



JANUARY 2009
revised 2019

**DOWNTOWN - HIGHWAY 11/FRONT STREET CORRIDOR
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN
PLAN D'AMÉLIORATION COMMUNAUTAIRE**



Adopted by Council
By-law No. 04-09 on
JANUARY 13TH, 2009
amended on July 10, 2019
by By-law No. 48-19

PREPARED FOR:

CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF HEARST

Centre-Ville Hearst Downtown Central Business District
Improvement Area
Hearst and Area Economic Development Corporation

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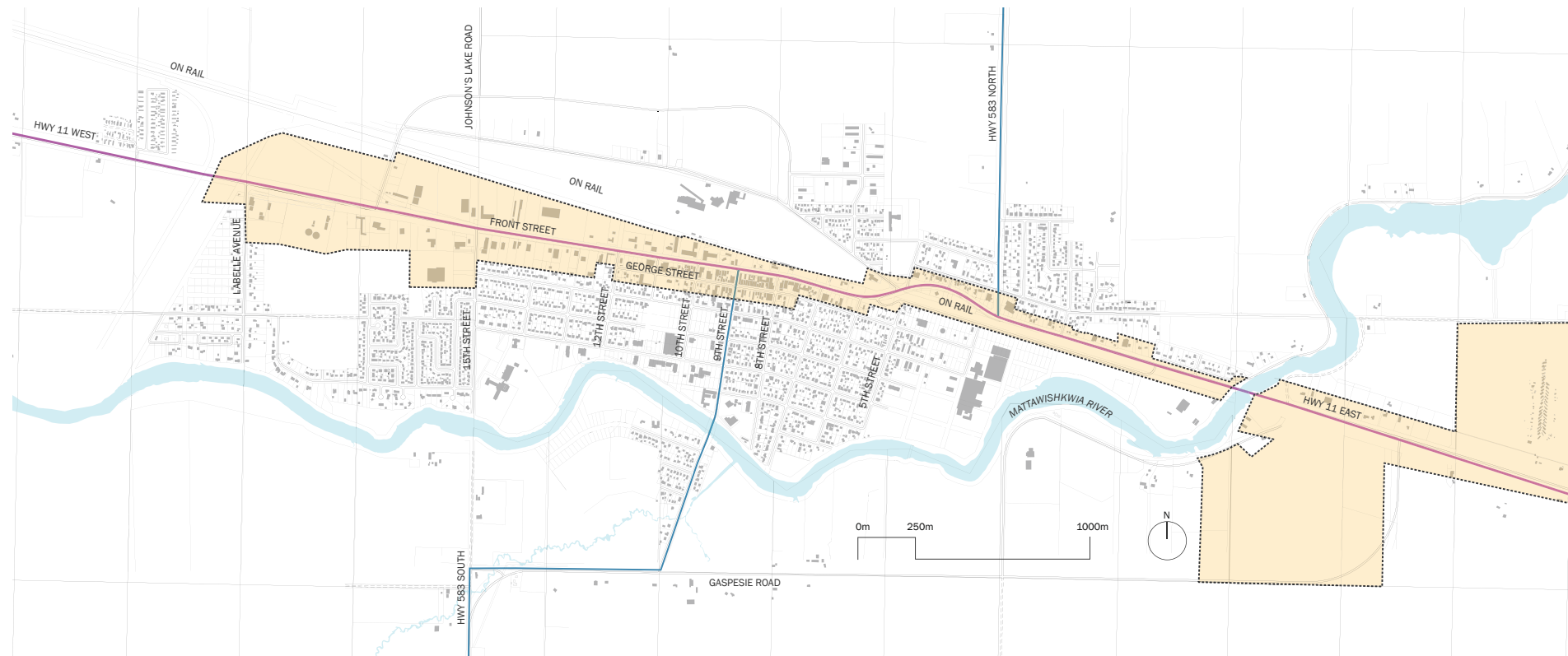
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WITH FUNDING ASSISTANCE FROM:

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND CORPORATION



MAP OF HEARST WITH CIP PROJECT AREA

1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hearst is located on the Trans-Canada Highway 11 in the Cochrane District of Northeastern Ontario. It has a predominantly French-speaking population of 5,620 and functions as a regional referral area for a much larger population estimated at 10,000. Post-secondary education, health, social, business and financial services are provided to other communities as far west as Constance Lake and Longlac, southwest to Hornepayne, and eastwards to Mattice. Due to the catchment area's relative isolation and the considerable distances to major urban centres, the community's commercial sector is fairly well-developed and offers a wide range of goods and services in response to the Town's broader role as a service centre.

The community was originally named "Grant", and was founded by early settlers during the mid 1800's. In 1911, it was renamed "Hearst" in honour of the Provincial Minister of Lands, Forests and Mines. Hearst grew rapidly with the development of the Transcontinental Railway, becoming the divisional point between CNR Northern Route and the Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railroads. Hearst was incorporated as a municipality in 1922. Its economic mainstay has been the lumber industry, beginning first as homestead logging to supply the railways and pulp mills, then evolving to present day large sawmill and panel manufacturing operations that supply American and Canadian markets.

During this time of considerable change when Hearst is experiencing declines in its commercial labour markets, the need to focus planning, design and community action is paramount. The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) initiated by the Town of Hearst and its partners, the Centre Ville Hearst Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA) and the Hearst Economic Development Corporation (EDC), provides a unique opportunity to draw on past efforts and achieve a concerted plan of action that cements the community's economic pillars adopted under the *Perspective 2020 InSight* process. By seeking tangible participation of Hearst's commercial drivers in the BIA and Highway 11 commercial sector, the CIP process is granted the best opportunity to ensure real growth at the entrepreneurial level from where true lasting value is derived.

The Town of Hearst has many assets – and potential opportunities – that will be well-supported by a CIP. As a regional centre for both residents and outlying communities, the CIP will enhance existing businesses and will result in an increased range of services. Through study and public consultation, the CIP will provide direction for improvements within the Community Improvement Project Area, which will attract more businesses, tourists and visitors to the community. The goals, objectives, design guidelines and implementing tools capitalize on the strong spirit and heritage of the community (e.g. francophone history and forestry sector), while considering up and coming concepts (e.g. green technology, biofuels, ecotourism). Based on current and anticipated

declines in the forestry sector and anticipated economic opportunities of the mining industry, the creation of a professional service sector could spark new ventures and opportunities in the Community.

With a well established reputation as a hub for outdoor recreation, Hearst is host to thousands of tourists every year for activities that include fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, camping, swimming, canoeing, golf and more.

As part of the improvement to the Town's services, Hearst is undertaking improvements to several of its parks and public spaces, including the pedestrianization of and upgrading of the streetscape and facilities along 10th Street, as well as improving connections along the new Sentier de la Rive, creating new recreational opportunities. The Mattawishkvia River runs through the south edge of the Town and historically has taken a backseat to the highway and the railway as a defining element of the Town of Hearst.

The CIP will also facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. "Brownfield" properties are often vacant or under utilized and, in some cases, abandoned due to concerns over environmental liability and the financial costs for site remediation.

Based upon the experience of other municipalities, the implementation of a successful CIP may rely on funding and other forms of assistance from Municipal, Provincial and/or other funding programs.

A recent major study (*Perspective 2020 InSight*) identified the need for the overall enhancement and revitalization of the primary commercial sector and corridor of this community. As a result, the Town and its partners are undertaking the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and strategy for Downtown and Highway 11 Corridor with assistance from a Consulting team consisting of J.L. Richards & Associates Limited (JLR), with planningAlliance (pA) and Commerce Management Group (CMG).

The CIP seeks to foster the renaissance of Hearst retail/service sector by creating local economic tools and empowering Hearst's entrepreneurs to forge new investment in themselves. By structuring the CIP as a shared pathway to success, the Corporation of the Town of Hearst treasures the value of risk and reward and recognizes the mutual responsibility of all local stakeholders.

Hearst remains a strong example of a locally-driven consumer economy that remains operated by owned by local residents. Although national franchises are present and are an integral part of Hearst's business climate, the economic pulse remains driven by local merchants who are fully invested in their future.



1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of the CIP is to develop a tool to address infrastructure deficiencies and facilitate beautification projects identified in *Perspective 2020 InSight*.

The CIP will include incentives to stimulate or encourage private and/or public investments, which can include grants, loans, or other programs for façade improvements, infrastructure works, signage, streetscape and landscaping, and a phasing-in of any increase in taxes that may result from investments within the corridor area. Some of the key points to address in the CIP include:

- To help create a stronger and more stable economic base.
- To promote cleaner and more appealing environments within the Town of Hearst.
- To encourage business retention and growth.
- To balance the relationship between the Highway 11 /Front Street Corridor as a significant transportation route and as a local commercial corridor, as well as its relationship to downtown will also need to be addressed.
- To integrate the areas because complete communities need connections amongst residential, commercial and employment areas.

Whether the reasons are physical, social, economic or environmental, this document will provide a flexible, comprehensive and co-ordinated strategic framework for dealing with lands and buildings in an effort to revitalize this corridor and ensure economic sustainability.

1.2 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT AREA

The Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Project Area is shown on Schedule A to this CIP. This Project Area comprises a five-block area of the Hearst downtown core and a corridor of roughly six kilometres along Highway 11. This area is predominantly commercial, with some larger industrial land uses located towards its eastern and western boundaries. The downtown core is designated as the Centre-Ville Hearst Downtown BIA and has a membership of 80 businesses. Outside of the designated BIA, there are approximately 88 businesses located along the Highway 11 Corridor.

The Highway 11 Corridor is the principal transportation route within, as well as to and from the Town. As the northern route of the Trans-Canada Highway system, it is also the primary route for commercial vehicles and tourists through Hearst. Although part of the Corridor between Twelfth and Fifteenth Streets has become the active focus for new commercial development, other properties outside or just to the east along this major roadway are marred by several brownfield sites (e.g. former gas stations and bulk fuel plants) and older vacant or neglected buildings. In essence, the Highway 11 Corridor does not portray a true image of the vitality and pride that is inherent in all other parts of the community.

The study area for the CIP is relatively narrow and generally follows Highway 11. Based on the variation in character of the different portions of the study area, it can be divided into three sections:

- The downtown area;
- The highway commercial area (Front Street); and
- The highway industrial area (Highway 11).

1.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The CIP was first conceptualized during a recent major study (*Perspective 2020 InSight*) undertaken by the Municipality, which provided the community and its immediate catchment area with an economic strategy and new Official Plan. Its goal is the overall enhancement and revitalization of the primary commercial sector and corridor (downtown core and Highway 11/Front Street strip, respectively) of this community.

Objectives include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing a marketable “identity” or visual signature for the Hearst commercial sector(s);
- Providing directions for façade improvements;
- Providing guidance on landscape improvements and the ‘greening’ of the commercial sector;
- Improving traffic and pedestrian flow and infrastructure, particularly lighting and accessibility;
- Establishing a strategy for the remediation of brownfield sites that addresses the best use, ownership and financing tools;
- Developing program(s) that will provide financial incentives for achieving the CIP;
- Identifying time frames and major milestones to ensure that action is achieved and the plan is a success;
- Creating a business development concept;
- Ensuring that the commercial area is populated and people-oriented by promoting and enhancing associated residential uses.

In addition to cleaning up properties that are often strategically located, redevelopment or reuse would provide the following benefits:

- Revitalization of the downtown core and surrounding area;
- More effective use of existing municipal infrastructure;
- Cleanup of environmentally contaminated sites;
- Increased tax revenue;
- Increased job creation;
- Demonstration of Community pride; and
- Positive change through difficult economic times.

1.4 POLICY FRAMEWORK

A review of applicable studies was completed to determine the policy framework to assess future development in the community improvement project area. The studies referenced ranged from the Official Plan of the Hearst Planning Area; the Strategic Plan entitled *Perspective 2020 InSight*; the Town of Hearst Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and Hearst Zoning By-law No. 65-04. Analysis of these has revealed a consistent theme being the enhancement and promotion of the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Project Area.

In 2002, Hearst embarked on the process of creating a Strategic Plan. Entitled, “*Perspective 2020 InSight*”, it established a community vision for the future and developed strategies for the Town to follow in achieving this future. *Perspective 2020 InSight* included goals and objectives to ensure that a prosperous community is present for the current and future generations of Hearst residents. One of the objectives of the plan was to facilitate a comprehensive beautification program. This is to be accomplished, in part, by preparing “Community Improvement Plans” and developing an implementation strategy.

The Official Plan of the Hearst Planning Area implements *Perspective 2020 InSight*, the Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Official Plan encourages the use of a Community Improvement Plan to revitalize areas in decline or in transition from one land use to another, in declining commercial or mixed use areas where there are a number of vacant or underutilized properties, and in residential areas where the housing stock is in need of maintenance, rehabilitation and/or repair.



1.5 PUBLIC CONSULTATION INFORMATION

In order to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) to redevelopment of the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor, and the policies and programs that could be used to ensure a successful revitalization, key stakeholders in the BIA and Highway 11 commercial sector were invited to participate in various workshops. The purpose of these workshops was to establish a design theme, determine priority areas, establish design guidelines, provide recommendations on the incentive programs (grants, loans, tax assistance, etc.) and advise on the marketing/implementation of the CIP.

The first public presentation was carried out at a council meeting to present the CIP process on August 18, 2008. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the public, key stakeholders and Council of the Study process.

In this respect, the opinions, attitudes and advice of individuals and groups were actively sought as a part of the plan-making process for this plan through a variety of techniques, including:

- Mail out invitations;
- Door-to-door invitations throughout the CIP Project Area;
- Announcements in the local print media;
- Start-up Meeting at a broadcasted Council meeting;
- Survey Questionnaires and follow-up calls; and
- Website link.

One of the unique aspects of public input into this Community Improvement Plan was the creation of Hearst's "Community Improvement Plan Steering Committee", which is comprised of representatives from the Town Council, the Hearst Economic Development Corporation, the Hearst and Area Chamber of Commerce, the Centre-Ville Hearst Downtown (BIA) and businesses along the Front Street Highway corridor.

This Committee was constituted by the Hearst Council in 2007 and was instrumental in determining the CIP Project Area. The Committee was created to capture, in a consistent way, the interests and objectives of various stakeholder groups who could be directly and permanently affected by what the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Plan sets out in its final form. While this Group did not replace the function of individual public input in the planning process, it did help to focus the exchange of comments and ideas among the various stakeholder viewpoints in the various meetings held for that general purpose.

In addition to Town Council meetings, which offered the public opportunities to

comment on the designated Community Improvement Project area boundaries, and to review the draft and final versions of the Community Improvement Plan itself, three public and stakeholder consultation events and a community survey and business sector survey elicited feedback that became the foundation of this plan.

August 18, 2008 - SWOT Analysis Workshop

Approximately 40 people attended this event, held at the Legion, to complete a SWOT analysis of the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor. During the workshop it became clear that there is a desire for a community with a distinct identity – recognizing the importance of the francophone culture and the lumber industry. The need for discussions around a focal point or "anchor" was discussed as was the need for varied functions and activities which are required for the area to prosper.

September 19, 2008 - Community and Business Questionnaires

A bilingual stakeholders questionnaire was also distributed to all businesses and made available on the municipal website. The questionnaire was structured to obtain further feedback on the SWOTs, building on previous survey work and included questions about a design vision for the Study area. A community questionnaire was mailed to all households and also made available on the Town's website.

Both questionnaires were utilized to:

- Identify the current needs and planning requirements to improve our local retail and commercial sectors.
- Assure that the views of all Hearst residents are heard and included in this important community project.
- Forge new alliances among established businesses towards enhancing new economic growth.
- Identify consumer trends and needs.
- Gain insight into business plans.

September 29, 2008 - Design Concepts and Guidelines

The thoughts and ideas expressed at the SWOT Analysis Workshop were grouped into themes and presented to approximately 28 people who attended this event held at the Curling Club. Their tasks were to review design concepts and guidelines describing the desired "end condition" for the area.

A proposed "node" or focal point concept was presented with a structure resembling a burner as the focal point. Preferred design concepts for the corridor identified were discussed as the need for three distinct areas within the CIP Project Area:

- Industrial;

- Highway Commercial; and
- Commercial Core.

December 8, 2008 - Presentation of Draft Community Improvement Plan and Results from Community and Business Questionnaires to Steering Committee / Council and to Stakeholders

The Draft CIP was presented to 10 members of the Steering Committee, of whom one was the mayor and two additional members of Council not associated with the Steering Committee. Approximately 30 people attended the Stakeholders presentation, held at Cinéma Cartier, to review the Draft Community Improvement Plan and results from the Community and Business Questionnaires.

2 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN POLICIES

2.1 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY AND PLANNING POLICIES

SECTION 106 OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001

Section 106(1) and (2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* prohibit municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses. Prohibited actions include:

- a) giving or lending money or municipal property;
- b) guaranteeing borrowing;
- c) leasing or selling any municipal property at below fair market value; and
- d) giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee.

Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* provides an exception to this bonusing rule for municipalities exercising powers under the provisions of Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

SECTION 28 OF THE PLANNING ACT

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows municipalities, with provisions in their Official Plans relating to community improvement, to designate by By-law a "Community Improvement Project Area", and prepare and adopt a Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area. Once the Community Improvement Plan has been adopted by the municipality and comes into effect, the municipality may exercise authority under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in order that the exception provided for in Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* can be applied.

According to Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act*, a "community improvement project area" is defined as "a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of the buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason."

Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act* defines "community improvement" as "the planning or replanning, design or redesign, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable, or other uses, buildings,

structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary."

Once a CIP has come into effect, the municipality may:

- i acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28(3) of the *Planning Act*);
- ii construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28(6));
- iii sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan (Section 28(6)); and
- iv make grants or loans, in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for whole or any part of the eligible costs of the Community Improvement Plan (Section 28(7)).

Section 28(7.1) of the *Planning Act* specifies that the eligible costs of a Community Improvement Plan for the purposes of Subsection 28(7) may include costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities.

Section 28(7.3) of the *Planning Act* specifies that the total of all grants and loans made in respect of particular lands and buildings under Section 28(7) and (7.2) of the *Planning Act* and tax assistance provided under Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* in respect of the land and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the Community Improvement Plan with respect to those lands and buildings.

SECTION 365.1 OF THE MUNICIPAL ACT, 2001

Section 365.1(2) and (3) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* allows municipalities to pass a By-law providing tax assistance to an eligible property in the form of deferral or cancellation of part or all of the taxes levied on that property for municipal and education purposes during the rehabilitation period and development period of the property, both as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* operates within the framework of Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. A municipality with an approved Community Improvement Plan in place that contains provisions specifying tax assistance will be permitted to provide said tax assistance for municipal purposes. Municipalities may also apply to the Minister of Finance

to provide matching education property tax assistance through the Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP).

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 2005

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and is intended to guide municipalities in making planning decisions. The *Planning Act* requires that municipal decisions in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter "shall be consistent with" the PPS.

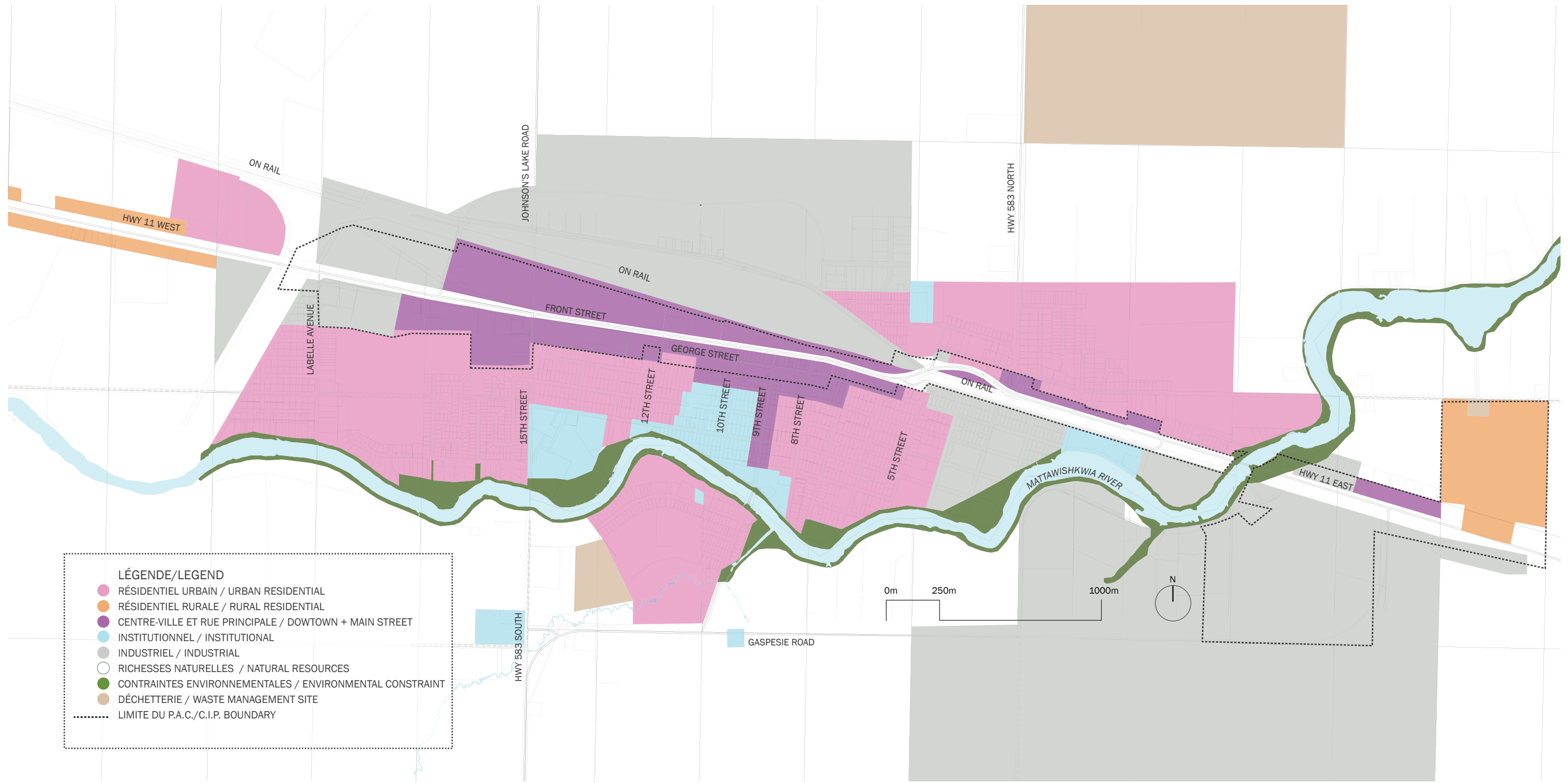
The PPS supports economic stability, business retention, growth remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites. For example, Section 1.7.1 b) of the PPS states that "long term economic prosperity should be supported by maintaining and, where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets."

Also, Section 1.7.1 c) of the PPS states that "long term economic prosperity should be supported by promoting the redevelopment of brownfield sites." Brownfields are defined in the PPS as "undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be under-utilized, derelict or vacant."

The PPS also supports Smart Growth through urban growth management. For example, Section 1.1.3.3 of the PPS states "planning authorities shall identify and promote opportunities for intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated, taking into account existing building stock or areas, including brownfield sites, and the availability of suitable existing or planned infrastructure and public service facilities required to accommodate projected needs." Therefore, the PPS supports downtown revitalization and brownfield redevelopment as a way to achieve the goal of promoting intensification and redevelopment. Other policies in the PPS (Sections 1.1.1 a), 1.1.1 g) and 1.6.2) support the management of growth to achieve efficient development and land use patterns which sustain the financial well-being of the Province and municipalities over the long term. This Community Improvement Plan is consistent with policy statements issued under the Act.

2.2 OFFICIAL PLAN OF THE HEARST PLANNING AREA

The Community Improvement policies in Section 5.3 of the Official Plan set out the rationale for preparing a CIP, criteria to be considered when designating a community improvement project area, priority areas for community improvement, and the range of actions that Council may undertake to implement CIPs.





CONCEPT FOR CIVIC NODE AND GATEWAY AT FRONT AND 9TH STREETS

THE DOWNTOWN OF HEARST IS NOT VISIBLE FROM HIGHWAY 11, MAKING IT INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM OTHER TOWNS. CURRENTLY, TOURISTS HAVE LITTLE REASON TO STOP.

A CIVIC NODE AT THE CORNER OF 9TH AND FRONT WILL MAKE A BOLD IMPRESSION ALONG HIGHWAY 11. TO VISITORS, THIS NODE WILL REVEAL THE COMMUNITY'S VITALITY AND ACT AS A GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN, AS WELL AS INSPIRE THEM TO VISIT THE TOWN'S MANY ASSETS.

3 CIP DESIGN GUIDELINES

3.1 THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Hearst is among several Northern Ontario communities with a history founded on forestry. This industry has undergone such dramatic transformations in recent years, that the futures of many of the towns it helped to create are now in jeopardy.

Challenges

As the traditional forest industry struggles to find its place in a changing economy, towns like Hearst are looking to adapt by embracing sustainable forestry technologies.

As discussed in the introduction, Hearst has a strong commercial base, comprised of three distinct areas - downtown, the highway commercial area and the highway industrial area. Creating connections amongst them is one of the key challenges the Town faces.

Despite a vibrant and active downtown area, it often remains unknown to passers-by travelling along the Front Street corridor, as the corridor offers little information about or impression of the presence of a downtown. Enhancing the connections between downtown and the Front Street corridor is a key challenge.

OPPOSITE PAGE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT) - DOWNTOWN HEARST, GEORGE STREET; WALKING AND CYCLING PATH ALONG HWY 11 WEST; ONE OF HEARST'S ICONIC 'BEEHIVE' BURNERS

In addition, first impressions are key factors in a town's identity. Hearst's vacant buildings and brownfield sites along the Highway 11 Corridor provide visitors passing through Town with the wrong impression. Through discussions with key property owners, the Town would like to revitalize these sites with uses that will enhance the corridor aesthetically and functionally, as well as fostering stability and opening up opportunities for economic growth, expansion and diversification.

3.2 STRENGTHS TO BUILD ON

The Downtown of Hearst, centred on George Street between 8th and 10th Streets, is a vibrant part of Town that attracts locals as well as visitors. The Downtown area would benefit tremendously from having an increased presence through stronger connections to the Front Street corridor. An opportunity exists to make a strong visual connection to downtown from the highway corridor, which this plan proposes, in the form of streetscape improvements on Front Street and at least two north/south streets.

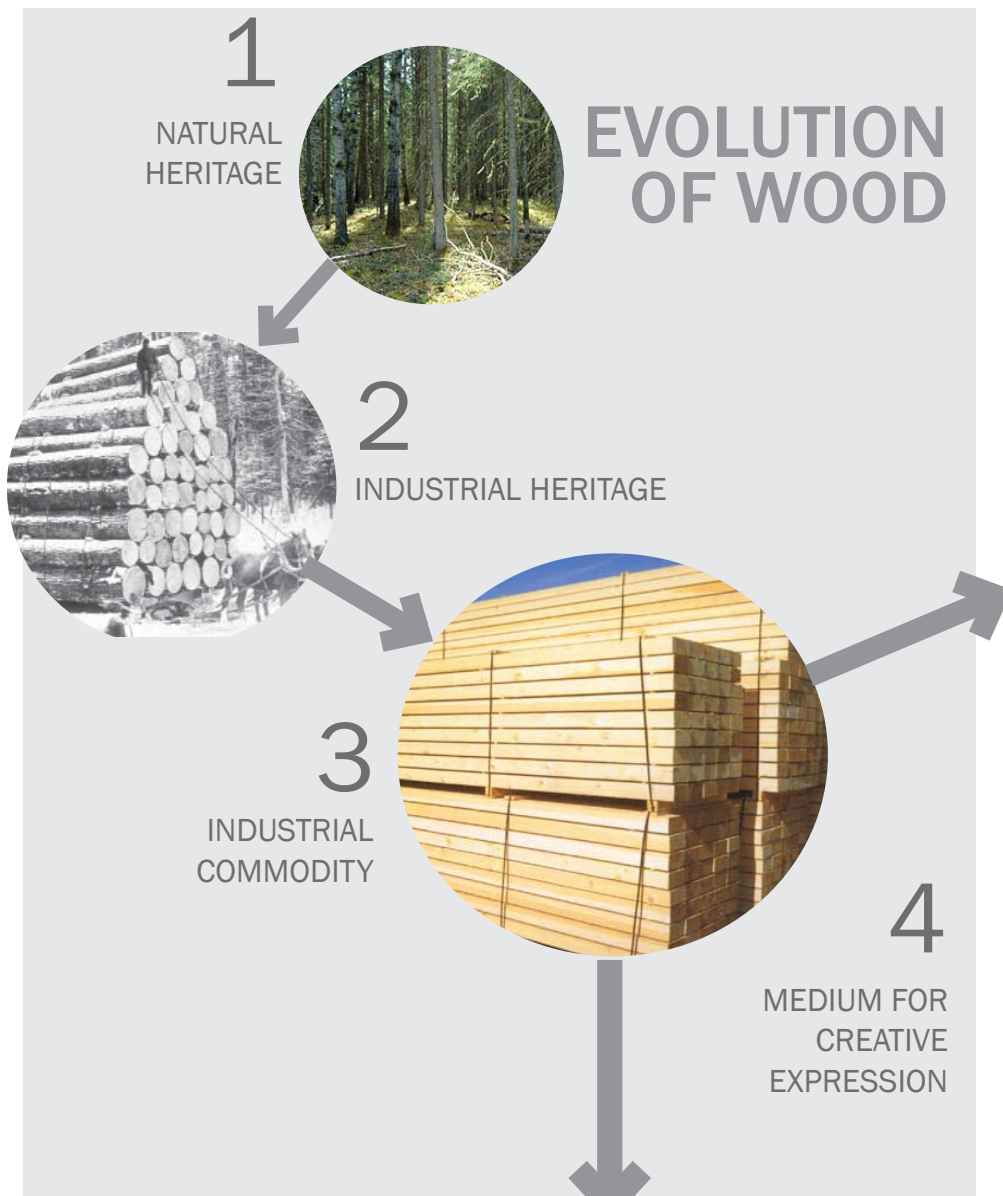
Vacant and underutilized lands and brownfield sites offer opportunities to create new activity nodes, greenspace or properties for redevelopment along the Highway 11/Front Street corridor.

Hearst's three commercial areas - Downtown, Highway Commercial and Highway Industrial - each have their own physical characteristics and conditions. Improvements to these areas will follow their own distinctive guidelines, but will also incorporate elements that unify the community as a whole. The guidelines set out in this Plan provide conceptual direction for the CIP report. The Town of Hearst may elect to complete more detailed site-specific and block-specific Urban Design Guidelines to further elaborate the concepts contained in this plan. The Urban Design Guidelines could provide details recommended to implement the concepts of this plan on a case-by-case basis and could establish a basis for reviewing new development to ensure conformity with the Community Improvement Plan.

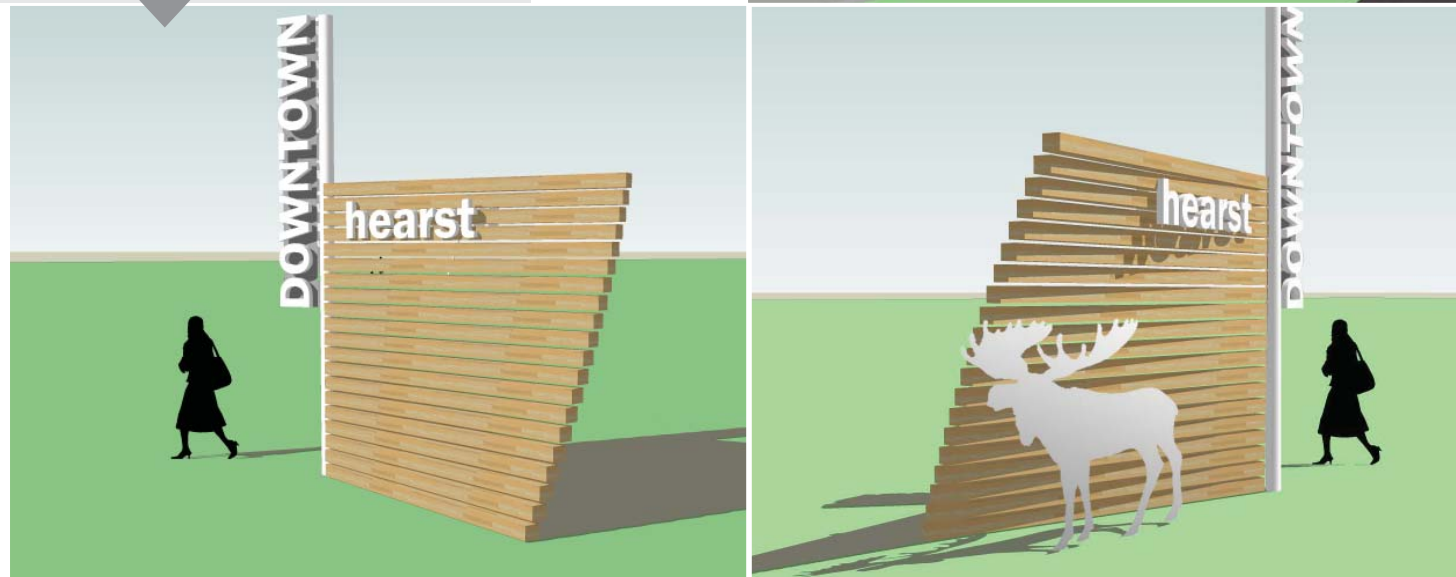
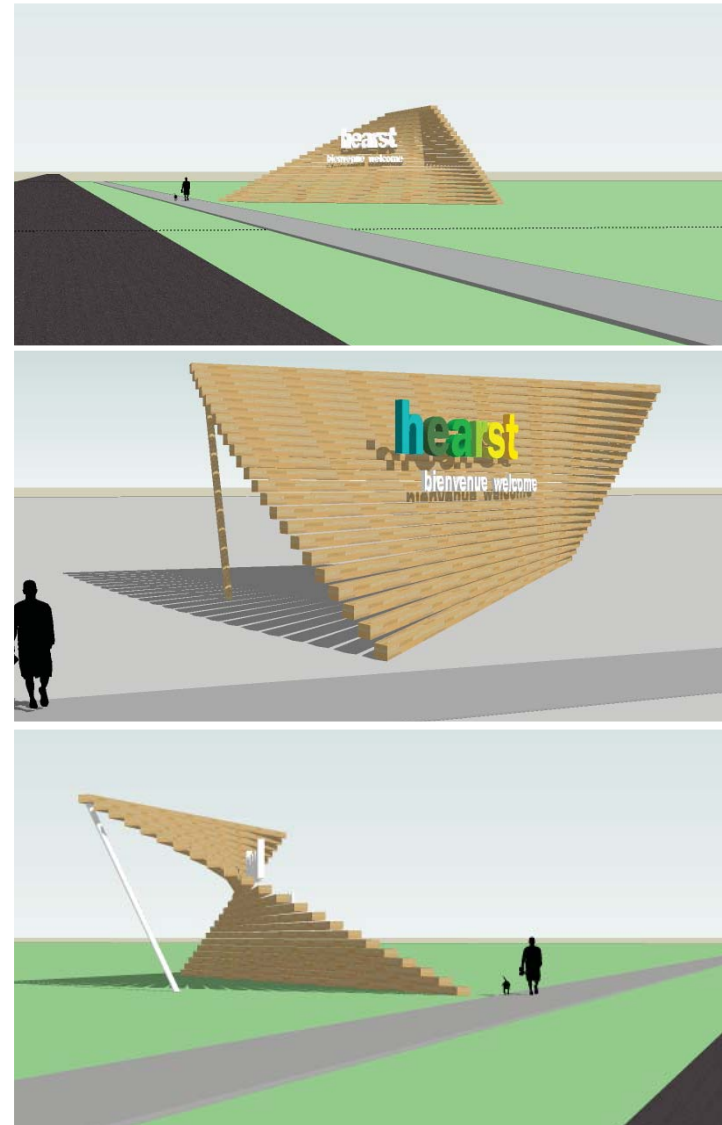
The CIP design guidelines are organized in the following categories:

- Town theme and the Hearst Brand
- Gateways and Landscaped Entry Points
- Corridors and Streetscape Design
- Activity Nodes and Public Space
- Street Furnishings
- Trails and Connections
- Accessibility
- Façade Improvements





TOWN GATEWAY CONCEPT - THE APPROACH, THE PASS AND LOOKING BACK



DOWNTOWN GATEWAY CONCEPT - TWO VIEWS

3.3 TOWN THEME AND THE HEARST BRAND

As the primary element of a Town theme for the Community Improvement Plan, wood symbolizes the potential of sustainable forestry, as well as the significant founding industry of Hearst. As the self-proclaimed moose capital of Canada, it is appropriate for the Town to adopt the icon of the moose in its imagery. Together, wood as a material and the moose as an icon will make up the Town theme. Opportunities to carry the Town theme forward are identified in the following categories:

- Gateways
- Streetscape elements
- Activity nodes

The approach to the theme is to treat wood as a material or as an essence. The inherent qualities of wood - nature, warmth, strength, flexibility - can be exploited in countless ways, making it a versatile tool for expressing an idea or feeling, depending on the context and application. The examples on this page illustrate how the simple manipulation of a traditional wood image - the wood pile - can be recontextualized and given a new identity as a material for creative expression for the community, symbolizing the transition of their economies.

An iconic moose imagery can be introduced in support of and complementary to the wood theme. It is recommended that the Town undergo a graphic identity exercise as part of their re-branding, which can then be applied and coordinated throughout the Town's identity program, from stationary to signage and gateways. On a gateway element, for example, the moose graphic could be applied as part of or in addition to a sculptural wood structure (see image bottom right)

Other unique features of Hearst, including the Francophone community, its status as an education centre, outdoor recreation, are important and should be recognized in support of the wood theme where opportunities exist.

3.4 GATEWAYS AND LANDSCAPED ENTRY POINTS

Well-defined gateways create both a symbolic and physical entrance to the downtown, define an identity, and mark the transition between the different areas.

The approach for gateways is to create a sense of arrival for each of the areas, starting with the largest impact as one approaches the edge of the Town from any direction, reducing the scale of impact as one approaches the centre of Hearst. This is the scale of the streetscape as one travels in that direction from a larger/car-dependant mobility to a smaller/pedestrian mobility as one approaches the downtown.



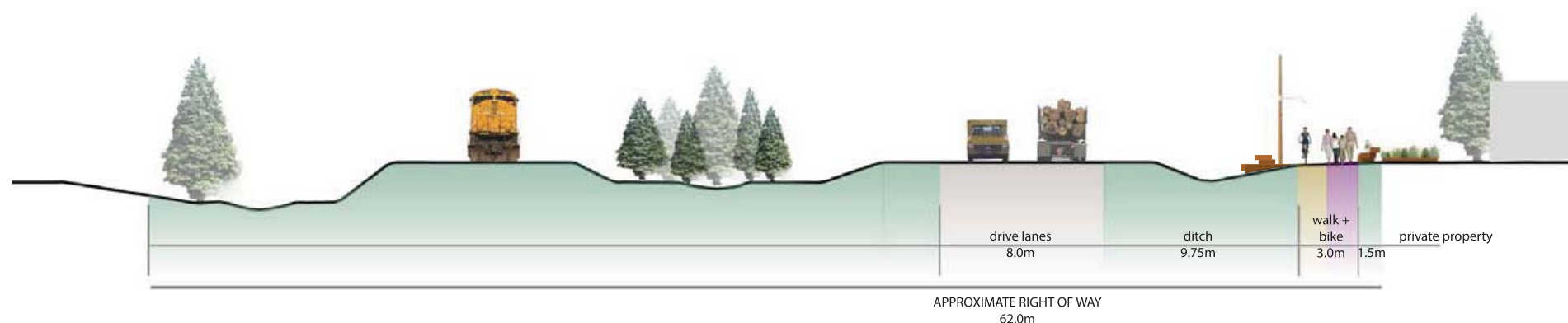
TOWN GATEWAY CONCEPT



EXISTING GATEWAY INTO HEARST



CONCEPT FOR LANDSCAPED DOWNTOWN ENTRY POINT AT 9TH AND FRONT STREETS



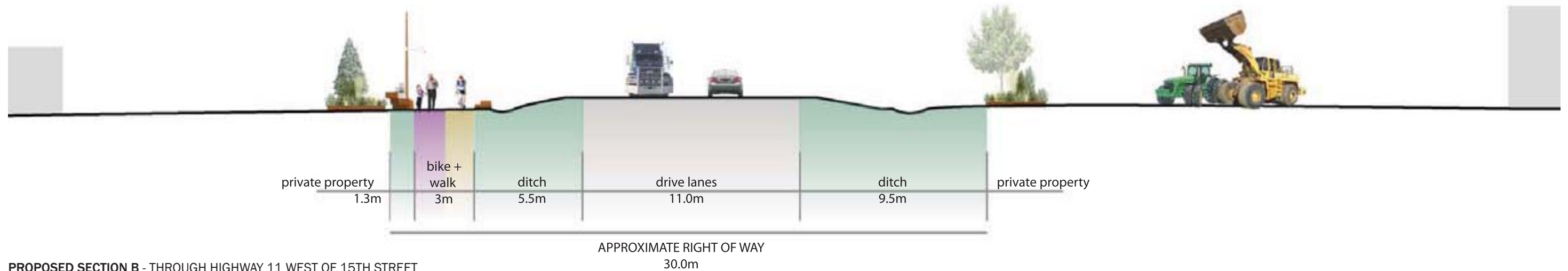
PROPOSED SECTION A - THROUGH HIGHWAY 11 EAST OF HIGHWAY 583 NORTH

3.5 CORRIDORS AND STREETScape DESIGN

‘Streetscape’ is a term that refers to the system of streets, sidewalks, landscaping and open space as a whole. The streetscape is how we experience an area and the ease with which we move through it is determined by the quality of the streetscape. The following provides a description of ‘streetscape’ for each of the three areas.

Highway Industrial Corridor

Although the Trans-Canada Highway 11 right of way east of the ONR crossing and west of 15th Street is managed by the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO), the condition of the entire highway passing through Hearst is crucial to the appearance and functionality of Hearst, as has been expressed by stakeholders.



PROPOSED SECTION B - THROUGH HIGHWAY 11 WEST OF 15TH STREET

The existing character of the streetscape in this section is a mix of uses with industrial sites along the road. The road is loosely defined by the edge of asphalt paving, with an asphalt trail set far from the road on one side only. The buildings are few and far between and set far back from the road.

Based on the objectives in the CIP, below is a list of recommendations that addresses the issues related to the highway industrial corridor:

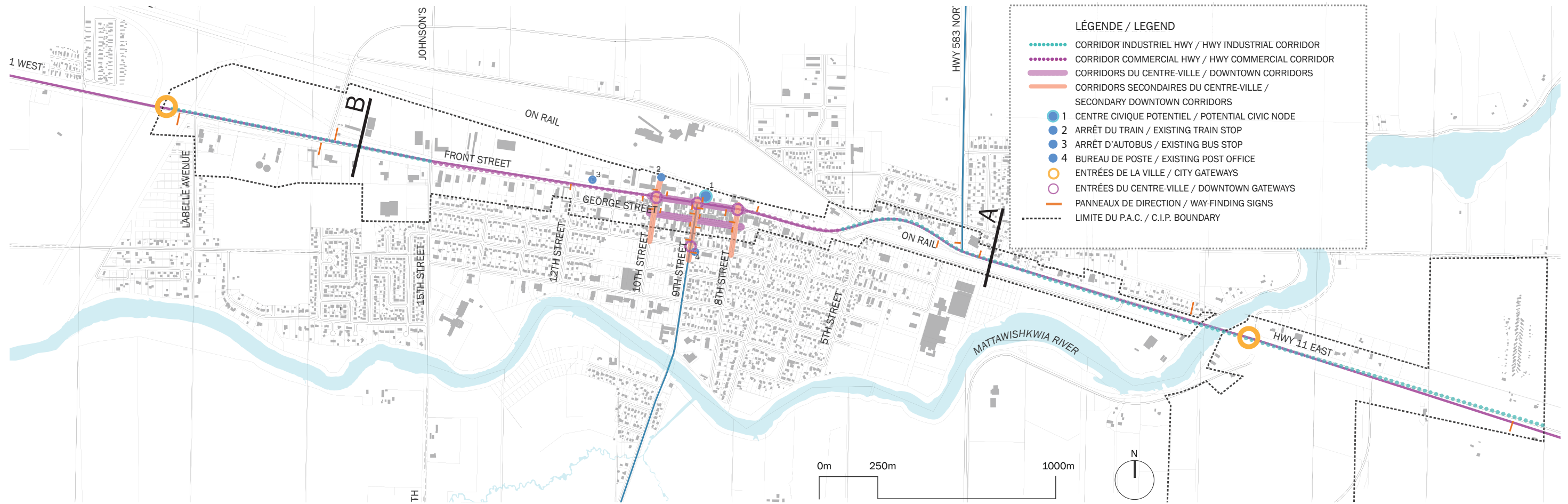
- Reduce property entrance widths to operational minimum. Define property access clearly with two lanes that allow for safe, simultaneous entry and exit. Typical lane width is approximately 3.5m. The remainder of property edge should be landscaped, preventing vehicular access through, essentially acting as an attractive barrier.
- Prevent migration of gravel from yards onto highway by paving section of driveway closest to highway paving, aligning it with landscaped edge as a general rule (see images to the right for example).
- Support 'greening' of Corridor through landscaping on private properties by making information available to property owners on landscaping media and techniques. A brochure could summarize this information effectively as well as illustrate to the owner the impact their efforts could have on the Corridor as a whole when combined with others' efforts. A low-maintenance horticultural hedge on the front edge of the property could act as a low 'screen' (1m) and help conceal potential industrial equipment on the ground, while revealing views above itself to important signage and structures for identification from the highway. This green 'screen' could also partially conceal any necessary security fence or structure that is in a state of disrepair or otherwise unsightly.
- Improve pedestrian and cycling paths by upgrading the surface paving and

providing path lighting where deemed essential for user safety after dark. Consider solar electric lighting to minimize installation costs, but should not compromise on light levels.

- Add more benches along paths as part of a strategy for promoting walking and cycling in a long-term plan that reflects an ageing, more health-conscious population. These benches should be coordinated with the Town theme, as described in the section *Town Theme and The Hearst Brand*.
- Business signage along the Industrial Corridor should be standardized through an approvals process if not already the case. Signage on buildings is addressed under the *Façade Improvements* section of this report. Signage that is located along the side of the road should not obstruct visibility and, therefore, should be positioned at a height above grade (at least 3m) that will offer clear views for pedestrians as well as vehicle operators. The graphic design of these signs should relate to that of the signage on the building for continuity. The structure supporting the signage should have a proper footing and be plumb and level. Temporary or mobile signage is not recommended as it tends to be of lower quality and obstructs visibility because of its proximity to the ground. The scale of the roadside signage should be such that the text is legible from a distance but not so large that it is disproportionate to the neighbouring signage.

EXISTING CONDITIONS - HIGHWAY INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

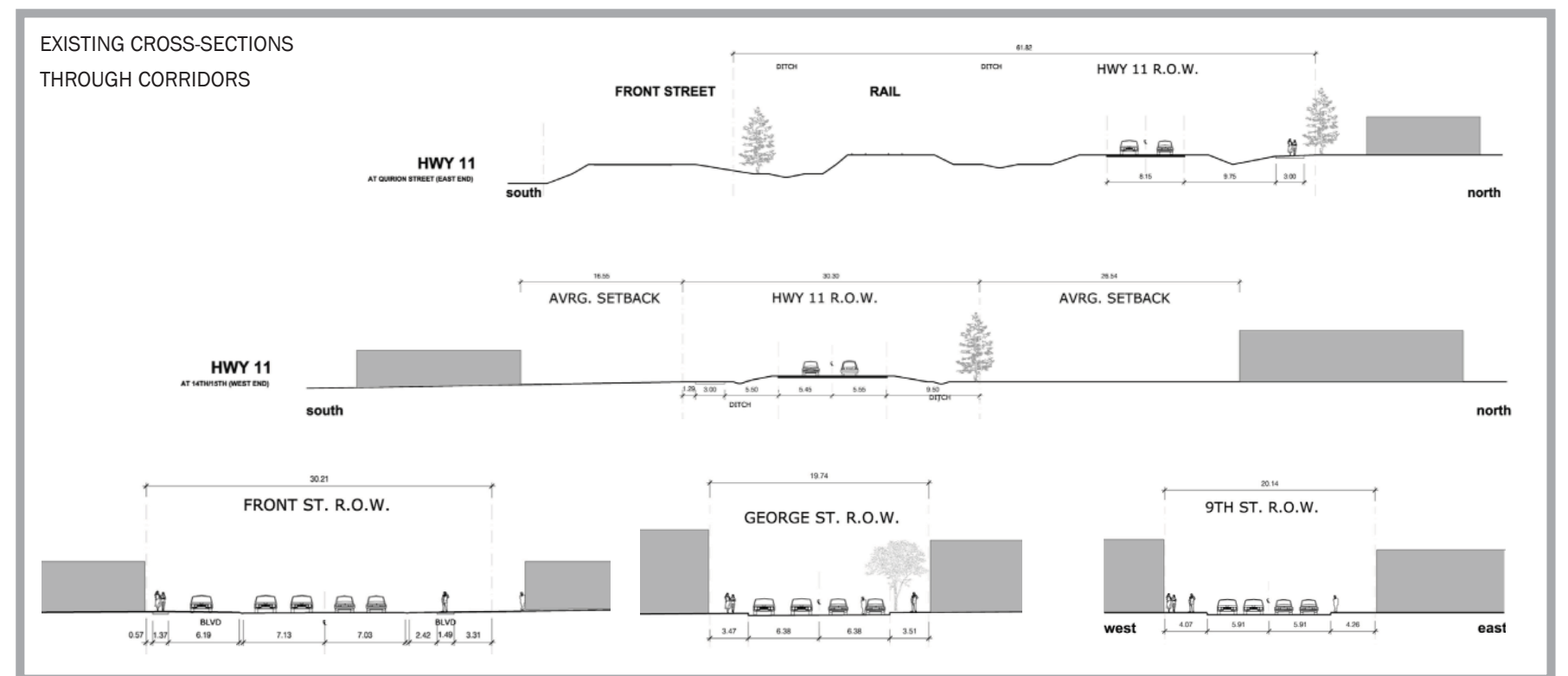


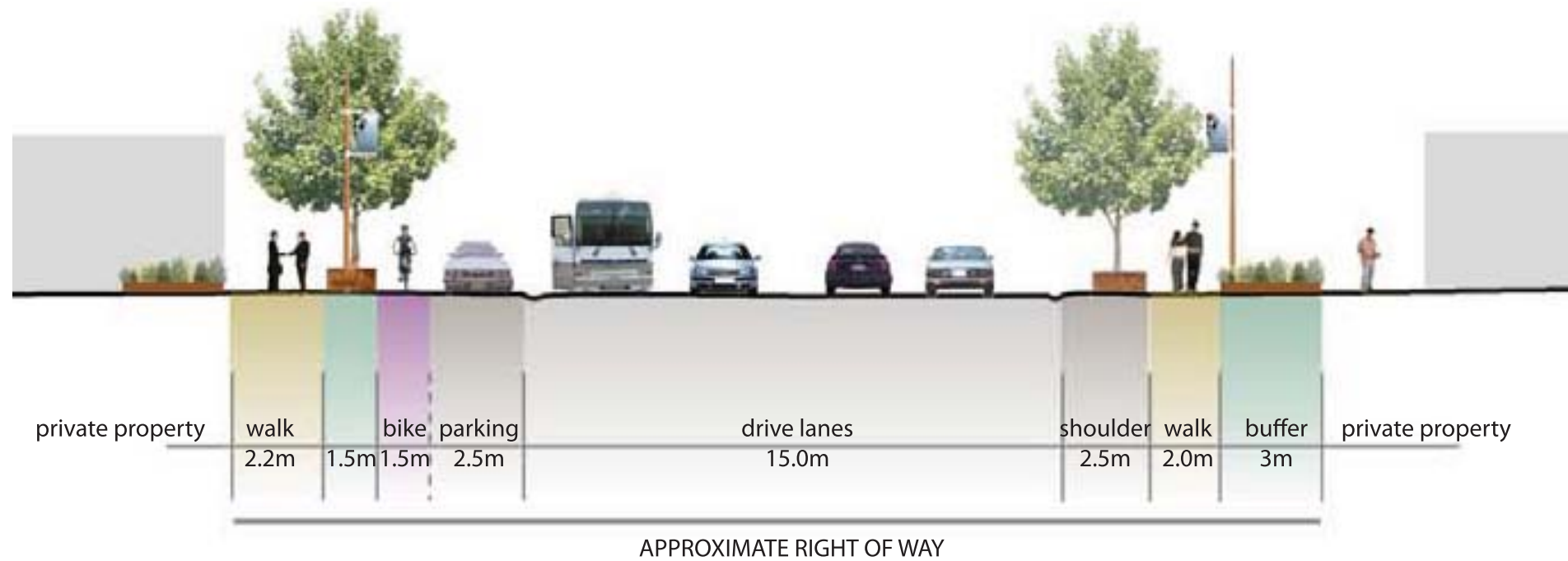


MAP OF CENTRAL HEARST - NODES AND CORRIDORS & CROSS-SECTION LOCATIONS



MAP DETAIL OF CENTRAL HEARST - NODES AND CORRIDORS & CROSS-SECTION LOCATIONS





PROPOSED SECTION C - THROUGH FRONT STREET NEAR 10TH STREET

Highway Commercial Corridor

The portion of the corridor roughly between 15th and 6th (ONR crossing) Streets is under municipal control (connecting link) and has been identified as the Highway Commercial Corridor, based on site visits and stakeholder input. Although the width of the right of way for this portion of the corridor is approximately the same as that of the highway industrial portion, the difference in the streetscape is significant. The density along this corridor is higher and the pedestrian realm has more emphasis. With the multitude of hydro poles and street lamps, it feels visually congested. In general, the Highway Commercial Corridor would benefit from creating a safer and more defined pedestrian realm and a 'greening' of its edges.

Recommended improvements for the Highway Commercial Corridor include:

- Implement an overall traffic-calming through speed limit reduction and the introduction of bold 'zebra-striping' at pedestrian crossings. These stripes can be achieved by painting white stripes, or paving stripes with two highly contrasting colours. These colours should be coordinated with those of the Downtown for visual connectivity. The width of the crossing should be a minimum of 2m for long distance visibility and emphasizing pedestrian activity on Front Street.
- Removable planters with trees between 8th and 10th Streets would be an effective way of creating a connection with the Downtown character during the spring, summer and fall, in addition to further slowing down the

traffic.

- Encourage property owners to landscape the front of their property, preferably contained within a raised curb or planter, effectively defining the edge of the Highway Commercial Corridor.
- Reduce commercial entrance widths to operational minimum. This can be enforced through site plan approval for new developments or redevelopments.
- Promote permeable paving for parking lots as part of a sustainability strategy for on-site stormwater management for new developments, as well as redevelopments.
- Improve sidewalk standards through upgrading of paving, and the introduction of bollards where increased pedestrian safety is warranted at street crossings. Paving should be coordinated with sidewalks downtown.
- Provide continuous sidewalk through commercial corridor on north side, complete with marked crossings.
- Introduce wayfinding and promotional sign program that recognizes the Highway Commercial character and scale, and the Town theme.
- Brownfield sites, vacant or underutilized properties along the corridor that are not slated for redevelopment are an opportunity for creating a 'forest within the Town' through the planting of trees, shrubs and ground cover. Consideration should be given for species that can contribute effectively to site remediation.



EXISTING CONDITIONS - VACANT SITE; GRAVEL MIGRATING ONTO PATH AND ROAD



EXISTING CONDITIONS - ROAD EDGE DEFINED BY LANDSCAPING ; DEFINED PROPERTY ACCESS



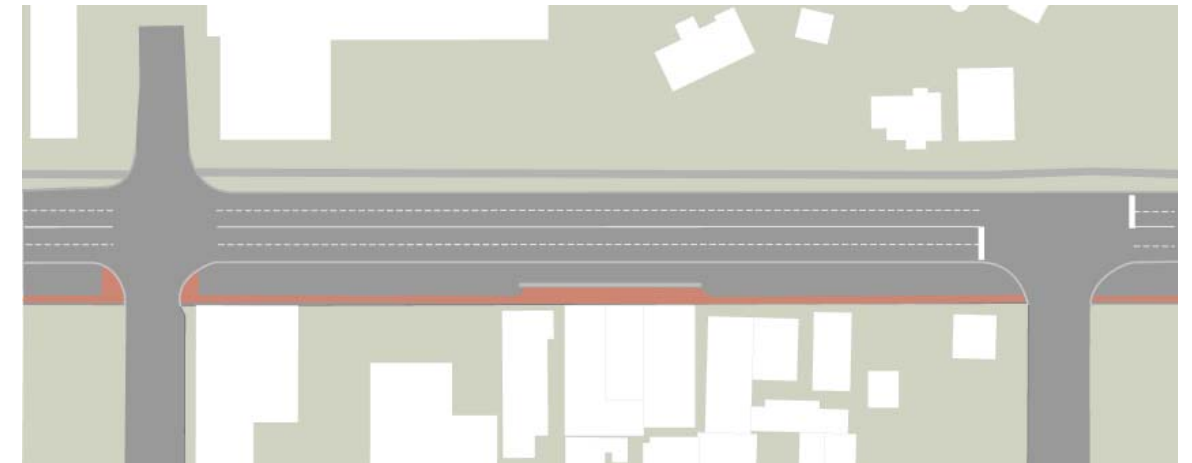
PRECEDENT - LANDSCAPED ROAD EDGE - FORMER HIGHWAY 11, NORTH BAY



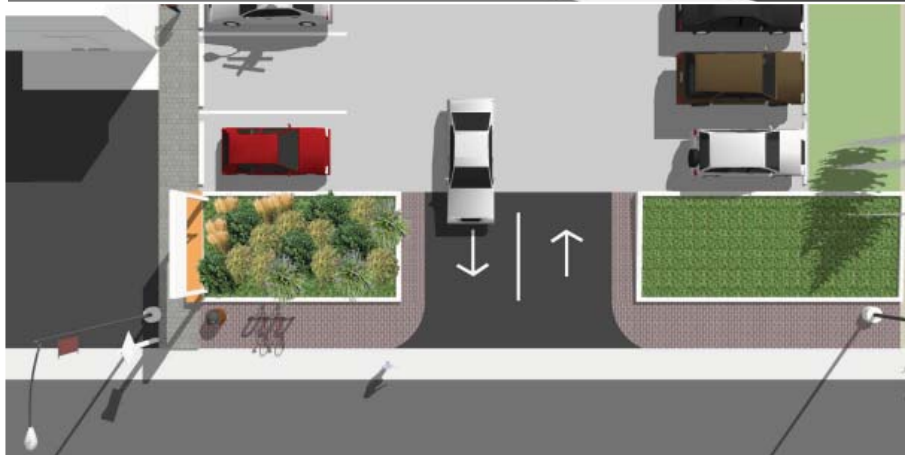
BEFORE



EXISTING CONDITIONS - FRONT STREET



EXISTING PLAN OF FRONT STREET BETWEEN 9TH AND 10TH STREETS

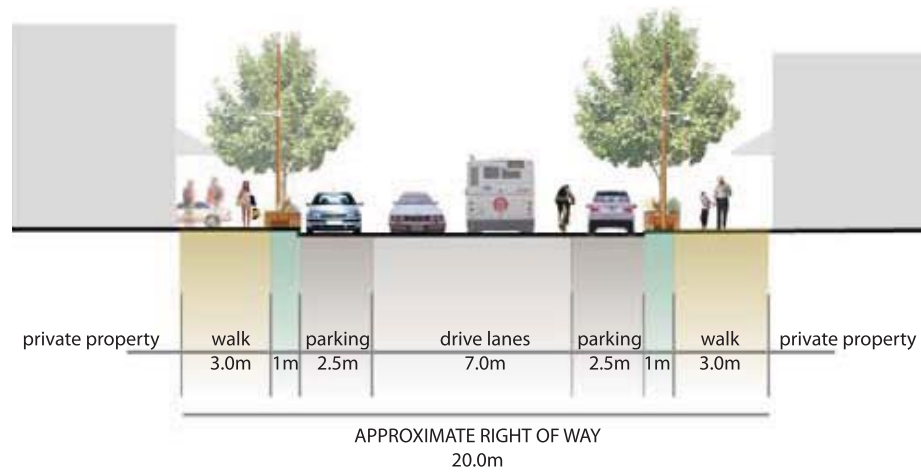


AFTER

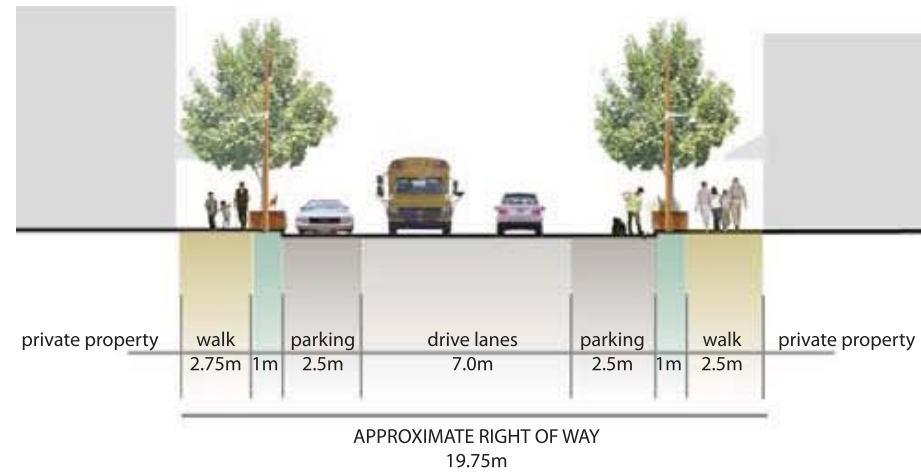
CONCEPT FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVEWAY WITH 2 PAVED ACCESS LANES AND LANDSCAPING



CONCEPT PLAN FOR FRONT STREET BETWEEN 9TH AND 10TH STREETS



PROPOSED SECTION D - THROUGH 9TH STREET NEAR GEORGE STREET



PROPOSED SECTION E - THROUGH GEORGE STREET NEAR 9TH STREET



EXISTING CONDITIONS - GEORGE STREET; 9TH STREET

Downtown Corridors

The downtown core, defined as the Centre-Ville Hearst Downtown BIA is visibly more pedestrian oriented than the other commercial areas. During the mid-eighties, the Town underwent a successful overhaul of its downtown streetscape, which has had a positive impact on the downtown.

Front Street is considered to be part of the downtown core but its current character is more related to the Highway Commercial area. Improvements to Front Street character should enhance visual connections to the downtown.

One of the key objectives for the improvement to Front Street is to create a safer environment for pedestrians and to effect a 'slowing down' of vehicular traffic, as described in the previous section - Highway Commercial Corridor.

Although most of the downtown businesses are on the east/west streets, improvements to the north/south streets are equally important in enhancing connections between George Street and Front Street, and creating a consistent downtown character throughout the area.

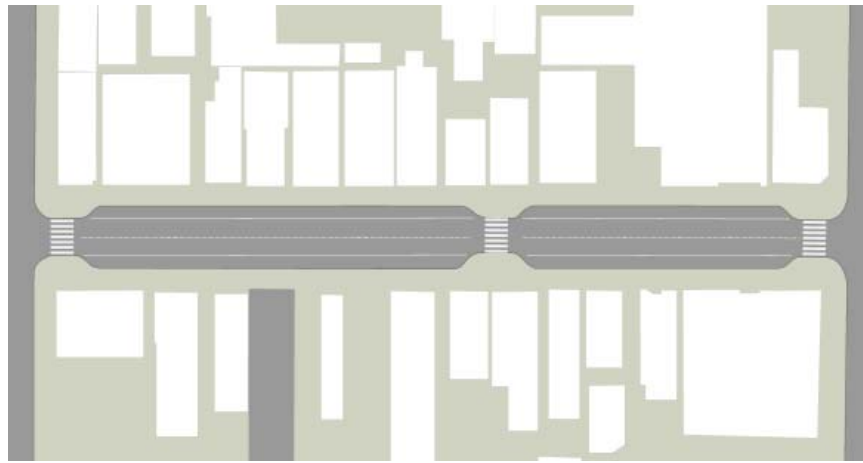
As discussed, the BIA completed enhancements to George Street in the 1980s. In addition, it is fortunate that the restaurants on George Street are on the north side of the street, since it offers better exposure to sunlight during the cold Northern winter months and makes them more inviting, which is better for business. Improvements to the public realm could build on these existing assets.

Recommendations for improvements to the downtown streetscapes include:

- Promote permeable paving for parking lots, including the municipal parking

lot on George Street, as part of a sustainability strategy for on-site stormwater management for new developments, as well as redevelopments.

- Increase sidewalks where possible by reducing driving lane widths where right of way allows.
- Add a row of trees where the right of way permits.
- Standardize lighting, street furniture and landscaped surfaces throughout Downtown
- Adopt a wayfinding and promotional sign program that reflects both the downtown scale and the Town theme.
- Promote public realm with addition of street furniture, and the introduction of patio seating during the spring, summer and fall. This will attract more local residents, as well as retain more visitors to the area by offering them a place to sit back and enjoy the scenery or enjoy a refreshment or snack in between shopping and other activities in the area.
- Introduce small civic nodes at existing bump-outs where possible by re-organizing street furniture elements and introducing new ones. This can be achieved by installing bollards for safety, and trees, benches and garbage cans.
- Develop pedestrian connection from the train station to Front Street with new sidewalk and path lighting, and wayfinding at the intersection of Front and 10th Streets.



EXISTING PLAN OF GEORGE STREET BETWEEN 9TH AND 10TH STREETS

1 OPTION 1-A permanent bump-outs on north side

ADVANTAGES:

- Increased sidewalk at 2 new integrated bump-outs with trees
- Maintain most parking spaces
- More attractive due to permanence

DISADVANTAGES:

- Loss of approximately 5 parking spaces on the north side
- Permanent bump-outs make winter maintenance more challenging

OPTION 1-B removable bump-outs (planters)

ADVANTAGES:

- Removable tree planters create impression of bump-outs without hindrance to winter maintenance
- Flexibility of tree placement
- Trees will be protected from vehicles, snow and salt during winter months

DISADVANTAGES:

- Limited appeal of planters on pavement - will look somewhat temporary
- Removable tree planters must be installed, removed and stored yearly

2 OPTION 2-A wider sidewalk and no parking north side

ADVANTAGES:

- Sidewalk widens by 2.5m, more space for public realm
- Additional space on north side; ideal for terraces and accessibility ramps outside property line
- Two-way traffic

DISADVANTAGES:

- No parking on north side

OPTION 2-B wider sidewalk, one-way street with parking

ADVANTAGES:

- Sidewalk widens by 2.5m, more space for public realm
- Maintain all parking spaces
- No hindrance to winter maintenance on north side
- Possible angled parking (45 degrees) on north side

DISADVANTAGES:

- One-way traffic
- Potential challenge for commercial loading/unloading

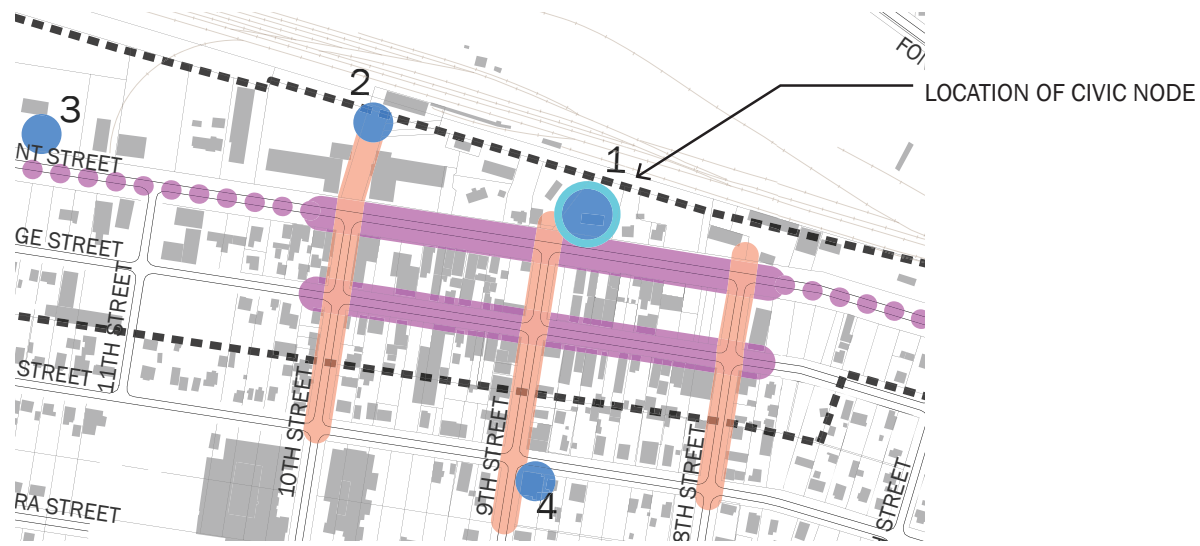


CONCEPT PLAN FOR GEORGE STREET BETWEEN 8TH AND 9TH STREETS - OPTION 1



POTENTIAL PLAN OF GEORGE STREET BETWEEN 8TH AND 9TH STREETS - OPTION 2

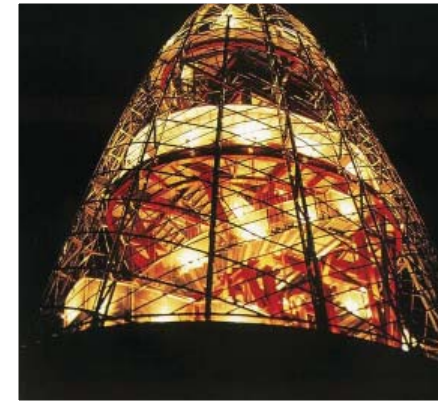
CONCEPT PLAN OF DOWNTOWN



CONCEPT FOR CIVIC NODE ON BROWNFIELD SITE AT FRONT AND 9TH STREETS - BIRD'S EYE VIEW



PRECEDENT FOR VIEWING TOWER



3.6 ACTIVITY NODES AND PUBLIC SPACE

The recognition of the importance of public space in cities and towns has had a resurgence in North America and worldwide in recent years due to the realization that quality of life depends highly on the quality of public space, and less on the personal attainment of things. Increasingly, people are feeling the need to connect to others in meaningful ways through community involvement and shared public space. In addition, the creation of a new public space is often tied to the revitalization of the community. Feedback from the public suggests that a similar sentiment is emerging in Hearst. Furthermore, a series of civic nodes along 10th Street was proposed in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2005-2015, which, together, form a pedestrian focused linear civic space, named “Le Corridor”.

In support of this, we propose that activity nodes be enhanced for Hearst. An activity node can be described as a specific place within the larger public domain. The scale of a node ranges from a bench on a sidewalk bump-out to a park or civic centre, for example. Their purpose is to foster community vitality, whether in the form of an organized event or impromptu conversations on a sidewalk bench. The health and sustainability of a community depends on access to public space such as those where vitality can emerge and thrive.

The state of public space in Hearst is relatively healthy in the form of parks scattered mostly on the south side of the Town along the river. However, private commercial space predominates along the Front Street corridor and downtown and could both benefit tremendously from a few carefully selected new civic nodes. The introduction of significant civic nodes within the existing commercial areas would create a dynamic and vitality that is mutually beneficial for both private and public interests.

Recommendations for the improvements of nodes or creation of new ones are:

- Reinforce existing nodes with better connections and improved urban design elements and landscaping. For example, 10th Street , north of Front Street to connect the train station with the Downtown.
- Create new civic nodes with appropriate uses where possible, using vacant or brownfield sites.
- Strive for a balance of public and private space in all areas, mutually benefitting community vitality and economic activity.

Potential Projects Include:

- **Civic Node - Multi-purpose Public Space and Parking at 9th and Front Streets**
A ‘green’ public open space at this location could serve as a strategically placed civic focal point along Highway 11, as well as a much needed anchor and gateway for the Downtown. The node would provide a refuge along the busy commercial corridor while connecting it to the more

intimate scaled downtown area. The main attraction of an open space could serve a multitude of uses, such as: a farmers market, festival grounds, arts performance space, plaza with café seating and more. Depending on available space, it could offer RV and Trailer tourists a place to park and have instant access to community information, and a direct connection to the Downtown. Also depending on available space, the site could offer a burner-inspired tower with roles as a beacon and an educational play space that would celebrate the Town's forestry heritage. The iconic tower could provide views to the lumber mill and its historic 'beehive' burners, as well as the downtown area and Mattawishkwia River, all the while animating the public space and engaging the young-at-heart as a recreational structure through innovative features inherent in its design.

- **Increase Street Closings for Pedestrian Street Events and Festivals**
George Street, as the heart of the Downtown, is in itself an established centre for public activity. The Town could capitalize on this by increasing the scope and/or frequency of street closings. It has been noted that, in many communities, these types of events can stimulate economic activity all the while promoting a greater sense of community. Street closings require little investment and can be achieved with simple traffic barricades or (removable) bollards at either end of the portion of the street that is participating.



EXISTING STREET FURNISHINGS IN HEARST

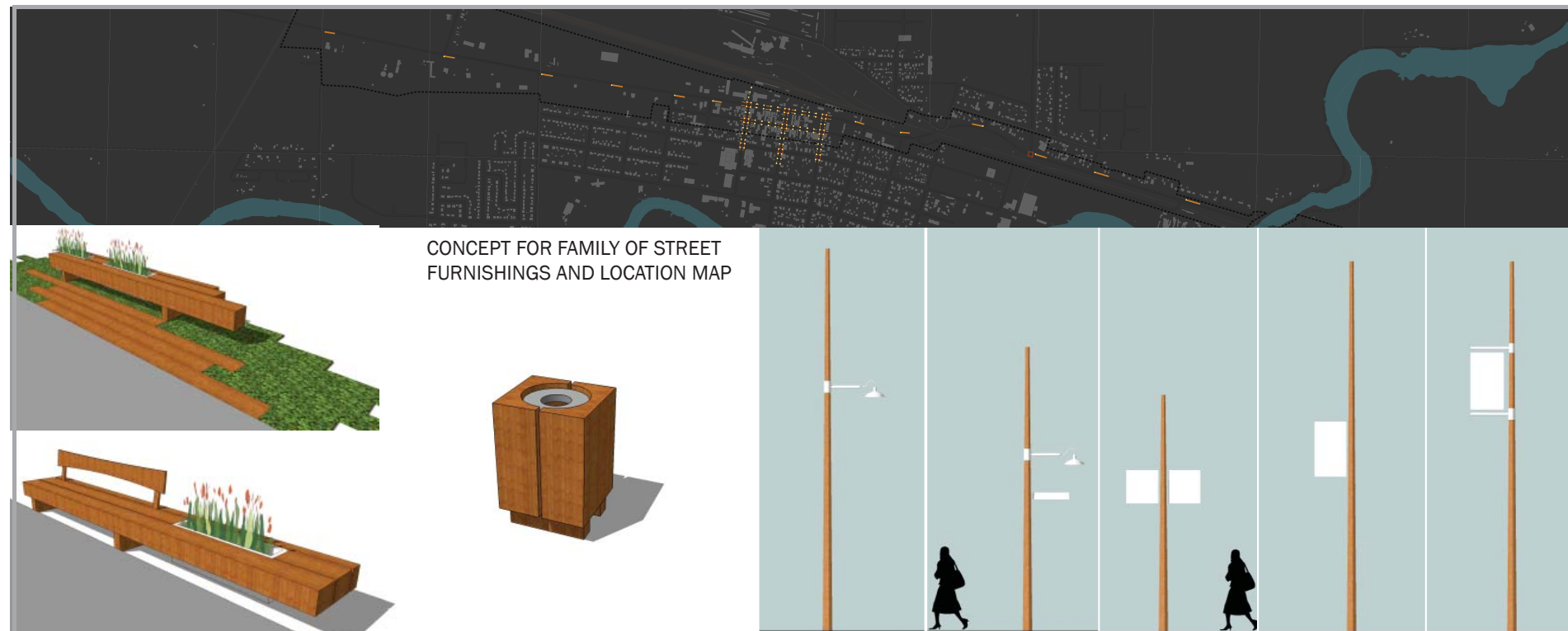
3.7 STREET FURNISHINGS

The term street furnishings refers to all fixtures, furniture, ground surface treatments and amenities that are added to a streetscape to make it a comfortable, safe, useful and navigable environment for use by pedestrians and cyclists. A successful street furnishings program will enhance a business district's vitality by encouraging patrons and visitors to stay and browse or relax in the area.

As suggested in the *gateways* section, the use of the raw and honest expression of wood as a visual language could play a powerful role in the branding strategy of Hearst and the idea could be adapted to street furniture. The supply of wood from the wood mills plays a practical and symbolic role in supporting the local economy in the creation of street furniture such as benches, planters, garbage containers, as well as the gateway elements.

Recommended improvements to street furnishings include:

- Develop a language using the wood theme throughout the furnishings based on either: a) the use of select lumber with basic hardware connections, keeping in mind ease of parts replacement and repair with local supply and labour; or b) the purchase of good quality street furniture products of which at least the human interface portions are made of wood for carrying the wood theme.
- Work with wood to benefit the community by expanding on the tradition of elders' contribution towards the construction of trash receptacles. This could be expanded to include other street furniture elements and the involvement of youth.



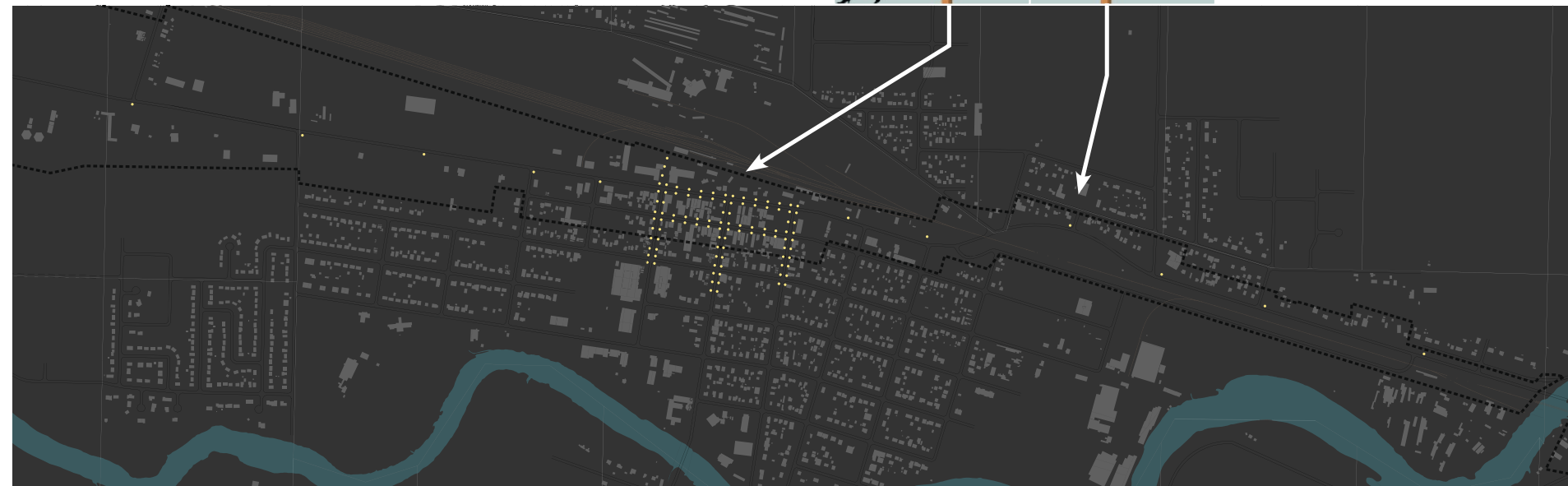
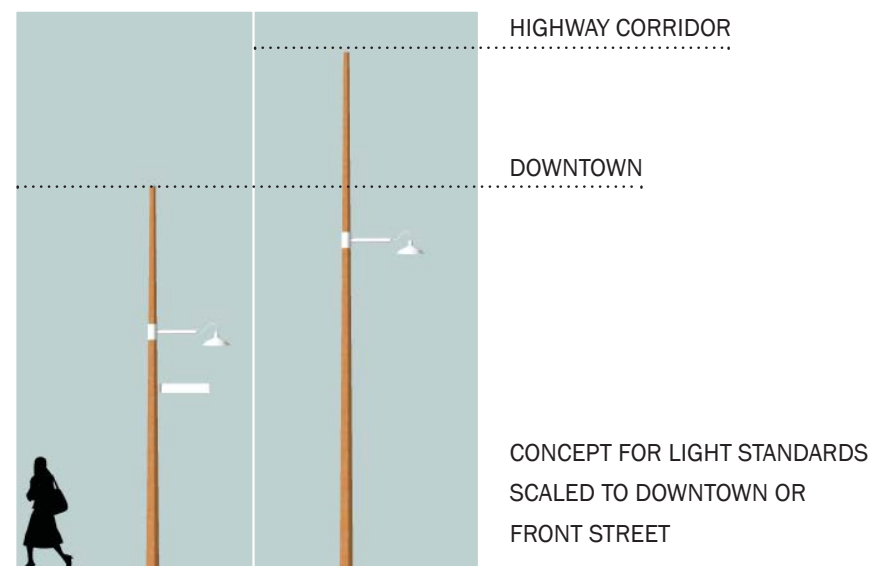


EXISTING LIGHTING DOWNTOWN AND ALONG HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

PRECEDENTS - LIGHTING



FIXTURES THAT CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO WOOD STREET FURNISHINGS SUCH AS PLANTERS OR BENCHES FOR LIGHTING PATHS



Lighting

The current lighting scheme in the Study area consists of a decorative 'heritage' style in the downtown area, and tall utilitarian type in the commercial corridor on a metal pole or sometimes attached to wooden hydro poles at a slightly lowered height. It has been noted by a Town official that the street lighting system in the downtown area requires replacement to bring the underground power feeds into compliance with ESA standards. Improvements to lighting should focus on creating a safe, accessible, comfortable and welcoming experience for all pedestrians and cyclists.

Lighting plays a major role in how an area is perceived and enjoyed. During the day, the light standards (or masts) are prominent objects that create a rhythm through a streetscape, making a mark with their physical character. After dark, the ambiance created by the lighting effect will create the character.

The proposed lighting concept (see map this page) recognizes the differences between the three areas - Highway Industrial, Highway Commercial, and Downtown. From a scale perspective, the scheme proposes a shorter mast and lower lamp position Downtown, whereas on Front Street, the masts are taller and the lamps are positioned higher. Along the Highway Industrial Corridor, the masts gradually get lower and thicker, as they will be further from the road. From a frequency point of view, the Downtown will have a typical urban distribution, including on Front Street between 8th and 10th Streets, from which point the frequency would decrease until reaching the edge of Town in both directions. The strategy for distinguishing these masts from the numerous existing hydro and lighting poles is to group them with a bench and a small landscaped area such that these are illuminated, thus creating a small node that will have a greater impact than any elements would individually. This impact is intended to catch the attention of tourists as they approach the centre of Town, inviting them to stay for a visit.

Recommendations for improving lighting include:

- Replace existing downtown street lighting with new series that reflects the Town theme.
- Street lighting throughout the Downtown should be consistent in character, while adapting it to the appropriate scale of its area.
- Introducing pedestrian path lighting in the Highway Commercial area and perhaps in the Highway Industrial area on a longer term basis, carrying the wood theme but at a scale appropriate to the area.
- Review lighting along the highway to assess the feasibility of utilizing existing light standards for introducing path lighting.
- Luminaires should be of such design that the light they produce is focused downwards so as to avoid light pollution and wasted energy.
- Consider solar electric lighting along industrial corridor

Pedestrian and Vehicular Wayfinding (Signage)

Wayfinding in Hearst is limited and uncoordinated. Being similar to that of regional or highway signage, it does not reflect the Town's character and vitality.

Signage is an important element in promoting a Town's downtown area, parks, recreational facilities or other Town assets of value to visitors and tourists. Equally important is that the signage convey a distinct character that is unique and reflects the character and values of the Town.

The concept for new wayfinding in Hearst is the same as for the lighting in that it is designed to respect the context in which it is located (see diagram below).

Recommended improvements to wayfinding include:

- Format that utilizes simple, clear and readable text size and font.
- Encourage the use of signs that are oriented to pedestrians in the Downtown core.
- Signs should reinforce the Downtown character and be coordinated with street furniture, lighting and gateway signage.
- A design standard should be set that will determine the use of text colour, background colour and the supporting structure.
- Keep traffic signage separate from pedestrian wayfinding and other streetscape elements.
- The format should easily accommodate changes and additions over time.
- Limit the number of items on a sign. Signs with less information provide clearer and uncluttered wayfinding.
- Consider colour-coded signage to help orient people by theme of attraction or by area (e.g.- Downtown, Parks, Commercial District, etc...)
- Signs should be strategically placed to provide clear directions where they are most needed.



EXISTING SIGNAGE ON FRONT STREET AND DOWNTOWN

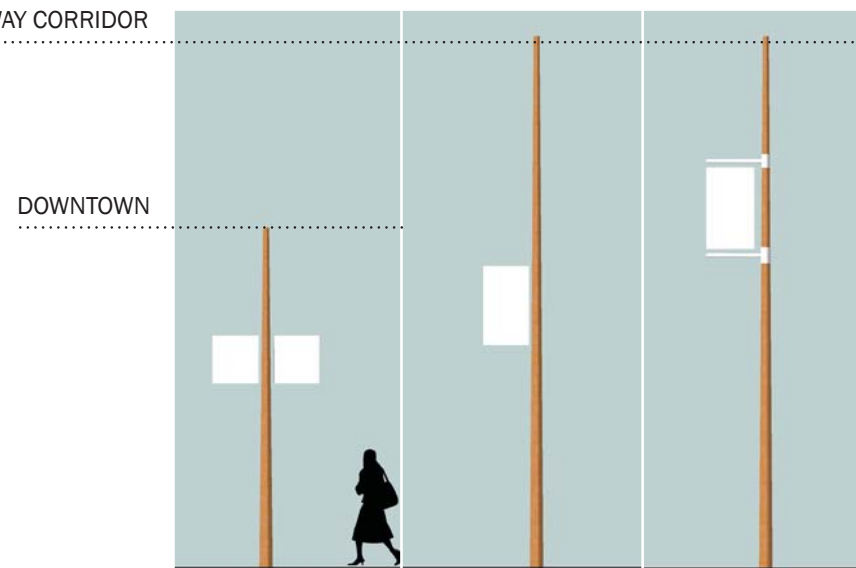
EXAMPLE OF COLOUR CODED SIGNAGE WITH CLEAR SIMPLE FONT

PRECEDENT - COORDINATED FAMILY OF WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE

CONCEPT FOR DOWNTOWN EVENT BANNERS



HIGHWAY CORRIDOR





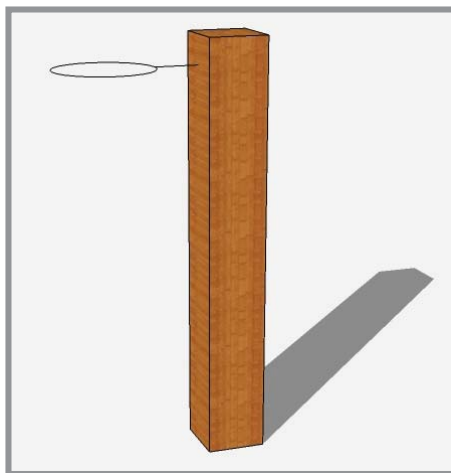
PRECEDENT - PORTABLE WOOD PLANTER



EXISTING PLANTER DOWNTOWN



SKETCH - PORTABLE TREE PLANTERS WITH AND WITHOUT SEAT



SKETCH - TREE GUIDE

Planters

Trees and plantings are very important in creating a successful streetscape. People are naturally attracted to streets lined with trees because of the protection and ambiance they offer, making them essential for a downtown street where walking, shopping, dining and relaxing are desired and encouraged. Also, trees can impact the experience of pedestrians in terms of protection from the elements (wind, sun, rain, snow), as well as the provision of cleaner air.

While vacant lots or brownfield sites can be unattractive if neglected, they can also be used for re-introducing nature within the Town with new tree parks. Tree guides (this page, lower right) that protect newly planted trees could reflect the wood theme by following the language of the streetscape elements, making a statement as bold elements in their own right, all the while protecting the vulnerable young trees as they grow.

The concept for new planters is based on portability and the Town theme. A set of portable tree planters will provide much needed flexibility for removal during winter months. It is also envisioned that the planters could integrate minimal seating as a bench solution where limited space permits the use of either a planter or a bench, but not both.

Salt and snow removal are hazards to tree growth and survival and should be a consideration in selecting the location and species of trees.

The following are recommended improvements to planting:

- It is encouraged to introduce a row of trees in the zone between the sidewalk and the street curb where the right of way allows. With increased sidewalk widths come better tree planting conditions, which promotes better canopy growth.
- Trees species along corridors could include a mixture of White Spruce and White Birch, which are indigenous to the region and are robust by nature.
- Encourage property owners to plant a tree at the street edge of their property to help 'green' the Town.
- Specify planter type or design one that coordinates with the quality and character of other street furnishings as well as optimizes space on the sidewalk. Planters could incorporate a seat or perch for casual stops and informal conversations.
- Plant trees along Highway 11 as a screen between the road and the Tri-Cept site. Plantings should be at a distance from the road that will allow them to grow and thrive.
- Planters should be built robust enough to withstand years of being moved in and out of storage.

Sidewalk and Crosswalk Paving

When paving materials for sidewalks, landscaping and crosswalks are chosen carefully, they effectively perform two functions simultaneously. As a passive self-guiding traffic flow system, the right paving can keep pedestrians safer while making vehicle operators more aware of pedestrians. As a surface pattern, it plays an important role in the character and attractiveness of the streetscape.

General principles for sidewalk and crosswalk paving include:

- The paving material palette should be consistent throughout. Where definition is paramount for safety reasons, such as crosswalks or curb edges, light/dark contrast is important in order to maintain their visibility for as long as possible.
- Brick paving is the most common surface material for sidewalk improvements, however if a lower-cost alternative to brick paving is desired outside of the Downtown sector, a pressed concrete product is an acceptable option that should be tinted to match the colour of the brick paving.
- It is recommended that zebra striping be applied on crossings at major streets, such as Front Street, where safety is a major issue.
- With the exception of crosswalks, roads should remain asphalt.



EXISTING SIDEWALK PAVING IN HEARST

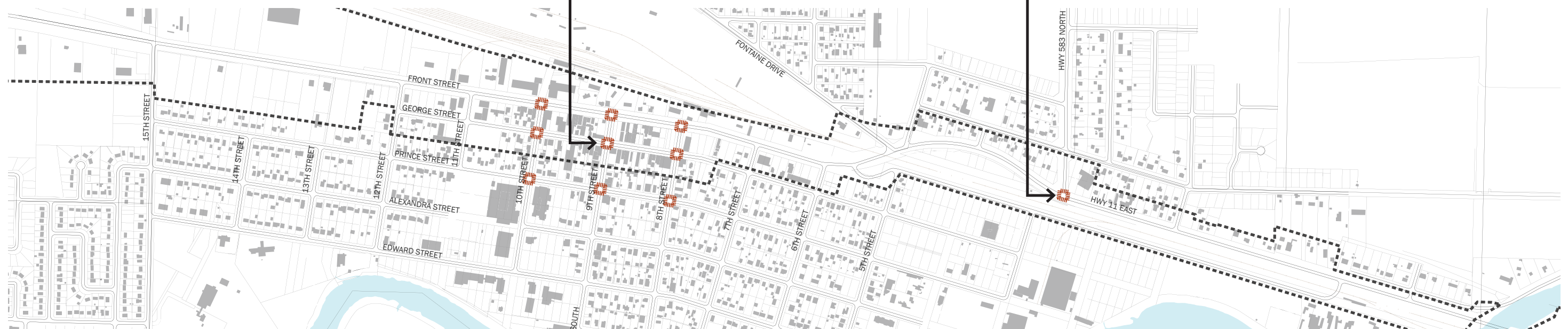


SIDEWALK AND CROSSING PAVING PRECEDENTS

PROPOSED 'ZEBRA' CROSSING INTERSECTION



PROPOSED 'ZEBRA' CROSSING FOR HIGHWAY 11 AT HIGHWAY 583 NORTH





PRECEDENTS - WOOD FURNITURE

Street Furniture

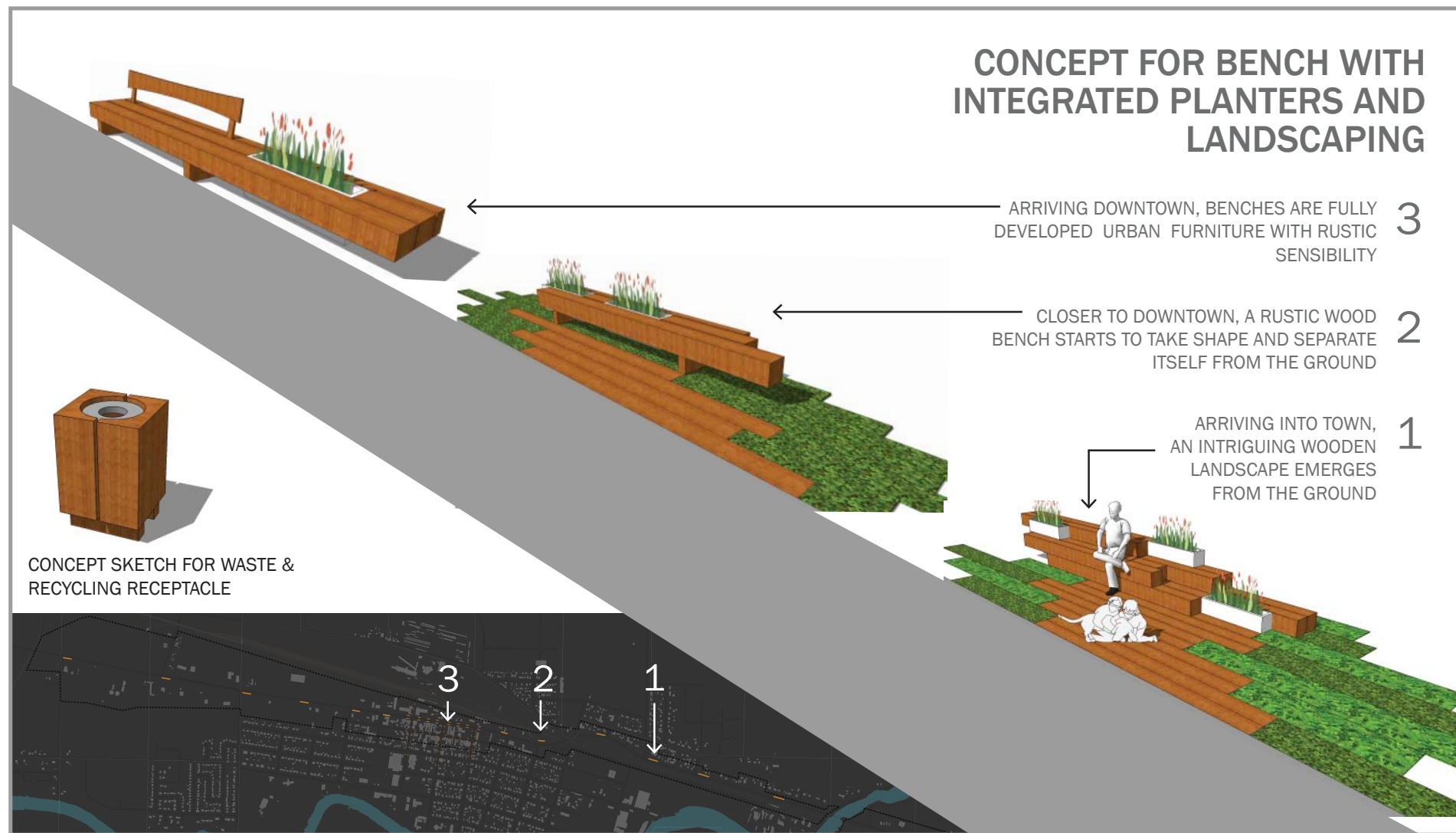
Although the street furniture in Hearst is popular and well used, it consists of various styles, depending on the provider or the era in which it was installed. As a result, much of the existing street furniture of Hearst is uncoordinated and could be standardized to carry a consistent character throughout. As an alternative to simply replacing the existing fixtures and furniture with new products, the Town could take the approach of creating a truly unique environment. One of the benefits of the wood theme is that it can be carried through to the street furniture in a provocative and distinctive way by incorporating a unique design into the streetscape as built-in furniture. This approach would allow for more inventive ways of creating rest areas or spontaneous meeting places. A major benefit to the built-in approach would be the more efficient use of space by combining typically separate items, such as a planter and a bench, into one integrated design.

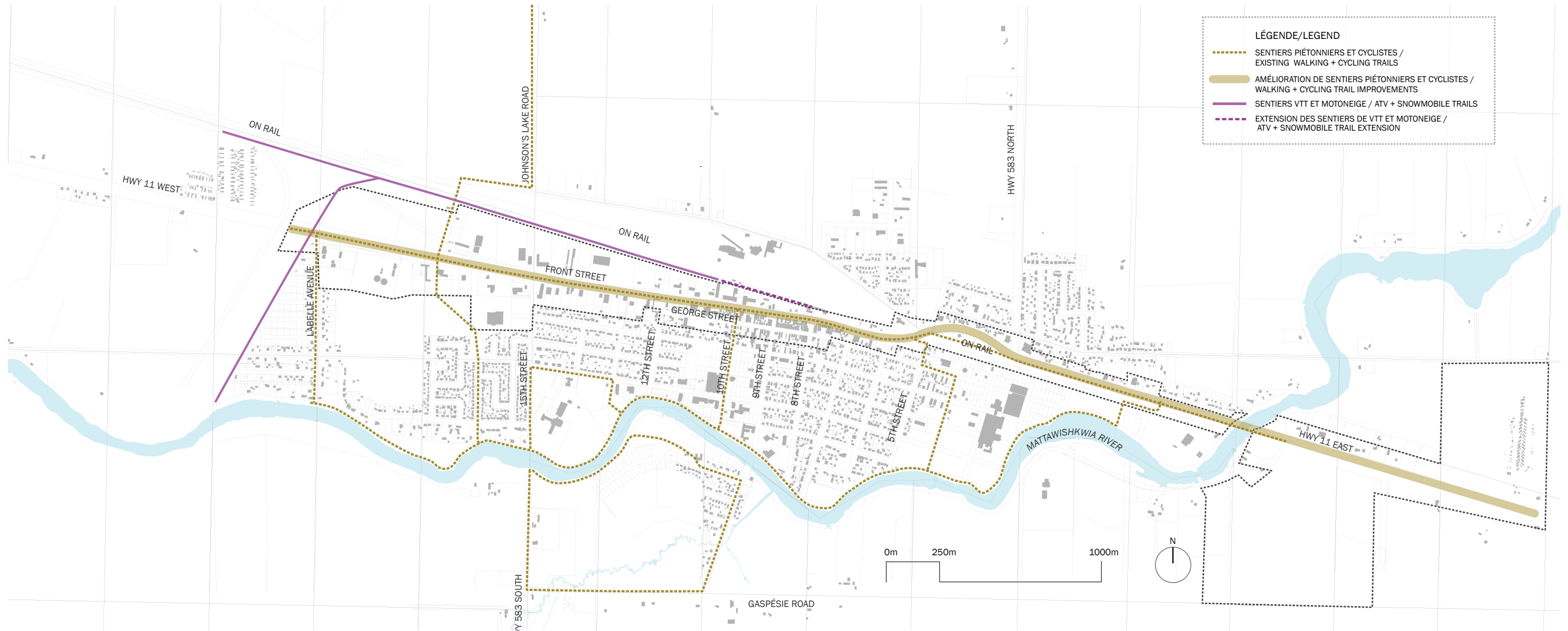
As part of the streetscape, street furniture is important in defining its character and should be chosen carefully. A good quality, comfortable bench will pay dividends in the long run due to the fact that it will last longer and will require fewer replacements, not to mention the comfort level it will offer, which will encourage the public to use it more often. The location and frequency of benches is also critical to their function as a group and the impression they give. Fewer benches at longer intervals discourages visitors from staying for extended periods. Through the public meetings, a more intense bench frequency has been requested by older residents, which will become increasingly important with time as the region's demographics are expected to age in the coming decades.

The involvement of a seniors group in the production of public garbage receptacles is currently in place and should continue with a new street furniture program. The program could be augmented to include more groups, such as the aboriginal community and youth members, as well as expanded to include other furnishings. Public garbage and recycling receptacles should be coordinated with other street furniture elements. The design should consider how the unit could adapt to accommodate both recycling and garbage within a single unit in the future.

General recommendations for improving street furniture include:

- Introduce bicycle lock rings to sidewalks as a commitment to cycling as an alternative to vehicle use and to encourage cyclists to support the downtown businesses. They should be coordinated with other street furnishings.
- Provide additional benches along Front Street between 15th and 12th Streets that are consistent with the Town theme.
- Consider benches that are easily removeable for certain locations due to winter snow removal and maintenance.





3.8 TRAILS AND CONNECTIONS

In 2005, the Town of Hearst prepared a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the period of 2005 to 2015. The Master Plan is a tool to assist municipal staff and Council when making decisions about how to provide recreation and cultural programming and park facilities. The Plan points to a projected increase in demand for parks and recreation, and to an ageing population.

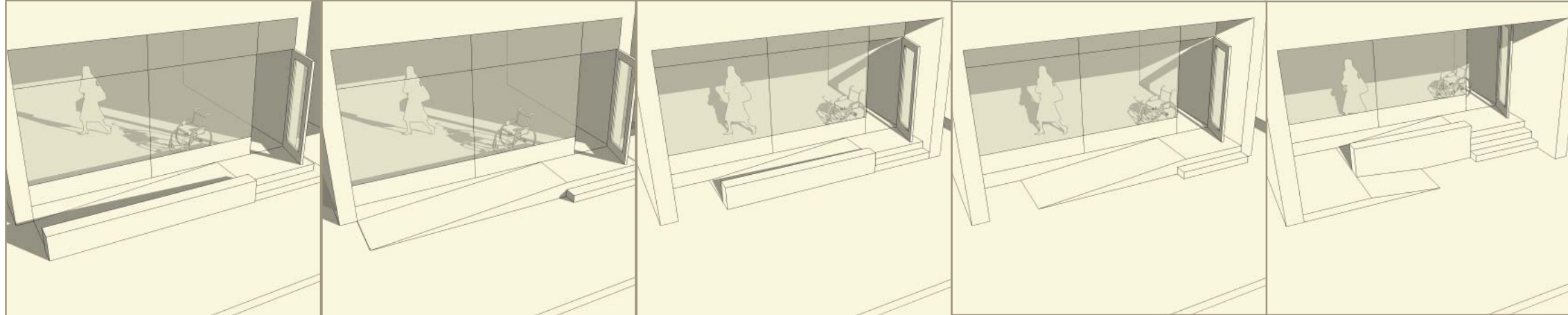
Hearst's existing trail system, which serves pedestrians, cyclists, ATV and snowmobiles enthusiasts, is substantial and should be maintained and supported. In support of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, connections through downtown and along the highway are recommended to increase access to and through these areas for cyclists and pedestrians. Existing trails along the rail corridor could be extended to connect to new nodes along the

north side of the Highway 11 corridor.

Recommendations to trails and connections include:

- Where ATV and snowmobile trails cross pedestrian paths, provide bollards and signage to prohibit vehicles from entering the pedestrian paths.
- Existing sidewalks should be improved and new ones introduced where they do not exist within the downtown core as well as along the highway commercial corridor.
- Sidewalks on downtown streets could be improved by defining them better.
- Recommend extending the existing walking and cycling path along Highway 11 East beyond the river for connecting to other trails. Upgrade of the vehicular bridge recommended to allow for safe use by pedestrians or cyclists.

ACCESSIBILITY RAMP DIAGRAMS - POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR VARIOUS CONDITIONS



2-RISER RAMP ON PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY WITH PLANTER OR BENCH

2-RISER RAMP ON PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

2-RISER RAMP WITHIN PROPERTY LINE WITH PLANTER OR BENCH

2-RISER RAMP WITHIN PROPERTY LINE

3-RISER RAMP WITHIN PROPERTY LINE

3.9 ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility in the context of building and streetscape is defined as the ease with which all individuals, including those who are disabled, can safely access or move within buildings, as well as the public realm.

Accessibility to the business establishments in Hearst was expressed as one of the public’s main concerns at the stakeholder meetings and should be a priority. All new development is reviewed for accessibility under the Building Code.

The buildings on George Street were built during a time when their relationship to the street was less of a concern and accessibility was not yet a public priority. As a result, the height of the ground floor in relationship to the current sidewalk, varies considerably from building to building, which poses a significant challenge in making some of them accessible. This condition cannot be remedied with one solution for all cases and, therefore, should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Although a more careful analysis should be executed for providing detailed guidelines, the following are general principles for creating accessible buildings based on the severity of the case type.

Potential recommendations include:

- In less extreme cases where the distance between the ground floor and the sidewalk is one step or less, the difference in height could be accommodated in the form of a ramp within the building’s entrance area, depending on the setback of the door from the sidewalk. In the case where the door is not set back, the entrance may be reconfigured to allow for a setback of the door.
- In the cases where the difference is two to three steps, a more complex

modification to the storefront and entrance would be required, increasing the cost significantly. This condition may require a ramp that is parallel to the sidewalk in order to minimize the impact to the interior space, provided the storefront is wide enough.

- Some of the ground floors are four or five steps higher than the sidewalk, making the problem difficult to deal with in a standard way. These cases would likely require a portion of the height difference to be accommodated outside of the building, on the sidewalk, in the form of a front porch with a ramp, as well as a portion similar to the less extreme cases. The portion outside depends entirely on the ability for the sidewalk to accommodate it, and is likely not realistic without significant modification to the streetscape. As discussed in the Streetscape section, if the parking lane is removed, an increased sidewalk may accommodate this type of porch and ramp, which would require coordination with the municipality as improvements are proposed within the municipal right of way. This concept would have significant cost implications for both the building owner and the Town.
- Where a building has a side or rear door, or has the potential to introduce a side or rear door, an owner may elect to provide a ramp on the side of their building from the door to the sidewalk.



EXISTING CONDITIONS





BEFORE



AFTER

CONCEPT SKETCH FOR EXISTING DEVELOPMENT SITE ON GEORGE STREET (G3 ON MAP - ABOVE RIGHT)



MAP OF CENTRAL HEARST IDENTIFYING KNOWN 'BROWNFIELD' SITES AND OTHER VACANT SITES
LEGEND: B= IDENTIFIED 'BROWNFIELD' SITES; G= IDENTIFIED VACANT/GREYFIELD SITES

3.10 BUILT FORM AND DEVELOPMENT

The built form in the CIP area of Hearst is quite varied but is generally comprised of 2-3 storey buildings. The Downtown buildings are typically built up to the street line with narrow spaces between them or share party walls and have smaller lots. The commercial and industrial buildings outside the Downtown area tend to be set back from the road and have front or side driveways or parking lots and have larger lots.

Improvements to the built form are focused on establishing a comfortable relationship between new and existing developments, as well as maintaining a certain standard of quality for site and building conditions along the streets or the highway.

Recommendations to improve the built form include:

Highway Industrial Corridor

- It is difficult to expect industrial developments to adhere to specific guidelines due to the fact that their design is often dictated by their function. However, these developments are encouraged to provide a 'front' facing the highway, including a clear visible entrance and signage. Where industrial buildings are set back significantly from the highway, it is the the driveway and front edge of the property that become the de facto 'face' to the highway, and therefore, these edges should be properly landscaped, as described in the *Corridors and Streetscape* section.
- On vacant or brownfield sites along the Highway Industrial Corridor, if new development is unlikely to occur, support the development of a 'naturalized' park, in an effort to help 'green' the Corridor. If new development is likely to occur in the foreseeable future but not immediately, the site should be landscaped with native grasses and/or groundcover rather than trees because these are more flexible and trees are likely to be damaged in the development process. The reasoning behind these 'naturalized' areas is to 'green' the Corridor at minimal costs. The process can be started with seeds, or plants available locally in the wild that can be transplanted and allowed to proliferate.

Highway Commercial Corridor

- New developments or redevelopments along this Corridor, although some existing are set far back, are encouraged to respect the setback of adjacent buildings wherever possible. In addition, they should provide a 'front' to the street or highway, complete with shopfront and entrance, as described in the *Shopfronts and Entrances* section. This is especially important for buildings that are located in close proximity to the highway for Front Street, such as the Rona building, where a continuous commercial 'front' is desired.
- Where commercial buildings are set back significantly from the highway, such as the new Canadian Tire building, it is the treatment of the driveway and front edge of the property that becomes the de facto 'face' to the highway and, therefore, should be properly landscaped, as described in the *Corridors and Streetscape* section.
- New commercial developments should be commercial in appearance and avoid residential-style structures that are not appropriate.
- Residential developments along the Corridor should be mixed-use, with the ground floor being commercial retail or services with a shopfront to maintain a continuous public frontage at grade.

Downtown Corridors

- New developments or redevelopments should respect the existing built form by following the build-to line of adjacent buildings as well as any zoning or by-law regulations. In essence, new projects in the Downtown should be designed and built to have a street presence and contribute to the public-related frontage at grade as a whole.
- Where new developments require accessibility ramps, they should be integrated into the building design, as well as the site design, rather than appearing as 'add-ons'.
- On vacant or brownfield sites in the Downtown area where new developments are not likely to occur, encourage the development of landscape features or public space that is appropriate to its context and that will complement the public realm.



EXISTING CONDITIONS - EXAMPLES OF GOOD FAÇADES

3.11 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

The use of storefronts as a marketing tool can be an effective way to promote a business and should be considered as an integral part of any façade improvement or new development.

The majority of buildings in the Downtown area were constructed to satisfy the basic needs of a thriving forestry Town. If there is an over-arching character to the buildings in Downtown Hearst, perhaps it could be described as modest, practical with a hint of 'northern rustic', but the absence of a prominent architectural heritage common in some other Northern Ontario Towns is noted. Heritage buildings are rare, generally isolated and should be maintained and preserved.

The majority of the buildings downtown, including on George and Front Streets, differ significantly, posing a challenge in creating a set of specific design guidelines for façade improvements. Future developments and façade improvements could build on the northern rustic character to develop cohesion throughout the Downtown and Highway Commercial areas without modifying existing building typologies. It is recommended that future developments adhere to a building height standard that will gradually establish a consistent scale for the Downtown streetscape.

The aim of the façade improvement program is to create a set of guidelines that applies to all building types, based on basic design principles related to the following categories:

- a) Shopfront and Entrance;
- b) Upper Floors and Roof;
- c) Building Signage, Lighting and Awnings;
- d) Materials and Colour; and
- e) Boulevard Elements (porch, ramp, stairs, terrace and planters).

GOOD PUBLIC VS PRIVATE DEFINITION; SIGNAGE OUT OF SCALE AND UNCOORDINATED; LACK OF OVERHANG



GOOD SHOPFRONT AND ENTRANCE; OUT OF PROPORTION SIGN



GOOD SHOPFRONT AND ENTRANCE; WELL PROPORTIONED WINDOW SIGNAGE



Shopfront and Entrance

A commercial shopfront and its various elements can have an enormous impact on the unifying effect of a street. To reinforce the sense of place on a main street, building fronts should act more or less as a continuous 'face', an extension of the streetscape with spaces that will activate and energize the street. This goal is also appropriate for rear courtyards and passages through a site where mid-block linkages are desired. Where development occurs on vacant lots, continuous street frontages should be introduced. Where this is unlikely to occur, the voids should be treated to support street vitality and complement the public realm.

The following guidelines are recommended for shopfronts and entrances:

- Shopfronts should express individuality as well as maintain continuity with the area.
- Shopfronts and entrances should be well proportioned, of human scale, and oriented to the pedestrian.
- The shopfront should be a single system in what appears to be a single opening in the building.
- The shopfront should occupy the entire width and height of a ground floor, where possible, creating a higher degree of transparency, enhancing the connection between inside and outside activity.
- Small, individual windows on the ground floor should be avoided as they relate to a residential character, creating a sense of privacy that is inappropriate for commercial building façades. Glazing and entrance system should use large panes of glass as much as possible.
- Hospitality establishments, such as restaurants and cafés, are encouraged to have sliding doors to 'open up' to the street during the summer months.
- There should be express mixed uses - public at grade and private uses above.
- Shopfronts should take advantage of opportunities for marketing and promoting themselves, but should avoid being filled with merchandise or obsolete signage and displays. Any displays or signage on the window should obscure views as little as possible and be of proportion and scale that is appropriate to the window and shopfront.
- Shopfronts should be composed of materials of enduring quality and considered detailing.



BEFORE



AFTER

PRECEDENTS FOR GOOD SHOPFRONTS AND ENTRANCES. SIGNAGE AND AWNINGS. COLOUR AND MATERIALS





EXISTING - WELL-DEFINED ROOF LINE AND OVERHANG THAT PROTECTS AGAINST THE ELEMENTS



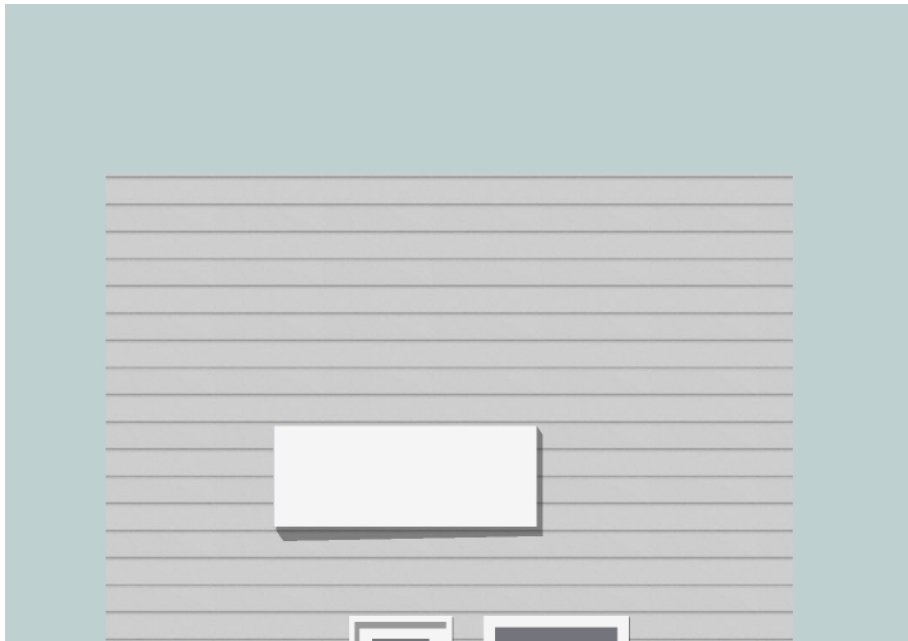
EXISTING - WELL-DEFINED ROOF LINE WITH CORNICE; PRIVACY DISTINCTION FOR SECOND FLOOR WITH MATERIAL CHANGE; WELL-PROPORTIONED WINDOW OPENINGS

Upper Floors and Roof

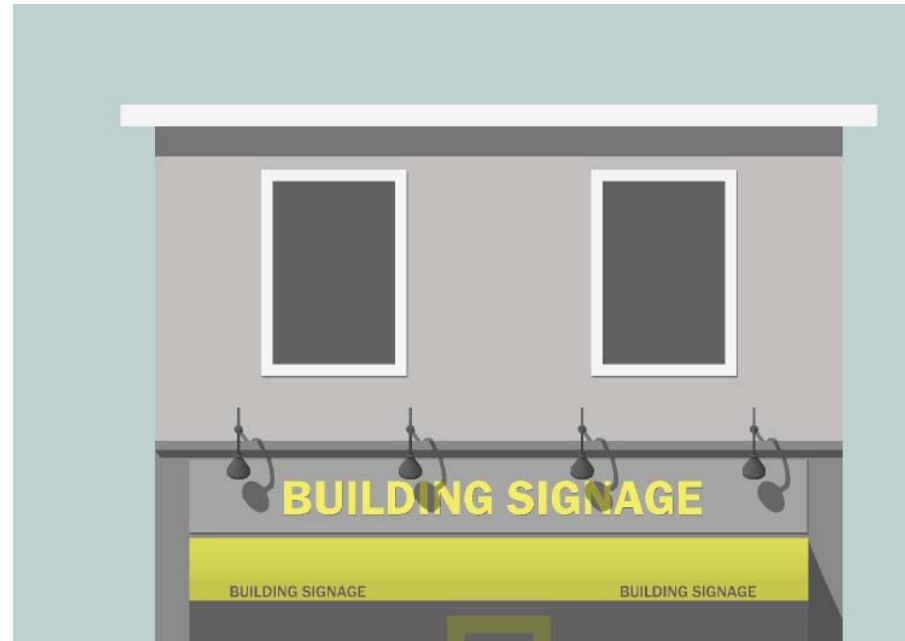
Generally, upper floors feel more private than ground floors, but should still consist of windows even if they are being used as storage. The quantity of windows, their size, proportion and location should be considered in relation to the width, height and proportion of the exterior wall, all of which contribute to creating a balanced façade.

Recommendations for upper floor openings and details include:

- Although a cornice on a façade is more appropriate on a building Downtown, roof overhangs are appropriate and encouraged on commercial buildings outside of the Downtown. Aside from providing further moisture protection to the building itself, overhangs protect pedestrians from the elements as they enter and exit the building, making it more inviting and approachable
- New single-storey developments should consider a façade with a tall parapet that extends partially towards the average 2-storey building height, complete with a strong cornice line at the top.
- As a measure to maintain unity in the Downtown, flat roofs are preferred, pitched roofs are discouraged and shed roofs should slope towards the back so that the highest point is at the front.



BEFORE



AFTER

CONCEPT SKETCH FOR WELL-DEFINED ROOF, OVERHANG AND PROPORTIONAL WINDOW OPENINGS. FAÇADE COLOUR CHANGE BETWEEN UPPER FLOOR AND GROUND FLOOR DISTINGUISHES PRIVATE FACE FROM PUBLIC FACE



EXISTING - GOOD EXAMPLE OF GROUPED AND HORIZONTALLY WELL-ALIGNED SIGNAGE



EXISTING - GOOD EXAMPLE OF WELL-PROPORTIONED SIGNAGE WITH SUPPORTING SIGNAGE ON WINDOWS

Building Signage, Lighting and Awnings

These elements, as a group, have as much impact on the impression of the façade as the shopfront. They can usually be simply added to the existing façade without any significant downtime for the business. Signage can be integrated into a façade, using the building material as background to letters, or can be an applied 'band' across the façade. In either case, the signage should be carefully considered and designed such that the signage and building complement each other. Lighting should focus on signage, and creating a sense of place. A good balance of lighting levels will create an atmosphere in addition to maintaining public safety.

The following guidelines are recommended for signage:

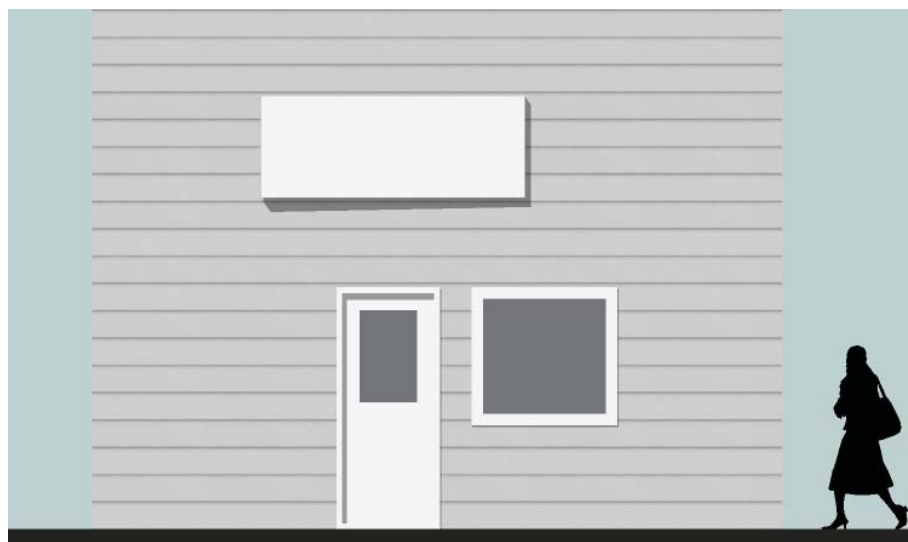
- Signage above the shopfront should occupy the entire width of the building that the business occupies. Text should be limited to a size that is proportionate to the size of the sign and to pedestrian traffic.
- Backlit signage boxes are discouraged in the Downtown as their character is not suited to the area. This type of signage on the Highway Commercial Corridor is appropriate but should be contained within a single horizontal 'band'. Services and products offered should be on a separate, lower order of signage below the brand or company signage, such as on windows or ground floor walls using smaller text sizes.
- Signage lighting in a Downtown setting is traditionally installed on the façade above the shopfront signage to illuminate the signage. Where additional lighting is desired, it can be installed into the soffit of the overhang as a downlight. For emphasizing entrances, discrete wall mounted lights should provide light downwards to avoid light-washing at eye-level.
- Awning signage is an effective way of identifying a business. Business names, logos and their placement on the awning are important to the character of the street and should be integral to the design of the façade.
- The review of products, materials, and manufacturers prior to the work will ensure a minimum standard of quality.



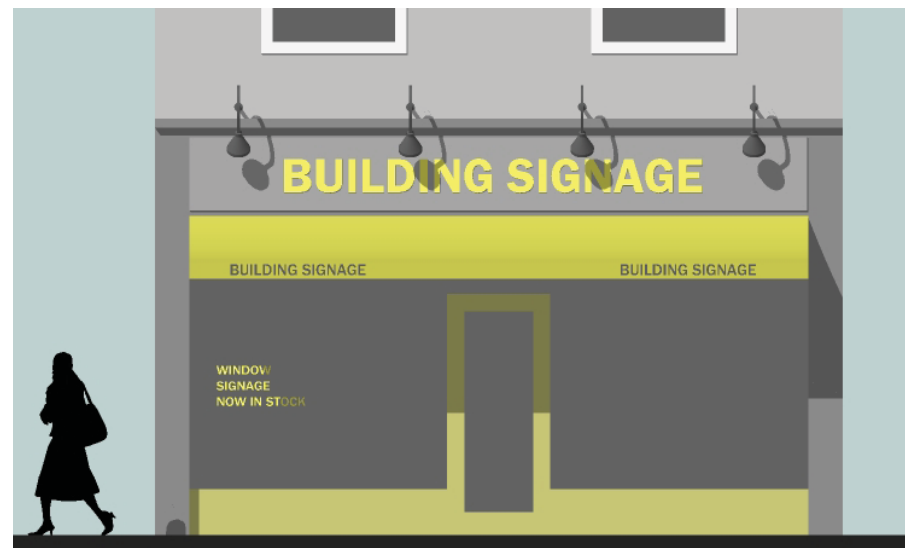
CONCEPT SKETCH - BRAND COLOUR AS SIGNAGE AND ACCENTS



CONCEPT SKETCH - BRAND COLOUR AS BUILDING



BEFORE



AFTER

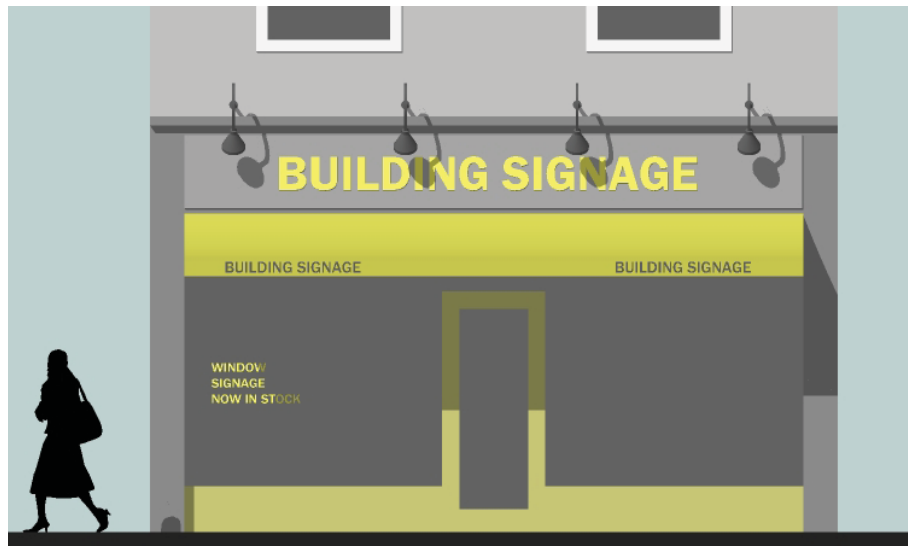
CONCEPT SKETCH - BUILDING SIGNAGE UPGRADE WITH MAIN SIGN, SECONDARY AWNING SIGNAGE AND SUPPORT OR TEMPORARY SIGNAGE ON WINDOW



EXISTING - GOOD EXAMPLE OF BUILDING COLOUR AS BRANDING IN HEARST



PRECEDENT - GOOD EXAMPLE OF COORDINATED AWNING AND SIGNAGE COLOUR AS PART OF BRANDING STRATEGY



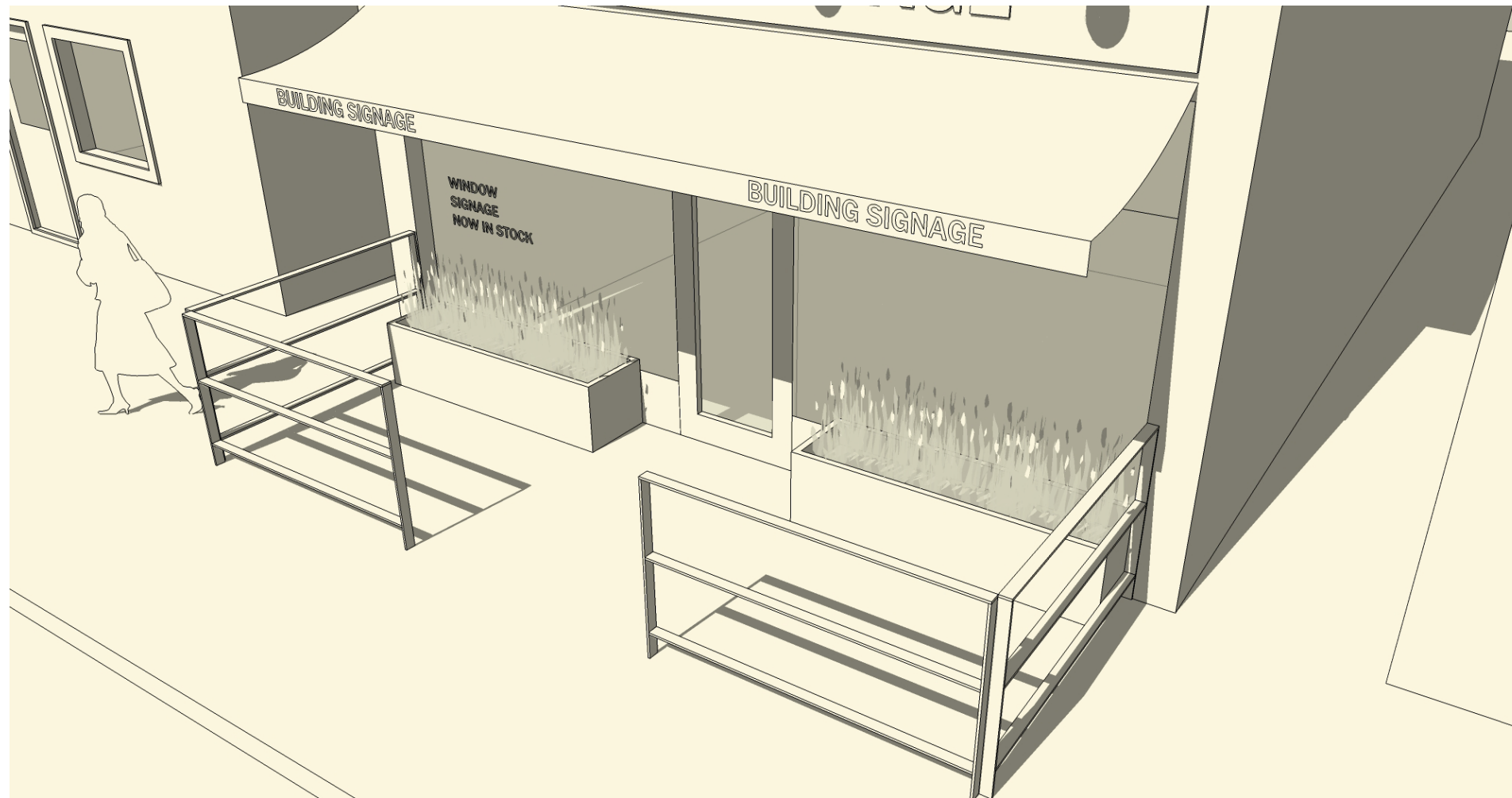
CONCEPT SKETCH - COORDINATED FACADE ELEMENTS AS PRIMARY COLOUR; BUILDING COLOUR AS SECONDARY OR BACKGROUND COLOUR

Materials and Colour

Colour can affect the human experience in ways that are sometimes not immediately obvious. The power of colour can be a useful tool for branding and could be considered as part of an overall branding strategy for commercial enterprises, especially for those on the Highway Commercial and Industrial Corridors where exposure is challenging as a result of being set far back from the highway. It is important to consider colour not only within a scheme for a single façade or building, but also as part of the larger context. For example, if there was a tradition on a street of each building being painted in strong, bold colours, then it would be appropriate for guidelines to respect that tradition. Conversely, if the tradition on a given street or sector was to stay within a certain palette of soft neutral colours with white detailing, for example, then it would be appropriate for the guidelines to follow that tradition. In the Commercial and Downtown areas of Hearst, the range of colours and schemes is quite diverse, which makes it difficult to identify an overall trend or tendency.

Rather than limit the range of colours as a form of standardization, it is recommended that the approach be based on basic colour design principles as recommended below:

- The use of a material as a mere façade is discouraged in order to avoid a 'Disney' effect, especially where the material is not a local vernacular. Honesty in materials and construction is the recommended approach in creating a character that is appropriate and feels genuine.
- The use of vinyl siding or low-grade wood siding is discouraged in any commercial area, especially on street facing façades.
- Industrial metal siding should be avoided within the Downtown sector unless the type of business warrants it - e.g. garage, lumber store - but should be avoided on prominent corridor façades such as Front, George, Prince and 9th Streets.
- The use of quality materials and workmanship should be considered as one of the standards for approval.
- Consider colour not only within a scheme for a single façade or building but also as part of the street context.
- It is important to limit the number of colours to two - one dominant and one complementary. Shades and tints of a colour are not considered an additional colour and can add depth to a colour scheme but should be subtle and not diminish the simplicity of a colour scheme.
- The façade material may count as one colour if it is strong enough, in which case it should be an integral part of colour selection.



Boulevard Elements (porch, ramp, stair, terrace and planters)

Porches, terraces and planters attract pedestrians by diminishing the barrier between outside and inside. They animate the street, breathing life into the public realm. When stairs and ramps are integrated into a shopfront's full width, they also become part of the street, as well as the commercial activity inside, melding the two together.

The following guidelines are recommended for façade improvements and new developments:

- Displays and spill-out activities, such as cafés, should complement sidewalk movement, such as walking and shopping.
- All boulevard elements should be integrated into the design of any new building to avoid the impression of an 'add-on'.
- New developments requiring accessibility ramps should consider them to be integral to the building design and, in the Downtown, should occupy the full width of a façade where appropriate and technically feasible.
- All boulevard elements shall comply with all relevant building codes, By-laws and standards.
- Coordinate all work that is beyond the property line with public works.
- The quality and character of any boulevard element should be consistent with that of the building to which it is associated.



4 POTENTIAL PROGRAMS OF SUPPORT

In order to achieve the goals of this CIP, providing financial incentives to property owners will greatly encourage private participation in the overall enhancement of the Town.

The investment leveraging programs created through the CIP aim to provide tangible economic gains for the grass-root entrepreneurs. The plan calls for individual decision making freedom while providing design and leadership guidelines that ensure community-wide planning harmony.

The program inventory features a broad range of incentives designed to stimulate private sector investment in property rehabilitation and improvements.

The purpose, type, duration, eligibility criteria and application requirements for each of the financial incentive programs (including brownfield redevelopment incentive programs) are described in detail below. The financial incentive programs will be complemented by a Marketing Strategy.

4.1 GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The general and program specific requirements contained in this CIP are not necessarily exhaustive and the Town reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis. All of the financial incentive programs contained in this CIP are subject to the following general requirements, as well as the individual requirements specified under each program.

- a) The Town reserves the right to audit the cost of project feasibility studies, environmental studies, environmental remediation works, and/or rehabilitation works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;
- b) The Town is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including, without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant and/or tax assistance;
- c) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the Town, the Town may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant and/or tax assistance;
- d) The Town may discontinue any of the programs at any time, but applicants with approved grants and/or tax assistance will still receive said grant and/or tax assistance, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements;
- e) All proposed works approved under the incentive programs and associated improvements to buildings and/or land shall conform to all municipal By-laws, policies, procedures, standards, guidelines, including applicable Official Plan and zoning requirements and approvals;
- f) The improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and/or other municipal requirements. Outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply and/or charges from the Town (including tax arrears) must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant and/or tax assistance payment;
- g) Town staff, officials, and/or agents of the Town may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the Town; and,
- h) The total of all grants and loans (excluding tax assistance) provided in respect of the particular lands and buildings of an applicant under the programs contained in this CIP shall not exceed 50% of the cost of rehabilitating said lands and buildings.



4.2 PLANNING, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURAL GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Planning, Design and Architectural Grant Program is to promote the undertaking of planning concepts, urban design drawings, and/or architectural plans for site development and building façade improvements in preparation for redevelopment or building façade improvements.

Description

The Planning, Design and Architectural Grant Program will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of eligible planning, design and architectural work to a maximum grant of \$600 with a maximum of one study per property. Eligible planning, design and architectural work include but are not limited to:

- Concept plans
- Design drawings
- Building façade plans
- Any other plans as approved by the Town

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review of the final completed drawing(s) with the

original invoice, indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the consultant conducting the study or the actual cost of the study. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the study is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the consultant(s) that conducted the study are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to provide the drawings to subsequent owners and interested parties, should the applicant decide not to proceed with reuse, rehabilitation or retrofitting of the site.

The Planning, Design and Architectural Grant Program will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any feasibility study to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the study.
- c) Planning, Design and Architectural work shall be for the purpose of:
 - i Concept plans;
 - ii Design drawings;
 - iii Building façade plans;
 - iv Any other feasibility study as approved by the Town.
- d) Applications will include:
 - i A detailed work plan;
 - ii A cost estimate for the study;
 - iii A description of the planned redevelopment, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved.
- e) All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.
- f) One electronic (PDF) and one hard copy of the drawings/plans shall be submitted to the Town for the Town's review and retention.



4.3 BUILDING FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Building Façade Improvement Grant Program (BFIGP) is to stimulate private investment in the existing commercial areas of the CIP Project area and to promote the undertaking of building façade improvements in accordance with the CIP Design Guidelines.

Description

The BFIGP will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of eligible façade improvements to existing commercial properties to a maximum grant of \$17,500 (façade) and of \$5,000 (sides) with a maximum of one grant per property per year. Only improvements with a total of \$2,000 and greater are eligible for the Program.

Improvements to be undertaken must be consistent with the intent of the CIP and its design guidelines and may include the following:

- Restoration of the brickwork or cladding, including exterior painting;
- Replacement or repair of cornices, eaves, parapets, windows, doors and other significant architectural details;
- Repair, replacement or addition of signage, awnings, marquees and canopies;
- Repair, replacement or addition of exterior lighting;
- Modifications to the entranceway; including the provisions to improve accessibility; and
- Any other work as approved by the Town.

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against

program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review of the planning, design and architectural plans illustrating the façade improvements with the original invoice, indicating that the contractor(s) have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the contractor conducting the work or the actual cost of the work. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the work is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the contractor(s) that conducted the work are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to provide the drawings to subsequent owners and interested parties, should the applicant decide not to proceed with reuse, rehabilitation or retrofitting of the site.

The BFIGP will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any façade improvements to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the works.
- c) Building façade improvement work shall comply with the CIP Design Guidelines, meet the Ontario Building Code and other applicable By-laws.
- d) Applications will include:
 - i Architectural plans;
 - ii A detailed work plan;
 - iii A cost estimate for the work;
 - iv A description of the planned improvements, including any planning applications that have been submitted and approved.
- e) All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.
- f) One electronic (PDF) and one hard copy of the drawings/plans shall be submitted to the Town for the Town's review and retention.



4.4 SIGNAGE GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Signage Grant Program (SGP) is to promote the undertaking of improvements to signage in accordance with the CIP Design Guidelines.

Description

The SGP will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of eligible signage improvement work to a maximum grant of \$2,500, with a maximum of one grant per property, unless there is a change in business occupancy. Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Signs
- Sign lighting
- Any other related work as approved by the Town

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review the signage drawings with the original invoice, indicating that the contractor(s) have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the contractor conducting the work or the actual cost of the work. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the work is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the contractor(s)

that conducted the work are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to provide the drawings to subsequent owners and interested parties, should the applicant decide not to proceed with the signage improvements.

The SGP will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any signage improvements to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the works.
- c) Signage improvement work shall comply with the CIP Design Guidelines.
- d) Applications will include:
 - v Plans;
 - vi A cost estimate for the work;
 - vii A description of the planned improvements, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved.
- e) One electronic (PDF) and one hard copy of the drawings/plans shall be submitted to the Town for the Town's review and retention.



4.5 PARKING AREA IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Parking Area Improvement Grant Program (PAIGP) is to promote a 'greener' streetscape by reducing the width of site accesses, improve parking surface materials, reduce the amount of gravel spillover onto municipal right of way (e.g. sidewalks), improving access and safety. Landscape improvements may occur between parking areas and roadways or laneways, or funds may be used for resurfacing and line painting of resurfaced parking areas. On lands adjacent to Highway 11, grants will be available to property owners who alter their parking areas to provide formal connections to abutting parking lots or remove an existing entrance from the current Highway in favour of a joint entrance with an adjacent property owner. Grants will also be available to property owners who propose a landscape plan and/or entrance improvement project based on an approved plan that utilizes plantings and signage to improve the area of the property directly abutting the Highway. The undertaking of parking area improvements shall be in accordance with the CIP Design Guidelines.

Description

The PAIGP will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of eligible parking area improvement work to a maximum grant of \$17,500, with a maximum of one grant per property per year.

Eligible costs include but are not limited to:

- Landscaping materials
- Resurfacing and line painting
- Labour
- Professional fees
- Any other related work as approved by the Town

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this

approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review the parking area improvement plans illustrating the parking area improvements with the original invoice, indicating that the consultant(s) and/or contractor(s) have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the consultant/contractor conducting the work or the actual cost of the work. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the work is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the consultant(s)/contractor(s) that conducted the work are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to provide the drawings to subsequent owners and interested parties, should the applicant decide not to proceed with improvements of the site.

The PAIGP will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any parking area improvements to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the works.
- c) Parking area improvement work shall comply with the CIP Design Guidelines.
- d) Applications will include:
 - i Landscape plan;
 - ii A detailed work plan;
 - iii A cost estimate for the work;
- e) A description of the planned improvements, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved.
- f) The Town reserves the right to request additional plans or studies, such as grading plans.
- g) All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.
- h) One electronic (PDF) and one hard copy of the drawings/plans shall be submitted to the Town for the Town’s review and retention.



4.6 BUILDING/PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT REBATE GRANT PROGRAM (TAX INCREMENT GRANT) (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Property Tax Increment Grant Program (PTIGP) is to provide economic incentive for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of properties in the CIP Project area. It is anticipated that the Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program will lead to an increase in the tax base for Hearst by encouraging quality redevelopment that is consistent with the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Plan and Design Guidelines.

Description

The Town will collect the full amount of property taxes owed for each of the years of the program’s applicability and will issue the Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant to the approved applicant after the final tax bills for each year have been collected. If the tax bill is not paid in full, the Town will cancel all future grants and collect past grants made as part of this program.

The Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program is specific to the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Plan, and applies to the Town’s portion of realty taxes only.

The Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program will consist of a grant program, whereby registered property owners and/or assignees will be eligible to receive a grant for a percentage of the tax increment generated from the improvements made to the building or property.

The amount of the grant would be determined based upon the incremental increase in the municipal taxes that result from the work being completed. The total amount of the grant provided would not exceed the value of the work that resulted in the reassessment.

The tax increment used for establishing the grant amount will be calculated using the formula: Municipal Tax Portion of Realty Taxes After Redevelopment – Municipal Tax Portion of Realty Taxes Before Redevelopment.

The payment schedule for all Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grants will be as follows:

Year of Grant	Increment Percentage Rebated
1	100%
2	80%
3	60%
4	40%
5	20%

The Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant may be passed on to subsequent owners for the amount and time left in the original grant payback period. Subsequent owners may be required to enter into an agreement with the Town that outlines the details of the remaining grant amount, eligibility and financial obligations.

The compliance of each application with the criteria of this program and the amount of the property’s grant (within the permitted terms of this program) is at the discretion of and subject to Council approval.

The Tax Increment will be established after the final inspection of the improvements in accordance with the Ontario Building Code, and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) has established a new assessment value.

The dollar value for the tax increment used in the first year of the grant will be used for all subsequent years. The grant amount will not take any base year market value change or overall tax rate change into account, meaning the grant is based on the increase in property assessed value as a direct result of the improvements made to the building or property.

This grant represents foregone income. However, site redevelopment creates a deferred tax income to be retained by the Town at expiry of the agreement.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for this grant under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to Council approval:

- a) Property owners and/or assignees will be required to submit a complete application to the Town describing, in detail, the improvements that are planned. The application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the improvements being made in order to be eligible for this program. The Town will review the application to ensure that the improvements are eligible for a Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program. For the purpose of this program, eligible improvements are deemed to be improvements that will lead to an increase in the property's assessed value by improving the physical condition of the building and/or property in a manner that is consistent with the CIP's intent and design guidelines.
- b) Projects are also required to be in compliance with the Town's other By-laws and policies, including zoning and building regulations.
- c) The subject property shall not be in a position of tax arrears or any other financial obligation towards the Town.
- d) This program would not exempt property owners from an increase in municipal taxes due to a general tax rate increase or a change in assessment for any other reason after property has been improved, except by reason of an assessment appeal.
- e) The grant will be forfeited and repaid to the Town if the owner makes the decision to demolish or alter the property in a manner that does not comply with the CIP Design Guidelines before the grant period elapses.
- f) A Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant may be received by a property owner and/or assignee in combination with any other municipal program offered by the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Plan. However, in accordance with the *Planning Act*, the total of this grant and any other grants and loans provided by the municipality to the property owner and/or assignee, either individually or collectively, cannot exceed the cost of rehabilitating the subject land and/or buildings.
- g) The Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program is applicable to development proposals on all public and private properties within the CIP Project area. The Program will be applied to both public and private property in accordance with the details of the program detailed above.



4.7 SALE OF PUBLIC LAND FOR LESS THAN MARKET VALUE

Purpose

The Sale of Public Land For Less Than Market Value is an incentive to promote development in accordance with the CIP and is specific to underutilized publically-owned properties in the CIP Project area.

Description

Town Council will consider the sale of municipally-owned property at 25 per cent less than market value for developments that meet the intent and Design Guidelines of the CIP.

Pre-consultation with Town staff and Council to discuss the proposed development is required prior to submitting a proposal that seeks the land for less than market value.

Potential purchasers of publically-owned land will be required to submit detailed architectural concept and site drawings describing the proposal in images and text sufficient to address the CIP design guidelines. The proponent of development will be required to submit to the Town a development Pro forma that identifies development expenses (including that land at current market value or at the eligible discounted rate) and revenues to be generated. The Development Pro forma will be used to determine the development proposal against 'the highest and best use' of the land, as determined by Council.

As required by the *Planning Act*, the purchaser of publically-owned property will be required to enter into a written agreement with the Town stating that they will keep and maintain the land and building and the use in conformity with the

CIP, including its Design Guidelines.

The agreement will be registered against the land to which it applies and the Town will enforce the provisions of the agreement against any party to the agreement and, subject to the provisions of the *Registry Act* and the *Land Title Act*, against any and all subsequent owners or tenants and/or assignees of the land. Included in the agreement will be the requirement for the property to remain current on its property taxes.

Projects are also required to be in compliance with the Town's other By-laws and policies, including zoning and building regulations.

Purchasers benefitting from the Sale of Public Land for less than market value may, also utilize other grant or loan provisions of the CIP.



4.8 BUILDING REHABILITATION LOAN PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Building Rehabilitation Loan Program (BRLP) is to match funding of renovations to non-residential properties, to promote functional improvements, and change of use to a mixed-use building (residential above commercial) in accordance with the CIP Design Guidelines.

Description

Building improvement is defined as work to the interior and exterior of a property, its energy efficiency, as well as small scale increases in floor area (less than 10 per cent in GFA).

The available loan is equivalent to a proportion of the work value and on a matching funds basis, to a maximum of 50 per cent of eligible costs. The maximum loan is \$17,500.

The loan will be reflected on the tax roll and will be registered and discharged by the Town in accordance with Section 32(2) of the *Planning Act*. The loan will be interest free with a maximum amortization period of five years. The loan is fully open and may be repaid in full at any time prior to the end of the term of the loan.

Repayment of the loan will be calculated on a maximum 5-year amortization period commencing on the first anniversary of the approval of the Financial Assistance Agreement between the Town and the owner(s) and annually on the anniversary date thereafter until paid in full.

The loan is also transferable to successors in title provided the new owner meets the eligibility criteria and agrees to the terms and conditions of the loan.

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the loan application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for a loan under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) A loan application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any improvements to which the loan will apply.
- b) Prior to release of the funds, the Town of Hearst will require proof of cost submitted by the applicant. This will include final invoices for all costs related to the eligible works.

The program will be monitored for effectiveness on an annual basis with a detailed review in year 5 of the program to determine whether the program has met the goals of the CIP.

4.9 MUNICIPAL FEE GRANT PROGRAM (new)

Purpose

The purpose of the Municipal Fee Grant Program is to promote development by reducing costs of municipal fees. The Municipal Fee Rebate Program shall provide a refund for the following municipal fees related to the development.

Description

- a) Building Permit Fee – 100% reduction of the cost of the Building Permit Fee, up to a maximum grant of \$2,500
- b) Landfill Site Tipping Fee – 100% reduction of the cost of the Tipping Fee, up to a maximum grant of \$500.

The Municipal Fee Rebate Program shall commence on or after the date that the amended Plan comes into effect.

- a) A grant/rebate application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any improvement to which the grant/rebate will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property before making an application to conduct work.
- c) The subject property shall not be in a position of property tax and/or water arrears or have any municipal orders from the Building, By-law or Fire Departments.
- d) All fees shall be paid in full at the application stage. Once the work is completed, the fees shall be refunded to the applicant.
- e) The total value of the refund provided under this grant plus any other grant of this Plan shall not exceed the value of the work done as declared in the Building Permit Application.



5 BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

5.1 PROJECT FEASIBILITY STUDY GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Project Feasibility Study Grant Program (PFSGP) is to promote the undertaking of feasibility studies so that potential investors can obtain more and better information with respect to the costs of reusing, rehabilitating and retrofitting brownfield buildings and lands.

Description

The PFSGP will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of an eligible feasibility study to a maximum grant of \$3,000, with a maximum of one study per property. Eligible feasibility studies include but are not limited to:

- Structural analyses
- Evaluation of mechanical and electrical systems
- Concept plans
- Market analyses
- Any other related feasibility study as approved by the Town

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review of the final completed study with the original invoice, indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the consultant conducting the study or the actual cost of the study. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the study is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the consultant(s) that conducted the study are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to provide the study to subsequent owners and interested parties, should the applicant decide not to proceed with reuse, rehabilitation or retrofitting of the site.

The PFSGP will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any feasibility study to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the study.
- c) Feasibility studies shall be for the purpose of:
 - i Structural analyses;
 - ii Evaluation of mechanical and electrical systems;
 - iii Concept plans;
 - iv Market analyses;
 - v Any other related feasibility study as approved by the Town.
- d) Applications will include:
 - i A detailed study work plan;
 - ii A cost estimate for the study;
 - iii A description of the planned redevelopment, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved;
- e) All completed feasibility studies must comply with the description of the studies as provided in the grant application form.
- f) One electronic and one hard copy of the study findings shall be submitted to the Town for the Town's review and retention.



5.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM (as amended)

Purpose

The purpose of the Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program (ESAGP) is to promote the undertaking of environmental studies so that more and better information is available with respect to the type of contamination and potential remediation costs on brownfield properties.

Description

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) has become a standard requirement of most financial institutions. A Phase I ESA does not provide detailed information with respect to the type of contamination and cost of remediation. Therefore, Phase I ESAs are not eligible for funding under this program. To be eligible to apply for the ESAGP, a Phase I ESA must have been completed on the property and must show that the property is suspected of environmental contamination.

The ESAGP will provide a matching grant of 50 per cent of the cost of an eligible environmental study to a maximum grant of:

- a) **\$6,000 per study; and**
- b) **\$12,000 per property/project.**

Eligible environmental studies include a Phase II ESA, Remedial Work Plan, and a Risk Assessment. Environmental site assessment grants will only be offered on eligible properties where there is potential for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment of the property.

Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff and a decision on the grant application will be made by Town staff, subject to delegation of this approval authority from Council. Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council.

Grants approved under this program would be provided to applicants following submission to the Town for review of the final completed study with the original invoice, indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full. The grant will be paid on the lesser of a cost estimate provided by the qualified person (consultant) conducting the study or the actual cost of the study. The grant may be reduced or cancelled if the study is not completed, not completed as approved, or if the consultant(s) that conducted the study are not paid. The applicant will agree to provide the Town with permission to notify any other subsequent project proponents of the existence of an environmental study or studies.

The ESAGP will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town and approved prior to the start of any environmental study to which the grant will apply.
- b) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application and conduct the study.
- c) Environmental studies shall be for the purpose of:
 - i confirming and describing contamination at the site (partial or complete Phase II ESA);
 - ii developing a plan to remove, treat, or otherwise manage contamination found on the site (Remedial Work Plan/Risk Assessment);
- d) Applicants must complete and submit to the Town for review a Phase I ESA that demonstrates that site contamination is likely.
- e) Applications will include:
 - i a detailed study work plan;
 - ii a cost estimate for the study;
 - iii a description of the planned redevelopment, including any planning applications that have been submitted/approved.
- f) All environmental studies shall be completed by a "qualified person" as defined by Ontario Regulation 153/04.
- g) All completed environmental studies must comply with the description of the studies as provided in the grant application form.
- h) One hard copy of the study findings shall be supplied to the Town for review.



5.3 PROPERTY TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of the Property Tax Assistance Program (PTAP) is to encourage the remediation and rehabilitation of brownfields sites by providing a cancellation of the property tax increase on a property that is undergoing or has undergone remediation and development to assist with payments of the costs of environmental remediation. This program applies only to properties requiring environmental remediation and/or risk assessment/management.

Description

The legislative authority for the PTAP is established under Section 365 of (2) the *Municipal Act, 2001*, which allows municipalities to pass a By-law providing tax assistance to an eligible property in the form of cancellation of all or a portion of the taxes levied on that property for municipal and education purposes during the “rehabilitation period” (maximum 18 months from the date that tax assistance begins) and the “development period” of the property, as defined in Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Matching education property tax assistance for eligible properties under the provincial Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP), or through any other replacement programs administered by the Ministry of Finance, is subject to approval of the Minister of Finance on a case-by-case basis.

An “eligible property” for the PTAP is a property within the community improvement project area where a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) has been conducted, and that as of the date the Phase II ESA was completed, did not meet the required standards under subparagraph 4i of Section 168.4(1) of the *Environmental Protection Act* to permit a Record of Site Condition (RSC) to be filled in the Environmental Site Registry.

“Eligible costs” for the Property Tax Assistance Program are the costs of any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a record of site condition (RSC) to be filled in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*. This includes the costs of:

- a) Phase II ESAs, Remedial Work Plans, and Risk Assessments not covered by the Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program;
- b) environmental remediation, including the costs of preparing a RSC;
- c) placing clean fill and grading;
- d) installing environmental and/or engineering controls/works as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment;
- e) monitoring, maintaining and operating environmental and engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment;
- f) environmental insurance premiums.

In no case will the total amount of tax assistance provided under the PTAP exceed the total of these eligible costs.

The municipal property tax assistance provided will cease:

- a) when the total tax assistance provided equals the total eligible costs as specified above; or,
- b) after three years, whichever comes first.

The matching education property tax assistance will cease:

- a) when the total tax assistance provided equals the total eligible costs as specified above; or,
- b) after such time period as is approved by the Minister of Finance, whichever comes first.

Applications for property tax assistance in the CIP Area will be eligible for cancellation of the municipal property tax increase for up to three years and cancellation of the education property tax increase for up to the time period as approved by the Minister of Finance. If a property is sold by the original applicant within the three year term from the date of the passing of the By-law, both the municipal and education property tax assistance will cease. Rollover of any remaining municipal tax assistance into the Rehabilitation Grant Program will not be permitted.

The matching education property tax assistance is subject to approval by the Minister of Finance. The matching education property tax assistance may be provided on a different schedule from the municipal property tax assistance

provided by the Town and may be subject to additional conditions. The Town may continue to offer municipal property tax assistance beyond the period for which the Minister of Finance agrees to offer education property tax assistance.

The property will be subject to passing of a By-law by the Town that authorizes the provision of the tax assistance. This By-law will contain conditions required by the Town as well as conditions required by the Minister of Finance. In order for the By-law to apply to education property taxes, before it is passed by the Town, the By-law must be approved in writing by the Minister of Finance.

Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council. Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff who will then make a recommendation to Town Council. The application is subject to approval by Town Council. As a condition of approval of an application for Property Tax Assistance, the property owner must enter into an agreement with the Town. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the property tax assistance. This Agreement is also subject to approval by Town Council.

The Property Tax Assistance Program will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for an initial period of five years, with an option to extend the program for up to another five years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council and the Minister of Finance.

Requirements

Only owners of property within the Community Improvement Project Area are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to availability of funding as approved by Council and the Minister of Finance:

- a) An application for property tax assistance must be submitted to the Town prior to the start of any remediation works to which the tax assistance will apply.
- b) The application must be accompanied by a Phase II ESA prepared by a qualified person that shows that the property does not meet the standards under subparagraph 4i of Section 168.4(1) of the *Environmental Protection Act* to permit a Record of Site Condition (RSC) to be filled in the Environmental Site Registry.
- c) The application must be accompanied by a Phase II ESA, Remedial Work Plan or Risk Assessment prepared by a qualified person that contains:
 - i an estimate of the cost of actions that will be required to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit

- a record of site condition (RSC) to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*; and
- ii a work plan and budget for said environmental remediation and/or risk management actions
- d) As a condition of the application, the Town may require the applicant to submit a Business Plan for redevelopment of the property (as applicable), with said Plan to the Town's satisfaction.
- e) The property shall be rehabilitated such that the work undertaken will result in an increase in the assessed value of the property.
- f) The total value of the property tax assistance provided under this program shall not exceed total eligible costs. This includes the eligible costs of:
 - i Phase II ESAs, Remedial Work Plans, and Risk Assessment not covered by the Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program;
 - ii environmental remediation, including the costs of preparing a RSC;
 - iii placing clean fill and grading;
 - iv installing environmental and/or engineering controls/works as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment;
 - v monitoring, maintaining and operating environmental and engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment; and
 - vi Environmental insurance premiums.
- g) All property owners participating in this program will be required to enter into an agreement with the Town that will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the tax assistance.
- h) All Property Tax Assistance Program applications and agreements must be approved by Council.
- i) Should the owner of the property default on any of the conditions in the By-law, the tax assistance provided (plus interest) will become payable to the Town and the Province.
- j) The owner shall file in the Environmental Site Registry a RSC for the property signed by a qualified person, and the owner shall submit to the Town, (within six months of acknowledgement) proof that the RSC has been acknowledged by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE).



5.4 BROWNFIELDS REHABILITATION GRANT PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of the Brownfields Rehabilitation Grant Program (BRGP) is to encourage the remediation, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of brownfield sites by providing grants to help pay for additional rehabilitation costs normally associated with brownfield sites.

Description

The BRGP will provide a financial incentive in the form of an annual grant for up to 10 years to help offset the cost of rehabilitating eligible brownfield properties only where that rehabilitation results in an increase in assessment value and property taxes on these properties. An application can be made for the BRGP or the Property Tax Assistance Program, or both programs together. The annual grant available under the BRGP can be paid only once final site/building inspection has taken place, reassessment of the property has taken place, and the property owner has paid the property taxes in full for the year in which the grant is to be provided. If an application for both the Rehabilitation Grant Program and the Property Tax Assistance Program have been approved, the annual grant available under the Rehabilitation Grant Program will begin when the benefits of the Property Tax Assistance Program end.

“Eligible costs” for the Rehabilitation Grant Program include the costs of:

- a) Phase II ESAs, Remedial Work Plans, and Risk Assessments not covered by the Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program or the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- b) environmental remediation, including the costs of preparing a RSC, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;

- c) placing clean fill and grading not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- d) installing environmental and/or engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- e) monitoring, maintaining and operating environmental and engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- f) environmental insurance premiums not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- g) the following Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program Components:
 - i base plan review by a certified LEED consultant;
 - ii preparing new working drawings to the LEED standard;
 - iii submitting and administering the constructed element testing and certification used to determine the LEED designation;
- h) demolishing buildings;
- i) building rehabilitation and retrofit works;
- j) upgrading on-site infrastructure, including water services, sanitary sewers and stormwater management facilities;
- k) constructing/upgrading off-site infrastructure, including roads, water services, sanitary sewers, stormwater management facilities, electrical and gas utilities, where this is required to permit remediation, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of the property that is subject of the application.

In no case will the total amount of the grant provided under the Rehabilitation Grant Program exceed the total of these eligible costs.

The annual grant available under the Rehabilitation Grant Program will be offered as a tax-increment based grant on a “pay-as-you go” basis. The applicant will initially pay for the entire cost of rehabilitation. When the Town receives the incremental property taxes that result from the rehabilitation project, the Town will reimburse the applicant in the form of an annual grant equivalent to 50% of the increase in municipal taxes that results from the project for a period of up to 10 years, or up to the time when total grant payments equal total eligible costs, whichever comes first.

Applications for sites within the CIP area will be eligible for annual grant payments for up to 10 years.

Applications will be processed and approved on a first come first serve basis, subject to availability of funding as approved by Council. Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by Town staff who will then make a recommendation

to Town Council. The application is subject to approval by Town Council. As a condition of approval of an application for a Rehabilitation Grant, the applicant must enter into an agreement with the Town. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the grant. This Agreement is also subject to approval by Town Council.

The assessment and municipal property taxes (“base rate”) will be determined before commencement of the project. The increase in municipal property taxes (or “municipal tax increment”) is calculated by subtracting the municipal property taxes before reassessment from municipal property taxes after reassessment by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) following project completion. The amount of the grant will be recalculated every year based on the municipal property taxes levied and the municipal tax increment every year. The Rehabilitation Grant Program will commence on or after the date that this Plan comes into effect and will be offered for a period of 10 years, subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council.

Requirements

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council:

- a) A grant application must be submitted to the Town prior to the start of any rehabilitation works to which the grant will apply.
- b) Such application shall include reports, plans, estimates, contracts and other details as may be required to satisfy the Town with respect to the eligible costs and conformity of the project with the CIP.
- c) If the application includes costs for environmental remediation, the application must be accompanied by a Phase II ESA, Remedial Work Plan or Risk Assessment Plan prepared by a qualified person that contains:
 - i) an estimate of the cost of actions that will be required to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a record of site condition (RSC) to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*; and
 - ii) a work plan and budget for said environmental remediation, and/or risk management actions.
- d) As a condition of the grant application, the Town may require the applicant to submit a Business Plan, with said Plan to the Town’s satisfaction.
- e) The property shall be rehabilitated such that the amount of work undertaken is sufficient, at a minimum to result in an increase in the assessed value of the property.
- f) The total value of the grant provided under this program shall not exceed total eligible costs. This includes the cost of:
 - i) Phase II ESAs, Remedial Work Plans, and Risk Assessments not covered

by the Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program or the Property Tax Assistance Program;

- ii) environmental remediation, including the costs of preparing a RSC, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- iii) placing clean fill and grading not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- iv) installing environmental and/or engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- v) monitoring, maintaining and operating environmental and engineering controls/works, as specified in the Remedial Work Plan and/or Risk Assessment, not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- vi) environmental insurance premiums not covered by the Property Tax Assistance Program;
- vii) the following Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Program Components:
 - a) base plan review by a certified LEED consultant;
 - b) preparing new working drawings to the LEED standard;
 - c) submitting and administering the constructed element testing and certification used to determine the LEED designation.
- viii) demolishing buildings;
- ix) building rehabilitation and retrofit works;
- x) upgrading on-site infrastructure, including water services, sanitary sewers and stormwater management facilities;
- xi) constructing/upgrading off-site infrastructure, including roads, water services, sanitary sewers, stormwater management facilities, electrical and gas utilities, where this is required to permit remediation, rehabilitation and/or adaptive reuse of the property that is subject of the application.
- g) All applicants participating in this program will be required to enter into an agreement with the Town, which will specify the terms of the grant.
- h) All Rehabilitation Grant Program applications and agreements must be approved by Town Council.
- i) If a building(s) erected on a property participating in this program is demolished before the grant period expires, the remainder of the monies to be paid out under the grant shall be forfeited.
- j) The owner shall file in the Environmental Site Registry a RSC for the property signed by a qualified person, and the owner shall submit to the Town proof that the RSC has been acknowledged by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). This condition applies even if the owner is applying only for non-environmental costs (items f) viii-xi above).



5.5 GREEN MUNICIPAL FUND PROGRAM

Purpose

The Green Municipal Fund Program (GMFP) provides financial assistance for Brownfield Remediation above and beyond programs offered through the CIP.

Description





Within the project area of this CIP, it is expected that applications will be made for financial assistance under the GMFP. The Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is a source of financing for municipal environmental projects, funded by the Government of Canada and managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). The program funded by GMF supports a variety of environmental projects in categories such as Energy, Waste, Water, Sustainable Transportation, Integrated Community Planning and Brownfield Remediation.

Funding for brownfield remediation includes grants to conduct site investigations and feasibility studies, and low interest loans for site remediation projects. The programs are offered annually and any municipal government is eligible to apply for funding (municipalities may partner with a private sector landowner or developer). Properties are typically required to be within a CIP Project area that supports brownfield remediation and redevelopment in order to qualify for funding under the GMFP.

The GMFP is intended for larger projects that may require extraordinary funding (i.e., above and beyond the financial assistance that may be available through this CIP). Applications are completed on a project-by-project basis and considered through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The amount of funding that is provided will depend on the potential of the project for public benefit (environmental, social and economic). Funding is allocated and awarded annually through the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Requirements

- a) The Town of Hearst may apply for financial assistance under the GMFP to support the remediation and redevelopment of any brownfields located within this CIP Project area.
- b) Applications will be considered and endorsed by Council on a project-by-project basis.
- c) Applications may be made for Town of Hearst projects, or for projects that include a private sector partner who has an interest in the remediation and redevelopment of a brownfield site within the CIP Project area.
- d) Where an application is made with a private sector partner, the Town of Hearst and the partner shall enter into an agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the partnership and this agreement shall form part of the application.
- e) The combined benefits provided under all grant, loan and property tax assistance programs proposed in this Plan or any other CIP, may not exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands.

Program	Year 1 2009	Year 2 2010	Year 3 2011	Year 4 2012	Year 5 2013	Years 6-10 2014 onward
Planning, Design and Architectural Grant Program**	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Building Façade Improvement Grant Program**	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	
Signage Grant Program**	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Parking Area Improvement Grant Program**	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	
Building/Property Improvement Rebate Grant Program (Tax Increment)*	Foregone Revenues Dependent on Site Applications 					
Sale of Public Land For Less Than Market Value**	Foregone Revenues Dependent on Site Applications 					
Building Rehabilitation Loan Program**	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	
Project Feasibility Study Grant Program**	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	
Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program**	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Property Tax Assistance Program*	Foregone Revenues Dependent on Site Applications 					
Rehabilitation Grant Program*	Foregone Revenues Dependent on Site Applications 					
Total Annual Allocation of Funds (excluding Foregone Revenue)	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$195,000	\$195,000	

* Maximum duration of grant assistance is 10 years from end of 2013

** To qualify for assistance applicants must complete project within six months of the end of program in 2013

6 PUBLIC WORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The following are not CIP incentive programs but are intended to augment the grants program under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

In conjunction with the incentives and to augment the CIP grants program for encouraging private rehabilitation and improvements, the Town will participate in the improvements to public lands and facilities, further described as follows:

Street Lighting

The Town will complete the installation of heritage streetlights throughout the Community Improvement Plan Project Area, with the top priority being ‘downtown’. The lighting shall be consistent with the lighting design as set out in the CIP Design Guidelines, and will be designed to provide a level of lighting in the commercial core that will provide for a safe and attractive environment for pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

Streetscape Improvements

The Town will complete the installation of new street trees, tree planters, bicycle stands and garden/flower beds within the CIP Project area, with the top priority being ‘downtown’. The streetscaping shall be consistent with the concept designs as set out in the CIP, and detailed design drawings.

The Hearst Downtown BIA, local merchants, and the Hearst Economic Development Corporation, with possible financial assistance from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), will be asked to assist the Town in the provision of street furniture, benches and garbage receptacles. The Hearst Downtown BIA and local merchants will also be asked to co-ordinate the placement and maintenance of hanging flower baskets by participating business owners.

Wayfinding Signage

New wayfinding signage will be provided in the Community Improvement Area. These signs will use a historic theme (wood) and larger letters to assist people who are unfamiliar with the Town. There will be signs directing visitors to the community in general and, more specifically, to the Downtown.

Landscaping, Laneway and Parking Improvements

Parking and traffic movements in the CIP Project area will be enhanced by the improvements described in the CIP. In addition, streets will be landscaped with appropriate plantings and vegetation that will provide visual amenity within the CIP Project area.

Proposed Implementation Outline for Public Works

- 1 -2 yrs
 - 2 Town Gateways
 - Civic Node + RV park (Front & 9th Streets)
 - Wayfinding & signage
 - Downtown Streetlighting
- 2 - 5 yrs
 - Downtown Gateways
 - Public Bench Nodes on Highway 11 Corridor
 - George St. Improvements
 - 9th Street Gmprovements
- 5 -10 yrs
 - Front Street Improvements
 - 8th Street Improvements
 - 10th Street Improvements

7 IMPLEMENTATION

Administration

This Community Improvement Plan will be administered by the Town of Hearst as part of the implementation of the Community Improvement Policies of the Official Plan of the Hearst Planning Area.

Recommended Funding Plan

The table on page 44 outlines recommended funding levels for each program year. The recommended funding is based on the anticipated level of development interest in the Community Improvement Project area, recognition of the likely limitations on capital funds available to the Town, and scale of funding of incentives programs in comparable communities. It is not possible to accurately predict the number and scale of applications in advance of implementing the Plan. The recommended funds are minimums that should be approved in order to meet the goals of the Plan over the five-year term.

Funding allocations contained in this Plan are subject to review and approval by Town Council.

Intended Combined Effect of Programs

The programs contained in this Plan are separate funding options designed to offer support for a variety of different development-related costs. The programs also share the same goal of property revitalization, creating social, physical and economic benefits. The Town has discretion as to which program(s) to apply to each property under application.

Urban Design Standards

The Town may complete more detailed Master Urban Design Guidelines/ Plans to guide future development in the Community Improvement Project Area to augment the revitalization and rehabilitation programs outlined in this report. The Master Urban Design Guidelines/Plans would provide detailed recommendations to augment the policies of the Official Plan and establish a basis for reviewing new development, and to ensure that development is consistent with the Community Improvement Plan goals and objectives. The Guidelines may also include additional details regarding building and landscaping design that may be used by Council to assess applications for grants provided under this program.

Official Plan and Zoning By-law

This CIP has been prepared in accordance with the Community Improvement policies of the Official Plan of the Hearst Planning Area. The Town may consider amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law to implement provisions of Bill 51, Amendments to the *Planning Act* that will enable the Town to require that development and redevelopment within the Community Improvement Plan comply with guidelines outlined in the Community Improvement Plan and subsequent Master Urban Design Guidelines/Plans.

Site Plan Control By-law and Sign By-law, Delegation of Authority By-law

The Town will update the Site Plan Control By-law, Sign By-law, and Delegation of Authority By-law to reflect the intent of this Community Improvement Plan.

Business Development Concept

A business development concept including marketing policies and business promotion will be developed to strengthen the implementation of the CIP. Methods may include production of brochures, real estate marketing forums, or involvement of a community liaison to raise public awareness.

Monitoring and Amendments

Council will conduct periodic reviews of the programs and activities relating to Community Improvement to determine their effectiveness. Council may amend this Plan as is necessary to ensure that the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan are achieved. Any increase in program financing permitted under Section 28 will require an amendment to this Plan. An extension to any program for up to an additional five years and any decrease in program financing due to Municipal budgetary constraints in any given year will not require amendments to this Plan.

Financial Implications

The Financial incentives proposed in this CIP are based on a five year cycle, but are also subject to the overall fiscal limitation of the Municipality which are

reflected from year to year in Council's annually approved budget.

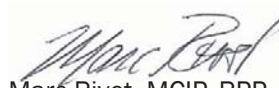
The Town has committed sufficient funds for private land improvements to enable properties to take full advantage of all of the financial incentives available. This would result in a significant improvement to the appearance of the community and, undoubtedly, encourage further investments in the lands and buildings in the community and in addition, improvements to public lands including street tree planting, bike paths, entry features, sidewalks, etc. As both the private and public realms increase their investment in the Community Improvement the overall benefits will be significant.

Conclusions

This CIP provides clear direction for Council, staff, and landowners with regard to public and private investment initiatives in the Hearst Downtown – Highway 11 Corridor Community Improvement Project Area.

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SCHEDULE A DOWNTOWN - HIGHWAY 11/FRONT STREET CORRDOR COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AREA

