

Authority: Etobicoke Community Council Report No. 11, Clause No. 35,
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. 942-2000

**To amend former City of Etobicoke By-law No. 1989-209, being a By-law to adopt a
community improvement plan for the Long Branch Community
Improvement Project Area.**

WHEREAS the Council of the former City of Etobicoke has, by By-law No. 1989-118, passed June 13, 1989, designated lands in the Long Branch Commercial Area as a Community Improvement Project Area; and

WHEREAS the Council of the former City of Etobicoke has, by By-law No. 1989-209 passed October 16, 1989, adopted a community improvement plan for the Long Branch Community Improvement Project Area; and

WHEREAS a public meeting has been held to discuss a further amendment to the Long Branch Community Improvement Plan;

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

1. The Long Branch Community Improvement Plan, as adopted by By-law No. 1989-209 of the former City of Etobicoke is amended by adopting the Amendment to the Long Branch Community Improvement Plan No. 1, attached hereto as Schedule "A".

2. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to make the necessary application to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for approval of the aforementioned Community Improvement Plan Amendment.

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

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

NOVINA WONG,
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A”**Amendment to the Long Branch Community Improvement Plan No. 1****1. BACKGROUND****1.1 Designation of the Improvement Area**

On June 13, 1989, Council for the former City of Etobicoke adopted By-law No. 1989-118 thereby designating the Long Branch Commercial Area as a Community Improvement Project Area for the purpose of implementing a range of public and private property improvement projects. The boundaries of this Project Area include the north and south sides of Lakeshore Boulevard West, approximately between 22nd Street and west of Browns Line. This Amendment applies to the same Project Area as designated by former City of Etobicoke By-law No. 1989-118.

1.2 Adoption of Long Branch Community Improvement Plan

By-law No. 1989-209, adopted by Etobicoke Council on October 16, 1989 established the Long Branch Community Improvement Plan. This plan enables the City to provide loans to registered owners within the Long Branch Community Improvement Project Area to undertake improvements such as sidewalk and curb upgrades, on-street parking, pedestrian lighting, planting street trees, addition of planters and benches. The Plan outlines the eligibility, guidelines and administrative and application procedures for registered property owners to secure a loan. The proposed amendment will enable the City to provide grants for Commercial Façade Improvements for registered commercial property owners within the Project Area.

1.3 Commercial Façade Improvement Program

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 the former municipalities of Toronto, Etobicoke and East York. The Long Branch Community Improvement Project Area 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;
- (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. AUTHORITY

2.1 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.

2.2 Etobicoke Official Plan

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 Etobicoke Official Plan contains provisions relating to community improvement which among other matters designated the entire area south of The Gardiner Expressway (formerly the Queen Elizabeth Way) in South Etobicoke as a Community Improvement Area. Implementation of the Etobicoke community improvement policies requires designation of specific Community Improvement Project Areas and the preparation of Community Improvement Plans.

Chapter 10 of the Etobicoke Official Plan provides for the maintenance, rehabilitation and improvement of the residential, 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 Long Branch provides the framework to facilitate the implementation of these Official Plan policies.

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 Long Branch Business Improvement Area 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 Long Branch 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 Long Branch Toronto Community Improvement Project Area.

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 an 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. The retail frontage is relatively continuous from east to west. Of the 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. 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 area's appearance.