

To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 4/15/2025

Subject: Core Areas Transformation Fund Installation and Placemaking Request

Submitted By: Michael Launslager, Director of Economic Development

Prepared By: Thomas Strongman, Economic Development Officer

Report No.: 25-003-CRE

File No.: C11

Wards Affected: Ward 2

RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Report 25-003-CRE Core Areas Transformation Fund Installation and Placemaking Request be received;

AND THAT Council approve the funding request through the Core Areas Transformation Fund (CATF) to the Hespeler Village BIA for a lighting installation within the Jacob's Landing location in Hespeler Village.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Purpose

To seek Council approval to provide funding through the CATF to the Hespeler Village BIA for a Red, Green, Blue, (RGB) LED lighting installation within the Jacob's Landing pergola and riverside lookout in Hespeler Village.

Key Findings

The intent of the CATF program is to support the City of Cambridge in placemaking efforts, to support community members, and to inspire future placemaking efforts within the city.

Staff have reviewed the BIA's proposal and found that this project furthers the efforts of enhancing a local landmark and beautifying the city's core areas. Staff are supportive of the Hespeler Village BIA and believe this project will further activate an underappreciated space in Jacob's Landing Park and lay the foundation for further community development in Hespeler.

Financial Implications

Through the CATF application process, the Hespeler Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) is requesting up to \$25,000 to help fund the installation of a permanent lighting arrangement to enhance and revive Jacob's Landing in downtown Hespeler's core.

Up to \$25,000 from the CATF will be provided to the applicant once the project has been determined to be complete by economic development staff. This project must be completed within one calendar year of funding approvals in order to issue reimbursement on the amount requested in the original application document.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

☒ Strategic Action

Objective(s): PLACEMAKING - Promote and create a wide range of destinations and activities that capitalize on the beauty of the rivers and heritage buildings

Strategic Action: Create and activate spaces that offer things for people to do

OR

☐ Core Service

Program: Not Applicable

Core Service: Not Applicable

This project aligns with the City of Cambridge's Strategic Plan by enhancing public spaces and opportunities to enjoy built and natural heritage. The installation of LED lighting at Jacob's Landing supports the strategic objective of placemaking by creating a vibrant and attractive destination that leverages the natural beauty of the area.

This initiative also aligns with the goal of fostering economic inclusion and support by establishing our core areas as attractive destinations and activating a space that offers things for people to experience.

BACKGROUND:

The CATF is a multi-year initiative recognizing that vibrant core areas are essential for great cities. Established in 2019, the CATF promotes growth and enhances the vitality

and overall livelihood of downtown cores, encouraging residency and economic activity. The program is guided by three investment pillars: Private Sector Stimulus, Strategic Land Acquisition/Disposition, and Placemaking and Experiences.

This application falls under the Placemaking and Experiences pillar, designed to support capital projects or partnerships that create unique experiences and a sense of place in our community. Proposals may be initiated by city staff, council, or community members.

ANALYSIS:

The proposed project seeks to enhance the existing infrastructure at Jacob's Landing through a series of different lighting installations.

The proposal includes strip lighting along stair risers down to the river's edge and flood lighting for pergola posts. The Hespeler BIA anticipates that upon the installation's completion, it will become a new sought-after place for people to come together.

The project will utilize existing infrastructure from the falls lighting near the park and include electrical work and a programmable touch screen control console. This console will manage both the waterfall lighting and the new installation at Jacob's Landing, allowing control of lighting colors.

The Hespeler BIA will handle ongoing maintenance for this project, detailed in an agreement between the Hespeler BIA and City after council approval of funding for the project.

The Hespeler Village BIA, has identified that the matching funds for this project will be raised through a "community contribution" effort, aiming to gather the necessary funds for the installation via community fundraising and sponsorships.

This application meets the CATF placemaking program's requirements and proposes a positive infrastructure impact in Hespeler. The lighting of public assets exemplifies successful placemaking, as seen in other parts of the city, where it has consistently made our core areas attractive destinations for community members and tourists while enhancing the vibrancy of key city assets. As such, it is the opinion of City staff that this application receives the requested funding, and the project be supported.

EXISTING POLICY / BY-LAW(S):

There is no existing policy/by-law.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The financial impact of this project is up to \$25,000 in matching funds from the CATF's Placemaking and Experience pillar. Under the current CATF placemaking program terms, the Hespeler Village BIA is eligible to participate and obtain funding approval for their proposed project.

Funding will be granted upon project completion and after proof of matching funds has been provided to City of Cambridge staff.

The annual cost associated with introducing a few additional lighting sources to the Jacobs landing area should also be considered. Due to the power efficiency of LED lighting, this is likely to be negligible.

PUBLIC VALUE:

Collaboration:

Working in partnership with the Hespeler Village BIA will showcase the opportunity for community-driven projects as part of our placemaking pillar. A project like this may inspire additional pedestrian traffic in Hespeler's core, potentially translating to an increase in expenditures in core area businesses, and an enhanced liveliness within the core area of Hespeler.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE INPUT:

The Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) was consulted regarding the proposed use of capital for the lighting installation in Jacob's Landing, and it received support, notably, "the proposed lighting enhances the functionality and usability of the space during dusk and night hours. Additionally, it can attract visitors with its seasonal light controls in honor of various holidays or significant days, similar to many city light displays".

It was also noted that this project might conflict with any future restorations to Jacob's Landing Park, if such restorations are undertaken. A plan has been suggested for how the lighting infrastructure could be removed and re-installed to align with any future restorations to the Pergola. Overall, EDAC recognized the project's positive impact and identified an opportunity to use this placemaking initiative to attract additional improvements in Hespeler.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Posted publicly as part of the report process.

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL CONSULTATION:

The Staff Steering Committee for the CATF was consulted and given the opportunity to provide feedback and questioning. The following departments and positions were circulated, provided comment, and took place in our scheduled site visit.

- Director Economic Development
- Manager of Economic Development
- Director of Risk and Facilities
- Director of Finance and Deputy Treasurer
- Supervisor of Parks and Recreation Operations
- Director of Operations
- Senior Civil Engineering Technologist
- Supervisor of Horticulture
- Senior Planner (Heritage)

CONCLUSION:

To support the CATF's placemaking pillar and strategic action, staff and the Economic Development Advisory Committee recommend approving \$25,000 from the CATF for this installation, to be delivered upon project completion within one year of project approval.

REPORT IMPACTS:

Agreement: **No**

By-law: **No**

Budget Amendment: **No**

Policy: **No**

APPROVALS:

This report has gone through the appropriate workflow and has been reviewed and or approved by the following as required:

Director

Deputy City Manager

Chief Financial Officer

City Solicitor

City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 25-003-CRE Appendix A – Making Hespeler Project Overview
2. 25-003-CRE Appendix B – Lighting Positioning