

## Report to Planning and Environment Committee

**To:** Chair and Members  
Planning & Environment Committee  
**From:** Gregg Barrett  
Director, City Planning and City Planner  
**Subject:** Core Area Community Improvement Plan  
**Meeting on:** October 19, 2020

### Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Director, City Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken with respect to the Draft Core Area Community Improvement Plan:

- (a) This report **BE RECEIVED** for the purpose of providing Municipal Council with an update on the progress of the Core Area Community Improvement Plan; and,
- (b) Civic Administration **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with public consultation on the Draft Core Area Community Improvement Plan attached hereto as Appendix "A".

### Executive Summary

A *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* is required to implement several actions items identified in the *Core Area Action Plan*. The draft *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* has been prepared based on the direction of the *Core Area Action Plan* and the consultation that was undertaken during that study. It is an appropriate time to take the draft plan to the community for feedback. Due to restrictions put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, Civic Administration is currently exploring alternatives to the customary community information meeting to consult with the community.

## Analysis

### 1.0 Background

#### 1.1 Core Area Action Plan

In response to increasing concerns received regarding the state of the core area, and acknowledgement that there has previously been extensive public and private investment in the downtown and surrounding areas, the City of London initiated a study to identify the gaps that were potentially hindering the future success of the core area. The *Core Area Action Plan* was the result of this study, which identified approximately 70 initiatives that were intended to address these gaps. In November 2019, Municipal Council received this plan.

Civic Administration was directed to begin implementing the action items identified in the *Core Area Action Plan* that could be addressed through existing budgets. Civic Administration was also directed to submit business cases for action items requiring additional investment through the 2020-2023 Multi-Year Budget process. Funding for many of these action items has since been approved through the 2020-2023 Multi-Year Budget process. In particular, a source of funding was identified for a number of action items identified as requiring a community improvement plan to facilitate their implementation. This includes programs to provide grants to implement safety audit recommendations on privately-owned property, as well as the elimination of application and licensing fees for patios, signage and awnings.

#### 1.2 Purpose of the Core Area Community Improvement Plan

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, a community improvement plan (CIP) allows a municipality to, among other things, provide grants and loans to

property owners that would otherwise be unavailable. The *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* will therefore facilitate the implementation of the following *Core Area Action Plan* action items that have an approved source of funding:

- Item #54: Provide grants to implement safety audit recommendations on privately-owned property through Core Area Community Improvement Plan
- Item #62: Eliminate encroachment fees for patios, signage and awnings in the Core Area through Core Area Community Improvement Plan
- Item #63: Eliminate application fees for encroachments, signage and patios in the Core Area through Core Area Community Improvement Plan
- Item #64: Eliminate fees for use of on-street parking spaces for temporary restaurant patios through Core Area Community Improvement Plan

It is important to note that the *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* is an enabling document which means Municipal Council is under no obligation to activate and implement any of the incentive programs.

## 2.0 Draft Core Area Community Improvement Plan

### 2.1 Core Area Community Improvement Project Area

Ontario's Planning Act defines a 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." The *Core Area Action Plan* generally defined this area as the Thames River to the west, properties fronting Queens Avenue to the north, Woodman Avenue to the east, and properties fronting King Street to the south; it also includes all properties fronting Richmond Street from Fullarton Street to Oxford Street East and properties fronting York Street from the Thames River to Waterloo Street.

This initial boundary was refined in the draft *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* based on the parcel fabric, resulting in the Core Area Project Area boundary illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Core Area Project Area

It is important to note that the Core Area Project Area overlaps with the project areas defined by the *Downtown Community Improvement Plan* and the *Old East Village Community Improvement Plan*.

## **2.2 Draft Core Area Community Improvement Plan**

The *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* is intended to be a scoped plan which addresses the gaps identified by the *Core Area Action Plan*. These gaps include addressing the physical space between the Downtown and Old East Village that has not been previously included in the *Downtown Community Improvement Plan* and the *Old East Village Community Improvement Plan*, as well as addressing the policy gaps that prevent the implementation of identified financial incentives.

## **3.0 Next Steps**

### **3.1 Consultation**

The draft *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* was prepared based on the direction of the *Core Area Action Plan* and the consultation that was undertaken during the study which lead to that plan. However, it is important to check in with the community at this stage in the preparation of the *Core Area Community Improvement Plan*.

As a result of preventative measures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19, Civic Administration is currently exploring alternatives to the customary community information meeting to collect feedback on the draft *Core Area Community Improvement Plan*. Holding a virtual community information meeting and utilizing the Get Involved webpage to collect community feedback through surveys and other means are currently being developed. Low-tech options will also be available.

Public consultation will be undertaken from October to December of 2020, with the final plan targeted to come before Municipal Council in the first quarter of 2021. The by-laws to approve the Project Area, adopt the Community Improvement Plan, and establish the financial incentive programs will come forward at this future public participation meeting.

## **4.0 Conclusion**

The draft *Core Area Community Improvement Plan* has been prepared and is ready for community feedback. Public consultation will be undertaken from October to December of 2020, with the final plan targeted to come before Municipal Council in the first quarter of 2021.

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Kerri Killen, MCIP, RPP Senior Planner, City Building and Design</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	<b>Britt O'Hagan, MCIP, RPP Manager, City Building and Design</b>
<b>Recommended by:</b>	<b>Gregg Barrett, AICP Director, City Planning and City Planner</b>
<p>Note: The opinions contained herein are offered by a person or persons qualified to provide expert opinion. Further detail with respect to qualifications can be obtained from City Planning.</p>	

October 7, 2020

\\FILE2\users-z\pdp\Shared\City Building and Design\Core Area Community Improvement Plan\Reports\2020-10-19  
PEC Report - Draft Core Area CIP.docx

