



TOWN OF  
**HALTON HILLS**  
*Working Together Working for You!*

## REPORT

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**TO:** Mayor Bonnette and Members of Council

**FROM:** Erin Kaiser, Manager of Economic Development and Innovation

**DATE:** May 27, 2022

**REPORT NO.:** ADMIN-2022-0029

**SUBJECT:** Community Improvement Plan (CIP) – Final Adoption Report

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. ADMIN-2022-0029, dated May 27, 2022, regarding the adoption of the Town's new Community Improvement Plan (CIP), be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council pass a By-law to implement the new Community Improvement Plan, as appended to this report, pursuant to Section 28(4) of the Planning Act, and repeal By-law 2010-0029 to terminate the existing 2010 Community Improvement Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the new Community Improvement Plan as it pertains to the Town of Halton Hills in its entirety and to the financial incentives for the seven Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Priority Zones, specifically:

- a) Downtown Acton
- b) Downtown Georgetown
- c) Hamlets
- d) Acton and Georgetown GO Station Lands
- e) Employment Lands
- f) Premier Gateway Employment Areas
- g) Agricultural Lands

AND FURTHER THAT a dedicated CIP Review and Evaluation Team comprised of Town staff and external stakeholders, as appropriate, be formed to review and evaluate Community Improvement Plan (CIP) applications and make recommendations with respect to their approval;

AND FURTHER THAT, consistent with the delegated authority granted to the Senior

Management Team via report ADMIN-2022-0019 (dated April 13, 2022), including the delegated authority for the Town's CAO to approve the execution by the Mayor and Clerk of CIP agreements, including any amendments or termination of such agreements, that the review and approval of Community Improvement Plan (CIP) applications be undertaken by Town staff in consultation with the CIP Review and Evaluation Team, while recognizing that any CIP applications that may be of greater interest to Council or the public will be brought to Council and that an annual summary of approved CIP applications will be brought to Council for information;

AND FURTHER THAT all applicable by-laws for Community Improvement Plan (CIP) grants be brought to Council for approval;

AND FURTHER THAT any Community Improvement Plan (CIP) applications approved prior to the adoption of the new Community Improvement Plan (CIP) be processed under the existing 2010 Community Improvement Plan;

AND FURTHER THAT Town staff be authorized to make any housekeeping updates to the new Community Improvement Plan (CIP) as the document is graphically designed, provided that no material changes are made;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Region of Halton for their information.

## **KEY POINTS:**

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is one of the Town's key tools for supporting local businesses and encouraging revitalization and private sector investments that are aligned with public interest goals.
- To date, the original CIP (approved in 2010 and funded starting in 2014) has provided a total of 32 grants with a total value of nearly \$400,000. Since 2017, total Town and private sector investment directly related to CIP-funded works is estimated at over \$1.1 million.
- A comprehensive review and update of the Town's existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) commenced in late 2020. Council approved the project's Terms of Reference in August 2020 via report ADMIN-2020-0019.
- The draft CIP was created and released to the public and agencies for comment, and a statutory public meeting was held on April 19, 2022.
- The development of the new CIP included widespread stakeholder consultation.
- Final comments were collected from internal and external stakeholders and considered in the preparation of the final CIP that is appended to this report for approval and adoption (Appendix 2).

## **BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the final CIP for review and approval as the Town's new CIP.

### **1. CIP Background**

The Town's original CIP was approved by Council in 2010 and included a variety of financial incentives and municipal leadership programs, tailored to address key community improvement issues in both the urban and rural areas of Halton Hills. To implement the existing CIP, on April 12, 2010, Council passed By-law 2010-0028 which designated all of the Town as a Community Improvement Project Area pursuant to Section 28(2) of the Planning Act, along with By-law 2010-0029 which implemented the existing CIP pursuant to Section 28(4) of the Planning Act. At that time, the Town's CIP was one of the most comprehensive plans in Ontario.

The 2010 CIP programs were mainly designed to encourage brownfield redevelopment, revitalize downtown Acton and Georgetown, encourage additional landscaping in industrial areas, and support the agricultural sector. Amendments to the CIP were made over the years to provide additional flexibility.

### **2. CIP Funding History and Current Application Status**

While the CIP itself was approved in 2010, funding for its programs began in 2014. During the time that funding has been in place, take-up of the CIP programs and value of the grants provided has grown significantly, especially for façade improvements and environmental site assessment grants. CIP funding is currently provided in the Town's Capital Budget at \$107,500 per year.

A total of 32 grants have been provided to date with a total value of nearly \$400,000. It is estimated that, since 2017, total Town and private sector investment directly related to CIP-funded works is over \$1.1 million. As a key economic development tool, the CIP has generated many positive community benefits, including through downtown beautification.

In 2020, CIP up-take decreased with the onset of the pandemic as businesses turned their attention to resiliency efforts. However, since the end of 2020, the Town has experienced significant interest in the CIP, especially for façade improvements and environmental site assessment grants.

From 2020 to date, the Town has awarded five successful applications. An additional three applications are being processed and staff are fielding eleven pending applications. Applications are detailed in Appendix 1.

### **3. CIP Update**

The Town's original CIP has been in place for over 10 years and was in need of an update to ensure its continued success and alignment with the Town's goals and strategies. Through this update, the Town's aim was to build upon the existing

program's strengths and successes, while exploring additional tools and incentives to stimulate broader community improvement.

A comprehensive review and update of the existing CIP commenced in late 2020 with the hiring of professional consultants Sierra Planning and Management. Council approved the Terms of Reference for this project in August 2020 via report ADMIN-2020-0019.

The Town's economic development goals and strategic priorities, as well as other key Town priority areas, were taken into consideration when determining the main areas of focus for the new CIP. Key focus areas included:

- affordable housing;
- brownfield redevelopment;
- storefront/main street revitalization;
- agriculture/agri-business;
- heritage;
- arts and culture;
- climate change; and
- accessibility.

CIP implementation can generate direct and indirect community benefits, including increased assessment and economic development growth, downtown beautification, heritage preservation, improved building energy efficiency, value-added agricultural uses, additional affordable housing options, and the clean up of idle brownfield sites.

The timeline for the CIP Update project was as follows:

- August 2020: Council approved the CIP update project's Terms of Reference through report [ADMIN-2020-0019](#).
- November/December 2020: The Town retained professional consultants Sierra Planning and Management to commence the CIP Update project. Consultants began the research and technical work required to inform the Background Discussion Report. Two project committees were organized: the Technical Advisory Committee and the Community Consultation Group.
- January/May 2021: Significant stakeholder engagement took place to inform the project, including the launch of the [Let's Talk Halton Hills project page](#), several meetings with external and internal project committees, targeted survey creation and dissemination, meetings with subject-matter experts including various Town Committees, and stakeholder focus group sessions.
- June/July 2021: Based on research and extensive stakeholder consultation, the Background Discussion Report was prepared and received by Council through report [ADMIN-2021-0033](#).
- August 2021: Consultants, Town staff and both project committees met several times to discuss key matters and approaches under consideration for the new CIP. Senior Management Team was also engaged. An update was provided to Council through [ADMIN 2021-0015](#).

- September/December 2021: Town staff and consultants drafted the preliminary suite of programs and presented this to both project committees, Senior Management Team and Halton Region for feedback and discussion. Town staff also developed a Financial Plan based on the preliminary program suite.
- January 2022: The direction for the new CIP, including the recommended suite of programs, was finalized and presented to Council through Report [ADMIN-2022-0002](#).
- February/March 2022: The draft CIP was created and released to the public and agencies for comment. This and the statutory public meeting were advertised in the local newspaper, as well as through key project stakeholders.
- April 2022: Halton Region and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs submitted their comments and suggestions on the Draft CIP.
- April 11, 2022: The Statutory Public Meeting was held to gather public feedback on Report [ADMIN-2022-0021](#). There were no comments made.

#### **4. Overview of New CIP Programs**

The new CIP (Appendix 2) is attached to this report for Council review and adoption.

The suite of programs within the new CIP has been carefully developed to maximize community benefits, respond to stakeholder feedback, and enable their implementation. The program suite is cross-disciplinary in scope and is aimed to support, where possible, multiple Town priorities, including economic development, climate change, accessibility, heritage, main street revitalization, brownfield redevelopment, and affordable housing. The new programs are:

1. Façade Improvement Program
2. Building and Property Renovation Program
3. Commercial Property Accessibility and Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program
4. Agricultural Building Renovation Program
5. Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) Program
6. Multi-stream Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program
7. Planning Fees and Building Permit Grant
8. Non-Residential Development Charge (DC) Deferral – Interest Program
9. Affordable Housing Development Charge (DC) Related Program
10. Environmental Remediation Tax Cancellation Assistance Program

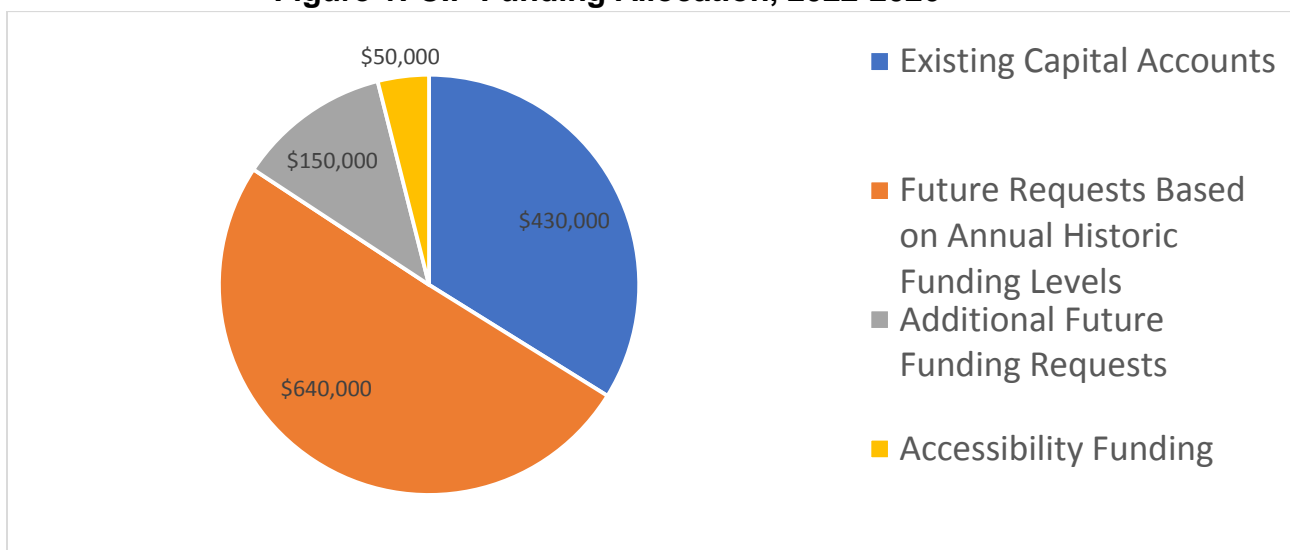
Town staff note that there are no material or significant changes in the CIP programs that were previously presented to Council and the public via the publishing of the draft CIP.

#### **5. CIP Funding and Resourcing**

In January 2022, through Report [ADMIN-2022-0002](#), staff prepared a Financial Plan in consultation with Finance staff. The Financial Plan was based on an estimate of the number of CIP applications that are anticipated to be approved for each program over

the course of five years from the date of the new CIP's approval. An overview of the anticipated allocation of funding for the CIP over the 5-year period is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: CIP Funding Allocation, 2022-2026**



With the added and expanded programs within the CIP, it is anticipated that interest and program uptake in the CIP will increase once launched and over time as awareness of the new CIP increases. Depending on the volume of inquiries and applications as well as the type of development/improvements, workload across Town departments may be affected. In other municipalities with similarly comprehensive CIP, such as Bradford West-Gwillimbury, there are dedicated staff for CIP promotion and implementation. At this time, Town staff (mostly Economic Development) are able to process applications with existing resources. However, as the new CIP is implemented and given the number of new and/or updated programs being launched, staff will continue to monitor resource needs and report to Council as appropriate. The cost of future resource needs is not included in the current Financial Plan and would be subject to future Budget submissions.

## **6. Next Steps and Adoption of new CIP**

A dedicated CIP Review and Evaluation Team comprised of Town staff and external stakeholders is being formed for the review and evaluation of CIP applications and to make recommendations with respect to the applications for approval. Some members will be program-specific (e.g. a representative from the Accessibility Committee for the Commercial Property Accessibility Grant). Representation from the Acton and Georgetown Business Improvement Area Boards will be included for Façade Improvement Grants proposed within the respective BIA boundaries.

Once the new CIP is adopted, all new applications will be reviewed under the new program. Any already approved applications in the queue will be finalized under the existing CIP.

Consistent with the delegated authority granted to the Senior Management Team via report ADMIN-2022-0019 (dated April 13, 2022), including the delegated authority for the Town's CAO to approve the execution by the Mayor and Clerk of CIP agreements, including any amendments or termination of such agreements, the review and approval of Community Improvement Plan (CIP) applications will be completed by Town staff in consultation with the CIP Review and Evaluation Team. Any applications that may be of greater interest to Council or the public will be brought to Council. In addition, an annual summary of approved CIP applications will be brought to Council for information. An example of the type of CIP applications that would be brought to Council includes the Multi-Stream Comprehensive Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program.

Implementation of the CIP will be monitored on an annual basis with an interim review anticipated in Year 3 of the program. A more comprehensive review will be undertaken in Year 5.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This report aligns to the Town's Strategic plan recognizing the value to foster a prosperous economy, maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the town through the provision of a wide range of opportunities for economic development.

This report also recognizes the value to foster a healthy community that provides a clean environment and a range of economic and social opportunities to ensure a superior quality of life in our community. It also identifies shaping growth as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:**

This report impacts and/or helps address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target through climate mitigation.

#### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Public Engagement has been conducted as follows: Let's Talk Halton Hills project webpage, Online Survey, Stakeholder Focus Groups, engagement with various Town Committees including the project's external stakeholder committee (Community Consultation Group), a Statutory Public Meeting held April 19, 2022 (with accompanying public ads in the local newspaper), as well as engagement with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**INTERNAL CONSULTATION:**

The internal staff project Committee (TAC), departments/divisions including Finance, Planning and Development, Parks & Recreation, Buildings, Cultural Services, Climate Change, and Economic Development as well as the Senior Management Team have been engaged throughout the CIP Update project.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

This report has the potential to require funding in a future budget year and therefore needs to be referred to budget committee for tracking purposes.

The Financial Plan and Financial Implications for the new CIP were detailed in Report No. ADMIN-2022-0002, dated January 20, 2022, and approved by Council at its February 7, 2022 meeting.

Reviewed and approved by,

Damian Szybalski, Director of Economic Development, Innovation & Culture

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer