



Downtown Paris

# Community Improvement Plan & Parking Strategy

Final | March 2019





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background .....	1
1.2	Downtown Paris Design Guidelines .....	2
1.3	Consultation .....	2
1.4	Overview of this Plan .....	3
1.5	How to Use this Plan .....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Context .....	5
2.2	Vision .....	5
2.3	Goals and Objectives .....	6
<b>3</b>	<b>FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1	Programs .....	9
3.1.1	Façade Improvement Grant .....	10
3.1.2	Signage Improvement Grant .....	12
3.1.3	Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant .....	13
3.1.4	Property and Private Parking Area Improvement Grant .....	15
3.1.5	Planning and Building Application Fee Grants .....	16
3.1.6	Adaptive Commercial Reuse Grant .....	18
3.1.7	Tax Increment Equivalent Grant .....	20
3.1.8	Brownfield Study Grant .....	22
3.1.9	Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program .....	23
3.2	General Eligibility Requirements .....	26
3.3	Administration of the Financial Incentive Programs .....	27
3.3.1	Designation of the Administrator and Review Committee .....	27
3.3.2	Financial Incentives Program Budget .....	28
3.3.3	Application Intake .....	28
3.3.4	Application Process .....	29
<b>4</b>	<b>PARKING STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>46</b>
6.1	General .....	46
6.2	Community Improvement Project Area .....	46
6.3	Implementation of Downtown Paris Design Guidelines .....	47
6.4	Implementation of Parking and Municipal Leadership Strategies .....	48
6.5	Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy .....	48
6.6	Marketing the Plan .....	50
6.7	Glossary of Terms .....	51

**Appendix 1: Downtown Paris Community Improvement Project Area**

**Appendix 2: Downtown Paris Design Guidelines**

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Downtown Paris is a unique, historic destination within Brant County. The maintenance, enhancement and revitalization of Downtown Paris will be beneficial to all residents Brant County, and may be facilitated through a Community Improvement Plan.

The Downtown Paris Community Improvement Plan (this Plan) is a long-term revitalization tool aimed at achieving a unique and clear vision for the downtown area of Paris. This Plan identifies specific goals, objectives and is supported by design principles to guide revitalization in a manner that is appropriate to enhancing the unique attributes of the community. This Plan outlines a series of action-oriented programs intended to achieve the stated vision and supporting goals and objectives.

Programs include financial incentives aimed at private-property owners and tenants to improve their property; a strategy for improving vehicle parking; and a suite of other tools aimed at improving the public realm. The programs are supported by policies to support implementation and administration, and to ensure that the programs are contributing to realizing the vision and goals of this Plan.

This Plan, originally prepared in 2015, has been updated to integrate refinements made through the development of Community Improvement Plans for Burford and St. George in 2018.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a common revitalization tool that has been implemented by many municipalities across Ontario. CIPs are

statutory documents prepared under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, and are principally used to stimulate investment in private property. The purpose of a CIP is to encourage the beautification, rehabilitation and other improvements to the building stock. Additionally, some municipalities undertake municipal projects as part of their CIP, such as streetscape improvements, new infrastructure, new or renovated public buildings or further studies. Accordingly, for many municipalities, a CIP represents a comprehensive revitalization strategy for a targeted area.

To prepare a CIP, the County is required to have Official Plan policies in place to describe the use of CIPs. The County of Brant's Official Plan (September 2012) contains detailed community improvement and revitalization policies under Section 2.6. The Plan identifies several goals and objectives to support community improvement. It outlines criteria for selecting Community Improvement Project Areas and the preparation and implementation of CIPs.

To adopt a CIP, a Community Improvement Project Area (Appendix 1) must be adopted by a by-law of Council. The Community Improvement Project Area is the designated area to which a Community Improvement Plan applies and is administered separately from this Plan, but is attached as Appendix 1 for convenience purposes.

Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities may acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land (Section 28(3)); construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or improved by the County (Section 28(6)); or, the County may issue grants or loans for eligible costs of the community improvement plan (Section 28(7)).

A Background Report was previously prepared for Downtown Paris in 2015. The Background Report includes an analysis of relevant legislation; a

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis for each area; a review of other similar Community Improvement Plans and lessons learned; a summary of consultation; and a review of options for programs and incentives to be considered. While the Background Report is not operative components of the Community Improvement Plan, they provide a resource to obtain more information about the basis of this Plan.

## **1.2 DOWNTOWN PARIS DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines form a critical component of this Plan. The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines were prepared by the Paris Renaissance Team, consisting of a group of interested stakeholders, members of Council, County staff and experts in community design and architecture. The Guidelines were adopted by Council with the direction that they were to be implemented by this Community Improvement Plan on October 21, 2014.

The Community Improvement Plan is the most important vehicle for implementing the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines. Many private property improvements will take place in accordance with the policies of this Plan, and as such, there is an opportunity to require conformity to the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines as a component of eligibility. Accordingly, the Guidelines are a companion document to this Plan, forming the design criteria for financial incentive programs. Applicants to financial incentive programs in Downtown Paris will be required to ensure that their project is designed in accordance with the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines.

This Plan does not replace the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines. Rather, the Guidelines are a

companion document to this Plan, and this Plan makes explicit references to the Guidelines. In some cases, this Plan draws some of the Guidelines out to highlight the most critical, mandatory requirements. Section 6.3 discusses the implementation of the Guidelines in detail. The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines document is attached to this Plan as Appendix 2.

## **1.3 CONSULTATION**

Input into this Plan has been critical. Since the Plan will principally be implemented by property owners and tenants who access the financial incentive programs, it is important that the Plan have buy-in and support from the community.

The development of the original Plan for Downtown Paris was led by a Steering Committee, consisting of members of Council, representation from the Downtown Paris BIA and representation from County of Brant staff. The County retained WSP (then MMM Group) to assist in facilitating the process and completing the Discussion Paper and Community Improvement Plan for Downtown Paris.

On February 18, 2015, a public open house and workshop session was held with interested persons. About 25 persons participated in the meeting, contributing to a discussion of issues to be addressed by the Plan; a formulation of a vision for the revitalization of Downtown Paris; and prioritization of the types of programs that could be implemented through this Plan. A detailed summary of this meeting is contained in the Discussion Paper produced through the Downtown Paris CIP process. This original Plan was also subject to a Statutory Public Meeting, as required by the Planning Act, on August 31, 2015. Based on the comments received, the original CIP document was finalized.

## 1.4 OVERVIEW OF THIS PLAN

This Plan is comprised of the following sections:

- **Section 1** is this introduction. It does not form an operative component of the Plan, but is intended to orient readers with the Plan.
- **Section 2** sets out the visions for the Downtown area of Paris, for the purposes of implementing this Plan. This section forms an operative component of the Plan under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, as it establishes the overall purpose of the Plan and forms a component of the general eligibility criteria. Generally, all projects under this Plan should contribute to achieving the vision, goals and objectives. The section also provides useful clarity about the intended outcomes of the Plan.
- **Section 3** outlines the financial incentives, as well as eligibility criteria and administration policies. This Section forms an operative component of the Plan and implements financial incentive tools under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. The approach of this Plan is to outline an array of financial incentive programs, which could be funded in any given combination by Council in any given year, subject to budget constraints and priorities.
- **Section 4** outlines the strategy for improving parking in Downtown Paris. Generally, this section does not implement tools under the *Planning Act*, except that it enables the acquisition and improvement of land and buildings as may be required to implement the Parking Strategy.

- **Section 5** outlines the municipal leadership programs, which complement the other programs of this Plan. Similarly, this Section does not generally form an operative component of the Plan under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, except that it enables the acquisition and improvement of land and buildings to implement the municipal leadership programs.
- **Section 6** includes policies for implementing this Plan, making sure it is working and marketing the Plan's programs. This section does not form an operative component of the *Planning Act*, but it contains important programs to provide for the successful implementation of this Plan.

## 1.5 HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Plan will be read and used by the County, as well as property owners and tenants who are located within the designated Community Improvement Project Area. This Plan contains a high level of detail to ensure that the programs are implemented efficiently, to minimize risk to the County, and to maximize the benefits of the programs. It is intended that the County will assist interested persons in reading and understanding the relevant sections of the Plan. The County may prepare brochures or other marketing materials to better communicate the policies of the Plan to different audiences (see Section 6.5).

The County has a central role in understanding and implementing this Plan on a day-to-day basis and over the long term. Section 3.3 establishes general administration policies, which outlines the need for the County to designate a Plan Administrator and to consider designating a Review Committee. Section 4.7 includes administration policies for

implementing the Parking Strategies. The Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.4) and the policies for Marketing the Plan (Section 6.5) will also need to be administered by the County.

Private property owners and tenants who are interested in applying for financial incentives should become familiar with relevant portions of the Plan. Section 3.1 outlines the Financial Incentives that are made available by this Plan, subject to funding. Each of the programs under Section 3.1 is associated with eligibility criteria, including design-related eligibility criteria. The design criteria reference the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines documents, which are considered companions to this Plan. Readers should be familiar with the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines. Section 3.2 includes general eligibility criteria for applying for financial incentives. Readers should also be familiar with Section 3.3, which outlines administration processes for applying for financial incentive programs.

Generally, readers should also be familiar with the vision, goals and objectives (Section 2) and the glossary of terms to assist in interpreting the Plan (Section 6.6).

## 2 VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It is important to establish a future vision for the purposes of implementing this Plan. Stating the goals and intended outcomes of the Plan, and monitoring whether the goals and outcomes are being achieved, will make it much more likely that the Plan will be successful in achieving its vision. Since this Plan focuses on a revitalization program for Downtown Paris, this section identifies a vision of the future for Downtown Paris.

A vision is a picture of the future. It describes what each community aspires to achieve in the long term. It is intended that the programs contained in this plan will help each community work towards the vision. The sum of the programs intended by this Plan will represent an important step towards realizing this future image of each community.

### 2.1 CONTEXT

Downtown Paris is defined by the Official Plan and the designation of the Downtown Paris Business Improvement Area. Downtown Paris is situated within a unique geography at the confluence of the Grand River and the Nith River. The geography naturally helps to condense the downtown while providing unique view corridors and waterfront access opportunities.

One of Downtown Paris' unique attributes is the relationship of the rear building façades with the Grand River. The buildings were historically constructed virtually at the edge of Grand River, forming a unique view of the rear façades contrasting with the river from the William Street bridge, entering Downtown Paris from the east. A few buildings have taken advantage of their

unique context, and have implemented rooftop patios and similar amenities. There is real potential to achieve a truly great pedestrian experience in Downtown Paris, provided that the relationship of the buildings and the rivers can be sensitively enhanced.

Downtown Paris has an excellent stock of many well-maintained historic buildings. However, there is still potential for further improvement and enhancement. Grand River Street North represents the principal "main street", while William Street and Mechanic Street form secondary "main streets." Along these streets, there is an established mixed use, dense character with consistent street walls and design that is scaled and oriented to pedestrians. The maintenance and enhancement of this historic character is critical to the revitalization and improvement of Downtown Paris.

The principal development opportunity in Downtown Paris consists of lands on the south side of Mechanic Street, including potential repurposing of the former Canadian Tire facility. The existence of a Special Policy Area within portions of Downtown Paris provides requirements for flood proofing and prohibition or limitations on some sensitive uses. The Special Policy Area policies for the Downtown Core are included in the Brant County Official Plan and are implemented in the Zoning By-law. All development, even where incented by this Plan, will be subject to meeting the requirements of the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law.

### 2.2 VISION

For the purposes of this Plan, a vision is established to generally guide future improvements and set the overall intent of this Plan. Upon

implementation of this Plan, Downtown Paris will be:

- A special, distinctive destination;
- A great pedestrian experience, with cohesive design, and prominent views and interaction with the Grand River and the Nith River;
- Beautiful, colourful and vibrant;
- Authentic and historic;
- A unique shopping destination and a regional attraction and hub for cultural, commercial, tourist and artist activities;
- Walkable, pedestrian and cycling-friendly;
- Safe, accessible and barrier-free;
- Easily and conveniently accessible; and
- Well-maintained, clean and exhibits great community pride.

## 2.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The vision statements (Sections 2.1) represent high-level principles to guide the future of Downtown Paris. To support the implementation of the vision, the following more specific goals and objectives are established for Downtown Paris:

**Goal #1: Ensure a high standard for private property improvements, conserve heritage properties and encourage authentic and high-quality improvements to buildings.**

1. Provide incentives to encourage façade and signage improvements in accordance with the standards outlined in this Plan and the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines.

2. Ensure improvements enhance historic building attributes and are compatible with the historic character of Downtown Paris.
3. Implement the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines as a tool for evaluating applications for financial incentives and also for development approvals.

**Goal #2: Implement high-quality, consistently designed and cohesive streetscapes as well as gateway features.**

1. Prepare and implement a Downtown Paris Streetscape Plan to design features, sidewalk treatment, crossing treatment, on-street parking treatment, as well as streetscape elements (furniture, lighting, garbage receptacles, tree grates, etc.), to ensure that future capital projects are consistent with the long-term design.
2. Implement capital improvements to streetscapes in accordance with the prioritization of improvements outlined in this Plan and the Streetscape Plan.
3. Implement improvements under the Streetscape Plan as part of any intensification/infill development proposals as may be initiated.
4. Provide great incentives for the improvement of rear façades visible from the William Street bridge, as well as corner properties, which create the greatest visual impression on visitors.
5. Incorporate the principles of age-friendly and accessible design in signage (font size, colour contrast) and in physical streetscape improvements (minimize physical barriers).

**Goal #3: Enhance the views of the Grand River and Nith River.**

1. Encourage the development of rooftop patios and uses that enable views of the Grand River and Nith River.
2. Provide improvements to rear façades where the façades back onto the Grand River (i.e., east side of Grand River Street North).
3. Explore opportunities for improved waterfront access and trail development, including the potential for a pedestrian waterfront boardwalk with direct access to buildings fronting on the water, where and when funding from senior government is available.

**Goal #4: Ensure cleanliness, a high standard for property maintenance and pride in ownership.**

1. Encourage façade, property and landscaping improvements that utilize a high standard of quality, durability and design.
2. Review and update the County's Property Maintenance By-law to clearly indicate owners' and tenants' responsibilities for maintaining property in Downtown Paris.
3. Implement a brochure outlining responsibilities for property maintenance, including frequently asked questions and best practices for weed control, landscaping, potted plants, sidewalk cafés, etc.

**Goal #5: Implement consistent branding for Downtown Paris.**

1. Coordinate banners and other BIA activities to ensure the new logo for Downtown Paris is being utilized.
2. Refresh marketing materials and online materials and develop Community

Improvement Plan marketing materials which utilize the new logo and colour scheme.

3. Ensure coordination between the County and the BIA, including consideration for establishing a Downtown Revitalization Committee.

**Goal #6: Increase tourism and visitors in Downtown Paris and throughout the County.**

1. Provide additional bicycle parking to better accommodate cycling tourism.
2. Enhance views and access to the waterfront, including the possibility of a pedestrian waterfront boardwalk.
3. Explore opportunities for improved waterfront access and trail development.
4. Improve wayfinding signage to communicate tourism opportunities, parking and trails/cycling routes.

**Goal #7: Encourage appropriate infill and intensification in Downtown Paris, including remediation of brownfields, and bring new residents directly into Downtown Paris.**

1. Utilize incentive programs to encourage appropriate, compatible infill and intensification projects, to bring more residents into Downtown Paris, subject to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law and any other permits as may be required.
2. Encourage the improvement of upper storey apartments as a source of housing.
3. Ensure infill and intensification projects are in accordance with this Plan and the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines.
4. Where the opportunity arises, consider utilizing brownfield incentives, including

exploring participation in Provincial funding, at least on a pilot project basis, to improve the likelihood of redeveloping potential brownfield properties.

**Goal #8: To establish an appropriate parking supply that meets demands on the majority of days.**

1. Maintain overall peak parking utilization in the downtown at about 85 percent, with relatively balanced parking demands throughout the area.

**Goal #9: To have a parking management strategy that addresses the demands on the “busiest” days.**

1. Minimize the misuse of municipal parking (e.g., overstay of parking time limits).
2. Ensure that occasional “overflow” parking demands are suitably accommodated and there is no “spillover” of downtown parking into adjacent residential areas.

## **3 FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

The financial incentive programs are intended to encourage investment in private property. To be eligible for financial incentives, this Plan establishes eligibility criteria, including design-related criteria, which set a standard for aesthetics and ensure that the improvements are contributing to achieving the vision, goals and objectives of each unique Downtown area, as set out in Section 2.0 of this Plan. This Plan references the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines to establish design criteria.

### **3.1 PROGRAMS**

This Plan establishes a broad series of grant programs to assist in private property improvements. The intent of having a broad set of programs is to enable the County to have access to a comprehensive ‘toolbox’ of programs, which may be required at varying times throughout the life of this Plan. As provided in Section 3.3.2, Council has the discretion to allocate funding to certain programs, based on demand or certain priorities in each year. These decisions should be based on the recommendations of the Administrator through the monitoring and evaluation strategy (Section 6.4).

The programs include:

- Property and private parking area improvement grant;
  - Planning and building application fee grant;
  - Tax increment equivalent grant;
  - Adaptive commercial reuse grant;
  - Brownfield study grant; and
  - Brownfield property tax assistance program.
- 
- Façade improvement grant;
  - Signage improvement grant;
  - Upper storey apartment improvement grant;

### 3.1.1 Façade Improvement Grant

#### 3.1.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the façade improvement grant is to encourage improvements to building façade elements, architectural articulation, and encourage restoration of historic attributes and materials. The program will result in greater longevity and viability of buildings in the downtown, restore historic character, and contribute significantly to the beautification of Downtown Paris, helping to attract more visitors and businesses.

#### 3.1.1.2 Eligible Properties

All commercial, institutional, mixed-use and multi-unit residential buildings with more than 3 units in the current Community Improvement Project Area are eligible for the façade improvement grant. Additionally, any other properties that may be designated under Part IV or V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* are eligible.

#### 3.1.1.3 Authority

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### 3.1.1.4 Eligible Costs

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Repair, replacement or restoration of façade masonry, brickwork, architectural detailing or foundation improvements;
- Repair, replacement or new installation of awnings or canopies;

- Painting, cleaning or similar treatments to improve façade materials or enhance durability over the long-term, provided these improvements are part of a larger improvement project (i.e., are associated with other eligible projects listed herein);
- Window and door replacement, provided it is part of a larger façade improvement project (i.e., associated with other eligible projects lists herein) and provided the improvements represent an improvement in detailing (e.g., lattice), and not merely replacement of glass;
- Improvements which contribute to the accessibility and/or barrier-free access to the building (such as improvements to stairs/entrances or automatic doors), provided the project is a component of a broader façade improvement project, and the improvements are in accordance with the design eligibility criteria;
- Projects involving improved access and views of the rivers, including the development of new rooftop or rear yard patios, seating areas or public lookouts which will have significant river views; and/or
- Services of an architect, engineer or heritage professional to advise on the improvements listed above.

#### 3.1.1.5 Grant Value

The maximum value of a grant shall be:

- For properties located on a corner lot (at an intersection), the maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$10,000, provided the façade improvement addresses both street-facing façades.

- For properties that back onto the Grand River in Downtown Paris (i.e., located on the east side of Grand River Street North), the maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$12,500.
- For all other properties, the maximum grant shall be 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$7,500.

Further, the services of an architect or heritage professional shall be a maximum of 20% of the value of the grant.

#### **3.1.1.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Plan's Administrator.

#### **3.1.1.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### **3.1.1.8 Design Eligibility Criteria**

To be considered eligible, projects shall be in compliance with the following design requirements, as may be applicable, as referenced from the respective Design Guidelines:

- **Façade articulation/composition** is to be in accordance with Sections 3.3 (Façade Articulation) and 3.4 (Façade Composition). As much as possible, concealed elements are to be reintroduced. Original materials and architectural elements are to be restored.
- **Building materials** shall be in accordance with Section 3.8 – Materials. In no case will synthetic siding, mirrored/tinted glass panels, unadorned concrete block, textured stucco or decorative marble/granite tiles except as an accent be used. In no case shall a project involve the removal of historic building materials unless they are beyond repair. Modern economy materials such as vinyl and aluminum are not to be used.
- **Cleaning and other treatments** are to utilize techniques that will not damage the building materials, in accordance with bullet 3 under **Section 3.3 – Façade Articulation**.
- **Painting and colour schemes** should relate to the recommendations outlined in the **Downtown Paris Design Guidelines, pages 14-15**, with the goal of providing consistency and appeal.
- **Windows and doors** shall be in accordance with Section 3.6 – Windows and Doors. In all cases, where possible, original windows should be repaired and restored. Window replacements, where necessary, are to follow original window configurations. Additionally, Section 3.3 – Façade Articulation contains applicable guidelines for windows.
- **Awnings** shall be in accordance with Section 3.10 – Awnings. Proponents are encouraged to incorporate awnings into their project design where it is considered appropriate.
- **Section 3.5 – Specific Recommendations** contains façade improvement recommendations for certain buildings and blocks which shall be implemented by proponents of these buildings (County Office at 66 Grand River St. N., 33-35 Grand River St. N., Red Brick Block on William Street and the John M. Hall Building at 39-43 Grand River St. N.).

### 3.1.2 Signage Improvement Grant

#### 3.1.2.1 Purpose

The purpose of the signage improvement grant is to encourage improvements to building signage, in a manner that is aesthetically appealing, pedestrian-scaled, and not designed for motor vehicle traffic.

#### 3.1.2.2 Eligible Properties

All commercial uses in the currently designated Community Improvement Project Area are eligible for the signage improvement grant.

#### 3.1.2.3 Authority

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### 3.1.2.4 Eligible Costs

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Repair, restoration or improvement to existing historic signage;
- Installation of new signage or replacement of signage;
- Costs associated with the removal of signage which does not comply with the Design Criteria of this Plan, provided there is a new sign installed in accordance with this Plan; and
- Costs for professional design/architectural services to design the sign.

#### 3.1.2.5 Grant Value

The maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$3,000.

The services of a professional design/architectural firm to design signage shall be a maximum of 20% of the value of the grant.

#### 3.1.2.6 Payment of Grant

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Administrator.

#### 3.1.2.7 Program Eligibility Criteria

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### 3.1.2.8 Design Eligibility Criteria

To be considered eligible, projects shall be in compliance with the following design requirements, as may be applicable, in the Design Guidelines:

- **Relationship to Sign By-law:** In accordance with the County's Sign By-law, applicants for incentives under this Plan are not required to comply with the Sign By-law, but will be subject to the sign-related guidelines identified below.
- **Signage is to be in accordance with Section 4.0 – General Signage Guidelines,** as applicable to the proposal. At a minimum, signage is to be limited to within the sign band and may be applied to an awning as a permanent element (Section 4.3). **Design and materials** are to be in accordance with Section 4.4. **Prohibited sign types** are outlined in Section 4.6. **Overhanging signs** may also be appropriate, subject to required

permits. For those applicants who do not apply through the CIP program, the County's Sign By-law still applies.

- **Signage shall also be consistent with the principles of accessible and age-friendly design.** Lettering should utilize large fonts which are appropriate for the size of the sign. Colours should be highly contrasting, with dark lettering on light backgrounds or light lettering on darker backgrounds. Complementary colours and analogous colours for both the background and the lettering should be avoided. Raised lettering is encouraged. If highly graphical or stylized signage is used in the principal sign, there should be a secondary sign with plain, clear lettering (such as lettering on the window or door).
- **Signage lighting shall be in accordance with Section 4.5 and Section 3.9.** In no case will backlit or neon signs be permitted. Proponents will be encouraged to incorporate external lighting to their signage, although ambient lighting may be sufficient for some signage types.
- **Secondary signs** may be used in accordance with Section 4.2. Window signs may be included, provided they are limited to 25% of the window size and do not block views into the store. Portable signs may be used provided they are of a traditional quality construction and not plastic marker board.

### **3.1.3 Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant**

#### **3.1.3.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the upper storey apartment improvement grant is to encourage the improvement of apartment units in the upper storeys of mixed use buildings. This program is intended to draw a mix of people to live in the Downtown area.

#### **3.1.3.2 Eligible Properties**

Only 2+ storey buildings in the Community Improvement Project Area shall be eligible for this grant. Further, the ground floor of the building must be used for non-residential uses (commercial, office, or institutional).

#### **3.1.3.3 Authority**

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### **3.1.3.4 Eligible Costs**

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Any works in existing upper storey residential unit(s) which bring the unit(s) into compliance with the Ontario Building Code; and
- Costs for the services of a professional engineer or architect as may be required in association with the improvements noted above.
- In accordance with the policies of the Official Plan and the Special Policy

Area, no new residential units may be created in the flood prone areas of the Downtown Paris. It is not the intent of this Plan to permit uses that are not permitted in accordance with the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and the Conservation Authority. However, should the policies evolve, this program may be utilized in accordance with applicable policy and law at the time of application for an incentive. Readers should consult the County to determine if their project is permitted before applying for financial incentives. The approval of financial incentives may be conditional upon other County and agency approvals.

encouraged to make façade improvements as part of their project, and may be eligible for an additional grant under the façade improvement grant program, provided the project complies with all eligibility requirements and design eligibility criteria outlined for that grant program.

#### **3.1.3.5 Grant Value**

The maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$5,000 per residential unit, whichever is less. A maximum of three (3) units shall be eligible per property, leading to a maximum potential total grant of up to \$15,000 per property.

#### **3.1.3.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Administrator.

#### **3.1.3.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### **3.1.3.8 Design Eligibility Criteria**

The Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant principally relates to the interior use of the building, so design eligibility criteria are not specified for this grant program. Applicants will be

### **3.1.4 Property and Private Parking Area Improvement Grant**

#### **3.1.4.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the property and private parking area improvement grant is to encourage landscaping and promote the use of private parking areas in the Downtown area as a source of parking, and reduce the strain on municipal parking lots. The grant also encourages sidewalk cafés to bring activity to the street.

#### **3.1.4.2 Eligible Properties**

All commercial, institutional and mixed-use properties in the currently designated community improvement project area are eligible.

#### **3.1.4.3 Authority**

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### **3.1.4.4 Eligible Costs**

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Landscaping improvements associated with any side yard or rear yard parking lot, to buffer the sidewalk from the parking area;
- Installation or improvements to permanent outdoor seating areas and sidewalk cafés, including fencing and landscaping, provided the seating area is located in a front or side yard or within the public right-of-way subject to approval from the County. Non-

permanent and moveable elements of an outdoor café area will not be considered an eligible cost;

- Improvements to existing parking surfaces, including paving with an improved material, curbing, repainting, lighting, and signage. For clarity, repaving of a parking area with the same material and recycled asphalt shall not be an eligible cost. Eligible works must represent an improvement over existing conditions and not merely a life cycle replacement. Further, only side and rear yard parking areas shall be eligible;
- Improvements to pedestrian connections, walkways and designated bicycle parking areas; and
- Costs for the services of a professional engineer, planner or landscape architect as may be required in association with the improvements noted above.

#### **3.1.4.5 Grant Value**

The maximum value of a grant shall be a maximum of 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$5,000.

#### **3.1.4.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Administrator.

#### **3.1.4.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for grants related to parking area improvements, the parking area must be made available by the property owner for public parking during evenings and weekends or all hours, as indicated through signage installed and maintained on the site.

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### 3.1.4.8 Design Eligibility Criteria

The Design Guidelines does not specifically address guidelines for parking areas and landscaping features. Accordingly, improvements made under this Grant program shall be in accordance with the following requirements:

- **Landscape buffers** should be used between sidewalks and parking areas, except where driveways are required. Landscape buffers should be defined with curbing, stone or be in a permanent, raised planter. Trees are encouraged as part of the landscape buffers.
- **Sidewalk cafés/outdoor patios** should generally be enclosed by a decorative iron fence. The use of landscaping, hanging planters and other features is encouraged to further buffer and define the sidewalk café/outdoor patio.
- **Parking area improvements** will incorporate landscape buffers. Asphalt, other than recycled asphalt, is a sufficient paving surface; however, decorative surface treatments are encouraged, including permeable paving surfaces. Where possible, one-way aisles through parking areas are preferred to minimize the size of the driveway required, and therefore minimize its interruption to the sidewalk. Parking areas should be defined by curbing. Landscaping and tree planting within the parking area and around the edges of the parking area is encouraged. Sufficient lighting should be incorporated to prevent crime, be downward facing, and light posts should not exceed 8 metres in height.

### 3.1.5 Planning and Building Application Fee Grants

#### 3.1.5.1 Purpose

Planning application and building permit fees may pose a barrier to private property investment where these applications are required.

#### 3.1.5.2 Eligible Properties

Any property in the community improvement project area is eligible for this grant. However, the grant must be in relation to a proposed commercial, institutional, mixed-use or multi-unit residential (at least four units) project.

#### 3.1.5.3 Authority

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### 3.1.5.4 Eligible Costs

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Development of a vacant property (infill) for commercial, office, mixed-uses, institutional uses or multi-residential uses (at least four units);
- Redevelopment of a property for commercial, office, mixed-uses, institutional uses or multi-residential uses (at least four units);
- Major additions to a commercial or mixed use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the gross floor area of the building;

- Infrastructure work including the improvement or reconstruction of existing on-site public infrastructure (water services, sanitary and storm sewers);
- Major improvements to parking areas, such as the re-planning or reconfiguration of parking areas which requires a site plan, minor variance, rezoning and/or building permit;
- Major property enhancements aimed at improving views and access to the waterfront, including the development of rooftop patios and other waterfront access projects; and
- Professional services by an engineer, architect, and/or planner.

#### 3.1.5.5 Grant Value

The maximum value of the grant shall be \$5,000 or 100% of the value of the County's required building permit, engineering, and/or planning application fees which are specifically related to the proposed improvements (Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-law Amendment, Minor Variance, Encroachment Permit Fee, or Site Plan), whichever is less.

#### 3.1.5.6 Payment of Grant

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Administrator. The applicant will be responsible for paying the full value of any planning and building application fees. The grant is issued as a rebate for the fees.

#### 3.1.5.7 Program Eligibility Criteria

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### 3.1.5.8 Design Eligibility Criteria

This grant program could relate to a broad range of different improvements, including infill (new development), redevelopment, building additions, property conversions or site planning (e.g., reconfiguration of parking areas). Accordingly, depending on the proposed improvements, the following design guidelines will be applicable:

- **Building height** shall be in accordance with Section 3.1. In no case will 1 storey buildings be permitted. This Plan encourages the development of 2-3 storey buildings.
- **Building setbacks and stepbacks** will be in accordance with Section 3.2 – Setbacks and stepbacks.
- **Façades** will be in accordance with Section 3.3 – Façade Articulation and Section 3.4 – Façade Composition, as applicable to new buildings. **Windows and doors** will be in accordance with Section 3.6, as applicable to new buildings.
- **Roofs** for new buildings will be in accordance with Section 3.7 – Roofs.
- **Building materials and colours** will be in accordance with Section 3.8 – Materials as applicable for new buildings.
- **Awnings**, where proposed, will be in accordance with Section 3.10 - Awnings.
- **Signage** as part of new buildings will be in accordance with Section 4.0 – General Signage Guidelines.
- Any parking area improvements and site planning will be in accordance with the design requirements for parking area improvements and landscape buffers in Section 3.1.4 – Design Eligibility Criteria for

the Property and Parking Area Improvement Grant of this Plan.

### **3.1.6 Adaptive Commercial Reuse Grant**

#### **3.1.6.1 Purpose**

The adaptive commercial reuse grant is intended to help assist in the conversion of non-commercial buildings for commercial purposes, and the conversion of existing commercial space to other commercial uses. This grant can help promote the use of vacant spaces which are limited by structural or other Ontario Building Code compliance issues and the beautification of properties which are being converted. This grant is intended to cover required improvements to meet the Ontario Building Code, where an owner/tenant proposes to convert from a commercial or non-commercial use to a different commercial use. The intent of the program is to provide flexibility and encourage the continued use of commercial spaces in the downtown area.

#### **3.1.6.2 Eligible Properties**

Any property in the community improvement project area is eligible for this grant. However, this program is only applicable to existing commercial uses (which are proposed for conversion to another commercial use) or other non-commercial uses which are proposed for conversion to a commercial use.

#### **3.1.6.3 Authority**

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### **3.1.6.4 Eligible Costs**

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Upgrades to plumbing to comply with the Ontario Building Code;
- Upgrades for insulation, doors, windows, and walls to comply with fire protection standards;
- Installation of accessibility-related equipment to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (e.g., ramps, accessible doorways)
- Installation of upgraded fire protection system elements (e.g., required signage, alarms/detectors, sprinkler systems);
- Installation of upgraded or new permanent ventilation systems as may be required for certain uses (e.g., restaurants)
- Upgrades to electrical systems and wiring to comply with the Ontario Building Code;
- Repair of roof leaks or plumbing system leaks and measures to prevent future leaks; and,
- Construction or improvement of stairs or railings to meet Ontario Building Code.

For clarity, the eligible costs will not include:

- Non-permanent or moveable fixtures used by the business, such as appliances, furnishings, interior signage, and lighting fixtures;
- Decorative and finishing elements and materials, such as painting, finished flooring, drywall, shelving, counters/bars, and similar elements;
- Replacement or repair of roof shingles;
- Lifecycle replacements of aged building components – the proposed

improvements must represent an upgrade to meet a higher standard of the Ontario Building Code; and,

- Replacement of any elements that already meet the Ontario Building Code.

#### **3.1.6.5 Grant Value**

The maximum value of the grant shall be \$10,000 or 50% of eligible costs, whichever is less.

#### **3.1.6.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Administrator.

#### **3.1.6.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

#### **3.1.6.8 Design Eligibility Criteria**

There are no applicable design eligibility criteria, since this grant program focuses on Building Code-related improvements. However, applicants shall be encouraged to make façade and signage improvements (as may be applicable) in conjunction with the proposed improvements, and there may be opportunity to obtain a separate grant in association with those exterior enhancements.

### 3.1.7 Tax Increment Equivalent Grant

#### 3.1.7.1 Purpose

A tax increment equivalent grant is intended to encourage the development and redevelopment of properties where there will be a significant increase in property taxes as a result of the development or redevelopment project. The program helps to reduce tax increases as a barrier to property investment and help make development and redevelopment in the core as attractive as a greenfield development opportunity.

#### 3.1.7.2 Eligible Properties

Any property in the community improvement project area is eligible for this grant. However, the grant must be in relation to a proposed commercial, institutional, mixed-use or multi-unit residential (at least four units) project.

#### 3.1.7.3 Authority

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### 3.1.7.4 Eligible Costs

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Development of a vacant property (infill) for commercial, office, mixed-uses, institutional uses or multi-residential uses (at least four units);
- Redevelopment of a property for commercial, office, mixed-uses,

institutional uses or multi-residential uses (at least four units);

- Major additions to a commercial or mixed-use property, involving an increase of at least 25% of the gross floor area of the building;
- Infrastructure work including the improvement or reconstruction of existing on-site public infrastructure (water services, sanitary and storm sewers);
- Structural rehabilitation works;
- Major improvements to parking areas, such as the re-planning or reconfiguration of parking areas which requires a site plan, minor variance, rezoning and/or building permit; and
- Professional services by an engineer, architect, and/or planner.

#### 3.1.7.5 Grant Value

The grant value shall be a percentage of the municipal tax increase which results from the improvements to the property (i.e., the tax increment). The grant will be paid to the owner each year for a maximum of 10 years or less, at the discretion of the Review Committee. In year one, the value of the grant may equal up to 100% of the tax increment. In subsequent years, the value of the grant shall decrease until it reaches 0% of the tax increment. In no case shall the total value of all grants issued over the grant period exceed 50% of the eligible costs of the project. A payment period of 10 years shall be the maximum with the grants being progressively reduced over the grant period.

- In accordance with the policies of the Official Plan and the Special Policy Area, no new residential units may be created in the flood prone areas of Downtown

Paris. It is not the intent of this Plan to permit uses that are not permitted in accordance with the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and the Conservation Authority. However, should the policies evolve, this program may be utilized in accordance with applicable policy and law at the time of application for an incentive. Readers should consult the County to determine if their project is permitted before applying for financial incentives. The approval of financial incentives may be conditional upon other County and agency approvals.

#### **3.1.7.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant shall be paid only upon completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the Administrator. The applicant will be responsible for paying the full value of property taxes in any given year. The grants shall be issued annually upon full payment of property taxes.

#### **3.1.7.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply, in addition to the following specific criteria:

- This program anticipates various forms of development, which will be subject to permissions under the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and potentially a permit from the Conservation Authority. This program is not intended to indicate that uses or structures not permitted under policy and zoning is permitted.
- To be eligible, the proposed development or redevelopment project must result in a significant increase in the municipal property taxes. Applicants may be required to submit a business plan and an estimate of the potential amount of the

tax increment, based on current assessment values and the anticipated value of the investment.

- This grant program shall not be combined with any other grant program outlined in this Plan. However, applicants may rescind their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant and re-apply for other grants under this Plan, as may be applicable.
- If an eligible applicant is approved for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, and if the subject property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner may not be entitled to receive the remaining grant payments, in accordance with the terms of the program agreement. The payments are also non-transferrable to the new owner unless specifically stipulated as part of the Financial Incentives Program Agreement executed between the owner at the time the agreement was entered into with the Corporation of the County of Brant.

#### **3.1.7.8 Design Eligibility Criteria**

This grant program could relate to a broad range of different improvements, including infill (new development), redevelopment, building additions, property conversions or site planning (e.g., reconfiguration of parking areas). Accordingly, depending on the proposed improvements, the following design guidelines will be applicable:

- Infill development, new development, redevelopment and building additions will be in accordance with the following:
- **Building height** shall be in accordance with Section 3.1. In no case will 1 storey buildings

be eligible. This Plan encourages the development of 2-3 storey buildings.

- **Building setbacks and stepbacks** will be in accordance with Section 3.2 – Setbacks and stepbacks.
- **Façades** will be in accordance with Section 3.3 – Façade Articulation and Section 3.4 – Façade Composition, as applicable to new buildings. **Windows and doors** will be in accordance with Section 3.6, as applicable to new buildings.
- **Roofs** for new buildings will be in accordance with Section 3.7 – Roofs.
- **Building materials and colours** will be in accordance with Section 3.8 – Materials as applicable for new buildings.
- **Awnings**, where proposed, will be in accordance with Section 3.10 - Awnings.
- **Signage** as part of new buildings will be in accordance with Section 4.0 – General Signage Guidelines.
- Any parking area improvements and site planning will be in accordance with the design requirements for **parking area improvements** and **landscape buffers** in Section 3.1.4 – Design Eligibility Criteria for the Property and Parking Area Improvement Grant of this Plan.

### 3.1.8 Brownfield Study Grant

#### 3.1.8.1 Purpose

The risks and costs associated with brownfield rehabilitation are often key barriers to the rehabilitation and redevelopment of brownfield properties. Additionally, the lack of information on specific properties, and the reluctance of property owners to undertake and fund environmental studies, could be a barrier to investment due to uncertain level of risk. The Brownfield Feasibility Grant Program will promote the completion of studies with respect to environmental conditions of properties by owners that otherwise may not occur due to cost premiums associated with these assessments.

#### 3.1.8.2 Eligible Properties

Any property in the community improvement project area is eligible for this grant, provided there is a rationale or basis for suspecting the site is a potential brownfield property (i.e., based on the results of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment).

#### 3.1.8.3 Authority

The authority for administering this grant program is consistent with Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, and conforms to the policies of Section 2.6 of the Brant County Official Plan.

#### 3.1.8.4 Eligible Costs

The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Preparation of a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment;

- Preparation of a Phase III Environmental Site Assessment (i.e., detailed remediation plans as an outcome or extension of the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment);
- Preparation of a work plan for remediation of the site; and
- Preparation of a risk assessment plan.

#### **3.1.8.5 Grant Value**

The maximum value of the grant shall be 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$15,000.

#### **3.1.8.6 Payment of Grant**

The grant shall be paid only upon submission and the Review Committee's acceptance of the applicable study/report.

#### **3.1.8.7 Program Eligibility Criteria**

The policies of Section 3.2 – General Eligibility Criteria apply.

To be eligible, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment must be completed and indicate that contamination is likely.

All environmental studies must be completed by a qualified person as defined in Section 168.1 of the *Environmental Protection Act*, Ontario Regulation 153/04, as amended.

#### **3.1.8.8 Design Eligibility Criteria**

An understanding of the proposed development or design may not be known at the time of application for the brownfield study grant. Accordingly, there are no design eligibility criteria for this grant program.

### **3.1.9 Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program**

#### **3.1.9.1 Purpose**

The provision of tax assistance to brownfield property owners may encourage the remediation and redevelopment of these properties. Remediation of sites and their subsequent development may result in an increase in the assessed value of a property. The Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program allows the County to cancel or defer all or a portion of municipal taxes during a set period. The Province offers a program in which the education portion of taxes may be cancelled or deferred, subject to approval by the Ministry of Finance.

#### **3.1.9.2 Eligible Properties**

Any property in the community improvement project area is eligible for this grant, provided remediation is required for development or redevelopment in accordance with the results of a Phase II or Phase III Environmental Site Assessment. Additionally, the development/redevelopment must be for commercial, mixed-use, institutional, or a multi-residential development with at least 4 units.

#### **3.1.9.3 Authority**

In accordance with Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act*, the County may defer or cancel all or a portion of municipal taxes during the period in which the brownfield site is being cleaned up or redeveloped (the rehabilitation period and development period, as defined in the *Municipal Act*). The County may also apply to the Minister of Finance, on behalf of the property owner, to have the education portion of the property taxes deferred or cancelled.

#### 3.1.9.4 Eligible Costs

The potential tax assistance shall be calculated based on the estimated value of any eligible costs, which may include:

- Preparation of a Phase III Environmental Site Assessment (i.e., detailed remediation plans as an outcome or extension of the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment), a work plan for remediation of the site and/or preparation of a risk assessment plan, unless such cost was included as an eligible cost under the Brownfield Study Grant program previously issued for the property;
- Environmental consultant fees or property insurance during the remediation period; and
- The costs of environmental remediation, including costs for preparing the Record of Site Condition; costs for demolition, costs for removing and disposing of contaminated soil and materials; costs for placing clean fill and grading; installing, maintaining, monitoring or operating environmental or engineering works as required in accordance with the Phase III Environmental Site Assessment or Risk Assessment Plan.

#### 3.1.9.5 Value of Tax Assistance

The County may pass by-laws to provide a deferral or cancellation of all or a part of the municipal portion of taxes on a brownfield site during the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period, as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the *Municipal Act*. The total value of the tax assistance will not exceed the total eligible costs, which are defined in the eligibility requirements above. The property tax

assistance may cover up to 100% of the municipal property taxes.

The value and duration of the tax assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the *Municipal Act*, and outlined in the implementing By-law.

Prior to passing the by-law approving the tax assistance, County staff will be required to notify the Ministry of Finance. Within 30 days of passing the by-law, County staff will also be required to notify the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Finance.

County staff may apply for Provincial Tax Assistance, on behalf of the owner, to cancel or freeze all or a portion of the education portion of property taxes (i.e., the Ontario Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program). The application will need to be approved by the Minister of Finance, and may be subject to a different timeline than the approved municipal tax assistance. The County must be offering municipal tax assistance in order for the owner to be eligible for Provincial tax assistance. An application to the Ministry of Finance to offer educational tax assistance must be made and approved prior to passing the tax assistance by-law. The matching Provincial tax assistance will generally be similar to the municipal tax assistance (e.g., if only 50% of the municipal taxes are cancelled, then likely only 50% of the education portion will be cancelled).

#### 3.1.9.6 Payment

The terms and timing of tax assistance shall be as outlined in the by-law, prepared in accordance with the *Municipal Act*. The program is only a cancellation or deferral of taxes, and is not paid as a grant.

### 3.1.9.7 Program Eligibility Criteria

In no case shall the total amount of tax assistance exceed 50% of the total calculated eligible costs. The Province may stipulate different eligible costs for the educational portion if pursued by the County.

### 3.1.9.8 Design Eligibility Criteria

This program could relate to a broad range of different improvements, including new development), redevelopment, building additions, property conversions or site planning (e.g., reconfiguration of parking areas). Accordingly, depending on the proposed improvements, the following design guidelines will be applicable and may be incorporated into the implementing tax assistance by-law as conditions:

- **Building height** shall be in accordance with Section 3.1. In no case will 1 storey buildings be permitted. This Plan encourages the development of 2-3 storey buildings.
  - **Building setbacks and stepbacks** will be in accordance with Section 3.2 – Setbacks and stepbacks.
  - **Façades** will be in accordance with Section 3.3 – Façade Articulation and Section 3.4 – Façade Composition, as applicable to new buildings. **Windows and doors** will be in accordance with Section 3.6, as applicable to new buildings.
  - **Roofs** for new buildings will be in accordance with Section 3.7 – Roofs.
  - **Building materials and colours** will be in accordance with Section 3.8 – Materials as applicable for new buildings.
  - **Awnings**, where proposed, will be in accordance with Section 3.10 - Awnings.
- **Signage** as part of new buildings will be in accordance with Section 4.0 – General Signage Guidelines.
  - Any parking area improvements and site planning will be in accordance with the design requirements for **parking area improvements** and **landscape buffers** in Section 3.1.4 – Design Eligibility Criteria for the Property and Parking Area Improvement Grant of this Plan.

## 3.2 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible, all applications for financial incentives shall comply with the following general eligibility criteria:

1. The subject property shall not have outstanding tax arrears.
2. In no case will a completed project or a project underway be considered for a grant. Construction may only begin after application approval and the execution of the financial incentive program agreement, in accordance with the application process (Section 3.3.4).
3. The subject property shall be located within the currently designated Community Improvement Project Area (refer to Section 6.2).
4. Where an applicant is a tenant, the authorization and consent of the owner shall be required as part of the application form.
5. Where a subject property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, any planned improvements shall be consistent with the reasons for designation as set out in the by-law designating the property.
6. Projects shall be considered in the opinion of the Administrator and Review Committee to represent an improvement in quality, aesthetics, durability and/or restoration to historical authenticity, and not merely a life cycle replacement of what is existing.
7. At its sole discretion, the Review Committee may decline an application where the total calculated grant would be less than \$500.00.
8. The application shall conform to the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and all other by-laws of the County, any permit from the Grand River Conservation Authority, and all laws and regulations of the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada, as may be applicable to the project.
9. Applicants may be able to apply for more than one grant. All grant programs may be combined, except that the tax increment equivalent grant shall not be combined with any other program.
10. Applicants shall disclose other funding and incentives being received for the project as part of the application for financial incentives. At its sole discretion, the Review Committee may deduct any other grants or incentives from the eligible grant amount.
11. It is recognized that other approvals may be required in relation to a community improvement project. Applicants may apply for financial incentives prior to receiving other required approvals (e.g., zoning, site plan, permit from the Conservation Authority, etc.). However, applicants will need to be aware of the risk that not receiving other approvals may mean that a grant may not be paid. Where approvals are required, the receipt of required approvals may be added by the Administrator as conditions for grant payment in the financial incentive program agreement.
12. It is recognized that this Plan incents certain forms of development within a designated Special Policy Area (i.e., a flood prone area). All development will be subject to meeting the requirements of the Official Plan, the Zoning By-law, and a permit from the Conservation Authority as may be required. This Plan does not exempt any applicant from receiving other required approvals. This Plan shall not be construed as to indicate land use or development permissions.

13. In no case will the value of all grants exceed 50% of the total eligible costs.

### **3.3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**

#### **3.3.1 Designation of the Administrator and Review Committee**

1. Upon implementation of this Plan, Council shall appoint an **Administrator** to manage the day-to-day responsibilities of this Plan. The responsibilities of the Administrator shall be as outlined in this Plan, including: meeting with potential applicants for financial incentives; coordinating applications with the Review Committee and/or Council; and fulfilling the responsibilities of the Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.4) and Marketing the Plan (Section 6.5). Generally, the Administrator should be a full-time staff member at the County of Brant to ensure consistent customer service and the maintenance of strong relationships with the business community. This Administrator role will be fulfilled by the General Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Investments, and Economic Development Officer or a designate.
2. By default, Council is the authority who will make decisions on financial incentive applications. However, Council may appoint a **Review Committee** to make decisions on applications for financial incentives, as outlined in Section 3.3.3. The Review Committee may consist of any committee selected by Council upon the recommendation of the Administrator and County staff. Appointment of the Review Committee should consider their ability to expediently make decisions on applications and ensuring that they have suitable expertise. Members of the Review

Committee should be impartial and be able to interpret and implement this Plan and the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines. Members of the Review Committee could include, but are not limited to:

- a) Representation from County staff (Economic Development & Strategic Investments, Development Services including Planning and Building, Public Works, as well as representation from Finance); and/or
- b) A committee appointed by Council consisting of local residents, business owners, and/or individuals with expertise in the fields of architecture, urban design, urban planning, economic development, and/or community revitalization.

### 3.3.2 Financial Incentives Program Budget

1. The County shall be responsible for funding the financial incentive programs.
2. Council shall establish an annual budget for financial incentive programs as part of its annual budgeting process. This Plan does not specify the amount of the budget, as it may be subject to availability of funding and other priorities of Council.
3. Any unused portion of the budget may be carried forward to the following year.
4. At its sole discretion, and in consideration of recommendations by the Administrator through the Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.4), Council may allocate portions of the budget to individual financial incentive programs. Further, Council may choose to allocate no funding to certain programs.

### 3.3.3 Application Intake

1. By default, the process for accepting applications is considered to be an **open, year-round process**. When there is funding available for financial incentives, the Administrator will accept applications at any time during the year, and the Administrator and Review Committee will process and make decisions on applications in accordance with the process outlined in Section 3.3.4. Under this process, funding becomes available on a “first-come, first-served” basis.
2. Council, in consideration of a recommendation by the Administrator, may opt to implement an **application intake window process**. Under this application process, the Administrator will only accept financial incentive applications during one or more specified timeframe(s) during the year, with a hard deadline for accepting applications. Council and/or the Review Committee will hear applications all at once. Should there be more approved applications than there is funding available, there will be a need to prioritize applications. The prioritization of applications will be at the sole discretion of Council and/or the Review Committee, in consideration of the following prioritization criteria:
  - a) Applications related to designated heritage buildings under the *Ontario Heritage Act* may be considered as the first priority.
  - b) Buildings listed on the municipal heritage register may be considered the second priority.
  - c) Applications involving projects that improve public access or views of the Grand/Nith Rivers in Downtown Paris may be considered as the third priority.

- d) Applications related to corner lot properties may be considered as the fourth priority.
- e) Finally, the order in which the applications were received during the intake window period may be considered as a fifth priority.

### 3.3.4 Application Process

1. Generally, applicants shall be required to meet with the Administrator to discuss their potential improvement project before an application will be accepted. The Administrator will confirm application requirements, eligibility, process and timing and will recommend design considerations.
  2. An applicant will submit a completed application form along with any materials required by the Administrator in consultation with the Review Committee. The types of required supporting materials will depend on the proposed project and the grant(s) being applied for. Supporting materials may include:
    - a) Drawings/elevations/plans/sketches of the proposed improvements;
    - b) Current photos of the property;
    - c) A minimum of two quotes to complete the work, except where the work is highly specialized in nature, is of a low value (i.e., under \$1,000), or there is another acceptable reason for not having at least two quotes, at the discretion of the Administrator;
    - d) Proof that the project complies with zoning/Official Plan and/or any other Provincial, Conservation Authority or Federal requirements as may be applicable;
    - e) Historical photos or other historical information about the property, as may be available (may be supplemented by the Administrator in consultation with other County staff);
  3. The Administrator will review the application for completeness and eligibility, and inform the applicant that the application is considered “complete”. If the application is incomplete, the Administrator will inform the applicant of how to complete the application.
  4. If the application is deemed complete, the Administrator will circulate the application to Council/Review Committee for review.
  5. Council/Review Committee will meet to discuss and make a decision on the application. If the application is refused, it will be returned to the applicant with the reasons for refusal. The Applicant will be able to resubmit their application once they have addressed the reasons for refusal. Where the Review Committee is not Council, the Applicant will have the alternative option of appealing the Review Committee’s decision to Council for reconsideration.
- f) A completed Phase I or Phase II Environmental Site assessment (as may be required for the Brownfield Study Grant or the Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program);
  - g) A project feasibility plan/pro forma as may be required in relation to a tax increment equivalent grant or the Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program; and/or
  - h) A brownfield remediation work plan including description of remediation proposed and timelines for undertaking remediation and development is required for the Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Program.

6. If the application is approved, the Administrator will prepare and execute a financial incentive program agreement, which requires signature by the County and the applicant. The financial incentive program agreement will outline the terms and payment of the grant. The agreement also represents an important tool to ensure that the applicant is carrying out their project in accordance with their approved application.
7. The applicant may begin construction. Once complete, the applicant must inform the Administrator.
8. The Administrator may inspect the project to ensure compliance with the financial incentive program agreement. Alternatively, the Administrator may request photos. If the completed project does not comply with the Agreement, the Review Committee, at its sole discretion, may choose to not make payment.
9. If the Administrator is satisfied the Applicant has completed the project in accordance with the financial incentive program agreement, payment of the grant will be made in accordance with the terms and/or schedule outlined in the financial incentive program agreement.

## 4 PARKING STRATEGY

The Downtown Paris Community Improvement Plan study integrates a preliminary analysis of vehicle parking needs in and around the BIA, to determine whether there is a need to expand the supply of parking or implement other solutions to more efficiently manage parking needs.

Based on a parking inventory survey undertaken by WSP Group (then MMM Group) on Saturday, September 20, 2014, there are 608 parking spaces within the Paris BIA. This includes 219 municipal off-street parking spaces, 132 on-street parking spaces, and 257 privately owned commercial parking spaces. Municipal parking is free, with time restrictions of 2 or 3 hours at most locations. The existing supply of parking areas, as of the time of completion of this Plan, is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Parking utilization surveys were undertaken by WSP Group (then MMM Group) on Saturday, September 20, 2014, from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Additionally, spot surveys were completed by Brant County staff in the morning (from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m.) and in the afternoon (from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.) on 26 weekdays in October, November and December 2014. The average utilizations observed during these weekday counts were generally consistent with the WSP Group (then MMM) survey.

The overall parking utilization in the Paris BIA was observed to fluctuate between 41 to 57 percent on the Saturday, with the overall peak utilization observed from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Parking demands were concentrated along Grand River Street, where the majority of the downtown businesses are situated. Municipal off-street and on-street parking nearest Grand River Street was fairly well utilized.

Municipal on-street and off-street parking was far more utilized (79 percent) compared to privately owned commercial parking lots (28 percent). The lower parking utilizations recorded at private lots are largely predictable and can be attributed to off-peak conditions for many of the uses.

During the weekday periods, overall parking utilization was observed to average 63 percent, with average peak parking utilization being 72 percent for municipal on- and off-street parking and 36 percent for private parking lots.

The survey results indicate that the existing parking demands in the Paris BIA are sufficiently accommodated by the existing parking supply. However, anecdotal discussions suggest that all lots are very busy during the peak periods, and that the search for available parking is very frustrating for drivers on the busiest days. Participants at the Public Open House and Workshop conducted for this study indicated that parking is one of the most disliked qualities about Downtown Paris and is a high priority for improvement.

Parking is a key element to the success of the BIA, and has a role in the development of tourism. Convenient on-street parking is the most valuable as it attracts visitors to various businesses situated on a “main street”, such as Grand River Street North.

An appropriate parking supply should meet the demand on the majority of days; strategies should be considered to manage demands on the “busiest” days. It is also important that both real and perceived parking issues be addressed.

The adequacy of parking must also consider the anticipated growth in the Paris BIA. Growth in Paris and Brant County could create new demand for business and commercial services in the core, and

there are ample opportunities for redevelopment and infill in the downtown. These include properties on the south side of Mechanic Street, and fringe residential uses that could be converted for commercial use.

This proposed parking strategy for the Paris BIA, with its various parking management components, addresses both the existing and anticipated parking demands and provides appropriate potential parking solutions for those visiting, working, and living in the area, while maximizing the efficiency of the overall parking supply.

**Figure 1:** Existing Downtown Paris Parking Supply (as of 2015)



## 4.1 DOWNTOWN PARIS IMMEDIATE TERM INITIATIVES (0 – 2 YEARS)

### 4.1.1 Parking Duration in High Priority Parking Areas

On-street parking, particularly along Grand River Street, was consistently found to be the most utilized parking supply in the downtown. On-street parking along these streets is at a premium, as visitors prefer on-street parking that is close to store fronts. To ensure that an adequate supply of on-street parking is available for visitors most of the time, and to support business vibrancy, high turnover of parking in these locations is desirable. A lack of parking can have a detrimental impact on the local businesses.

Who, when and how long vehicles may park at a particular location are controlled by parking regulations; in this case, the County by-law. To prioritize parking facility use and increase parking turnover in high demand areas, thus ensuring it is reasonably convenient for short-term parkers to find parking, it is desirable to establish limits on parking duration that reflect the importance of on-street parking, particularly along Grand River Street.

Currently, parking duration on Grand River Street is limited to 2 hours. Other on-street parking limitations vary, but are generally 2 or 3 hours.

**It is recommended that consideration be given to reducing on-street limits on parking duration, such that it is 1 hour adjacent to shops (i.e., along the majority of Grand River Street) and no more than 2 hours for the majority of the remaining streets in the downtown.**

This favours short-term parkers, such as deliveries, shoppers and other customers, and those running errands, by increasing parking turnover and making it quicker and easier to find parking within a very short walking distance of their primary destination.

For longer term parkers, less utilized parking in the municipal lots around the downtown continues to provide a relatively convenient alternative to on-street parking.

It is notable that in most of the municipal lots, a 24-hour parking duration limit is presently in effect. This 24-hour duration allows parkers to effectively park in municipal lots indefinitely. During winter months in particular, this can reportedly be problematic, leading to winter maintenance and snow clearing issues, and reducing the overall parking supply.

For these reasons, many municipalities enact overnight parking restrictions that generally range from 2- to 4-hour bans between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

It is recommended that consideration be given to introducing an overnight parking restriction in all municipal lots in the downtown between the hours of 3 a.m. and 5 a.m.

### 4.1.2 Parking Enforcement

For limits on parking duration to be effective, parking enforcement must be frequent and effective, while at the same time being considerate.

Many otherwise upstanding citizens who would otherwise never steal or break the law will often ignore parking regulations and fines, reducing their effectiveness. Improving enforcement and control supports parking management by increasing

regulatory effectiveness. As parking management activities expand, so too should enforcement activities.

**It is recommended that parking enforcement efforts should be focused on identifying any common misuse of municipal parking (e.g., overstay of parking time limits) and targeted to address issues in high priority areas, such as along Grand River Street.**

### **4.1.3 Education and Awareness Programs**

Education and awareness programs that communicate the role and benefits of parking are crucial to the success of parking in the downtown.

It is recommended that education and awareness focus on initiatives that educate business owners and employees about the value and role of parking facilities, and inform the general public about parking availability, regulations and so on.

Specific items to focus on may include:

- Helping BIA members fully appreciate the importance of on-street parking to the success of their business, other businesses and the overall health and vitality of the downtown, and the different roles of on-street and off-street parking.
- Encouraging business owners and employees to park in off-street locations, so that on-street parking is readily available for visitors, shoppers and customers.
- The role of enforcement as a tool to encourage compliance, rather than as a punishment.

- Public education through social media and websites, informing visitors where to find parking, about the location of accessible parking, and promoting compliance with parking regulations, and the like.

### **4.1.4 Efficiency of Existing Parking Lots**

Increasing the capacity of existing parking lots means that the parking supply in the downtown increases without using more land or undertaking major construction. There are various ways this can be achieved, including:

- Use currently wasted areas (corners, edges, undeveloped land, etc.). This can be particularly appropriate for small car spaces, motorcycle and bicycle parking.
- Reconfigure parking lot layouts. In some instances, slight modifications to driveways and drive aisles and restriping of stalls can increase the number of available parking spaces.
- Remove or consolidate non-operating vehicles, equipment, material and junk stored in parking facilities, particularly in prime locations.
- Provide special, small parking spaces for motorcycles. Also, allow and encourage motorcycles to share parking spaces when possible.
- Reduce parking space size. Shorter term parking requires larger spaces, but employee and residential parking spaces can be somewhat smaller. A portion of spaces can be sized for compact vehicles, which require about 20% less space than full-size stalls.

**It is recommended that all opportunities to increase the capacity of existing municipal parking facilities be reviewed.**

#### **4.1.5 Physical Connections to and from Parking Lots**

Improving the walkability (the quality of walking conditions) of connections to and from parking lots expands the range of parking facilities that serve a destination. It also increases the feasibility of sharing parking facilities and the likely use of remote parking facilities.

Improving walkability increases “park once” trips; that is, parking in one location and walking rather than driving to other destinations, which reduces vehicle trips and the overall amount of parking required.

Pedestrian connections from off-street parking areas should be well lit and secure, of a surface treatment that respects a wide range of age and mobility needs and meets accessibility guidelines, and signed so as to be easily and quickly identified. Consideration may be given to added features that enhance the experience, including planting/landscaping, seating, an emergency telephone, auto assistance information, event kiosk or billboard, and so forth.

**It is recommended that existing connections between downtown destinations and the parking lots in the downtown be reviewed, with particular focus on accessibility, lighting, and security.**

## **4.2 DOWNTOWN PARIS SHORT TERM INITIATIVES (3 – 5 YEARS)**

### **4.2.1 Wayfinding**

Many parking problems result, in part, from inadequate user information. Wayfinding or signage can provide information to drivers about parking availability, regulations and price, and can provide directions, such as which way to go to find available parking. Wayfinding is particularly useful if there is a perceived parking shortage, although spaces are actually available in an area, to notify drivers of alternative (less visible) parking locations.

Wayfinding can also be used to direct pedestrians from parking locations to local attractions and back to their parking location after a visit.

Signage, particularly that which is intended for drivers, should be highly visible and distinguishable, informative, and standardized in order to be quickly and easily understood. This is particularly important for infrequent visitors. If implemented appropriately, signage can help reduce the time a parker spends circulating and looking for parking which, in turn, can substantially enhance the visitor experience to the downtown.

**It is recommended that a further review of wayfinding opportunities and requirements in Downtown Paris be initiated, with a view to identifying potential additions and improvements to existing user information and signage.**

Signage in the downtown can be supplemented by other forms of user information, such as maps, brochures, websites, and electronic guidance systems, where appropriate.

## 4.2.2 Shared-use Parking Arrangements

Consider shared-use parking arrangements to permit public use of private parking, particularly current parking supplies that may be substantially underutilized.

Arrangements between the County and landowner may be informal or through formal agreements, and may wish to stipulate conditions and/or restrictions on use. Conditions may call for a nominal payment, establish maintenance expectations, and/or cover potential liability issues. Restrictions may establish the time of day, week and/or season (i.e., months of the year) that use is allowed.

Arrangements might stipulate limitations, such that they are part of a Parking Overflow Plan that is only put in place to deal with seasonal peaks and/or Special Event parking needs.

Arrangements could also be combined with parking permitting to create employee or other parking arrangements.

**It is recommended that all opportunities to establish shared-use parking arrangements between the County and private landowners be reviewed and considered in order to increase the effectiveness of the overall parking supply in the downtown.**

Examples of highly under-utilized sites that may present some opportunity for shared-use arrangements and increased public parking include the Royal Tavern, LCBO and Old Canadian Tire sites. Collectively, these properties provide an estimated 93 private parking spaces, but were only 18 percent utilized during the period when overall parking demand in the downtown was at its highest.

## 4.3 DOWNTOWN PARISLONG TERM INITIATIVES (BEYOND 5 YEARS)

### 4.3.1 Municipal Parking Supply

The Parking Needs Analysis demonstrates that there is currently sufficient parking supply in the downtown to meet typical existing peak parking demands.

However, as already established, a determination of the adequacy of parking must also take into account anticipated growth in the Paris BIA. Growth in Paris and Brant County could create new demand for business and commercial services in the core, and there are ample opportunities for redevelopment and infill in the downtown, most notably along the south side of Mechanic Street.

**For this reason, it is recommended that all opportunities to increase municipal parking supply be explored, with the intention of protecting viable long-term options for expanded municipal parking in the downtown as opportunities emerge.**

At this time, it is anticipated that possible options for long-term enhance of the municipal parking supply might include:

- Acquiring private property for expansion of surface parking. Municipal Lot 3 could potentially be a candidate for expansion through acquisition of adjacent property.
- Agreements (possibly joint venture) with private developers to provide public parking as part of a redevelopment project. This could be implemented in conjunction with redevelopment of the

properties along the south side of Mechanic Street.

- Acquiring and/or maintaining lots that are suitable for possible structured parking (i.e., ideal size, shape, access, etc.). Municipal Lot 1 is ideally situated in the downtown to provide a short walk to virtually all of the downtown, and may be of adequate shape and size for structured parking. Further study would be needed to identify whether an efficient parking layout could be achieved.

The Old Canadian Tire site or an assembly of properties along the south side of Mechanic Street (possibly in conjunction with Municipal Lot 2) could provide an additional opportunity for expanded municipal parking in the long-term. While somewhat more remote compared to Lot 1, a parking structure in this area would still be within a highly acceptable 150 metre walking distance of much of the downtown. Again, further study is required.

For any option involving the conversion of surface parking to structured parking, phasing would need to be carefully considered.

With any future parking expansion that may be under consideration, a comprehensive financial assessment will also be required. It is likely that parking expansion in Downtown Paris would cost in excess of \$15,000 per space for surface parking and \$30,000 per space for above-grade structured parking.

Site selection is an important step toward establishing a successful parking facility. An ideal site should be accessible to the biggest parking demand generators, and be able to support an efficient parking layout. For the Paris BIA, potential site selection criteria include:

- The site is within a convenient walking distance of primary destinations in the downtown.
- The site is accessible (i.e., boundary roads allow for convenient and effective access and egress arrangements).
- The site adjoins existing parking, particularly for expansion of surface parking, for efficiency of layout and consolidation of access and egress.
- The site is a regularly-shaped land parcel (i.e., rectangular) for efficiency of layout.
- The site is a suitable minimum size, particularly if being considered for structured parking, that permits efficient layout of parking stalls and accommodation of vehicle circulation, access and egress storage lanes, ramps, and equipment.
- There will be minimal demolition of existing structures, particularly historic structures.

### 4.3.2 Pay Parking

Pay parking means that motorists pay directly for using parking facilities. This may be implemented as a parking management strategy to reduce parking problems, to recover parking facility costs, or to raise revenue for local parking programs or downtown improvements, or the like. Generally, it is intended to achieve a combination of objectives.

Currently, most parking is inefficiently priced; it is provided free, significantly subsidized, or bundled (automatically included) with building purchases and rents, forcing consumers to pay for parking facilities regardless of whether or not they want it.

When motorists do pay directly for parking, it is often a flat annual or monthly fee, providing little incentive to consider the use of that space.

If pay parking is implemented, parking rates should be set to optimize parking facility use. This is known as performance-based pricing, which means that about 15 percent of parking spaces are vacant and available at any time.

In some instances, resistance to pay parking is a consequence of inconvenient pricing methods:

- Many require payment in specific denominations (coins or bills).
- Many require motorists to predict how long they will be parked, with no refund available if motorists leave earlier than predicted.
- Some payment systems cannot easily handle multiple price structures or discounts.
- Some are confusing or slow to use.
- Some have high equipment or enforcement costs.
- Enforcement often seems arbitrary or excessive.

Better payment methods are available. Newer electronic systems are more convenient, accurate, flexible, and increasingly cost-effective. They can accommodate various payment methods (coins, bills, credit and debit cards, and by cellular telephone or the Internet), charge only for the amount of time parked, incorporate multiple rates and discounts, automatically vary rates by day and time, and are convenient to use.

Some employ contactless technology which automatically deducts payment. Newer systems also produce printed receipts and record data for

auditing, which prevents fraud and increases convenience for customers, operators and local governments. They can also automatically record data on utilization and turnover, which improves planning and administration.

The implementation of pay parking is likely to be the most effective tool in managing the demands for parking in the downtown. Pay parking creates the ability to differentiate parking rates by location and time of day, thus creating opportunities to “shift” parking demands based on customer willingness to pay. For example, parking in the most remote lots might continue to be free (or at least very inexpensive), while pay parking is implemented along Grand River Street. Some customers making trips for certain purposes will be willing to pay the cost of parking in exchange for the convenience it offers. For others, paying for parking will not be a consideration, given the purpose of the trip and the still relatively convenient remote parking.

Through the Downtown Paris Community Improvement Plan study and Public Open House and Workshop, it was heard very clearly that Paris is not ready for pay parking. Nonetheless, parking in the downtown is reportedly difficult to find during certain periods (e.g., summer peak), and is certainly highly utilized in particular locations on a regular basis (e.g., on-street parking along Grand River Street).

**It is recommended that pay parking in the downtown be the focus of further stakeholder consultation and, if appropriate, that there be further study of the long-term implementation of some form of pay parking that would assist in optimizing parking facility use (i.e., performance-based pricing), and may also contribute revenues that could be used for future parking expansion, as well as education and awareness initiatives.**

## 4.4 DOWNTOWN PARIS SPECIAL EVENT PARKING

### 4.4.1 Remote Parking

Remote Parking (also known as Satellite Parking) refers to the use of off-site parking facilities. This often involves shared facilities, such as office workers parking at a restaurant parking lot during the day, in exchange for restaurant employees using the office parking lot evenings and weekends. It can also involve use of public parking lots.

Remote parking can also involve use of parking facilities located at the periphery of a business district or other activity centre, and use of overflow parking during a special event that attracts large crowds. Shuttles may be provided to connect destinations with remote parking facilities, allowing them to be farther apart than would otherwise be acceptable.

Remote parking requires providing adequate user information and incentives to encourage motorists to use more distant facilities. For example, signs and maps should indicate the location of peripheral parking facilities, and they should be significantly cheaper to use than in the core. Without such incentives, peripheral parking facilities are often underused, while core parking is congested.

Overflow parking plans may be produced to describe the management strategies that will be applied when parking facilities fill, for example, during special events, peak shopping periods, or temporary reductions in parking supply. Because most parking facilities are sized to accommodate peak demands that seldom occur, an overflow parking plan can significantly reduce the amount

of parking needed, and provide reassurance that reduced supply will not create problems.

In the case of Downtown Paris, the Syl Apps Community Centre provides an opportunity for remote parking, particularly during peak shopping periods and special events. The arena is approximately a 400m walking distance from the downtown, which makes it an acceptable walk for most shoppers and visitors.

To be successful, remote parking at the Syl Apps Community Centre should be promoted through social media, websites, and other user information associated with special events, and signage should be strategically located to direct visitors to the location.

**It is recommended that the opportunity to use Syl Apps Community Centre as a remote parking venue be reviewed and that any necessary arrangements be made to secure the use of the parking facilities, when needed, and that steps be taken to make visitors aware of the location and availability of the remote parking.**

### 4.4.2 Coach / Bus Staging

Alternatively, or at different times or for different special events (subject to demands), the Syl Apps Community Centre parking lot could be used to provide coach / bus staging.

For particular special events that are anticipated to attract significant bus traffic, it would be possible to have buses unload / load passengers at designated locations within the downtown, and then have them park at the Syl Apps Community Centre.

This increased accommodation of buses could help encourage group trips (i.e., tourism and economic development), free up valuable parking in the

downtown, and possibly reduce private automobile traffic and parking demands, as a result of increased travel by bus.

**It is recommended that the opportunity to use Syl Apps Community Centre as a bus staging area be considered and, if desirable, that steps be taken to promote the location and availability of the bus parking to tour groups and the like, as part of special event planning and the promotion of overall tourism and economic development.**

#### 4.4.3 Bicycle Parking

Bicycle parking issues were identified by the County during peak summer months, particularly when there are a large number of cyclists visiting the downtown as part of organized excursions.

Bicycle parking increases the convenience and security of cycling and, in some situations, can substitute for a portion of automobile parking, particularly if implemented as part of a comprehensive bicycle improvement and encouragement program.

Optimal bicycle parking supply depends on the level of cycling that occurs in the community and at the particular destination. Some destinations have 10-20% of visitors arrive by bicycle, at least during peak summer months.

Bike racks were observed on both sides of Grand River Street, centrally located adjacent the pedestrian crosswalk in downtown. However, depending on the volume of cyclists in Downtown Paris, several bicycle facility improvements could be considered for implementation:

- Install additional permanent bike racks, along with wayfinding (i.e., signage), in the same general area as the existing racks (e.g., north side of the pedestrian

crosswalk), and/or in or adjacent to Municipal Lots 1 and 2.

Bicycle facilities should be prominently located (i.e., in a highly visible area) for security purposes and along routes that provide convenient bike access. In time and depending on the volume of cyclists, consideration may be given to providing changing facilities in conjunction with the bicycle storage facilities at Lots 1 and 2.

- Additionally, for summer peak periods and special events, additional temporary bicycle parking can be provided, if needed, by installing temporary bike racks in the hatched areas adjacent crosswalks and/or converting select on-street parking spaces for bicycle parking using temporary bike racks.
- In these instances, it would be advisable to install temporary signage and barriers / bollards to define the bike parking areas.

**It is recommended that monitoring of bicycle use be undertaken during peak summer periods and special events in an effort to quantify the demands for bicycle parking in the downtown, and that there be appropriate consideration for the implementation of improved bicycle facilities in response to the findings of the monitoring.**

## 4.5 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is understood that at the time of preparing this Plan, there is some on-going discussion within the community regarding potential modifications to the existing on-street parking supply that could

have implications on the provision of parking in Downtown Paris. Specifically, it is understood that there is some consideration being given to possibly (1) modifying the existing angled parking on Grand River Street to parallel parking and (2) providing reserved parking for the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) on Broadway Street West.

Any such modifications to the parking supply in future need to be considered more fully in the context of the objectives of the Downtown Parking Strategy, as well as those of the Community Improvement Plan. Nonetheless, some considerations and potential implications related to these potential changes to the on-street parking supply are highlighted in the remainder of this section.

#### 4.5.1 Parallel versus Angled Parking

There are both pros and cons to parallel versus angled parking in the Downtown core. Ultimately a decision to convert angled parking to parallel, if desired, should be considered by Council and may proceed through the Streetscape and Gateway Area Plan. Some considerations are as follows:

- Parallel parking requires less pavement (i.e., approximately 2.5 metres as compared to approximately 5.25 metres for 45-degree angled parking). Excess pavement can be re-allocated for other uses to achieve other important objectives (e.g., wider sidewalks).
- Parallel parking results in substantially less parking on a linear curb length basis (i.e., angled parking generally achieves at least 70% more parking within the same linear curb space).

- Parallel parking is generally more suited to roadways with higher volumes and higher speeds than angled parking.
- In the absence of wheelstops, angled parking can result in vehicle overhang that has the undesirable effect of reducing sidewalk width and interfering with streetscape/landscape features.
- Angled parking can produce poor driver sightlines when reversing out of a parking stall, resulting in reduced safety of operations compared to parallel parking.

#### 4.5.2 Reserved OPP Parking

The designation of reserved parking for the OPP would seemingly result in a reduction to the existing on-street public parking inventory in the downtown by 8 parking spaces. While these spaces were not observed to be among the most utilized parking spaces in the downtown (observed utilization was typically around 50 percent), on-street parking in the downtown is generally at a premium, with overall observed peak utilization at nearly 85 percent.

### 4.6 IMPLEMENTATION/ ADMINISTRATION

Once the components of a parking strategy are selected, the next step is to develop an implementation plan. As has been suggested above, this may include various phases and contingency-based options. For example, some strategies will be implemented the first year or two, others within five years, and a third set will only be implemented, if necessary, based on

performance indicators such as excessive parking congestion, spillover problems, or the like.

Responsibility for implementation and administration of the plan likely resides with Brant County staff, given that components of the proposed parking strategy for Downtown Paris involve potential modifications to on-street parking time limits that are established by County by-law, parking enforcement, and potential physical alterations to municipal on- and off-street parking.

Many of the initiatives can be implemented as a component of the Streetscape and Gateway Plan (refer to Section 5.1). The Plan can address specific improvements to pedestrian connections as well as reconfiguration of municipal parking areas and wayfinding signage as recommended in this section.

Nonetheless, close consultation with the BIA will be vital in implementing some of the key potential components, such as education and awareness, improved wayfinding and Special Events parking initiatives.

## 5 MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The County’s primary function in this Plan is to fund and administer the financial incentive programs. However, these programs are limited to improvements on private property. To complement these programs and encourage revitalization, the County may lead projects and programs in Paris to:

- Improve the public realm, including streetscapes and other public property elements;
- Acquire and improve land and buildings to advance the visions for the Downtown area; and
- Conduct additional supporting studies to achieve the visions.

At the time of revising this Plan in 2018, the Downtown Paris Streetscape and Gateway Areas Plan was underway, with consideration to address the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines which outlines some principles and needs for public realm, sidewalk and streetscape improvements (Section 5.0 – Pedestrian Experience). These principles include:

1. Consistent use of materials, application of accent paving and pedestrian lighting;
2. Updated finish elevations to avoid steps to enter buildings;
3. Application of an aesthetic standard to fixtures, lighting, paving, etc.;

4. The use of raised planters and trees for pedestrian comfort; and
5. The need to distinguish a sense of arrival into Downtown Paris.

While some of these principles can be addressed in part through private property improvements as indicated in the grant programs, sidewalk, streetscape and right-of-way configuration will have dramatic, long-lasting results. The County’s detailed Streetscape and Gateway Areas Plan will aim to:

1. Provide a master plan for streetscape improvements in the Downtown;
2. Identify sidewalk improvements and treatment, crossing improvements and treatment;
3. Implement improvements that are consistent with the principles of universal accessibility and age-friendly community design;
4. Identify the location of street tree plantings and permanent planters;
5. Identify required lighting improvements, which should be uniform, and having regard for the lighting styles used on the Grand River Street North and William Street bridges and the use of energy efficient lighting standards;
6. Extend lighting to public parking lots for consistency in lighting standards and design across public areas;
7. Identify the location of municipal bicycle parking along with wayfinding signage;
8. Identify preferred fixture models (benches, waste receptacles, tree grates, light fixtures), having consideration to the examples noted in the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines (page 21);

9. Consider improved treatment (paving, delineation) to on-street parking spaces;
10. Consider use of on-street parking spaces to provide additional space for the pedestrian realm (through seasonal outdoor patios seating with temporary landscaping) or permanent reuse of spaces or the reconfiguration from angled parking to parallel parking, as may be determined by Council;
11. Identify and design gateway and wayfinding signage features;
12. Implement parking area improvements and recommend improvements to municipal parking lots; and
13. Estimate costing for the improvements above as well as phasing of construction to minimize disruption to traffic and business.

The Grand and Nith Rivers create a unique setting and gateway for Downtown Paris. While the community already capitalizes on the opportunities afforded by the river views and natural setting, there continues to be an opportunity to facilitate enhanced waterfront access, including consideration for a pedestrian boardwalk. The County will endeavor to improve views and access to the waterfront through:

1. Implementing financial incentives that promote pedestrian interaction with the waterfront (i.e., the façade improvement program);
2. Seeking Provincial or federal funding, as may be available, to support improvements, as well as financial support from private property owners; and
3. Acquiring and improving land for the purpose of providing access or improvements to the waterfront in accordance with Section 28(3) and 28(6) of the *Planning Act*.

## 6 IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 GENERAL

1. This Plan is intended to be implemented over a 10-year period. However, nothing shall prevent the implementation of this Plan beyond 10 years.
2. Once Council is satisfied that this Plan has been carried out, Council may dissolve the Community Improvement Project Area by by-law, rendering the Plan inoperative.
3. Nothing in this Plan shall exclude anyone from complying with any other policies, by-laws, laws or regulations by the County, the Province, the Government of Canada or any agency.

### 6.2 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AREA

1. The Community Improvement Project Area is the area to which this Community Improvement Plan applies. No property is eligible for financial incentives if it is located outside the currently designated Community Improvement Project Area.
2. The Community Improvement Project Area is designated by a by-law of Council and is maintained separately from this Plan. In the event that Council wishes to modify the Community Improvement Project Area, Council would do so by passing a new Community Improvement Project Area By-law and replacing the current Community Improvement Project Area By-law.
3. For convenience purposes only, the Community Improvement Project Area is

attached to this Plan as Appendix 1. However, readers should consult with the County to ensure they are reviewing the latest Community Improvement Project Area, as designated under the most recent by-law.

4. This Plan is intended to focus on the revitalization and improvement of Downtown Paris. It is recognized that the precise geography of what constitutes “Downtown” may need to be redefined over time. Consideration to modify the Community Improvement Project Area should be made upon a review and evaluation of this Plan in accordance with the Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.4). Modifications to the Community Improvement Project Area could occur due to the following circumstances:
  - a) The Business Improvement Area is expanded or contracted, and there is a desire to align the Community Improvement Project Area with the Downtown Paris Business Improvement Area;
  - b) The area designated as Downtown Paris in the County’s Official Plan is expanded or contracted as a result of a review of the Official Plan;
  - c) There is a desire by Council to focus the Community Improvement Plan on a smaller area, to concentrate the benefits of the Plan and better utilize limited implementation resources; or
  - d) There is a desire by Council to expand the Community Improvement Plan’s impact on a larger area and encourage greater program uptake. However, in this circumstance, the applicability of the programs to areas outside the Downtown area will need to be examined. The

programs herein are intended to be applicable to address the critical needs of Downtown Burford and may not be appropriately applied to other areas of the community.

### **6.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF DOWNTOWN PARIS DESIGN GUIDELINES**

A key function of this Plan is that it is the principal vehicle for implementing the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines document. For clarity, the following policies shall apply:

1. The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines are referenced this Plan as eligibility criteria for the financial incentives. The applicable design guidelines are referenced as Design Eligibility Requirements for each of the financial incentive programs, under Section 3.1.
2. The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines shall form an integral component of this Plan and shall be implemented and maintained through the life of this Plan. The Administrator shall be responsible for maintaining a copy of the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines and providing it to applicants for financial incentive programs for reference.
3. The application and interpretation of the guidelines contained in the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines shall rest with the Review Committee to interpret the Plan and its applicability to each application for financial incentives, on a case-by-case basis. It is recognized that not all of the guidelines may apply, depending on the nature of the application. Further, the Review Committee will have discretion to deem certain guidelines to be unreasonable for the applicant to implement, depending on the specific circumstances of the application.
4. Applicants are responsible for understanding the applicability of the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines to their specific proposed project. Failure to implement the guidelines may result in the refusal of an application, at the discretion of the Review Committee in accordance with Section 6.2.3 above.
5. The Downtown Paris Design Guidelines also speak to principles for improving the public realm, such as streetscapes. These guidelines are implemented through Section 5.1, which gives consideration to implementing the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines as part of the development of a Streetscape Plan. It is the responsibility of the Administrator and Review Committee to ensure the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines are considered through the development and implementation of a Streetscape Plan.
6. Through implementation of the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines, the Review Committee may identify the need to make minor changes to the wording of certain guidelines contained in the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines. Accordingly, a review of the Design Guidelines may be initiated upon recommendation of the Administrator through the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.4). The underlying principles and vision of the Guidelines document is not intended to change over the 10-year life of this Plan. A Review of the document should be limited to wording tweaks to improve the clarity and administration of the Guidelines.
7. For convenience purposes, the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines document is attached to this Plan as Appendix 2.

## 6.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF PARKING AND MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

This Plan identifies strategies for improving vehicular parking (Section 4.0) as well as streetscape and public realm improvements (Section 5.0) in Downtown Paris. The following applies to the implementation of these programs:

1. The role of this Plan is to identify parking and public realm improvement needs which would benefit the revitalization of the community of Downtown Paris. The implementation, timing and specific scope of these programs shall be at the discretion of Council and shall be subject to budget considerations.
2. This Plan enables the acquisition, clearance, preparation, improvement or disposition of land, buildings and structures in accordance with Sections 28(3) and 28(6) of the *Planning Act*, for the purposes of implementing these programs, as may be required.

## 6.5 PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

The success of this Plan will depend on the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation strategy to ensure the programs are being utilized and that they are achieving their intended outcomes. The Administrator, in consultation with the Review Committee, will conduct an annual monitoring and review process as follows:

1. Upon implementation of this Plan, the Administrator shall establish a database for monitoring and reviewing applications. For each application, the Administrator should collect:
  - a) The type of project and the type of grant(s) being sought;
  - b) Value of the grant(s) being sought as well as the total value of construction;
  - c) Address, property, applicant and ownership information;
  - d) The names of contractor(s) and supplier(s), which can be used for future reference to interested applicants;
  - e) The type and quantity of improvements being made, as specific to the application (e.g., length of façade, number of signs, area of landscaping, number of parking spaces created/improved, number of trees planted, length of walkways created/improved, number of bicycle parking spaces created/improved, etc.);
  - f) Number of new residential units created or amount of non-residential floor area affected; and

- g) Subjective information about the reasons for the application (i.e., is the Plan responsible for encouraging the project?).
- 2.** Upon receipt of each application for a financial incentive, the Administrator will enter information about the application into the database. Further, the Administrator should endeavor to collect “before” photos of each subject property. Upon approval of each application, the Administrator should collect “after” photos of each project.
- 3.** On a quarterly basis, the Administrator will report to Council on the successes and issues of the Plan, noting:
- a) The total value of grants issued and the total private investment made;
  - b) The amount of private investment leveraged by the Plan;
  - c) The total number of applications received and the total number of successful applications (total and for each program);
  - d) Before and after photos of successful applications;
  - e) Any unintended outcomes of the programs, and measures for preventing unintended outcomes in the future;
  - f) Any recommended adjustments to the Community Improvement Plan or the Community Improvement Project Area as may be required;
  - g) Progress on implementation of the Parking Strategy (Section 4.0) and the Municipal Leadership Strategy (section 5.0);
  - h) Any recommended improvements to Plan administration or application processing; and
- i) Recommendations for funding grant programs, including whether additional funding could be required and which programs should be funded.
- 4.** As noted, there may be a need to make adjustments to the Plan or the Community Improvement Project Area as an outcome of the review process. Table 6.1 summarizes which types of changes will require an amendment to this Plan.

**Table 6.1 – Types of Modifications that Require an Amendment**

Type of Plan Modification	Requires an Amendment to this Plan?
Delete or add eligible costs to a financial incentive program	Yes
Modify, delete or add to the “eligible properties” or any other eligibility criteria within each incentive program, the general eligibility policies (Section 3.2) or other criteria	Yes
Permanently delete a financial incentive program	Yes
Add a new financial incentive program	Yes
Modify, delete or add to the vision, goals or objectives	Yes
Modify the Community Improvement Project Area	No (requires a new Community Improvement Project Area by-law)
Discontinue funding to any program, or discontinue funding to all programs in any given year	No
Allocate funding to certain programs in any given year	No
Delegate Council’s default authority for approving financial incentives to a committee or an individual	No

## 6.6 MARKETING THE PLAN

To be successful, the County will need to engage in on-going marketing of the Plan’s programs and encourage uptake. At a minimum, it is recommended that the Administrator lead the following activities:

1. A Community Improvement Plan brochure be prepared and made available for distribution (this may be integrated with educational programs for parking and property maintenance, as recommended by this Plan);
2. Public inquiries into the Plan are considered to be an important marketing opportunity. The Administrator should be responsive and informative when inquiries are made.
3. A dedicated webpage be established to provide information about the Plan, its implementation, contact information and availability of application forms; and
4. On an annual basis, the Administrator should communicate that the Plan’s budget has been refreshed through a distribution of flyers, the brochure or a meeting with the BIA and other stakeholders.

## 6.7 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

To assist in the interpretation of this Plan, the following terms are defined:

**Administrator** means the individual or individuals tasked with the responsibility to implement this Plan on a day-to-day basis. An administrator may participate as a member of the Review Committee or may be responsible for coordinating with the Review Committee.

**Applicant** means a property owner or tenant that has submitted an application for one or more financial incentives outlined in this Plan.

**Application** means the form required to be completed by an applicant for a financial incentive and may include supporting materials as required by the Administrator in consultation with the Review Committee.

**Community Improvement Project Area** means the area to which the Community Improvement Plan applies, designated by a by-law of Council and administered separately from this Plan. The reader should consult the County to confirm the current Community Improvement Project Area. For convenience purposes, the Community Improvement Project Area is included as Appendix 1 to this Plan.

**Council** means the Council of the Corporation of the County of Brant.

**County** means the Corporation of the County of Brant.

**Downtown Paris Design Guidelines** means the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines document, dated October 21, 2014 and referred by Council for implementation in the Community Improvement Plan study on October 21, 2014. The Downtown

Paris Design Guidelines are a companion document of this Plan, and this Plan makes frequent references to the document. For convenience purposes, the Downtown Paris Design Guidelines is included as Appendix 2 to this Plan.

**Financial Incentive Program Agreement** means an agreement executed between the County and a successful applicant for one or more financial incentive programs. The Agreement outlines the conditions for payment of the grant, as well as timeframes and the responsibilities of the County and the applicant.

**Mixed Use Building or Property** means the use of land or property for a combination of commercial, institutional and/or residential uses. For the purposes of this Plan, this shall refer to a building with at least two storeys in which the ground floor is used for commercial or institutional uses and the upper storey(s) are used for other commercial uses, institutional uses, offices or residential uses.

**Review Committee** means the group of persons delegated with the authority to review and make decisions on applications for incentives, and other responsibilities as indicated by this Plan. By default, Council makes decisions on financial incentives unless Council delegates the authority to a specified Review Committee.

**This Plan** means the Downtown Paris Community Improvement Plan and Parking Strategy.