



Town of Ingersoll Downtown Revitalization Strategy

February, 2004

Partners:

Town of Ingersoll
Business Improvement Area
Chamber of Commerce
Oxford Small Business Support Centre

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Ingersoll Downtown Revitalization Strategy

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Introduction & Background

Background on Ingersoll

The Town of Ingersoll is located on the south branch of the Thames River in southwestern Ontario. Ingersoll is situated just north of Highway 401, east of London and west of Woodstock.

Based on Statistic Canada figures of 2001, Ingersoll's population is estimated at 11,000. Other key demographic data include:

- Ingersoll has experienced a stable and positive population growth rate in the past decade. It is estimated that the annual growth rate exceeded three percent.
- This growing municipal population is a positive factor in bringing back vitality to the downtown core.
- Compared to the benchmark of Woodstock, the age distribution of Ingersoll has some positive factors. Ingersoll has a higher percentage of young families than Woodstock. It should also be noted that Ingersoll has a proportionate lower number of seniors and of young adults.
- Ingersoll households tend to be slightly larger as compared to the Woodstock benchmark. The average household is 2.6 persons compared to 2.5. Ingersoll's largest group at 33 % is comprised of two people. The second largest is made up of 4 to 5 persons.
- Ingersoll's average household income is \$57,347 which is 3.8 percent higher than the Woodstock benchmark.
- Ingersoll is a blue-collar community with the highest percentage of its labour force in sales and service (22.9%), followed by trades, transport, equipment (20.3%) and then processing and manufacturing (17.3%)
- Related to level of education, the largest proportion of the population (over 20 years of age) did not complete high school (31.2%). The second largest group included those who had completed high school and those who graduated from college (both at 18.1 percent).

Background on the Downtown *(From 1991 Downtown Revitalization Study)*

Within the Central Business District of Ingersoll...

“...the major concentration of retail uses is primarily found in the central core block, bounded by Charles and including King St. Immediately to the north a mixture of retail, office and institutional uses are found in the block from Canterbury to King Street. Similarly south of Charles Street is a mixed use area of many functions stretching cross the Thames River to Victoria Street.”

The emerging pattern shows a very small retail core with office, institutional and industrial uses scattered throughout the central business district.

The Downtown core is primarily composed of five main sections. The central retail core block from King to Charles St. is composed of a contiguous, Victorian façade. It is high quality and is worthwhile preserving. The southern block from Canterbury to King Street is also primarily composed of higher quality buildings which are setback considerably from Thames Street. This condition is also a desirable quality within the core. To the north, from Charles to Victoria St., across the river is an area of lower quality built form with many large gaps along the frontage. The fourth district is the Thames River Valley open space zone, which divides the core in half. The final zone is the secondary area of the core, including Charles and King Streets.”

The two major changes since 1991 study include:

- The development of a municipal office library complex north of King Street between Duke and Oxford streets.
- The development of a major shopping area just west of the downtown core area. This new development just opened in October 2003 and includes a mega-grocery store, retail and personal services operations, and gas bar.

Background on the Downtown Strategic Plan

In the fall of 2003 the Town of Ingersoll, the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce and the Oxford Small Business Support Centre partnered to initiate the Ingersoll Downtown Revitalization Strategy. To assist in creating an effective and implemental downtown strategy, the partners enhanced their planning capacity by:

- Establishing a local Steering Committee (planning team) with representation from the four partners
- Providing local coordination through James Timlin, the Chief Administrative Officer
- Hiring of Priority Grow Inc. as an outside consultant and facilitator

Why a Downtown Strategic Plan?

Ingersoll's downtown is indeed the heart and soul of the community. However external market forces during the past decade or so have impacted its health. In recent years retail/service and entertainment "power centers" in the adjacent urban areas of London and Woodstock have claimed a good portion of the disposable income of local and regional residents.

What is needed is an overall plan to bring business people, community leaders and civic organizations together to create and then build upon a thoughtful and creative vision. This renewed "big picture" and its linked actions will serve as a catalyst in realizing a more vibrant, attractive and prosperous downtown area.

Purpose of the Plan

Creation of a results-driven implementation strategy to:

- Better understand the downtown's current state
- Articulate the desired downtown's vision and its future Role and Image
- Determine expected measurable results or targets
- Identify *engines for change* for the results to occur

- Draw up a detailed short term implementation plan to make things happen through joint activities of local and outside partners

This strategy conceives and unfolds an organized, long term and coordinated approach to sustainable downtown regeneration that reflects and responds to community desires, needs and commitments.

This strategy is intended to:

- Keep the community focused and effective by aiming at critical targets it must achieve in order to have a successful downtown
- Guide in an efficient manner - future actions of all various community organizations involved in the strategy
- Assist in creating and keeping community buy-in by following a collaborative approach
- Encourage the forging of new local partnerships and alliances
- Facilitate new approaches for investment
- Act as a coordination tool to translate strategies into action
- Serve as a measuring stick to demonstrate success and uncover problems

Expected Outcomes

The strategy's expected outcomes within the next three to five years include the following key changes:

- a more competitive commercial area
- new appropriate economic development
- heightened investment in the building stock
- increased visitors levels
- reduced local leakage of disposable income
- business/employment growth
- increased level of resident community engagement including youth

As the downtown emerges as a stronger travel generator, it also will enhance the importance of other assets within the town and surrounding area for building on regional tourism.

Process

Starting in the fall of 2003, this strategy included an information and assessment phase that allowed the community an opportunity to voice both its hopes and its concerns. This was done through several brainstorming sessions that included about 150 people. This diverse group included representation from business people, industry, arts and culture, tourism, students and residents-at-large.

As well the planning team consolidated previously prepared reports about the downtown and then identified and compiled key community demographic data. In order to get current information about the business environment, more than 110 BIA business people responded to a business survey (an extremely high proportion of all businesses).

Upon receiving all of this input, the planning team crafted a draft vision statement, future Role & Image, and goal statements. At the end of November 2003 the team received feedback from all the previously involved groups who attended the brainstorming sessions. In December 2003 the team prepared this draft strategy.

Downtown's Current Assessment

The following is a summary of Downtown Ingersoll's Current Role and Image. Its role- both economic and social- consists of the markets its serves and the products, services and activities it provides them.

Current Market & Economic Role

- The key market is definitely residents living within the town and those just outside its boundaries. Downtown is not attracting enough other shoppers/users from other parts of Oxford County and beyond.
- The main reasons why residents use the downtown are for making frequent but small purchases- convenience goods and services, followed by obtaining professional services and then using restaurants and entertainment.
- The largest percentage of businesses is involved in the retail sector followed by professional services and thirdly by restaurants/entertainment. The downtown lacks a cluster of unique and visually attractive specialty type stores.
- Downtown businesses tend to be stable. More than half has been in operation for more than a decade. This may be good for stability but may not be so good for business innovation.
- Most businesses rent their premises but owner occupied buildings do account for forty percent of the businesses. Renters and landlords may be reluctant to fix up their rented premises unless there is some sort of an incentive.
- Residents appreciate the downtown for local public services i.e. library and post office. The library/municipal building is a big draw for locals.
- A high percentage of resident shopping dollars is spent outside the downtown area. The downtown has a tough time competing with the merchandizing of big box stores located just minutes away in two other communities.

- The main shopping competition is from stores in Woodstock and London. The new Independent Store may draw more shoppers from the downtown in the short term. The impact in the long term is not known as of yet.
- Ingersoll does have travel generators- the Elmhurst, ITOPA, Creative Arts Centre, the museum and even CAMI. However the downtown is not taking advantage of collaborative efforts with these attractions.
- The current market would like to see improvements made to the appearance and atmosphere of the downtown and to an increased variety of goods.
- The current business community would like to see improvements to parking management, a higher level of stores, more attractive commercial facades and new street lights and enhanced public amenities to better serve their markets.

Current Social/Cultural Functions

- The downtown serves as the focus to a number of community events and activities. There does seem to be community and business support for more of them. Volunteer capacity will be an issue.
- The Gazebo does serve as a centre of activity during these events. During the rest of the time- the majority- it is the hangout for a certain group of youth who is perceived to be threatening and to be socially negative. A redeveloped and higher used gazebo is seen to be very important by both residents and business people.
- For many youth the downtown is not perceived to be a safe place including the Youth Centre and the skate board park. As well youth do not feel that the downtown meets their needs. Youth perceive that they receive a less than positive reaction by merchants. The bottom line- downtown is viewed as youth non-friendly.
- Despite a strong arts and culture community, outside of the theatre and one private gallery, the downtown does not show case these assets. The cultural sector, despite these assets, is underdeveloped.

The total image of Ingersoll's downtown is made up of its background image and the sum of its image "bits". The background image includes natural elements, topography, and the street and sidewalk infrastructure. The "bits" consist of the sum of the individual business/ building images.

Image & Design

- The overall image is mixed and fractured. There are distinctive zones within the downtown core that are not well integrated.
- The central retail block from King to Charles is high quality and has good potential to attract shoppers.
- A number of significant buildings still remain downtown. There is strong community support for the town's architectural heritage.
- Despite these assets, downtown is seen to be worn, tired looking and shabby.
- There are a few excellent examples of interesting commercial storefronts, however overall the facades are unattractive. Commercial signage ranges from a few excellent ones to many with poor design.
- The empty storefronts are viewed as a really bad signal. Temporary uses/displays in the windows would soften this dead space and feeling.
- The public streetscape improvements are disjointed and do not unify the area.
- Although accessible parking exists, parking management systems need to be improved.

Downtown Ingersoll's Key Future Issues

Strategic issues are significant points stressing a community causing dispute/conflict or potential opportunity that must be resolved to make big gains. These include:

Management

1. Clear Leadership Role of Council

In the past there is some lingering feeling that Council did not feel the downtown was a significant area. Is Council prepared to provide a leadership role in terms of championing the downtown and providing ongoing additional investments?

2. BIA Professionalism

In the past decade the BIA has operated as a re-active organization. Is the BIA ready and able to operate in a more strategic manner? Is the BIA prepared to fully participate and be committed to implement the strategy?

3. Ongoing Implementation

There is need for some organizational mechanism involving business and municipal concerns to ensure ongoing implementation, action and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Commercial/Economic Development

4. Investment Climate

Adequate re-investment into the downtown will not happen by the private sector until economic returns can be demonstrated. Are the BIA and Council prepared to be more pro-active in attracting and retaining commercial operations? Is there a willingness to work collaboratively in strategic campaigns?

Is council prepared to assess the possibility of additional residential development in the downtown?

Image

5. Need to Bring Back a Quality and Consistent Physical Image

Despite some great physical assets the downtown is looking shabby and tired. Is council prepared to invest funding in a façade improvement program? Is the BIA ready and willing to facilitate a higher level of visual merchandising? Is there a commitment to funding an incremental streetscape plan?

6. Protection of the Historical Building Stock

Is council able to ensure appropriate level of design intervention to protect and enhance the existing historical building stock? Need to explore ways to encourage re-investment with absentee landlords. Is the municipality going to ensure good maintenance of its publicly owned buildings?

Marketing

7. Ability to Expand the Tourism Sector

Ingersoll does not have a well developed tourism infrastructure or does not have enough travel generators. Does the broad community support more tourism? Are local organizations prepared to organize and volunteer in more community events? Is the downtown business community prepared to actively partner both in planning and implementation with Elmhurst, the Creative Arts Centre and the theatre to bring more people into the community?

Social/Cultural Functions

8. Youth Participation

Youth do not feel that they are integrated into the community. Is the local government and businesses prepared to listen to and then work with youth to incorporate their needs?

9. Link with Arts Community

The downtown and arts community could really benefit by building on linkages. Can the arts and businesses community determine common ground and work together?

10. Gazebo Revitalization

The gazebo is both an attraction and deterrent to the revitalization to downtown. Can all community groups come together to re-invent the gazebo area into a people place?

The Future Directional Shift

- Our Vision and Future Role & Image -

The Year 2010 Vision Statement

Serving as the heart and soul in an expanding community, Downtown Ingersoll will be a unique destination and an inviting place offering more specialty retail, restaurants, cafes, cultural activities, entertainment and professional services. This historic core of a vibrant small town will be well known for celebrating its history, traditions, culture and economy. Its architecture, streetscape and natural heritage will show case its important past and its present role as a shopping and a gathering place.

Downtown Ingersoll will be pedestrian- friendly appealing to all ages including its youth. As the historic town centre it will instill great community pride for all residents.

- Future Economic Role -

The Resident Market

Based on the 2001 Census figures of 11,000 people within the town and 5,000 people just outside the municipal boundaries, the downtown will continue to mainly serve this market of 16,000 which is continually growing. Downtown will continue to provide convenience products and services, professional services and restaurants.

Building on the foundation of more events/activities, shopping incentives and on outstanding customer service/helpfulness, the businesses mix will change experiencing an increase of higher quality and unique specialty stores and a small increase in food services and entertainment businesses.

The Visitor Market

Downtown will attract more visitors who live within an hour's drive including the Kitchener-Waterloo and the London urban regions. The increased number of visiting families, empty nesters and active seniors - who are day trippers and overnights - will be drawn by:

- *Increased number of high quality and community-supported special events - twelve per year including a major youth activity*
- *Enhanced connections and joint promotions with the Elmhurst Inn, Creative Arts Centre, ITOPA, and the museum*
- *A concentrated number of visually appealing specialty shops*

Oxford/Eastern Middlesex Counties Market

An increasing number of rural Oxford County residents (outside of Woodstock) will be drawn to the downtown because of: *newly created visual and merchandising linkages with the Independent Store centre; exceptional customer service of downtown stores; and the many well known community activities and special events held throughout the year.*

In addition, for the same reasons, *the downtown will attract a larger share of the 7,000 people (based on 2001) census living the eastern part of Middlesex County.*

- Future Social/Cultural Role -

- The gazebo, with upgraded amenities, will become THE community meeting place for everyone. ***Improved seating with picnic tables, outdoor game tables, and enhanced visual appearance along with a community information board*** will attract locals and visitors to use the gazebo during the day and early evening. Organizations and community groups will ***stage all sorts of small scale activities including music concerts, plays, and entertainment.*** ***Youth will hold organized music and other events there on a regular basis.***
- ***Local artists will be showcased*** in public spaces and in windows of empty private buildings.
- The Theatre may be used for a variety of uses including the ***showing of select films.***
- Youth and the schools will be highly engaged with local arts and cultural groups in organizing ***community-based events.***

- Image and Design -

- The downtown will present a unified image and promotion campaign that reflects its branding program. A ***strong coherent streetscape will reflect its history and small town charm.***
- ***Many attractive and well re-designed commercial storefronts and signs*** will present a positive shopping and investment climate.
- ***Downtown properties-including backs of the buildings- will become better maintained*** as more building owners take advantage of the building incentive program.
- A ***coordinated awning program with consistent color and style*** will be introduced into the retail core area.
- A phased three-year streetscape program will ***place integrated and highly attractive public improvements including historically based streetlights, hanging baskets and planters.*** These elements will be ***functional, pedestrian friendly and well designed.*** The first stage will be connected and linked with the re-development of the gazebo.
- Walkways through the downtown will be improved and will be ***better linked to the surrounding open space areas.***
- Pedestrians will ***feel safe*** and will ***not be overwhelmed by traffic flows.***

Expected Results & Strategies for Five Core Areas

Encouraging Economic Development

Goal #1

New appropriate commercial development will be recruited for downtown that first will serve the local and regional markets but also will draw day visitors from a hundred kilometer radius. An increased number of high quality and tastefully designed specialty stores and restaurants will attract a higher level of pedestrian traffic and retain them for a longer period of time in the downtown.

Short Term Objectives (achieved by years 2004/05)

1.1 A retail/commercial recruitment strategy will be prepared to finalize its “market position”. This is to include a potential list of new businesses that are both desirable and rationale. Completed by fourth quarter of 2004.

Strategies:

1.1.1. Prepare current downtown commercial analysis. To include demographic data (already gathered), commercial supply /demand/ surplus, and vacant land and properties survey.

1.1.2. Identify possible new appropriate retail and service business opportunities.

1.2 A Downtown Recruitment Team will be operational with a partnership of the BIA, chamber, local realtors and the municipality. In place by fourth quarter of 2004.

Strategies:

1.2.1 Select Commercial Development Recruitment Team.

1.2.2 Prepare recruitment action plan and produce necessary marketing tools.

Medium Term Objective (achieved by either 2006/07)

1.3 At least three new specialty retail and one food/entertainment operations will open up their doors. By second quarter of 2006.

Goal #2

The majority of existing downtown commercial operations will experience increased business levels due to the enhanced downtown environment and product. Several businesses will expand while very few will close or re-locate outside of the downtown.

Short Term Objectives

2.1 Twenty five percent of all downtown employees will have completed customer service training by second quarter 2005.

Strategy:

2.1.1 Organize customer service training program for staff of BIA businesses.

2.2 At least three marketing themes or clusters will be promoting downtown as a specific destination i.e. restaurants, gifts or cultural organizations. By second quarter 2005.

Strategy:

2.2.1 Develop three joint marketing packages based on common themes.

Mid Term Objective

2.3 By 2006 sixty percent of downtown business will have increased business levels as compared to the 2004 baseline year.

Marketing the Downtown

Goal #3

The downtown will be the staging area for a broad range of activities and special events drawing people on a consistent basis throughout most of the year. During the warmer months the downtown, especially the gazebo area, will be busy with people of all ages including the youth because of a series of ongoing local activities. Unique and exciting special events will be held on a regular basis attracting both residents and visitors. The specialty shops and services will be used on a frequent basis, primarily by residents and secondly by visitors.

Short Term Objectives

3.1 A winter festival for 2005 will be in the organizational stages by the first quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

3.1.1. Prepare an overall concept for the winter festival.

3.1.2 Select a winter festival planning team representing service clubs, cultural and business organizations, and Youth Committee.

3.2 The first issue of an annual community calendar will be released by the first quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

3.2.1 Develop community calendar concept. Produce and distribute first issue.

3.3 Coordinated and small-scale activities will be occurring in the gazebo during in the third quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

3.3.1 Select the Gazebo Event Team and develop a year round concept.

3.3.2 Coordinate the ongoing activities at the gazebo.

3.4 The downtown will host one event of the Wine/ Jazz festival in 2004.

Strategy:

3.4.1 Reach an agreement with the Wine/Jazz Festival to hold one event downtown

3.5 A coordinated information package with the accommodation facilities will be released by the third quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

3.5.1 In consultation with Elmhurst Inn, Travelodge and bed and breakfast operations develop a joint information package for the fall/Christmas seasons.

3.6 The first promotion aimed at youth will be held during third quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

3.6.1 Assist the Youth Action Committee in holding an event during the fall (subject to the strategic plan).

3.7 A total marketing and branding package will be developed by the second quarter of 2005. A unique image will be released that illuminates this strategy's stated ***Vision and Future Role and Image*** including a distinctive image design and logo. A joint promotional campaign will be aimed at priority target markets i.e. all abutting area regions. Completed by the second quarter of 2005.

Strategy:

3.7.1 Select a marketing team with representation from the broader community.

3.7.2 Conduct a downtown branding exercise.

3.7.3 Produce a total marketing and promotional package.

Mid Term Objectives

3.8 Three new special events, show-casing the downtown, will be well attended by both residents and visitors by the fourth quarter of 2006.

3.9 Four joint promotional packages with other community attractions i.e. Elmhurst/ Independent Store/ Museum will be released by the fourth quarter of 2006.

3.10 Non-resident pedestrian traffic in the downtown will be increased by 25% by the fourth quarter of 2006.

Addressing Social and Cultural Issues

Goal #4

The downtown will become the primary centre in both presenting and promoting Ingersoll's significant cultural and heritage communities.

Short Term Objectives

4.1 Ingersoll artisans will have their work showcased in the downtown area i.e. windows of empty stores by the second quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

4.1.1 Organize a Downtown Artisan Task Force.

4.1.2 Prepare a plan to showcase local artists/artisans in the downtown

4.2 A business/arts incubator concept will be investigated by the third quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

4.2.1 Arrange a discussion group with the province's rural affairs/ culture agencies.

4.3 A strategy to improve collaborations with local cultural and heritage groups and operations will be completed by the third quarter of 2005.

Strategy:

4.3.1 Determine interest to conduct a one day symposium on the role of culture and heritage in the downtown.

4.4 The municipal museum re-development strategy will be completed by the first quarter of 2005.

Strategy:

4.4.1 Undertake an assessment of the current operations of the museum; and prepare a terms of reference as to refining and re-positioning the museum's role and creating links with the downtown.

4.5 Films and other entertainment activities will be shown to the public in the ITOPA theatre by the second quarter of 2005.

Strategy:

4.5.1 Enter into discussions with ITOPA as to showing of select films/entertainment during the year.

Mid Term Objectives

4.6 Diverse cultural programming will be offered downtown-particularly in the gazebo area - through collaborations with existing cultural organizations by the first quarter of 2006.

4.7 ITOPA will be a venue for several performing arts and cultural events by the second quarter of 2006.

Goal #5

Youth will feel included and will have a sense of belonging within the downtown community. The downtown will respond more effectively to their social needs. All youth will feel safe and not threatened while being in the downtown area. As well, all people will feel more comfortable being in the downtown at any time of the day.

Short Term Objectives

5.1 The BIA will play an active role in the Youth Action Committee by the second quarter of 2004 (subject to strategic plan).

Strategy:

5.1.1 Present a BIA/downtown perspective in formation of YAC.

Medium Term Objective

5.2 The perception of an unsafe downtown will be reduced by 50 % of the student population and by 25 % of the general population.

Guiding Image and Design

Goal #6

The downtown's image will be transformed into an attractive, well groomed, and historically authentic area, capitalizing on the existing historic building stock. The pride of business/property owners will be demonstrated by appropriate commercial signage, attractive storefronts, upgraded backs of buildings - both visual appearance and functional considerations - and by interesting visual merchandising. This improved physical appearance will create an atmosphere that encourages and facilitates new private investment into the downtown.

Short Term Objectives

6.1 A municipally funded commercial storefront building improvement incentive program will be set up by the second quarter of 2004. Commercial storefront and signage guidelines- to demonstrate appropriate design- will be adopted by the second quarter of 2004. (Based on the revision of the guidelines from the *1994 Façade Improvement Program* document.)

Strategy:

6.1.1 Conduct a “best practices” study of current downtown building improvement programs.

6.1.2 Based on the study, prepare and adopt a building improvement guidelines, incentive fund and associated program.

6.2 Seventy five percent of businesses will create quality Christmas store window displays by the fourth quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

6.2.1 Have a short term contract with a locally based designer for a window display training session and onsite coaching before the 2004 Christmas season.

Medium Term Objectives

6.3 An annual award program will be in place to recognize achievement of store front improvements by the first quarter of 2006.

6.4 Twenty percent of all storefronts/buildings will be fixed up or enhanced by the fourth quarter of 2006.

6.5 Priority rear facades will be improved along the east and west side of Thames Street by the fourth quarter of 2006.

6.6 Ten percent of plastic back lit commercial signs will be replaced by more appropriate and traditional typefaces by the fourth quarter of 2006.

Goal #7

Streetscape improvements will be historically accurate as well as functional and well designed. The physical look will be well coordinated; and will respect the historic built heritage while being pleasing to the eye.

Short Term Objectives

7.1 A higher level of general maintenance of the downtown- snow removal, garbage pick up and street cleaning- will be occurring by the first quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

7.1.1 Continue reviewing and adjusting the quality of municipal services.

7.2 A streetscape design exercise will be completed to determine placement of the most appropriate and high impact streetscape improvements. This is to include the re-design of street furniture, benches, trash receptacles, ground planters and street lighting. To be completed by second quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

7.2.1 Hire a landscape architect to lead the Steering Committee through the public improvements exercise.

7.2.2 Complete and formally adopt the design plan.

7.3 The gazebo area will start to be enhanced with improved seating, tables, outdoor game tables and greenery by the second quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

7.3.1 Secure the funding (both in dollars and in kind services) to undertake the gazebo enhancement.

7.4 The first phase of the historic street light replacement program will start to be installed along Thames Street from Canterbury St. north to Charles St. by the third quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

7.4.1 Secure the funding to start historic street light replacement.

Medium Term Objectives

7.5 A community information board- including a listing of current activities and interesting historic events- will be installed in the gazebo area by the second quarter of 2006.

7.6 All the street lights will be replaced in a sequential manner by the third quarter of 2006.

7.7 Ground planting and hanging planters will be in place throughout the downtown by the third quarter of 2006.

7.8 A more integrated pedestrian walkway will link the downtown with the surrounding open space by the second quarter of 2007.

7.9 New entry signs reflecting the newly adopted design image will be installed in the gateway areas.

Goal #8

Parking will be more of a positive experience for both customers and for the business people.

Short Term Objective

8.1 Parking rates will be adjusted to allow for longer term or free parking in parking lots while encouraging short term on-street parking. Completed by second quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

8.1.1 Continue reviewing and adjusting parking policy and rates.

Medium Term Objective

8.2 Directional parking lot signage and landscape enhancements will be installed as part of the overall design concept by the second quarter of 2006.

Managing Development - Organization

Goal #9

Downtown Ingersoll will be effectively managed through an organizational vehicle that will ensure collaboration and partnership among the downtown stakeholders. The BIA will upgrade its management capacity through an arrangement with the municipality. Communications among all parties will be improved occurring on a regular basis. The downtown strategy will regularly be monitored, evaluated and adapted in order to realize actual results.

Short Term Objectives

9.1 A permanent committee structure will be established as the implementation arm of the downtown revitalization strategy by the first quarter of 2004.

Strategy:

9.1.1 Create a Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee and then appoint members.

9.2 A Downtown Summit will be organized to review and adapt the strategy by the first quarter of 2005.

Strategy:

9.2.1 Organize the logistics of the summit to be held in early 2005.

Medium Term Objectives

9.3 All local community organizations will be tangibly supporting the downtown strategy by the first quarter of 2006.

9.4 Half of all of the downtown revitalization capital costs and one quarter of all the operational will be secured from non-municipal or BIA sources. By the first quarter of 2006.

2004 Implementation Plan

Encouraging Economic Development

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
1.1.1 Prepare current downtown commercial analysis. To include demographic data (already gathered), commercial supply /demand/ surplus, and vacant land and properties survey.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Compile existing demographic data b) Prepare retail demand threshold analysis c) Prepare inventory of existing commercial space-both utilized and vacant and the leasing costs d) Develop and update electronic commercial mix map 	Start - Early spring Complete - Early fall	Primary- EDO Secondary- BIA/ Oxford Business Support Centre	Staff time
1.1.2 Identify possible new appropriate retail and service business opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify business opportunities for local entrepreneurs b) Identify business opportunities to be recruited from outside local area 	Start- Early summer Complete- Early fall	Primary- EDO Secondary- BIA/ Oxford Business Support Centre	Staff time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
1.2.1 Select Commercial Development Recruitment Team	Specific Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Compile list of possible business people, property owners, realtors and community organization c) Prepare terms of reference d) Select team members 	Start- Early fall Complete- Late fall	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA/ Oxford Business Support Centre	Staff time
1.2.2 Prepare recruitment action plan and produce necessary marketing tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prepare leasing package b) Develop promotional tools that describe positive changes and advantages 	Start- Early fall Complete- Late fall	Primary- EDO Secondary- BIA/ Oxford Business Support Centre	Staff time Budget of \$1,500

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
2.1.1 Organize customer service training program for staff of BIA businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Select trainer from within region b) Develop strategy c) Promote the service d) Hold training sessions 	Start- Late spring Complete- Mid fall	Primary- BIA Secondary- Oxford Small Business Centre	Staff time Budget of \$1,500

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
2.2.1 Develop three joint marketing packages based on common themes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prepare draft concept b) Present to BIA membership c) Determine interest d) Prioritize the top three e) Finalize packages 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late spring	Primary- BIA Secondary- EDO	Staff time Budget of \$3,000 each

Marketing the Downtown

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.1.1 Prepare an overall concept for the winter festival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Get input from local community organizations b) Prepare draft concept 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late winter	Primary- Chamber Secondary- Service clubs	Volunteer time
3.1.2 Select a winter festival planning team representing service clubs, cultural and business organizations, and Youth Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approach local community organizations for participation b) Select team 	Start- Late winter Complete- Late winter	Primary- Chamber Secondary- Service clubs	Volunteer time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.2.1. Develop community calendar concept. Produce and distribute first issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Get input/ funding commitments from local community organizations b) Prepare draft concept c) Finalize and produce calendar d) Prepare distribution list e) Distribute first issue 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late winter	Primary- Chamber Secondary- Municipality	Staff time Budget of \$500

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.3.1 Select the Gazebo Event Team and develop a year round concept.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Get input/ funding commitments from local community organizations b) Prepare annual plan c) Secure funding commitments 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late winter	Primary- BIA Secondary- Chamber/ cultural organizations/CAO	Staff/volunteer time
3.3.2 Coordinate the ongoing activities at the gazebo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Appoint/ hire coordinator (summer student program) b) Implement plan 	Start- Late spring Complete- Early fall	Primary- BIA Secondary- Local service clubs/EDO	Salary for coordinator (possibility of accessing summer student program)

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.4.1 Reach an agreement with the Wine/Jazz Festival to hold one event downtown.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Arrange a meeting b) Secure an agreement 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late winter	Primary- BIA Secondary- Chamber	Volunteer time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.5.1 In consultation with Elmhurst Inn, Travelodge and B&B's, develop a joint information package for the fall/ Christmas seasons.	a) Secure commitment in principle b) Create package c) Distribute package	Start- Spring Complete- Late winter	Primary- BIA Secondary- Elmhurst Inn, Travelodge	EDO time Budget of \$500 (BIA)

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.6.1 Assist the Youth Action Committee g an event during the fall (subject to strategic plan).	a) Hold meeting with Council and determine needs. b) Assist in coordination.	Start- Spring Complete- Fall	Primary- CAO and municipality/ YAC Secondary- BIA	CAO and volunteer time Budget of \$ 500 (municipality)

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
3.7.1 Select a marketing team with representation from the broader community.	a) Develop terms of reference a) Hold a number of meetings with community organizations. c) Determine interest in participation d) Select team members e) Hire student for baseline surveys	Start- Spring Complete- Summer	Primary- BIA Secondary- Chamber	Volunteer and EDO time Summer student grant
3.7.2 Conduct a downtown branding exercise.	a) Develop terms of reference a) Hire a marketing consultant to assist team. c) Complete the work	Start- Spring 2004 Complete- Spring 2005	Primary- BIA Secondary- Municipality	Volunteer and EDO time Budget of \$ 15,000

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
4.1.1 Organize a Downtown Artisan Task Force.	a) Discuss concept with Cultural Centre b) Develop terms of reference c) Select members	Start- Late winter Complete- Late spring	Primary- BIA Secondary- Cultural Centre/ Museum/EDO	Volunteer and EDO time
4.1.2 Prepare a plan to showcase local artists/artisans in the downtown.	a) Develop work plan b) Initiate first show case	Start- Late spring Complete- Summer	Primary- Artisan Task Force (subject to being created) Secondary- BIA/YAC	Volunteer and EDO time

Addressing Social and Cultural Issues

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
4.2.1 Arrange a discussion group with the province's rural affairs/ culture agencies.	a) Contact appropriate agencies b) Hold a meeting with the various groups	Start- Spring Complete- Fall	Primary- Artisan Task Force (subject to be created) Secondary- EDO	Volunteer and EDO time

4.3Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
4.3.1 Determine interest to conduct a one day symposium on the role of culture and heritage in the downtown.	a) Contact appropriate local agencies b) Hold a meeting with the various groups to determine interest. c) Make decision to proceed	Start- Spring Complete- Fall	Primary- Artisan Task Force (subject to be created) Secondary- EDO	Volunteer and EDO time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
4.4.1 Undertake an assessment of the current operations of the museum; and prepare re-positioning terms of reference as to refining and re-positioning the museum's role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold discussions with museum curator and with local organizations b) Undertake interviews with other local cultural organizations c) Prepare outline for self – assessment exercise d) Prepare terms of reference 	Start- Fall Complete- Fall	Primary- CAO/ municipality /curator Secondary- EDO	Museum curator and EDO time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
4.5.1 Enter into discussions with ITOPA as to showing of select films/entertainment during the year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold discussions with ITOPA board b) Undertake self-assessment to determine viability 	Start- Fall Complete- Fall	Primary- CAO/ municipality Secondary- ITOPA	CAO time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
5.1.1 Present a BIA/downtown perspective in formation of YAC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold discussions with student councils, principals, and youth groups b) Determine a BIA role 	Start- Winter Complete- Winter	Primary- YAO Secondary- BIA	Volunteer time

Guiding Image and Design

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
6.1.1 Conduct a “best practices” study of current downtown building improvement programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Compile a listing of existing programs b) Assess the aspects that are working well/ not working well 	Start- Early winter Complete- Early winter	Primary- CAO/ municipality Secondary- BIA	CAO time
6.1.2 Based on the study, prepare and adopt a building improvement guidelines, incentive fund and associated program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Review and identify best aspects of the 1994 building guidelines study. b) Based on the review prepare revised design guidelines with assistance from designer c) As part of the review prepare revised design guidelines d) Develop application process e) Obtain council approval for program and funding 	Start- Early winter Complete- Late spring	Primary- BIA Secondary- municipality	CAO/EDO time Budget of \$2,500 for design consulting fees \$75,000 for financial incentives

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
6.2.1 Have a short term contract with a locally based designer for a window display training session and onsite coaching before the 2004 Christmas season.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Select a local designer b) Organize workshop and site visits prior to Christmas season c) Hold two day event 	Start- Late summer Complete- Mid fall	Primary- BIA Secondary- Oxford Small Business Centre	BIA volunteer time Budget of \$2,000 for designer

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
7.1.1 Continue reviewing and adjusting the quality of municipal services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold meeting with BIA and council to identify issues b) Prepare and implement work plan to help resolve any issues 	Start- Early winter Complete- End of winter	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA	CAO time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
7.2.1 Hire a landscape architect to lead the Steering Committee through the public improvements exercise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prepare terms of reference as to the role and support for the committee b) Hire a landscape architect on a short term contract c) Secure funds from province 	Start- Early winter Complete- Early spring	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA/Province	CAO and Steering Committee time
7.2.2 Complete and formally adopt the design plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Complete design plan b) Adopt the plan 	Start- Mid spring Complete- End of spring	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA	CAO and Steering Committee time Budget of \$5,000 for consultant fees

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
7.3.1 Secure the funding (both in dollars and in kind services) to undertake the gazebo enhancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Present initial concept to province and local service groups b) Include design work in overall design plan c) Present detailed concept and costs to province, BIA, Council and local service groups d) Start initial changes 	Start- Mid winter Complete- End of spring	Primary- BIA Secondary- Municipality/CAO/Province	CAO/ EDO /BIA and Steering Committee time Budget of \$10,000 for year one

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
7.4.1 Secure the funding to start historic street light replacement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Present initial concept to province, BIA and local service groups b) Include design work in overall design plan c) Present detailed concept and costs to province, BIA, Council and local service groups d) Begin installation 	Start- Mid winter Complete- End of fall	Primary- Council Secondary- Province/BIA	CAO/ EDO and Steering Committee time Budget of \$160,000 for year one and 320,000 for year two

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
8.1.1 Continue reviewing and adjusting parking policy and rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hold meeting between BIA and Council to identify issues b) Prepare and implement work plan to respond to issues 	Start- Mid winter Complete- End of spring	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA	CAO and Steering Committee time

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
9.1.1 Create Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee and then appoint members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Prepare terms of reference b) Hold meeting with all stake holders c) Determine interest to participate d) Appoint members 	Start- Early winter Complete- Mid winter	Primary- Council Secondary- BIA/ Chamber/ Oxford Small Business Support Centre	CAO and Council time Budget of \$1,500 for out-of – pocket expenses

Strategy	Specific Action	Timing	Responsibility	Resources Required
9.2.1 Organize the logistics of the summit to be held in early 2005.	a) Develop concept	Start- Fall	Primary- Steering Committee Secondary- CAO	CAO and Steering Committee time

Appendices

- 1) List of Relevant Reports
- 2) Marketing & Branding Concepts
- 3) Design Guidelines and Program Concept

List of Relevant Reports

1. Ingersoll Downtown Revitalization Study, December 1991
2. Town of Ingersoll Facade Improvement Project, August 1994
3. Ingersoll Statistics Canada 2001 Census Summary, October 2003
4. Ingersoll Diagnosis & Future Directions Report, November 2003
5. Ingersoll BIA Business Member Survey Results, November 2003

Marketing & Branding Concepts

From: Government of Ontario REDDI Site- www.reddi.gov.on.ca

Branding

“The idea of a community image is closely related to the notion of **brand** identity, a term, which is now often being used and which is one component of good marketing. The original idea of "brand" stems from the use of branding on ranches to identify the owner’s cattle from those of other ranchers. Marketers now spend large amounts of money and resources to build brand, brand recognition, and brand loyalty or brand equity. As a result, common product brands are instantly recognized and identified with the desired product characteristics. A great deal has been written on the subject of brand management.

The following are a few definitions of brands:

"A brand is nothing more than a word in the mind" (Al Ries, 22 Immutable Laws of Branding)

"A brand should differentiate your cow from the other cows on the ranch" (Al Ries, 22 Immutable Laws of Branding)

"Brands provide an image. They assure us of quality" (Berndt Schmitt, Marketing Aesthetics)

"A brand is a network of associations in the consumer’s mind. If the association - whether rational or emotional - represents something that is personally or socially desirable to the consumer, we call it a value. Such values are the key drivers of consumer choice." (Interbrand Group, Brands, The New Wealth Creators)

The advantages of a strong brand identity for a downtown are that it leads to:

- greater awareness of the community (thus more people will be potentially interested in visiting and shopping there)
- greater potential interest in supporting the community from marketing, communications and funding partners
- greater interest and respect from politicians and other key leaders in the community
- more public promotion and positive media exposure
- beneficial future product development opportunities based on the brand and identity of the community

Images and brand identity can be built on several different aspects including:

- names
- visual images or landmarks
- symbols
- narratives
- slogans or jingles
- concepts
- combinations of the above

The following section addresses the advantages and disadvantages of some of the above branding concepts.

- Using **names** as the basis of a brand have the advantage that they provide an "anchor" for a community. They are usually short and easy to recall. The disadvantage is that they may be difficult to change and may not be recognizable in a multilingual or global context. Examples of brands based on names include, "Heritage Perth" and "Elora – Ontario's Beautiful Village".
- **Symbols or logos** are visual in nature and have the attraction of being attention getting. They have the difficulty that they can sometimes become dated or ambiguous if people do not understand them. Examples of logos are below.
- **Visual and sensory images or landmarks** may also form the basis for a brand identity. They have the advantage of being both a simple and powerful mechanism to communicate and mentally visualize. The disadvantage is that the images may become dated or inappropriate. The images can also form the basis for logos. Examples of landmarks include Paris and the Eiffel Tower. They can be woven into slogans. For example, the Forest City, the Limestone City, the Windy City.
- Building brands based on **narratives or stories** have the advantage of being engaging and involving. They may also resonate with lifestyles that the community is attempting to appeal to. The disadvantages are that the

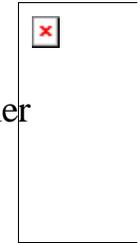


narratives may not be well known and they take time to understand and process. Examples of narratives include the "Allegheny Traveler" which is used in Pennsylvania as a comic strip style story line to convey images and information about travel in that state.

- **Slogans and jingles** can also be used as the basis for brand images. They have the advantage that they can be memorable, catchy and involving. They may concisely convey desirable brand concepts. Some jingles are set to music. The disadvantages are that they may not appeal to all, may seem quaint or dated with time. Examples of brands based on slogans include: "Virginia is for lovers" and "Stratford Strolls".
- **Concepts** may also be used as the basis for brands. These may be innovative, grand or encompassing. The disadvantages are that they may be difficult to communicate and are not legally intellectual property, which can be protected. Examples of a brand based concept include: "At Ford Quality is Job One," "Freedom 55", "Customer First", "Live Free or Die".
- Brands may also build on a **combination** of the above considerations, which may then combine some of the associated advantages or appeal on many sensory levels. For example, the famous New York state tourism slogan and logo.

A simple exercise to help you as a community to develop a brand or identity is to brainstorm as a group using the above concepts to generate ideas, which could form the basis for your brand image.

- Start with a free flowing brainstorming exercise in which participants are invited to share any positive and/or negative images that people associate with the community or the downtown? (Note that all groups will not necessarily share the values assigned to these images.)
- To assist in this exercise, participants may be invited to think in terms of:
 - names
 - visual images or landmarks
 - symbols
 - narratives



- slogans or jingles
 - concepts
 - combinations of the above
- Differentiate any images, which are negative in nature from those that are positive. Discuss whether any negative images require measures, actions or communications to remove the source of the negative image.
 - Obtain agreement on whether the positive images or branding ideas can be used as the basis of the downtown branding concept. Is the preferred brand readily understandable by those not familiar with the community? Is it pleasing or compelling? It is memorable? Is it aligned with the broader community or downtown vision?
 - Once your preferred image/brand is developed, it will be necessary for the appropriate authority to take actions to ensure that the brand identity is communicated with the target audience in local press, news releases, communications campaigns, flyers, etc.
 - Use local suppliers to help implement the brand identity if possible.

Joint Marketing

A joint marketing or advertising campaign typically occurs when a BIA, chamber of commerce, or informal group of downtown merchants join together to promote their goods and services collectively. The theory here is that by promoting themselves as a 'critical mass' they can capture more interest and attention on the part of the market, and provide them with more reasons to come downtown. The merchant organization will either buy advertising space in a community publication or broadcast, or publish their own advertising vehicle; either way, costs are considerably reduced for individual advertisers who purchase a smaller ad within the space.

There are a number of specific advantages with a joint marketing campaign; some of these are:

- it can be a cheaper and more **cost effective** way for individual businesses to promote themselves to the community, or to whatever market they are targeting i.e. tourist market – sometimes businesses that couldn't otherwise advertise are able to get their message out to the marketplace.
- it enables the organization to promote whatever **image, brand or identity** may have been developed for the downtown as the 'umbrella' under which individual businesses are promoted
- it creates the image in the mind of the potential shopper or service user that there is a **wide variety of retail and services available** in the downtown.

As well, beyond joint advertising, it is possible to set up specific **packages** amongst downtown businesses. These are where several businesses will create an experience among themselves, and promote this jointly. A common example would be a dinner / theatre package, where the experience offered is dinner at a particular restaurant prior to the show in the community theatre. In the tourism industry, tour packages are very common, where accommodation, attractions, dining and transportation are all bundled together and sold to the market. But other forms of packaging are possible as well – for example, where after buying a dress in the downtown ladies clothing store you are then given a discount coupon for lunch in the restaurant next door. Packages such as these will not only increase the awareness of customers of other businesses in the downtown, but they will also increase the chance that shoppers will stay in – or return to – the downtown.

Another form of packaging is **gift certificates** – not for a specific store only, but for any store in the downtown. Shopping centers have been doing this for a while now. For example, the Yorkdale Shopping Centre in Toronto sells gift certificates – you can buy a \$25 or \$50 certificate good at any store in the mall. This keeps customers in the mall, and encouraging them to shop in the mall as opposed to going to other chain stores elsewhere. Merchants within downtowns can cooperate to implement a similar coupon campaign.

Another form of joint advertising is a **downtown web site**. These enable the promotion of an image and identity for the downtown area, and profile local businesses, either by linking to their own site where they have one, or by posting information about local businesses. Of course, web sites also provide an opportunity to present a wealth of other

information such as events in the downtown, the history of the community, a directory of services available downtown, etc.

Examples of downtown web sites in Ontario include:

Peterborough: <http://dbia.accel.net/>

Belleville: <http://www.downtown.belleville.on.ca/>

Kingston: <http://www.whatsonkingston.com/shopping/downtownk/>

Pembroke: <http://www.pembrokedowntown.com/>

Campbellford: <http://www.visitcampbellford.ca/>

North Bay: <http://www.city.north-bay.on.ca/downtown/nwsupdte.htm>

Midland: <http://www.georgianbaytourism.on.ca/members/downtownmidland.htm>

Orangeville: <http://www.orangeville.org/tourism.php?tid=3>

Bancroft: <http://www.commerce.bancroft.on.ca/bancroft.html>

Smiths Falls: <http://www.town.smiths-falls.on.ca/business/bia.html>

Useful advice and assistance on the process of developing a web site can often be obtained from:

- local or regional marketing and communications companies
- regional media businesses
- your Internet services provider (ISP) if you have one
- perhaps the downtown web site could be a link off your local municipality's site, if one exists
- community colleges (several downtowns have had their web site created by community college students as a demonstration project, so check out this possibility if you can)
- somebody in the Board of Directors of the BIA or Chamber of Commerce who has knowledge and skill in the field

- most youth! (a family member, or through your town's Community Access Program, usually sponsored by local libraries, or the municipality)

In contrast, it is relatively simple to solicit interest in, and develop, a joint advertising campaign in your community.

Steps to Develop a Joint Marketing or Advertising Campaign

1. **Solicit initial interest:** Talk to a few of the retail and service businesses in town to determine their general level of interest.
2. **Determine possibilities:** Check with local media to determine prices for certain sized ads (e.g. a 1-page ad, or a 30-second spot). Ensure that they are aware that this benefits not just those businesses participating, but also the downtown and community overall, and ensure that you are getting the best possible price as a result.
3. **Determine pricing:** Once you know the media cost, determine the cost per individual participant. This will, of course be heavily influenced by the number of participants, and the minimum number of participants needed to make the ad feasible.
4. **Solicit broad interest:** Communicate with all businesses in the downtown to determine their level of interest and commitment to participation. Sign them up and collect their money. If there is widespread interest, develop a plan for a timed series of ads.
5. **Design the ad:** Work with your media partners i.e. newspaper or broadcaster to design an attractive and interesting ad. Use the image and identity for your downtown if one has been developed.
6. **Place the ad:** Make arrangements to run the ad at the most opportune time. Use the opportunity to remind your media partner that as the quid pro quo for placing your advertising with them, that you expect from time to time

positive stories about the downtown redevelopment efforts. Offer to help them by identifying potential story items and possibly volunteer to write articles about the downtown revitalization efforts.”

Design Guidelines & Program Concept

Design Guidelines:

From: Government of Ontario - www.reddi.gov.on.ca

“Effective guidelines, developed with the input of the business community and implemented by the municipality have proven to increase investment in the downtown. Guidelines establish realistic ground rules for renovations/restoration and new infill development, as well as signage. These tools offer a form of quality control and actually protect the investment of property owners involved in the revitalization “partnership”.

A downtown design committee composed of representatives of the municipality, business community and other volunteers with a design background can be an effective organization to promote and manage good quality and realistic design improvements for downtown businesses.

Typically design guidelines offer advice for the following: architectural definitions, historical evolution of a building façade and influences, design options flowchart, building materials, display windows and entry ways, doors, upper story windows, ornamental cornice, awnings, colour and signage.”

Financial Incentive Programs:

A number of municipalities in Ontario have adopted a financial incentive program to encourage commercial storefronts upgrades and exterior building improvements. One of the more effective initiatives is the Building Revitalization Program of the City of Cambridge. Listed below is information regarding the key aspects of this program.

This program provides interest free and partially forgivable loans for property improvements that focus on improving the street appearance of buildings and encourage structural and weather/waterproofing repairs. All properties in the defined downtown area are eligible to access this funding initiative.

The City of Cambridge will provide interest free loans of up to 50% of the cost of certain types of building improvements – with a loan ceiling of \$20,000 per building with a partial forgiveness of up to 35%.

As well the City provides a \$750 grant for professional design service for each property in the downtown area. Other financial incentives include exemptions for development charges, sign permit fees and building permit fees.