

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

TOWN CENTRES of RODNEY & WEST LORNE MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN



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September 2009

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RODNEY & WEST LORNE**

MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN

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PART 1 : BACKGROUND

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Town Centres of Rodney and West Lorne

1.0 PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

Community improvement is a means by which a municipality takes a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the reuse, redevelopment and revitalization of lands, buildings and infrastructure in an area identified in the municipality as being in need of such measures. A municipality's commitment to community improvement is expressed in its official plan through goals, objectives and policies. These goals, objectives and policies are then applied to the area identified for community improvement and a community improvement plan is prepared -- shaped by local needs, conditions, priorities and resources.

The preparation of the community improvement plan is governed by the provisions of the Planning Act (Appendix A) and facilitated by guidelines published by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Until recently, community improvement plans containing financial assistance or land related programs required the approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). This is no longer the case although MMAH remains involved in the review of such plans. The approval function now rests with the municipal council. Once a community improvement plan is adopted by by-law by a municipal council, notice is given along with a 20 day appeal period. In the event no appeals are filed within the prescribed period, the plan comes into effect. Where appeals are filed, they will be heard by the Ontario Municipal Board.

By preparing a community improvement plan (CIP), a municipality is able to:

- a) focus attention on areas in need of improvement, redevelopment and revitalization;
- b) facilitate and encourage physical change in a comprehensive and coordinated manner;
- c) stimulate private sector investment through public, incentive based programs; and
- d) take advantage of funding and incentive based legislation to support community improvement.

A CIP may identify and target one or more community improvement project areas defined under the Planning Act as those areas that because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or any other environmental, social or community economic development reason, a municipality considers is in need of improvement. The Act provides the legislative powers to municipalities to prepare and adopt a community improvement plan. These powers include:

- a) designating, by by-law, a specific property, area or entire community as a community improvement project area provided the municipality's official plan contains community improvement provisions;

- b) constructing, repairing, rehabilitating and improving buildings on municipally owned land;
- c) acquiring, holding, clearing, grading or otherwise preparing land for community improvement;
- d) selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of municipally owned land;
- e) providing grants or loans to owners, tenants and their assignees; and
- f) providing tax relief for environmental remediation.

In the Municipality of West Elgin, the Official Plan for the Village of Rodney and the Official Plan for the Village of West Lorne contain identical provisions for community improvement. These official plans are about to be replaced by the new Official Plan for West Elgin. The new Official Plan also contains provisions for community improvement (Appendix B). The Plan was adopted by Council on 21 February 2008 and is before the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing pending approval.

2.0 TOWN CENTRES OF RODNEY AND WEST LORNE

As the largest settlements in the Municipality of West Elgin and being situated near its geographic centre, Rodney and West Lorne are readily accessible to all residents of the community for basic goods and services and institutional needs. Both villages lie just south of Highway No. 401, making them readily accessible to the region as-a-whole. As the only settlements in West Elgin serviced by both a municipal water supply and municipal sanitary sewage system, Rodney and West Lorne offer the greatest potential for accommodating future growth and development in the municipality.

The town centres of both Rodney and West Lorne have been adversely affected by a decline in economic activity brought about by a decline in the population of the municipality, changes in the farm community and the range, quality and pricing of goods and services offered in neighbouring London and St. Thomas. Given the potential of the town centres to be viable and attractive, to be a social gathering place and to perform multi-functional roles, a CIP for these areas is considered a necessary and timely strategy.

An overview of the demographic characteristics and the historical development of Rodney and West Lorne as well as an assessment of the current state of the town centres has been undertaken to understand how these settlements were shaped and what measures are needed to protect and enhance their existing assets, create new attractions and to ensure economic and social vitality.

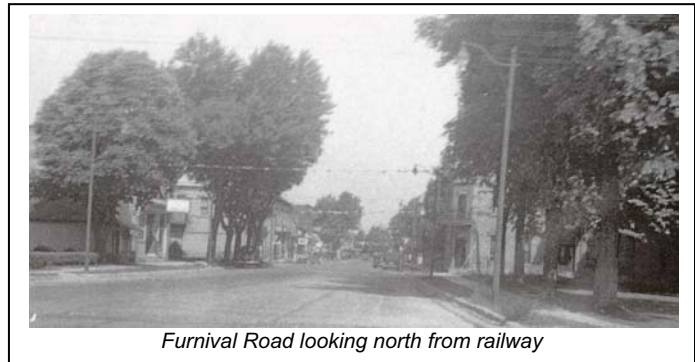
The current (Statistics Canada, 2006) population of West Elgin is 5,349 -- about half of which live in Rodney and West Lorne. Both are small settlements with estimated populations of 1225 and 1800 respectively when taking into account contiguous development beyond their previously incorporated boundaries. In recent years, the growth rate for both has been relatively static.

The majority of West Elgin's residents are of British or Scottish heritage. In addition, a significant number of residents are of Portuguese descent. The 'school age' population (aged 0-19) is expected to decrease to 23% of the total population by 2021 while the elderly population (aged 65+) is expected to remain fairly constant. The working population (aged 20-64), on the other hand, is expected to increase.

2.1 RODNEY

2.1.1 Early Development

Rodney's early development was based largely on the lumber industry having been first known as Stewart's Mills, named after Alexander Stewart who was responsible for introducing the first sawmill in the village. With the advent of the Canadian Southern Railway (CSR), development of the village shifted



and dwellings and shops were erected near the tracks. To accommodate the needs of a thriving local economy, a number of hotels were established in the core, the first two being the Rodney Hotel and the Forest Inn Hotel. Soon afterwards, other hotels followed including the Royal Hotel at Queen Street and Furnival Road and the Patterson Hotel at Victoria Street and Furnival Road.

Between 1870 and 1907, the population of Rodney increased from a mere 100 to over a 1000 and the number of businesses grew from 10 establishments to a diverse mix of over 50 establishments including butcher shops, cobblers, furniture stores, dressmaking shops and a hardware store. During this period, the village also saw the establishment of its first bank on the northeast corner of Clark Street and Furnival Road in 1880. Despite the early boom in population and businesses, Furnival Road itself was not paved until 1928.

2.1.2 Existing Land Use

The town centre of Rodney lies largely along Furnival Road between Queen Street on the north and two former railway lines on the south (Figure 1). It is linear in shape being about four blocks long and half a block deep and contains a mix of commercial, institutional and residential uses (Figure 2). Commercial enterprises make up the bulk of the building fabric. In some instances, apartments may be found over ground floor commercial uses. Institutional buildings include the local library and the old town hall, the latter being once the municipal offices of the former Village of Rodney and the Township of Aldborough and, before that, the local post office.

Of the commercial businesses, two long established car dealerships (one recently closed) and a grocery store, have the most dominant presence. The remaining businesses are generally small to medium in size and provide a limited range of goods and services (Table 1). Vacant storefronts are evident and it is apparent that some businesses have recently

RODNEY TOWN CENTRE



Date of Photograph: 2006

Source: Municipality of West Elgin
Official Plan 2008



DOWNTOWN CORE

Figure: 1

Existing Land Use

RODNEY TOWN CENTRE

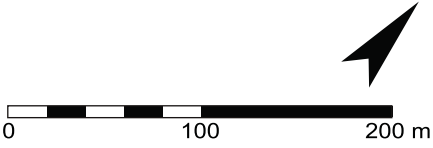
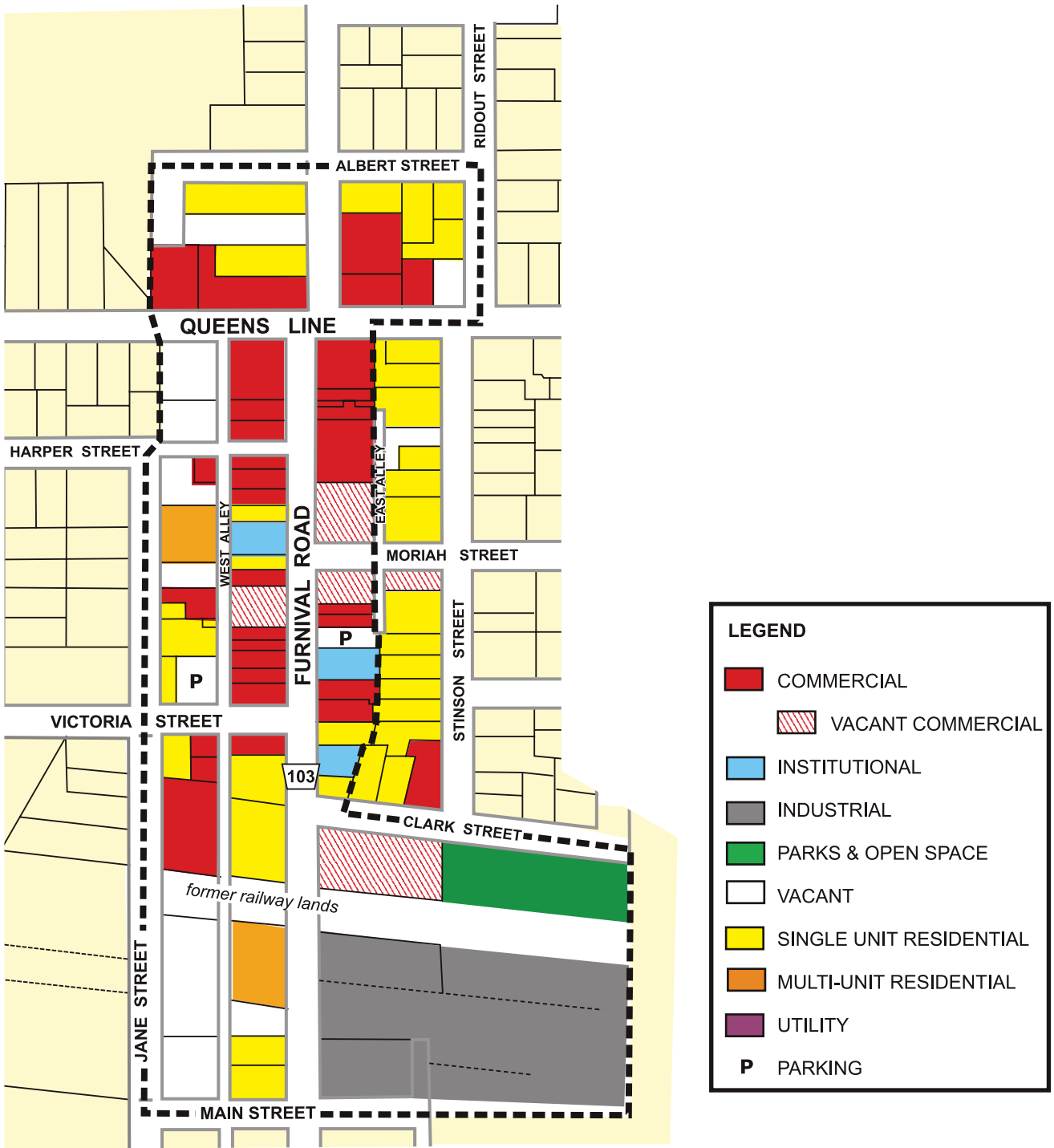


Figure: 2

Table 1**EXISTING BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS****Rodney Town Centre**

	Name	Address	Classification
1	Back Door Pizza	242B Furnival Road	food service
2	Beer Store	167 Queen Street	beer/liquor
3	Canada Post	234 Furnival Road	government service
4	D & L's Fish & Chips	223 Furnival Road	food service
5	Fairle's Food Market	237 Furnival Road	food retail
6	Fordham Motors	241 Furnival Road	motor vehicle sales & service
7	Gigi's Variety	214 Furnival Road	variety, food service, bowling
8	Hair Razor's Salon	246 Furnival Road	personal service
9	Iris Flower Patch	216 Furnival Road	florist
10	Keiri's Ink	218 Furnival Road	business service
11	Lor Mar Laundromat	239B Furnival Road	personal service
12	LCBO	243 Furnival Road	beer/liquor
13	M&D Restoration & Collision	230 Furnival Road	motor vehicle service
14	MTO Licensing Office	217 Furnival Road	government service
15	Marg's Variety	240 Furnival Road	variety
16	Mel's Accounting Service	242 Furnival Road	accounting
17	Micky's Diner & Shake Shoppe	207 Furnival Road	food service
18	My Unique Boutique	213 Furnival Road	clothing retail
19	Padfield's Funeral Home	212 Furnival Road	personal service
20	Rodney Ambulance Service	210 West Alley	government service
21	Rodney Library	207 Furnival Road	educational
22	Rodney Medical Clinic	226 Furnival Road	medical/dental
23	Ron's Craftastic Gifts	211B Furnival Road	retail, specialty
24	Royal Bank	244 Furnival Road	financial
25	Royal LePage/Triland	240A Furnival Road	insc/real estate
26	Stedman's V&S	221 Furnival Road	retail. general
27	Stephanie Cox	239A Furnival Road	personal service
28	West Elgin Parent Child Resource Centre	217 Furnival Road	government service
29	West Elgin Mutual Insurance	238 Furnival Road	insurance

closed or are in the process of closing as a result of a long continued decline in business. As is typical with most small town 'main streets', on-street parking provides the majority of parking spaces. A municipal parking lot lies adjacent to the former town hall.

2.1.3 Visual Character

The town centre of Rodney possesses both positive and negative attributes. On the negative side, there are no natural amenities that give the core a unique or special identity (e.g. water, topography) and the layout of the core is fairly simplistic. There are, however, a few remaining heritage buildings (Figure 3) (Table 2) that contribute to the distinctive character of the core and a potential exists for revitalizing the streetscape to make it more appealing, pedestrian friendly and enjoyable.

With relatively minor work, many building façades could be made more attractive. More costly restoration of heritage building façades, however, is necessary to reclaim their architectural features and to ensure their structural integrity. Signage, in some cases, is poorly designed and constructed and could be more appealing. The use of awnings is limited.



As for the public realm, an up-grading of many of the elements such as boulevard treatment, light fixtures, pedestrian seating, street trees and garbage receptacles would be desirable and general maintenance could be improved. Gaps in the streetscape could be effectively reduced by landscaping and perimeter walls and vehicular access across the sidewalk restricted, wherever possible, to eliminate pedestrian–vehicular conflicts.

2.1.4 Survey Findings

A self-administered survey was undertaken of all merchants in the town centre to ascertain areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and future priorities for improvement and development (Appendix C). The survey findings are summarized below.

Physical issues that were identified included a general lack of maintenance and cleanliness of sidewalks and public spaces, inadequate landscaping, insufficient benches (particularly for the elderly), clutter left on the balconies of apartments above stores, poor upkeep of vacant stores, insufficient parking and the use of street parking by residents on a continuous basis and lastly, slow snow removal in the winter. With respect to the state of retailing, issues identified by respondents included a lack of retail and merchandise diversity and variety, unsatisfactory storefront appearance, cleanliness and empty stores.

Survey respondents expressed the need for physical improvements through measures such as greater and more attractive landscaping and improved maintenance of sidewalks to make the town centre more vibrant. With respect to storefronts, respondents felt that assistance to storeowners for improving their premises would be beneficial to the image of the downtown core and in attracting more customers and additional retailers.

Table 2

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

Rodney Town Centre

	ADDRESS	EXISTING USE/BUSINESS^①
1	205 Furnival Road	residential /vacant
2	207 Furnival Road	West Elgin Library
3	209 Furnival Road	residential
4	211 Furnival Road	Ron's Craftastic Gifts
5	212 Furnival Road	Padfield's Funeral Home
6	213 Furnival Road	vacant
7	214 Furnival Road	Gigi's Variety
8	215 Furnival Road	vacant
9	216 - 218 Furnival Road	Iris Flower Patch & Keiri's Ink
10	217 Furnival Road	Community Centre

① ground floor only

HERITAGE BUILDINGS: RODNEY TOWN CENTRE



205 Furnival Road



207 Furnival Road



215

213

211

209 Furnival Road



212 Furnival Road



217 Furnival Road



214 Furnival Road

216 - 218 Furnival Road

To improve the retail mix and vitality of the downtown core, the establishment of a business recruitment program was supported to attract new businesses such as a hardware store, pharmacy, upscale restaurant or pub (with an outdoor patio), deli, shoe store, clothing store and bookstore. The need for a clothing store and a hardware store was cited most often. In addition, efforts such as special promotional events and a 'buy local' campaign to support local businesses were also suggested.

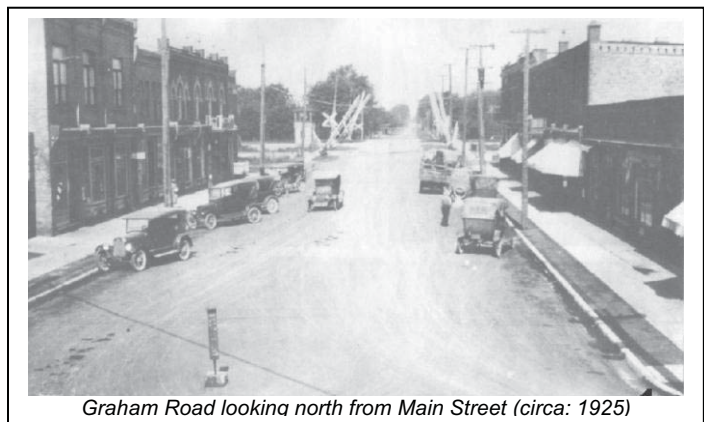
Respondents were very much in favour of establishing a loan/grant program to improve storefronts and heritage buildings. Most were adamantly opposed to storefront conversions for residential purposes.

2.2 WEST LORNE

2.2.1 Early Development

West Lorne's foundations were built upon lumbering, wagon-making and the railroad. Like Rodney, the primary impetus for the settlement's growth was the lumber industry. At one point, there were five sawmills doing a thriving business in the village.

The year 1872 was a landmark year for West Lorne as it witnessed the introduction of the Canada Southern Railway (CSR), which completely revamped business in the area, and the opening of a new post office. The 1880's also brought about many changes to the village. By then, swamps south of the Village had been completely drained, the back streets had been corduroyed and graveled and the stave mills were in full production. Soon afterwards, one of West Lorne's major manufacturing plants, Canadian Cannery, commenced operations.

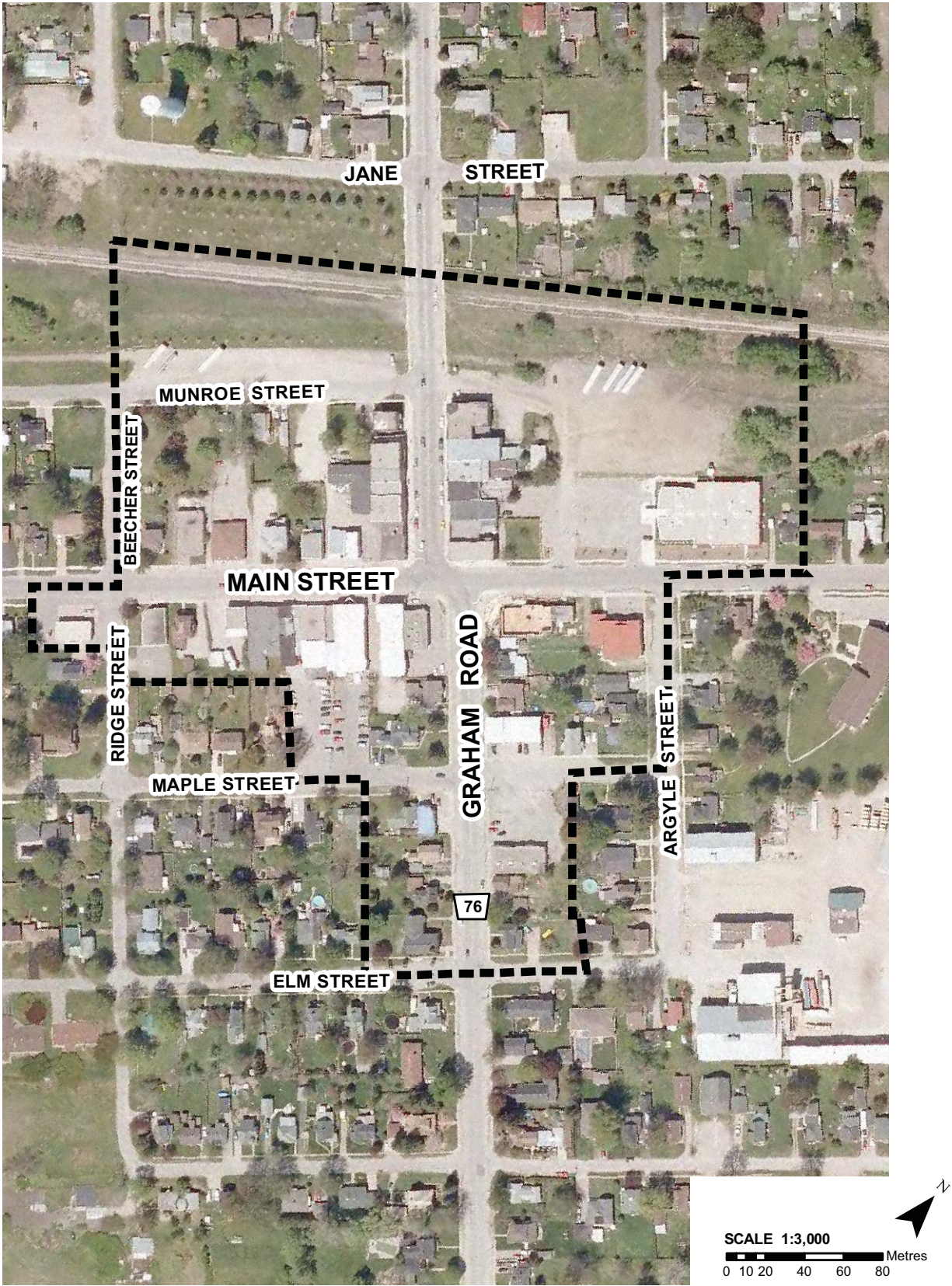


Initially, the poor condition of Main Street in the village was a deterrent to commercial enterprises but when Cyrenius Oxford Lemon of London opened a general store on Main Street, other businesses shortly followed including a boot and shoe store, a tailor shop, a grocery, a baker and a hotel. Eventually, a large department store opened on the east side of Graham Road.

2.2.2 Existing Land Use

The town centre in West Lorne, unlike Rodney, is more rectangular and compact in shape with development having evolved along two streets, Main Street and Graham Road south of the former Canada Southern Railway (Figure 4). About the same size as the town centre in Rodney, the core contains a similar mix of commercial and institutional uses and a number

**WEST LORNE
TOWN CENTRE**



Date of Photograph: 2006

Source: Municipality of West Elgin
Official Plan 2008

 **DOWNTOWN CORE**

Figure: 4

of remnant dwellings (Table 3). Institutional uses include a library, a community health centre, a community centre and a fire station (Figure 5).

The West Elgin Community Health Centre and the West Elgin Community Complex (recently rebuilt following a devastating fire) are recognized as key establishments in the core. They were a definite factor which led to the decision to locate a recently constructed senior citizens' home in the core to take advantage of nearby facilities and services within easy walking distance. With its community health centre, three medical practitioners and a pharmacy, West Lorne is the medical centre of West Elgin.

A greater than desirable number of vacant storefronts and premises nevertheless attests to the decline in business activity and the major challenge facing the downtown core in West Lorne. The proposed Arts and Cookery Bank, described as a community heritage centre, is an ambitious and creative effort that it is hoped will significantly contribute to the revitalization of the downtown core.

2.2.3 Visual Character

Many of the more contemporary commercial buildings in West Lorne do not possess distinguishing characteristics or attractive architectural features. Relatively modest improvements (e.g. paint, flower boxes, window and door treatments) could have a significant visual impact. Greater attention to architectural detail has been paid in the design of public buildings; namely the Community Complex and the Community Health Centre.

On the other hand, West Lorne's town centre has a greater legacy of heritage buildings (Figure 6) (Table 4) and a more diverse mix of buildings compared to Rodney. In fact, the block along Graham Road extending between Main Street and Munroe Street is virtually intact as a heritage streetscape. An opportunity exists to create a heritage conservation district as a basis for preserving, restoring and enhancing this block as a key component of a revitalized town centre.



Issues with the West Lorne's public realm mirror those in Rodney. Greater attention to amenities (e.g. tree planting, street furniture, signage) and a higher level of maintenance would make a significant difference in improving the streetscape and the pedestrian environment.

2.2.4 Survey Findings

A self-administered merchant survey, virtually identical to the one undertaken in Rodney, was also undertaken in West Lorne to ascertain areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and future priorities for improvement and development.

Table 3**EXISTING BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS****West Lorne Town Centre**

	Name	Address	Classification
1	AP Electronics	173 Main Street	retail – specialty
2	Arts & Cookery Bank	242 Graham Road	educational
3	Bank of Montreal	226 Graham Road	financial
4	B & J Variety	209 Graham Road	convenience
5	Besley's Home Furnishings	174 Main Street	appliances and furniture
6	Bonita's Spa Essentials	236 Graham Road	personal service
7	Corner Consignment	225 Graham Road	apparel
8	Dixon's Feed Service	217 Graham Road	farm supplies
9	Drs. S & P Kashyap	188 Main Street	medical/dental
10	Dr. S Kovac	233 Graham Road	medical/dental
11	Foodland	170 Main Street	food – retail
12	Freedom 55 Financial	233 Graham Road	financial
13	Gangle Insurance	173 Main Street	insc/realty
14	Healthkicks Fitness	168 Main Street	personal service
15	Home Hardware	232 Graham Road	retail – general
16	Joe's Family Restaurant	178 Main Street	food service
17	Judy's Hair Loft	240 Graham Road	personal service
18	Modern Beauty Salon	225 Graham Road	personal service
19	Muddy Paw's Grooming	220 Graham Road	animal care
20	Out to Lunch	224 Graham Road	food service
21	Palumbo Veterinarian	168 Main Street	animal care
22	PJ's Pizza	238 Graham Road	food service
23	Random Ink	234 Graham Road	business service
24	Ripley & Giles Motors	190 Main Street	motor vehicle service
25	Ripley's Quality Home Centre	182 Main Street	home supplies
26	Rosa's New Image	207 Graham Road	personal service
27	Preferred Insurance	209 Graham Street	insurance
28	Ross & Co Salon and Tanning	209 Graham Road	personal service
29	Sudz Coin Laundry	218 Graham Road	personal service
30	The Chronicle	167 Main Street	publishing
31	Verbrugghe Realty	167 Main Street	real estate
32	West Elgin Chiropractic Centre	186 Main Street	medical/dental
33	West Elgin Community Health Centre	153 Main Street	medical/dental
34	West Elgin Medical Centre	171 Main Street	medical/dental
35	West Elgin Pharmacy	229 Graham Road	retail – general
36	West Elgin Support Services	160 Main Street	public service
37	West Lorne Library	160 Main Street	public service

Source: Community Planners Inc. & Municipality of West Elgin

Existing Land Use

WEST LORNE TOWN CENTRE

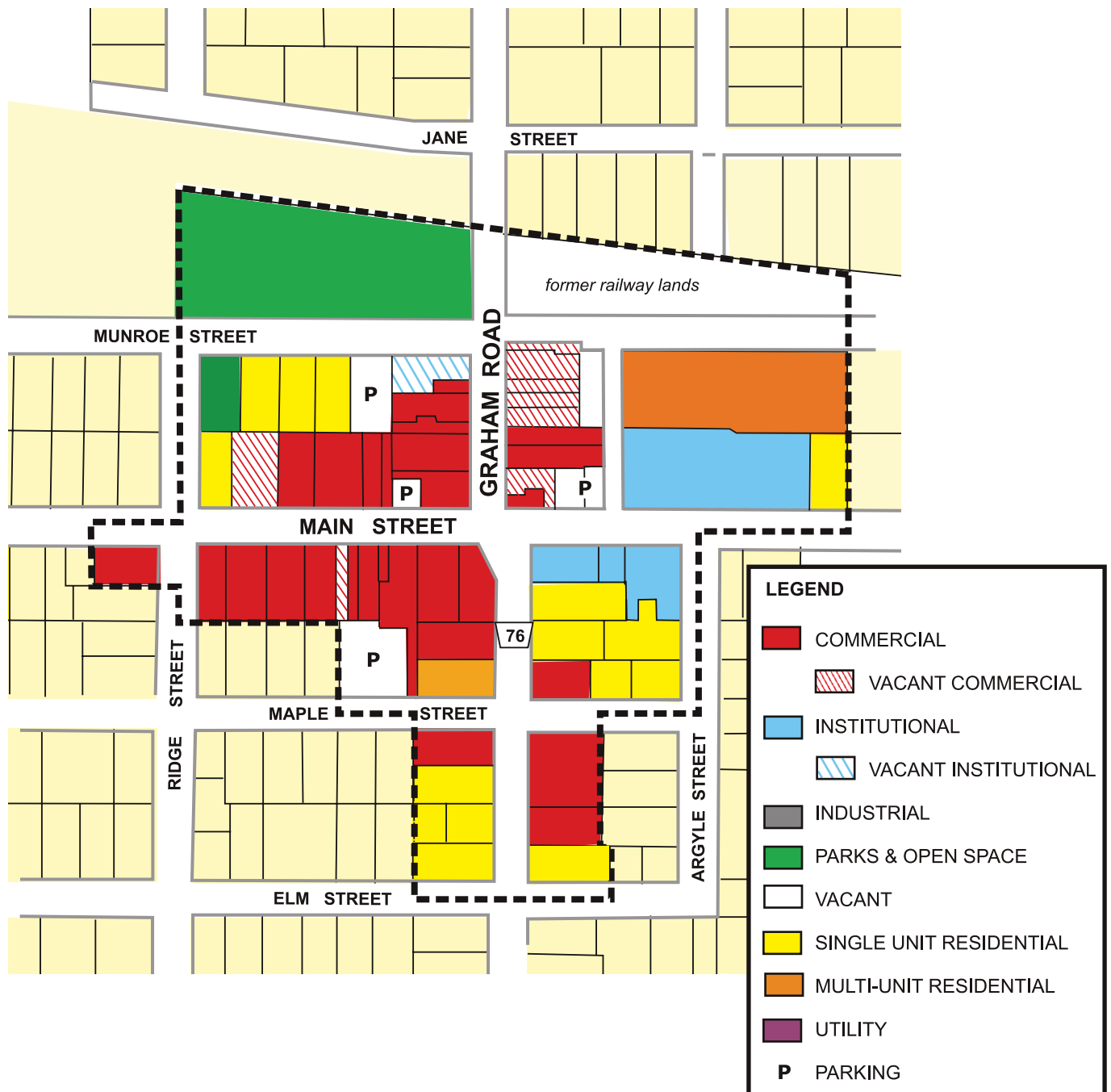


Figure: 5

Table 4

HERITAGE BUILDINGS

West Lorne Town Centre

	ADDRESS	EXISTING USE/BUSINESS^①
1	206 Graham Road	vacant
2	225 Graham Road	Corner Consignment/Modern Beauty Salon
3	226 Graham Road	Bank of Montreal
4	227 Graham Road	vacant
5	229 Graham Road	West Elgin Pharmacy
6	231 Graham Road	vacant
7	232 Graham Road	Home Hardware
8	233 Graham Road	Dr. S. Kovac /Optometrist & Freedom 55 Financial
9	234 Graham Road	vacant
10	235 Graham Road	AP Electronics/vacant
11	236 Graham Road	Bonita's Spa Essentials
12	237 Graham Road	vacant
13	238 Graham Road	PJ's Pizza
14	242 Graham Road	Arts & Cookery Bank (under construction)
15	160 Main Street	West Elgin Public Library
16	171 Main Street	West Elgin Medical Centre

①ground floor only

HERITAGE BUILDINGS: WEST LORNE TOWN CENTRE



Commercial Block - Main Street to Munroe Street (west side)



Commercial Block - Main Street to Munroe Street (east side)



206 Graham Road



160 Main Street



171 Main Street

Respondents identified deteriorating sidewalks, lack of seating, inadequate parking, unkempt vacant properties (including storefronts), unsatisfactory landscaping and tardy removal of snow banks in the downtown core as matters that should be addressed. Residents and employees who often parked their cars all day thereby preventing customers from enjoying convenient and easy access to stores was pointed out as an issue that needs to be addressed.

Retail problems in West Lorne were perceived similar to those in Rodney. Respondents expressed concern about the lack of certain types of stores and that the variety of merchandise available in existing stores was often disappointing. Storefront appearance and cleanliness were frequently raised issues. In addition, the appearance of empty stores was cited as a deterrent for business in surrounding stores. Poor store signage was also seen as an issue by some respondents.

To improve the town centre of West Lorne, respondents indicated that the physical problems should be addressed first. To do this, elements such as more landscaping (in particular, flower boxes) and better sidewalk maintenance were suggested. Regarding storefronts, respondents felt financial assistance should be given to businesses to help them improve their storefronts. A perceptive comment by one respondent was that some store windows looked cluttered as a result of signs or messages advertising community events or other local happenings. As a solution, the respondent suggested a central bulletin board or community kiosk.

Additional actions that were suggested included upgrading sidewalks and improving stores to better facilitate wheelchairs, erecting signs to identify parking areas, improving existing parking areas (particularly those along Munroe Street) and enforcing time limits for on street-parking to prevent abuse by residents and employees.

Respondents felt that new stores should be recruited to the downtown core to improve the retail mix. Restaurants, a clothing store, a flower shop, a children's goods store and even law offices and a used furniture store were mentioned. A restaurant, preferably one with a patio, and a clothing store were cited most frequently.

Like Rodney, the majority of respondents in West Lorne were in favour of establishing a loan/grant program to improve storefronts and heritage buildings but adamantly opposed storefront conversions for residential purposes.

2.3 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND TRENDS

Based on observations as well as the findings from the merchant survey, it was evident that there was a high level of dissatisfaction with the opportunities available for shopping and entertainment in both Rodney and West Lorne. Furthermore, while many seem receptive to spending their money locally, they feel better choices exist in nearby London and St. Thomas.

Local businesses, in turn, suffer from outside competition and are then less able to provide a more diverse product range and higher quality goods and services. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Fordham Motors Limited in Rodney), many businesses have been unable to substantially invest to expand or improve their operations.

Vacant storefronts, deteriorating building façades and the limited hours maintained by many businesses on weekdays are reflective of the level of commercial activity in the town centres. In Rodney, there are approximately 30 businesses operating in the town centre and six vacant storefronts resulting in a vacancy rate of roughly 20%. In West Lorne, there are approximately 35 businesses operating in the town centre with seven vacant storefronts representing a similar vacancy rate.

The goods and services that are currently offered in the town centres are largely those that meet basic needs. Although the addition of new establishments such as restaurants and clothing stores which appear needed would be welcomed, there are considerable challenges in sustaining these and other types of businesses given the size of the villages and the proximity of nearby centres offering a greater range of merchandise and more attractive pricing. Nevertheless, a business recruitment and expansion strategy to improve the vitality of the town centres warrants consideration. A number of businesses exist within West Elgin outside of the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne. Initiatives to attract these businesses to locations in the downtown cores should be a key component of such a strategy.

Under the program, First Impressions Community Exchange, a group of representatives from the Township of Southgate (Grey County) visited the Municipality of West Elgin in May of 2009. The program, which is sponsored by the Province of Ontario and administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in southwestern Ontario, is described as a:

.....structured process that reveals the first impression a community conveys to outsiders, including tourists, potential investors and retirees. It offers a fresh perspective on the community's appearance, services and infrastructure and helps communities learn about their strengths and shortcomings.....Volunteer "visiting teams" from two exchange communities do unannounced, incognito visits, record their observations, and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. The knowledge gained through a First Impressions Community Exchange can be the basis for positive community action, focused on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction, quality service improvement, or broader community strategic planning efforts.

Although the program was applied to the Municipality of West Elgin as-a-whole, there was considerable attention and focus on the downtown cores of Rodney and West Lorne. Provided below are excerpts taken from the report submitted by the delegation from the Township of Southgate in July of 2009 on its observations and suggestions with respect to the town centres.

- *The lack of a "heritage" town hall in either Rodney or West Lorne was unexpected.*
- *The need for downtown improvement and revitalization was very apparent.*
- *The least appealing features of housing in West Elgin are the dwelling units located above retail outlets in the business core.*
- *Buildings in need of signage and façade repair, for rent signs in vacant store fronts, and inconsistent business hours detracted from its appearance.*

- *The overall appearance of the downtown area was depressing with an obvious need for Main street revitalization. Neither Rodney nor West Elgin core possessed any amenities that gave either downtown area a unique identity.*
- *The most obvious characteristics of a struggling retail sector are vacant storefronts or for rent signs. Both urban centres had a high incidence of both. Characteristically, deteriorating facades and storefront signage lacking visual appeal are a symptom of unhealthy economic circumstances. Conversely both communities had businesses that appeared to be doing well. One would conclude that the health of the local retail economy is extremely mixed.*
- *Shopping choices and variety were limited, typical for a small rural urban centre. Basic retail and commercial services were available such as banking, grocery, drug store and hardware. A variety of mostly fast food eateries also existed in the community.*
- *Customer service varied considerably from business to business. Staff or owners' attitudes ranged from indifference to being extremely helpful. A correlation between good customer service and success was evident.*
- *The business sections in both urban centres require streetscape and façade improvements to create visually attractive downtown cores that would attract more customers as well as new retailers. Downtown improvements help to retain existing retailers because of increased patronage. Rural urban centres that have undergone significant downtown improvements have experienced both a significant increase in visitor traffic as well as an influx of new retailers. New retailers provide shopping choices.*
- *Downtown West Lorne is in need of streetscape and façade Improvements. It lacks a visually attractive appearance due to the deterioration of some buildings, and lack of maintenance. The downtown core in both Rodney and West Lorne lacked a visual vibrancy that creates a "WOW" reaction in the visitor's eye.*
- *Signage in the downtown area: Some signage was excellent. Some was non-existent. Some was totally unprofessional e. g: signs with missing letters. What message does this send to the potential shopper?*
- *Window displays in the downtown: From our perspective many lacked imagination and were not eye catching.*
- *Variety and quality of merchandise in the downtown area. Due to the predominance of one of a kind retailers competition for customers was not existent. Our expectations in West Lorne were for a choice of merchants.*
- *Mix of facilities and services in the downtown: Mix of retailers in both urban centres was limited. Customer service by staff at a flooring and cabinet store was outstanding. Generally customer service was mixed.*
- *Quality and availability of parking: We experienced no problems in finding parking in either urban centre.*
- *Quality of lighting: Street lighting standards were acceptable.*

- *Role and potential of the downtown in tourism: Catering to or attracting summer tourist traffic did not appear to be a priority for the retailers that we visited. The retail potential is unlimited.*
- *Residential housing mix in downtown: Acceptable except for apartments located above stores.*
- *Desirability of the downtown as a place to live: Undesirable, due to condition of the buildings.*
- *Unusual or unexpected stores or services for a community this size: Furniture retailer in West Lorne, substantive automobile dealership in Rodney, impressive community health clinic.*
- *Overall Condition of the retail sector: While a limited number of downtown businesses were attractive and appealing and as a result appear to be successful, the downtown cores lacked appeal to attract visitors to the community. Main street improvement of streetscapes and facades is needed and along with a program for business expansion and retention should be a priority.*
- *Variety of shopping: none e.g. one foodmarket*
- *Customer service at businesses visited: Staff at some of the stores we visited greeted us cordially and offered their assistance.*
- *Streets: Garbage cans on posts were unappealing.*
- *Landscaping, Trees: The approaches to the downtown areas were well landscaped and treed.*
- *Pay phones, drinking fountains, benches, etc: Saw only benches in West Lorne. Both downtowns could benefit from a downtown parkette having these amenities.*
- *Restaurants, specialty shops or attractions that would bring you back to this community in the near future: None*
- *Heritage Buildings:The Municipal Building in Rodney was a heritage building but no effort has been made to improve its exterior heritage features. Some of the buildings in the business cores of both Rodney and West Lorne were heritage buildings whose architectural features have been neglected and therefore lacked visual attractiveness.*
- *Would you consider locating your retail or service business here? No. Not without implementation of a downtown improvement plan because presently many of the businesses appeared to be struggling.*
- *Five biggest obstacles/challenges facing this community*
 - *Downtown retail vacancies, lack of retail variety & inconsistent store hours.*
 - *Deteriorating façade and streetscape appearances.*
 - *Lack of a strong industrial base with inherent employment opportunities.*
 - *Lack of sanitary, easily accessible public washrooms.*
 - *Municipal inertia to effect community improvements.*

- *What will you remember most about this community six months from now (positive or negative)? Positive: Medical facility and parks Negative: The deteriorating downtown appearance in West Lorne.*

Concluding comments:

- *In our assessment of West Elgin, we found many positive features and amenities in your community that you can be truly proud of, and we would hope that any negative assessments or suggestions that we have made will be taken in the spirit that they were intended – neutral confirmation of your own assessments for improvements to identified areas of your downtown cores, and will serve as a catalyst to bringing about these needed improvements to your community*
- *We believe that such improvements will create a visually appealing business area that will attract new retail development, increased visitor traffic and create a new downtown energy producing economic benefits for all of West Elgin.*

PART 2 : COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

3.0 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Designating the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne as community improvement project areas is considered justified within the meaning prescribed for such areas under Section 28(1) of the Planning Act. It is also consistent with the objectives of the Municipality of West Elgin in identifying and undertaking community improvement projects as expressed in the official plans of the Village of West Lorne and the Village of Rodney and in the recently adopted, though yet not approved, new Official Plan for the Municipality.

Under the Planning Act, a decision of the Council of a municipality in exercising any authority that affects a planning matter must be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). This requirement would appear to apply in the case of undertaking community improvement authorized under the Act. The PPS promotes healthy and active communities by, amongst other matters,..... *planning public streets and facilities to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, and facilitate pedestrian and non-motorized movement, including but not limited to, walking and cycling*. A number of opportunities where these initiatives can be successfully undertaken in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne are identified in the sections that follow.

In addition, the PPS states that long term economic prosperity shall be supported by..... *maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets*. The adoption of this plan by the Council of the Municipality of West Elgin is for the expressed purpose of enhancing the vitality and viability of the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.

3.1 VISION STATEMENT

Based on the analysis undertaken of the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne and the findings of the merchant surveys as well as feedback from the general public, property owners and merchants, the following vision statement for the Community Improvement Plan is suggested.

To create attractive, distinct and vibrant town centres in the villages of Rodney and West Lorne that capitalize on their assets and is characterized by the provision of goods and services and by a diversity of activities and experiences that exemplify successful main street characteristics and that contribute to the needs and quality of life of local residents, attracts visitors and tourists and enhances the economic viability of local businesses.

3.2 GOALS

The overarching goals of the Community Improvement Plan for the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne are to improve the physical environment, to improve the level of business activity and to stimulate development and redevelopment. If these goals are reached, the town centres will become more attractive, more sustainable and more vibrant places.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

In tandem with these goals, the following objectives would seem appropriate and desirable to the town centres of both Rodney and West Lorne.

- a) To create a more attractive, distinctive and pedestrian friendly streetscape;
- b) To preserve and restore heritage buildings;
- c) To improve the appearance of non-heritage buildings;
- d) To capitalize on redevelopment, infill and mixed use opportunities;
- e) To improve the appearance and viability of existing businesses;
- f) To strategically attract new businesses and expand existing businesses;
- g) To reduce the number of vacant storefronts and the amount of vacant floor space;
- h) To create new activities and places of interest; and
- i) To increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

3.4 PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

Five key projects have been identified and designed to enhance and revitalize the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne and to restore their economic and social vitality. They are:

- a) improvements to the streetscape or public realm;
- b) improvements to building façades and storefronts;
- c) establishment of a farmers' market;
- d) creation of a heritage conservation / arts and culture district; and
- e) business expansion and recruitment.

Complementary initiatives would include heritage restoration (outside the HCD) and improved building and property maintenance. A recreational trail for walking, jogging, cycling and similar activities along the abandoned railway corridor between Rodney and West Lorne would strengthen the linkage between the two town centres and increase patronage of the town centres. The provision of trails and bike paths in the area were identified as a recreational need in the Community Needs Assessment prepared for the former Township of Aldborough in 1995. This potential facility warrants attention now while the opportunity to create it still exists.



Assistance and support at the local level for the various community improvement projects and initiatives identified would come from the Municipality of West Elgin, a Business Improvement Area (to be established), the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce, volunteers and the community-at-large. Other bodies and organizations that would be solicited for support or as partners would be the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation, County of Elgin and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

3.4.1 Public Realm

The public realm is typically understood as the lands comprising streets, sidewalks, lanes, off-street parking areas and other publicly-owned land as well as public buildings and facilities. Based on a visual analysis, improvements are desirable. They would have the potential to make a significant difference in terms of the overall appearance of 'main street' in Rodney and West Lorne and in terms of the type and quality of pedestrian amenities provided. Maintenance, while generally acceptable, could also be improved.



The first step in the process is to identify and confirm the key issues or problems to be addressed. Through the research undertaken, many of the key issues and problems have been identified. Findings from the merchants' survey revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction with landscaping and street furniture. A comprehensive streetscape plan would detail improvements including selection of plant materials, design and location of street furniture, street lighting, street trees, buffering, boulevard treatment, signage and other elements as well as cost estimates, phasing and maintenance requirements. The plan would ensure an overall coordinated design of street elements. Such plans are usually prepared, or at least led by, a professional landscape architect or those persons with similar design skills. Architects and planners are often involved in plan preparation.

3.4.2 Building Façades and Storefronts

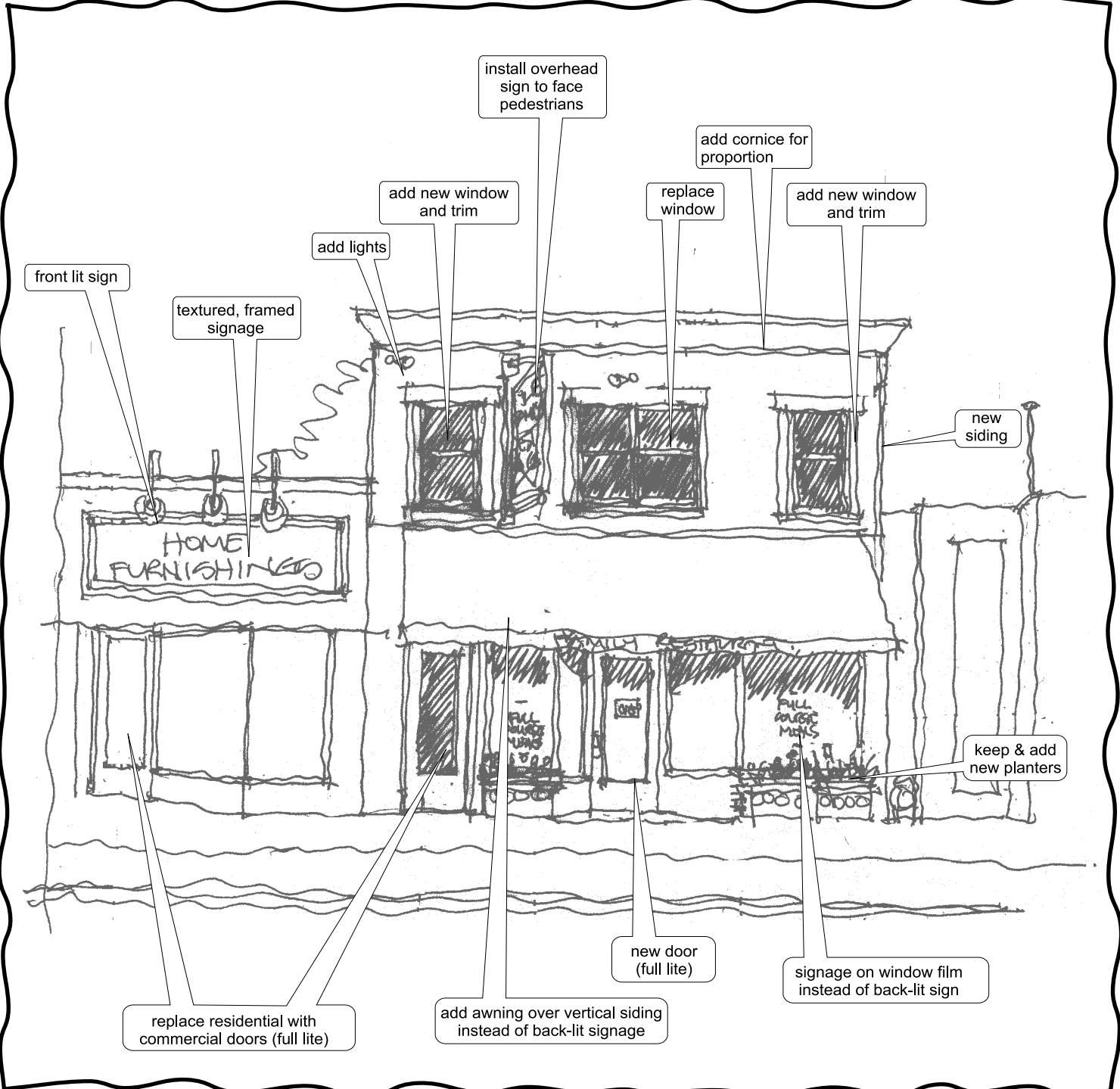
Improvements to the streetscape would have only limited impact in making the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne more attractive and appealing if buildings lining the streetscape and which have fallen into a state of tiredness, disrepair or neglect are not also addressed. A substantial up-grading of both the public realm and the building façades which encloses it will have far greater visual impact than focusing on the public realm alone.



In terms of building façades, improvements are certainly not necessary or desirable in every instance. In some cases, relatively modest, low cost improvements have the potential to make a

SUGGESTED FACADE IMPROVEMENTS: NON-HERITAGE BUILDING

176-178 Main Street, West Lorne



Source: Malhotra, Nicholson, Sheffield Architects Inc. and Community Planners Inc.

Figure: 7

significant difference (Figure 7). In other cases, buildings that are not occupied at the ground or storefront level (and, in particular, those which have experienced long term vacancy) will present a challenge. Heritage buildings will also be a challenge as façade improvements to restore or maintain original architectural features are likely to be more costly than the use of more contemporary materials.

Two façade improvement programs have been identified, one of which would apply to non-heritage buildings and one which would apply to buildings designated or capable of being designated under the Heritage Act either individually or as part of a group of buildings comprising a heritage conservation district. Due firstly to the invariably higher costs of restoring the façades of heritage buildings compared to façade improvements to non-heritage buildings and secondly to the potential contribution heritage buildings make to the unique or distinctive identity of the town centres, the level of grants and loans under the program applying to heritage buildings should be set at a higher level.

Although blight and deterioration is not widespread in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne, there are a number of instances where derelict or otherwise poorly maintained buildings detract from the overall appearance of the town centres. One particular issue that has been raised is whether the Municipality has the authority to address unsightly vacant storefronts as well as boarded up storefronts. Although not common based on research undertaken to date, it should be possible for the Municipality to adopt measures to deal with these issues in its property maintenance and occupancy standards by-law. While achieving co-operation without having to resort to legal measures is preferable for a number of reasons, more effective results in the end may only be possible if the Municipality has the necessary legislation at its disposal to deal with persistent situations where owners shows little or no interest in addressing.

3.4.3 Rodney Farmers' Market

Farmers' markets are widely recognized for their ability to consistently attract residents and tourists alike. A strategically located farmers' market has the potential to significantly increase activity in the town centre and generate 'spillover' impacts to other businesses. While the population base in West Elgin is limited in terms of supporting a farmers' market, there are a number of factors which would potentially contribute to its success. Firstly, both Rodney and West Lorne lie in the midst of a rich agricultural area; secondly, there are a number of local growers offering produce and specialty products in the rural area of West Elgin and in neighbouring municipalities; thirdly, there is a large seasonal population in area trailer park and campgrounds along the lakeshore and fourthly, there are a number of individuals with skills and experience in farmers' markets who are residents of West Elgin.



Of the two villages, Rodney is considered the preferred choice for establishing a local farmer's market in West Elgin. It is better situated in terms of attracting the seasonal population along the shoreline and, in the event, the proposed development of Seaside

Waterfronts Inc. in Port Glasgow takes place, it is well positioned to attract that potential customer base as well. In addition, Rodney has what appears would be an ideal location for a farmers' market on the former Orford Farmers Co-op or existing Thompson Elevator site on the edge of the downtown core. The nature and potential availability of vacant or under-utilized buildings and the availability of lands for vendor and customer parking would be well suited to such a facility. Residents and visitors arriving from the north and via Highway No. 401 would invariably access the facility by traveling through the downtown core, thereby providing potential new customers for core area businesses.

The logical next step in establishing a farmers' market in Rodney would be to establish a small working or steering committee to advance the concept leading to the preparation of a feasibility study or business case as a basis for going forward with actual development. Residents of the community who have experience or skills in such facilities should be sought for selection to the committee.

Project WE, a 'grassroots' initiative to establish a facility to improve access to locally grown and produced products by commercial establishments from and beyond as well as a place for local producers to sell their goods and value added products directly to residents and visitors has earmarked Rodney as a location. Two sites are being considered; one in the downtown core and the other on Pioneer Line. The downtown core site offers potentially greater and more widespread benefits for not only the facility itself but as a significant attraction and traffic generator which is desperately needed in the downtown core.

3.4.4 West Lorne Heritage Conservation / Arts & Cultural District

Heritage preservation has been long recognized as a key ingredient in the successful revitalization of historic downtown cores. Through heritage preservation, the unique or at least distinctive character of a downtown core becomes more apparent and the downtown core as-a-whole becomes of greater interest, particularly to visitors and tourists. When combined with a mix of specialty and eclectic shops or a focus or theme in terms of activity, historic preservation can be a very powerful strategy for core area revitalization.

While neither of the town centres of Rodney or West Lorne are particularly rich in heritage buildings from either an architectural or historical perspective, in West Lorne on Graham Road between Munroe Street and Main Street may be found a virtually intact heritage streetscape that represents a formative period in the development of the village. While some of its architectural features have been eroded, significant heritage qualities are still apparent. Like most heritage streetscapes, the upper storeys are more intact than the lower or street level retail façades. Still, a number of historic storefronts have been largely unaltered. Of those historic façades that have been clad over with more contemporary materials, some would appear to be readily capable of being restored to their original or near original condition.

The designation of this historic block in West Lorne as a heritage conservation district would be first step in formally recognizing its significance and potential. It would prevent the unwarranted demolition of the existing building fabric and would ensure any changes to the external character of buildings would not destroy architectural features or be unsympathetic to original building façades. Secondly, it would provide a basis for a heritage preservation and restoration program to financially assist property owners in undertaking improvements aimed at restoring and reclaiming its architectural and historic character (Figure 8). It would also provide assurance that the efforts of property owners who are undertaking restoration

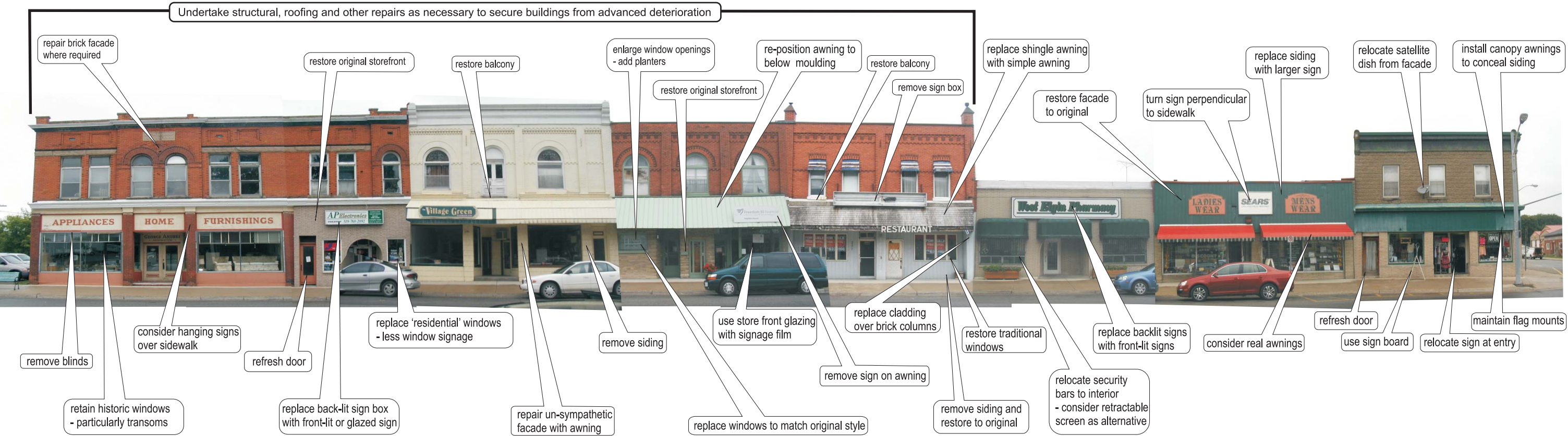
SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS: HERITAGE BLOCK

Graham Road - Munroe Street to Main Street, West Lorne

GRAHAM STREET - west side



GRAHAM STREET - east side



would not be undermined by unsympathetic exterior up-grades by owners of neighbouring properties. Over a period of time, restoration of the block has the potential to be a defining feature of the town centre of West Lorne and a significant attraction to residents, tourists and visitors.

To achieve, however, a greater impact in terms of being a catalyst for core area revitalization, the heritage conservation district needs more of a *raison d'être* than solely its architecture and history. While there may be other possibilities, the most appealing scenario it is suggested would be to focus on arts and culture intermixed with specialty shops including a café and a restaurant. In the long term, visitor accommodation in the upper stories of existing buildings may be feasible.

The proposed Arts and Cookery Bank in the former bank building at the corner of Graham Road and Munroe Street is a huge first step and a 'building block' in establishing the proposed arts and cultural district. West Elgin is home to a number of accomplished and recognized artists. An arts and sculpture gallery featuring their works as well as a place to display and sell their work would be a natural and a vital component of the district. A place for local artisans and craftsmen to display and sell their crafts work may also be desirable. The facilities available at the nearby Community Complex (including the local library) and at the West Elgin Secondary School which already serve as a venue for local cultural activities and events, enhance West Lorne as the logical centre of arts and culture in West Elgin and will serve to complement and strengthen the district.

The process for designating an area as a heritage conservation district is set out in the Heritage Act and summarized in Appendix D.

3.4.5 Business Recruitment and Expansion

The continuing decline in business activity, recent store closures, the seemingly precarious state of many existing businesses and the presence of several vacant and abandoned storefronts are symptomatic of the economic malaise facing the town centres of Rodney and



West Lorne. Business retention and expansion (BR&E) is a strategy adopted elsewhere designed to ensure that existing businesses remain in business and that new businesses are attracted. It is considered one of the five key components to the revitalization of the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.

A BR&E strategy appropriate to address the issues at hand would be a proactive, community-based approach that would focus on:

- a) identifying weaknesses in the existing retail and service mix;
- b) evaluating market characteristics and conditions;
- c) building community support for local businesses;
- d) improving the competitiveness of local businesses;
- e) attracting and developing new businesses; and
- f) promoting business development and job creation.

In 2003, a BR&E survey was conducted by the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce. Various business strengths, weaknesses, trends and needs were identified through the survey and, as a result, several initiatives were started. These included the Cactus Cattle & Cowboys Festival and the Gold Card Program, the latter of which partners local merchants with the West Elgin Secondary School in West Lorne to reward students who have achieved and maintained an 80% average or 96% attendance or better. While significant steps have been made through the survey, many of the deficiencies that were identified have yet to be fully addressed.

In 1995, a Community Needs Assessment was undertaken in the former Township of Aldborough by graduate students in the School of Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. Their final report contained a needs inventory and assessment which included retail and commercial needs. While somewhat dated, many of the issues and needs identified remain valid today. The report is a useful reference document for the preparation of a BR&E strategy.

The report from the Township of Southgate under the First Impressions Community Exchange program in 2009 included a number of observations on perceived weaknesses in the retail sector in the downtown core (Section 2.3). It also included suggestions as to how these weaknesses may be overcome. The report should also be considered in the preparation of a BR&E strategy.

The initial step in developing a BR&E strategy would be the development of an action plan. This exercise should start with reviewing the results of the 2003 survey prepared by the Chamber to determine what conclusions and findings remain relevant today to the town centres. A review of the merchants' survey conducted as part of the preparation of the Community Improvement Plan in terms of deficiencies in the current business mix and environment would also be useful. It would be also useful to identify the success (and failures) of BR&E strategies adopted elsewhere for communities of similar size and characteristics. Although OMAFRA has a BR&E program for rural municipalities, it is designed for larger, more urbanized areas compared to Rodney and West Lorne and, while worthy of investigation, may not be suitable in this context.

3.5 KEY/LEAD PARTNERS

3.5.1 Municipality of West Elgin

Municipal funding to implement the Community Improvement Plan would typically be determined by Council through the annual budget process. Funds would be replenished through the repayment of loans for façade improvement, heritage restoration and other similar programs. Where external sources of funding have been given, those monies would be used in accordance with the terms and conditions specified by the granting organization. The implementation and management of the various loan and grant programs would be the responsibility of the Municipality.

3.5.2 Business Improvement Area

Establishing a business improvement area for the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne would provide a structure for property owners and businesses to organize themselves and undertake initiatives, raise money on a fair and equitable basis for beautification and marketing purposes and provide an effective voice to Council on issues related to the town centres.

A business improvement area (BIA) is a formal association of property owners within a defined area represented by a board of management charged with overseeing the beautification, improvement and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures (beyond which is normally provided at the expense of the municipality) and the promotion of the area as a business or shopping area. The establishment and operation of BIA's are governed by the Municipal Act (Appendix E). Matters such as the composition of the board, limitations on power, voting rights, membership and establishing and altering the boundaries of the BIA are also addressed in the Act.

A BIA raises money through a levy on commercially assessed property within the area defined as comprising the BIA established by by-law of the municipality. BIA's are distinguished from less formal business associations where membership and the payment of fees are on a voluntary basis and no statutory framework exists to guide and regulate their operations and activities.

A BIA represents a unified voice for local business issues providing a forum for discussion amongst property owners and their designated tenants on needed or desirable physical improvements (i.e. beautification) and marketing and promotion strategies and a funding mechanism to assist in implementation. It provides a means to finance various projects in a designated area (i.e. the business improvement) that may not be undertaken otherwise.

Fees are normally levied in proportion to the amount of commercial assessment. Alternatively, a flat fee across the board could be established. The BIA determines which projects it wishes to undertake and establishes a budget for these purposes that is then used to calculate the levy. The levy is obtained from commercial property owners in the business improvement area through a supplement on property taxes. Once a Council approves the budget, the municipality would collect the levy through the payment of property taxes and remit (or in some instances, administer) the revenue collected to the BIA.

Given the issues and challenges facing the town centres in both Rodney and West Lorne, the establishment of a joint BIA to serve both Rodney and West Lorne would appear preferable to establishing a separate BIA in each centre. A single BIA would also facilitate the sharing of ideas, challenges and solutions and the promotion of both downtown cores. It would also make for a more effective voice in bringing matters of concern in front of Council. Rather than compete with each other, commercial property owners and merchants would work together. Specific issues that a BIA for Rodney and West Lorne could take a leadership role in, or undertake directly, include:

- a) beautification projects such as flowers, banners and seasonal decorations;
- b) community festivals and special events;
- c) merchandising, sales training and skills development;

- d) hours of operation and promotions;
- e) customer, employee and resident parking.

Due to the limited pool from which to draw on and the struggle many merchants are having to remain in business in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne, any levy established would likely have to be modest at best, at least in the short term. Initially, perhaps the Municipality could consider covering the start-up costs followed by first year of operation for the Board of Management to conduct meetings of its members to establish priorities and funding required. Even a modest levy in the amount of \$50 - \$100 annually (if a flat fee was considered appropriate) has the potential to raise sufficient funds for additional flowers and plantings or other amenities which could make a significant impact on the appearance of the streetscape.

3.5.3 West Elgin Chamber of Commerce

The West Elgin Chamber of Commerce based on its business orientation, its initiative and experience in undertaking a BR&E survey in 2003 and its interest in the revitalization of the town centres would seem to be a natural and logical choice to take the lead in formulating and implementing a BR&E strategy for the town centres. A BR&E strategy has been identified as one of the five key components of the Community Improvement Plan for the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.

As a result of the strong interconnectedness between the existing business community and the recruitment of new businesses and the efforts required to expand/improve existing business, it is essential that a positive relationship be established between the Chamber and the proposed BIA. The Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation has a strong mandate in fostering local economic development and appears more than ready to assist in the development and implementation of a BR&E strategy for the town centres. To develop the action plan and to ensure implementation of the strategy, it is anticipated that the Chamber may require some degree of staff support and possibly outside assistance to undertake and implement a BR&E strategy for the town centres.

3.6 ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

3.6.1 Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

Through its Rural Economic Development (RED) program (Appendix F), the Ontario Ministry of Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) assists rural communities in removing barriers to community development and economic growth. Since its inception, over \$10 million dollars has been awarded under RED towards community revitalization projects. To receive funding, applicants must be in partnership with another organization.

Eligible expenditures under RED include but are not limited to the following:

- a) development and distribution of marketing and promotional materials;
- b) feasibility and business plan preparation;
- c) costs of obtaining technical expertise; and
- d) skill enhancement costs.

A number of rural municipalities have been able to use RED to facilitate downtown revitalization. Four municipalities in the County of Hastings collectively received \$100,000 in 2006 to undertake downtown revitalization efforts focusing on physical improvements to streetscapes and website development. The Municipality of West Grey, in conjunction with the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) and West Grey Chamber of Commerce, received \$20,000 in 2007 towards its Sign, Awning, and Façade Improvement Program; the Township of Norwich, in conjunction with the local Chamber of Commerce and BIA, received \$16,000 in 2006 to implement a BR&E program and the Town of Ingersoll, in conjunction with several partners including the BIA, received \$547,500 in 2005 to support downtown revitalization, skills enhancement and health care services projects.

In 2009, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs announced a new program to assist municipalities to develop strategies and action plans that provide a long term sustainable approach to downtown revitalization. The program, Main Street Ontario, is a structured initiative that touches all aspects that shape downtowns (Appendix G). The four point program builds on four specific elements of downtown revitalization; namely, economic development, organizational development, marketing and promotions and physical improvements. It engages a local project coordinator to work with the community. Assistance and economic development expertise is provided to the coordinator by the Ministry.

Funding under Main Street Ontario is available, matched to 50% of eligible project costs, to a maximum of \$150,000 over a three period. The most likely funding partner in West Elgin to provide matching funding would be the Municipality, the proposed BIA or combination thereof. Given the advance work already undertaken in developing a strategy and action plan for the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne through the preparation of the Community Improvement Plan, the program would not appear to be entirely suited to the situation at hand. Nevertheless, its applicability or a revised version of it should be explored.

3.6.2 Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation

The Elgin Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) is an organization focused on the economic development of Elgin County and its respective municipalities. Based in St. Thomas, it initiates and provides direct investment into planning and economic development projects designed to stimulate local economic growth. It also actively promotes collaboration amongst municipalities of Elgin County, the Federal Government, the Province and local agencies to facilitate local economic development. Its objectives are:

- a) to facilitate community strategic planning;
- b) to promote growth in economic sectors such as tourism;
- c) to encourage cooperative marketing;
- d) to promote policies that help create employment and business growth;
- e) to assist in the development and needs of economic sectors; and
- f) to enhance community identities and image.

The organization also encourages skills training and development through various courses.

In carrying out the Community Improvement Plan, the Elgin CFDC could play a very positive role in evaluating the feasibility of the proposed farmers' market in Rodney and in assisting the Chamber of Commerce in developing and implementing the BR&E.

3.6.3 County of Elgin

The revitalization of the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne will, by necessity, require the co-operation and assistance of the County of Elgin. The "main street" of Rodney (Furnival Road) and the 'main streets' of West Lorne (Graham Road and Main Street), being County Roads, are all under the jurisdiction of the County of Elgin. Consequently, any improvements with their respective road allowances will require the approval of the County. A stated objective of the County in its proposed Roads Plan and Policies (2008) is:

to encourage and work with local municipalities in ensuring safe, convenient and visually attractive pedestrian facilities through settlement areas.

In implementing the Community Improvement Plan, the County would be most directly involved in any proposed improvements to the public realm which is proposed to be led by the Municipality in consultation and collaboration with the proposed Business Improvement Area.

The recently released Economic Development Plan (2007-2011) for the County of Elgin identified various roles for the County to play in economic development. These included undertaking research program management and monitoring dealing with such issues as:

supporting lower- tier municipalities in the development of business retention and expansion programs, main street revitalization, harbour front development programs..... and in the provision of economic development services to smaller lower-tier municipalities.

Through its Community and Cultural Services Department, the County should be called upon to assist with the initiatives of the Community Improvement Plan related to the establishment of a Farmers' Market in Rodney, the Heritage and Arts and Cultural District in West Lorne and in the formulation and implementation of the Business Recruitment and Expansion Strategy.

3.6.4 Local Horticultural Societies

There are two long established horticultural societies in the Municipality of West Elgin, one being the Rodney and District Horticultural Society and the other being the West Lorne and Community Horticultural Society. Both not-for-profit organizations have and continue to be active in the beautification of the town centres in Rodney and West Lorne as well as outside these areas. While their efforts in the town centres are primarily with respect to flower beds and hanging baskets, both have been instrumental in raising funds for the installation of street furniture. The West Lorne and Community Horticultural Society received a grant in 2001 from the Trillium Foundation in the amount of \$21,000 to go towards benches, hanging

baskets, banners and garbage receptacles. The Rodney and District Horticultural Society received a similar grant.

In addition to membership fees, revenues are received from a number of different sources. The Municipality of West Elgin currently makes an annual contribution of \$1000 to both societies while the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce makes a grant of \$750 to the Rodney and District Horticultural Society. Both societies are also eligible for an annual grant from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

With the establishment of a joint BIA, it would seem naturally to link and co-ordinate the efforts of the two horticultural societies “insofar” within the town centres to that organization. Under the Municipal Act, the BIA has a specific mandate to oversee *the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally owned landbeyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally*. Through the establishment of a BIA, commercially assessed property owners and businesses will have a collective and representative voice. A BIA will have the ability to raise funds on an equitable basis which has the potential to take the current and admirable efforts of the local horticultural societies to a higher level and a corresponding greater impact on the town centres. Once established, the possibility exists whereby the BIA could assume some of the current responsibilities and activities of the horticultural societies within the town centres.

3.7 LOCAL PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

To achieve the objectives and to undertake the initiatives of the Community Improvement Plan, there are various programs that need to be put in place and funding sources that need to be tapped. Applications made under the various programs will be subject to the approval of Council. The programs are identified and outlined below.

3.7.1 Public Realm Improvement Program



The Public Realm Improvement Program will focus on publicly-owned land in the town centres, being for the most part the street environment. It will complement the Façade Improvement Program and Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program (described subsequently) and will be primarily aimed at improving the appearance of the streetscape and improving public amenities. Improving the streetscapes would make the town centres more inviting to residents (including seasonal residents) and to visitors and tourists thereby stimulating economic and social activity and strengthening the vitality of the town centres. As such, the Public Realm Improvement Program will potentially include improvements in the following areas:

- a) landscaping and tree planting,
- b) street furniture and amenities e.g. benches, litter containers,
- c) sidewalk and boulevard treatment,
- d) street lighting and overhead wiring,

- e) signage, banners and awnings,
- f) facilities for cyclists,
- g) buffering of parking areas.

Development and implementation of the Public Realm Improvement Program would be undertaken by the Municipality in consultation with a proposed Business Improvement Area. Although potential funding sources include the Province, the Municipality and the proposed BIA, it is anticipated that most of the funding would have to come from the Municipality and would be based on the preparation and adoption of a streetscape plan and the financial resources of the Municipality to undertake recommended improvements.

3.7.2 Façade Improvement Program

The Façade Improvement Program will be aimed at assisting property owners and authorized tenants in up-grading non-heritage buildings façades within the town centres. Under the Façade Improvement Program, the Municipality will provide loans and grants for eligible works including:

- a) redesign of storefront and entrances,
- b) repair and replacement of windows,
- c) exterior painting and cladding, and
- d) up-grading of exterior lighting and signage.



Signage is very important to merchants and a highly visual element in the streetscape. In Rodney and West Lorne, overhanging signs have been allowed to encroach into the public realm although few merchants have taken advantage of this alternative to fascia signs. Distinctive, creative signage is not commonplace. Particular attention is warranted to ensure the type, materials, typestyle, size and lighting of signs are appropriate to, and contribute to, the quality of the streetscape to which they belong in addition to their primary purpose of enhancing the identity of individual businesses.



Under the Façade Improvement Program, grants and loans will be provided to help defray the cost of physical improvements by the property owner or business tenant. The maximum amount that a person could receive will normally not exceed 50% of the total cost of the work with a ceiling on the grant portion established by the Municipality. The remainder will constitute the loan portion. Interest free loans normally have a maximum amortization period of 5 years commencing upon completion of the approved work.

To qualify, an owner (or authorized business tenant) must demonstrate that the proposed façade work will improve the appearance of the streetscape and will be performed in a competent manner. As such, an application outlining basic information about the property and work to be undertaken, accompanied by a sketch will be required prior to any grants or loans being approved.

While some municipalities will consider applications at any time and render approvals based on funds being available, it will be preferable to have applications submitted annually with approvals going to those projects that best meet the program objectives. While the Municipality may consider providing financial assistance equaling the total cost of a façade improvement project through a combination of grants and loans, projects with leveraged funds will be given priority.

Applications under the program will be required to be submitted by a due date and will be decided upon by a specified date each year. Based on the quality of the submissions as well as the funds available for the program, successful applicants will be determined. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply the following year.

Under a companion Property Tax Increment Equivalent Program, the Municipality may protect properties from the tax implications arising from an increase in assessment resulting from participation in the Façade Improvement Program. Where successful, an applicant will receive a rebate in the form of a grant equal to a specified percentage (typically 10% to 40%) of the increase in the municipal portion of his property taxes, resulting from façade improvement under the program for 5 years following completion of the approved work. Successful applicants under the Façade Improvement Program will automatically be enrolled in the Property Tax Increment Equivalent Program.

General eligibility criteria under the Façade Improvement Program based on its use elsewhere will include the following:

- a) applicant shall be the registered owner or authorized tenant of the property for which the application is being made;
- b) only one application shall be accepted per property in a given year;
- c) only non-heritage commercial properties eligible. Eligible properties shall lie in the designated improvement area;
- d) the property shall not have any outstanding orders against it nor shall the owner be in arrears of property taxes or any other municipal financial obligations;
- e) the total value of grants and loans received shall not exceed the total value of the eligible work done;
- f) applicant shall agree to be subject to an audit of work done and associated costs if deemed necessary by the Municipality;
- g) applicant shall enter into an agreement with the Municipality that specifies the terms and conditions of the grant or loan;

- h) applicant agrees to forfeit grant or loan and recovery by the Municipality should work not be done in conformity with the agreed upon conditions of the grant or loan, or if a building improved by a grant or loan is demolished prior to the expiry of the grant or loan period, and
- i) façade redesign and rehabilitation work shall conform with all municipal policies and standards and be subject to review and issuance of planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.

3.7.3 Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program

Heritage buildings and districts contribute significantly to the image, uniqueness and interest of town centres. The purpose of the Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program will be to encourage the restoration, stewardship, use and maintenance of heritage properties. To be eligible for the program, the property must be occupied by a building or structure or a portion of a building or structure that is designated under Part IV of the Heritage Act or within a heritage conservation district designated under Part V of the Act. Heritage buildings in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne which are considered potential candidates for designation under Part IV and/or Part V of the Act are listed in Table 2 and Table 4 and depicted in Figure 3 and Figure 6.

Under the Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program, the Municipality will provide grants and loans for eligible works such as:

- a) restoration or replacement of architectural and historical features;
- b) restoration or replacement of exterior masonry and/or cladding, windows and doors;
- c) chemical or other façade cleaning measures, and
- d) signage.



The Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program will have three components; namely, heritage design, heritage improvement and heritage tax relief.

3.7.3.1 Heritage Design

The Heritage Design component of the program will offer property owners of designated heritage buildings or heritage buildings lying within a heritage conservation district, a grant for the preparation of a building design study and restoration plan describing, in sufficient detail, the proposed restoration and preservation work, skills required and estimated cost. To qualify, the design study and restoration plan must be prepared by an architect, architectural technician or other similar professional with proven design credentials in heritage restoration.

Grants will be provided for up a maximum of \$2000 but not more than 50% of the cost of the design study plan and restoration plan. Applications received will be evaluated and awarded at a specified time each year by the Municipality based on the quality of the submission received, the potential impact of the proposed works and the funds available for the program. The Municipality may retain professional design assistance to assist in the evaluation process. Unsuccessful applicants may reapply the following year.

3.7.3.2 Heritage Improvement

The Heritage Improvement component of the program will provide grants and loans for actual heritage conservation, preservation and restoration work. To qualify for a grant and/or loan, the work being proposed must be in compliance with the municipally approved design study and restoration plan. The owner must also be willing to enter into a heritage conservation agreement with the Municipality (or the Ontario Heritage Foundation) designed to protect the heritage features of a property and to encourage good stewardship of the property.

Grants and loans will be available for up to 50% of the total cost of the work. Property owners who apply for grants may also apply for an interest free loan. The maximum amount that an owner could receive in terms of an interest free loan will be the amount equivalent to 50% of the cost of the approved restoration work. Interest free loans will have a maximum amortization period (e.g. 5 to 10 years) commencing immediately upon completion of the approved and inspected work. Due to the often costly nature of restoring heritage buildings, the maximum grants and loans available under the program need to be significant to attract the interest of owners of such buildings (e.g. in the order of \$10,000 or more). Security will have to be provided by the owner.

Applications will be submitted and evaluated on an annual basis. Those applications considered to have the greatest potential impact on the building in terms of restoring it to its original design and the greatest potential impact on the streetscape will be given priority based on available funds allocated annually by the Municipality for the program. Once again, unsuccessful applicants may reapply the following year.

While the Municipality may consider providing financial assistance equaling the total cost of a heritage improvement project through a combination of a grant and low interest loan, projects with leveraged funds will be given priority.

3.7.3.3 Heritage Tax Relief

Under the Municipal Act, (Section 365.2), municipalities may provide grants as tax relief from the municipal portion of property taxes where preservation and restoration work, approved by the Municipality, has been successfully completed. Owners of properties that have participated in the two previous components of the program will be automatically enrolled in the tax relief component of the program. Owners undertaking their own restoration work without the assistance of the Municipality will also be eligible to participate in this component of the program. To be eligible for tax relief, the property must be occupied by a building or structure, or a portion of a building or structure, that is:

- a) designated under Part IV of the Heritage Act or within a heritage conservation district designated under Part V of the Act; and
- b) subject to a heritage conservation agreement for the property.

Such programs typically offer grants equalling between a 10% to 40% reduction in the municipal portion of the post-restoration property taxes. This amount is usually rebated each year for 5 years following successful completion of the approved work. Properties where approved heritage restoration has been successfully completed will automatically be eligible for heritage tax relief.

General eligibility criteria for the Heritage Preservation and Restoration Program and its respective components are:

- a) applicant shall be the registered owner or authorized tenant of the property under which the application is being made;
- b) applicant shall enter into an agreement with the Municipality that specifies the terms and condition of the grant or loan;
- c) only one application shall be made per property in a given year;
- d) property shall not have any outstanding orders against it or be in arrears of property taxes or any other municipal financial obligations;
- e) total value of grants and loans received shall not exceed the total value of the work done;
- f) the Municipality shall reserve the right to require an audit of work done and associated costs;
- g) should the work not be done in compliance with the agreed upon conditions of the grant or loan, or if a building improved by a grant or loan is demolished prior to the expiry of the grant or loan period, the grant or loan is forfeited and shall be recovered by the Municipality; and
- h) preservation and restoration work shall conform with all municipal policies and standards, and be subject to review and issuance of planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.

3.8 OTHER PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

3.8.1 Community Adjustment Fund

The Community Adjustment Fund (CAF) is a national two-year, \$1-billion economic stimulus measure of the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan. It is intended to provide economic stimulus to mitigate the short-term impacts of the current economic downturn by creating employment opportunities and to address transitional and adjustment challenges in restructuring industries and communities. In southern Ontario, the Minister of State

responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario (Fed Dev Ontario) has responsibility for the program.

According to Industry Canada's web site, many communities across Canada rely on industrial sectors that have been hit hard by current economic conditions, including forestry, mining, agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing. The Fund gives priority to communities that are severely affected by the global economic downturn such as resource-based communities that depend on a limited industry base.

Eligible recipients must be located in communities with a population under 250,000. Included are non-profit organizations, post secondary institutions, co-operatives, First Nations, municipalities and municipally-created organizations.

In addition, priority will be given to projects in and around eligible communities that:

- a) are located in rural, single-industry communities;
- b) create jobs and maintain employment;
- c) leverage funds from provinces, territories and other funding partners;
- d) build on partnership arrangements already in place (e.g. federal-provincial/territorial agreements) and existing programs; and,
- e) provide a legacy of longer-term economic benefits.

While the first intake of applications closed in June of 2009, applications for the second intake, 2010-2011, will be accepted by Fed Dev Ontario later in 2009 on a date yet to be announced. Program details including eligibility criteria may evidently change.

West Elgin, and more particularly the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne, would meet many, if not most, of the eligibility criteria under CAF. At this stage, however, it is not certain whether program recipients or projects identified in the Community Improvement Plan will be eligible under the criteria that will apply to the second intake. Under the first intake of the program, the Arts and Cookery Bank received \$265,622 to restore and equip the former bank building at 242 Graham Road in West Lorne.

3.8.2 Ontario Trillium Foundation

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario that awards grants to charities and not-for-profit organizations through two programs: province-wide and community. Within these two programs, funding is allocated in four sectors: arts and culture, environment, sports and recreation, and human and social services. Community program grants account for 80% of the OTF's funding. The maximum grant available to a municipality or a not-for-profit organization is \$75,000 per year for up to 5 years. The Foundation has three grant cycles per year.

Recent funding given by the OTF for community improvement initiatives include \$40,000 to the Township of Malahide to upgrade sports, recreation and tourism facilities in Port Bruce;

and \$32,000 for the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre to renovate office space, purchase new equipment and to make the centre safer. In West Elgin, the Port Glasgow Yacht Club has received \$56,000 from the OTF to build a deck and docking facilities providing individuals, including those with disabilities, easier access to their boats and increasing the recreational potential of the area. In or about 2001, the OTF awarded a grant of \$21,000 for beautification and amenities in the town centre of West Lorne.

3.8.3 Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program

A brownfield is a vacant or under-utilized property that is contaminated or may be contaminated due to prior industrial or similar type uses and, as a consequence, poses a potential environmental or health risk. Such properties usually have lost their potential for industrial purposes and exhibit a greater potential to be redeveloped into residential, commercial and/or mixed-use facilities.



The Province of Ontario has created the Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTI) to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields. The program provides education property tax assistance to match municipal property tax assistance as an incentive to the cleanup of eligible brownfield sites. Under the program, the Province cancels all or a proportion of the education taxes of a property for up to three years. The Municipality must apply to the Minister of Finance for matching education assistance. Such assistance is conditional upon approval by the Minister.

The abandoned railway lands in Rodney and West Lorne potentially qualify as brownfield sites. These lands have alternate use possibilities other than their previous use and may be eligible under such a program. Evidence of the need for such a program was demonstrated by issues resulting from contaminated soils being encountered during the development of the West Lorne Seniors Housing Complex on abandoned railway lands in the downtown core.

To participate in BFTI program, the Province has established the following criteria under the Municipal Act (Section 365.1):

- a) an eligible property must have undergone a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and;
- b) an eligible property must be located in community improvement project area covered by a community improvement plan containing tax assistance provisions; and
- c) as of the date of the site assessment, the property does not meet the standards of the Environmental Protection Act to permit a Record of Site Condition to be filed in the Ministry of the Environment's Brownfields Environmental Site Registry.

Municipal criteria for participation in BFTI will include the following:

- a) an applicant shall be the registered owner of the property for which the application is being made or an agent authorized by the registered owner;
- b) only one application shall be submitted per property in a given year;
- c) an applicant shall not have any outstanding orders against the subject property or be in arrears of property taxes or have any other municipal financial obligations; and
- d) a (re)development proposal and concept plan for the eligible property shall be included with an application;
- e) a completed Phase I ESA, Phase II ESA and a Remedial Work Plan (Phase III ESA or Site Specific Risk Assessment SSRA) in conformity with the Environmental Protection Act shall be included with an application;
- f) an agreement with the Municipality specifying the terms and conditions of the brownfield, planning and environmental approvals required, along with the tax assistance to be received.

4.0 ACTION PLAN

The following set of actions has been identified as a basis for revitalizing the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne. While the majority involve initiation and implementation by the Municipality of West Elgin, there are specific tasks that would involve the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce and a Business Improvement Area (once established) as well as local businessmen and property owners in the town centres and members of the community who have an interest in the health and vitality of the town centres. Where the actions depend on the availability of financial assistance from the Municipality, implementation will be dependent on other municipal priorities and the impact on the tax base.

- a) That the Municipality of West Elgin commission the preparation a streetscape plan for the town centres of both Rodney and West Lorne to identify specific improvements to the public realm and without limiting the generality of the forgoing to include sidewalk and boulevard treatment, street lighting, tree planting, pedestrian seating, overhanging signage, public signage, traffic lights, overhead wiring, parking areas, refuse containers, landscaping and on-going maintenance along with estimated costs, priorities, phasing and funding sources.
- b) That the Municipality of West Elgin prepare and fund an incentive program for the up-grading of commercial façades and storefronts including signage in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.
- c) That the Municipality of West Elgin prepare and fund an incentive program for the restoration of heritage buildings in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.
- d) That the Municipality of West Elgin appoint a Task Force to determine the nature, scope and feasibility of establishing of a farmers' market in the town centre of Rodney in partnership with Project WE on the lands occupied, in part by the former Orford Co-op and Thompsons' grain elevators and storage facilities.

- e) That the Municipality of West Elgin appoint a Task Force to determine the nature, scope and feasibility of establishing of an arts and cultural district in the town centre of West Lorne on Graham Road between the former CN railway lands and Main Street.
- f) That the Municipality of West Elgin commission a study pursuant to the Heritage Act to determine the potential of establishing a heritage conservation district in the town centre of West Lorne on Graham Road between the former CN railway lands and Main Street.
- g) That the Municipality of West Elgin appoint a Task Force to establish a framework governing the nature, objectives, structure, operating procedures, funding and priorities of a joint Business Improvement Area (BIA) to represent commercially assessed property owners and merchants in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.
- h) That the West Elgin Chamber of Commerce be invited to take a lead role in establishing and implementing a business recruitment and expansion strategy for the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne which has the potential to improve the sustainability of existing businesses and attract new businesses.
- i) That the Municipality of West Elgin, in consultation with the proposed BIA, review its current program for street and sidewalk maintenance in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne with a view to determining desired improvements, available resources and respective responsibilities.
- j) That the Rodney and District Horticultural Society and the West Lorne Horticultural Society and the proposed BIA, once established, determine an appropriate sharing of responsibilities, priorities and co-ordination with respect to beautification of the town centres.
- k) That the Municipality of West Elgin amend its property maintenance and occupancy standards by-law to incorporate provisions governing deteriorated or derelict storefronts in the town centres of Rodney and West Lorne.
- l) That the Municipality of West Elgin maintain its current regulations in its Zoning By-laws to prevent the conversion of ground level store fronts to residential occupancy.
- m) That the Municipality of West Elgin establish a policy governing existing and new upper floor balconies overhanging the streetscape to prevent adverse impacts on the pedestrian environment.
- n) That the Municipality of West Elgin, in consultation with the proposed BIA, establish a policy and regulations as necessary governing the use of public sidewalks and boulevards by merchants.
- o) That the Municipality consider the feasibility of establishing a recreational trail for walking, jogging, cycling and similar activities along the abandoned railway corridor between Rodney and West Lorne to strengthen the linkage between the two town centres.

APPENDICES

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

TOWN CENTRES of RODNEY and WEST LORNE

MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN

APPENDIX A: PLANNING ACT - COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT (SECTIONS 28 – 33)

Community improvement project area

28. (1) In this section,

“community improvement” means the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary; (“améliorations communautaires”)

“community improvement plan” means a plan for the community improvement of a community improvement project area; (“plan d’améliorations communautaires”)

“community improvement project area” means a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason. (“zone d’améliorations communautaires”) R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (1); 2001, c. 17, s. 7 (1, 2); 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (1).

Affordable housing

(1.1) Without limiting the generality of the definition of “community improvement” in subsection (1), for greater certainty, it includes the provision of affordable housing. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (2).

Designation of community improvement project area

(2) Where there is an official plan in effect in a local municipality or in a prescribed upper-tier municipality that contains provisions relating to community improvement in the municipality, the council may, by by-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a community improvement project area. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (2); 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (3).

Acquisition and clearance of land

(3) When a by-law has been passed under subsection (2), the municipality may,

- (a) acquire land within the community improvement project area with the approval of the Minister if the land is acquired before a community improvement plan mentioned in subsection (4) comes into effect and without the approval of the Minister if the land is acquired after the community improvement plan comes into effect;
- (b) hold land acquired before or after the passing of the by-law within the community improvement project area; and
- (c) clear, grade or otherwise prepare the land for community improvement. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (3); 2001, c. 17, s. 7 (3).

Community improvement plan

(4) When a by-law has been passed under subsection (2), the council may provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a community improvement plan for the community improvement project area and the plan may be adopted and come into effect in accordance with subsections (5) and (5.1). 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).

Restriction re upper-tier municipality

(4.0.1) The community improvement plan of an upper-tier municipality may deal only with prescribed matters. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (4).

(4.1)-(4.4) Repealed: 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).

Same

(5) Subsections 17 (15), (17), (19) to (19.3), (19.5) to (24), (25) to (30.1), (44) to (47) and (49) to (50.1) apply, with necessary modifications, in respect of a community improvement plan and any amendments to it. 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).

Same

(5.1) The Minister is deemed to be the approval authority for the purpose of subsection (5). 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).

Same

(5.2) Despite subsection (5), if an official plan contains provisions describing the alternative measures mentioned in subsection 17 (19.3), subsections 17 (15), (17) and (19) to (19.2) do not apply in respect of the community improvement plan and any amendments to it, if the measures are complied with. 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (1).

Powers of council re land

(6) For the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan that has come into effect, the municipality may,

- (a) construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area in conformity with the community improvement plan, and sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any such buildings and the land appurtenant thereto;
- (b) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area to any person or governmental authority for use in conformity with the community improvement plan. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (6); 2001, c. 17, s. 7 (6).

Grants or loans re eligible costs

(7) For the purpose of carrying out a municipality's community improvement plan that has come into effect, the municipality may make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or any part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8).

Eligible costs

(7.1) For the purposes of subsection (7), the eligible costs of a community improvement plan may include costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8).

Grants or loans between upper and lower-tier municipalities

(7.2) The council of an upper-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of a lower-tier municipality and the council of a lower-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of the upper-tier municipality, for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan that has come into effect, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, but only if the official plan of the municipality making the grant or loan contains provisions relating to the making of such grants or loans. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8).

Maximum amount

(7.3) The total of the grants and loans made in respect of particular lands and buildings under subsections (7) and (7.2) and the tax assistance as defined in section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* or section 333 of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, as the case may be, that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement plan with respect to those lands and buildings. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8); 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 48 (3).

(8) Repealed: 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (3).

Application of s. 32 (2, 3)

(9) Subsections 32 (2) and (3) apply with necessary modifications to any loan made under subsection (7) of this section. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (9).

Conditions of sale, etc.

(10) Until a by-law or amending by-law passed under section 34 after the adoption of the community improvement plan is in force in the community improvement project area, no land acquired, and no building constructed, by the municipality in the community improvement project area shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of unless the person or authority to whom it is disposed of enters into a written agreement with the municipality that the person or authority will keep and maintain the land and building and the use thereof in conformity with the community improvement plan until such a by-law or amending by-law is in force, but the municipality may, during the period of the development of the plan, lease any land or any building or part thereof in the area for any purpose, whether or not in conformity with the community improvement plan, for a term of not more than three years at any one time. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (10).

Registration of agreement

(11) An agreement concerning a grant or loan made under subsection (7) or an agreement entered into under subsection (10), may be registered against the land to which it applies and the municipality shall be entitled to enforce the provisions thereof against any party to the agreement and, subject to the provisions of the *Registry Act* and the *Land Titles Act*, against any and all subsequent owners or tenants of the land. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (11); 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (10).

Debentures

(12) Despite subsection 408 (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* or any regulation under section 256 of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, debentures issued by the municipality for the purpose of this section may be for such term of years as the debenture by-law, with the approval of the Municipal Board, provides. 2002, c. 17, Sched. B, s. 9; 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 47 (4).

Dissolution of area

(13) When the council is satisfied that the community improvement plan has been carried out, the council may, by by-law, dissolve the community improvement project area. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (13).

Agreement re studies and development

29.(1)A municipality, with the approval of the Minister, may enter into agreement with any governmental authority or any agency thereof created by statute, for the carrying out of studies and the preparation and implementation of plans and programs for the development or improvement of the municipality.

Where approval of Minister not required

(2)Despite subsection (1), a municipality may enter into agreement with one or more other municipalities under subsection (1) without the approval of the Minister. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 29.

Agreements for grants in aid of community improvement

30.The Minister, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and a municipality may enter into agreement providing for payment to the municipality on such terms and conditions and in such amounts as may be approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council to assist in the community improvement of a community improvement project area as defined in section 28, including the carrying out of studies for the purpose of selecting areas for community improvement. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 30.

31.Repealed: 1997, c. 24, s. 226 (1).

Note: Despite the repeal of section 31, an order made under that section is continued as an order made under the corresponding provision of the *Building Code Act, 1992*. See: 1997, c. 24, ss. 226 (2), 228.

Grants or loans for repairs

32.(1)When a by-law under section 15.1 of the *Building Code Act, 1992* is in force in a municipality,

the council of the municipality may pass a by-law for providing for the making of grants or loans to the registered owners or assessed owners of lands in respect of which an order has been made under subsection 15.2 (2) of that Act to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of the repairs required to be done, or of the clearing, grading and levelling of the lands, on such terms and conditions as the council may prescribe. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 32 (1); 1997, c. 24, s. 226 (3).

Loans collected as taxes, lien on land

(2) The amount of any loan made under a by-law passed under this section, together with interest at a rate to be determined by the council, may be added by the clerk of the municipality to the collector's roll and collected in like manner as municipal taxes over a period fixed by the council, and such amount and interest shall, until payment thereof, be a lien or charge upon the land in respect of which the loan has been made.

Registration of certificate

(3) A certificate signed by the clerk of the municipality setting out the amount loaned to any owner under a by-law passed under this section, including the rate of interest thereon, together with a description of the land in respect of which the loan has been made, sufficient for registration, shall be registered in the proper land registry office against the land, and, upon repayment in full to the municipality of the amount loaned and interest thereon, a certificate signed by the clerk of the municipality showing such repayment shall be similarly registered, and thereupon the lien or charge upon the land in respect of which the loan was made is discharged. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 32 (2, 3).

Demolition control area

33.(1) In this section,

"dwelling unit" means any property that is used or designed for use as a domestic establishment in which one or more persons may sleep and prepare and serve meals; ("logement")

"residential property" means a building that contains one or more dwelling units, but does not include subordinate or accessory buildings the use of which is incidental to the use of the main building. ("immeuble d'habitation") R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 33 (1).

Establishment of demolition control area by by-law

(2) When a by-law under section 15.1 of the *Building Code Act*, 1992 or a predecessor thereof is in force in a municipality or when a by-law prescribing standards for the maintenance and occupancy of property under any special Act is in force in a municipality, the council of the local municipality may by by-law designate any area within the municipality to which the standards of maintenance and occupancy by-law applies as an area of demolition control and thereafter no person shall demolish the whole or any part of any residential property in the area of demolition control unless the person is the holder of a demolition permit issued by the council under this section. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 33 (2); 1997, c. 24, s. 226 (4).

Council may issue or refuse to issue permit

(3) Subject to subsection (6), where application is made to the council for a permit to demolish residential property, the council may issue the permit or refuse to issue the permit.

Appeal to O.M.B.

(4) Where the council refuses to issue the permit or neglects to make a decision thereon within thirty days after the receipt by the clerk of the municipality of the application, the applicant may appeal to the Municipal Board and the Board shall hear the appeal and either dismiss the same or direct that the demolition permit be issued, and the decision of the Board shall be final.

Notice of appeal

(5) The person appealing to the Municipal Board under subsection (4) shall, in such manner and to such persons as the Board may direct, give notice of the appeal to the Board.

Application for demolition permit where building permit issued

(6) Subject to subsection (7), the council shall, on application therefor, issue a demolition permit where a building permit has been issued to erect a new building on the site of the residential property

sought to be demolished.

Conditions of demolition permit

(7)A demolition permit under subsection (6) may be issued on the condition that the applicant for the permit construct and substantially complete the new building to be erected on the site of the residential property proposed to be demolished by not later than such date as the permit specifies, such date being not less than two years from the day demolition of the existing residential property is commenced, and on the condition that on failure to complete the new building within the time specified in the permit, the clerk of the municipality shall be entitled to enter on the collector's roll, to be collected in like manner as municipal taxes, such sum of money as the permit specifies, but not in any case to exceed the sum of \$20,000 for each dwelling unit contained in the residential property in respect of which the demolition permit is issued and such sum shall, until payment thereof, be a lien or charge upon the land in respect of which the permit to demolish the residential property is issued.

Registration of notice

(8)Notice of any condition imposed under subsection (7) may be registered in the proper land registry office against the land to which it applies.

Registration of certificate

(9)Where the clerk of the municipality adds a sum of money to the collector's roll under subsection (7), a certificate signed by the clerk setting out the sum added to the roll, together with a description of the land in respect of which the sum has been added to the roll, sufficient for registration, shall be registered in the proper land registry office against the land, and upon payment in full to the municipality of the sum added to the roll, a certificate signed by the clerk of the municipality showing such payment shall be similarly registered, and thereupon the lien or charge upon the land in respect of which the sum was added to the roll is discharged.

Appeal to O.M.B.

(10)Where an applicant for a demolition permit under subsection (6) is not satisfied as to the conditions on which the demolition permit is proposed to be issued, the applicant may appeal to the Municipal Board for a variation of the conditions and, where an appeal is brought, the Board shall hear the appeal and may dismiss the same or may direct that the conditions upon which the permit shall be issued be varied in such manner as the Board considers appropriate, and the decision of the Board shall be final.

Application to council for relief from conditions of demolition permit

(11)Where a condition has been imposed under subsection (7) and the holder of the demolition permit considers that it is not possible to complete the new building within the time specified in the permit or where the holder of the permit is of the opinion that the construction of the new building has become not feasible on economic or other grounds, the permit holder may apply to the council of the municipality for relief from the conditions on which the permit was issued.

Notice of application

(12)Notice of application under subsection (11) shall be sent by registered mail to the clerk of the municipality not less than sixty days before the time specified in the permit for the completion of the new building and, where the council under subsection (14) extends the time for completion of the new building, application may similarly be made for relief by sending notice of application not less than sixty days before the expiry of the extended completion time.

Extension of time

(13)Despite subsection (12), the council may, at any time, extend the date specified in that subsection for the making of an application for relief from the conditions on which the permit was issued.

Powers of council on application

(14)Where an application is made under subsection (11), the council shall consider the application and may grant the same or may extend the time for completion of the new building for such period of time and on such terms and conditions as the council considers appropriate or the council may relieve the person applying from the requirement of constructing the new building.

Appeal to O.M.B.

(15) Any person who has made application to the council under subsection (11) may appeal from the decision of the council to the Municipal Board within twenty days of the mailing of the notice of the decision, or where the council refuses or neglects to make a decision thereon within thirty days after the receipt by the clerk of the application, the applicant may appeal to the Municipal Board and the Board shall hear the appeal and the Board on the appeal has the same powers as the council has under subsection (14) and the decision of the Board shall be final.

Offence

(16) Every person who demolishes a residential property, or any portion thereof, in contravention of subsection (2) is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$50,000 for each dwelling unit contained in the residential property, the whole or any portion of which residential property has been demolished.

Standards for health and safety remain in force

(17) The provisions of any general or special Act and any by-law passed thereunder respecting standards relating to the health or safety of the occupants of buildings and structures remain in full force and effect in respect of residential property situate within an area of demolition control. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 33 (3-17).

Certain proceedings stayed

(18) Subject to subsection (17), an application to the council for a permit to demolish any residential property operates as a stay to any proceedings that may have been initiated under any by-law under section 15.1 of the *Building Code Act, 1992* or a predecessor thereof or under any special Act respecting maintenance or occupancy standards in respect of the residential property sought to be demolished, until the council disposes of the application, or where an appeal is taken under subsection (4), until the Municipal Board has heard the appeal and issued its order thereon. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 33 (18); 1997, c. 24, s. 226 (5).

Exemption re Building Code

(19) Where a permit to demolish residential property is obtained under this section, it is not necessary for the holder thereof to obtain the permit mentioned in subsection 8 (1) of the *Building Code Act, 1992*. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 33 (19); 1997, c. 24, s. 226 (6).

APPENDIX B: MUNICIPALITY OF WEST ELGIN OFFICIAL PLAN – COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT (SECTION 4.3)

4.3 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

4.3.1 Objectives

- a) To up-grade physical services to a minimum standard,
- b) To improve streetscapes, pedestrian amenities and parking,
- c) To convert underutilized, obsolete or derelict building space to more productive purposes,
- d) To reduce land use conflicts and incompatibilities, and
- e) To eradicate substandard housing and property conditions.

4.3.2 Improvement Areas

The contiguous built-up areas of Rodney and West Lorne are designated as a 'Community Improvement Area' within the meaning of the Planning Act. Within these areas, community project areas may be established, by by-law, for the purposes of undertaking specific or comprehensive improvement projects. These areas shall be selected using the following guidelines:

- a) areas where there is a deficiency in municipal services and facilities (e.g. water supply, sanitary sewers, storm drainage, streets, sidewalks, parking, traffic circulation),
- b) areas in need of economic revitalization and beautification (e.g. 'main' street),
- c) areas where there is a potential for a more efficient use of land through redevelopment, infilling or reuse of brownfield sites,
- d) areas of older dwellings and buildings which are in need of repair and/or rehabilitation, and
- e) areas with land use conflicts or incompatibilities.

4.3.3 Establishing Priorities

Community improvement projects shall be identified, from time to time, having regard to the stated goals and objectives, the availability of government financial assistance, the impact on the area directly affected and the financial limitations to the Municipality. Priorities shall be given to those areas where deficiencies are found to be the most critical from the standpoint of public health and safety.

4.3.4 Implementation

Once a community improvement project area has been identified, the Municipality shall prepare, adopt and implement a community improvement plan which may include the following measures:

- a) undertaking capital improvements and public works,
- b) acquiring, holding, and preparing lands for redevelopment,
- c) preserving and restoring architecturally and historically significant buildings and structures,
- d) developing local funding programs and tax incentives,
- e) obtaining financial support from other levels of government, and
- f) eliciting the support and involvement of local groups and clubs.

4.3.5 Property Maintenance

The Municipality shall prepare and adopt bylaws to ensure minimum standards of property maintenance and occupancy to protect public health, safety and welfare; to eliminate unsightly and unsafe conditions and appearances with respect to buildings, lands, neighbourhoods and other areas; and to ensure adequate enjoyment of property. These by-laws may take the form of Property Maintenance and Occupancy Standards adopted under the Building Code Act or the Clearing and Cleaning of Land adopted under the Municipal Act.

**APPENDIX C: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT BUSINESS PLAN SURVEY
VILLAGE OF RODNEY, 2007**



The Municipality of West Elgin

Community Improvement Plan Business Survey

**Village of Rodney
July 2007**

- 1) Please describe the nature of your business and how long it has been established at this location.

- 2) What attracted the business to its current location? Has the business always been here or has it been relocated from elsewhere?

- 3) What best describes the future of the business over the next five years at its present location?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| (a) no significant change | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) expansion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) downsizing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) relocation inside the downtown core | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) closure | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 4) Are you contemplating, or would you be receptive to any physical changes to your storefront or building over the next five years?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If Yes, please describe

- 5) What features of the downtown core of Rodney, if any, are most important in making it attractive or conducive to doing business?

- 6) What types of businesses do you believe are most lacking in the downtown core of Rodney?

- 7) Do you think the conversion of vacant storefronts to residential use should be permitted?

8) Do you have any suggestions for improving Rodney's downtown core?

9) What elements, if any, of the downtown core of Rodney especially need to be addressed or repaired?

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) | street lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) | sidewalks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) | trees/plantings | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) | benches | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) | overhead power lines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (f) | storefront signs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) | cleanliness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) | maintenance (wear and tear) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) | parking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) | other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10) What changes or improvements could be made to the downtown core of Rodney, or in general, to attract more business and make the core more viable?

11) What do you think should be the three main priorities for improving downtown's 'main street' character?

12) Do you believe that a loan/grant program to improve storefronts and restore heritage buildings would be positive for the downtown core of Rodney?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know ☐

13) Do you have any additional comments you would like to make with respect to improving the downtown core of Rodney and making it a more viable business area?

APPENDIX D: HERITAGE ACT - HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Under the Ontario Heritage Act, a municipality may designate the whole or any part of a municipality as a Heritage Conservation District (HCD) in order to preserve and enhance properties that collectively give an area a special or unique character.

To designate the area as HCD, a municipality is required to first pass a by-law designating the area as a Heritage Conservation Study Area. Under the Heritage Act, a study of the heritage features must be conducted and a heritage conservation district plan prepared. Public meetings must be convened for the purposes of obtaining public input after which the municipality would be able to officially adopt a HCD plan.

Designation as a HCD provides protection in terms of demolition and in preventing unsympathetic improvements within the district. It would also allow the municipality the authority to prescribe minimum property standards for buildings within the district thereby ensuring no further erosion of heritage features occurs and that unharmed heritage features are maintained.

The first step in the process of designating an area as a heritage conservation district as set out in the Heritage Act, is the undertaking of a detailed study of the area to determine its potential as a heritage conservation district. Specifically, the Act stipulates that the study shall:

- (a) examine the character and appearance of the area that is the subject of the study, including buildings, structures and other property features of the area, to determine if the area should be preserved as a heritage conservation district;
- (b) examine and make recommendations as to the geographic boundaries of the area to be designated;
- (c) consider and make recommendations as to the objectives of the designation and the content of the heritage conservation district plan;
- (d) make recommendations as to any changes that will be required to the municipality's official plan and to any municipal by-laws, including any zoning by-laws.

Under the Heritage Act, the study must be completed in a one year period. The by-law authorizing the study may prohibit or set limitations with respect to the alteration of properties within the heritage conservation study area and the erection, demolition or removal of buildings or structures, or classes of buildings or structures, in the study area while the study is underway. The by-law is subject to appeal, which in the event, would be heard by the Ontario Municipal Board.

The Heritage Act sets out the scope of a heritage conservation district plan being:

- a) a statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage conservation district;
- b) a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the heritage conservation district;
- c) a description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;
- d) policy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district; and

- e) a description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of property in the heritage conservation district may carry out or permit to be carried out on any part of the property, other than the interior of any structure or building on the property, without obtaining a permit.

Where a heritage conservation district is in place, the municipality shall not carry out any public work in the heritage district that is contrary to the objectives set out in the plan or pass a by-law for any purpose that is contrary to the objectives set out in the plan. With respect to building conditions, once a heritage conservation district is in place, a municipality could amend its property maintenance and occupancy standards by-law to:

- (a) prescribe minimum standards for the maintenance of the heritage attributes of property situated in the heritage conservation district; and
- (b) require property that is situated in the heritage conservation district that does not comply with the standards to be repaired and maintained to conform with the standards.

APPENDIX E: MUNICIPAL ACT - BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREAS (SECTIONS 204 – 215)

Designation of improvement area

204. (1) A local municipality may designate an area as an improvement area and may establish a board of management,

- (a) to oversee the improvement, beautification and maintenance of municipally-owned land, buildings and structures in the area beyond that provided at the expense of the municipality generally; and
- (b) to promote the area as a business or shopping area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (1).

Corporation

(2) A board of management is a corporation consisting of the number of directors established by the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (2).

Local board status

(2.1) A board of management is a local board of the municipality for all purposes. 2006, c. 32, Sched. A, s. 89.

Composition

(3) A board of management shall be composed of,

- (a) one or more directors appointed directly by the municipality; and
- (b) the remaining directors selected by a vote of the membership of the improvement area and appointed by the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (3).

Membership

(4) Members of an improvement area consist of persons who are assessed, on the last returned assessment roll, with respect to rateable property in the area that is in a prescribed business property class and tenants of such property. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (4).

Determining tenancy

(5) In determining whether a person is a tenant or not, the clerk of the municipality may accept a list provided under clause 210 (2) (b) or the declaration of a person that the person is a tenant and the determination of the clerk is final. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (5).

One vote

(6) Each member of an improvement area has one vote regardless of the number of properties that the member may own or lease in the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (6).

Nominee

(7) A corporate member of an improvement area may nominate in writing one individual to vote on behalf of the corporation. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (7).

Joint nominee

(8) Subject to subsection (6), one individual may be nominated for voting purposes by two or more corporations that are members of an improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (8).

Refusal to appoint

(9) The municipality may refuse to appoint a person selected by the members of an improvement area, in which case the municipality may leave the position vacant or direct that a meeting of the members of the improvement area be held to elect or select another candidate for the municipality's consideration. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (9).

Term

(10) The term of the directors of a board of management is the same as the term of the council that appointed them but continues until their successors are appointed. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (10).

Reappointment

(11) Directors are eligible for reappointment. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (11).

Vacancies

(12) Subject to subsection (9), if a vacancy occurs for any cause, the municipality may appoint a person to fill the vacancy for the unexpired portion of the term and the appointed person is not required to be a member of the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 204 (12).

Budget

205. (1) A board of management shall prepare a proposed budget for each fiscal year by the date and in the form required by the municipality and shall hold one or more meetings of the members of the improvement area for discussion of the proposed budget. 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 40 (1).

Council to approve

(2) A board of management shall submit the budget to council by the date and in the form required by the municipality and the municipality may approve it in whole or in part but may not add expenditures to it. 2001, c. 25, s. 205 (2); 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 40 (2).

Limitations

(3) A board of management shall not,

- (a) spend any money unless it is included in the budget approved by the municipality or in a reserve fund established under section 417;
- (b) incur any indebtedness extending beyond the current year without the prior approval of the municipality; or
- (c) borrow money. 2001, c. 25, s. 205 (3).

Limitations on power

(4) Section 65 of the *Ontario Municipal Board Act* and section 401 of this Act apply to the municipality's approval under clause (3) (b) in the same manner as if it were incurring a debt of the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 205 (4).

Notice

206. A board of management shall give reasonable notice to the general membership of the improvement area of a meeting to hold a vote under clause 204 (3) (b) or for the purposes of a discussion under subsection 205 (1). 2001, c. 25, s. 206; 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 41.

Annual report

207. (1) A board of management shall submit its annual report for the preceding year to council by the date and in the form required by the municipality and the report shall include audited financial statements. 2001, c. 25, s. 207 (1).

Auditor

(2) The municipal auditor is the auditor of each board of management and may inspect all records of the board. 2001, c. 25, s. 207 (2).

Funds to be raised

208. (1) The municipality shall annually raise the amount required for the purposes of a board of management, including any interest payable by the municipality on money borrowed by it for the purposes of the board of management. 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (1).

Special charge

(2) The municipality may establish a special charge for the amount referred to in subsection (1),

- (a) by levy upon rateable property in the improvement area that is in a prescribed business property class; or
- (b) by levy upon rateable property in the improvement area that is in a prescribed business

property class and that, in council's opinion, derives special benefit from the improvement area, which levy may be calculated using different percentages of the assessment for one or more separately assessed properties or categories of separately assessed properties in the prescribed class if the resulting levy is equitable in accordance with the benefits that, in council's opinion, accrue to the properties from the activities related to the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (2).

Minimum and maximum charges

(3) The municipality may establish a minimum or maximum charge or both, expressed for one or more separately assessed properties or categories of separately assessed properties in a prescribed class, as,

- (a) percentages of the assessed value of rateable property in the improvement area that is in a prescribed business property class;
- (b) dollar amounts; or
- (c) percentages of the board of management's annual budget. 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (3).

Effect of by-law

(4) When a by-law under subsection (3) is in force,

- (a) the amount of a charge levied in a year under subsection (2) shall not, when calculated for the individual property in the prescribed class to which it applies, be less than or greater than the amount of the applicable minimum and maximum charge for the property established under the by-law; and
- (b) if necessary for a fiscal year to raise the amount referred to in subsection (1) because a minimum or maximum charge applies to one or more separately assessed properties or categories of separately assessed properties in the prescribed class, the municipality shall for the year adjust any charges applicable to the remaining individual properties or subclasses of properties in the prescribed class by adjusting the percentage or percentages of assessment established under subsection (2) for those properties. 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (4).

Exclusion

(5) Section 210 does not apply to an adjustment made under clause (4) (b). 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (5).

Borrowings

(6) If only a part of money borrowed by the municipality in any year for the purposes of a board of management is required to be repaid in that year or a subsequent year, only that part and any interest payable on the total amount shall be included in the levies under this section in that year or subsequent year, respectively. 2001, c. 25, s. 208 (6).

Priority lien status

(7) Charges levied under this section shall have priority lien status and shall be added to the tax roll. 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 42.

Changes to boundary

209. The municipality may alter the boundaries of an improvement area and the board of management for that improvement area is continued as the board of management for the altered area. 2001, c. 25, s. 209.

Notice

210. (1) Before passing a by-law under subsection 204 (1), clause 208 (2) (b), subsection 208 (3) or section 209, notice of the proposed by-law shall be sent by prepaid mail to the board of management of the improvement area, if any, and to every person who, on the last returned assessment roll, is assessed for rateable property that is in a prescribed business property class which is located,

- (a) where the improvement area already exists, in the improvement area and in any geographic

area the proposed by-law would add to the improvement area; and

- (b) where a new improvement area would be created by the proposed by-law, in the proposed improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (1).

When notice received

(2) A person who receives a notice under subsection (1) shall, within 30 days after the notice is mailed,

- (a) give a copy of the notice to each tenant of the property to which the notice relates who is required to pay all or part of the taxes on the property; and
- (b) give the clerk of the municipality a list of every tenant described in clause (a) and the share of the taxes that each tenant is required to pay and the share that the person is required to pay. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (2).

Objections

(3) A municipality shall not pass a by-law referred to in subsection (1) if,

- (a) written objections are received by the clerk of the municipality within 60 days after the last day of mailing of the notices;
- (b) the objections have been signed by at least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to notice under subsection (1) and under clause (2) (a); and
- (c) the objectors are responsible for,
 - (i) in the case of a proposed addition to an existing improvement area,
 - (A) at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area, or
 - (B) at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the geographic area the proposed by-law would add to the existing improvement area, or
 - (ii) in all other cases, at least one-third of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (3).

Withdrawal of objections

(4) If sufficient objections are withdrawn in writing within the 60-day period referred to in clause (3) (a) so that the conditions set out in clause (3) (b) or (c) no longer apply, the municipality may pass the by-law. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (4).

Determination by clerk

(5) The clerk shall determine whether the conditions set out in subsection (3) have been met and, if they are, shall issue a certificate affirming that fact. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (5).

Determination final

(6) The determination by the clerk is final. 2001, c. 25, s. 210 (6).

Repeal of by-law

211. (1) Council shall give notice in accordance with subsection 210 (1) of a proposed by-law to repeal a by-law under subsection 204 (1) if the municipality has received,

- (a) a resolution from the board of management requesting the repeal; or
- (b) a request for the repeal signed by persons who are responsible for at least one-third of the

taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (1).

Statement

(2) A person signing a request under clause (1) (b) shall state what amount of taxes on rateable property in the area that the person is required to pay. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (2).

Time

(3) Council shall give the notice within 60 days after receiving the resolution or request. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (3).

Repeal

(4) Council shall repeal the by-law under subsection 204 (1) if requests for the repeal are received by the clerk of the municipality within 60 days after the last day of mailing of the notices and,

- (a) the requests have been signed by at least one-half of the total number of persons entitled to notice under subsection 210 (1) and under clause 210 (2) (a); and
- (b) those who have signed the requests are responsible for at least 50 per cent of the taxes levied for purposes of the general local municipality levy on rateable property in all prescribed business property classes in the improvement area. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (4).

Timing

(5) The repealing by-law must come into force on or before December 31 of the year in which it is passed. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (5).

Requests withdrawn

(6) If sufficient requests are withdrawn in writing within the 60-day period referred to in subsection (4) so that either condition set out in that subsection no longer applies, the municipality is not required to repeal the by-law. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (6).

Determination by clerk

(7) The clerk shall determine whether the conditions set out in clause (1) (b) and subsection (4) have been met and, if so, shall issue a certificate affirming that fact. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (7).

Determination final

(8) The determination by the clerk is final. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (8).

Restriction

(9) If the conditions of subsection (4) are not satisfied, council is not required to give notice under subsection (1) in response to a resolution or request for a period of two years after the last mailing of the notices. 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (9).

Non-application

(10) No requirement under this section or under section 210 applies to the repeal by a municipality on its own initiative of a by-law under subsection 204 (1). 2001, c. 25, s. 211 (10).

Effect of by-law

212. A by-law passed under subsection 204 (1), subsection 208 (2) or (3), section 209 or subsection 211 (4) is not invalid by reason only that,

- (a) a person required to give a copy of a notice to a tenant or other information to the municipality under subsection 210 (2) has not done so;
- (b) the objections referred to in clause 210 (3) (b) have not been signed by at least one-third of the total number of persons entitled to receive notice under subsections 210 (1) and (2) because a person required to give a copy of the notice under subsection 210 (2) has not done so; or
- (c) the requests referred to in clause 211 (4) (a) have not been signed by at least one-half of the total number of persons entitled to notice under subsections 210 (1) and (2) because a

person required to give a copy of the notice under subsection 210 (2) has not done so. 2001, c. 25, s. 212.

Tenants

213. For the purposes of clauses 210 (3) (c) and 211 (1) (b), subsection 211 (2) and clause 211 (4) (b), a tenant shall be deemed to be responsible for the part of the taxes that the tenant is required to pay under the tenant's lease or under sections 367 and 368. 2001, c. 25, s. 213.

Dissolution of board

214. (1) Upon the repeal of a by-law under subsection 204 (1), the board of management is dissolved and the assets and liabilities of the board become the assets and liabilities of the municipality. 2001, c. 25, s. 214 (1).

Liabilities exceed assets

(2) If the liabilities assumed under subsection (1) exceed the assets assumed, the council may recover the difference by imposing a charge on all rateable property in the former improvement area that is in a prescribed business property class. 2001, c. 25, s. 214 (2).

Regulations

215. The Minister may make regulations prescribing one or more classes of real property prescribed under the *Assessment Act* as business property classes for the purposes of sections 204 to 214. 2001, c. 25, s. 215.



Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

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Rural Economic Development (RED) Program



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Rural Economic Development (RED)

The Rural Economic Development (RED) program assists with the costs of projects that use the power of partnership to create change. Why? Because we know that people work better when they work together. The partners might be individuals, businesses, organizations, or municipal governments. They share a common goal: to breathe new life into rural communities, make more opportunities to develop skills, and improve access to health care.

Two examples of RED projects

1. Building skills in the Peterborough area

Here community partners are working to keep existing jobs in the manufacturing sector and create new ones. With the support of the Ontario government, they provide better training for workers, access to experts, and an internship program for youth. They are also making local residents more aware of career opportunities in the sector.

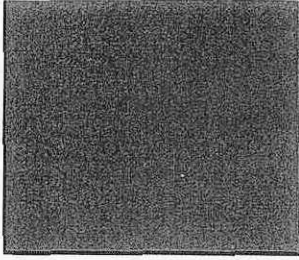
2. Improving access to doctors in Huron East/Seaforth

Here we are working with the community leaders in Huron East/Seaforth to launch the Skills for Healthcare Attraction and Retention Pilot program. Known locally as Health Kick Huron, the project is aimed at attracting new health-care professionals to this medically under-served Lake Huron community. The Ontario government hopes the strategies developed in the project can be used by other communities.

How does my community apply to RED?

Download the Program Guidelines and Grant Application Form and fill out the forms.

Why is RED so important to rural Ontario?



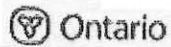
Teamwork has always been the key to success in rural Ontario. Yesterday's barn-raising and threshing bees are today's community-building partnerships. RED plays a major role in supporting these efforts.

Together, we will build an Ontario that is the envy of the world. Our quality of life will be second to none.

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Feedback and technical inquiries to: rural.omafr@ontario.ca
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Last Updated: April 30, 2007

Rural Economic Development (RED) Program News Release

Author: OMAFRA Staff
Creation Date: 12 December 2006
Last Reviewed: 15 December 2006

For Immediate Release November 6, 2006

Revitalization Initiative to Rejuvenate Four Downtown Areas

McGuinty Government Invests In Eastern Ontario

Tweed -- The McGuinty government is helping the municipalities of Tweed, Centre Hastings, Marmora and Lake and Stirling-Rawdon rejuvenate their downtown areas, Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and MPP for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington announced today.

"The McGuinty government is helping to revitalize our rural communities," said Dombrowsky. "This project will bring more visitors to Tweed, Centre Hastings, Marmora and Lake and Stirling-Rawdon, strengthening the local economy."

The government will contribute \$100,000 to help the Municipality of Marmora and Lake, and its partners the Municipality of Tweed, Municipality of Centre Hastings, and Township of Stirling-Rawdon revitalize their communities. These four municipalities will focus on rejuvenating the downtown areas with streetscape physical improvements including new banners, planters and lighting, and website development with a "shop locally" campaign.

"On behalf of the main street management teams, we want to thank the provincial government for its support on this important project," said Andrew Redden, Main Street project coordinator for all four partnering municipalities. "With our strong partnership, we have the potential to increase tourist traffic, attract new business, and create long-term jobs for the area."

Other government initiatives that demonstrate the McGuinty government is on the side of families in rural Ontario include:

- Creating an integrated One-Stop training and employment system that will ensure people in rural areas have better access to skills training and labour market services that are tailored to the needs of rural communities;
- Recognizing the unique needs of rural schools with \$260 million for school repairs, library books and transition programs;
- Investing over \$26 million in rural communities through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program.

Today's investment was made through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program, which invests in projects that support sustainable rural economies and community partnerships -- a key part of the government's plan for rural Ontario.

Through the RED program, the Ontario government and its rural partners are building stronger communities that work better for the people who live in them. For more information about RED or

For more information:
Toll Free: 1-888-588-4111
Fax: 1-519-826-4336
Email: red.omafra@ontario.ca

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Last Updated: December 20, 2006

APPENDIX G: MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS MAIN STREET ONTARIO PROGRAM

Who May Apply?

Eligible applicants include strategic alliances between (any combination of) business associations, community organizations and municipalities.

MAIN STREET ONTARIO is recommended for:

- Communities with at least 50 commercial enterprises or 70 structures/storefronts in the downtown; and,
- Communities under 100,000 in population.

Applicants will be assessed on both their downtown needs and capacity to deliver a three-year MAIN STREET ONTARIO project.

Application Process

The annual application process for MAIN STREET ONTARIO funding is as follows:

- *Expression of Interest:* applicants submit a brief description of their proposed project for initial assessment.
- *Full Application:* applicants provide a full description of their project for assessment and approval.

Applicants are encouraged to review the RED Program Main Street Ontario Guidelines for expression of interest and application deadlines.

Interested in more information or applying for MAIN STREET ONTARIO?

Please visit our website or contact your closest OMAFRA regional economic development office.

OMAFRA Regional Economic Development Teams support the delivery of MAIN STREET ONTARIO in southern rural communities. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) supports the delivery of MAIN STREET ONTARIO in northern communities.

Main Street Ontario – Rural
Community Development Branch:
1-888-588-4111

Email: mainstreet.omafra@ontario.ca

Northern Ontario Regional Office:
1-800-461-6132

www.ontario.ca/rural

Également disponible en français



Main Street Ontario

Economic Development Tools, Training
& Funding for Downtown Revitalization



Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

MAIN STREET ONTARIO

is an initiative of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) that combines:

Technical Assistance such as coaching and training to:

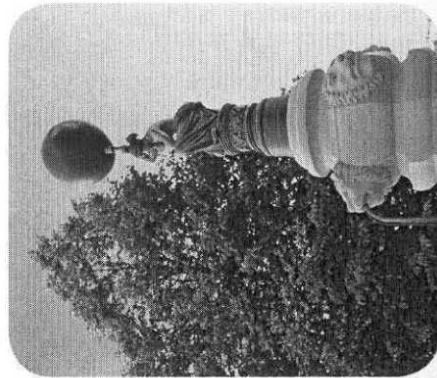
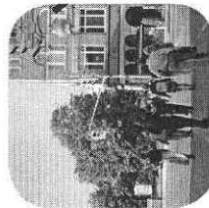
- Support market analysis;
- Develop an action plan; and,
- Identify new business opportunities.

Funding for project implementation to:

- Hire a downtown revitalization coordinator;
- Develop new marketing initiatives;
- Identify business development strategies; and,
- Implement downtown revitalization projects.

Province-wide Community Network:

- For sharing expertise;
- Highlighting success stories; and,
- Providing solutions to common challenges in downtown revitalization.



A Comprehensive Approach

MAIN STREET ONTARIO builds on all four points of downtown revitalization:

1 Economic Development

2 Organizational Development

3 Marketing and Promotions

4 Physical Improvements

This model has been used successfully in other jurisdictions, for stimulating economic development that leads to private and public sector reinvestment in traditional commercial districts by:

- Strengthening local business and encouraging investment by property owners;
- Creating enjoyable public streets and spaces animated by a variety of creative and civic activities;
- Providing work and living opportunities that respond to people's needs across a spectrum of ages and interests; and,
- Leveraging a community's vision and resources to strengthen the downtown economy.

Funding

is available through the Rural Economic Development (RED) Program's *Community Revitalization* stream.

Funding matched to 50% of eligible project costs up to a maximum of \$150,000 over three years per project is available. This funding helps individual communities hire a full-time downtown revitalization coordinator to develop an overall Main Street action plan, as well as to implement and monitor the overall project.

Eligible Costs

RED funding will support the following 7 types of eligible costs:

1. Project coordinator salary/wages/benefits;
2. Training/conference expenses for the coordinator and chair;
3. Meeting expenses;
4. Office-related expenses;
5. Fees for a design professional;
6. Costs associated with data gathering for market analysis; and,
7. Initial implementation expenses (e.g., business recruitment strategy, small scale physical improvements or new events).

"By capitalizing on our existing business and community assets, we have seen a significant change in our community over the last three years. OMAFRA's Main Street approach provided us with the framework and support to make this happen."

Reeve Ron Gerow
Township of Havelock-Beimont Methuen
Warden, Peterborough County
Vice-Chair, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus