
***Downtown Grimsby Revitalization
Steering Committee***

Downtown Grimsby Capital Plan

October 7, 2009

Ron Marini and Associates Inc

62 Quaker Crescent
Hamilton, Ontario L8W 1H5
(905) 388-7568
r__marini@sympatico.ca

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Executive Summary

In May of 2009, the Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee engaged Ron Marini and Associates Inc., a planning and communications firm, to prepare a plan for downtown Grimsby which identified major public works over a prescribed period of time. Utilizing plans prepared for the Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee, notably a Downtown Master Plan, Ron Marini and Associates Inc. together with Lawrence Stasiuk, OALA, Landscape Architect, identified public sector works and prepared detailed estimates to construct the works. The works so identified were then scheduled based on a priorities list from the Downtown Master Plan. Once the works were identified and scheduled, likely funding sources were identified and are so noted in this report. This report is the result of this work. The most important element of the report is the 3-Year and 10-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Downtown Grimsby. Highlights from the plan include a program of gateway signage for downtown, street ambience improvements and the creation of exciting new public spaces and the reinvigorating of tired public lands. In going forward, various governing bodies such as the Town of Grimsby, the Region of Niagara and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority have been identified as partners

in making the vision of downtown Grimsby from the Downtown Master Plan a reality.

Ron Marini and Associates Inc. is grateful to the leadership shown by Tony Quirk, an indefatigable advocate for improving Downtown Grimsby and the members of the Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee for this opportunity to contribute to the betterment of the jewel which is Downtown Grimsby.

***Ronald M. Marini, MCIP, RPP
President
Ron Marini and Associates Inc
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Introduction:

The Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee of Grimsby has been focussed on bringing renewal and regeneration to Grimsby's unique downtown. They have had strategies, plans and legislation drafted in order to make significant progress in Downtown Grimsby's renewal. Part of the work identified included the preparation of a Downtown Grimsby Capital Plan.

The Capital Plan is a schedule of works, prioritized over time identifying construction projects and related costs. It is important to note that the Capital Plan restricts itself to those works on public lands. Other plans prepared for the Grimsby Revitalization Steering Committee speak to renewal and regeneration of privately held lands.

Ron Marini and Associates Inc and Lawrence Stasiuk, OALA, collaborated on the preparation of the Downtown Grimsby Capital Plan. The result of the collaboration is found on the spreadsheet in this report entitled: "Downtown Grimsby Capital Plan".

Downtown Capital Plan Explained:

The works listed on the above-referenced spreadsheet have been identified after reviewing the implementation section of the "Downtown Grimsby Community Improvement Plan Draft Downtown Master Plan" prepared by GSP Group Inc

and RCI Consulting. That document, by tables and by maps, identified the various required public works and then established a general framework prioritizing those projects. The Grimsby Downtown Capital Plan moves the agenda of public work improvements further by articulating the specific works, identifying the scope of work as best as possible within the limitations of the details of the Master Plan, and then using known best practices in municipal project management and cost in 2009 dollars, prioritized and assigned construction and related costs. Only through the preparation of detailed design and construction plans can actual estimates be ascertained. The estimates in the Capital Plan are sufficient for budgeting and capital planning.

The priorities identified, closely match the works and schedules from the Master Plan cited earlier, the significant difference being the implications of construction and necessary prerequisites (e.g. land purchase) before identified projects could go forward. In such instances, the Capital Plan makes adjustments in the priorities and consequently in the timing of the undertaking of the project.

Our recommendations for projects in the specific years are based on the best information available today. We recommend that other jurisdictions review this Capital Plan to co-ordinate their own planned works, (sewer, water, road reconstruction) and make the appropriate adjustments to align all capital works. Coordinating works will maximize efficiencies and minimize disturbances and inconveniences to the public and businesses.

The most significant element of the Capital Plan is the listing of projects planned for the near term. This represents the immediate priorities and therefore, there is

an urgency to allocate the requisite funds to ensure the works will be done as per the schedule.

The balance of the Capital Plan reflects known elements spread over a longer time period and include matters that need to be canvassed, such as the timing and acquisition of the Post Office, relocation of Elm Street and the construction and its related elements of the Town Square.

The Capital Plan is ambitious but it is achievable where there is a will and willing partners. The next part of the report deals with potential funding sources.

Potential Funding Sources and Partners

When discussing potential partners and funding sources, it is relevant to discuss the public interest and why public dollars should be allocated to making Downtown Grimsby a better place.

From a provincial perspective, healthy downtowns and directing growth to downtown areas as opposed to creating urban sprawl are central themes to both Provincial Policy Statements and to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The allocation of money to improve street ambience, create trail linkages, improving public open spaces and to make travelling in the downtown a better experience through implementing capital plans downtown are aligned with Provincial Growth initiatives. Consequently, applications for assistance from Provincial ministries would be justified if such requests were submitted from the DIA, Town or Region.

In addition to the Province, the obvious funding partners are the Downtown Improvement Area, Town of Grimsby, Region of Niagara and the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

The DIA has been recommended in the Capital Plan to address the gateways to the downtown, way finding and related signage and public space enhancements in the form of murals and public art. Funding from existing and future Provincial programmes to the DIA would be used for these elements attributable to the DIA.

With the advent of both a new Official Plan and Provincial growth plans, the downtown is important to the Town from a policy perspective and hence, deserves a greater degree of capital dollars as contemplated by the Capital Plan.

The majority of projects are already Town assets, such as the improvements to Coronation Park, improvements to the Town's downtown parking lots and their pedestrian linkages and improvements to the trail system. New areas involving the Town would be the relocation of Elm Street with its intersection with Main Street and the planned public square at the current terminus of Elm at Main Street. Because Main Street is a Region of Niagara asset, there is a good opportunity for the Region to partner with some of the costs of these important undertakings for the improvement of Downtown Grimsby. A number of street and parking and traffic calming projects should be eligible projects under the Gas Tax dollars received from the Federal Government.

Major downtown streets in Grimsby are under the purview of the Regional Municipality of Niagara. As such, they play the most significant role in the improvements to public space in downtown Grimsby. Major downtown streets

such as Livingston, Main and Christie streets as well as the bridge improvements recommended over the Forty Mile Creek are Regional responsibilities.

Rehabilitation of these streets, incorporating traffic calming features, landscape improvements and pedestrian improvements are clearly aligned with Regional efforts to improve the downtown environments of the many communities which comprise the Region of Niagara. The Region has been forthcoming with capital dollars for incentive programs so the next logical step is for the Region to fund those elements of the Grimsby Capital Plan attributable to those elements under their jurisdiction. As noted in the comments under the Town of Grimsby, gas tax dollars could be spent on the many planned upgrades to regional roads in Grimsby. In addition, upgrades to the off street trail system could be viewed in the context of regional trail systems and regional funding for the upgrades as identified in the Capital Plan should also be sought.

In both Regional and Town cases, determination should be sought as to which projects may be eligible for Development Charges dollars. In future, as both governments revisit their development charge by-laws, the presence of the Capital Plan for downtown Grimsby can be used to justify an allocation of future charges to identified downtown projects.

Improvements to Forty Mile Creek, or Coronation Park related to Conservation Authority matters should be referred to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority for consideration in their capital budget for 2010 and beyond.

The Town and the Region could partner in accessing Green Municipal Funds from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Such funds could be targeted for

pedestrian improvements, traffic calming and trail systems all leading to making downtown Grimsby more accessible by foot and to make the pedestrian experience a better downtown experience.

Next Steps:

The formulation of the Grimsby Downtown Capital Plan ushers in a new era in revitalization and renewal for the Town. This statement is made on the strength that the capital plan is based on a comprehensive downtown master plan including a proposed downtown community improvement plan. Together, the effort represents governments and private property owners and local business partnering and shouldering their respective responsibilities to achieve the vision for Downtown Grimsby as articulated through the community consultation.

Ronald M. Marini, MCIP, RPP

President

Ron Marini and Associates Inc.