



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Economic Development Division

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 6, 2015
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program – Amendment to Program Description and Terms (PED15095) (Wards 1, 2 and 3)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Wards 1, 2 and 3
PREPARED BY:	Hazel Milsome (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2755
SUBMITTED BY:	Jason Thorne General Manager Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That Appendix “H” to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan, being the Program Description and Terms of the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program, be deleted and replaced with the Program Description and Terms attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED15095.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program was first introduced in 2011 as a matching grant for façade improvements for property owners and authorized tenants of commercial properties located within the Downtown Hamilton Community Improvement Project Area (DHCIPA). The Program offers a maximum grant of \$10,000 or \$12,500 for corner properties and was introduced as a three-year program with applications being accepted to the end of December 2014. Improvements approved under the Program were to be completed no later than August 1, 2015. The Program ended January 1, 2015 for property owners / authorized tenants within the DHCIPA as planned.

In 2013, the Program was extended to property owners / authorized tenants within the Community Downtowns, the Mount Hope / Airport Gateway and the commercial corridors along Barton Street, east of the Barton Village Business Improvement Area and along Kenilworth Avenue North as identified in the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Project Area. The deadline for improvements approved for grants within the aforementioned areas is December 31, 2016. This

deadline is not proving difficult to date; however, will be further explored during the five-year review of the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan and Project Area.

The August 1, 2015 deadline for improvements to be completed for applications received within the DHCIPA is proving unrealistic for some of the applicants for various reasons including meeting planning and building requirements. Also, 25 of the applications received from property owners / authorized tenants within the DHCIPA at the end of December 31, 2014 are still being processed for approval due to the volume of applications received in 2014 (54 under this Program and 220 in total). In addition, staff does not want to encourage the placement of scaffolding and sidewalk closures in the Downtown during the Pan Am Games.

Report PED15095 amends the Program Description and Terms of the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program extending the deadline for completion of the improvements to August 1, 2016.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 4

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Applications approved for properties that are located within the DHCIPA under the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program are funded through Capital Project Numbers 8201303510 and 8201203510. Sufficient monies are available to fund the applications received. Grants approved under the Program for all other areas are funded through Capital Project No. 8201303710.

Staffing: Administration of the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program is accommodated within the Urban Renewal Section of the Planning and Economic Development Department as well as the Finance and Administration Section of the Corporate Services Department.

Legal: Section 28 of the *Planning Act* permits a municipality, in accordance with a Community Improvement Plan, to make loans and grants which would otherwise be prohibited under Section 106(2) of the *Municipal Act*, to registered / assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings. A Community Improvement Plan can only be adopted and come into effect within a designated Community Improvement Project Area. Changes to a Community Improvement Plan or Community Improvement Project Area require formal amendments, as dictated by the *Planning Act*. The Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan and Project Area, provides the authorization for the City to offer grants under the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program.

The revised Program Description and Terms for the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program provided in Appendix “A” to Report PED15095 are adopted by Council resolution and appended to the Plan.

Council has adopted by resolution, detailed implementation measures to allow for the efficient administration of each financial incentive program. These administration procedures are contained in the various program descriptions and terms provided in the appendices to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan. Changes to the appendices not requiring a formal amendment will be adopted by City Council by resolution. The Program Description and Terms of the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program are appended to the Community Improvement Plan as Appendix “H”.

Formal amendments to the Community Improvement Plan are required in the following instances:

- to introduce any new financial incentive programs;
- to increase the amount of financial assistance that may be provided to registered owners, assessed owners, and tenants, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, as described in Section 8 of the Plan; and,
- a change to the Community Improvement Project Area as it is described in Section 6 of the Plan.

The proposed amendment to the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program terms does not require a formal amendment.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED

City Council, at its meeting held October 12, 2011, approved the Program Description and Terms of the Hamilton Downtown Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program and authorized staff to prepare and process the necessary amendment to the respective Community Improvement Plan and hold a public meeting at the Planning Committee as required under the *Planning Act* in order to implement the Program within the DHCIPA.

The Program was introduced as a three-year program for the purpose of improving upon the physical appearance of commercial properties within the DHCIPA. The intent of the Program was to spur the preservation, revitalization and reinvestment of commercial properties within the Downtown and assist in creating a welcoming environment for people to live, work, plan and learn. The Program was also intended to assist in deterring the further physical decay of the older building stock and complement

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the financial incentives available in the Downtown for residential and commercial development recognizing that incremental physical changes could assist in transforming areas and ultimately increasing property assessment and tax revenues.

Applications under the Program were accepted until December 31, 2014 with improvements under the Program to be completed by August 1, 2015.

The Program was expanded to the Community Downtowns and the commercial corridors along Barton Street, east of the Barton Village BIA, and along Kenilworth Avenue when City Council approved an amendment to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan at its meeting held February 13, 2013. The amendment included changing the title of the Program to the Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program.

The Program was further expanded to the Mount Hope / Airport Gateway Community Improvement Project Area when City Council, at its meeting held November 13, 2013, approved an amendment to the Downtown and Community Renewal Community Improvement Plan at its meeting held November 13, 2013.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff from the Finance and Administration Division, Corporate Services Department and the Legal Services Division, City Manager's Office, were consulted and concur with the recommendations included in Report PED15095.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

When the Program was introduced in the DHCIPA, the intent was to have all works approved completed by August 1, 2015. It is now apparent that the deadline will prove impossible for some of the applicants due to various approvals for the work required prior to the works commencing, including the approval of the grant application due to the volume of applications received under the financial incentives in 2014. In addition, staff does not want to encourage the placement of scaffolding and sidewalk closures in the Downtown during the Pan Am Games. Staff is therefore recommending that the deadline for completion of the improvements be extended to August 1, 2016 which requires the Program Description and Terms being amended.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council may decide not to approve an amendment to the Program Description and Terms of the Program, thereby improvements approved under the Program would have to be completed by August 1, 2015. This would place a hardship on some of the applicants due to the various reasons identified in Report PED15095. This alternative is not recommended.

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Financial: Grants would not be issued to some of the applicants under the Program.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2012 – 2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #1

A Prosperous & Healthy Community

WE enhance our image, economy and well-being by demonstrating that Hamilton is a great place to live, work, play and learn.

Strategic Objective

- 1.1 Continue to grow the non-residential tax base.
- 1.5 Support the development and implementation of neighbourhood and City-wide strategies that will improve the health and well-being of residents.
- 1.6 Enhance Overall Sustainability (financial, economic, social and environmental).

Strategic Priority #2

Valued & Sustainable Services

WE deliver high quality services that meet citizen needs and expectations, in a cost effective and responsible manner.

Strategic Objective

- 2.3 Enhance customer service satisfaction.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A”: Commercial Façade Property Improvement Grant Program

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