

Authority: East York Community Council Report No. 9, Clause No. 13,  
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on October 3, 4 and 5, 2000  
Enacted by Council: October 5, 2000

**CITY OF TORONTO**

**BY-LAW No. 825-2000**

**To adopt a Community Improvement Plan for the Pape Avenue  
Community Improvement Project Area.**

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has, by adopting Clause No. 13 of Report No. 9 of the East York Community Council, designated lands on Pape Avenue as a Community Improvement Project Area within the meaning of Section 28 of the Planning Act;

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

**1.** The Community Improvement Plan attached as Schedule "A" to this By-law is adopted as the Community Improvement Plan for the Pape Avenue Community Improvement Project Area.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 5th day of October, A.D. 2000.

CASE OOTES,  
Deputy Mayor

NOVINA WONG,  
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

**SCHEDULE "A"****PAPE AVENUE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN****1. INTRODUCTION**

The Pape Avenue Business Improvement Association (BIA) which has been existence since 1986 has a long history of active reinvestment in the area in partnership with the former Borough of East York. The primary investment was made in 1988 under the former Pride program. Approximately \$250,000.00 was invested in major streetscape improvements including sidewalk reconstruction, decorative paving, light poles and fixtures, and planters.

Since that date, the BIA has continued to be active in the area through such activities as the annual Pape Avenue Festival and constant investment in the upkeep of the existing streetscape improvements. The BIA has also been very involved in issues affecting reinvestment in commercial strips in general. For example, the former Borough of East York had a very restrictive by-law pertaining to parking standards for new restaurants. The Pape Avenue BIA was pivotal in working with the Borough to amend the by-law to relax the parking standards thus facilitating the opening of new restaurants. In recognition of their key role, Pape Avenue was the initial testing ground for the new by-law which was so successful that it was eventually applied to all of East York.

In recent years however, the area seems to have experienced a decline in its appearance. Litter is common, the light poles are in need of repainting, many of the light fixtures are out for periods of time, and planters are often used as waste receptacles. The BIA is fully aware of the current state of affairs and is strongly committed to working with the new City to reverse this trend.

The designation of the Pape Avenue Community Improvement Project Area and the preparation of this Plan represents the first step in the renewal of the Pape Avenue retail area. Key future revitalization initiatives to achieve this objective are highlighted in this Plan.

**2. BACKGROUND**

The City's Commercial Façade Improvement Program budget was increased from \$480,000.00 in 1999 to \$936,000.00 in 2000 to address service leveling. City Council recommended new project areas in Toronto, Etobicoke and East York. The Pape Avenue Business Improvement Area (BIA) was chosen as one of the new areas eligible for grants under this program because it meets the following criteria:

- (i) it has an existing Business Improvement Area Association;
- (ii) the area is designated by Toronto Economic Development as an employment revitalization area;
- (iii) the retail strip urban form, typically with one or two floors of housing above, is appropriate for façade improvement; and
- (iv) the community has the potential for creating new private re-investment.

Grants are only available, however, to commercial building owners whose properties are in designated areas covered by Community Improvement Plans under Section 28 of the Planning Act. This can only be achieved if the Official Plan contains appropriate provisions relating to community improvement which covers the lands to be designated for community improvement.

## 2.1 Designation of the Community Improvement Project Area

The boundaries of the area are indicated on the attached Map “1”, entitled “Pape Avenue Community Improvement Project Area”.

## 2.2 Authority Provided by Section 28 of the Planning Act

Once a By-law has been passed designating an area as a Community Improvement Project Area, Section 28 of the Planning Act authorizes Council to provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area.

Among other things, the Act makes provision for the City to request the authority to make grants or loans to registered or assessed owners of property within Community Improvement Project Areas towards the cost of rehabilitating land and buildings in conformity with a Community Improvement Plan. Further, with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s approval, the City can do so even where a grant or loan would constitute bonusing under Section 111(1) of the Municipal Act.

## 2.3 East York Official Plan

### (a) Community Improvement Policies

Subsection 28(2) of the Planning Act provides that the council of a municipality which has an Official Plan which contains provisions relating to community improvement, may by by-law designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an Official Plan as a Community Improvement Project Area. The East York Official Plan contains provisions relating to community improvement which among other matters designate the entire former Borough of East York as a Community Improvement Area. Implementation of the East York Official Plan community improvement policies requires designation of specific Community Improvement Project Areas and the preparation of Community Improvement Plans.

Sections 2.12.1 - 2.12.4 of the East York Official Plan are policies which provide for the maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal of the former Borough’s residential, industrial and commercial areas through improving safety and the housing stock, upgrading public services and infrastructure, and retaining and enhancing the employment and economic investment in industrial and commercial areas. More specifically, in the phasing and allocation of community improvement funding in commercial areas, Council will have regard for:

- (i) the need for streetscape improvements;
- (ii) encouraging economic revitalization; and

- (iii) the need for rehabilitation of buildings and the potential for benefiting from a Business Improvement Area.

This Community Improvement Plan for the Pape Avenue BIA provides the framework to facilitate the implementation of these policies.

- (b) Planning Policy and Supports to Economic Vitality of Retail Strips

The Official Plan designation for the subject community improvement area is “Main Streets Commercial/Residential”. Planning policy reflects a desire to support this portion of Pape Avenue as a pedestrian related retail strip together with multiple unit housing in the form of medium rise structures.

Other general Official Plan policies promote the economic vitality and growth of main street retail-commercial areas to maintain and strengthen local identity and improve the tax base.

Among North American cities Toronto is unusual in the continuing importance of traditional retail strips within the overall commercial structure. Despite the proliferation of shopping centres and the huge growth of big box retail, traditional retail strips have remained and in a few cases have grown, within all parts of the City. They are particularly evident within the Inner City which includes East York, where they continue to account for the majority of the retail floor area.

### 3. THE CITY’S COMMERCIAL FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The City’s Commercial Façade Improvement Program provides grants to commercial building owners whose properties are in designated areas covered by approved community improvement plans. The purpose of the program is to improve the front exterior facades of commercial buildings by restoration, redesign and renovation. The program is an effective tool for facilitating economic revitalization in selectively targeted commercial districts. Benefits of this program include:

- (i) \$4.20 of private façade re-investment for each dollar of City funding;
- (ii) preservation and enhancement of architectural and historic features;
- (iii) new shoppers and more profitable local businesses;
- (iv) enhancement of residential land values;
- (v) more desirable places to live, shop and visit;
- (vi) partnerships between the city and local businesses; and
- (vii) increased assessment values and growth.

Access to the Commercial Façade Improvement program will assist the Pape Avenue Business Improvement Area Association in their efforts to renew the area and complement other past revitalization initiatives including existing streetscape improvements. It is recommended that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing be requested to grant the authority to the City to make grants or loans to registered property owners in the Pape Avenue Community Improvement Project Area under the Commercial Façade Improvement Program as described in this Plan.

### 3.1 Commercial Façade Improvement Program Accomplishments

The City has given \$1,430,000 in grant partnerships generating approximately \$6,000,000 in renovation since the program commenced in 1996. In 1999, the program was available in eight designated retail strip revitalization areas. City Council has recommended extension of the program to a further 15 retail strips within the City including the Pape Avenue Business Improvement Area (BIA).

The program has been and continues to be an outstanding success. The local business people in these areas and in other areas have suggested that the program should be expanded to other areas of the City.

### 3.2 How the Program Works

The program is available for a 5 year period and extensions are considered on a case by case basis.

The applicant must be a registered property owner within a community improvement area with an active revitalization program. The applicant may only apply once for a property.

A review committee for each façade improvement area consisting of local business people and residents considers the applications submitted and recommends to the City a grant to an established maximum or to not approve the application. Approved grants cover up to 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements. The current maximum grant varies from \$10,000 to \$20,000 depending on the area of the City. The grant can be in the form of either a cash payment or a property tax credit.

The applicant enters into agreement with the City in accordance with a schedule to complete the work. Upon completion of the agreed to improvements and receipt of the paid invoices, the City reimburses the applicant with the agreed upon grant. All City taxes in arrears must be paid before the grant is issued.

### 3.3 Character of the Community Improvement Project Area and Possible Façade Upgrades

The area is a traditional main street with few suburban influences north of Cosburn Avenue. The retail frontage is relatively continuous from north to south except for two small pockets of houses. Of the approximately 115 businesses in the area, most are local convenience shops and services. There are few vacancies.

The street wall is primarily characterized by one and two storey brick and stone facades with retail at grade and apartments or offices above. While some of the buildings were constructed during the 1920's, most were built after the Second World War. Most of the facades are sound structurally, although many of the buildings have not been maintained regularly and reflect an unkempt appearance. This condition negatively impacts the areas appearance.

The Pape Avenue Business Improvement Association is supportive of the Commercial Façade Improvement Program. The Association has already contacted the owners in the study area to inform them about the program. Upon approval of this Plan by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the next step will entail the development of local design guidelines for façade improvement. The possibility of hiring a consultant with Business Improvement Association funds for a façade study has recently been discussed among local owners and will be part of their Fall agenda.

#### 4.0 CLEAN UP AND MAINTENANCE

The preparation of this Community Improvement Plan involved consultation between City staff and the local community. At a community meeting held on July 26, 2000, residents were asked to identify what they liked about this portion of Pape Avenue and what they disliked. They were then encouraged to bring forth ideas respecting possible improvements.

Local residents were very supportive of the strip and especially liked the local services and the personal touch of many of the business owners. They also liked many of the existing streetscape improvements that were installed in 1988.

Local residents however were very dissatisfied with the level of streetscape maintenance along this portion of Pape Avenue. Litter was a problem everywhere with the concrete planters often being used as waste receptacles. Many of the bulbs in the decorative lighting were out and haven't been replaced for substantial periods of time and the decorative light standards are badly in need of painting. The result is that the retail strip appears run down which reflects badly on local businesses.

Individual meetings were also held with local business owners. Many of them have been there for many years and they are very supportive of the local Business Improvement Association. Like the residents, local businesses are also very dissatisfied with the poor level of maintenance in the area. They are especially dissatisfied given the local BIA has a separate maintenance agreement with the City whereas the City is supposed to provide a higher level of cleanup and maintenance based on the conditions of a maintenance contract with the City.

As a result of this consultation, it is recommended that the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services be directed to consult with the Business Improvement Association regarding proper implementation of the maintenance agreement between the City and local businesses.

## 5.0 STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

In terms of streetscape improvements, the immediate priorities of the BIA are Christmas decorations and a banner program. It is recommended that the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department provide ongoing support to the Pape Avenue Business Association particularly with respect to a banner program specific to this area.

In terms of long range plans, this portion of Pape Avenue is scheduled for sidewalk reconstruction in 2003. This provides an exciting opportunity for major streetscape renewal and revitalization. It is recommended that the BIA be encouraged to consider the hiring of a consultant to provide guidance for streetscape improvements and renewals at the time of sidewalk reconstruction. Such a study should address improvements to the quality of the existing street landscaping, possibilities for additional streetscape improvements and a signage improvement program.

Map 1

