

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Core Area Community Improvement Plan (O-9257) – Core Area Community Improvement Plan Financial Incentive Program Guidelines

- Councillor P. Squire: There's a staff presentation? Is there?
- Kerri Killen, Senior Planner: I have a presentation prepared.
- Councillor P. Squire: Thank you very much. Go ahead.
- K. Killen: Thank you. So, the item you have before you right now is an Official Plan amendment for the Core Area Community Improvement Plan or CIP. So, in 2019 the City initiated a study to identify actions that could be taken to support the success of the Core Area. The result of the study was the Core Area Action Plan which identified seventy individual action items that can be undertaken to address identified issues. Four of these action items which are listed on the second side, will be implemented through the Core Area CIP. So, these action items included providing grants to implement safety audit recommendations on privately owned property, eliminating encroachment fees for patio, signage and awnings, eliminating application fees for encroachment, signage and patios and eliminating fees for use of on street parking spaces for temporary restaurant patios. So, the project area boundary for the CIP as shown on slide three and it represents the boundary that was established through the Core Area Action Plan. It generally includes the downtown, Old East Village and Richmond row. The Core Area was determined by identifying where there was the most need in terms of helping those struggling with homelessness and health issues, improving safety and security, supporting businesses, and attracting more people to the area. So, the Core Area CIP proposes three new financial incentive programs which are listed on slide four. The first is a safety audit grant program which would offer grants to reduce the financial burden on business owners who want to take, who want to make modifications to private property that would improve the safety as identified through a core area safety audit. This program will grant up to fifty, fifty percent of the total cost of the property modifications that improve safety and up to a maximum of ten thousand dollars per property. The second program is a boulevard cafe grant program which would offer grants to reduce the financial burden on business owners who operate sidewalk patios. This grant program eliminates the administrative and license fees related to the operation of a patio on the public right away. This program would replace the existing boulevard cafe grant program currently offered through the Downtown CIP. And the final program is the grant, sorry, the sign grant program which would offer grants to reduce the financial burden on businesses or property owners who install new signs or requiring encroachment agreements for signs. The grant program eliminates the sign permit application fee, the encroachment agreement application fee and the annual encroachment fee for signs. So, slide five provides a summary of the recommendation before you today which is to adopt the Core Area CIP and financial incentive programs as well as to discontinue the boulevard cafe grant program within the Downtown CIP Area. And that concludes my presentation. Thank you.
- Councillor P. Squire: Thank you very much. I'm not, I don't think there would be any technical questions. We will just move on to public delegations.
- Cathy Saunders, City Clerk: Ms. Valastro is on the phone.
- Councillor P. Squire: Alright, go ahead. Ms. Valastro?
- C. Saunders: Ms. Valastro: You need to hit star six to unmute.
- Anna Maria Valastro: Hi, hi there I'm here now I'm sorry.
- Councillor P. Squire: Go ahead.

- Anna Maria Valastro: I live in the core I'm someone that actually connects with core residents to raise awareness and support for issues that impact the core. I do this usually by door knocking. I have for example spoken to those residents that live in the vintage apartments above the stores on Dundas Street and I fundamentally believe that the city is misguided in its approach to revitalizing the Core. For example, you can't run a business if your windows are being smashed on a regular basis. I also think that the focus of the Core Area Community Improvement Plan is too focused on bringing people to the downtown and is neglecting those residents who already live in the downtown as those residents that would be the ground support for the businesses in the core. For example, the city is dead wrong as to who lives in the core and especially who lives on Dundas Street above the stores. In my neighborhood of North Talbot, we still have some affordable rentals, we have a school bus that picks up young children on Talbot Street and busses them to school. We have not for profit housing, housing for disability, public housing, student housing, wealthy residents that live on mansions and a lot of long-term residents that rent. Many other renters are older individuals of lower income. If city officials calculate that the population of the core is younger rather than mixed it's because the older residents tend to avoid those businesses that you don't cater to them such as the businesses on Richmond Street. Our neighbourhood also has several houses that remain whole and not carved up but are currently limited to groups of students of five or more. The report does not recognize the housing types from what I can, what I can see. The Core Area Community Improvement Plan fails to address the Core Area residents in their role in supporting businesses. I would argue that these residents are the backbone of support and which suggests that taking care of local residents should be a primary focus of any plan to stabilize the downtown. I also believe that this plan solely focused on one type of business, but the core is overwhelmingly historical and with vintage storefronts many of them tiny that would be best suited to entrepreneurial businesses that would be unique to the core that in turn would attract people looking for a different shopping experience that would be, that would not be available on malls and accentuate the historical character of the core. It's a plan, this plan ignores what is already beautiful about the downtown it splits right there and funny but you're not looking, you're trying to reshape the core rather than bring you know bring out what's already unique and attractive about it and I understand the frustration of residents that do not live in the core do not visit the core have no desire to shop in the core having to foot the bill for these plans that you know many think are misguided and might fail. Most people want to shop play and work where they live and visit another district for its uniqueness. I feel this plan does nothing to lift and stabilize the core. For example, while nice I don't think moving removing curbs and re-bricking Dundas would attract anyone to the core, one doesn't really notice the road the beautiful leafy streetscape might because there's nothing like it anywhere else in the city not even on Wortley Village or Old East Village. In closing I feel that the homeless population is a part of the core and I was deeply disappointed when the city removed the parkette at Covent Market because it became a gathering spot for people on the street. Personally, the parkette gave a sense of community not my community but someone else's community and in many ways, I found it's better than having people scattered across the street. I also found it hypocritical you know that, that they don't have a place in the core and they're obviously our neighbors too. So, while I think it's great to have more public washrooms and to have visible foot patrols and all those small things, I think overall I think that the focus is misguided and you I just think you need to treat it like a whole community rather than just very specific businesses. Thank you.

- Councillor P. Squire: Thank you very much. We appreciate you coming to present today. Who's next?
- C. Saunders: Ms. Pastorius is next.
- Councillor P. Squire: Okay, Ms. Pastorius.
- Jen Pastorius, Old East Village BIA: Hello everyone. Thank you very much for having me. I will be very brief. The Old East Village BIA supports the staff recommendation for the Core Area Community Improvement Plan as it further activates the already approved Core Area Action Plan and I would like to thank city staff and the entirety of Council for your ongoing support and work to continue to revitalize the Old East Village. Thank you.
- Councillor P. Squire: Thank you very much. Other presentations? Which, in room one and two? So, who would like to speak? Thank you very much if you could just give us your name and your address if you like you can.
- Frances Vancer: My name is Frances Vancer and I live at 250 Pall Mall Street and I'm just wondering how the core improvements are going to affect our tax rate because we're already at a high, high level. I think it's a 5,400 a year and I would like to know what our zoning is for the property as well as the mail rate for our property compared to others in the area. A condo on Queen Street pays 2,800 per year and I don't what their zoning and mail rate would be. Our building is a single, a condo building on Pall Mall Street and I'm just wondering where the, why it's so high. I come from Mississauga, I moved from Mississauga about a year ago and I had a seventeen hundred square foot condo right on downtown Mississauga and I was paying 2,800 dollars per year with the bus at the door and the LRT which is going to be passing on the corner within a year and I moved to London and I'm paying, I have a fifty five hundred and forty square foot condo, mid-sized building and I'm paying 5,400 per year and I can't understand why so I would I leave that with you that's what I wanted in my presentation.
- Councillor P. Squire: Yeah, I think that the question of your taxes, I would love to talk with you about that for about an hour but nobody else wants to hear me so and that's really a political question related to other things. I don't think I would ask staff to answer that. And a lot of it depends on decisions made by this Council so there you go. Any other submissions, speakers? No? Alright we just need a motion to close the public participation meeting