

Discussion Paper No. 2: Analysis & Options

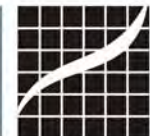
Leamington Uptown Commercial District

Community Improvement Plan

August 24, 2011



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1.0 Introduction

The purpose of Discussion Paper No. 2 is to build on the background research, field work, SWOT analysis and stakeholder consultations that have been undertaken, by analyzing and identifying options for consideration and discussion. Our analysis and options relate to the following:

- Land use
- Parking & Access
- Occupancy Rate
- Building/Façade Areas of Focus
- Open Spaces
- Development/redevelopment sites
- Financial incentives
- Additional Considerations

The preparation of this Discussion Paper and the hosting of a Public Open House in September 2011 conclude Phase 2 of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Work Program. Comments and direction received on this Discussion Paper will form the basis of the preparation of a draft Community Improvement Plan, which is Phase 3 of the Work Program.

2.0 Foundations of the Community Improvement Plan

While undertaking our Phase 2 analysis and preparing options, we continuously measured our work against the foundations of the Community Improvement Plan process including the objectives of the CIP as outlined in the Request for Proposal, the findings of the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis and the stakeholder consultations (including the merchant and resident surveys).

2.1 CIP Objectives

The objectives for the Uptown Community Improvement Plan are:

- Review and update previous plans including Urban Design Guidelines.
- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown.
- Encourage residential development in Uptown including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing.
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown.
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown.

- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process.
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses.

These objectives are directly related to each of the topics outlined in this discussion paper, and as such, will be addressed through the recommendations that flow out of each topic.

2.2 SWOT Analysis

The first CIP Discussion Paper dated June 24, 2011 contained a Strength-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Uptown. A summary of the SWOT analysis follows.

1. Strengths

- Prominent historical structures
- Existing landmarks such as the Big Tomato Information Booth and Italian Centennial Fountain Park
- Large assortment of shops and restaurants
- Cultural diversity
- Walkability of the Uptown area
- Proximity to the waterfront and Point Pelee National Park
- Interest, participation and support of residents and business owners in the Uptown
- Distinctively strong streets such as Talbot Street West and Russell Street.
- High usage of the Uptown

2. Weaknesses

- Vacant store fronts.
- Lack of guidelines for development and signage
- Barriers to open space connectivity
- Sidewalk/boulevard size limits use for outdoor patios and bicycles
- Limited bike storage options

- Insufficient landscaping of parking lots
- Lack of gateway features at entrances of Uptown
- Accessibility barriers

3. **Opportunities**

- Alleyways and rear façades can be redeveloped to serve as pedestrian connections
- Learn from and build upon thriving sections like Talbot Street West
- Harmonize the existing cultural diversity
- Connectivity of open spaces
- Enhance prominent buildings and façades
- Build on existing characteristics of the Uptown Commercial District

4. **Threats**

- Absentee landlords residing outside of Leamington
- Poor quality signage that is intended for only certain populations
- Perception that Uptown is unsafe
- Obstructed storefronts
- Heavy truck traffic
- Cultural gap

For a detailed description of the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis please refer to Discussion Paper: Leamington Uptown Commercial District Community Improvement Plan which is available online at the Municipality of Leamington's website at:

<http://www.leamington.ca/general/documents/DiscussionPaper1revised.pdf>

2.3 Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders from selected organizations, business owners, and property owners were consulted, and a summary of their comments follows:

- Vacant properties in the Uptown are a concern.
- Preserve existing heritage buildings and landmarks.

- Promote more boutique style shops and stores.
- Prohibit bicycle riding on sidewalks and place more bike racks.
- Establish a consistent theme incorporating agriculture and multiculturalism.
- Provide grants, loans and tax reductions for building improvements.
- Initiate a Farmers Market and ethnic festivals.
- Encourage the integration of existing cultures.
- Lack of family events and activities.
- Encourage more pedestrian linkages and connections.
- Maintain a variety of shops and restaurants.
- Increase the number and types of restaurants.
- Introduce street life in the form of cafes, vendors and entertainers.
- Commission more murals like the existing butterfly mural.
- Signage needs to be coherent and cohesive.
- Parking and safety in the Uptown are perceived concerns.

2.4 Merchant and Resident Surveys

Merchant and resident surveys were administered with the assistance of the Municipality of Leamington and the Uptown Business Improvement Area.

2.4.1 Merchant Surveys

Gary Dolphin, a representative of the Uptown Business Improvement Association (BIA) administered the merchant surveys door-to-door. The surveys were also completed and submitted online using the municipal website. A summary table is contained in Appendix B, and an overview of the findings is below:

1. A total of 55 merchants responded to the survey.
2. 17 respondents were business owners and 28 were both the business and building owner.
3. The top three main attractions for people visiting Uptown include the retail options available, the availability of parking and the streetscape.
4. Approximately 30% of the responses indicated that financial incentives and an improved Uptown would encourage them to add residential units to their buildings.

5. Approximately 41% of responses indicated that financial incentives would encourage them to improve the façade of their buildings.
6. The top three areas to focus on included (i) vacancies, (ii) parking, (iii) and infrastructure.
7. In response to what vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian improvements would encourage visitors to Uptown, the top three responses were (i) install bike racks and restrict riding on sidewalks, (ii) control crowds and loitering, and (iii) create more parking and remove time restrictions to parking.

2.4.2 Resident Surveys

Twenty survey boxes were placed at key locations and events, including the Town Hall main floor and second floor, Marina, Recreation Complex, GM dealership, Perfect Ten Spa, Royal Bank, Gaspars Restaurant, Leamington Tomato, Portuguese Club, Penzoil Quick Lube, Reflection Salon, Simp Skates, Leamington Fitness, Star Movie Theatre, Leamington Library, Pita Pit, Community Education Centre, Gabriels Furniture and Rexall Walk In. There were also booths with opinion boxes set up at various Uptown events including the following:

- June 24th - 4-7pm - 75th Chamber Anniversary BBQ @ Marina
- June 25th - 10-2pm Taste of Leamington and Fashion Show @ Marina
- June 25th 5-8pm Tree Unveiling at Seacliff Park
- July 1st – 8–10 pm Canada Day BBQ and Fireworks @ Marina
- July 2nd – 10-5pm Arts @ Marina
- July 3rd – 10-5pm Arts @ Marina
- July 10th – 4–5pm Marina Concert
- July 17th – 4–5pm Marina Concert
- July 22nd – 10-8pm Leamington Sidewalk Sale
- July 23rd – 10-8pm Leamington Sidewalk Sale
- July 23rd – 6-9pm Marina grand re-opening
- July 24th – 4- 5pm Marina Concert
- July 31th – 4-5pm Marina Concert

A summary table is contained in Appendix B, and an overview of the findings is below:

1. 352 surveys were received, and a total of 307 responded to the question of where they lived. Of the responses, 79% (242) live in Leamington, and of those, 76% (185) have lived in Leamington more than five years.

2. In terms of frequency of visiting Uptown, 28 respondents said they never visit, 10 said they visited daily, 45 said they visited once a month, and 11 said they visited once a year. In groupings, 24 said they visited somewhere between daily and 5-10 times per week and the majority (231) said they visited the Uptown between one to 10 times per month. Additionally, 96 respondents indicated they visit 1 to 10 times per year.
3. The top five responses why residents visit Uptown included (i) shops/stores -107 responses, (ii) restaurants – 61 responses, (iii) banks/accountants/taxes restaurants – 41 responses, (iv) to support local businesses – 34 responses, and (v) the library – 32 responses. Additionally, 55 respondents indicated that they do not shop or visit Uptown, and 22 respondents indicated that they hardly ever shop/visit Uptown.
4. The top response why residents do not visit Uptown included (i) lack of variety and quality of stores – 76 responses (ii) expensive/no discounts – 69 responses, (iii) limited parking/inconvenient – 48 responses, (iv) crowds in front of stores/sidewalks – 41 responses, and (v) prefer mall/Walmart – 36 responses. It is notable that safety concerns came in sixth with 32 responses.
5. In terms of their perception of the Uptown, 50 responded positively and 50 responded negatively. The most notable positive attributes was friendly people. The basis for the negative perception included empty stores, loitering, rundown businesses, to many ethnicities, lack of store variety, maintenance, and building/storefront conditions.
6. Respondents offered the following recommendations to improve the Uptown:
 - Improve storefronts and façades (74)
 - Clean the streets and sidewalks (55)
 - More upscale/quality stores (42)
 - Attract new businesses (33)
 - Create patios and cafés (29)
 - More sidewalk treatments (28)
 - Police patrol/by-law enforcement (24)
 - More quality restaurants (22)
 - Attractive and updated signage (18)
 - More parking (19)
 - Installation of bike racks/paths (17)
 - Limit types of businesses (12)
 - Miscellaneous other comments

3.0 Analysis and Options

This section contains our analysis of various components of the Uptown including; land use, parking and access, occupancy, building/façade areas of focus, open spaces and development/redevelopment sites, and financial incentives. Our analysis also expands upon the original CIP terms of reference and includes a section on additional consideration that we felt warranted discussion.

The second component of this Section is the identification of options to improve the Uptown. Our expectation is not necessarily that every option will be implemented, but rather, that they serve to offer ideas to the Steering Committee, the public, stakeholders, and Council as we collectively prioritize the options. It is essential that there is value for money spent, and we have attempted to assign a cost ranking in our analysis, along with a value ranking to assist in prioritizing the options. The idea of the rankings is to provide a ‘snapshot’ of the least (\$), moderate (\$ \$) and most expensive (\$ \$ \$) options along with our assessment of the relative value of the option in terms of a low, medium and high ranking.

The methodology undertaken as part of the development of options was comprehensive and included:

- Discussions with stakeholders and the steering committee regarding the Uptown area and specific issues and concerns that they may have. For a detailed list of the stakeholders and members of the steering committee and the related summary of comments please refer to Discussion Paper Leamington Uptown Commercial District Community Improvement Plan.
- Field reconnaissance that included a physical survey of each of the buildings in Uptown. We noted their existing use, vacancies, signage as well as condition of the façades and storefronts. We also examined the types of available parking, such as municipal parking lots, on-street parking and informal parking lots. We recorded the locations of open spaces, private and public, bike lanes, bike storage as well as regional recreational paths and trails and parks.
- The information gathered through field reconnaissance and aerial photography was employed in creating a land use map of Uptown. In addition to the types of land uses, The Land Use Map: Uptown Leamington (refer to Appendix A) denotes the Community Improvement Boundary, gateway locations, transition zones, parking, alleys, open spaces and bike storage locations.

3.1 Land Use

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that there are CIP objectives (refer to Section 2.1) relating to land use including (i) encouraging residential development including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing, (ii) encourage private/public partnerships for community

improvement, (iii) to repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands, (iv) develop investment incentives to attract new businesses. The SWOT analysis (refer to Section 2.2) revealed that there are a large assortment of shops and restaurants. Our stakeholder consultation informed us that vacant properties was a concern, that more boutique style shops and stores should be promoted, there is a desire to maintain a variety of shops and to increase the number and types of restaurants. The Merchant Survey results noted that the retail options available were perceived as an attraction for visitors. The Resident Survey results noted that the existing shops/stores and restaurants were the top two reasons why people visited the Uptown; however, in contrast, the lack of variety/quality of stores was listed as the number one reason why people didn't visit the Uptown. It is essential that merchants in Uptown be informed, through the BIA, of the public's outlook on the lack of variety of stores as there exists a disconnect between retailers and shoppers. While the former believe that they are providing a varied selection of goods, shoppers disagree. Through the surveys, residents recommended that attracting new businesses and increasing the number of quality restaurants would improve the Uptown.

Our June 2011 Discussion Paper provided a general overview of the land uses in the Uptown. This analysis goes one step further by summarizing the specific land uses by land use category as noted in Tables 1 and 2 below.

During our field work we noted the different types of land uses that are present in Uptown as well as recorded the type of use for each property. The geographic distribution of the land uses in Table 1 have been mapped (refer to Appendix A: Land Use Map – Uptown Leamington).

Table 1. Types of land uses

Land Uses	
Commercial	197
Residential	37
Community Services	3
Educational	6
Institutional	11
Recreation	1
Vacancies	26
Total	281

Table 2. Types of commercial uses

Commercial Uses	
Accommodation	2
Entertainment/Cultural	7
Financial	8
Medical	10
General office	30
Personal Service	24
Restaurant	33
Retail	73
Service	4
Service Auto	6
Total	197

The total number of buildings in the Uptown is 281, and not unsurprisingly over two thirds of all land uses are commercial in nature, with second place going to residential uses at a distant 13%. The majority of buildings are used for commercial purposes and account for 71% of the existing properties. As noted in

Table 2, the prominent commercial uses are retail, restaurants and general office space. Offices were actually categorized into general offices, medical offices (excluding the Princess Centre) and financial offices, which account for 11%, 4% and 3% respectively. The majority of general offices such as lawyers, accountants, real estate appraisers and travel agencies are located south of Talbot Street. The southwest quadrant has 45% (13 of 29) of the general offices in Uptown, which are concentrated on the south side of Mill Street West and south side of Russell Street. The southeast quadrant has 21% of the general office uses. These are mainly located along Princess Street and Talbot Street East. With the exception of the Princess Centre, the majority of medical uses such as dentists, doctors and chiropractors are situated north of Talbot Street. The northwest quadrant has a total of 4 medical offices. The Princess Centre located in the southeast quadrant, used to house a number of health related offices and services. During our stakeholder consultation process we were told that the occupancy rate at the Princess Centre has decreased due to the development of a medical hub near the Leamington District Memorial Hospital on Talbot Street West. We were not able to verify this through our field work, or through our discussions with two commercial realtors active in the Uptown.

Personal services such as beauty salons, fitness club, dry cleaners and computer services are concentrated in the southern section of Uptown along Talbot Street West, Talbot Street East, Erie Street South, Mill Street West, Princess Street and Victoria Street. Institutional, education and community services account for 6.78%. Vacancies are 9%.

The following sections detail land use recommendations:

3.1.1 Target Specific Land Uses for the Uptown

Action: There are a number of land uses that could be targeted for the Uptown including residential, financial, a large food store, a large format drug store, a theater and other cultural uses.

Location: Can be targeted to specific locations (i.e. on Talbot Street East) or throughout the entire Uptown.

Why? Uptown residents typically support the Uptown businesses. A large format food store and drug store (perhaps combined) would anchor the Uptown (14 responses in the resident survey on why they don't visit Uptown). An additional theatre or other cultural uses such as a children's museum, or private galleries would provide additional draw for residents who perceive there is 'nothing to do' (24 responses in resident survey on why they do not visit Uptown). In addition, the municipality could consider partnering with the Art's Centre and the Sun Palour Players Theatre Group to promote ongoing events to tourists and residents looking for cultural activities in Uptown. Creation of package deals such as 'drinks, dinner and theatre/gallery event' could stimulate interest among visitors as well as create a synergy between the theatre, gallery and restaurants.

Using major financial institutions as an example, there are 8 financial offices in the Uptown that include banks, lending agencies, tax preparation, insurance and brokerage services. The financial uses are located throughout the Uptown with 4 in the southeast quadrant, 2 in the northeast quadrant, 1 in the southwest and 1 in the northwest. While the Royal Bank of Canada, which is located in the northwest quadrant, is the only banking institution within the commercial core, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce is located just outside on Russell Street and Erie Street. Financial institutions act as anchors in commercial cores and draw residents and businesses into the Uptown, with over 55 responses to the resident survey indicating that banks/accountants/taxes are reasons why they visit Uptown.

How?

- Expand the function of Economic Development in Leamington to specifically recruit desired land uses.
- Leamington could consider restricting/limiting the zones (either existing permissions or proposed rezonings) relating to certain land uses such as large format grocery store, drug store and financial institutions to encourage development of these specific uses within Uptown.
- Establish a private/public partnership with desired land uses/businesses to strategically locate in the Uptown (refer to financial incentives in Section 3.7 of this Paper).

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and others.

When? Discussions can commence immediately.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Encourage residential development including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing.
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement.
- To repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses.

Cost Ranking: \$ - \$ \$ \$

Value Ranking: High

Costs are associated with staff time in economic development and planning to potentially amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law relating to existing permissions, and more significantly, the capital costs when a partnership has been formed.

3.1.2 Increase Residential Uses in and Surrounding the Uptown

Increasing residential uses in the Uptown is a means to stimulate economic and social activity which will help revitalize the area. An increase in residential dwellings both within Uptown and in surrounding neighborhoods will also aid in changing residents perception of safety as more residential means more ‘eyes on the street’.

In addition to the general methodology outlined in Section 3.0, careful consideration of residential potential was also based on:

- Discussions with stakeholders and the steering committee revealed that residential uses within Uptown are limited but generally desired to increase safety and provide a larger base of patrons. While some stakeholders feel that adding residential units would help revitalize the Uptown, a few others revealed due to the present conditions no residents would consider relocating within Uptown. In addition, our consultations with the Municipality of Leamington’s Development Services and Fire Department revealed challenges to residential development. Even if residential units may be desired in Uptown there are stringent building and fire code restrictions that limit certain residential development such as second floor conversions above commercial uses.
- The physical survey, aerial photography and land use mapping of existing uses revealed that residential development exists mainly in the form of single family homes on the periphery along the intersection of Albert Street and John Street, along Queens Avenue north of Selkirk Avenue, Wellington Street north of Nelson Street, Victoria Street between Mill Street and Orange Street, and along Orange Street east of Victoria Street. Medium density residential exists along Russell Street, Victoria Avenue South, Mill Street East and at the intersection of Talbot Street East and Princess Street. While there does exist a few second-storey apartments with commercial at grade, the majority of second floor units are used as storage.
- The results of the merchant surveys show that there is interest in the business community to develop and/or convert second storey spaces to residential units. 48% of the 55 merchants that responded to the survey revealed that an improved Uptown would encourage them to add residential units to the existing housing stock. 44% of the 55 merchants that responded stated that if adequate financial incentives were provided by the municipality they would consider developing residential units in Uptown. While there is some genuine interest in the business community to increase residential dwelling in Uptown, 35% of the 55 merchants that responded to the survey stated that no incentive from the municipality would encourage them to develop residential dwellings. The resident surveys also revealed that an increase in residential units is not a priority among residents. Only 1% of the

352 residents that responded to the survey indicated that the addition of residential units should be considered in order to improve Uptown.

3.1.2.1 Encourage Conversion of Second Floor to Residential

Action: Convert second floors of buildings into residential apartments to increase the number of residents living in the Uptown.

Location: Uptown Leamington

Why? At present the majority of second floors of buildings in Uptown are being used for storage purposes. There is an opportunity to increase the housing stock in Uptown through the conversion of second storey units into residential dwellings. While an increase in the residential uses is seemingly desired by the business community, through stakeholder consultations it was revealed that residents are less inclined to live within Uptown due to the present building conditions, lack of amenities, safety concerns and general physical appearance of the area. Improvement to Uptown in the future may be the catalyst required to entice residents to live in the area.

How? Through consultations with the Municipality of Leamington's Development Services and Fire Department we learned that Building Code (most notably fire) restrictions limit the conversion of second storey spaces above commercial uses back to functioning residential units. It will be essential for the municipality to work with developers on a case by case basis to best determine measures to help overcome restrictions to conversion to residential uses. Accessibility and potential large costs associated with renovations is also a barrier to the conversion of these areas, back to their original use. In our opinion, the real question is what opportunities exist to convert these spaces?

The Renovation Loan Program (refer to Section 3.7) could be used as a method to increasing residential uses as it would provide property owners with financial incentives to renovate the second floors of their buildings and bringing them up to existing Building Code requirements. The Municipality may also want to consider the establishment of a fast track approvals process for proposals that encourage residential development within Uptown.

At present, the majority of residential uses are in the form of single family homes. A range of housing types and affordability in the Uptown will assist in introducing different age groups and income groups, such as young families, seniors or new immigrants into the Uptown. As required by Provincial Policy, during the next Official Plan Update, Leamington will be required to address housing affordability, and new units in the Uptown could assist in this regard.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, private developers and property owners

When? Short to medium term.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Encourage residential development in Uptown including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing.
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown.
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$

Value Ranking: High

3.1.2.2 Increase Residential Units on the Periphery of the CIA

Action: Encourage residential intensification on the periphery of Uptown.

Location: Residential Improvement Areas on Schedule D of Leamington Official Plan.

Why? As discussed above, residential uses are a necessary component to increasing liveliness of Uptown, strengthening the economy and ensuring safety and surveillance. Since the potential to increase the housing stock within Uptown is economically challenging, an alternative is to intensify the residential uses on the periphery of the Community Improvement Area, as these are in close proximity to Uptown. There exist strong residential neighborhoods that are within walking distance of Uptown that can be utilized for the purposes of establishing a larger base of Uptown patrons. Controlling the quality of these residential units will be a priority as much of the existing housing stock consists of older buildings. This can be achieved through proactively enforcing property standards which in turn will ensure residential neighborhoods of good caliber that will be attractive to residents looking to relocate near Uptown.

The ability of Uptown and the adjacent walkable neighborhoods to co-exist will strengthen both entities. The neighborhoods benefit from the amenities such as shops, entertainment and dining options all within walking distances and Uptown benefits from the flow of pedestrian traffic provided by the neighborhood residents.

How? The Municipality of Leamington, in the next review of the Official Plan, may establish policies that encourage intensification of residential uses along the boundary of the Community Improvement Area. This is a requirement of Provincial Policy and will assist Uptown.

A second option is that the Municipality has already designated the residential area surrounding the Uptown as an Improvement Area, so a second CIP, following the Commercial District CIP could be prepared.

A third option is that the Municipality of Leamington can pass a by-law under the Development Charges Act, 1997, that allows a reduction in municipal development charges to developers that build medium-density residential units either in close proximity to the Community Improvement Area or within Uptown (refer to Section 3.9.1 Municipal Rebate Program). Along the same lines, the municipality could utilize bonusing policies as prescribed by the Planning Act to consider additional density and height in the Residential Improvement Area in exchange for community benefits.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, area residents and private developers.

When? Medium to long term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Encourage residential development in Uptown including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing.
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$

Value Ranking: High

3.1.3 Adjusting the CIP Boundary

Action: Adjust the CIP Boundary. The work we have undertaken has been based on the current CIP boundary as identified in the Leamington Official Plan (Schedule D). During our stakeholder consultation we received a comment recommending that the Boundary be expanded and that the limits should not be roads as two sides of the street interrelate. As a consequence of this comment and our own field work, we have reviewed the boundary and note that it serves to delineate the Uptown area reasonable well, but some fine tuning of the boundary could occur.

Location: East, south, west, north limits of the current CIP boundary.

Why & How: Figure 1 illustrates the alternative boundary with an explanation following.

- The northern boundary is defined by Hazelton and Foundry Streets. During our field work we observed that this area appears to relate more to the extended commercial strip to the north than to the Uptown core. We have labeled this as a transition area. A shift in the boundary southwards to Clark Street would reduce the size of this transition area, while maintaining St. John's Anglican Church as a northern anchor, and shift potential incentive money to the areas with stronger needs such as Talbot Street East.

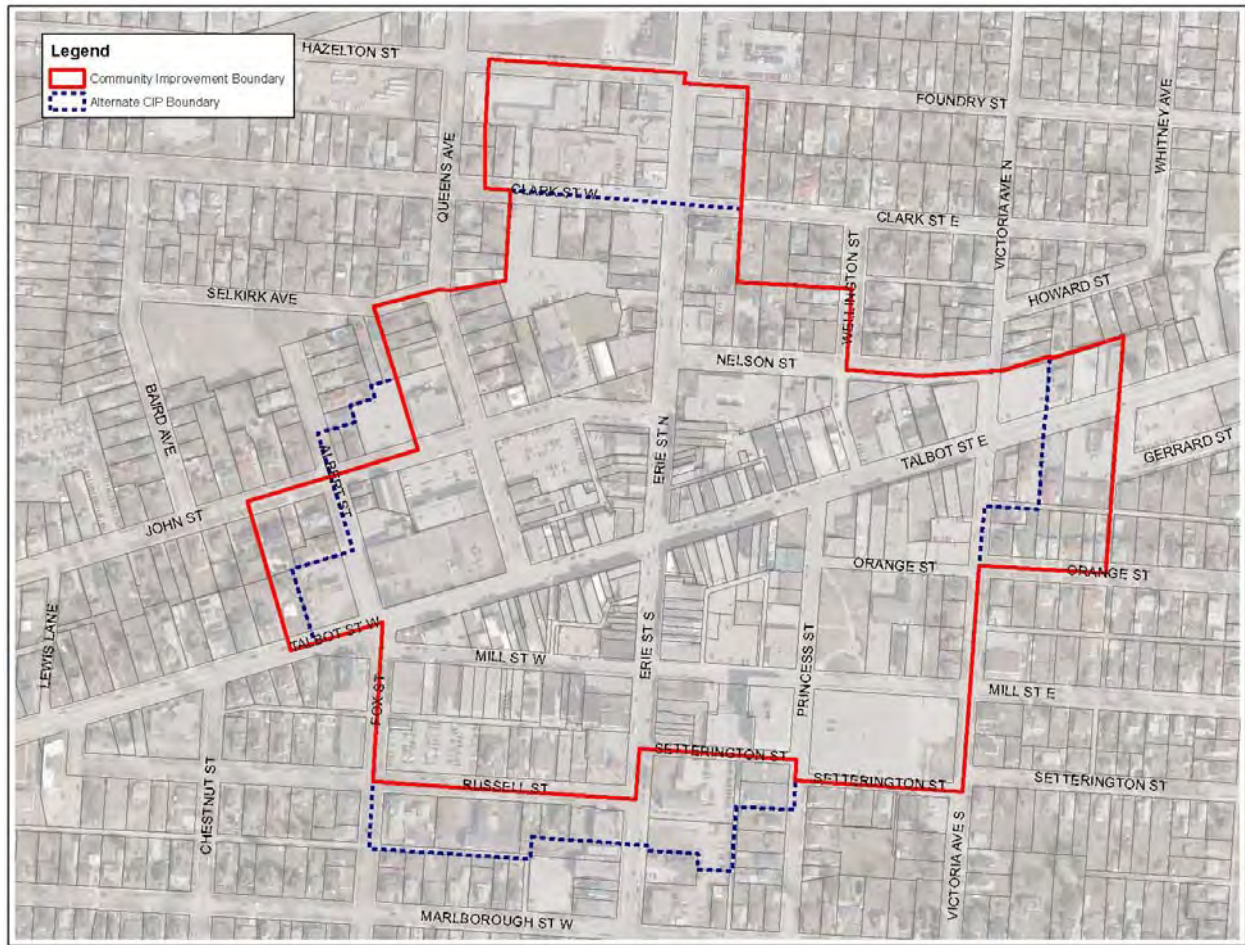


Figure 1. Alternative CIP Boundary

- The eastern boundary extends to Gerrard Street and similar to our previous comment, this is a transition area. There is merit in shifting the boundary to only include one or two properties east of the intersection. The eastern boundary also extends southwards to Orange Street, which is entirely residential east of Victoria Avenue South. This residential area is only connected to the commercial area by an alley and functionally is more connected to the residential lands to the south. The CIP boundary could be adjusted in this area to exclude these lands.
- The southern boundary currently ends at Russell and Setterington Streets. The Knox Presbyterian Church and CIBC bank are located adjacent to the boundary and in our opinion these two uses serve as anchors to the Uptown and should be included. There is also a redevelopment site across the street from the CIBC and north of the church which could be included in the CIP boundary. There has also been extensive redevelopment along the south side of Russell Street and extending the boundary to include those lands would form a stronger southern boundary of the CIP.

- The western boundary ends at Fox Street and excludes the First Baptist Church which we consider to be one of the anchor land uses in the Uptown. On the north side of Talbot Street West the boundary extends west and north of the gas station to include residential dwellings. In our opinion, the boundary and entrance to the Uptown in this area are more clearly defined by Albert Street and the gas station. The CIP boundary should also be extended to include the John Street B parking lot as well as the wellness centre and veterinary clinic at the north east corner of John Street and Albert Street. Inclusion of the municipal parking lot within the CIP boundary will encourage investments for improvements and help achieve consistency of parking lot signs and directional signage.
- Through consultations with the Steering Committee and stakeholders it was revealed that if the CIP boundary limits were to be altered, consideration should be given to including the new Municipal Office which is located just north of Uptown at Erie Street North and Ivan Street. The new Municipal Office is in a transition area that is not reflective of the characteristics of the older historic core. Adjusting the CIP boundary to include the new Municipal Office will increase the Community Improvement Area significantly. The concern remains that the larger the geographical area of the CIP, the more dispersed the Municipality's funds will be, potentially limiting the long-term success of the project. If Council deems the inclusion of the Municipal Offices necessary, then a new Community Improvement Area, 'Northern District', could be established to help improve the area north of Uptown along Highway 77.

Who: Municipality of Leamington & affected property owners/tenants.

When: Short term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown.
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** Medium

3.2 Parking and Access

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that a CIP objective (S. 2.1) is to improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) revealed that there were barriers to open space connectivity and accessibility, that the alleyways can be redeveloped to serve as pedestrian connections and that the Uptown was walkable. Our stakeholder consultation informed us that there was a perception of parking problems in the Uptown. The Merchant Survey results noted that the existing parking encouraged

visitors but that additional parking would improve the Uptown. Lastly, the Resident Survey results noted that limited or inconvenient parking, which also refers to the two hour parking limit, was the third highest response given why people don't visit or shop in the Uptown. Residents suggested that more parking would improve the Uptown.

Based on previous traffic studies, the majority of parking within Uptown occurs on municipal parking lots where there are approximately 410 spaces. Complementing off-street parking facilities are on-street municipal spaces that were estimated in 1998 to provide 295 spaces. At the time of the 1998 study parking levels were determined to be at 67% of capacity at peak time. Using the same annual projected use increase of 1.3% to parking facilities in the previous report, this would mean that peak parking would be approximately at 84% capacity. A quick check against the number of land uses (assuming similar study boundaries) indicates a potential increase of 34 businesses. Based on this preliminary analysis there appears to be sufficient parking remaining in the Uptown. This analysis does not include spaces available off-street on private lands that are either dedicated parking lots or informal parking areas. Observations undertaken during inspections in July 2011 confirmed that parking spaces were generally available across the Uptown, particularly at off-street municipal facilities.

Other considerations that translated into the options below included:

- The Municipality of Leamington's Official Plan Community Improvement policies identify the importance of improving amenities and services in the Uptown commercial area.
- An analysis of the resident survey revealed that 10% of the reasons why people did not visit Uptown was because they perceive that there is limited or inconvenient parking. A review of the land use plan indicates that 75% of Uptown businesses are within 100 meters of a municipal off-street parking lot. One hundred meters was chosen on the basis that it is the distance of the furthest parking space to the Walmart entrance at the Leamington site. If private lots and on-street parking was included, then all businesses in Uptown would have parking within 100 meters, which is equal to or less than the walking distance facing consumers in high-traffic big box format retailer parking lots.
- The resident survey also indicated that once people started using Uptown, only 1% negative perception responses were related to limited parking. This low response reaffirms that parking limitations are only a perception and that most people using Uptown do not have an issue with parking. As a result, there is a great opportunity to attract residents to Uptown if they could be educated with respect to actual parking availability/options.
- The previous BIA studies (1998) sited trucks as a small percentage of total traffic. The recent resident survey had 3% of respondents indicating that trucks and traffic were a reason they did not

visit Uptown. The municipality is currently reviewing the Heavy Traffic by-law and is exploring the idea of new signage denoting the prohibition of truck traffic in Uptown.

- The conclusions of the previous BIA studies (1998) with respect to parking and traffic was reviewed. Ideas put forward as feasible in that study have been incorporated into the options below where applicable.
- When considering the options below, the municipality should consult with the Director of Corporate Services regarding proposed infrastructure projects that may need to be completed prior to parking lot improvements. This coordination will minimize duplication, reduce disruption for businesses, and potentially save costs.

In summary, any issues raised regarding parking are likely to be perceived rather than real. Therefore, the options listed below work towards improving the functionality of existing parking facilities through such measures as signage, education, and amenity improvements.

3.2.1 Promote Public Parking Amenities

Action: Residents should be educated with respect to parking options in Uptown (in particular the location of off-street municipal parking) to attract new visitors.

Location: Municipal wide

Why? Stakeholder consultation, field work, mapping and review of the previous plans, confirmed that there is sufficient parking in Uptown. The stakeholder consultation process also revealed that the majority of residents choose to park either along the main streets or at nearby parking lots such as John Street parking lot and Russell Street parking lot. The parking lots that are furthest from the main streets such as the Mill Street parking lot and 11 Mill Street East parking lot are likely less used due to the lack of directional signage and unattractive pathways. For example, 11 Mill Street East parking lot is in close proximity to the main intersection of Talbot Street and Erie Street. Despite there being a private/public alley that connects the parking lot with the main streets the parking lot is not efficiently used. The resident survey confirmed that once residents started using Uptown, there were very few negative perceptions regarding parking availability.

Educating residents regarding Uptown parking options may be an effective means of attracting new users to Uptown and reverse the negative perceptions of parking and access.

How? An important first step to realizing the full parking potential of Uptown and educating people of its benefits would be advertising the existing municipal parking plan that clearly shows the location of all off-street municipal parking lots and developing a logical and unique naming/referral system that will promote resident understanding. A naming system may use numbers, the names of famous local people, precinct

themes, promotional themes (i.e vegetables), corporate name sponsors, or other useful reference system that will attract and hold public interest.

A final parking plan would show the number of parking spaces at each location as well as parking lot entrances. Another useful feature might be to create a 'parking precinct' system; whereby, areas of Uptown best serviced by a particular off-street municipal parking lots are shaded a unique colour.

Signs should be erected on major roads to announce the presence of a municipal parking lot (and total spaces) and point to its location. A good example of signage that alerts visitors to the existence of a parking lot off the main street is the Clark Street Parking Lot sign along Erie Street North.

Directional signage geared towards pedestrians also needs to be erected. The stakeholder consultation process revealed that people assume there is a problem with parking because not many want to walk from the municipal lots, which are located on the side streets, to the main street. These signs will help increase public awareness of parking in Uptown, resulting in more visitors. Signage could also include painted arrows on the ground to direct visitors from the parking lot to the alleys onto the main street.

Other ideas for promoting a coordinated parking education campaign include:

- Advertising in local media throughout the municipality. This campaign could utilize a wider promotional program (i.e. "Forget the Big Apple – Where to park in the Big Tomato");
- Brochure included in local tax bill mail-out.
- Municipal enforcement staff distributing brochure when issuing on-street tickets;
- Bill board advertising in the vicinity of big box stores highlighting Uptown's free parking and comparable walking distances;

In addition to promoting parking amenities, the municipality may consider addressing the two-hour parking limit which resident surveys sited as a drawback to visiting Uptown. An option would be the creation of a variety of parking limits, through a Zoning By-law Amendment, throughout Uptown that is determined by distance to the older historic core. For example, parking near the periphery could be longer term parking compared to street parking which would continue to have a two-hour limit. Further consultations with the Director of Corporate Services would determine the feasibility of this option.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, Director of Corporate Services, Steering Committee, the BIA and Chamber of Commerce.

When? Short to Medium Term. Signage can be erected gradually on a site by site basis.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.2.2 Encourage Enhancements to Parking Lots

Action: Parking lots should be more visually appealing and pedestrian friendly in order to promote usage and new visitors to Uptown.

Location: Uptown municipal parking lots (refer to Parking Plan)

Why? Municipal parking lots represent a unique opportunity for the Town to ‘inject’ improvements on municipally owned property that will have a direct and immediate benefit on the surrounding fabric of Uptown. Not only does the improvement of parking lots provide visually attractive spaces, but also serves to encourage visitors to the Uptown through improved parking facilities. At the same time, higher quality parking areas can have a spin-off effect on the surrounding rear facades of businesses and alleyways.

The resident survey confirmed that “better maintenance” was one of the main reasons (7th out of 20) why residents did not visit Uptown. In addition, when asked what improvements residents would recommend, the second most common response was to clean up streets and sidewalks. The improvements of parking lots would assist in addressing these concerns. In addition, higher amenity parking areas with better lighting and passive surveillance opportunities would help reduce another negative perception identified through the resident survey with respect to safety.

It is strongly recommended that the Municipality prioritize the further improvement of the municipal parking lot located at 11 Mill Street East for the following reasons:

- While the lot has recently been paved, there are opportunities for further landscaping and treatments to make the area more visually unappealing;
- The lot is considered one of the most important in Uptown because of its close proximity to the main intersection of Erie and Talbot Streets and its ability to service businesses in the eastern portion of Uptown where vacancies are higher;
- An improved lot would integrate well with events at Dieppe Park;
- The improvement of the parking lot would act as a catalyst for improving the rear facades and pedestrian alleyways. Collectively, these improvements, in close proximity to the main intersection, would greatly strengthen Uptown and encourage new visitors.

How? Landscaping, lighting and paving treatments would help make the parking lots more visually appealing and pedestrian friendly. The parking lot treatments suggested in the previous BIA plans, such as screening, paving and pedestrian lighting should be implemented. Enhancing the visual appearance of parking lots and making them more pedestrian friendly is a requisite for increasing their usage and attracting more visitors to Uptown. Improvements to the parking lots could also make them an appealing setting for community events and festivals. Distinctive paving treatment can be used to transform the parking lots into multi-use spaces. Pedestrian walkways can also be distinguished through the use of varying paving treatments.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington Director of Corporate Services

When? Short to Long term (on a lot per lot basis, with a focus on prioritizing 11 Mill Street East).

Contributes to CIP Objectives:

- Review and update previous plans including Urban Design Guidelines
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$

Value Ranking: High

3.2.3 Establish Mid-Block Pedestrian Connections

Action: Encourage the establishment of mid-block pedestrian connections to increase access and connectivity within Uptown.

Location: Mill Street West (Just east of Fox Street)

Why? Midblock connections are pedestrian routes between built form that have a public character, provide public access and are open and accessible at each end. Mid-block pedestrian connections enhance the Uptown experience and stimulate further pedestrian circulation by providing a convenient network for walking. Shotton Park serves as a mid-block connection on Talbot Street West.

An opportunity exists for a current informal private parking lot on Mill Street West to be converted to a pedestrian connection. Reasons for this connection includes:

- The large municipal parking lot on Russell Street would be more utilized through a pedestrian friendly connection to Mill Street West and beyond.
- The improved public space would be directly visible from Uptown's western gateway location. In addition, the immediate vicinity around the Big Tomato would be more visually appealing and potentially encourage visitors to further explore Uptown.

- The pedestrian connection could double as outdoor display space for local arts and culture projects and complement the Arts Center directly across the road.

How? These connections should ensure pedestrian appeal, comfort and safety by being adequately scaled, well lit, clearly marked and visible. Partnerships with the landowner (refer to Section 3.6) and the Arts Center would allow for creative and innovative treatments to complement this important gateway location.

Who? Municipality of Leamington, private land owner, Arts Centre, the BIA and Chamber of Commerce.

When? Medium term

Contributes to CIP Objectives:

- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** Low

3.2.4 Encourage Enhancements to Alleyways

Action: Alleyways should be enhanced to create areas of interest with patios, cafés and street entertainment.

Locations: Identified locations in order of priority include:

1. Queen’s Avenue to John Street
2. Erie Street South to 11 Mill Street parking lot
3. Shotton Parkette
4. Erie Street North to Talbot Street East

Why? Numerous responses in the resident survey referred to safety concerns, better maintenance, and limited parking. It is considered that alleyway improvements in Uptown have the capability to address a number of these concerns while adding significantly to the amenity of the area.

The rear façades of buildings needs to be repaired so that the alleyways can be more attractive to visitors. Public alleys should be used as connections to the parking lots, open spaces and public services. Alleys outside of Uptown can also be used as bike lanes to connect the trails to Uptown. Most importantly, the increased use and functionality of alleyways will improve the use of off-site municipal parking lots.

Since the sidewalks along the main street frontages are too narrow, alleys for some businesses may present an opportunity for street vendor stalls, outdoor cafés and street entertainment. The Shotton Parkette alleyway has potential to host such street activity due to existing restaurants that are adjacent to the alley, proximity to foot traffic on Talbot Street West and the backdrop of an appealing public space.

How? Improving the alleys depends on a number of factors including ownership, business operational needs, and building improvements. This option must also be weighed carefully since it is possible that monies and actions to improve rear facades may come at the expense of front façade improvements.

The façade improvement program should be considered to also apply to the rear of buildings that back onto the key locations identified above. In addition, it is recommended that if a building has two frontages, then it is entitled to double the entitlement for façade improvements.

Another initiative for the municipality is to favourably consider any applications by businesses looking to use rear alleyway spaces creatively. At the same time, the municipality should actively enforce property standards in accordance with the municipal property standards by-law in alleyway locations.

Who? Private land owners and the Municipality of Leamington.

When? Medium to long-term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Review and update previous plans including Urban Design Guidelines
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses

Cost Ranking: \$ \$ \$

Value Ranking: Low (site 1), High (site 2), Medium (site 3)

3.3 Occupancy Rate

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we know that CIP objectives (S. 2.1) are to encourage residential and mixed use development, attract new businesses, and redevelop vacant buildings. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) and stakeholder consultation revealed that vacant store fronts was a significant concern. The Merchants identified vacancies as being the top area of focus. Lastly, the Resident Survey results noted that

transient businesses contributed to a negative perception of Uptown and that attracting new businesses was one of the top recommendations for improving the Uptown. The resident surveys revealed that residents feel that the number of empty stores in the Uptown creates a negative perception and deters them from visiting. The surveys also demonstrated that residents do not shop in Uptown due to the lack of variety. The options presented below are ways to increase the variety of businesses, decrease the number of vacancies and revitalize the economic and social activities in Uptown.

The following options have been identified with respect to increasing occupancy rates in Uptown. Attracting new businesses that fit in with the small town charm of Uptown, are desired by residents and that thrive in the long term will help make a significant contribution to generating economic and social activities in Uptown.

The Municipality of Leamington, Economic Development Committee, Chamber of Commerce and the Uptown Business Improvement Area will need to collectively take an active role in determining the types of businesses that are desired, attracting new businesses to the area and encouraging existing businesses to relocate.

In addition to the general methodology outlined above in Section 3.0, options for increasing occupancy rates are also based on:

- Discussions with stakeholders and the Steering Committee revealed that Talbot Street East is less attractive to business owners looking to set up shop in Uptown compared to Talbot Street West and Erie Street South. The latter two streets are considered more appealing due to the upgraded façades and presence of older established buildings that serve as anchors and landmarks. These factors were confirmed by our discussions with real estate agents active in the Uptown who stated that businesses have historically opted to open stores in the western section of Uptown, such as Talbot Street West, as it has buildings that are more representative of the older historical commercial core. We also learned that parking is a concern from business owners looking to locate within Uptown and that properties that have easy access to parking or are adjacent to parking lots tend to be easier to sell or lease.
- Another factor shaping the occupancy rate is the presence of transient businesses. Our consultations revealed that there are a number of businesses that operate seasonally and others that do not survive very long. There are a number of reasons that could be responsible for this including the present economic climate, the struggles of a start-up business, lack of sufficient market research or the presence of a large seasonal migrant population.
- In order to determine the occupancy rate in Uptown, a physical survey was conducted during our field reconnaissance that detailed the use of the building and its occupancy status. As mentioned in

Section 3.0, the results of the physical survey were compiled to create a land use map denoting each building use. The physical survey and mapping asserted the strength of Talbot Street West. There are approximately two vacancies along Talbot Street West and 9 vacancies along Talbot Street East.

- An analysis of the permanent residence of property owners was conducted with the assistance of the municipality. Through analysis and mapping of the place of residence of property owners it was determined that a number of property owners do not reside in Leamington. Twenty-nine percent of property owners live outside of Leamington and 71% live within. The non-Leamington property owners were further analyzed. Approximately 17% lived in the Greater Toronto Area and beyond, while 83% reside in the City of Windsor, the County of Essex or the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. The southeast quadrant has the highest number of property owners that do not live in Leamington at approximately 12%. It is notable that the southeast quadrant also has the highest vacancy rate.

The following options are presented as a means to improve the occupancy rate Uptown.

3.3.1 Strengthen Talbot Street East

Action: Investments should be made to target vacancies along Talbot Street East.

Location: Talbot Street East

Why? Increasing the occupancy rate of Talbot Street East will help fortify the entire southeast quadrant and in turn Uptown as a whole. The increase in occupancy rate will also help strengthen the municipality's tax base.

Through consultations with stakeholders, steering committee and real estate agents it was revealed that Talbot Street East is a weak section of Uptown that continues to decline. Talbot Street East has the highest vacancy rate at 12%. Empty stores along the main streets are a deterrent to residents making them less likely to visit and making businesses less likely to invest in this area.

How? The Municipality of Leamington should consider creating a Relocation Package to educate businesses that wish to locate within the Uptown. Under the guidance of the Economic Development Committee, it is proposed that the municipality actively encourage new and existing businesses who are looking to relocate to consider Talbot Street East. A marketing campaign can be initiated which advertises to business owners who are looking to expand their businesses in a new location. The Economic Development Committee could create a relocation education package with detailed information regarding the benefits of locating in Uptown, such as financial incentives, cultural diversity, access to foot traffic, availability of parking, community events etc.. Due to the high costs associated with relocating to a new location, the Municipality could consider providing grants/loans to compensate business owners for the costs incurred, or could offer subsidies to landlords to reduce rents to make it more financially attractive to locate in the east. Partnering with an

Uptown financial institution would allow the Municipality to offer lower interest rates for a loan program geared to businesses owners looking to locate in the east. We anticipate that the Municipal Partnership Program will play a significant role in strengthening Talbot Street East (refer to Section 3.7.6).

It is also envisioned that the municipality take on a more active role as a liaison for commercial property owners. The Municipality could invest in partnering with a dedicated real estate agent to help rent vacant properties in Uptown. The Municipality could then offer property owners help when they are trying to find a tenant.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, Economic Development Committee, landowners, real estate agents.

When? Short to medium term.

Contribute to the CIP Objectives:

- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses

Cost Ranking: \$ \$ **Value Ranking:** High

We strongly recommend that this option be given priority consideration.

3.3.2 Establish Dialogue with Property Owners Living Outside Leamington

Action: The Municipality of Leamington should create an outreach program for property owners living outside of Leamington to take a more active role in their properties.

Location: Not site specific

Why? An analysis of the place of residence of property owners revealed that 29% of property owners do not reside in Leamington. The southeast quadrant has the highest number of property owners that do not live in Leamington at approximately 12%. The southeast quadrant also has the largest number of vacancies which may indicate that vacancies could be correlated to the residence of property owners. Absentee landlords can be a hindrance to the long-term improvement of the area and hence this issue needs to be further addressed. Owner occupied buildings are the preferred ownership model as they are present and aware of existing issues. According to our discussions with the stakeholders and the Steering Committee, it is more common for buildings of absentee landlords to be less maintained and house transient businesses.

How? Property owners, both residing in Leamington and outside, should be encouraged to play an active role in the selection of businesses on their properties in order to ensure that quality and performance are of the highest standards.

The Municipality of Leamington should consider the importance of educating non-Leamington residing property owners. The municipality should promote and provide resources for educational programming, outreach and assistance for absentee landlords. The Municipality could create an outreach program for non-residing property owners that encourages proactive partnerships with other businesses in Uptown in order to create ties with the community. The Municipality, Chamber of Commerce and BIA should collectively work on informing non-Leamington residing property owners on the progress of the Uptown Community Improvement Plan, the reason for the development of the CIP, areas of Uptown that need improvement and financial incentives that are being proposed. Newsletters, detailing the existing issues, financial incentives, current affairs and events in Uptown, should be sent out to all property owners to encourage ongoing communication.

The Uptown Business Improvement Association and the Chamber of Commerce should initiate a program to engage more renters in meetings and provide mentorship to business owners. They should also assist renters in learning how to care for their properties, encourage accountability and respect for the neighborhood, and provide information to empower renters.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, Leamington and District Chamber of Commerce, BIA, property owners residing outside Leamington and tenants.

When? Short to medium term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses

Cost Ranking: \$ \$

Value Ranking:

High

3.3.3 Encourage Businesses to Forge Working Relationships

Action: Encourage businesses to forge relationships with each other through the Leamington and District Chamber of Commerce and the Uptown Business Improvement Association.

Why? Through stakeholder consultation it was revealed that there is a disconnect between older established businesses and the newer establishments. There needs to be more cooperation and understanding between business owners. Business owners should be encouraged to exchange information, ideas and experiences in order to learn from other businesses that have overcome similar challenges.

How? The Leamington and District Chamber of Commerce should initiate a program that helps business owners actively engage with each other. Based on the nature of the business, owners should be encouraged to form innovative collaborative partnerships which will help businesses be more successful and efficient. Educational programs could help to inform businesses of the importance of synergy in the Uptown and help them realize the benefits of broad scale participation.

Local business owners could be encouraged to participate in Uptown promotional events. A benefits program could be initiated by the BIA that encourages participating businesses to offer joint discounts and incentives to residents that shop at participating stores as 19% of residents claimed that they do not shop in Uptown because it is too expensive. Collaboration between the business community for a long-term strategy to develop the economy and retain businesses, with partnerships that include the Municipality of Leamington's Economic Development Committee and Department of Development Services, Chamber of Commerce and Uptown Business Improvement Area.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, Leamington and District Chamber of Commerce, the BIA and business owners

When? Short to medium term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses

Cost Ranking: \$ \$

Value Ranking: Low – Medium

3.4 Building & Façade Areas of Focus

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that CIP objectives (S. 2.1) are to update Urban Design Guidelines, maintain and enhance the design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown, and repair and rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) revealed that

prominent historical structures was a strength of the Uptown and the lack of guidelines for development and signage was a weakness. Additionally, improvements prominent buildings and facades (including rear facades) was an opportunity. Our stakeholder consultation informed us that preserving existing heritage buildings and landmarks was important. The Merchant Survey cited heritage as a top four item in attracting visitors and that financial incentives would encourage them to upgrade the facades of their buildings. The Merchants further noted that heritage should be an area of focus. Lastly, the Resident Survey results noted that maintenance (which includes buildings) was the seventh most common reason given why they did not visit Uptown and that poor maintenance contributed to a negative perception of Uptown. It is notable that the top response from residents to improve the Uptown as to improve storefronts and facades. Preserving heritage buildings was also noted by 9 respondents.

Options for discussion are included in the following sections.

3.4.1 Establish Guidelines for Façade Improvements.

Action: Guidelines need to be established for façade treatments to ensure the design characteristics of the older historic core are preserved.

Why? The façade of a building is directly tied to the perceptions of the Uptown as an attractive and welcoming place. We cannot overstate the resident survey response that listed storefronts and facades as the top priority improvement for the Uptown. Examples of renovated buildings, with specific attention to the façade, have improved the streetscape and pedestrian interface. For example, Wharram’s Jewellery, located on Talbot Street West, is well restored and prominently features heritage elements like arches, keystones and decorative awnings.

In our opinion, specific attention to façade improvements should occur on Mill Street East, Mill Street West, Talbot Street East and Orange Street. These streets contain examples of lower quality facades, with the most common being covering the original detailed historic brickwork with aluminum cladding. Boarded up second storey windows, gaps in the second storey façade, deteriorating brickwork and poor quality signage all reduce the appeal of certain parts of the Uptown. Others areas have exposed blank walls and poor quality rear facades are common. It is not a coincidence that the perceived successful areas of the Uptown also have the highest quality facades.

Singling out Orange Street, the existing buildings do not have storefronts or signage, which makes it appear like an alleyway. The proximity of Orange Street to a public space, Dieppe Park, and Talbot Street East means that results of façade improvements, or lack thereof, can be magnified.

How? Implement Urban Design Guidelines.

Who? Municipality of Leamington and private landowners/tenants.

When: Short to medium term.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Review and update previous plans including Urban Design Guidelines.
- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.4.2 Enhance Storefront and Display Windows

Action: Storefronts need to be beautified and should display the goods that are on sale in order to attract more customers and create a more pedestrian friendly shopping environment

Why? A number of buildings in Uptown have storefront windows that are boarded up. Through our consultations it was revealed that residents believe the obstructed storefronts lend to the idea that vacancies are rampant, making Uptown look rundown as well as creating safety concerns.

How? The Municipality should ensure that eligible financial grants/loans and other programs are tied in part to improved storefronts and display windows. Business owners should be made aware of the fact that residents find the storefront windows and displays visually unappealing.

Leamington can also update any Municipal Act by-laws relating to property maintenance and occupancy standards.

The Municipality could work with the Arts community and landowners with vacant buildings to display artwork in order to remove newspaper clad windows that perpetuate the idea that Uptown is struggling. The artwork need not be of the highest quality/value, it could extend to the high school. Several municipal buildings in Ontario prominently display student art work.

Entrances should be well defined, be accessible and storefronts should promote visibility to the interior of spaces for visitor safety.

Who? Municipality of Leamington and private landowners/tenants, Steering Committee, Arts Council. .

When: Short term.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown.
- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown.

- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.4.3 Incorporate Historic Core Characteristics in Transitions Zones

Action: The transitions zones in the north and west should incorporate characteristics of the older historic core to tie the entire Uptown together.

Why? Transitional zones are characterized by single-storey development, buildings that are not oriented towards the street, signage that is intended for vehicles and not pedestrians, small groups of stores that are isolated from the rest of the street and surface parking in the front yard (refer to Appendix A: Land Use Map Uptown Leamington).

The transition zone in the north extends from Clark Street to the edge of the Community Improvement Area boundary. The transition zone in the east extends from Victoria Street eastward to the edge of the Community Improvement Area. The transition area includes large gaps in the streetscape created by parking lots and commercial strip development containing offices, automobile services, government buildings and retail services. The transition zones also contain residential uses in the form of single family dwellings.

If the boundaries of the Community Improvement Area are altered it is envisioned that the transition areas will be reduced in size. This will enable Leamington to focus attention and resources on continuing to build upon the existing assets of the older historic core. If the boundaries of the Community Improvement Area are not altered characteristics of the older historic core should be incorporated into the built form. The older historic part of Uptown has more consistent built form and continuous built edge.

How? In addition to the implementing prescribed Urban Design Guidelines, the municipality may consider working with the newly formed Heritage Committee to help identify the history behind the more prominent buildings in the older historic core and incorporate them into the transition zones. A self-guide heritage walking tour could be reinvented to direct visitors through the older historic core as well as the transition areas. Interpretive kiosks, decorative signage, public art as well as retail stores, tourism-oriented businesses and restaurants could be established as part of the walking tour to engage and inform visitors.

Who? Municipality of Leamington and Heritage Committee.

When: Short term.

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Review and update previous plans including Urban Design Guidelines

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown.
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown.
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.5 Open Spaces

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that a CIP objective (S. 2.1) is to review and update the previous Urban Design Guidelines which recommended establishing entrance features in the Uptown. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) revealed that the Big Tomato, which was previously identified as an entrance feature, is a strength of the Uptown. In contrast, the lack of additional gateway features at the other entrances of the Uptown was a weakness. The Merchant Survey results made no mention of Open Spaces, and the Resident Survey results included 12 comments suggesting that more parks and green space would improve the Uptown.

Open space areas in Uptown provide a series of valuable functions that support the area. These functions include public gathering areas, pedestrian connections, and improving aesthetics. Collectively they make Uptown a more appealing place to visit and are a valuable resource for the ongoing health of the area. The resident survey confirmed a desire by 12 respondents to have more parks and green space.

The options presented in this section do not advocate the creation of new public parks, since there appear to be sufficient public spaces in the Uptown. Instead, the options focus on amenity enhancements and improving pedestrian connectivity.

3.5.1 Shotton Park Should be Enhanced

Action: Further improve the functionality of Shotton Parkette and immediately surrounding areas.

Location: Shotton Parkette

Why? Shotton Park serves as both a mid block connection, between Talbot Street West and Mill Street West, and a public open space. The north side of the parkette has been enhanced with the use of an ornamental entryway, decorative paving, artwork, benches and landscaping. The south side of Shotton Park, along Mill Street West could use further enhancements as the utility boxes, garbage dumpsters and rear façades diminish its public appeal. The current appearance is considered to be a barrier for creating an attractive pedestrian interface between Talbot Street West and Mill Street and we estimate that this is holding back the development of Mill Street.

How? Public art in the park should be incorporated to encourage users to the parkette. The iron railing on the adjacent property should be removed in consultation with the landowner and a more pedestrian friendly environment should be encouraged. A loan/incentive could prompt the property owner to take down iron fence and make it more pedestrian friendly. The adjacent private parking lot should be paved to be more visually appealing and signs should be erected to direct visitors to the main street.

The park also needs to be enhanced to promote a comfortable connection to rear parking areas as it offers linkages to Mill Street East, which has two underutilized parking lots, Russell Street and the informal private parking lot on Mill Street West. This can be achieved through better lighting, public art displays and landscaping.

Who? Private land owners and the Municipality of Leamington.

When? Medium to long term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands

Cost Ranking: \$ \$

Value Ranking: Medium

3.5.2 Encourage Linkages to Better Connect the Open Space System.

Action: Introduce an effective system of connections for Uptown's open spaces.

Location: Uptown Leamington.

Why? Uptown Leamington has seven public and two private open spaces. While there is sufficient open space, the parks are not well connected. A better connected system of parks will increase their functionality and encourage their use either on a day-to-day basis and/or for special events. Actions related to this option include:

- Strengthen the southeast quadrant;
- Improve linkages around the Big Tomato;

- Promote festivals and activities;
- Improve connections with Selkirk Park.

How? With respect to the above four actions:

- There is an opportunity to strengthen the southeast quadrant through the linking of Dieppe Park, the Mill Street Car Park (with kids playground) and the private open space at Talbot Street East and Princess Street. Connecting these three areas will help increase usage of the Mill Street East parking lots as it would offer pedestrians a direct linkage between the parking area and the main street. Connections could be improved through directional signage, improving vacant lot connections (refer to Section 3.6), and parking lot enhancements,
- The Big Tomato Information Booth, the Arts Centre and the adjacent green space together form a prominent landmark in Uptown. It should be further enhanced and incorporated into a gateway feature with the adjacent Church as proposed by the previous BIA studies.
- In order to attract more visitors to Uptown, residents feel that more festivals and activities should be initiated. Through the resident surveys it was revealed that a Farmer's Market, ethnic festivals and activities for families are desired. Smaller back streets (i.e. Mill Street) could be closed down for festivals and events and converted into a pedestrian mall.
- Selkirk Park should be connected to the Uptown through pedestrian linkages along Albert Street and John Street. It can also be connected to the Italian Centennial Fountain Park. In addition, extending the existing bike lanes along Fox Street and Victoria Street would connect north Uptown with areas of interest in the Uptown such as Leamington library, Art's Centre, Dieppe Park and Mill Street Park as well as to the larger area at points such as Frank T Sherk Complex, Seacliffe Park, Waterfront and Marina, Point Pelee National Park.

Who? Municipality of Leamington, Uptown businesses, Migrant Works Community Program, the BIA, and Chamber of Commerce.

When? Medium to long term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown

Cost Ranking: \$ \$

Value Ranking: High

3.5.3 Bike Lanes & Bike Racks

Action: Provide for improved connections with respect to bike lanes that encourages bicycle use and helps avoid pedestrian conflicts.

Location: Uptown Leamington

Why? The resident survey indicated one reason why residents did not visit Uptown was because of bicycle conflicts with pedestrians (15 responses). An additional 17 responses of the survey indicated that they would like to see better bike paths to access locations within Uptown. Uptown already has some good bike connections and the idea of this option is to strengthen those connections further to increase access while reducing pedestrian conflicts. The reality is that Leamington has a higher percentage of bicycle users and it is for that reason that the Municipality should look towards accommodating this mode of transport wherever possible.

A review of the County Wide Active Transportation Master Plan supports local networks that contribute to the wider County trail system in addition to direct connections to built-up areas.

Bike storage, and lack thereof, also has a long history in Uptown and options should be explored to again minimize conflicts between pedestrians, businesses, cars and bike users. An analysis of the Community Improvement Area reveals that there are some bike storage facilities (refer to Appendix A) but most are unused. Bicycle users in Uptown generally park their bikes against storefront windows, entrances, benches, garbage receptacles and street lights creating obstacles for pedestrian movement and safety. Through stakeholder consultation it was revealed that the areas with the highest number of bikes include Queens Avenue and Talbot Street West, along Erie Street South between Mill Street and Settrington Street, the two vacant lots on Talbot Street East and Victoria Street as well as along Erie Street North between Talbot Street and John Street.

The majority of bike storage is in the form of ring and post bicycle stands. There are approximately 15 ring and post bicycle stands which are located along Talbot Street, Erie Street and Mill Street West (refer to Appendix A). In addition, there are some traditional bike racks, which are represented with double bike symbols on the Land Use Map, that can hold up to 18 bikes each. These are located in front of the library, Shotton Park, at the intersection of Nelson Street and Victoria Avenue North, at the Arts Centre on Mill Street West, Dieppe Park, Mill Street parking lot and the private green space along Talbot Street East.

A number of the traditional bike racks were located at Queens Street and Talbot Street West as well as Mill Street parking lot. These bike racks were installed in 2002 and were removed by the municipality due to lack of usage.

An assessment of the resident survey, previous Urban Development Study, Background Report and inspection of the area were used to identify bicycle network improvements and storage options.

How? The concept for a bicycle network improvement is based on a ‘wagon wheel’ concept whereby there is a outer ring connected to and part of the wider trail network with a series of trail connections to the inner hub (Uptown). A consolidated and well thought out bicycle trail network should encourage use while minimizing conflict with pedestrians.

The outer trail system should be composed of the vacant railways lands south of the fair grounds, connected to the railway right-of-way east of the high school, past the former railway station, along Oak Street West and to the Greenway Trail. The loop could then be closed in the future by the Highway 3 bypass to the east. We understand that many portions of the above described route have yet to be improved enough for riding, but such a trail network would be a long term investment for the Town and effectively serve the bicycle population. Most importantly, such a loop has the potential to establish connections between bike lanes and multi-use trails such as the MCR Rail Fitness Trail, trail between Erie Street and Sherk Street as well as the trail between Oak Street and Marina Park and Waterfront Promenade.

Once the outer bicycle trail ring has been established, then bike lanes (i.e. ‘spokes’) could be extended through Uptown. The shared-lane marking approach could potentially be used along Queens Avenue, Marlborough Street, Russell Street, Princess Street and Settingington Street, due to lighter traffic volumes along these streets. The outer trail and secondary routes into Uptown would unify the area and strengthen Uptown’s image as a community focal point.

The means to implement bicycle routes in Leamington and Uptown should be done in conjunction with the County Wide Active Transportation Master Plan and include the shared-lane marking or “sharrow” approach to encourage complete streets that cater to pedestrian, parking, and outdoor retail spaces.

With respect to bike storage, it is recommended that the Town relocate underutilized bike racks to high use areas and monitor their usage. Furthermore, it will likely be necessary for a Municipal Act by-law to be passed regarding bike parking, riding on the sidewalks and the need for late week evening enforcement. It should be noted that while municipal enforcement is not a permanent investment, as constant surveillance is not necessary, it will help alter visitor’s behavior over time. ‘Bike Friendly Area’ signs, denoting that users should walk their bikes when on the sidewalk, is a positive way to inform visitors that riding on the sidewalks is prohibited. Bilingual signage could be installed to inform all visitors of bike storage facilities and restrictions to riding on the sidewalks.

Who? Municipality of Leamington and Migrant Workers Community Program

When? Short to medium to long term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown

Cost Ranking: \$ \$ (incremental implementation is possible)

Value Ranking: High

3.5.4 Pedestrian Friendly Sidewalks

Action: Enhance sidewalks and provide opportunities for outdoor display/seating options

Location: Uptown Leamington.

Why? The previous improvement plans made recommendations for streetscape improvements that for the most part have been undertaken. Street furniture, trees and flower baskets, light fixtures and paving treatments were added to the Uptown. These improvements are reflected in the resident survey responses where there were 17 responses regarding “small town charm” and “scenery” as reasons to visit Uptown.

The Municipality of Leamington’s report on Sidewalk Cafés in the Business Improvement Area recommends that sidewalk cafés be permitted on the public right of way. It also notes the individual street widths of existing sidewalks in Uptown. The report encourages the development of sidewalk cafés and patios as these enhance the street level pedestrian activity. There was a large response (98 of 347 surveys) from residents who wanted to see storefront improvements and more patios and cafes. The expanded use of outdoor seating areas in Uptown should help address these survey results while adding to the vitality and energy of Uptown.

Another action that would make the sidewalks more pedestrian friendly particular in hot or inclement weather would be the expanded use of awning and overhangs on storefronts. The increased use of awning would encourage users of the Uptown and add visual interest to building façades.

How? Where the sidewalks are narrow, bulb-outs can be used for side walk activities such as cafés and retail vendors. A recent initiative has been undertaken by the City of Barrie where there was limited sidewalk space. The solution uses the space immediately adjacent to the storefront for outdoor seating while the parking space(s) in front of the store front form the continuation of the sidewalk. The present City of Barrie initiative is a trial program and if deemed successful will employ metal fencing rather than wood. Photo 1 illustrates this concept. In addition to serving as patio and retail space, bulb outs would help with traffic calming, decrease walking distances for pedestrians, increase pedestrian visibility at crosswalks as well as provide additional areas for green space and gateway opportunities.

Another option that is available to the municipality would be the creation of a Café Committee to oversee and promote an outdoor café program. The committee would work in coordination with the Uptown Business Improvement Area and individual restaurant owners to garner interest and help facilitate the program.



Photo 1: New outdoor seating arrangement in the City of Barrie that utilizes on-street parking spaces for the deviation of the sidewalk

There are potential negative impacts with respect to on-street car parking. We recommend that 2 to 3 permits per year be issued as a trial basis to determine what impacts (if any) occur for parking and traffic movements. As previously discussed, there remains a surplus of parking in Uptown so it is not considered that a limited number of outdoor patios in the short to medium term will have a significant impact. It is also recommended that the Municipality implement a design standard for outdoor patios incorporating building code requirements, limited mobility access and urban design features.

With respect to encouraging awning, this program should be integrated with the façade improvement program and appropriate permissions granted. Similar to outdoor patios, a set of standards for awnings

would allow for a comprehensive and unified them throughout Uptown while ensuring minimum clearances to avoid conflicts with pedestrians and vehicles.

Who? Municipality of Leamington and business owners/tenants.

When? Short to medium to long term (incrementally)

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance design characteristics and the historical context of Uptown
- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** Medium to High

3.6 Development/Redevelopment Sites

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that CIP objectives (S. 2.1) are to encourage residential and mixed use development, and to redevelop vacant buildings and lands. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) revealed that the lack of guidelines was an Uptown weakness and that new development should build on the characteristics of the Uptown Commercial District. Our stakeholder consultation informed us that vacant properties (built and vacant) in the Uptown was a concern. The Merchants did not reference redevelopment in their survey comments. Lastly, the Resident Survey results recommended more patios and café's as a top five improvement, and 12 responses recommended more parks and green space, 7 recommended development of a grocery store/chain store/mall, 7 recommended a coffee shop/bakery/ice cream shop, 6 recommended development of an antique shop/souvenir/book store, 6 recommended a farmers market and 4 recommended more residential.

The following options have been identified with respect to new development within and in the vicinity of the Uptown area. New development (i.e. refurbishment, renovation, conversion, or new building) has the potential to make a significant contribution to the Uptown through both improving its physical appearance and generating economic and social activities that will serve to reinforce the existing Uptown and any initiatives of the future CIP.

New development in Uptown can occur on both public and private properties and therefore the Municipality could play a significant role both as a land owner and as the approval authority for any new planning or building permit applications.

The options presented below are based on forming public/private relationships with landowners. These partnerships could be a catalyst for the redevelopment of key vacant lots within the Uptown area. The Municipality's contribution to the partnership could include joint venturing, grants, low interest loans, municipal fee discounts, reduced tax rates, and providing materials and services. Of course, the options presented below are fully dependent on participation by the landowner. Certainly, one way for the Municipality to ensure redevelopment of key hubs as a catalysts for development is to purchase the lots and develop them solely as municipal projects.

While the possibility of the Municipality purchasing key vacant lots (or redevelopment lots) within the Uptown was considered, the reality is that land purchases is an extremely expensive option, particularly when considering the general budget limitations of the CIP and all of its other programs. If Leamington were to consider a particular site important enough for purchase, then the redevelopment concepts presented below would still hold true.

In addition to the general methodology outlined above in Section 3.0, careful consideration of redevelopment potential was also based on:

- Discussions with stakeholders, the Steering Committee and reviewing the merchant and resident surveys which revealed that residents perceive there is a shortage of parking, which we believe is due to the lack of connectivity between municipal parking lots and main streets. Increasing accessibility to municipal parking lots will help make residents more aware of existing parking options and attract more visitors to Uptown.
- Discussions with commercial real estate agents operating in Uptown revealed that Talbot Street East is weak in comparison to the Talbot Street West and Erie Street South, which have more established businesses and upgraded façades. Merchants are more inclined to locate in the western and southern sections of Uptown. If this trend continues, Talbot Street East will remain undesirable to business owners looking to set up in Uptown.
- The Municipality of Leamington's Official Plan Community Improvement policies identify the need to improve the amenities and services in the Uptown commercial area and improve accessibility. The community improvement goals include encouraging private and public sector investment in the rehabilitation of existing building stock in order to prevent deterioration and improve community pride in ownership and occupancy. The goals also encourage redevelopment, intensification and new development that is sustainable and supports energy efficient design.

3.6.1 Improve Vacant Lots

Action: Selectively improve vacant lots within Uptown that contribute to public gathering and/or pedestrian connections.

Locations: In order of priority: (Refer to Land Use Map for locations)

1. North-east corner of Talbot Street East & Victoria Street.
2. Northwest Side of Talbot Street East and Wellington Street.
3. North Side of Mill Street West.
4. East side of Erie Street North., south of Foundry Street.
5. Princess Street (opposite Dieppe Park for connecting to existing municipal parking lot).
6. South Side of Mill Street West.

Why? The improvement of vacant lots within Uptown will improve entrances to the Uptown, anchor transition areas, and encourage pedestrian movement by improving access to parking and public spaces. The combination of these factors should bring more visitors into the Uptown.

Through field reconnaissance, mapping and experience we have selected three vacant lots that are most suitable for development through public/private partnerships. The vacant lots are ranked based on their location, connectivity to surrounding land uses and potential to enhance the adjacent areas.

- **Site 1:** *North-east corner of Talbot Street East & Victoria Avenue South*

This site provides a rare opportunity to redevelop a site large enough within the Uptown that could economically sustain a mixed use development or larger retail development. Such a development could also incorporate architectural design and features consistent with a gateway. A high quality building incorporating core retail (i.e. grocery store) and/or core service (i.e. government offices) activities would also serve to anchor activity further east on Talbot Street and thus attract the further spread of retail and service uses along Talbot Street between Princess/Wellington Streets and Victoria Avenue. Ideally, street level commercial would be complemented with second storey residential.

A less intense form of development would be in the form of public open space capable of accommodating/participating in public gatherings such as festivals and farmer's market. At the moment, there is no public open space in the north east quadrant of the Uptown despite the close proximity of residential uses.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$

Value Ranking: High

- **Site 2: *North-west Side of Talbot Street East and Wellington Street***

Site 2 was chosen due to its location, at Talbot Street East and Princess Street which is an area with large cultural diversity, and its size, which makes it suitable for new construction. These characteristics make the site ideal for development of a Multicultural Friendship Centre (refer to Section 3.8.1) in partnership with the greenhouse industry.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** High

- **Site 3: *North Side of Mill Street West***

The parking lot on north side of Mill Street has a direct relationship with Shotton Park and has the potential to stimulate the enhancement of the businesses in the vicinity. Currently Mill Street has the lowest quality streetscape of the streets west of Erie Street. Stimulating development in this area will essentially complete what is otherwise a very strong south west quadrant of the Uptown.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** High

- **Site 4: *East side of Erie Street North, south of Foundry Street.***

Assuming the boundary of the CIP does not change (refer to Section 3.1), this site is a gateway site that is strategically located at the entrance to the Uptown within a transition area.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** Medium

- **Site 5: *Princess Street (opposite Dieppe Park)***

Despite being the parking lot of the former vacant newspaper, this site was chosen for a number of reasons. The first is its potential to connect the parking areas on Mill Street East with Dieppe Park thereby ‘opening up’ these public spaces and increasing the sense of openness and connectivity with the two facilities. Active commercial frontages in the vicinity of Dieppe Park would strengthen the eastern portion of the Uptown Area. Finally, improvement of the site would enhance the existing public alley by providing a catalyst for future rear façade improvements around the car park and increasing activity (i.e. passive security).

Stakeholder consultation revealed that the large building immediately south, that used to house the Leamington Post, was recently sold and will be developed for adaptive reuse purposes. Hence this is a good opportunity to jointly improve the public realm and the appeal of the building. The combined effect may be reduced vacancy and an improved public space.

Cost Ranking: \$\$ **Value Ranking:** Medium

- **Site 6: South Side of Mill Street West**

Site 6 was chosen on the basis of its connection to the municipal parking lot. The south facing orientation, existing connections, proximity to the Big Tomato and Art Gallery would create an excellent public gathering space.

Cost Ranking: \$\$

Value Ranking: Medium

How? Besides purchasing and improving the sites as discussed at the beginning of this Section, the most cost effective and feasible means of implementing improvements at these sites is through partnerships with current land owners. Active participation by the Municipality to improve the lands owner's assets together with other potential municipal contributions (i.e. financial or services/materials), could 'kick-start' improvements while other activities of the CIP are undertaken. Comprehensive agreements would have to be entered into with the landowners to clearly specify roles and responsibilities of the shared improvements.

Who? Municipality of Leamington, green house industry and private land owners

When? Medium to long term (options can be implemented gradually on a site by site basis).

Contributes to CIP Objectives :

- Improve accessibility for people through improvements to the pedestrian realm, traffic circulation, on-street and off-street parking and linkages.
- Re-enforce property standards to maintain a safe and clean Uptown
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands

3.7 Financial Incentives

In reviewing the foundations of the CIP process, we learned that CIP objectives (S. 2.1) are to encourage residential and mixed use development, encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement, repair, rehabilitate or redevelop vacant buildings and lands, and to develop investment incentives to attract new businesses. The SWOT analysis (S. 2.2) revealed the opportunity to enhance prominent buildings and façade (including rear façades). Our stakeholder consultation informed us Leamington should be providing grants, loans and tax reductions for building improvements. The Merchant Survey results noted that financial incentives were the top response to encourage new residential and improve façades. It is noteworthy that only 1 response from the Merchants indicated that façade improvements should be an area of focus.

Similarly, only one response recommended storefront improvements. In contrast, through their surveys, the Residents told us that the number one way to improve the Uptown was to improve the storefronts and façades (74 responses). In addition, the maintenance of the Uptown was a top 7 reason why they didn't visit Uptown and 37 responses noted that rundown businesses lead to a negative perception of Uptown. Attractive and updated signage was also noted in 18 responses to improve the Uptown.

In order to implement the objectives of the Community Improvement Plan, the Municipality of Leamington will need to consider providing financial incentives to encourage land owners to improve and redevelop their properties.

The provisions of the Municipal Act, Planning Act and Ontario Heritage Act were used to provide a framework for the financial incentives. We also investigated Community Improvement Plans from areas such as Barrie, Goderich, Hunstville, Historic Drummondville, Meaford and Windsor to outline financial incentive programs. In addition, we consulted with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as well as stakeholders and the Steering Committee.

In addition to any financial incentives and programs, it is also recommended that the Municipality of Leamington undertake a marketing campaign to effectively promote the available incentives to property owners. The success of any program in Uptown may dictate future beautification and grant programs for areas beyond the Community Improvement Area.

The following sections detail possible financial programs that Leamington may which to implement to improve the Uptown. We do not necessarily recommend that each and every program be implemented.

3.7.1 Municipal Rebate Program

The intent of this program is to stimulate new investment in Uptown through the provision of a rebate program to offset the cost of specific planning and development fees.

All or a portion of application fees for specific projects consistent with the Community Improvement Plan objectives could be refunded upon approval of the application and successful completion of the project. The rebate will only apply to municipal fees for planning and development applications and will not include any costs incurred by the applicant. The rebate of the fees will be paid to the applicant. All property owners within the Community Improvement Area will be eligible to participate, subject to program requirements. Payment of fees will be required at the application stage and a rebate will be provided at a milestone date. Applications eligible for the rebate program could include; Site Plan Control and Development Agreements, Committee of Adjustment Applications, Sign Permit applications, Building Permit applications, Building Inspection fees and Sidewalk Cafés applications.

Cost Ranking: \$

Value Ranking: Low

3.7.2 Development Charge Reductions

The Municipality has the option of waiving or reducing the Development Charges by land use in certain areas where there is an overall municipal benefit. For example, we are aware of a few Municipalities that have waived Development Charges for a period of time relating to industrial development or for downtown waterfront development. Waiving the charge is predicated upon the lost revenue being picked up in the development charges for the balance of the municipality. An updated by-law, with a defined time period, would need to be passed under the Development Charges Act, 1997.

Within Leamington, Council could consider reducing the Development Charges associated with the creation of new residential units in the Uptown and potentially within a set distance of the Uptown Commercial District boundary. This could encourage new units to be constructed. Since Uptown is already well serviced and does not require much expansion of roads or sewer system, this option is viable and should be furthered evaluated by Council.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$

Value Ranking: Medium to High

3.7.3 Building Exterior and Façade Improvement Program

The Municipality of Leamington established a Façade Improvement Loan Program in 1999 to provide incentives to property owners seeking to upgrade their building façades. In consultations with the Steering Committee, it appears that the program may have been too stringent and hence unattractive to property owners at the time. If a new façade improvement program were to be initiated, and we think it should be made available to all property owners in the Uptown, and be widely advertised and promoted to garner awareness. The eligibility criteria, which will be contained in the Draft CIP, will differentiate the new Building Exterior and Façade Improvement Program from the previous Façade Improvement Loan Program.

The intent of the program would be to promote and assist property owners and tenants in the upgrading, improvement and restoration of the façades (front and rear) as well as exterior elements such as entrances, windows, roofs and signs of commercial, mixed use and residential buildings in a manner that preserves the heritage look, character, and scale of buildings within Uptown. The program will help achieve a cohesive exterior design for properties in Uptown. In addition the program will seek to encourage property owners to include energy saving measures where feasible. The façade improvement program will also help promote unified signage for commercial properties in accordance with urban design guidelines and encourage property owners to replace signs and advertising that do not relate to the existing business and do not comply with the municipality's sign by-law.

The amount of financial investment allotted to Community Improvement Plan programs are generally based on the municipality's tax base and thus, the size of the municipality. Therefore, the larger the municipality,

the larger the total number available to draw upon. This trend between population size and available grant dollars makes revitalization harder for smaller municipalities. Council must determine an appropriate amount that will be sufficient to entice property owners and stimulate revitalization in Uptown while balancing the local municipal budget.

Leamington must decide whether a loan or a grant or combination of both should be implemented. There are a number of municipalities with façade improvement grant and loan programs in the Province, examples of which are below:

- **Municipality of Meaford Façade Improvement Loan Program:** The minimum loan amount is \$2,500 and the maximum is \$15,000 for single properties to a maximum of \$45,000 for properties with multiple municipal addresses.
- **Town of Goderich Façade Improvement Grant Program:** Grants are available for up to 50% of the total cost for exterior design changes to the front of existing buildings in the CIP project area with a maximum grant being \$15,000.
- **City of Niagara Falls Historic Drummondville Façade Improvement Grant Program:** Matching grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible storefront and front, rear and side facade improvement/restoration works. The maximum matching grant for eligible storefront and front façade improvement works is \$10,000. The maximum matching grant per property is \$25,000.
- **Town of Halton Hills Façade Improvement Grant/Loan Program:** A grant equal to 50% of the cost of eligible façade and storefront improvements/restoration. The maximum grant is \$10,000 per building may be increased to \$15,000 by Town Council.
- **City of Windsor Grants:** Grants broken down into Bronze or Silver. Bronze provides a rebate in the amount of 35% of the cost of façade improvements up to \$10,000. Silver provides a rebate of 50% of the cost of façade improvements up to \$15,000. The financial assistance package available represents a maximum of \$15,000 per property and \$45,000 per property owner.
- **City of Barrie, Allandale Façade Improvement Loan:** A loan for 50% of the costs to a maximum of \$30,000 for façade improvements and 50% of the costs to a maximum of \$5,000 for the removal and replacement of signage.
- **City of Barrie, Next Wave CIP:** A loan for 50% of the eligible costs to a maximum of \$25,000 for façade improvements and 50% of the costs to a maximum of \$5,000 for the removal and replacement of signage. The overall maximum is \$30,000 per property.

For discussion purposes, we recommend that Leamington consider a maximum loan/grant of \$15,000. The Municipality may consider increasing the grant/loan amount to property owners whose buildings are designated heritage sites. The eligibility criteria will denote the grant/loan amount available to property owners with a standard building (X) and the amount available to a designated heritage building (X+). In our opinion, grants are particularly effective when they are issued based on equal payment by the landowner. For example, the program could establish that 50% of the costs of eligible façade improvements would be credited to the landowner as a grant. The landowner would be responsible for the full amount and then would be essentially rebated the 50%.

Lower grant percentages can also be used similar to the Federal Government's Home Renovation Tax Credit program; whereby, a tax refund was received for eligible home expenses. This was a highly successful program that stimulated the Canadian economy. A similar program could be implemented in Leamington with a grant taking the place of the tax rebate.

The total annual money available to the Building Exterior and Façade Improvement Grant Program will be determined by Council through consultations with the Municipality of Leamington Department of Finance and Business Services. It is recommended that Council design a financial plan to effectively direct the Building Exterior and Façade Improvement Grant Program.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.7.4 Renovation Loan Program

The intent of the program is to provide economic incentive to encourage the upgrading, rehabilitation and redevelopment of sub-standard commercial, mixed use and residential buildings to bring them into compliance with the current Ontario Building code. This could include the conversion of second storey storage into residential units. In addition, since accessibility issues limit conversion of second storey units to residential uses, the eligibility criteria could include upgrades to stairwells and fire exits.

It is anticipated that the Renovation Loan Program will lead to an eventual increase in the tax base for Uptown by encouraging high quality redevelopment that is consistent with the Uptown Community Improvement Plan and Urban Design Guidelines.

Due to the high costs associated with large renovation projects, the Municipality will have to subsidize a significant portion of the costs in order to encourage property owners to renovate their buildings. A loan for 50% of construction costs to a maximum of \$15,000 per property could be provided to property owners for improvements to commercial, mixed use and residential buildings.

Cost Ranking: \$\$ **Value Ranking:** Medium

3.7.5 Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program

Stakeholder consultation revealed that building owners and tenants feel that the property taxes imposed are not reflective of the existing building stock in Uptown. Rehabilitation, redevelopment and upgrading of properties will only increase property taxes in Uptown.

The intent of the program is to provide a grant for the portion of the taxes resulting from increased assessment for redevelopment or development initiatives that further the objectives of the CIP.

The difference between pre-development and post-development assessment would be refunded to the applicant as follows:

- In the 1st calendar year after the completion of the development = 100% refund.
- In the 2nd calendar year, after the completion of the development = 100% refund.
- In the 3rd calendar year, after the completion of the project = 75% refund.
- In the 4th calendar year, after the completion of the development = 50% refund.
- In the 5th calendar year, after the completion of the development = 25% refund.

Cost Ranking: \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.7.6 Municipal Property Partnership Program

The intent of this program is to facilitate the municipality's partnership with the private sector to upgrade specific sites either for the provision of public amenities or to facilitate redevelopment of private and public lands.

In order to stimulate redevelopment and realize the objectives of the Community Improvement Plan, the Municipality of Leamington may want to direct private sector redevelopment efforts and actively participate in revitalization of Uptown.

The Municipal Property Partnership Program would be a proactive municipal program that targets sites for municipal acquisition and/or partnerships with the private sector for redevelopment in order to achieve the objectives of the Community Improvement Plan. Through the program, the municipality aims to lead by example and showcase innovative approaches to redevelopment of sites.

This program can be funded at the discretion of Council and can be negotiated on a site specific basis. The Municipal Property Partnership Program will provide a source of funding for the municipality to develop on municipally owned lands or private/public projects.

Cost Ranking: \$\$\$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.7.7 Commercial Rent Reduction Grant Program

Stakeholder consultation revealed that tenants feel that the rents in Uptown are high. The intent of the program is to provide financial incentive to property owners to offset part of commercial rents. The incentive will be in the form of a grant to all property owners that are able to attract businesses to relocate within Uptown. The program will be established for a period of two years with the potential to continue if there is interest among property owners and Council.

This is an option that we can explore if there is interest from the property owners, tenants, the general public and Council.

Cost Ranking: \$ \$ \$ **Value Ranking:** High

3.8 *Additional Considerations*

The following sections detail miscellaneous options that did not align directly with the headings outlined by the CIP terms of reference.

3.8.1 Cultural Diversity

Action: Utilize Uptown's cultural diversity to create an attraction for visitors and residents.

Location: Uptown Leamington

Why? The presence of a large ethnic community creates a unique opportunity to capitalize on visitors to the Uptown and cultural diversity. We recognize that this diversity was negatively perceived by some residents from the survey; however, we believe that the diversity is unique to Leamington and can be built upon to strengthen the Uptown.

How? The Municipality of Leamington could promote ethnic festivals to showcase the cultural heritage of all ethnicities in Uptown. During our discussion with stakeholders, it was revealed that ethnic festivals had been hosted in the past but to limited success. We recommend that ethnic festivals be widely promoted as a community-wide event that welcomes all residents. It is also essential that the festivals be allowed to gain momentum over a five year duration in order to ensure continual local support. Council would need to set aside funds for the creation of an Ethnic Festival Committee to oversee the organization and promotion of the cultural events. Promoting ethnic festivals within the Uptown will help raise awareness and encourage residents to celebrate cultural diversity.

The Municipality of Leamington's Economic Development Committee along with the Uptown Business Improvement Area and Chamber of Commerce should encourage business owners to promote the stores to a wider audience through sponsorship opportunities at community events. An educational package can be

developed to educate ethnic business owners on the benefits of participation in the BIA, marketing and advertising techniques as well as ways North American ways to operate their businesses. A range of activities from cultural cuisine, dance, entertainment, performances, ethnic art and crafts can be used to celebrate the diversity in the area. The Municipality may also want to consider partnering with Carousel of Nations, which is a Canada wide festival, in order to promote diversity and cultural businesses in the area.

The Municipality should create a promotional program that educates residents about the history of Leamington. This will help educate residents and make them understand that Leamington was built with the help of immigrants such as the Portuguese, German, Italian and the Lebanese. Such an educational program may help reduce the cultural divide and unify the different ethnic communities.

Immigrants have helped shaped Leamington for decades. Similar community challenges surfaced with the introduction of immigrants years ago. Since, the formation of cultural clubs helped eliminate the culture divide that was emerging then, similar strategies may help today. A 'Multicultural Friendship Centre' could be developed on an existing vacant property along Talbot Street East at Wellington Street. The centre could be for all ethnic communities that are present in Uptown. Proximity to the First Nations location at Dieppe Park will help engage the Aboriginal community. An establishment of this nature, that celebrates diversity and encourages socializing amongst different ethnic groups, could also attract like-minded businesses to Talbot Street East and potentially strengthen the entire area. The Municipality could encourage the green house owners to participate in the development of the Multicultural Friendship centre as well as the initiation of recreational and cultural clubs that will help provide the migrant workers with opportunities to engage in social activities. Also, the Municipality could rigorously promote the existing corporate discounts that are offered to the greenhouse industry so that migrant workers can take advantage of the facilities offered at community centres like the Frank T. Sherk Recreation Complex.

Uptown Leamington would benefit from the development of a Cultural Plan. Cultural planning will help increase tourism, renew the vibrancy of the commercial core, create new business ventures and engage the different communities. A component of cultural planning is encouraging social cohesion. At present, misunderstandings between the different ethnicities are causing a cultural gap. Cultural planning will help identify and influence Uptown's cultural resources while building a sense of community and encouraging the celebration of different cultures.

Who? The Municipality of Leamington, the BIA, Chamber of Commerce, Uptown business owners and the greenhouse industry.

When? Short to long term

Contributes to the CIP Objectives:

- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement.
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process.
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses.

Cost Ranking: \$ \$**Value:** High

3.8.2 Strategic Marketing and Branding Campaign

Action: Develop and implement a strategic marketing and branding campaign to promote the commercial core as a shopping, dining, cultural and entertainment destination.

Locations: Uptown CIP

Why? Many successful commercial cores (i.e. Collingwood, Unionville, St. Jacobs, etc) have benefited from coordinated and focused marketing and branding campaigns. These campaigns serve to not only reinforce existing business but also provide momentum for new actions undertaken as part of the CIP.

Investing in a cohesive theme for the Uptown that incorporates Leamington's agricultural and multicultural aspects would help unify Uptown's image as a vibrant community with small town charm. In addition, future improvements could incorporate the chosen theme of an Uptown brand to create a memorable and unique atmosphere for visitors.

How? The focus of the branding/marketing campaign should depend on the preferred options of the new CIP. The Steering Committee could make a short list of successful commercial cores in Southern Ontario that have had a memorable effect on members who may have visited or done business in those locations. Contact could then be made with those communities to determine if a branding/marketing exercise had been undertaken, the perceived success of the campaign, and the professional help that was used to create and implement the campaign. Using the knowledge of other successful communities will give the Steering Committee direction on the type of campaign and who may be best able to assist. An Request for Proposals identifying the preferences of the campaign could then be issued to marketing professionals to develop a specific plan.

Who? Municipality of Leamington, Steering Committee, a Marketing Consultant and regional partners such as Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island.

When? Short term. A cohesive and common brand from the 'get go' will provided valuable direction and focus for many activities of the CIP.

Contributes to CIP Objectives :

- Encourage residential development in Uptown including mixed-use development, medium density residential and affordable housing
- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown
- Encourage private/public partnerships for community improvement
- Encourage community participation as part of the CIP process
- Develop investment incentives to attract new businesses

Cost Ranking: \$\$

Value Ranking:

Medium to High

3.8.3 Encourage More Public Art Initiatives

Action: Encourage more public art initiatives that build on heritage features of Uptown.

Why? Public art and wall murals beautify Uptown, which makes it a more desirable place to visit. The 3 dimensional butterfly mural on the south side of Talbot Street West is a great example of public art that is reflective of the heritage of Uptown. The mural can be seen by pedestrians from a distance and serves as a focal point to help orient visitors. The mural project was headed by the Municipality of Leamington's Economic Development Office and \$15,000 was allocated for commissioning an artist. Through our consultations it is evident that there is interest in the community to develop similar murals. These art displays provide an opportunity to celebrate and showcase local arts and culture. It also helps create a 'sense of place', serve as landmarks to orient visitors and builds an identity for Uptown. Public art displays also help enhance the quality and experience of the public realm.

How? Identify strategic locations for such public art installations. These should be highly visible locations and could include the terminus of view corridors, gateway locations, prominent corners or in public spaces. Key locations for murals include: Gabriele's wall along Albert Street, the south west corner of Erie Street and Talbot Street, on Princess Street and Settingington Street on the Princess Centre building. These locations are well suited for murals as they have large blank walls that need visual enhancement and they are prominent buildings that can be seen from different angles and large distances.

Who? Economic Development Office, Art groups, community stakeholders.

When: Short to medium term.

Contributes to CIP Objectives

- Strengthen the entrance areas into the Uptown

- Encourage community participation

Cost Ranking: \$\$

Value Ranking:

Medium

4.0 Urban Design Guidelines

Phase 3 of Work Program for the CIP includes the preparation of Urban Design Guidelines. In order to ensure that the Urban Design Guidelines are implemented, they could be made stipulations in the eligibility criteria of the financial incentives, which will be discussed in the Draft CIP that follows this Discussion Paper. In addition, the Planning Act's development tools, such as density bonusing along with Official Plan policies, Zoning regulations and site plan control could help enforce the Urban Design Guidelines. It is essential to note that the municipality will seek the input of the community in the formulation of the Urban Design Guidelines. The foundation of these guidelines follows:

4.1 *Heritage Buildings*

1. Respect the original historic character of Uptown while allowing for contemporary additions.
2. Alterations to historical architectural features should be avoided.
3. Conservation and restoration of heritage buildings should be prioritized.
4. Adaptive reuse of buildings should consider mixed-use buildings as this would help create vital live/work opportunities in the Uptown.
5. The original building fabric should be preserved and repairs should be made to deteriorating architectural features. Original building elements that lie beneath contemporary alterations should be preserved.
6. The style of the heritage doors should be preserved where possible, respecting the shape of the opening and the surrounding trim.
7. Replacement windows should duplicate originals in style, type and material. If an exact match is not possible, windows with similar styles and operation should be installed.
8. Heritage buildings should be painted in colours matching the original colour. Non-traditional colours such as primary colours and bright tones should be discouraged.
9. Architectural details such as windows, front doors, cornice lines etc. need to align with adjacent buildings so as to continue the existing pattern in façades.

10. Use fascia, awnings and projecting types of building signage to enhance the historic main street character of Uptown.

4.2 Building Design

1. New development and renovations to existing buildings should incorporate heritage elements within modern design.
2. Awnings should be incorporated into the design of the building and should provide interest and shade.
3. Storefront windows should provide views into the interior of the store as well as have displays indicating the type of goods sold.
4. Screen all roof mounted mechanical equipment from view by incorporating screens into the design of the building.
5. Building entrances should be off the main street, directly accessible from the sidewalk, and should be distinguished from the rest of the building wall through the use of architectural features, materials, lighting, canopies and signage.
6. Entrances should be accessible to persons with disabilities through the use of ramps and automated doors.
7. Special attention needs to be given to buildings in the transition zones (i.e. east of Victoria Avenue, north of Nelson Street, west of Albert Street and south of Settrington Street). Development should incorporate architectural elements, materials, massing, height and colors that are used in the older historic core so as to make it more pedestrian oriented and establish a cohesive identity for Uptown. Parking should be relegated to the rear of buildings. Amenities such as street furniture, signage, lighting and paving treatments should be encouraged.

4.3 Building Orientation, Massing and Setbacks

1. Building setbacks should take into consideration the existing 'street wall' which is characteristic of Uptown. Infill development should match the pre-established 'street wall' setback of adjacent buildings in order to maintain a continuous street wall. Exceptions may be made where the sidewalks are too narrow allowing with sidewalk cafés in the summer months.
2. Large wall areas should be broken by the introduction of architectural elements such as display windows and columns to help reduce the scale of the building.

4.4 Materials and Colour

1. Brick with stone accents are the preferred materials. Stucco is desirable when not excessively used the Uptown so as to replace the brick as the dominant material.
2. Concrete and aluminum cladding should be avoided.
3. Building walls and facades should be of warmer earthier tones and subdued colours.
4. The use of primary colors on large areas should be avoided.
5. Select trees, shrubs and other vegetation considering their tolerance to urban conditions such as road salt or heat. Give preferences to native species of the region.

4.5 Gateways and Vistas

1. Maintain views along Erie Street, Talbot Street and Mill Street.
2. Design corner buildings at major intersections with vertical elements with visual interest to promote visibility, help orient visitors and create a sense of place.
3. Gateways need to be immediately identifiable to pedestrians and vehicular traffic upon approach.
4. Incorporate public art, signage, paving, lighting and high quality materials into the design of the gateways.
5. Materials used should be consistent with materials of building façades and streetscape elements.
6. Reinforce the gateway concept presented in the previous BIA plans in order to enhance entry into Uptown.
 - a. Gateways help enhance orientation and civic pride by providing a ‘sense of place’ to visitors through landscaping, signage, and public art.
 - b. The primary access points into the Uptown are considered gateways
 - c. The previous plans identified the 4 gateways as:
 - i. The Northern Civic Gateway at Erie Street North and Nelson Street and John Street
 - ii. The Western Heritage Gateway at Talbot Street West and Mill Street and Albert Street
 - iii. The Southern Waterfront Gateway at Talbot Street and Russell Street

- iv. The Eastern Agricultural Gateway at Talbot Street and Victoria Street
- d. If the boundary of the Community Improvement Area is altered to exclude a part of the transition zone north of Clark Street East then the northern gateway should be erected at the intersection of Erie Street North and Clark Street.

4.6 Lighting and Signage

1. Signage should respect the building scale, architectural features and streetscape design.
2. Appropriate lighting levels and consistency of coverage should be provided in parking areas to assist both pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
3. Height and intensity of light standards should be sensitive to adjacent land uses.
4. Portable signs should be avoided. Signs should be mounted on panels that are fixed to the façade of the building.
5. Signs in other languages are allowed but there also needs to be a sign in English. Eliminate visual clutter.
6. Signs need to be updated to convey the nature of the existing business being advertised. Repair and maintain building signage that is in poor condition
7. Erect wayfinding signage to direct visitors from the parking lots to the main street shops, open spaces, public buildings and landmarks in Uptown.
8. Colours should be selected by considering the overall façade appearance and adjoining building colour schemes.

4.7 Parking, Access and Movement

1. Parking areas of new development should be situated at the rear of the building.
2. Rear façades should be upgraded and maintained in the same way as storefronts as opportunities exist to create active retail space such as back-of-lot cafés. This will also encourage pedestrians to park in the municipal lots and walk to the main street.
3. Design pedestrian access routes for comfort and safety. Provide sufficient lighting, directional signage, amenities (trash receptacles, benches) and visually appealing pedestrian pathways.
4. Private parking lots should be paved and well maintained to ensure a standard of attractiveness for residents and visitors.

5. Landscaping around the parking lots should be considered in order to screen views of the parked cars.
6. Surface parking areas that are adjacent to sidewalks should be designed with adequate buffers such as landscaping and/or bollards.
7. Curb ramps should be used to improve accessibility and to provide a proper transition between the road and curb.
8. Accessible parking spaces should be located as close as possible to building entrances and be clearly identified by signs.
9. Cluster above grade utilities, such as utility boxes, garbage and recycling receptacles, loading docks, air conditioner compressors, utility metres and transformer, wherever possible to minimize clutter. Also landscaping around such areas is encouraged to screen them from view.
10. Ensure bicycle parking is in high traffic areas, visible locations such as building entrances and pedestrian walkways, open spaces and in proximity to public buildings.
11. Bicycle storage should be located in a manner that does not impeded pedestrian circulation.
12. Lighting affixed to buildings should be encouraged to accentuate and animate buildings and spaces.

5.0 Options Summary

We have summarized the options presented in this report in Appendix D.

6.0 Conclusion


The options contained in this Discussion Paper were informed by the foundations of the Community Improvement Plan which included the CIP Objectives, SWOT Analysis, discussions with the Steering Committee and stakeholders and the responses from the Merchant and Resident Surveys. In addition, our field reconnaissance and physical surveying of the buildings resulted in the preparation of a Land Use Map of Uptown.

This Discussion Paper analyzes land use, parking & access, occupancy rate, building/façade areas of focus, open spaces, development/redevelopment sites and financial incentives in order to develop appropriate options. Each option specifies the associated action, location, timeframe, cost ranking and value ranking in order to assist the Steering Committee, the public, stakeholders and Council in assessing and prioritizing the options based on their view of improving Uptown.

This Discussion Paper summarizes the options that we recommend to the public and Council, for their consideration in the improvement of Uptown Leamington. Comments and direction received on this Discussion Paper will form the basis of the preparation of a draft Community Improvement Plan, which is Phase 3 of the Uptown CIP Work Program.

Sincerely,

The Jones Consulting Group Ltd.



Charlene Miranda, H.B.A, M.PL.
Planner

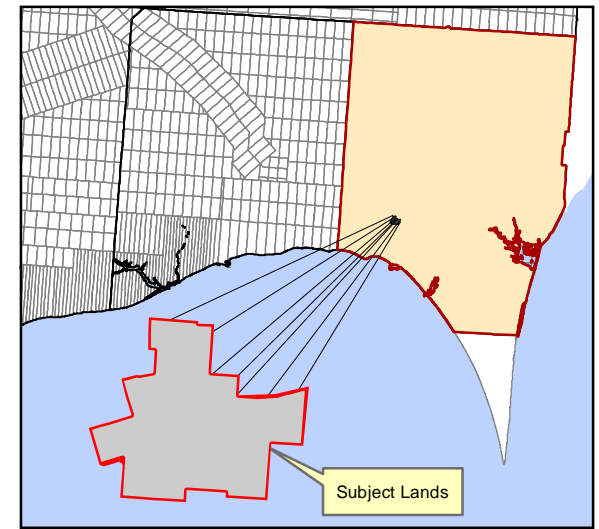


Ray Duhamel, M.C.P, MCIP, RPP
Partner



Appendix A: Land Use Map – Uptown Leamington

Land Use Map: Uptown Leamington

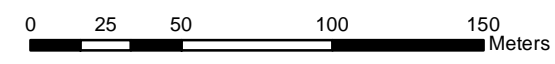


Key Plan
Municipality of Leamington

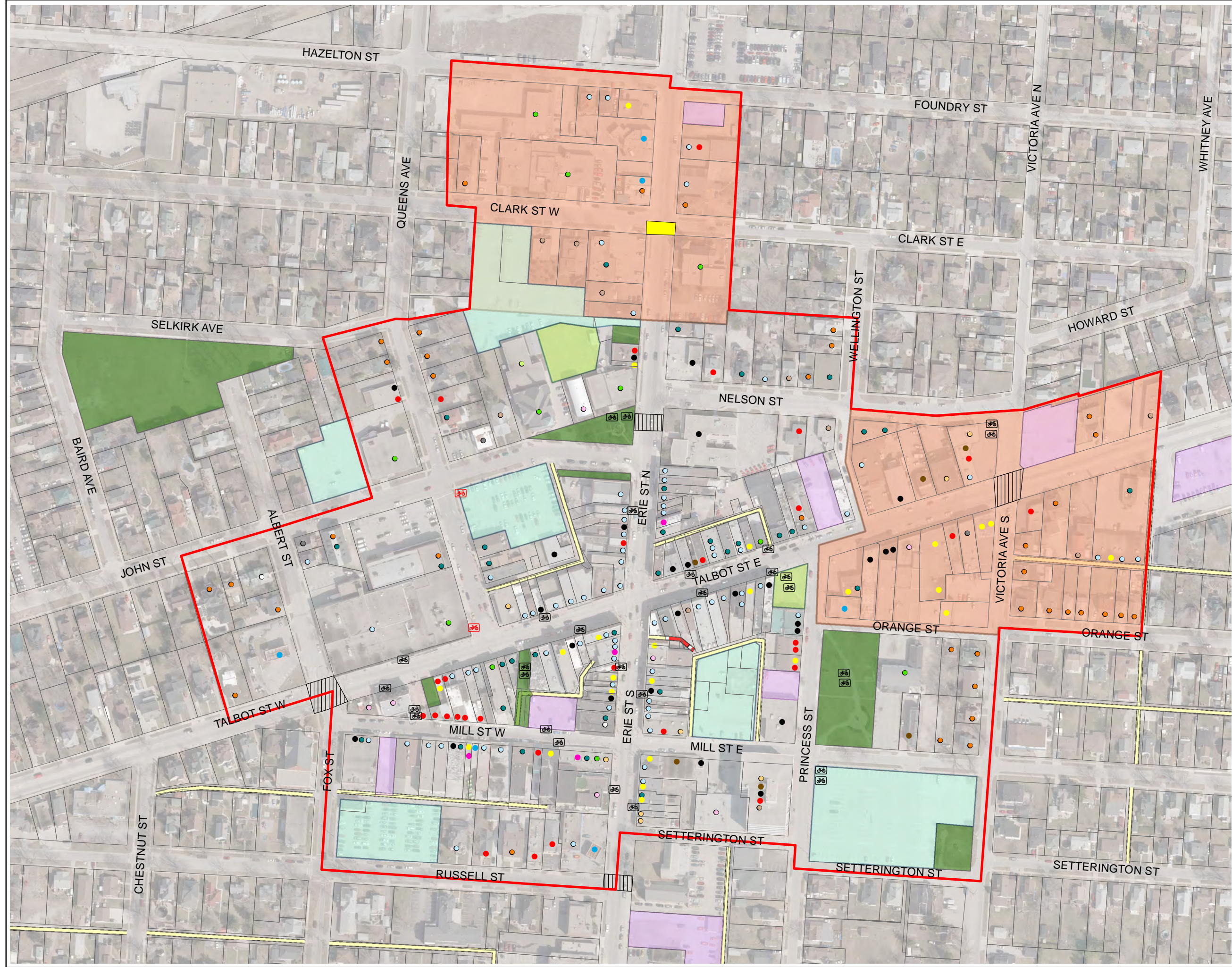
Legend

- Accomodation
- Community Services
- Educational
- Entertainment / Cultural
- Financial
- Institutional
- Medical
- Office
- Personal Service
- Recreation
- Residential
- Restaurant
- Retail
- Service
- Service Auto
- Vacancy

- Community Improvement Boundary
- Proposed Gateways
- Monteith Gateways
- Private Open Space
- Public Open Space
- Informal Private Parking
- Public Parking
- Transition Zones
- Private Alley
- Public Alley
- 🚲 Existing Bike Storage Location
- 🚲 Previous Bike Storage Location



1:2,500



Appendix B: Merchant Survey & Summary Table

Attraction for visitors		Incentives to add RES		Incentives for façade improvements		3 features to focus		How to improve access:		Respondents	
Retail Options	47	An improved Uptown	26	Financial	44	Vacancies	41	Install bike racks and restrict riding on sidewalks	18	Business owner	17
Parking	33	Financial	24	Other buildings doing so	26	Parking	33	Control crowds and loitering	9	Building owner	0
Streetscape	32	None	19	Design guidelines	13	Infrastructure	29	More parking and no time restrictions	9	Business and building owner	28
Heritage	21	Easier planning approvals	9	Easier planning approvals	11	Heritage	18	Establish bike lanes	7	Employee/Manager	5
Services	20	Marketing	7	Other:		Access	12	Patios and cafes	6	No answer	5
Other:		Total	85	Streetscape	5	Other:		Control trucks/ traffic	5	Total	55
Special Events	11			Attracting new businesses	3	Streetscaping	11	Public washrooms	5		
None	5			Tax reduction	2	Boutique shops/retail	8	Pedestrian streets for events	3		
Restaurants	4			Signage	1	Guidelines for buildings and signage	3	Better maintenance	3		
Personal Services	1			None	1	Alleys	3	Parking lot sigange	3		
Financial incentive	1			Total	106	Better maintenance	3	By-law enforcement for bikes, signs and loitering	3		
Safety	1					Adding residential	2	Farmer's Market	2		
Entertainment	1					Trolley/Public transit	2	Recreation/cultural facility for migrant workers	2		
Total	177					Safety	2	Make Uptown retail/service hub	1		
						Traffic	2	Improve storefronts	1		
						Lower the rents	1	Enhance parking lots	1		
						Reduce vacancies	1	Ethnic areas/Mexican Village	1		
						Reduce Loitering	1	Walking trails	1		
						Services	1	Music in the Uptown	1		
						Façade improvements	1	Attract new businesses	1		
						Total	174	Public transit	1		
								Sidewalk treatments	1		
								Greenhouse Museum	1		
								Total	85		
Total number of merchants surveyed: 55											

Merchant Survey Results

Appendix C: Resident Survey & Summary Table

Why do you shop/visit Uptown?		Why don't you visit Uptown?		Perception of Uptown?		How many times do you visit?		What improvements would you recommend?		Do you live in Leamington?	
Shops / stores	107	No variety/quality of stores	76	Positive	50	Daily		Improve storefronts and façades	74	No	40
Restaurants	61	Expensive / no discounts	69	Friendly people	14	Daily	10	Clean the streets and sidewalks	55	Kingsville	12
Do not shop / visit	55	Limited Parking / inconvenient	48	Free Parking	6	Once a week	8	More upscale / quality stores	42	Wheatley	4
Banks / accountants / taxes	41	Crowds in front of stores/ sidewalks	41	Fountain and flowers	6	Less than 5 times / week	5	Attract new businesses	33	U.S.A.	2
Support local businesses	34	Prefer Mall / Walmart	36	Small town charm	5	5 - 10 / week	1	Patios and cafes	29	Amherstburg	1
Library	32	Safety concerns	32	Multicultural	5	Monthly		More sidewalk treatments	28	Essex	1
Work Uptown	30	Better maintenance	29	Easy access / convenient	5	Once a month	45	Police patrol / bylaw enforcement	24	Hamilton	1
Doctor / dentist / pharmacy	27	Nothing to do	24	Art Gallery / Big Tomato	4	Less than 5 / month	82	More quality restaurants	22	Harrow	1
Convenience	25	Shops cater more to migrants	24	Shops / restaurants	4	5 - 10 times / month	63	Parking (more)	19	Windsor	1
Hardly ever shop / visit	22	Uncertain hours	20	Scenic	4	10+ times a month	42	Attractive and updated signage	18	Total living outside	63
Personal Services	17	Bikes on sidewalks	15	Total Positive	103	Yearly		Installation of bike racks / paths	17	Yes	19
Movie Theatre / theatre	17	No grocery store	14	Empty stores	53	Once a year	11	Community events	14	Less than 1 year	3
Groceries	11	Inconvenient	12	Negative	50	Less than 5 times / year	30	Activities for families/ teens/ seniors	13	1 - 5 years	37
Live in Uptown	10	Trucks and traffic	10	Loitering	45	5 - 10 times / year	24	Unified theme	12	6 - 10 years	23
Small town charm	9	Unsavory people	9	Businesses are rundown	37	10+ times a year	31	Ethnic festivals / Village / Club	12	11 - 20 years	35
Nice walk / scenery	8	Need more greenery	6	Too many ethnicities	32	Never		More parks / green space	12	21 - 30 years	49
Art gallery	8	Shop in Windsor	4	No variety of stores	30	Never	28	Limit types of businesses	12	31 - 40 years	25
Visiting the area	4	People smoking	4	Needs better maintenance	30	Total	380	Marketing and advertising	11	41 - 50 years	24
Sidewalk Sale	4	No night life (seniors / other)	3	Condition of buildings and storefronts	30			Better transit / shuttle service	10	51+ years	29
Lawyer / Realtor	3	Shop employees are rude	2	Sidewalk congestion / too crowded	15			Preserve heritage buildings	9	Total living within	244
Auto maintenance	2	Total	478	Transient businesses	11			Incentive programs for businesses	8	No Response	45
Church	1			Too old	6			Grocery store / chain store / mall	7	Total	352
Total	528			Limited Parking	4			Coffee shop / bakeries / ice cream	7		
				Total Negative	343			Facilitate integration	7		
				Neutral	33			Incentives to shop / discounts	7		
				Total	479			Display goods in windows	7		
								Lower taxes / rent	7		
								Music in the Uptown	6		
								Antique shop / souvenir / book store	6		
								Farmer's Market	6		
								More murals / art initiatives	5		
								Parking (no restrictions)	5		
								Public washrooms	4		
								More residential	4		
								Walking Tours	3		
								Total	555		

Resident Survey Results

Total number of residents surveyed: 352

Appendix D: Options Summary

OPTIONS SUMMARY

Option		Time Frame	Cost Ranking	Value Ranking	Priority
LAND USE	Target Specific Land Uses for the Uptown	Short to long term	\$ - \$\$\$	High	
	Increase Residential Uses in and Surrounding the Uptown:				
	• Encourage Conversion of Second Floor to Residential	Short to medium	\$\$\$	High	
	• Increase Residential Units on the Periphery of the CIA	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	Adjusting the CIP Boundary	Short term	\$	Medium	
PARKING AND ACCESS	Promote Public Parking Amenities	Short to medium term	\$	High	
	Encourage Enhancements to Parking Lots	Short to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	Establish Mid-Block Pedestrian Connections	Medium term	\$\$\$	Low	
	Encourage Enhancements to Alleyways	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	Low (site 1), High (site 2), Medium (site 3)	
OCCUPANCY RATE	Strengthen Talbot Street East	Short to medium term	\$\$	High	
	Establish Dialogue with Property Owners Living Outside Leamington	Short to medium term	\$\$	High	
	Encourage Businesses to Forge Working Relationships	Short to medium term	\$\$	Low - medium	
BUILDINGS AND FAÇADE AREAS OF FOCUS	Establish Guidelines for Façade Improvements	Short to medium term	\$	High	
	Enhance Storefronts and Display Windows	Short term	\$	High	
	Incorporate Historic Core Characteristics in Transition Zones	Short term	\$	High	

OPEN SPACES	Shotton Park Should be Enhanced	Medium to long term	\$\$	Medium	
	Encourage Linkages to Better Connect the Open Space System	Medium to long term	\$\$	High	
	Bike Lanes & Bike Racks	Short to medium to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	Pedestrian Friendly Sidewalks	Short to medium to long term	\$	Medium to High	
DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT SITES	Improve Vacant Lots:				
	• Site 1: Talbot Street East & Victoria Avenue	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	• Site 2: Talbot Street East & Wellington Street	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	• Site 3: North side of Mill Street West	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	High	
	• Site 4: East side of Erie Street North, south of Foundry Street	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	Medium	
	• Site 5: Princess Street (opposite Dieppe Park)	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	Medium	
	• Site 6: South side of Mill Street West	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	Medium	
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES	Municipal Rebate Program	Short term	\$	Low	
	Development Charge Reductions	Medium to long term	\$\$\$	Medium to High	
	Building Exterior and Façade Improvement Program	Short to medium term	\$\$\$	High	
	Renovation Loan Program	Short to medium term	\$\$	Medium	
	Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program	Medium term	\$	High	
	Municipal Property Partnership Program	Medium term	\$\$\$	High	
	Commercial Rent Reduction Grant Program	Medium term	\$\$\$	High	

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	Cultural Diversity	Short to long term	\$\$	High	
	Strategic Marketing and Branding Campaign	Short term	\$\$	Medium to High	
	Encourage more Public Art Initiatives	Short to medium term	\$\$	Medium	