

Cambridge Core Areas Revitalization Program

Core Areas Revitalization Advisory Committee (CARAC) |
2008 Annual Report

October 2008

The Corporation of the City of Cambridge

POLICY PLANNING DIVISION, PLANNING SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the activities of the Core Areas Revitalization Advisory Committee (CARAC) in 2008.

The Core Areas Revitalization Advisory Committee (CARAC) is an advisory committee of Cambridge City Council, and has been operating since 1998. The role of CARAC is to advise Council on issues and the formulation and implementation of policies and programs affecting the revitalization of the City's three historic downtown core areas of Galt City Centre, Hespeler Village, and Preston Towne Centre.

CARAC is comprised of representatives from each Business Improvement Area (BIA), representatives from each core area (business owner, property owner, tenant, employee, resident), a representative from the Chamber of Commerce, a citizen at large, and members of Council. Through meetings and events, these stakeholders are brought together to discuss and coordinate revitalization policies and initiatives.

2.0 CORE AREAS REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CARAC)

a) 2008 CARAC Membership

In February 2008, Jeff Lederer was elected as the Chair, and Jim Anderson was elected as the Vice-Chair. CARAC membership remained largely consistent in 2008, with the exception of the resignation of Susan Gwinner (Hespeler Village BIA representative) and Alan Millar (Citizen at Large). Ken Buller and Nicolette Horne were appointed to fill these positions. The current members of CARAC are:

Council:	Councillor Rick Cowsill, Councillor Karl Kiefer, Councillor Ben Tucci, Mayor Doug Craig (ex-officio)
Cambridge Chamber of Commerce	Jim Anderson (Vice-Chair)
Downtown Cambridge BIA	Andrea Stebbings
Galt City Centre Core Area	Ludmila Dejmek Jeff Lederer (Chair)
Hespeler Village BIA	Ken Buller
Hespeler Village Core Area	Tim Hilborn
Preston Towne Centre BIA	Shirley Bowman
Preston Towne Centre Core Area	Carol Thorman
Citizen at Large	Nicolette Horne

b) CARAC Meetings

CARAC meetings are held once per month at City Hall, and provide a forum for project updates, discussion, and sharing of information, issues, and ideas concerning the core areas

and downtown revitalization in general. Another important purpose of CARAC meetings is to allow for committee members to bring items forward to all members for discussion and action.

c) Committee Development

The Chair held one-on-one meetings with CARAC members in 2008 to discuss the future of CARAC. The results of the meetings were discussed at the October 2008 meeting. CARAC members passed the recommendation that CARAC examine the role of the core areas in ways that celebrate and complement not only previous documents (Heritage Master Plan, Economic Development Strategy, Official Plan Update, etc.) but also new directions and insights to the way we design and plan our core areas by developing a Five-Year Schedule of Projects for each core area. Staff was directed to provide a preliminary framework for the project's process.

3.0 CARAC ACTIVITIES NOVEMBER 2007 – OCTOBER 2008

The committee is involved in four types of activities:

1. CARAC-Initiated Projects
2. Subcommittees, Task Forces, and Special Projects
3. Cambridge Core Areas Patrol Program (CCAP)
4. Information and Education

This section provides summaries of CARAC members' activities and accomplishments over the past year.

a) CARAC-Initiated Projects

Vacant Windows Task Force

At the March 2008 meeting, Hardy Bromberg, Director of Building, spoke to CARAC about Property Standards and processes for following up on complaints and issues. Hardy Bromberg reported that the majority of complaints received about the core areas are: broken windows, unlocked doors, and unsightly exteriors.

Following the presentation, CARAC members discussed the negative impacts of vacant and poorly maintained windows, and the need to improve the appearance. In response to the presentation and discussion, CARAC passed the following two recommendations concerning property standards and enforcement. The Building Services Division will provide a report to look at enforcement and resources available and report back to CARAC.

Jeff Lederer, Andrea Stebbings, and Pam Wolf volunteered to start a Task Force to address this issue. As a Pilot Project, Jeff Lederer coordinated School of Architecture students to design and install temporary artwork on the outside and inside the windows of 60 Main Street. The project - **Synergy** - was launched on April 18th, 2008.

Synergy was a great success in many ways. It integrated the students with the local community, sparked curiosity amongst the community, animated a long-vacant building,

added a sense of celebration and play to the downtown, attracted media attention, and encouraged people to imagine the possibilities for the space.

The Task Force has continued to meet and develop a project that CARAC can implement, and will present a report at the October 2008 CARAC meeting.

Free Parking in December in Core Area Public Parking Lots

At the end of 2007, Councillor Ben Tucci successfully tabled a motion at Council to allow free parking in all core area Public Parking Lots for the Month of December. In addition, the No-Reporting Policy will be waived (no enforcement for the month of December). On –street parking policies still applied. CARAC discussed this initiative and recommended that signs be posted at the entrance to all core area Public Parking Lots and an advertisement be published in the Cambridge Times.

At the February 2008 meeting, CARAC members discussed the success of the initiative and provided staff with the following key points to be forwarded to the Transportation & Public Works Department and the consultant completing the Core Areas Parking Master Plan:

- Positive initiative; worked especially well for shoppers and visitors
- Temporary signage worked well and was very clear
- Parking needs to be enforced on a regular basis, not just certain times of the day
- Be careful with what information gets out to the public
- Businesses pay for permit parking during the month of December – should the City issue refunds for permit holders for December?

2007 CARAC Holiday Social

On December 5, 2007, CARAC hosted a Holiday Social and invited Staff, Members of Council, all Council Advisory Committees, and other stakeholders. Mr. Carl Bray of BRAY Heritage was the keynote speaker and presented the Heritage Master Plan. A table was provided for downtown businesses to display flyers, etc.

This was the first time that all of the advisory committees were brought together for an event. The event was appreciated, very well attended, and could become a regular feature of CARAC's activities.

b) Subcommittees, Task Forces and Special Projects

Core Areas Revitalization Advisory Committee (CARAC) & Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Task Force

Downtown issues cut across many different disciplines and interests and the same issue is often discussed by different advisory committees from different perspectives. To work towards developing common understanding, information-sharing, and holistic decision-making, members of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) felt that there would be benefit to having joint discussions regarding common areas and topics. To initiate this, the CARAC/EDAC Task Force was formed in 2007. Tim Hilborn and Jeff Lederer are the CARAC representatives on the Task Force. The Task Force has had one meeting and EDAC and CARAC continue to exchange Agendas.

Communication Plan for the Core Area Financial Incentive Programs

The April 2008 CARAC meeting was dedicated to be a focus group for MacMillan Marketing to gather information about a communication plan for the Core Area Financial Incentive Programs. In addition, a number of CARAC members also participated in an on-line survey and telephone interviews.

Core Areas Parking Master Plan

CARAC has been invited to appoint a representative to the Core Areas Parking Master Plan Stakeholder Committee.

Heritage Master Plan (HMP)

Jeff Lederer is the School of Architecture representative on the Heritage Master Plan Steering Committee and provides CARAC with regular updates on the HMP. At the February 2008 meeting, CARAC members discussed the DRAFT Heritage Master Plan and provided staff with their top three priorities for implementation, and overall comment. This report (CARAC-01-08) was submitted to the Heritage Planner for the HMP Committee's consideration.

Official Plan Advisory Committee

Ludmila Dejmek is the CARAC representative on the Official Plan Advisory Committee and provides CARAC with regular updates on the Official Plan Review Project.

c) Cambridge Core Areas Patrol Program (CCAP)

2008 marks the eleventh year of the Cambridge Core Areas Safety Patrol Program. From the long weekend in May to Labour Day weekend in September, CCAP Patrollers cycle and walk through each core area (day and evening shifts) to address safety concerns and be ambassadors for the core areas. The CCAP Program continued to play an important role in the downtown core areas this year, and made good contacts with store owners, City Staff, and members of the Police.

The Downtown Cambridge BIA continues to be the Service Provider for the program. Andrea Stebbings, Executive Director of the Downtown Cambridge BIA, and Bruce Cole, the CCAP Program Coordinator, administer the CCAP Program.

The CCAP Program is overseen by a subcommittee of CARAC. Members of the CCAP Program Committee include representatives of each BIA, a representative of the Waterloo Regional Police, and City Staff.

Through the active participation of CARAC members and CCAP Program Committee members, the CCAP Program continues to improve. Comments from the Regional Police, the merchants and the public continue to be very positive.

d) Information and Education

Throughout the year, CARAC members are provided with information on applicable conferences, workshops, and speakers. In addition, CARAC members are encouraged to suggest and coordinate guest speakers for the monthly meetings. In response to the members' requests, the following people attended CARAC meetings in 2008:

March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardy Bromberg, Director of Building and Enforcement Services, City of Cambridge: Empty Storefronts and Property Standards in the Core Areas• Jennifer Penney, Small Business Advisor, Economic Development Division• Linda Fegan, Director of Corporate Communication,
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Melissa Aldunate, Senior Policy Planner, Policy Planning Division: City of Cambridge Growth Management Strategy
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Susan Cudahy, General Manager, Waterloo Regional Tourism Marketing Corporation: Tourism in Waterloo Region: Vision, Approach and Opportunities• Wanda Schaefer-Stilling, Recreation Coordinator, City of Cambridge: Civic Square and City Hall Atrium – Programming and Events

4.0 CARAC IN 2008 / 2009

CARAC will continue to meet monthly and discuss project and program updates and new business affecting the three downtown core areas. In addition, CARAC members are encouraged to propose and manage issues and items for meeting agendas. Staff will continue to support the Core Areas Revitalization Advisory Committee through coordinating monthly committee meetings, CARAC subcommittee meetings as required, and following up on member requests.

There are a number of City of Cambridge and Planning Services Department projects that CARAC members can be involved in that deal with various aspects of downtown revitalization and urban intensification, including:

- Arts and Culture Master Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Core Areas Parking Master Plan
- Official Plan Review and Update
- Height, Massing and Density Study
- Core Area Financial Incentive Programs Review and Update
- Cambridge Core Areas Patrol Program (CCAP) Subcommittee
- Vacant Windows Task Force
- Development of Downtown Core Areas profiles on the Waterloo Region Tourism Marketing Corporation website
- Master Plan for Leisure Services/Facilities

It is anticipated that additional projects will be developed through the coming year.

One of the key initiatives will be examining the roles, goals, and objectives of the core areas, and looking into new tools and directions to meet these goals and objectives. Specifically, CARAC members will be developing a 5-Year Schedule of Projects for each core area to enhance core revitalization.