



# Staff Report

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## Planning & Development Services – Planning Division

**Report To:** Committee of the Whole Meeting  
**Meeting Date:** August 9, 2022  
**Report Number:** PDS.22.097  
**Title:** Update Report – Implementing the Community Improvement Plan Program  
**Prepared by:** Adam Smith, Director of Planning & Development Services

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.22.097, entitled “Update Report – Implementing the Community Improvement Plan Program”;

AND THAT Council approve the adjustments to the administration of the Community Improvement Plan Program as previously approved in PDS.21.034;

AND THAT Council selects Option #3 in implementing the Community Improvement Plan Program

### B. Overview

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This report is a follow-up report to PDS.21.033 that identified the programs to be funded through the CIPs in 2021 and set forth the approach to administration of the CIPs. The intent is to inform Council of proposed changes to their administration and describe steps to be taken to fund eligible projects in 2023.

### C. Background

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Adopted by Council in 2021, the Housing Within Reach Community Improvement Plan and the Town-wide Revitalization Community Improvement Plan are the key grant programs available to support businesses and agencies in achieving a wide variety of economic development objectives in the community.

Previously, staff report PDS.21.034 outlined the approach to administering the program and Council approved \$250,000 from the CIP Reserve Fund to be allocated to fund programs within both the Housing Within Reach CIP and the Town Wide Revitalization CIP.

Under the Housing Within Reach CIP the programs approved included:

- Development Charges Grant Equivalent Program

- Additional Dwelling Unit Program

Under the Town Wide Revitalization CIP the program approved included:

- Building Façade & Signage Grant Program

Previously, a Secondary Suite Grant Program was administered by The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation. In August 2021, Council resolved to have the program be implemented through the Town's CIP Program. Now known as the Additional Dwelling Unit Program, staff are recommending that it continues to be an approved program.

While there was staff direction in 2021 on funding the CIPs and creating intake periods for the programs stated above, no budget has been assigned in 2022. Given the upcoming election and limited approval powers during the 'lame duck' period of Council, staff are seeking to update the approach to the programs heading into 2023. This not only includes expanding the number of eligible programs but modifying the approach to governance and communications.

Staff are proposing that for both options described below that there be a 'conditional' intake period opened whereby proponents can make submissions prior to the 2023 budget being approved. This will better align with projects targeting works in the subsequent year and in future years, better inform the budgetary process whereby the budget allocated is reflective of interest in the programs.

Additionally, the staff review of the applications submitted will include the Communications and Economic Development Department. This will support staff in the Planning Division which has previously been solely responsible for the CIPs and support alignment of submissions with economic objectives of the municipality.

Finally, once approved, projects will be expected to have signage profiling the CIP contribution and the municipality will have mapping of the successful proponents on the website. These elements have all been envisioned within the Council approved documents entailing a marketing strategy to go along with the financial incentives.

#### Option #1: Maintain CIP direction provided in 2021

In this scenario, staff will move ahead with intake for 2023 under the same parameters of the approach proposed in 2021. The same programs noted earlier in this report will be opened for submissions.

#### Option #2: Expand eligible programs to include the Attainable Housing Feasibility Grant Program

Based on the current size of the reserve fund and the emphasis on enabling attainable housing within the community, the list of eligible programs could be expanded to include the following:

- Attainable Housing Feasibility Grant Program

*Purpose:* The Attainable Housing Feasibility Grant Program is intended to assist eligible applicants with the cost of determining an attainable housing project's feasibility prior to construction.

*Eligible Costs:* The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the value of the following eligible studies:

1. Market analysis;
2. Business development related studies and plans, including development pro-forma;
3. Building condition report, where an existing building is proposed to be repurposed or significantly modified or renovated; and
4. Capital replacement plan, generally described as an inventory of significant building components such as windows, doors, roofs, siding, or HVAC systems, and is used to calculate long-term expenditures required for future repair and replacement needs.

*Grant Value:* The value of a grant shall be 100% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$20,000.00 per property.

Option #3: Expand eligible programming in both the Housing Within Reach CIP and the Town-Wide Revitalization CIP

Alongside the addition of the Attainable Housing Feasibility Grant Program, the Town also opens intake for the Property Enhancement and Improvement Program and the Destination Infrastructure Program. This would allow the Town to align its financial incentives to feedback received through business surveys emphasizing the need for more activation of the downtown core. These grants are described in detail below:

- Property Enhancement and Improvement Program

*Purpose:* The Property Enhancement and Improvement Grant Program is intended to facilitate the enhancement of the public realm through improvements to private property. More specifically, this program encourages improvements to landscaping, parking areas, bicycle parking, laneways, and permanent outdoor eating areas and other similar considerations that contribute to the visual aesthetic of the public realm, augment other municipal led initiatives, and complement the broader community revitalization and development objectives of this Plan.

*Eligible Costs:* The potential grant or loan value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of the following eligible costs:

1. Landscaping improvements that abut a sidewalk or are highly visible from the public street. This includes landscaping features that may be located within or adjacent to surface parking areas. Eligible costs shall include:

- Professional landscaping services. Preference shall be given to applications that propose the provision of xeriscaping (i.e., native plan species) or related drought tolerant species.
  - Tree and shrub planting;
  - Permanent planters, walkways, benches, refuse receptacles, public art, and other similar considerations that may be located on private property but positively contribute to the public realm or enhance the sidewalk; and
  - Fencing, gates, or other similar permanent vertical elements.
2. Installation of permanent bicycle parking or related active transportation infrastructure.
  3. Installation or improvements to permanent outdoor seating areas and sidewalk cafes, provided the eating area is located adjacent to a sidewalk or public street in the front yard, side yard or rear yard, as applicable. For clarity, non-permanent improvements shall not be eligible under this program.
  4. Improvements to parking areas in the Thornbury, Clarksburg and Bruce Street Marsh Street Corridor Areas, including:
    - Improved surface treatment, such as permeable paving material or similar;
    - New demarcation of parking spaces to improve the efficiency or number of parking spaces;
    - Provision of landscape buffer and islands;
    - Works related to the provision of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliant accessible parking spaces and associated paving and signage.
    - Enhancements to walkways or connectivity between parking areas and public sidewalk or building entrances as well as curbing and lighting.
  5. Enhancements or upgrades to pedestrian walkways that connect a building entrance to a public street. This includes exterior improvements to satisfy the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

*Grant Value:* The maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs and shall not exceed a maximum of \$15,000.00 or \$500.00 per linear metre of lot frontage, whichever is less. The maximum value of a loan shall be 50% of eligible costs and shall not exceed a maximum of \$45,000.00 or \$1,000.00 per linear metre of lot frontage, whichever is less.

- The Destination Infrastructure Program  
*Purpose:* The Destination Infrastructure Program is intended to encourage local stakeholders, organizations and municipalities to upgrade and invest in destination infrastructure that positively contributes to the public realm.

*Eligible Costs:* The potential grant value shall be calculated based on the estimated value of the following eligible costs:

1. Capital improvements to core attractions such as trails, waterfront (i.e. parking, restrooms, staging, lookouts);

2. Signage that improves visitor experiences (i.e. interpretive/historical plaques, dementia friendly signage, kiosks, route markers for cycling/hiking, etc.);
3. Community wayfinding signage;
4. Permanent installation of outdoor art;
5. Converting vacant lands to parks/green space enhancements; and
6. Streetscape beautification (i.e. banners, benches, garbage/recycle receptacles, green space/park enhancements, seasonal decorations).

*Grant Value:* The maximum value of a grant shall be 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$15,000.00, whichever is less.

## **D. Analysis**

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In proceeding with Option #3 a total of 6 CIP grant programs would be available for intake. In PDS.21.33 the basis for an intake focused on 3 programs was related to budget in the CIP Reserve. Currently, the CIP reserve is in the amount of \$436,505 exclusive of contributions made by Grey County. In accounting for the \$80,000 provided by the County, the Town has a total of \$515,505 available for CIP implementation.

An intake process is not anticipated to be completed prior to submission of 2023 budgetary requests however, an estimate will still be submitted and upon review of budget requests for the year, Council can be made aware of total demand for the program and can adjust the request accordingly.

In the absence of a conditional approval process, staff may not be able to proceed with intake until late spring 2023 given the projected budget timeline for the upcoming year.

Another consideration for the recommendation made by staff in PDS.21.34 was the sustainability of the CIP reserve recognizing that the maximum available through certain grants such as the Development Charges Grant Equivalent Program can cause the reserve to rapidly deplete. Despite this risk, the reserve is not intended to remain static and is supported by contributions through Grey County and land sales made by the municipality. Depending on the success of the intake process, staff will seek to explore other means to fund the CIPs beyond the sources identified above. Further, staff have discretion through the CIP to create evaluation criteria that encourages submissions seeking contributions below the maximum available to help reduce the pressure on the reserve.

In broadening the intake to include additional programs under both the Housing Within Reach CIP and the Town-wide Revitalization CIP, the municipality maximizes its flexibility in supporting projects that address a variety of economic and housing related goals.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communication and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

### **2. Organizational Excellence**

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

### **3. Community**

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

### **4. Quality of Life**

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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There are no direct environmental impacts associated with the recommendations of this Staff Report.

## **G. Financial Impacts**

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Currently, there is no budget for CIP implementation in 2022. However, there are funding sources available through the reserve and allocations from Grey County totaling \$515,505. A future report will consider the budget required to fund eligible submissions.

## **H. In Consultation With**

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Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications & Economic Development

Ruth Prince, Director of Finance & IT

Sam Dinsmore, Manager of Accounting and Budgets

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Adam Smith at [directorplanningdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:directorplanningdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca)

**J. Attached**

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1. PDS.21.034 Community Improvement Plan – 2021 Program Recommendations

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Smith  
Director of Planning & Development Services

For more information, please contact:  
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**Report Approval Details**

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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**No Signature found**

**Shawn Everitt - Aug 2, 2022 - 9:16 AM**