

Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvement Committee



**Presentation to the
Municipality of Bluewater Council**

January 18, 2016

Mission Statement

The Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvement Committee (HSIIC) is a volunteer group of concerned and interested residents of Hensall. The goal of this organization is to identify areas of Hensall that need improvement and to then advocate for addressing the areas of concern. It is the goal of HSIIC to work with the Municipality of Bluewater, other interested residents, and business people in Hensall, in order to improve the visual appeal of the village and improve the quality of life for its residents and business owners.

Contact Information:

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- Miranda Burgess, Secretary, burgessmiranda@gmail.com

Purpose of This Presentation

The purpose of this presentation to Bluewater Council is to make the municipality aware of our goals and concerns and to advocate for improvements to our village.

Following this presentation, in the coming weeks, we would like to set up meetings with appropriate municipality staff to begin the process of making specific recommendations and to establish a long-term plan relative to the implementation of these improvements.

Our presentation dovetails with the Municipality's Strategic Plan as follows:

- 1) Effectively communicating to the residents of the municipality and partners represents a significant principle. Developing informed residents, encouraging their participation and input into the democratic processes, ensuring factual discussions and building consensus are key elements of this principle and the achievement of the Vision for Bluewater. This also involves being transparent in all the activities of the municipality.
- 2) Committed to providing public services - the primary role and function of Bluewater as a municipality is the provision of public services. Over the years, these can change in terms of availability, intent or scope, however the municipality has been created to organize and deliver public services that are important to and valued by the residents, that contribute to their quality of life and that create a distinctive character and foundation for the community. It is the foundation upon which the municipality develops and evolves over time and is valued and held accountable by its residents.
- 3) Enhance our quality of life - the quality of life in Bluewater, involving the natural features and assets, the history and tradition, the small and friendly community environment and relationships, the sense of safety and security and the area's proximity to other opportunities, is highly valued and is the key defining characteristic of the community. The public services offered by the municipality need to not only support and sustain this quality of life but to continue to enhance it, ensuring it is valued on behalf of all the residents.
- 4) We respond to community needs - Bluewater as a municipality is a creature of its residents. It was formed to support them in their daily life activities and in realizing their aspirations on a collective basis. Bluewater responds, on an on-going and evolving basis, to the needs of the community. This intent defines the means by which Bluewater acts, undertakes initiatives and makes decisions in concert with external accountabilities involving the province; other collective bodies, e.g.: the County or Conservation Authorities; federal laws and related requirements.
- 5) Cooperative planning and resources development - reflects the first of three strategies that the municipality employs to fulfill its Mission. The municipality undertakes planning activities under many dimensions, land use, economic development, public services, human resources, financing, etc. In all these activities, the municipality needs to pursue a cooperative approach, meaning that it consults meaningfully, works with partners, facilitates consensus building and represents the interest of its community in a cooperative way with all the stakeholders.

6) The equitable delivery of services - this is the second key strategy direction within the Mission, involving the delivery of the services provided by the municipality. The community is diverse in many ways, which is a valued asset, but this also creates unique differences in needs and perspectives across the community. The municipality, in building Bluewater as a community, needs to ensure, through investment, delivery standards, on-going evaluation of services delivery and other techniques, that services are equitably provided across the community and are reflective of the differing needs that collectively define the character and context of Bluewater. Prepare a ten-year infrastructure development strategy for water, sewer and roads that supports the following three key community outcomes:

- Economic development
- Public health and environmental conservation
- Quality of life enrichment

7) Proposed Mission Statement for Municipality of Bluewater in the Strategic Plan

Bluewater is a people-friendly municipality committed to providing public services that enhance our valued quality of life. We respond to community needs through:

- Cooperative planning and resources development.
- The equitable delivery of services.
- Effective stewardship of our unique physical environment. Fiscal responsibility.

8) We (The Municipality of Bluewater) believe...(in part),

- In the importance of complete and open communications that allows residents to be informed, to provide input and to meaningfully participate in their local municipal government and community life.
- In the importance of municipal leadership on behalf of the community that is responsive, cooperative, decisive, consistent and team-focussed.
- In developing an organizational culture that is customer-service driven and fosters, in staff and Council, a spirit of innovation, participation, optimism and the striving for excellence.

- In being accountable for the efficient and effective use of the community's resources, consistent with all statutory and regulatory requirements and transparent to the community.

9) Communication

Effectively communicating to the residents of the municipality and partners represents a significant principle. Developing informed residents, encouraging their participation and input into the democratic processes, ensuring factual discussions and building consensus are key elements of this principle and the achievement of the Vision for Bluewater. This also involves being transparent in all the activities of the municipality.

The presentation of the Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvement Committee (HSIIC) and our request for participation in planning and implementation relates to the above quotes taken from the municipality's Strategic Plan.

HSIIC has an organizational structure in place:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Secretary
- Finances/Grants
- Municipal Liaison
- Committee Members

We actively seek additional membership on an ongoing basis.

Key Areas of Concern and Present Priorities

<p>A) 123 and 126 King Street</p>	<p>The owner of these properties has not paid taxes for three years and cannot be reached despite efforts. In view of non-compliance of written orders for property deficiencies and unpaid taxes, HSIC advocates that the Municipality of Bluewater commence tax sale proceedings posthaste, pursuant with provincial tax sale rules (see photos).</p>
<p>B) Greening of Hensall</p>	<p>Offset the cutting down of trees in the Village of Hensall with a program of tree plantings within the village.</p> <p>Plant additional trees and green infrastructure at the park, entrances to the village, and other appropriate areas in the village</p>
<p>C) Sidewalks, Streets, Accessibility (handicapped and elderly)</p>	<p>The current system of sidewalks in Hensall includes many that are deficient due to deterioration and age (see photos). Many portions of the village sidewalks are not usable by the disabled and/or elderly in wheelchairs or walkers .</p> <p>Some areas of the village have no sidewalks at all, adding to non-accessibility and safety concerns for children.</p> <p>Some streets are significantly degraded and need to be included in a plan to bring them up to standards.</p>
<p>D) Heritage Lighting and Signage</p>	<p>Many, if not most, towns and villages in the surrounding areas have heritage lighting, signage, and graphics in place (see photos). Hensall would lend itself well to improvements of this nature.</p>
<p>E) Beautification and Maintenance of Existing Areas</p>	<p>Many areas of Hensall are blighted due to seemingly negligent maintenance and</p>

<p>Enforcement of Property Standards</p>	<p>upkeep in both public and private properties. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ramp of railroad property is a major safety concern and needs to be addressed immediately (see photos); • grader display (see photos); • condition of parking lot west of Heritage Hall; • many overgrown areas on public property, buckling paving stones, gardens, weeds, leaves, and debris blocking catch basins (see photos); • buckling and cracked remains of a foundation south of the post office (see photos). <p>Other problem areas are evident as well (see photos).</p>
<p>F) Healthy Active Design</p>	<p>Healthy active design includes active transport, which means that people are able to be active in a nice, safe environment. This includes such amenities as trails, bike paths, greenery, safe and accessible sidewalks.</p> <p>Currently, if Hensall residents want to use a walking trail or bike path, they must do so in another location (Exeter, for example).</p>

Photo Gallery Referenced Above

A) 123 and 125 King Street is a blighted property, tax deficient, and non-compliant with orders



B) The Greening of Hensall

As many large, mature trees have been cut down in Hensall, what is the plan to replace them or add green spaces in the village?



C) Sidewalks, Accessibility (handicapped and elderly), Streets

Many streets within the village are in desperate need of repair. Is there a long-term plan to address these? A BM Ross survey conducted in 2006 made recommendations that were put in the 2008 Hensall Community Improvement Plan relative to sidewalks and streets. In the subsequent ten years since the original recommendations were made, much still needs to be done. The disconnect between long-term planning and the implementation of such plans is evident. Is it funding? Differing priorities? We can do



In addition to many deteriorated sidewalks, there are no sidewalks at all in the following areas (on either side):

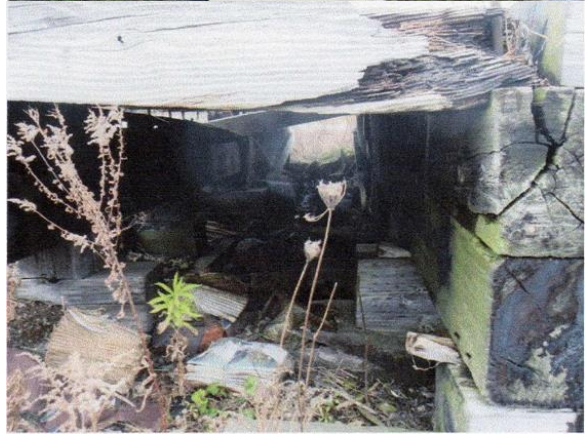
- Lorne Avenue, none on either side, entire length of the street
- Hensall-Zurich Rd east of Highway 4
- Queen St - Lorne Ave to Hwy 4 Richmond N - Lorne Ave to Hwy 4
- Richmond N - Hwy 4, halfway to Nelson St
- Queen St, Elizabeth to the end of the street
- Elizabeth St - King to Oxford
- Oxford - Elizabeth to Brock
- Brock - Oxford to Richmond S
- York Gres - less than 20% has a sidewalk

D) Heritage Lighting and Signage

See blue *Reference Photo Book Two* for examples of what other nearby towns and villages have done.

E) Beautification and Maintenance of Existing Areas, Enforcement of Property Standards

Derelict Ramp - presumably on RR property and derelict foundation by post office - a notice needs to be issued for their removal. They are extreme safety hazards. In addition, the old ramp area is currently used as an illegal dump.



The following is an excerpt from the Municipality of Bluewater's Property Standards Bylaw.

**THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BLUEWATER
BY-LAW No. 5-2003
PROPERTY STANDARDS BY-LAW
YARDS**

2.02 Every yard, including vacant lots shall be kept clean and free from:

(1) garbage, refuse, rubbish or debris and objects or conditions that may create a health, fire,

or accident hazard;

(3) long grass, brush, undergrowth and noxious weeds as defined by the Weed Control Act. For the purposes of this section, "long grass" shall mean grass that exceeds 20 cm. (8 inches) in height;

(4) dilapidated , collapsed or partially constructed structures which are not currently under construction ;

**PART IV
VACANT LANDS AND BUILDINGS**

VACANT LANDS

4.2 Vacant land shall be maintained to the standards as described in Part II, Article 2.02, of this By-Law.

4.3 Vacant land shall be graded, filled or otherwise drained so as to prevent recurrent ponding of water unless such ponding or water retention is based on an approved storm water management feature or facility or unless such ponding is part of a natural wetland area.

**PART V
NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY STANDARDS**

YARDS

5.02 The yards of non-residential property shall be maintained to the standards as described in Part II, Article 2.02 of this By-Law.

Other areas that show neglect or lack of maintenance: Grader "display":





F) Healthy Active Design

The following two pages use the Canadian Index of Wellbeing as a framework that is relative specifically to Hensall.

A healthy community means a better quality of life for everyone! The Grand Bend Community Health Centre is conducting a Community Wellbeing Assessment to identify priority areas for collective action to improve quality of life for people living in our catchment area. We serve residents in Hensall, Zurich and Kippen, among others.

We are using The Canadian Index of Wellbeing as a framework it measures quality of life in eight areas: community vitality, living standards, healthy populations, environment, education, democratic engagement, time use, as well as leisure and culture. If you would like more information about the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, visit <http://www.communityhealthandwellbeing.org/canadian-index-wellbeing/domains>

Priority Domains Identified By . . .	Meetings With Groups of Community Members	Interviews With Community Partners
Healthy Populations	6	8
Living Standards	6	7
Community Vitality	5	6
Democratic Engagement	5	0
Environment	4 – strength that needs continuous upkeep	0
Leisure and Culture	Strength if people can afford	4
Education	1	2
Time Use	-	0

From 2011 assessment, the top three concerns affecting the health of individuals and families included physical activity, healthy eating, and stress. The top three concerns affecting the health of others in the community include alcohol and drug misuse, employment, and smoking. These assessment results identify the need for community design improvements that support health and wellbeing such as walking, cycling, community gardening, possibly co-op grocery store or healthy corner store movement, safe and affordable housing options and attraction of health-promoting economic development (i.e. business and employment).

- The 2008 Hensall Community Improvement Plan was compared to the Heart and Stroke Foundation's healthy active design checklist (p.23-25) to identify commonalities. See chart on next page. The proposed community improvements could provide an opportunity to apply for walk or bike-friendly community designation (PHO). Communities benefit in many ways from healthy, active design (land use and development planning) including physical activity, mental health, social health, environment health (i.e. air quality, noise levels, water quality, and energy savings), traffic safety, cost savings, and community economic development (H&S). People are more physically active when communities are designed for walking and cycling (H&S). Aesthetics and upkeep of a neighbourhood are associated with more positive social behaviours, community engagement, and less social isolation (OPHE, 2015). When we create walk- and bike- friendly communities and encourage walking and biking, we help to improve health outcomes, revitalize local economies, foster social connections, and establish safer, more sustainable communities (Walk Friendly Ontario, 2015).

Suggested Community Improvements (CIP 2008, Table on p.6 and p.7)	Active, Healthy Design Checklist (Heart and Stroke,	Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvement Committee 2015 Priorities
Downtown Appearance (1 & G), Landscaping downtown (4 & G, M) = 46.9% (p.18, #8)	Aesthetics: the walking route is attractive and pleasant Stores in neighbourhood are generally occupied and well maintained. Proximity and Access: mix of residential, businesses and stores in the neighbourhood / downtown.	Greenspace: ivy at parkette, hanging plants downtown, trees in front of heritage hall Heritage Lighting and Banners Downtown
Condition of downtown and residential streets (2,3 & B) = 49.2% (p.18, #2)	Safety: pedestrian crossings are well marked and in sufficient quantity. Street signs are visible. Cars obey traffic rules and speed limits. Bike lanes and paths are separated from other traffic (i.e. marked lanes or wider road shoulders).	Trail in Hensall and Safe biking on roads (i.e. wide paved shoulders)
Condition of the residential sidewalks (depressing sidewalks at street corners) (4 & C) = 46.3% (p.18, #3&11)	Connectivity: sidewalks and/or walkways are in good repair, continuous, wide enough, and easily navigated with wheelchairs and strollers. Safety: sidewalks are separated from the road by grass, trees, and/or pavement There are "eyes on the street": windows, porches, and people.	Sidewalks and Accessibility
Street-lighting (5 & H) = 28.5% fp.18, #4)	Safety: Walking and cycling routes are well lit at night	Heritage Lighting Downtown; Consider when making trail

Number of Parks, Variety of Recreational Facilities, Proximity of Park to Residence (extension of sidewalk leading to arena) (7,8,9) fn.18, #10)	Proximity and Access: Homes are in walking and cycling distance of parks, rec. facilities as well as stores, school and work. Connectivity: Bike paths and lanes connect the neighbourhood with key destinations.	Dog Park Skate Park Sidewalk by the arena / park / splash pad
Shade trees in residential areas, = 26.8% f IO & M) fo.18, #4)	Aesthetics: the landscaping is attractive (e.g. trees and flowers).	Greenspace throughout village; sturdy trees coming into town
Waste receptacles downtown (12 & K) = 48.4% fp.18, #4)	Connectivity and Aesthetics: sidewalks and walkways are clear of obstacles (i.e. garbage).	
Benches downtown (13 & L) fp.18, #41	Aesthetics: there are benches and other places to rest along the route.	Bench or seating for library

Two photo books are included with this presentation to illustrate clear examples of some, though not all, of the problem areas we see.

The Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvement Committee is determined to work hand-in-hand with the municipality to improve Hensall's image.

We think we can do better than what we see in these photos--better than what we see as we walk through our village.

We believe this is an opportunity to take the words in the current Strategic Plan and in the Draft Strategic Plan and turn them into action.

We believe next steps are to gain the support of the council and staff of Bluewater. Following that, the next appropriate step would be to meet with municipality staff in order to "allow residents to be informed, to provide input, and to meaningfully participate in their local municipal government and community life" (from Municipality of Bluewater Strategic Plan, 2005).

The Draft 2015 Strategic Plan emphasizes the vision of Bluewater as a whole, and not a collection of the individual interests of various entities and regions within the municipality.

We believe this presentation is part of this wider vision, as we recognize the unique needs of Hensall. We also recognize that others within the municipality will have needs as well and thus we advocate for equitable long-term planning.

We further believe that this presentation is in concert with the six strategic pillars outlined in the Draft 2015 Strategic Plan, these being: infrastructure, communication, balanced growth, economic development, operational excellence, and quality of life.

Can we count on the support of council and the municipality's staff to plan next steps?

Specifically, we would ask council to approve that our committee meets with an appropriate municipality staff member, or members, up to twelve hours over the next four month period to establish implementation and funding sources related to the goals and concerns as outlined in this presentation.

Can we count on our voice being heard?

Thank you for reading and listening to this presentation.

References

Draft Municipality of Bluewater Strategic Plan - 2015. Retrieved from <https://bluewatersvoicewe.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/2015-draft-strategic-plan.pdf>

Shaping Active, Healthy Communities, A Heart and Stroke Foundation Built Environment for Change Toolkit. Retrieved from http://www.heartandstroke.com/atf/cf/%7B99455208B-E7F1-4BD6-A57D-B136Ce6C95BF%70/BETK_HSF_Built_Environments_ENG.pdf

Hensall Community Improvement Plan - October 2008. Retrieved from [http://www.town.bluewater.on.ca/projects-reports/hensall-community-improvement-plan-\(draft\)](http://www.town.bluewater.on.ca/projects-reports/hensall-community-improvement-plan-(draft))

Municipality of Bluewater Strategic Plan - May 2005. Retrieved from <https://bluewater.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/1408?preview=1409>

Municipality of Bluewater Property Standards Bylaws 5-2003. Retrieved from <https://bluewater.civicweb.net/filepro/documents/1129?preview=1136>.

Public Health Ontario, Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit. Retrieved from http://www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca/Rural_Healthy_Communities/Toolkit_files/HealthyRuralCommunitiesToolKit%20feb17.pdf

Walk Friendly Ontario.

http://walkfriendly.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WFO_Application_Guide_July-15.pdf

Hensall Streetscape and Infrastructure Initiative Terms of Reference

Purpose / Goal

- To identify areas of Hensall that need improvement and then to advocate for addressing the areas of concern.
- To improve the visual appeal of the village and improve the quality of life for its residents and business owners.

Short Term Actions

- To expand and formalize the committee. Expansion is continuous – we are always accepting new members.
- To engage relevant stakeholders, such as community members, business owners and partners in the process.
- Outcome: To use stakeholder input and relevant reports to develop our recommendations and presentation.

Medium-Term Actions

- To present to council to request recommended actions regarding specific improvements to the town of Hensall are incorporated into the Municipality's

plans.

- To apply for available grants so identified improvements are undertaken.
- Outcome: To obtain support and funding so the identified improvements are undertaken.

Long-Term Actions

- To complete the identified improvements.
- Outcome: To improve the built environment, thereby creating the context within which wellbeing and quality of life evolve and improve.
- Outcome: To improve quality of life for those who live and work in Hensall. Aesthetics and upkeep of a neighbourhood are associated with more positive social behaviours, community engagement, and less social isolation (58).

Membership

- Committee consists of concerned and interested residents and business owners of Hensall. Everyone welcome!
- Committee will work with the Municipality of Bluewater and other relevant and interested partners.
- Chair: Chuck Mallette
- Vice Chair: Nick Bjelan
- Grants / Finance: Nick Bjelan
- Secretary: Miranda Burgess
- Municipal Liaison: Marnie Hill
- Subcommittees determined as necessary (i.e. dog park and skate park).

Meetings

- Held fourth Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Hensall United Church.
- Or upon call of the chair.

Record of Meetings

- Secretary, Miranda Burgess, will keep notes about discussions and next steps as determined at meetings.

Communication

- Collect email addresses in order to circulate the meeting minutes by email.
- If someone does not have email, Charlie or an appropriate other will provide the meeting minutes or updates to you.
- Communication with Municipality: Email the senior staff person with carbon copy (CC) to the CAO and this committee, including Marnie.
- Members of subcommittees provide updates at meetings.

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