



## THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN DOWNTOWN SOUTHAMPTON

1. **Introduction:**

Council of the Corporation of the Town of Saugeen Shores has expressed its desire to establish a Community Improvement Plan for downtown Southampton.
2. **Purpose (General):**

A CIP describes what a municipality intends to do to address various issues in a certain defined area, known as a Community Improvement Plan project area. Through CIP's municipalities can:

  - i. Focus public attention on local priorities and municipal initiatives;
  - ii. Target areas in transition or in need of repair, rehabilitation and redevelopment;
  - iii. Facilitate and encourage community change in a co-ordinated manner; and
  - iv. Stimulate private sector investment through municipal incentive-based programs.
3. **Legislation:**
  - i. Ontario Planning Act

Section 28 of Ontario's *Planning Act* allows municipalities to prepare CIP's, to establish a framework for municipalities to support and implement programs to encourage development and redevelopment, in accordance with Official Plan policies. Whether the reasons are physical, social, economic, or environmental, a community improvement approach is a flexible, comprehensive, co-ordinated and strategic framework for dealing with lands and buildings. For the purposes of carrying out a CIP, a municipality may engage in the following activities within the CIP project area:

    - i. Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (28(3));
    - ii. Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the CIP project area in conformity with the CIP (28(6));
    - iii. Sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in the CIP project area in conformity with the CIP (28(6)); and,
    - iv. Make grants or loans to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the CIP project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the CIP (28(7)).
  - ii. Provincial Policy Statement (2005)

CIP's help to achieve the PPS objectives of healthy communities, a clean and safe environment and a strong economy. Community improvement is supported through PPS policies for:

    - i. Building strong communities
    - ii. Promoting efficient development and a mix of land uses
    - iii. Ensuring that necessary infrastructure and public service facilities are available
    - iv. Improving accessibility
    - v. Conserving heritage resources
    - vi. Supporting green design
    - vii. Encouraging residential intensification
  - iii. County of Bruce Official Plan (2010)

Local Official Plans for Primary Urban Communities shall contain general development and land use policies dealing with community improvement. It is the policy of County Council to encourage each local municipality to prepare a CIP where appropriate.

- iv. Town of Saugeen Shores Official Plan (2006)  
The Local Official Plan policies qualify the municipality to prepare and implement CIP's, and other mechanisms that are governed by Section 28. The Southampton CIP will establish a number of programs to implement the goals and objectives of community improvement.

4. **Process:**

A number of relevant background studies and projects are the foundation for the Southampton CIP:

- i. Southampton Strategic Plan (1996)
- ii. Saugeen Shores Parks and Trails Master Plan (2004)
- iii. Survey conducted by the Southampton Residents' Association (2005)
- iv. Public comments expressed in the Background Report to the 2006 (and 2012) Saugeen Shores Official Plan updates
- v. Saugeen Shores Design Guidelines (2009)
- vi. Signage and Wayfinding Strategy (2011)
- vii. Branding exercise used to clarify the identity of Southampton (2012)

In 2012 Council budgeted to undertake a Community Improvement Plan for Southampton. The Spruce the Bruce Steering Committee agreed to assume the initial oversight role. The STB Steering Committee discussed the framework and objectives of the CIP, and provided input into the draft CIP. The Committee requested that the draft CIP be made available to stakeholders including Council, community groups and those in the area affected. The draft Plan has been circulated to the mandatory public agencies for comment, and has been available for public inspection since November 2012.

A revised CIP incorporating feedback received was presented to the Committee for review in February 2013. The revised CIP was also available for continued public inspection on-line. The CIP was formally introduced to the public for review, consideration and feedback at the statutory Public Meeting held at the Southampton Town Hall on March 27, 2013. Final modifications have been made subsequent to the Public Meeting and as a result of agency consultation. The CIP in its final draft form has been available for public inspection on-line.

5. **Purpose (Specific):**

The Southampton CIP establishes a framework for the Town of Saugeen Shores to support and implement a series of programs over a five-year period, to encourage the maintenance, rehabilitation and revitalization of public and private spaces, and to provide financial incentives to achieve these objectives.

6. **CIP Project Area:**

According to Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act*, a "community improvement project area" is defined as "a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the Council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason". Project areas range from specific properties, to streets, neighbourhoods and entire communities, while program coverage can span a wide spectrum of municipal goals and objectives including the programs noted in Section 8 of this CIP.

The municipality shall designate the CIP project area by By-law. The programs authorized in this CIP may be carried out within the CIP project area as identified on Schedule 'A' to the Plan.

7. **Objective:**

The objective was established based on the plans and studies noted in Section 4 of this CIP. The CIP programs are a tool to establish a sense of place based on the noted strengths and identity of Southampton, to make the local community successful, and realize the economic and social benefits available within the CIP project area.

8. **Programs:**

The following Programs are authorized under the CIP:

- i. Facade Improvement Program  
To cover a portion of the project costs for exterior improvements to the street-facing facade of existing buildings in the Southampton CIP project area.
- ii. Storefront Sign Improvement Program  
To cover a portion of the project costs for storefront sign and awning improvements on existing buildings in the Southampton CIP project area.
- iii. Infrastructure Works/Building Restoration & Accessibility Enhancements  
For property tax assistance for remediation purposes to assist in bringing buildings up to current Ontario Building Code standards; and, accessibility enhancements to downtown businesses in accordance with the Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2001 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
- iv. Community Energy Efficiency  
To promote:
  - Construction of new green buildings that meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification standards;
  - Retrofit of existing buildings for energy efficiency (i.e. replacement of doors, windows, insulation, heating, etc.); and,
  - Alternative energy generating sources (i.e. rooftop solar panels).
- v. Streetscape Beautification, Signage & Landscaping Improvements  
For replacing/adding light standards, street furniture (benches, banners, planters, garbage/recycling receptacles, sidewalk and lane treatments, parking), and improved signage.
- vi. Public Space, Parks and Recreation Works  
For major capital projects geared to enhance, preserve and derive more economic benefits from public spaces within the CIP project area.

Programs i through iv are designed to stimulate private sector investment through municipal incentive-based programs. Programs v and vi are municipally-driven programs.

9. **Program Guideline Framework:**

The CIP Program(s) development shall be based on the following framework:

- i. Introduction
  - i. Program objective and details
- ii. Background
  - i. Previous studies
  - ii. Municipality's objectives
  - iii. Established need for CIP program
  - iv. Relevant design guidelines
- iii. Eligibility and Program Area
  - i. Eligibility Criteria (see below)
  - ii. Financial Incentive (see below) and Program Funding
  - iii. Applicant responsibilities
  - iv. Considerations (compliance with guidelines)
  - v. Site location (map)
- iv. Deliverables and governance
  - i. Application process (submission deadlines and other requirements, timelines, number of grants per year, etc.)
  - ii. Improvements eligible for funding (i.e. signage, illumination, awnings, painting, cladding, etc.)
  - iii. Administration (review, evaluation, approval, agreements, inspections, completion)
- v. List of appendices

## 10. Eligibility Criteria

- i. Any application under the above-noted programs must be consistent with the Official Plan, Community Improvement Plan and any other design guidelines that may be implemented for the Southampton CIP Project Area. Priority will be given to those applications which most closely meet the Program Guidelines that will be developed with the Framework as outlined in this Plan.
- ii. Priority for commercial properties within the designated CIP Project Area will be given for the following programs:
  - i. Façade Improvement Program
  - ii. Storefront Sign Improvement Program
  - iii. Infrastructure Works/Building Restoration and Accessibility Enhancements
  - iv. Community Energy Efficiency
- iii. Any applicant to a CIP Program must be the registered owner of the property or an authorized agent. If a tenant wishes to apply, a letter from the building owner approving the work to be done is required.
- iv. Eligible project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arm's length and which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment. Applicants will provide a minimum cash contribution to the project as outlined under Section 11 Financial Incentive depending on the type of Incentive that is implemented.
- v. The total of the financial incentive (grants, loans and tax assistance) shall not exceed the cost of improvements made to any buildings or lands.
- vi. Projects must be completed and invoices paid within the timeframes established for the applicable Program.
- vii. Financial Incentives are not permitted to be retroactive, and only projects commencing following the approval of the project funding will be considered.
- viii. Applicants must not be in default of any municipal taxes or local improvement charges.
- ix. Applicants must comply with all provincial and local laws and regulations pertaining to licensing, permits, building code and zoning requirements. The Applicant is responsible for obtaining all building and other required permits and must be in conformance with all applicable health and safety standards.
- x. The Owner/Applicant shall enter into an agreement with the Town stipulating at a minimum:
  - i. Terms of the financial agreement;
  - ii. Timetable for provision of agreement and completion of the project;
  - iii. An undertaking by the owner to satisfy all municipal and other relevant laws and requirements for the project.

## 11. Financial Incentive

Implementation of the financial incentives contained in the CIP is at the sole discretion of Council and is dependent on the availability of municipal funding. References to monetary values and formulae identified in brackets are included as examples only, and are at the discretion of Council.

Where applicable, financial incentive can be provided to the various CIP programs in the following ways:

### i. Grant Financial Incentive

- i. Where a project satisfies the relevant municipal guidelines, a grant may be given for municipal fees associated with the improvement (i.e. development charges, building permits, planning fees). Grants may cover up to 100% of the municipal fees.

The grant would be payable after the applicant executes a Commitment Agreement with the municipality; construction is complete and has been inspected by the appropriate approval authority. A maximum of one year is allowed for completion. The Agreement would specify eligible works and require no changes to work on the improvement for five years without municipal approval.

- ii. Where a proposed project satisfies the relevant municipal guidelines, a grant to cover up to [33%] of the eligible cost of the improvement to a maximum of [\$10,000] may be available on approved applications. Eligible costs may include professional design fees, material, labour and taxes necessary to complete the eligible work. In the event a project involves a second improvement, a grant of up to [50%] of the eligible cost to a maximum of [\$15,000] may be approved.

The grant would be payable after the applicant executes a Commitment Agreement with the municipality, construction is complete and has been inspected by the appropriate approval authority, and upon presentation of proof of accounts paid for the completed project. A maximum of one year is allowed for completion. The Agreement would specify eligible works and require no changes to work on the improvement for five years without municipal approval.

- ii. Loan Financial Incentive

Where a proposed project satisfies the relevant municipal guidelines, an interest-free loan to cover up to [33%] of the eligible cost of the improvement to a maximum of [\$10,000] may be available on approved applications. Eligible costs may include professional design fees, material, labour and taxes necessary to complete the eligible work. In the event a project involves a second improvement, a grant of up to [50%] of the eligible cost to a maximum of [\$15,000] may be approved.

The loan would be payable after the applicant executes a Commitment Agreement with the municipality, construction is complete and has been inspected by the appropriate approval authority, and upon presentation of proof of accounts paid for the completed project. A maximum of one year is allowed for completion. The Agreement would specify eligible works and require no changes to work on the improvement for five years without municipal approval. The Agreement will stipulate the repayment schedule.

- iii. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program Financial Incentive

Where a proposed project satisfies the relevant municipal guidelines to bring buildings up to current Ontario Building Code standards, a TIEG may be available on approved applications. The TIEG program provides tax assistance equal to all or a portion of the municipal property tax increase (increment) following the completion of a project owned by a private land owner that has resulted in an increase in the assessed property value. In year one of the program, the grant to the property owner is equal to 100% of the tax increment. Thereafter, the grant decreases by 10% per year (i.e. year two = 90%, year three = 80%, and so on up to year five).

## 12. **General:**

- i. Timeframe

The CIP shall remain in effect for five years following its adoption by Council. An annual review of the CIP will be undertaken with a report to Council.

- ii. Amendments

Amendments to the CIP would not normally be required if a municipality is discontinuing or cancelling a program; or, if funding to a program is decreased. Decisions respecting funding allocations to CIP programs are typically part of the annual Council budget process. However, amendments to the CIP may be required for a change or expansion in the geographic area to which financial or land programs outlined in a CIP apply; or, a change in the eligibility criteria (i.e. addition of new municipal assistance programs involving grants, loans, tax assistance or land; or, an increase to a financial incentive to be offered within a municipal CIP program). Such amendments require pre-consultation with the Ministry

of Municipal Affairs and Housing in order to assess additional liability which may be incurred by the Town.

iii. Participation

In order to carry out the Community Improvement Goals and Actions of this Plan, the Municipality may participate and coordinate in grants or loans with other levels of government pursuant to Section 28(7.2) of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990 for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan.

13. **Implementation:**

The municipality may prepare a five-year implementation plan to address matters related to the timing of construction of improvements, promotion of the policies and programs, and staging and monitoring of CIP programs.

14. **Monitoring**

Program monitoring shall occur on an annual basis to determine the following:

- i. Established targets from program uptake are being met;
- ii. Desired outcomes for the downtown are being achieved;
- iii. Program participants are completing their commitments; and
- iv. Overall benefits of the program.

SCHEDULE "B"



**Community  
Improvement  
Project Area**

Lake Huron

Fairy L