SCHEDULE 'A' to By-law 48-2016



Bluewater Community Improvement Plan

May 2, 2016

Prepared by the Municipality of Bluewater with the assistance of the Huron County Planning & Development Department

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1.0 Introduction

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a mechanism which stimulates and leverages private investment to promote redevelopment of property by providing financial incentives to projects in geographically-specific areas of the Municipality.

The Municipality of Bluewater has been successful in the implementation of a Community Improvement Plan for the Village of Hensall from 2008-2014 and decided, in 2014, to initiate the development of a new CIP which would apply across the entire municipality. Several public consultation sessions were held in support of the development of this CIP and the overarching goal that emerged *was to support the economic, social and environmental vitality of each of the villages and hamlets* within the municipality. This Plan will advance that goal by providing a framework which will guide community improvement projects across the municipality.

2.0 Legislative Authority

2.1 Planning Act

Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act allows municipalities, where there are provisions in its Official Plan relating to community improvement, to designate by By-law a "Community Improvement Project Area", and prepare a "Community Improvement Plan".

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act defines community improvement as "the planning or replanning, design or redesign, re-subdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary".

Section 28 of the Planning Act establishes and defines the term "community improvement project area" as "a municipality or an area within a municipality, the 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" (S. 28(1)). Section 28(2) states that the County may, by by-law, designate all or part of the County as a community improvement project area.

Once a community improvement project area has been designated, a community improvement plan can be prepared for that area. A Municipality may use a community improvement plan to:

- acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land;
- construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the municipality;
- sell, lease or dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the municipality; and/or
- make grants or loans to owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area to help them pay for the cost of rehabilitating their lands or buildings.

2.2 Bluewater Official Plan

The Bluewater Official Plan (2005) permits Community Improvement Plans to be established within the Municipality. The following policy is found within Section 4.4. of the Official Plan: "Community improvement projects that enhance the economic and social wellbeing of the community are encouraged. Bluewater may designate, by by-law, the whole of part of the Municipality as a Community Improvement Project Area in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act". A revision to the Official Plan may expand the policy direction for Community Improvement Plans but this will not necessitate an amendment to this Plan.

3.0 Rationale and Purpose

3.1 Summary of the Needs

As part of the preparation of the Bluewater CIP, the Bluewater Economic Development Committee reviewed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in various areas throughout Bluewater. While the villages and hamlets within Bluewater face different specific challenges, common themes include:

- the need for diversification in local economies to remain competitive and attract new investment;
- retention of retail and service opportunities to serve both resident and tourist populations;
- aging population and declining numbers of young people;
- lack of resources related to infrastructure;
- aging building stock;
- vacancies in commercial buildings;
- the need for more diversified housing options;
- the need for increased accessibility measures in public spaces and commercial downtowns.

3.2 Purpose of the CIP

The CIP is a framework for Bluewater to enact community improvement powers broadly throughout the municipality in order to encourage development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and to ultimately address the needs identified in consultation with Council, Staff, and local stakeholders.

Specifically, the purpose of the Bluewater CIP is to:

- Address community improvement widely throughout Bluewater, and specifically with respect to commercial area revitalization and heritage property / building redevelopment;
- b) Establish a set of goals for community improvement that will help address the needs of the Municipality;
- c) Designate Community Improvement Project Areas in the nine (9) communities where community improvement funds will be directed;
- d) Identify a set of area-specific, grant programs available to eligible property owners in order to stimulate and leverage private sector investment;
- e) Provide administrative procedures for the CIP that will ensure that the program is a functioning, flexible and effective municipal tool.

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4.0 Community Improvement Project Area(s)

A Community Improvement Project Area is an area within a municipality identified by Council for community improvement because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

Based on public input received, Bluewater Council has chosen to implement a CIP framework that guides community improvement widely throughout the municipality. Therefore the Community Improvement Area for the Municipality of Bluewater's Community Improvement Plan applies to the designated areas within nine (9) communities: Bayfield, Blake, Brucefield, Dashwood, Hensall, St. Joseph, Kippen, Varna and Zurich.

A schedule of maps showing the designated Community Improvement Project Areas for the Bluewater CIP is provided in Schedule A. Please note that inclusion on the CIP Project Area map does not necessarily mean that the property is eligible for a grant under this Plan. Please see Section 6.0 for the specific grant programs and Section 7.1.1. for the General Eligibility Requirements.

5.0 Goals and Objectives of the CIP

The goals of this CIP have been developed based on input from the public, Council and staff. Applications will be reviewed against the goals of the CIP and preference will be given to those projects which meet the most goals.

The goals of the Bluewater CIP are to:

- Advance the economic development and competitiveness of the municipality by retaining and improving opportunities for employment, shopping, and tourism within the Municipality.
- 2. Encourage and attract private sector investment within areas where signs of underinvestment are observed.
- 3. Increase the tax assessment base and revenues for the Municipality.
- 4. Enhance the physical/built environment and visual appearance of communities by supporting and encouraging building improvement, repair, and/or rehabilitation.
- 5. Promote intensification in contextually appropriate areas of the Municipality, including the provision of housing opportunities in downtown commercial buildings.
- 6. Contribute to the revitalization and enhancement of commercial core areas as focal points of the respective communities.
- 7. Support the protection and/or enhancement of cultural heritage resources.
- 8. Encourage renovations to commercial buildings which promote accessibility.
- 9. Protect and enhance the unique attributes, nature and character of each of the Municipality's villages and hamlets.
- 10. Demonstrate municipal leadership and commitment to community improvement.

6.0 Summary of Financial Incentive Programs

The Planning Act provides municipalities with a number of incentive program options to include within a Community Improvement Program. The incentive programs are designed to achieve the goals and objectives identified in the CIP. Based upon input gathered from community residents,

businesses and community stakeholders the Municipality will fund **two (2) incentive programs** under the Bluewater Community Improvement Plan:

- Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program
- Heritage Property Improvement Grant Program

Any municipal funding provided to the financial incentive programs contained in this CIP will be determined at the sole discretion of the Council during the annual budget process.

For both programs, the following applies:

- Grants are provided for 50% of the approved improvement costs to a maximum of \$5000.00.
- One application per legal property is eligible.
- Property owners who are eligible under both funding programs are not able to access both sources of funding (i.e. the maximum per project is \$5,000.00).
- The minimum grant is \$1000.00, representing up to 50% of the total project, and therefore projects must have a minimum value of \$2000.00.

6.1 COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM (CFIGP)

The Bluewater CFIGP supports the redevelopment of commercial facades within the commercial districts of the villages and hamlets as well as the commercial businesses along Bayfield's waterfront. The Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program offers grants to eligible commercial or mixed-use property owners for front or side façade improvements to buildings that are within one of the designated Community Improvement Areas.

This program will promote aesthetic improvements to buildings that otherwise may not occur due to the cost premiums associated with these improvements. The Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program gives preference to projects which feature the following:

- a visual improvement to the overall structure which involves a design change;
- retain and restore original elements such as windows, doors, chimneys, masonry or other architectural details;
- maintain the location, size and shape of all original windows facing, or visible from, the street;
- enhance the accessibility of the storefront entrance; and
- locate meters, vents, above-grade service connections (e.g. wires) away from the street façade.

The following types of front or sidewall façade improvements are considered eligible:

- a. Repair/replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of storefront doors and windows;
- b. Repair/replacement of façade masonry and brickwork;
- c. Repair/replacement of architectural details;
- d. Repair/replacement of retractable awnings or canopies;
 - a. Fixed awnings are not eligible.
- e. Façade painting and cleaning treatments;
 - a. Painting of masonry is not eligible.
 - b. The removal of paint from masonry with sandblasting is not eligible.

- f. Murals may be an eligible cost provided the subject matter involves the community's heritage, historical event or person, and/or culture.
- g. Addition of sidewalk cafes or patios in accordance with municipal By-laws;
- h. Landscaping including plant materials and planters to a maximum 15% of the total grant amount.
- i. Restoration to or replacement of building signage is eligible where combined with a larger improvement project. All signs must be designed in accordance with the municipal sign by-law.
 - a. Signage should be contained within the signboard above the main floor display windows or perpendicular to the façade. Free standing signs are not eligible.
 - b. Signage should be compatible with the character of the building and should not detract from or obscure any important features. Signage should be subordinate in terms of the overall visual impact of the property.
 - c. Internally lit or plastic signage is not eligible.
 - d. Signage lighting should be achieved with light fixtures attached to the building façade.
- j. Addition of new lighting or upgrading of existing fixtures on exterior façade;
- k. Architectural/design fees required for eligible works to a maximum of 15% of the grant amount provided the design is prepared by a licensed architect, architectural technologist or person deemed qualified by municipal staff.
- I. Other similar repairs/improvements may be approved at the discretion of Council or their designate.

Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

- labour provided by the applicant;
- expenses occurred prior to the approval of the application for funding; or
- general maintenance costs (e.g. repair/replacement of roof, eavestroughs, etc.).

In addition to the general eligibility requirements listed in Section 7.1.1, for this specific grant program, eligible buildings include commercial or mixed-use buildings. For the purposes of this program, the definition of 'mixed-use' is a building with a commercial business operating in combination with either an institutional or residential use within the same building.

For details on the application process see Section 7.1.2. The application forms are found in **Appendix A**.

6.2 HERITAGE PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM (HPIGP)

The Bluewater Heritage Property Improvement Grant Program will apply specifically to properties that have an official heritage designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Properties designated under Part IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act are recognized as heritage assets within the Municipality of Bluewater. Of the thirty-seven (37) heritage designated properties in Bluewater, thirty-four (34) are designated as part of the Bayfield Heritage Conservation District (HCD). The Bayfield HCD Plan and Guidelines outline the character of each building and encourages the conservation and enhancement of essential design attributes; all projects within the district must comply with the HCD Plan and Guidelines. No project involving a heritage designated property will be approved for CIP funding without a recommendation for Council approval from the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.

The following types of improvements are considered eligible:

- a. Repair or replacement of roofs with original materials (i.e. slate or cedar shake);
 - a. The repair or replacement of asphalt shingle or steel roofs are not eligible.
- b. Repair/replacement of exterior masonry and brickwork;
- c. Repair/replacement of architectural details;
- d. Removal of unsympathetic additions or alterations to the building;
- e. Façade painting and cleaning treatments;
 - a. Painting of masonry is not eligible.
 - b. The removal of paint from masonry with sandblasting is not eligible.
- f. Architectural/design fees required for eligible works to a maximum of 15% of the grant amount provided the design is prepared by a licensed Architect or a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals.
- g. Other similar repairs/improvements may be approved at the discretion of municipal staff and Council.

Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Labour provided by the applicant
- Expenses occurred prior to the approval of the application for funding
- Any interior renovations.

Note: While general maintenance activities are eligible under the Heritage Property Improvement Grant Program, preference will be given to projects which feature a distinct visual improvement.

For Application process see Section 7.1.2. The program application forms are found in **Appendix A**.

7.0 Administration

The Municipality will be responsible for all administrative tasks related to the implementation of the CIP. There are separate processes for Application Administration and overall Plan Administration; the next two sections correspond with these two items.

7.1 Application Administration

7.1.1. General Eligibility Requirements

The following General Eligibility Requirements are applicable to all incentive programs, and must be met in order for an applicant to participate in any of the Financial Incentive Programs to be approved. The General Eligibility Requirements must be read by the applicant in association with program specific eligibility requirements and program details as outlined in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.

General eligibility requirements include:

- 1. A CIP application form must be submitted and approved prior to commencing any improvement works in addition to all required supporting information. Supporting information may include detailed work plans, cost estimates and contracts, applicable reports, and any additional information as required by the Municipality.
- 2. A building permit must be obtained as required. Planning approval, including site plan approval, may be required. Building permits and planning approvals are not eligible costs under the CIP incentive grant programs.

- 3. Eligible applicants must be either the owner of the property, an agent for the owner of the property, or the tenant of a property to whom the owner has provided written consent for the application. Should a property be sold between the time of approval and completion of the project, the approved grant will be forfeited unless the applicant provides a written request for the grant to be transferred to the new owner; these decisions will be at the sole discretion of Council.
- 4. All proposed projects must be within one of the designated Community Improvement Project Areas. As well, all proposed projects must be compatible with the goals and objectives as presented in the CIP.
- 5. The property owner must not have outstanding tax arrears and must be in good standing with regard to taxation and any other municipal financial obligation at the time of application and throughout the duration of the project construction period as identified within the Community Improvement Plan.
- 6. Community improvement works associated with a grant program application must be in accordance with all municipal by-laws, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines in order to be approved. Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with the policies and standards provided by the Municipality's Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and all other planning documents.
- 7. Grants are awarded per year, per legal property. An individual who owns multiple facades within multiple properties may apply per property but not per façade.
- 8. Buildings must be structurally sound to be eligible for a CIP grant program. Should there be a question regarding the structural soundness of a building, the Chief Building Official has sole discretion in requiring an engineer's report regarding the structure (the cost of which will not be an eligible cost under the program).
- 9. Community improvement works undertaken and completed that are associated with an approved incentive program application must be consistent with the project description contained in the application form and supporting materials, and with the program agreement. Should the undertaken or completed works not be consistent with the original project description, to the satisfaction of the Municipality, the Municipality may delay, reduce, or cancel the approved incentive program benefits, and may require repayment of any of the incentive program benefits, at the discretion of the Municipality.
- 10. The incentive programs made available under the Bluewater CIP cannot be used together.

7.1.2. Application Process

- Step 1: Applicants are required to meet with a member of the CIP Review Team prior to the submission of their application. The purpose of this consultation meeting is to discuss and confirm application requirements, program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, supporting documentation requirements, etc.
- Step 2: Submit a complete application form to the municipal office, which will include all of the required application forms in addition to any supporting documentation required by the CIP Review Team which may include but is not limited to:
 - photographs of the existing building condition;
 - historical photographs and/or drawings;
 - a site plan and/or professional architectural drawings; —
 - specifications of the proposed work including a work plan for the improvements and construction drawings;
 - two (2) cost estimates for eligible work provided by licensed contractors. Contractors are required to provide a copy of their WSIB Clearance Certificate with the estimate.

Step 3: Staff will review application against the goals and objectives of the CIP and specific program criteria, and make a recommendation to Council to approve or deny the application. All applications will be subject to review by the CIP Review Team. Applications involving a property designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or adjacent to a property designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act will be reviewed by both the CIP Review Team as well as the Municipal Advisory Heritage Committee.

Applications will be assessed on a 'first-come first serve' basis. In the event multiple applications are received, Council may, at its sole discretion, determine priority based on an assessment of how the application meets the goals and objectives of this Plan. The decision of Council shall be final.

- Step 4: Council makes final decision on applications. There is no appeal of Council's decision.
- Step 5: If approved, applicant has eighteen (18) months to complete project as approved. No variations from the approved project are permitted without written approval from Council and/or municipal staff. Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Municipality which will outline the terms, duration, default, and any other provisions of the incentive program as well as obtain any necessary permits.
- Step 6: Once complete, applicant provides Municipality with copies of paid receipts for the work involved in the approved project. Provided the project is completed as approved and to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official, the Municipality's Treasurer will issue payment to the applicant.

7.1.2.1. Payment of Grant – Additional Details

Grant payment will be provided upon the successful completion of the project pending the submission of paid receipts and the approval of the Chief Building Official that the project was completed as approved. Should the actual costs be less than the quote provided at the time of application, the Municipality retains the right to lower the amount of the grant to fifty percent of the actual costs to a maximum of \$5,000.00. Should the actual costs be greater than the quote provided at the time of the application, the Municipality is under no obligation to change the amount of the grant as approved by Council.

Applicants have eighteen (18) months to complete the project from the time of approval or will forfeit the grant. In the case of an unforeseen circumstance, the applicant may apply in writing to the CIP Review Team for consideration of an extension to this timeline; this decision will be at the sole discretion of Council.

In the event that any portion of the approved project remains incomplete, as determined by the Municipality, on the final completion date and an extension was not requested or granted, neither the funding nor any portion thereof shall be payable by the Municipality and the Municipality shall not be liable for any loss, costs or damages arising as a result of the applicant's failure to obtain funding due to the failure to complete the approved project within the project completion timeframe. No grant payment will be made at any time prior to the completion of the planned project in its entirety.

7.2 Program Administration

7.2.1. Staff and Municipal Heritage Committee Involvement

- Council will designate a CIP Review Team comprised of a multi-disciplinary team of staff to ensure that a variety of interests are considered when evaluating applications. The CIP Review Team (or designated Team member) will respond to CIP applicants, conduct preconsultation meetings prior to application submission, review and evaluate all CIP applications and supporting materials against program requirements, prioritize applications in the event funding is oversubscribed, and present recommendations to Council for consideration.
- In addition to the review by the CIP Review Team, the Bluewater Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee will review and recommend approval of all CIP applications involving properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and properties adjacent to properties designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- The Chief Building Official, in addition to participating as a member of the CIP Review Team, will be responsible for inspecting and verifying completion of projects to ensure no variances from the approved project have occurred during construction.
- The Clerk and Treasurer will be responsible for administering the financial agreements and payments to approved applicants upon the successful completion of grants.

7.2.2. Budget

Funding for the incentive programs described in the Bluewater CIP is determined on a year-toyear basis according to current budget priorities. Council shall have the sole discretion to determine whether or not an annual budget allocation will be made to the grant programs under the CIP. In addition, the Municipality reserves the right to limit the amount of assistance it will provide under any particular project. The budget for the CIP will be set in the preceding budget year so as to allow Council to approve projects before the current calendar year budget process is complete.

7.2.3. Application Intake Process

Applications are accepted on a 'first-come, first-served' basis and will be presented to Council throughout the calendar year. Applicants should allow two to three months for review, recognizing that additional time will be needed if the application requires the involvement of the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee. Once the budget is fully subscribed for the calendar year, applications will still be accepted with the understanding that they will be placed in the queue for the following calendar year's budget.

7.2.4. Marketing Plan

The Municipality will promote the CIP and its incentive programs as described below:

- The Marketing Plan will be targeted to landowners, potential developers, real estate agents, local businesses and organizations within and outside of the CIPA in order to inform eligible property and business owners and potential developers, about the opportunities available through the Bluewater CIP.
- Program details, eligibility criteria, application forms, and other information related to the financial incentive programs will be provided to those targeted by the Marketing Plan.
- Additional information to market and support local businesses, products, services, and contractors (for example) may be provided in association with marketing material for the CIP.

7.2.5. Monitoring Program

The Municipality will conduct periodic reviews of the Community Improvement Plan in order to determine its effectiveness. Specifically, the purpose of the monitoring program is to determine:

a) if the funding programs are achieving the goals and objectives set out by the CIP; and/or

b) if program adjustments are required.

7.2.5.1. Data Collection

In order to successfully monitor the program, the CIP Review Team will be responsible for maintaining statistical data which will allow the municipality to determine if the program is achieving the goals and objectives set out by the CIP. Statistical data could include: number of successful and unsuccessful applications by type (façade (front/side), sidewalk café, signage, accessibility improvement, heritage restoration, etc.), total dollar amount of grant and total cost of project by type, and estimated increase in assessed value of participating program. Team will also be responsible for soliciting feedback from successful and unsuccessful applicants to determine where adjustments to the program are needed; this feedback is proposed to be collected in the form of a short survey completed by the applicant at the time of the completion of a successful project or through informal feedback following an unapproved project.

7.2.5.2. Reporting

Based on the information obtained through the monitoring of the grant program applications and from applicant feedback, the CIP Review Team will prepare a brief annual report for the purpose of providing feedback to Council, the business community and other interested community partners. This annual report will also include recommendations from staff should any adjustments to the CIP be required.

7.2.5.3. Program Adjustments

The CIP Review Team may periodically review and recommend an adjustment to the terms and requirements of any of the programs contained in the Plan. An amendment to the CIP will not be required to discontinue any of the programs contained in the Plan however any of the following changes will require a formal amendment to the Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act:

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

7.2.6. Interpretation

The Bluewater Community Improvement Plan must be read and interpreted in totality, and in conjunction with the Planning Act, and all other municipal planning documents. In addition, the CIP will be interpreted at the sole discretion of Bluewater Council in consultation with, or based on advice from, municipal staff.

8.0 Schedules and Appendices

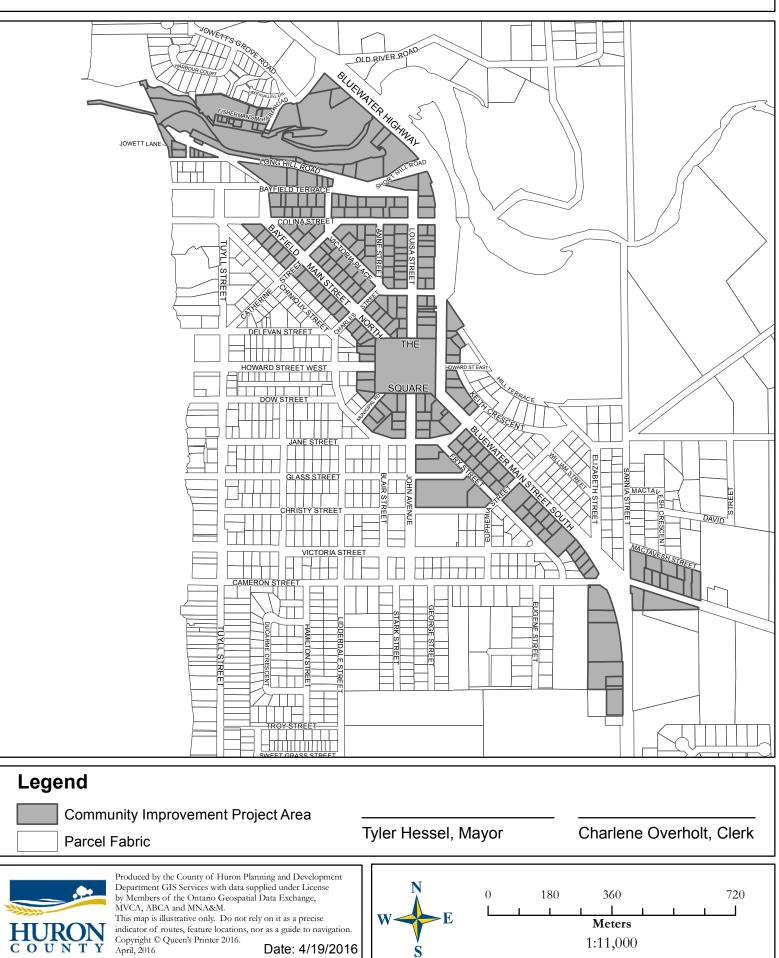
The schedules form part of this Plan and will be passed by By-law where the appendices are supporting documents and will not be passed by By-law.

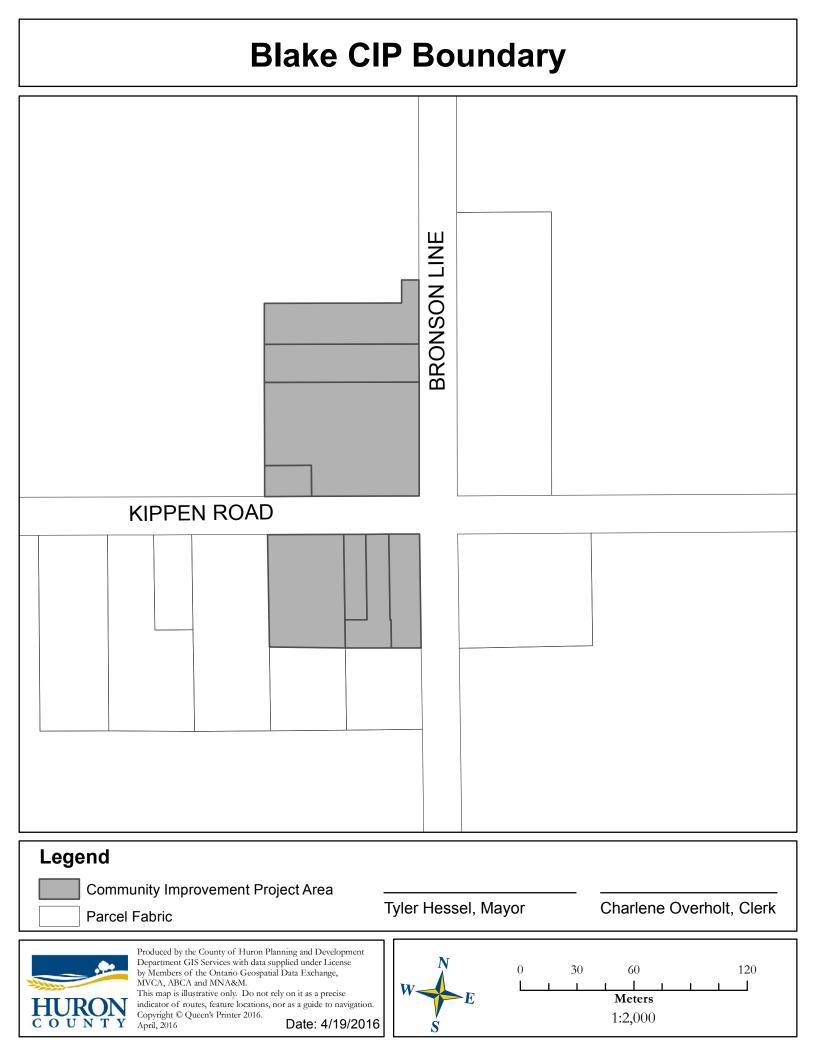
Schedule A-I: Community Improvement Project Area Maps Appendix A: Application Form & Applicant Checklist Appendix B: Example of Execution Agreement

Schedule A-I

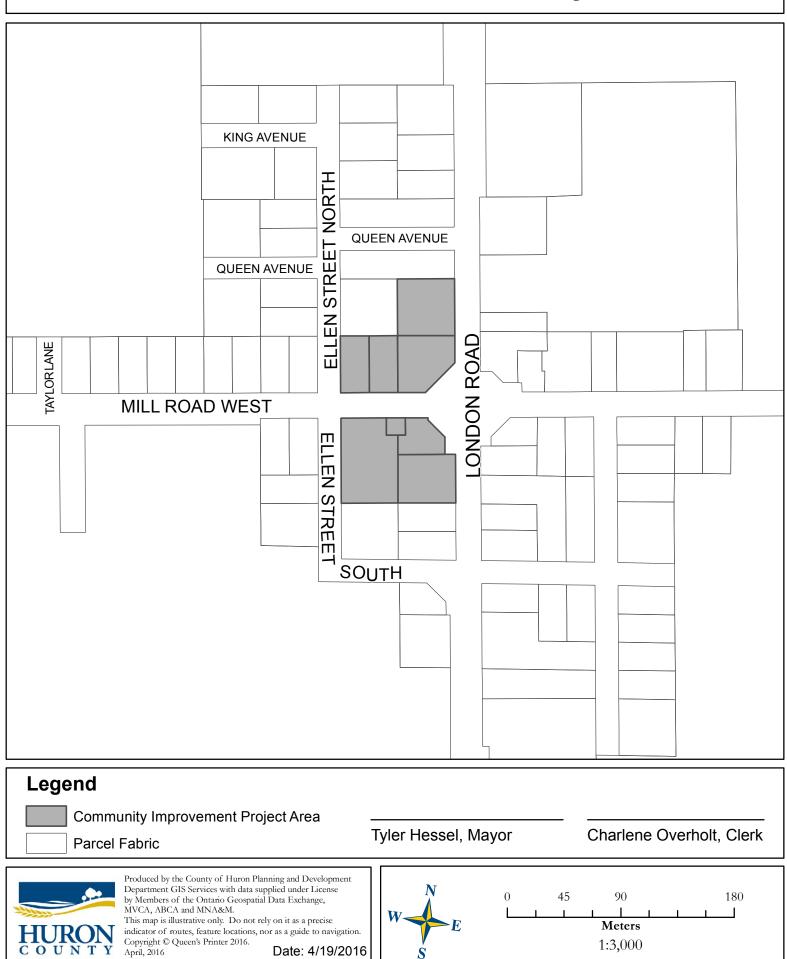
Schedule A: Map of Bayfield Community Improvement Project Area Schedule B: Map of Blake Community Improvement Project Area Schedule C: Map of Brucefield Community Improvement Project Area Schedule D: Map of Dashwood Community Improvement Project Area Schedule E: Map of Hensall Community Improvement Project Area Schedule F: Map of Kippen Community Improvement Project Area Schedule G: Map of St. Joseph Community Improvement Project Area Schedule H: Map of Varna Community Improvement Project Area Schedule H: Map of Zurich Community Improvement Project Area

Bayfield CIP Boundary

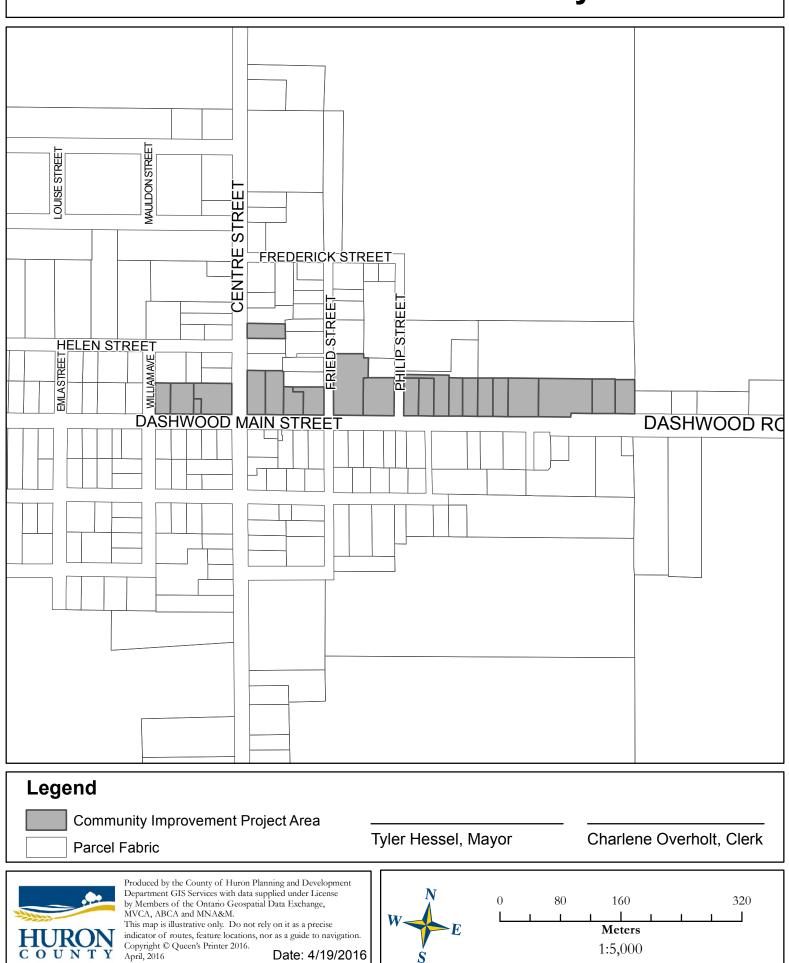


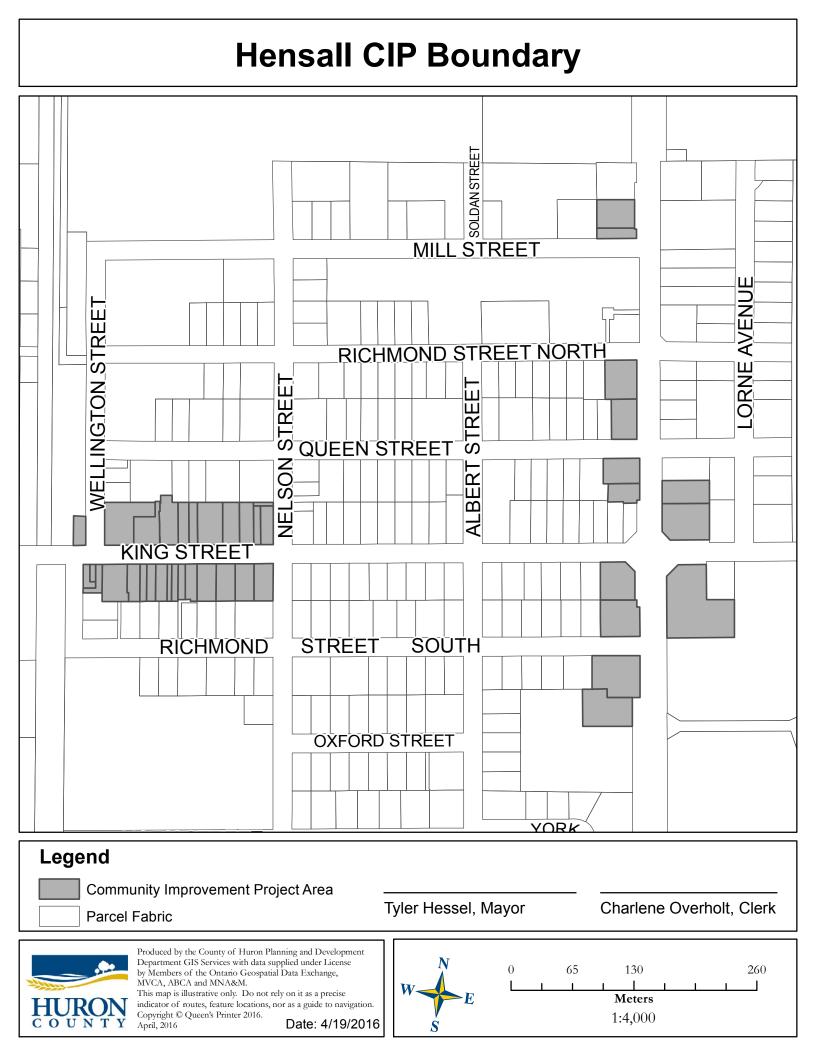


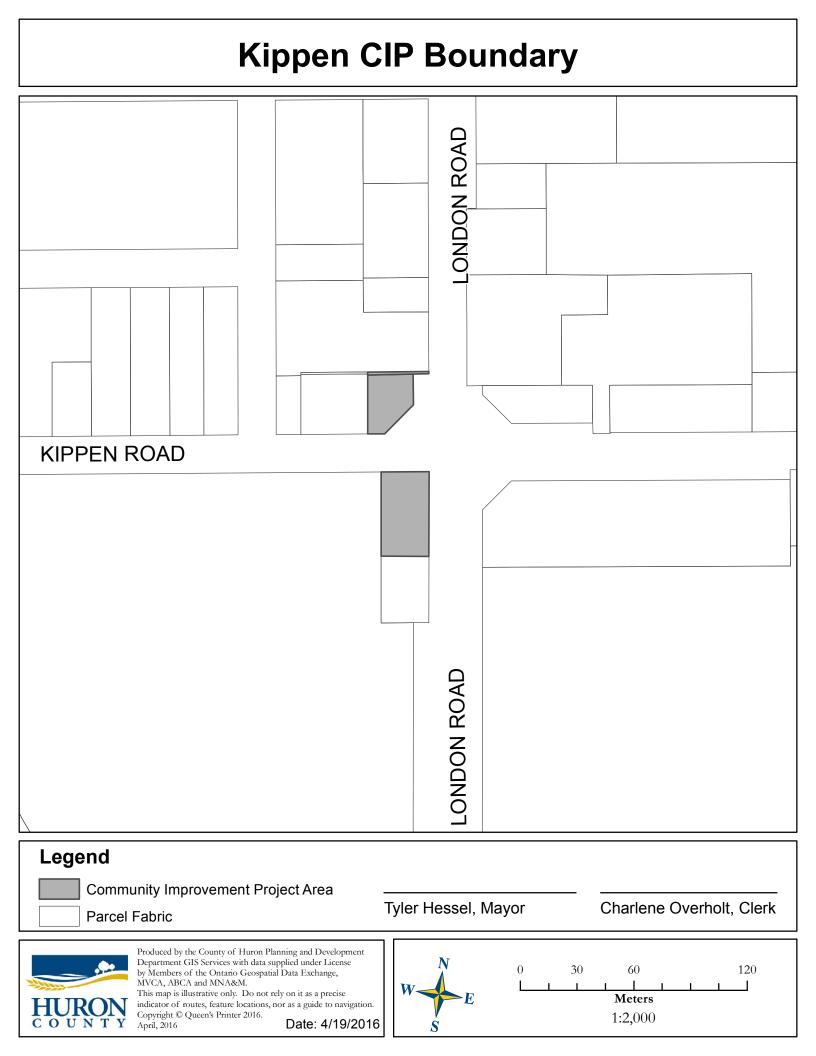
Brucefield CIP Boundary

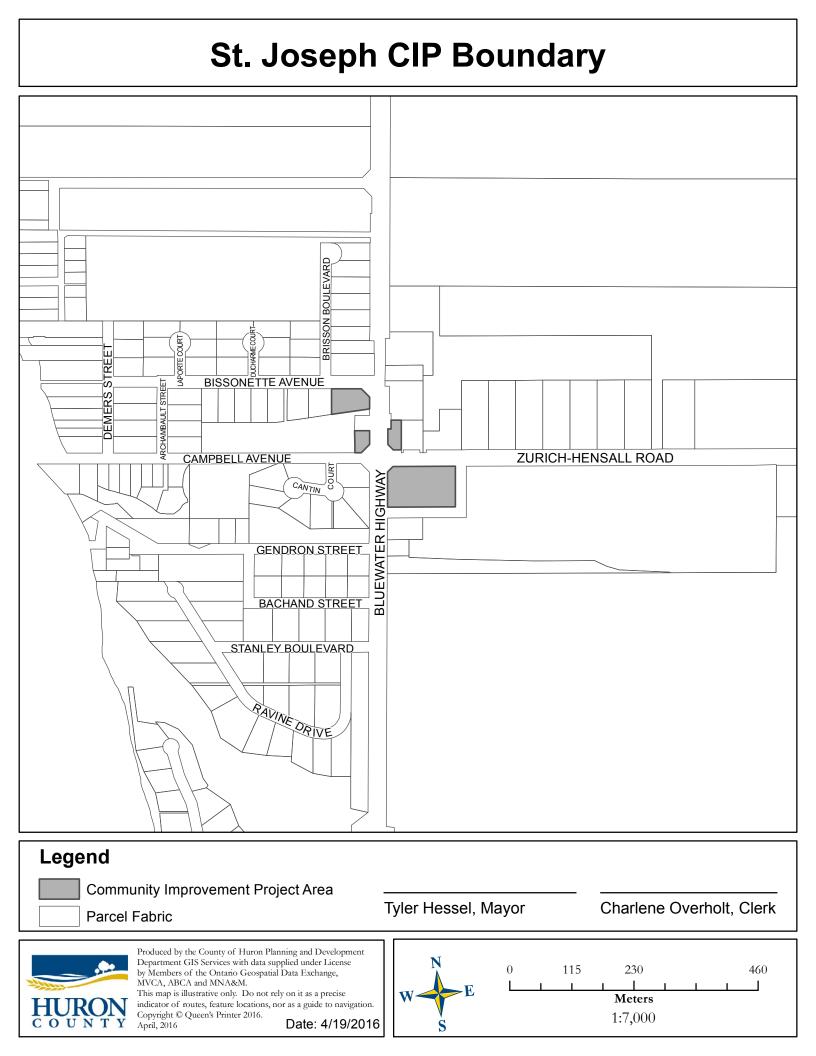


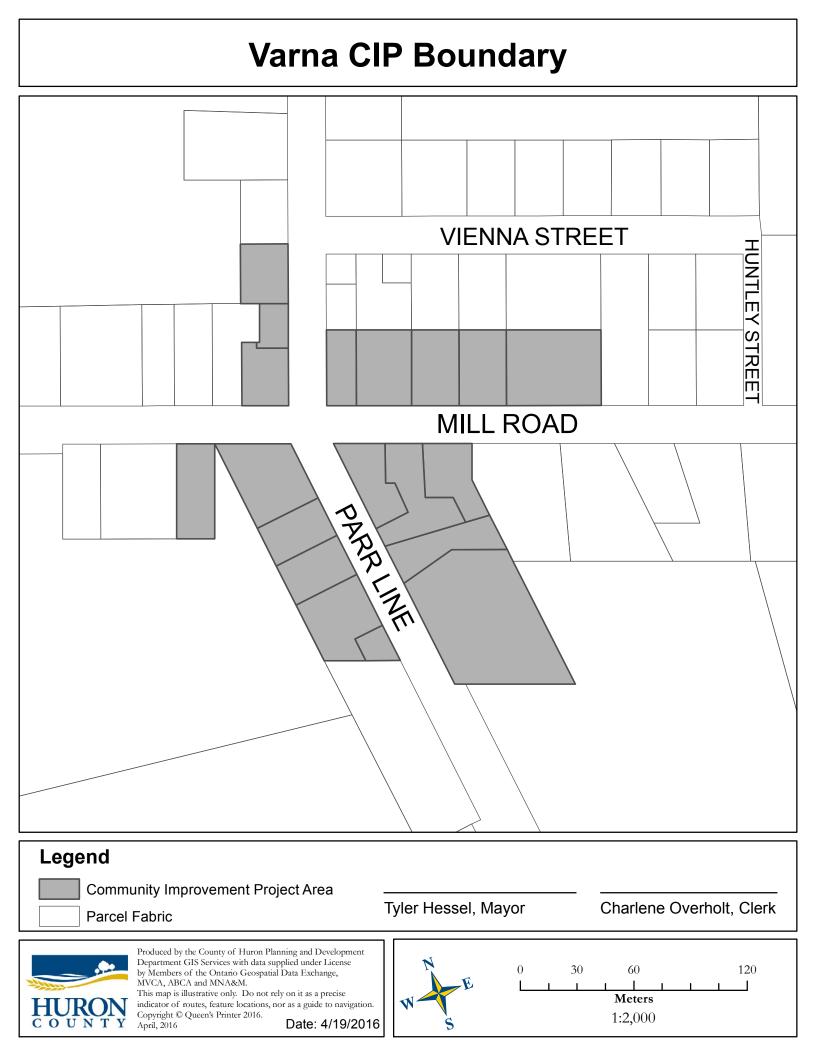
Dashwood CIP Boundary











Zurich CIP Boundary

