



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

FROM: Erin Kaiser, Senior Economic Development Officer

DATE: August 16, 2021

MEMO NO.: ADMIN-2021-0015

SUBJECT: Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Update – Progress Update

PURPOSE OF THE MEMORANDUM:

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Council with an update on progress being made towards the update of the existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The focus is on key technical matters and/or approaches being considered as the project moves towards a draft CIP.

BACKGROUND:

In 2010, the Town's first Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was approved by Council. At the time, the Town's CIP was one of the most comprehensive in Ontario and included a variety of financial incentives and programs to address key community improvement issues. The CIP is one of the Town's key economic development tools.

The Town is now undertaking a comprehensive review and update of the CIP to ensure a focused and effective economic development tool that incentivizes eligible improvements and development. The CIP Update builds on the existing program's strengths and successes, while exploring alternative approaches and potential additional and/or different incentives to maximize economic and community benefits.

Taking into account the Town's economic development goals, as well as other key priority areas, main areas for consideration as part of the CIP Update include:

- main street revitalization;
- brownfield redevelopment;
- affordable housing;
- agriculture/agri-business;
- heritage;

- arts and culture;
- climate change; and
- accessibility.

In addition, the scope of work includes the potential development of an Economic Assistance Program. The latter was to focus on strengthening business resiliency during times of economic hardship.

It is important to note that, since the onset of the pandemic, the Town has been taking proactive and coordinated action to support the local business community, where possible. To date, this has included the implementation of over 25 actions. These actions have been implemented in parallel with the ongoing CIP Update, and generally address the main objectives originally outlined for the "Economic Assistance Program" - initially included for potential consideration as part of the CIP Update back in 2020. More recently, the Town has developed an "Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan". The latter includes a suite of initiatives consisting of new and modified actions to continue to support economic recovery in the short and longer term.

Council was last provided with a project update in July 2021 via report ADMIN-0020-0019. At the time, the findings of a Background Discussion Report as well a summary of engagement activities to-date were presented. Since then, the focus has been on identifying a potential new suite of potential incentive programs, as well as assessing the feasibility of including an Economic Assistance Program within the updated CIP. Technical recommendations have been provided to staff by the project consultant via a draft Planning Justification and Recommended Strategy report. Key conclusions from the latter report will be integrated into the recommended CIP for Council's consideration.

COMMENTS:

In working towards a draft CIP that is anticipated to be presented to Council in late Fall, a number of technical matters and/or approaches have been identified and continue to be discussed in terms of their detail, including feasibility and appropriateness, with the project's Technical Advisory Committee, the CIP Community Consultation Group as well as Town subject-matter experts (e.g. Finance, Planning and Development, Climate Change). Pending these discussions, the draft CIP that will be recommended to Council will integrate the outcome of these discussions, as appropriate.

Among others, key matters and/or approaches under discussion include:

- Streamlining and amalgamating multiple existing programs into fewer signature programs.
- Terminating existing programs which have had limited uptake, have minor to no impacts on economic development and/or are no longer in alignment with the Town's goals and/or strategies.

- Incorporating the focus areas for consideration (e.g. affordable housing, climate change, arts and culture, heritage, accessibility) into an updated suite of programs as potentially either an eligible cost and/or part of the evaluation/eligibility criteria.
- Including an Economic Assistance Program as a potential funding enhancement across key CIP programs to support businesses during times of economic hardship, while recognizing the legislative limits of CIPs and funding availability, as well as business supports already implemented by the Town.
- Reviewing and potentially adjusting the delivery and co-ordination of other supplementary programs funded by the Town (fully or partially) to ensure a more streamlined approach under the umbrella of the CIP, as managed by the Town, including the potential integration of the Town's existing Manufacturing Expansion Fund and/or the BIA façade improvement programs.
- Considering alternatives to CIP program administration, such as, benefits of a year-round application intake versus scheduled intakes at certain point(s) of the year.
- Determining the need for geographic focus areas (i.e. CIP sub-areas) where the updated CIP programs will apply.
- Ensuring that the resources required for successful CIP implementation are in place, including staff and funding alignment with the Long Range Financial Plan.

The next major deliverable of the CIP Update project is the draft CIP. This will include the identification of the preferred program suite, incentive program details (e.g. eligibility criteria, funding amounts, sub-areas), funding strategy and a monitoring program.

CONCLUSION:

The CIP is one of the Town's key economic development tools to encourage/support private sector investment and community revitalization. Recognizing this, the CIP Update project is well underway with significant consultation, research and analysis completed. Additional strategic and technical discussions are underway related to key matters and approaches noted in this Memorandum. These will inform the draft CIP which is anticipated to be presented to Council in the fall.

Reviewed and approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Damian Szybalski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Damian Szybalski, Director of Economic Development, Innovation & Culture

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Mills". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C'.

Chris Mills, Acting Chief Administrative Officer