligible for "community improvement" as defined in the *Planning Act*.

Residential

- i) Two categories of eligible residential areas have been defined as follows:
 - (a) High Priority Areas, which are currently designated for assistance under a neighbourhood improvement program, or which meet all of the other criteria.
 - (b) Low Priority Areas, which are deficient only in municipal services or park and recreational facilities, but not both; or which have indications of instability in the existing pattern of land use.

Commercial

- ii) The eligible commercial areas are:
 - (a) The Downtown, as defined on Schedule "A" - the Land Use map.

This area includes a Business Improvement Area known as the Downtown Improvement Area.
 - (b) Old East Village

This is an older commercial district designated by the Old East Village Community Improvement Project Area and

encompassing the Old East Business Improvement Area.
(OPA #442)

(c) Established Older Business Districts

Several older business districts which serve neighbourhood and, in some cases, broader retail markets, have been delineated on the basis of their age and potential benefit from co-ordinated physical improvements.

(d) SoHo Area

This Amendment applies to lands that are designated Main Street Commercial Corridor and located on Wellington Street between the Thames River (South Branch) and the Canadian National Railway or lands that are designated Main Street Commercial Corridor or Auto-Oriented Commercial Corridor and located on Horton Street.

(OPA #503)

iii)

Industrial

iv) The eligible industrial areas are:

(a) Older Industrial Areas

Several older industrial areas of the City which have been delineated on the basis of their age and potential benefit from coordinated physical improvements.

(b) Special Study Area

An older industrial area extending south from Dundas Street to the C.N.R. rail lines east of Egerton Street where several industries have initiated a request for municipal attention to the improvement of municipal services in the area.

(c) Airport Area

The area in proximity to London International Airport generally east of Airport Road and north of the C.P.R. and designated for industrial development.

(OPA 389)

Brownfields

- v) The eligible brown field sites include vacant or underutilized lands and buildings located within the Urban Growth Area that have been contaminated as a result of previous development activity. (OPA No. 382)

The following factors will be considered in the selection and phasing of

**14.2.3.
Phasing**

Federal and
Provincial
Programs

"Community Improvement Project Areas":

i) The availability of federal and provincial programs as well as the relative need for physical improvement in specific areas.

Priorities

ii) Those residential areas shown on Figure 14-1 - Areas Eligible for Community Improvement, as Low Priority, will generally be considered after the areas of High Priority, except where circumstances warrant earlier consideration.

14.3.

IMPLEMENTATION

The policies of this Section of the Plan describe various initiatives which may be undertaken by Council to deal with existing deficiencies and to encourage private investment activity within designated "Community Improvement Project Areas".

**14.3.1.
Residential**

Within residential areas shown on Figure 14-1 - Areas Eligible for Community Improvement, federal and provincial government programs which are made available to assist with area improvement will be utilized where appropriate.

**14.3.2.
Commercial**

Council may encourage revitalization, redevelopment, and infilling development in commercial areas using the powers provided in the *Municipal Act* and the *Planning Act*. This may include the upgrading of underground services and utilities to support more intensive redevelopment, the use of zoning practices which support a community improvement plan, and the provision of loans to the owners of commercial properties to encourage rehabilitation.

Downtown

- i) Community improvements in the Downtown will be designed to:
- (a) implement the objectives and policies of the Official Plan with respect to the Downtown; and
 - (b) provide for streetscaping, servicing, and building rehabilitation and improvements to enhance the Downtown, and encourage complementary revitalization or redevelopment through private investment.

Older Established
Business Districts

ii) Community improvements in established business districts will address the needs of the area for both servicing improvements and projects to improve the attractiveness and functioning of the area.

**14.3.3.
Industrial**

Community improvements in industrial areas will either upgrade or provide municipal services such as curbs, gutters, sewers, sidewalks, streetlighting and roads to improve the function of the area and its potential attractiveness for new firms or expansion of existing firms. Council may also encourage redevelopment or infill development in conformity with a community improvement plan through the provision of

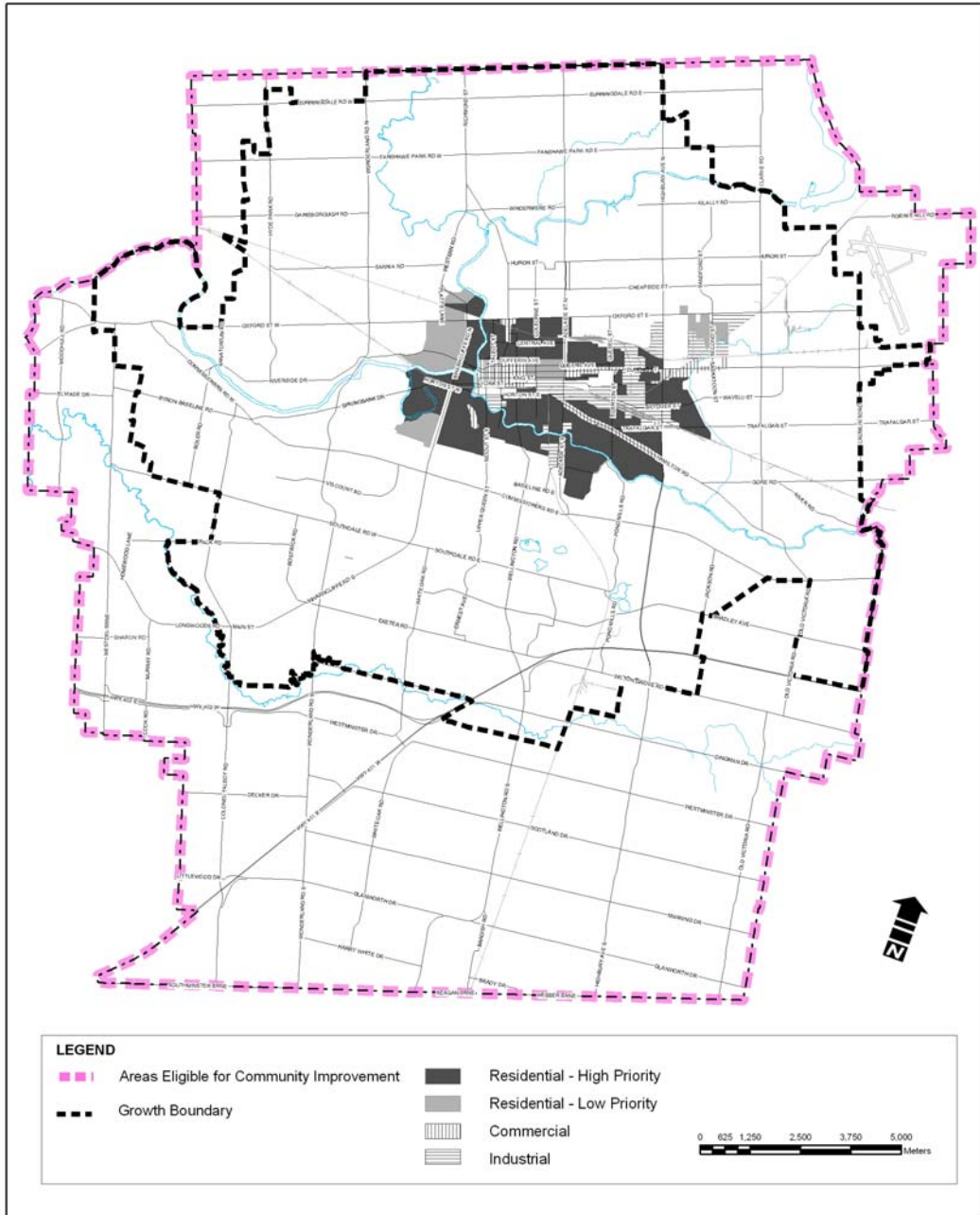
loans to the owners of industrial properties.
(OPA No. 389)

**14.3.4.
Other
Implementation
Measures**

In addition to the community improvement methods discussed in the preceding sections, Council may assist in the implementation of community improvement through the following methods:

- | | | |
|--|-------|---|
| Official Plan,
Zoning By-law
Amendments | i) | consideration of the objectives of community improvement within individual "Community Improvement Project Areas" in the evaluation of applications for Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendments in these areas; |
| Preparation of
Budget | ii) | consideration of the need for community improvement measures during the preparation of the capital and current budgets; |
| Land Acquisitions | iii) | the acquisition, holding and preparation of land for the purposes of community improvement within designated "Community Improvement Project Areas", where appropriate; |
| Property
Standards | iv) | the enforcement of the Property Standards By-law to avoid seriously sub-standard properties in accordance with the policies of Section 19.10. of the Plan; and |
| Building
Rehabilitation and
Conversion
Programs | v) | the administration of senior government programs for the rehabilitation of residential buildings or the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use. |
| Brownfields | vi) | the adoption of incentives to encourage the remediation and redevelopment of vacant or underutilized lands and buildings that have been contaminated as a result of previous development activity. (OPA No. 382) |
| Grants and Loans | vii) | grants and loans may be provided by the City to registered owners, assessed owners, and tenants of lands and buildings within a community improvement project area, and their assigns, for the purpose of implementing the community improvement measures under this plan.
(Clause vii) amended by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09) |
| Affordable
Housing
Programs | viii) | the construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation of residential buildings, including the conversion of non-residential buildings, for Affordable Housing as well as administering senior government programs for the provision thereof.
(Clause viii) added by OPA 438 Dec. 17/09) |

AREAS ELIGIBLE FOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT



OPA 389 approved by Council April 10, 2006