



# Town of Blind River Community

Program Overview and Guidelines

# Town of Blind River Community Improvement Plan

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## Program Overview and Guidelines

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Community Improvement Plan (CIP) for the Town of Blind River was initiated by the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and supported by Town Council and the Town's Staff. The CIP is a part of the broader Corporate Strategy and Economic Development Plan.

The contributions made by the members of the Town, its staff, survey respondents and stakeholders who agreed to be interviewed, provided great value to the development of the corporate strategic plan as well as the most recent survey.

While assembled by the Project Team, the following document is a true reflection of the wide-ranging and insightful ideas of numerous individuals and groups who are actively engaged in the various facets of community and economic development. This program provides incentives to business owners for community revitalization and to encourage economic prosperity in Blind River, both now and in the future.



# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)</b> .....	<b>4</b>
CIP PROJECT AREA.....	6
FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS.....	8
PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS .....	9
<i>Accessibility Grant</i> .....	9
<i>Building Façade Design and Improvement Grant Program</i> .....	10
<i>Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant</i> .....	11
<i>Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) OR (Tax Incentive Finance Program)</i> .....	12
<i>Planning and Building Fee Grant (Optional)</i> .....	14
<b>3. COMMUNITY THEME DESIGN GUIDELINES</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CIP</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>5. GENERAL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>6. MONITORING PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>27</b>
<b>7. MARKETING PLAN</b> .....	<b>29</b>
<b>8. CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>31</b>
<b>9. APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>32</b>

# 1. Introduction

The Blind River Strategy and Economic Development Plan project was undertaken in 2018-19. Many of the priority areas identified within the strategy came as a result of community consultations, with key strategic and economic priorities falling within the following two categories:

- Investment Readiness
- Economic Sector Development

Through this Corporate Strategy and Economic Development Planning, the development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was identified as a key initiative to be undertaken by the Town and its partners in community and economic development.

## Vision and Goals of the Town

In order to better reflect the community's current goals and objectives, the Corporate Strategy and Economic Development Plan process included a review of the Town's Vision and Mission. The following revised statements were approved by Town Council in 2019.

### Mission Statement

Providing quality services and leadership that reflect the social, cultural, environmental and economic needs of the community, while fostering regional partnerships and managing resources in a fiscally responsible manner.

### Vision Statement

Driven by extraordinary volunteers and supported by its community leaders, Blind River is a vibrant and prosperous town that has established itself as a year-round destination and ideal community in which to live and do business.

# 2. Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

The need for incentives to help improve the downtown area were predominant and a popular theme amongst both residents and businesses. As a result, the Strategic Steering Committee prioritized the development of a CIP for 2019, including the development of a community theme and a program of municipal incentives to encourage the improvement and redevelopment of private land and buildings.

A community survey pertaining specifically to the proposed CIP was undertaken to obtain further input from the community. With this CIP specific survey, the working team was able to obtain feedback relative to incentives and theme for the Town. For full survey results see Appendix.



## Defining the CIP

A Community Improvement Plan or CIP is a planning tool permitted under Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act. CIPs also include financial incentives, which are legislated under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act.

CIPs can provide several benefits for a community, including:

- Stimulation of private sector investment in targeted areas through grants and loans from the Town;
- Promotion of revitalization and place-making to attract tourism, business investment and economic development opportunities;
- Promotion of brownfield cleanup and redevelopment;
- Enhancement of streetscapes and building façades; and
- Effective use of community infrastructure.

## Community Theme

The community theme is a set of principles to help guide all municipal, commercial and residential improvement and beautification efforts.

## CIP Project Area

Blind River is a community of 3,472 people (2016 census) located along the North Shore of Lake Huron in the Algoma District. It sits approximately 140 km east of Sault Ste. Marie and approximately 165 km west of Sudbury, and neighbours the Mississaugi First Nation. Through these transportation corridors along Trans-Canada Highway 17 Blind River has access to Southern Ontario by way of Highway 69 through Sudbury and Interstate 75 and the United States by way of Sault Ste. Marie.

In addition to these road connections, Blind River is centrally connected by rail, air and water. A freight rail line parallels Highway 17 through the town, and Blind River is in proximity to airports and airfields in Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury and Elliot Lake.



The Planning Area occupies a total land area of approximately 521 km<sup>2</sup> and consists of an expansive rural area, downtown and surrounding business area, and the waterfront and marina



which provides a central access position to the North Channel of Lake Huron in transportation routes and port for Ontarian and United States visitors.

The five-year Corporate Strategy and Economic Development Plan (2019) had identified the Downtown, Highway 17 Corridor and the Marina-Waterfront as key areas to be considered as areas for revitalization and on which to concentrate efforts over the long term.

The Community Improvement Project Area is designated in the Blind River Community Improvement Project Area By-law, in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act. All community improvement activities, described in this Plan, including access to incentive programs, will only be undertaken within the area identified in the By-law.

The area located within the Town considered as having a need for immediate community improvement activities has been identified as:

- **Downtown Blind River:** Downtown Blind River is recognized as an area which will benefit highly from a wide range of community improvement programs, including both financial incentives and Town led initiatives.

It is recognized that as the Town evolves, this area may no longer need community improvement, and other areas may be identified as being in need of community improvement. Accordingly, modifications to the Community Improvement Project Area may be required. Any such modifications will not require an amendment to this Plan but will require an amendment to the Community Improvement Project Area By-law in accordance with Section 28(2) of the Planning Act.

CIPA - The area considered to be located within the Downtown Core including Provencher Lane to the West to Lawton Avenue to the East.

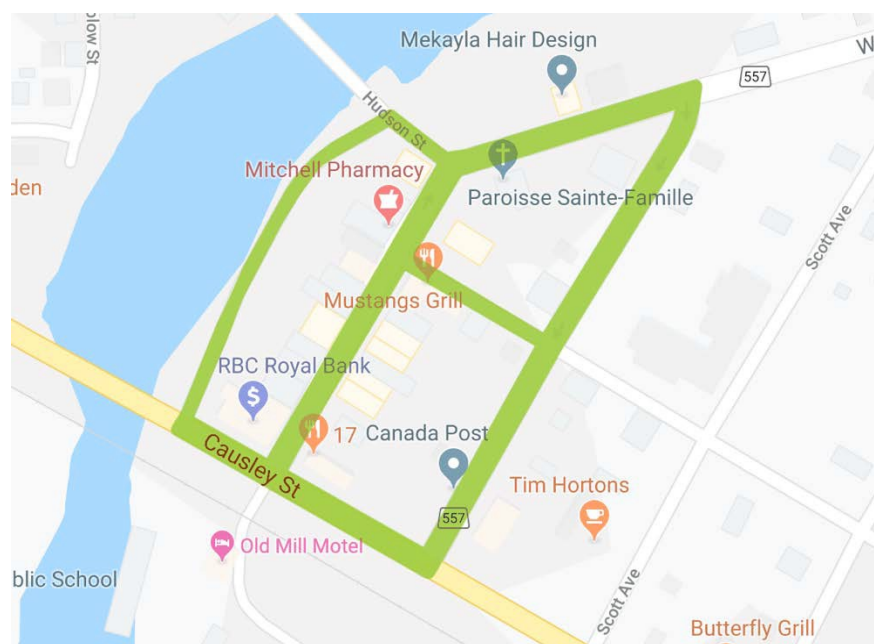


FIGURE 1 - DOWNTOWN CIPA



# Financial Incentive Programs

The CIP consists of a comprehensive set of financial (or other) incentive programs that are intended to achieve the goals of this CIP by encouraging private sector development and investment in Blind River. The incentive programs respond to the local needs and opportunities identified in the recent Strategy and Economic Development Plan community consultation process as well as in the Official Plan. They have been developed by Town staff and Council, and the CIP Working Group.

The financial incentive programs have been created to stimulate Blind River private sector redevelopment, with a priority on the Town’s downtown. Applicants may use individual incentive programs or combine multiple complementary programs for a single site or development, unless otherwise stipulated under the individual programs. The purpose, description, and eligibility requirements for each “financial” incentive program are outlined below. Eligible projects may also be augmented with other federal and provincial funding programs.

All programs are subject to funding allocated by Town Council on an annual basis.

A summary of the available “financial” incentive programs is provided in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 - SUMMARY OF INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Incentive Program	Program Highlights
1. Accessibility Grant	A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$2,500.
2. Building Façade Design and Improvement Grant Program	<p><u>Design:</u> 50% max 1,000 cost of preparation of architectural plans for façade.</p> <p><b>Façade Improvement Primary Grant</b></p> <p>A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 toward the costs to improve a building façade. Grants for buildings in excess of two stories would be structured to provide additional funding at a rate of \$1,000 per additional storey, up to a maximum \$6,000.</p> <p><b>Façade Improvement Secondary Grant</b></p> <p>A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$1,500 toward the costs of improvements to each exterior side and rear of buildings. Where buildings exceed two stories, the grant may be increased by an additional \$500 per storey.</p>
3. Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant	A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 of the costs for improving outdoor landscaping and property improvement on private property.

<p><b>4. Planning and Building Fee Grant (Optional)</b></p>	<p>A grant equal to 100% of the Town’s planning fees, to a maximum of \$1,500, to cover the cost of minor variance applications, zoning by-law amendment applications, site plan applications,</p> <p>And, a grant equal to 100%, up to \$1,500 for building permits or demolition permit fees.</p>
<p><b>5. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant</b></p>	<p>100% rebate of the municipal portion of a property tax increment resulting from redevelopment or building improvements, paid in increments over a maximum of 2 years.</p>

# Program Descriptions

## ACCESSIBILITY GRANT

### Purpose

The purpose of the Accessibility Grant is to improve the accessibility to existing buildings in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### Program Details

A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$2,500 is available to assist property owners, tenants, or assignees to encourage the provision of accessibility to existing buildings. Examples include customized portable ramps.

Property owners or businesses within the CIPA are eligible to apply for funding to renovate existing buildings to make them accessible according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements

Only commercial, mixed-use, institutional, industrial properties and Residential Multiple Zone (RM) zoned properties are eligible for this grant. For clarity, properties zoned Residential First Density Zone (R1) and Residential Second Density Zone (R2) are not eligible for this grant.

# BUILDING FAÇADE DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAM

## Purpose

To promote the rehabilitation, restoration and improvement of the front, rear and side facades of commercial, institutional and mixed-use buildings in the CIPA, including retail storefront display areas and signage. To encourage aesthetic improvements to buildings and properties, that reflect the Town's theme, and contribute to a vibrant, attractive and welcoming environment.

## Program Details

### 1) Design

A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$1,000 will be available to fund the cost of preparing architectural plans for building façade improvements.

In addition, a grant of 50% to a maximum of \$1,000 will be available to fund the cost of preparing a site plan suitable for approval by the Town in accordance with the Property Standards, Sign By-law, Design Guidelines and regular site plan requirements.

These grants would be paid at 50% (to a maximum of \$500 each) upon completion of design, and the remaining 50% after implementation.

### Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements

Designs for eligible projects must be prepared by a qualified professional. The grant will be conditional on the Town approval of the architectural plans, to ensure that the guidelines outlined in the Blind River Community Improvement Plan are implemented. Only commercial, mixed-use, institutional, industrial properties and Residential Multiple Zone (RM) zoned properties are eligible for this grant. For clarity, properties zoned Residential First Density Zone (R1) and Residential Second Density Zone (R2) are not eligible for this grant.

### 2-A) Primary Façade Improvement Grant

The Town will provide a grant of 50% (to a maximum of \$5,000) of the costs to assist with improvements to buildings. The grant would be structured to provide additional funding at a rate of \$1,000 per additional storey, up to a maximum of \$6,000. The grant would include building materials, labour and professional fees.

### 2-B) Secondary Façade Improvement Grant

Funding is available for improvements to each exterior side and rear of buildings that front onto a street and back onto a lane. The Town will provide a grant of 50% (up to \$1,500) of the costs per exterior or rear building face. Where buildings exceed two stories, the grant may be increased by an additional \$500 per storey.

## Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements

1. The following renovation/restoration projects will be considered to be eligible projects under this program:
  - a. repair or replacement of exterior facades including cladding materials, windows, and doors;
  - b. brick cleaning façade treatments, such as power washing;
  - c. repair or repainting of façade masonry and brickwork. The maintenance of brick facades will be encouraged;
  - d. installation, repair or replacement of architectural details and features;
  - e. installation, repair or replacement of awnings or canopies;
  - f. façade restoration, including painting and cleaning;
  - g. installation of lighting;
  - h. installation of exterior decorative lighting and upgrading of fixtures;
  - i. redesign of business front;
  - j. installation/improvement of signage (as permitted by the Sign By-law/Town's Property Standards By-law and the Ontario Building Code and Regulations);
  - k. landscaping, including plant materials (to a maximum of 15% of the approved grant amount);
  - l. professional design services required to complete eligible work; and
  - m. other similar improvement projects may be approved that demonstrate improvement to the quality of the property.
2. Eligible façades include both front and side facades (for corner properties).
3. Rear façade improvements will be considered secondary for the purposes of allocating funds. The improvement grant may not be used solely for window improvements.
4. Grants would be paid upon completion of the work in accordance with the agreement between the City and the landowner.
5. Only commercial, mixed-use, institutional, industrial properties and Residential Multiple Zone (RM) zoned properties are eligible for this grant. For clarity, properties zoned Residential First Density Zone (R1) and Residential Second Density Zone (R2) are not eligible for this grant

## LANDSCAPING AND PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT

### Purpose

To encourage an appealing pedestrian environment by supporting improvements to the aesthetics of outdoor landscaping on private properties, improving their aesthetics, and providing better pedestrian connections and seating.

### Program Details

A grant of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 of the costs for improving outdoor landscaping and property improvement on private property in the Community Improvement Area.

## Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements

Grants shall be provided for the rehabilitation and/or construction of patios, gardens, trees & shrubs, walkways, park benches, bicycle racks, waste receptacles, fountains, retaining walls, fencing, outdoor lighting, and any other outdoor landscape related improvements.

Only commercial, mixed-use, institutional, industrial properties and Residential Multiple Zone (RM) zoned properties are eligible for this grant. For clarity, properties zoned Residential First Density Zone (R1) and Residential Second Density Zone (R2) are not eligible for this grant. A grant for a total of half (50%) of the construction costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.

The maximum amount of a grant for professional landscape architectural services shall not exceed 50% of the grant that is calculated for eligible construction costs.

As a condition of grant application, the Town may require the applicant to submit for approval professional design/architectural drawing(s) which shall be in conformity with Downtown Design Guidelines, as well as impact studies such as traffic studies.

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works.

## TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT GRANT (TIEG) OR (TAX INCENTIVE FINANCE PROGRAM)

### Purpose

To stimulate investment by effectively deferring part of the increase in property taxation because of adaptive reuse, building rehabilitation, and retrofit works. This financial tool allows municipalities to provide a grant equal to the full amount, or a portion of the amount of the property tax increase after the property is redeveloped, while not eroding the tax base.

### Program Details

The tax increment financing tool is enabled through Section 28 of the Planning Act. This Program allows the Town to reduce any increases in tax revenues that result from new development in the CIPA. It is important to note that the total amount of the reduction will be limited to the amount that the taxes increase, or in other words, by the amount of the reassessment of the properties.

Grants shall be equal to a declining percentage of the municipal tax increase resulting from the improvements and shall be paid to the owner each year for a maximum of 2 years. In year one (1), the amount of the grant shall equal up to 100% of the tax increment and shall decrease by 50% per year until it reaches 0%.

“Municipal taxes” under this Program refers only to the general portion of the total taxes paid and will not include education taxes levied.

Note that the Tax Increment-based Program is budgeted separately from the general CIP budget.

A hypothetical property pays \$2,500 in annual municipal property taxes this year. If the property is redeveloped and a reassessment results in municipal property taxes of \$5,000 annually, the tax 'increment' is \$2,500 (i.e.  $\$2,500 + \$2,500 = \$5,000$ ). In the first year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$2,500, representing 100% of the tax increment. In the second year after re-assessment, the applicant would be eligible for a grant of \$1,250, representing a decrease of 50% from the previous year. The next year, the grant would expire. This example assumes that all eligibility criteria are met.

### **Eligibility Criteria and Program Requirements**

The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is offered to eligible property owners only where the property assessment increases as a result of development, redevelopment, or major improvement, and there is a subsequent increase in municipal property taxes. For the purposes of calculating this grant, municipal property taxes include the municipal portion of the taxes only, and do not include education or any other special charges.

Notwithstanding the above, the amount of the grant(s) shall be at the sole discretion of the Town and outlined in the financial incentive program agreement.

Grants shall be provided upon successful completion of the work, as approved by Council, and payment in full of the property taxes including the taxes for the incremental assessment increase. The amount of the grant in the first year cannot be calculated until the incremental assessment has been determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and provided to the municipality, which may take up to two years. Grants for subsequent years shall be paid annually to property owners within three (3) months of payment of the full property tax.

The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not be paid and shall not accumulate for any year when taxes remain unpaid by the due date. Any failure to pay taxes in any year shall disqualify the owner for further grant payments.

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council:

1. As a condition of grant application, the Town may require the applicant to submit a business plan, prepared to the satisfaction of the Town, in relation to an application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.
2. To be eligible for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, the property shall be improved such that the amount of work undertaken results in an increase of at least \$500 in the assessed value of the property, or the improvement involves more than 25% of the existing gross floor area.
3. In order to determine the suitability of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, prior to submitting an application for the program, eligible applicants may be required to estimate the total potential value of the tax increment, based on current assessment values and anticipated investment.



4. If the total value of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is significantly less than the applicant's estimated value, at the sole discretion of the Town, the applicant may be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program, and submit an application for one or more of the other incentive programs in this Plan as may be applicable to the project.
5. Should an eligible applicant be approved for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant, and if the subject property is sold, in whole or in part, before the original grant period lapses, the original owner may not be entitled to receive the remaining grant payments, in accordance with the terms of the program agreement. The payments are also non-transferrable to the new owner, unless specifically stipulated as part of the CIP Financial Incentive Program Agreement executed between the original owner and the Town.
6. The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant cannot be combined with any other grant or rebate in this Plan.
7. The property owner is responsible for the entire cost of the development or redevelopment project.

## PLANNING AND BUILDING FEE GRANT

### Purpose

To encourage infill development and redevelopment that is context-sensitive, attractive, and desirable, this incentive program waives any associated planning approval and building permit fees for the landowner/developer. Although this incentive is not included under Section 28 of the Planning Act, the waiving of building permit fees is permitted under Section 7 of the Ontario Building Code Act.

This grant reduces the administrative costs associated with the planning and building applications required to undertake improvements to private property. This grant is not intended for greenfield development or development through Consent to Sever applications.

### Program Details

The Town will provide a grant equivalent to the cost of the Town's planning application and building permit fees for approved projects in accordance with Section 69 of the Planning Act and the Town's Tariff of Fees By-law.

Requirements: Any property or business owner who undertakes redevelopment of lands and/or buildings in the CIPA is eligible for this grant. The owner would be responsible for all mapping and registration costs for agreements and plans where applicable

This program will provide a grant equal to 100% of the fee paid on planning and development applications. The Planning Fees Grant will be paid once all construction is complete and the Town has conducted all final inspections pertinent to all permits eligible for grants.

- Planning Fee Grant: A grant to a maximum of \$1,500 may be provided to cover the cost of minor variance applications, zoning by-law amendment applications, or site plan



applications. The grant may equal 100% of the Town's fees, provided it does not exceed \$1,500.

- Building Fee Grant: A grant to a maximum of \$1,500 may be provided to cover the cost of building permit fees or demolition permit fees. The grant may equal 100% of the Town's fees, provided it does not exceed \$1,500.

### **Eligibility Criteria (Eligible Costs) and Program Requirements**

Applicants are eligible to apply for funding under this program, subject to meeting the general program requirements, the following program requirements, and subject to the availability of funding as approved by Town Council:

1. The following types of planning and development applications and building permits are considered eligible for this program:
  - a. Building Permit
  - b. Demolition Permit
  - c. All Planning Act applications (Minor Variances, Zoning By-law Amendments, etc.)
  - d. Site Plan Control and Development Agreements
  - e. Plan of Subdivision/Condominium
  - f. Sidewalk Café Permit
  - g. Sign Permit; and
  - h. Encroachment Agreement

Other permits issued by the Town that are not listed above, but which advance the purpose of this program, may be considered.

# 3. Community Theme Design Guidelines

## Purpose

The Town of Blind River prides itself on its natural beauty, recreational opportunities, entrepreneurial spirit, character, and rich local forestry history. Building on this identity, the Community Theme Design Guidelines for the CIP were prepared to guide the design of improvements to existing building stock, new developments, and the built environment.

Though primarily directed towards the private sector, these guidelines may also be considered and/or adopted for public realm and residential improvements to create consistency in style, form, materials etc. throughout the community.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to promote distinctive, secure, healthy and high-quality spaces that foster a strong sense of community identity and pride. Some critical goals are as follows:

1. Create spaces, places and buildings that are unique to Blind River and contribute to an identifiable and coherent townscape;
2. Facilitate creative architectural solutions that fit with their surroundings, yet provide variety and interest over time; and
3. Preserve Blind River's character including use of traditional and natural materials which reflect its forestry history.

These Guidelines are a continuation of Council's and the community's efforts to build a distinct, welcoming and more sustainable community for future generations. While the physical form of the community is the focus of this section of the CIP document, it is recognized that community pride, enhanced social interaction and economic sustainability can be enhanced by positive contributions to the built environment.

## Application

The Community Theme Design Guidelines are intended to be used by all participants involved in the planning and design process and should be considered and reviewed in conjunction with specific regulations outlined in Town building bylaws and Engineering Design and Construction Guidelines.

These participants include:

- a) property owners and developers when planning and designing their projects and developments;
- b) the Town when reviewing applications for planning and development approvals;
- c) property and business owners when preparing applications for Financial Incentive Programs available under the CIP;
- d) the Town and CIP committee when evaluating, applications for Financial Incentive Programs;

- e) residents when undertaking exterior renovations to their properties; and
- f) the Town when undertaking streetscape improvement projects and other public realm improvement projects.

### **Design Guidelines**

The Design Guidelines are meant to provide design guidance, with the understanding that they are to be applied on a case by-case basis and are not meant to be a “checklist”. While their application is flexible, they are meant to be the general, higher level guidance to new developments and property and building improvements to encourage a consistent look and feel, thus creating a community that is attractive, cohesive and welcoming while reflecting its history.

Community identity is expressed through architecture and the relationship buildings have to the environment and public spaces. The following guidelines are intended to encourage the development of aesthetically pleasing places as well as places that promote comprehensive community sustainability.

### **Key objectives:**

1. Emphasize and enhance the character of Blind River to reflect its strong forestry history
2. Define building entrances
3. Unify and articulate building facades
4. Incorporate natural materials such as rock and timber

### **Design Elements**

The Design Guidelines are meant to help guide architectural and general improvements to buildings and properties within Blind River and aim to enhance the desired local character and aesthetics the community. While not a policy, the Design Guidelines are intended to complement and assist the Financial Incentive Programs enabled by this CIP as a flexible guide for design and development and provide recommendations specific to the following key elements:

- Architectural Design
- Materials and Colors

The Town of Blind River may opt to develop a more in-depth Standards document to guide the design of elements related to public spaces, parking, landscaping, public art etc...in the future.

## Architectural Design

The goal of this section of the Guidelines is to provide recommendations on detailing to create articulated and interesting architecture. Incorporating good detailing is important to the overall appearance of a building. Skillful detailing can reflect the historical vernacular of Blind River's forestry heritage.

1. Buildings should be designed to be attractive from all directions. Rear or side building facades visible from the street or public sidewalk or pathway should receive similar design treatment as the front or main façade.
2. Entrance ways and doorways should be clearly marked as prominent points of access into buildings. They should punctuate the street and offer some form of shelter. It is preferable that doors are modest in scale. The treatment of a primary and/or secondary entry to a building should be obvious and apparent from the street.
3. Accessory structures and enclosures (e.g. storage areas, garbage receptacles) should be integrated into the design of the primary building on the site.
4. Doors and windows should be recessed and provide architecturally integrated, permanent awnings or other devices for weather protection which fit with the overall scale of the architectural details.
5. Incorporating detailing derived from local historical motifs, rather than "imported" motifs is encouraged. Examples: simple, carved wood brackets; special entry doors with carved or sculpted elements; wooden handrails and wooden benches. Details can be incorporated in window and entry design, facades and roof shapes. Examples of this would be partial stone walls; deep set windows with strong frames and muntins (bars dividing windowpanes); curved brackets under roof overhangs and timber detailing on eaves or porches.
6. The use of Rundle stone, river rock or other masonry elements in the detailing of the building is encouraged. This may include a stone base, piers or other architectural elements such as chimneys
7. The use of heavy timber, log or other traditional materials are appropriate for entry porches, structural brackets, roof trusses and columns.
8. All mechanical devices, satellite dishes and signaling devices should be appropriately screened to complement the architecture of the building.
9. Roof ventilators are important to the performance of the roof and should be carefully detailed in gable ends or constructed as ridge accents or cupolas.
10. Vent placement should be integrated into the overall building design early in the design process and should not be visible from the street or shared.
11. Visually extending interior spaces outside through the use of the same paving material.
12. The design and placement of windows should complement the structural character and materials of the building.

## Materials and Colours

The choice of appropriate materials and colours is very important. A selective and innovative use of materials and colours will create unified and interesting streetscapes. Predominant building materials should be from raw materials present in the regional area and ones that reflect the forestry history and heritage of Blind River. While no standard colour scheme is proposed the overall colour schemes of buildings should strike a balance. Strong colours should be used to highlight features while the major portions of buildings should be in 'natural' tones.

1. Materials, particularly at ground level, shall be durable and detailed in a manner that provides interest to pedestrians.
2. The colour scheme for all projects shall be suitable to the streetscape, Blind River's natural environment and the building's style. Design and colours should reflect the range of colours and tones present in the surrounding environment with neutral, darker tones for major surfaces and materials, and brighter colours utilized for building detailing such as window and door trim.
3. Unpainted clear anodized aluminium window frames, door frames and doors are not recommended.
4. Side and rear elevations facing a street shall be of similar colours and materials as the front facades (excepting fireproof walls required as part of the Building Code).
5. Reflective-coated or mirrored glass is not acceptable (except Low E coatings to reduce energy use).
6. The use of salvaged and refurbished materials in new building projects is encouraged. Salvaged materials can add character to the building and can be used effectively as architectural details. Examples of common salvaged materials include: beams and posts, wood flooring, wood paneling, doors and frames, cabinetry and furniture, masonry products, decorative items such as mantels and ironwork.
7. Consider the incorporation of building materials with recycled content as a means of reducing the use of virgin materials and solid waste. Some common recycled products include: metals, concrete, masonry, ceramic tile and insulation. Ensure the recycled materials perform equally or better than virgin materials in terms of strength, maintenance and durability.
8. Encourage the use of regionally manufactured building materials (supports local economy, reduces transportation costs and environmental impacts).
9. Renewable materials are encouraged to help reduce the use and depletion of finite raw materials and long-cycle renewable materials (for example: bamboo flooring, cotton batt insulation, sunflower seed board, wool carpet).

The following are lists of both recommended and discouraged roofing materials and wall finishes that will contribute to the architectural character of Blind River.

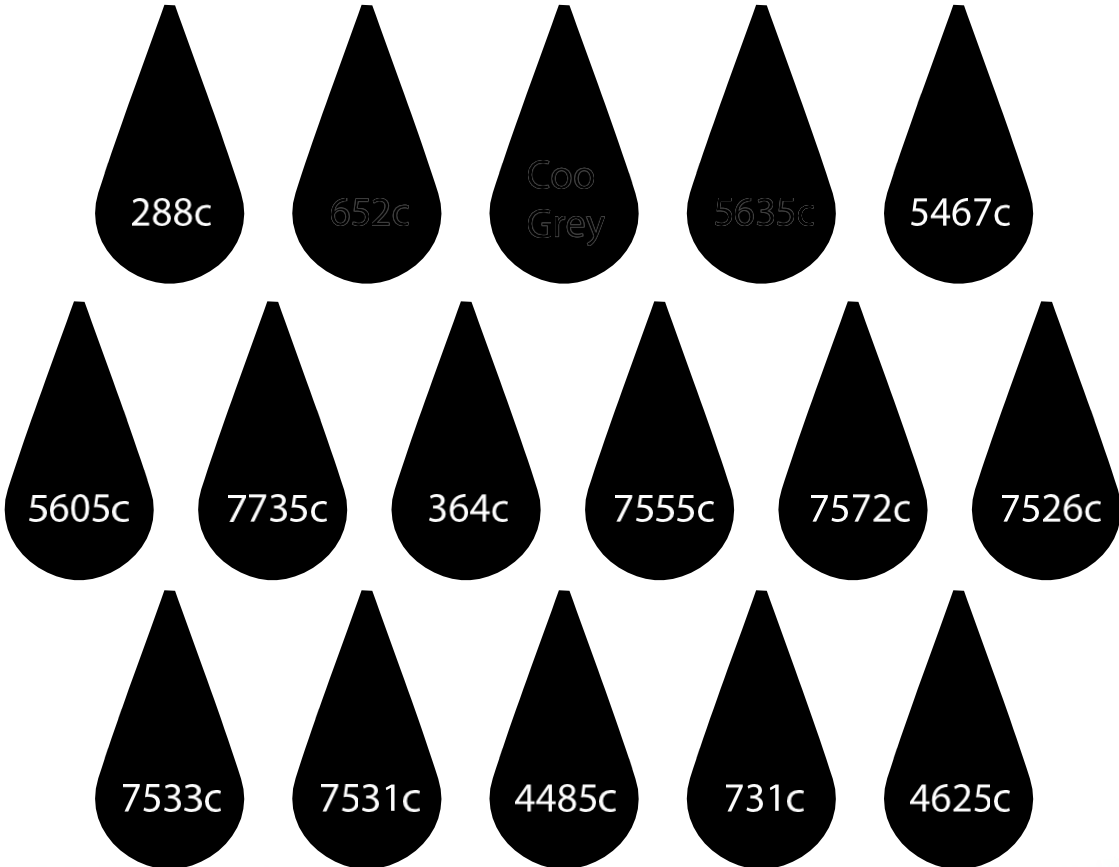
<b>Roofing Materials</b>	
<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Discouraged</b>
<p>slate or slate like materials (black, grey or greenish hues);</p> <p>heavy gauge interlocking asphalt shingles (red, green, dark brown, dark grey);</p> <p>metal: dark colours or treated copper. Metal roofs with standing seams, intermediate control creases and fabricated of a sufficiently heavy gauge of metal to control deformation.;</p> <p>grey, brown or black ballast or exposed membrane for flat roofs;</p> <p>other roofing materials made from recycled materials that emulate cedar shakes or asphalt shingles that shall have a minimum Class B Underwriters Laboratory Canada fire rating; and</p> <p>treated cedar shingles or shakes treated for fire resistance shall have a minimum Class B Underwriters Laboratory Canada fire rating.</p>	<p>untreated cedar shingles or shakes;</p> <p>uncoated (clear) aluminium or galvanized metal; and</p> <p>large areas of glass</p>

<b>Wall Finishes</b>	
<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Discouraged</b>
<p>wood siding, stained or weathered;</p> <p>real stone;</p> <p>manufactured, cultured stone that emulates real stone may be permitted;</p> <p>high quality cultured stone may be used with no repetition in pattern or obvious boundaries between “tiles” of cultured stone;</p>	<p>tiles; and</p> <p>glass curtain walls.</p>

<p>stucco finishes may be approved if they are complemented with appropriate detailing;</p> <p>cementitious fibre board or “Hardiplank” materials that are installed in the same manner as wood siding and not installed in sheets; and</p> <p>architecturally designed concrete blocks may be considered</p> <p>brick may be considered</p>	
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**Colour Scheme**

Examples of appropriate colours / pantones:





# 4. Implementation of the CIP

## CIP Committee

The CIP Committee will be led and supported by a staff member who would be responsible for application intake and ensuring that applications are complete and include all necessary documentation where required.

The CIP committee is to be comprised of the following:

- Town CAO
- Director of Facilities & Community Services
- Chief Building Official or designate from Building Division – as required
- Director of Finance/Treasurer – as required
- 1 Community Representative
- 2 Council Members
- Resource/Administration for minute taking

## Role & Responsibilities

- a) The CIP Committee shall also be authorized to retain other qualified professionals as required.
- b) The CIP Committee will be responsible for:
  - Reviewing and evaluating applications for Financial Incentive Programs;
  - Approving or refusing applications for Financial Incentive Programs
  - Monitoring the CIP, in accordance with the Monitoring Plan set out in Section 5, and providing annual reports to Council and community regarding costs and benefits of the CIP;
  - Marketing the CIP, in accordance with the Marketing Plan set out in Section 6;
  - Making recommendations to Council with respect to:
    - Financial Incentive Programs to be put into effect in any given year; and
    - Identifying an annual community improvement budget for Financial Incentives.

## Application Intake, Review & Approval Process

Application intake will occur on a rolling basis to help facilitate development and rehabilitation intentions on the part of property owners/developers in a timely fashion. The CIP Committee will meet monthly, or on an alternative schedule as agreed, and will forward recommendations to Council via a staff report. Council will make the final approval decisions on all applications.

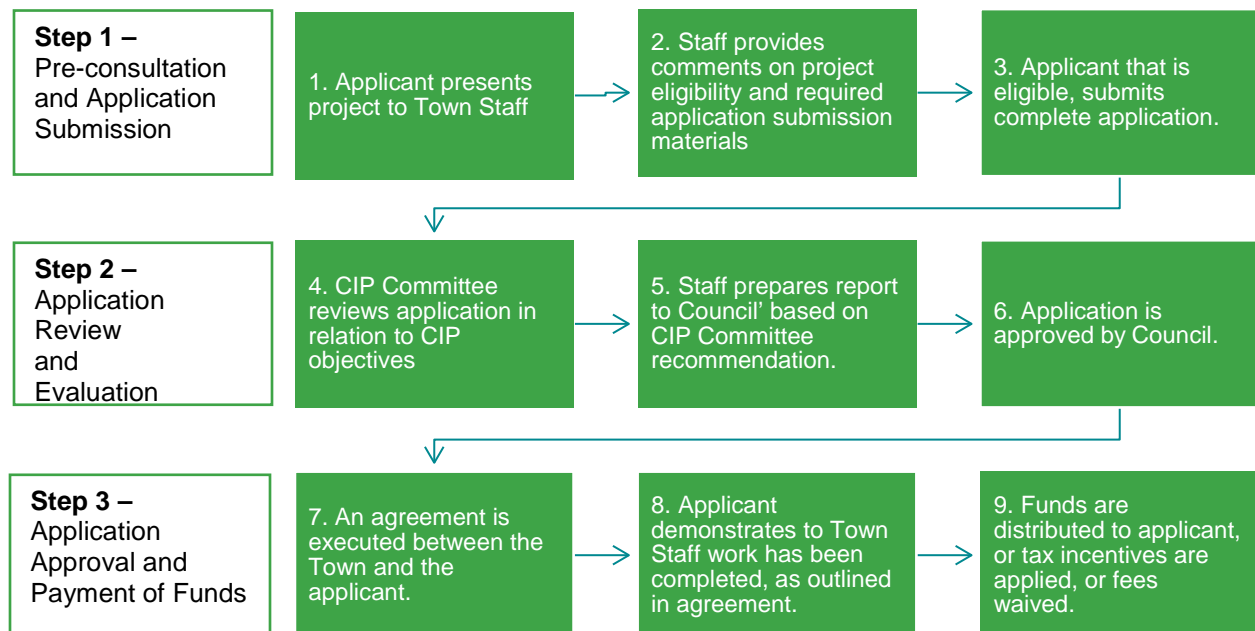
All applications that require annual funding will be accepted, evaluated and determined on a first-come first served basis. All funds committed in any one year (based on calendar years) will be assumed to be drawn down from the annual funding limit for the CIP as whole during the year of approval for funding, even where funds are disbursed in the following calendar year. Applications are encouraged for projects which are eligible for funding under more than one program.

At all times, the principle of matched funding necessitates that Council will not fund more than 50% of eligible costs or stated funding caps. Council also has the right to extend, revise or alter this CIP beyond the initial five-year horizon subject to the objectives of Council and the performance of the plan in the opinion of Council. Funding limits are as described under each individual program.

## STEPS:

1. Pre-application consultation meeting;
2. Completion of Application Form and any supporting materials required by the Town;
3. Screening of applications to ensure compliance with minimum eligibility requirements of the program
4. Evaluation of accepted applications by the CIP Committee;
5. Council may, at its discretion, require signing of a legal agreement which outlines all terms and conditions of assistance, and the limitations of assistance;
6. Prior to release of program funds, the Town will require proof of all costs submitted by the applicant. This will include final invoices for all costs related to the eligible works and may include a site visit by Town officials and/or staff.

TABLE 2 - PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS



## Annual Funding Plan

The draws on the overall funding limit will be monitored annually and programs will be subject to an annual funding review. The Town may adjust the overall level of CIP funding, as well as the distribution of funding between programs, based on the annual performance of each program. A formal review of programs for public review will occur at the end of Year 3, prior to the termination or extension of the CIP and associated funding programs at the end of year 5. The Council of the Town may alter the amount of annual funding to the Plan and its constituent programs. While it is not the intent of Council to restrict access to program support, Council reserves the right to terminate the operation of any of the programs or all programs should it be determined as necessary on fiscal grounds or for other reasons established by the Town during the life of the Plan. Council also has the right to extend, revise or alter this CIP beyond the initial five-year horizon subject to the objectives of Council and the performance of the plan in the opinion of Council.

## Role of Council

- a) Town Council will appoint a CIP Committee every two years and assign a Community Improvement Administrator to assist with the implementation of the Blind River CIP
- b) Town Council will delegate its responsibility for approving or refusing applications for Financial Incentive Programs to the CIP Implementation Committee
- c) Town Council will contribute to the overall administration of the CIP (subject to the municipality's priorities and the availability of resources/funding) as follows:
  - Providing approval for which of the CIP Financial Incentive Programs will be put into effect in any given year during the implementation period, if any; and
  - Providing approval for (as part of the annual budgeting process) a community improvement budget for Financial Incentives that have been put into effect for that year, if any.

# 5. General Program Requirements

## Eligibility

All of the financial incentive programs contained in this CIP are subject to the following general requirements as well as the individual requirements specified under each program. The general and program specific requirements contained in this CIP are not necessarily exhaustive and the Town reserves the right to include other requirements and conditions as deemed necessary on a property specific basis:

- a) Application for any of the incentive programs contained in this Plan can be made only for properties within the CIPA or “Downtown Core”
- b) An application for any financial incentive program contained in this CIP must be submitted to the Town prior to the commencement of any works to which the financial incentive program will apply and prior to application for building permit;
- c) If the applicant is not the owner of the property, the applicant must provide written consent from the owner of the property to make the application;
- d) An application for any financial incentive program contained in this CIP must include plans, estimates, contracts, reports and other details as required by the Town to satisfy the Town with respect to costs of the project and conformity of the project with the CIP;
- e) Review and evaluation of an application and supporting materials against program eligibility requirements will be done by the CIP review committee, who will then make a recommendation to Town Council or Council’s designate. The application is subject to approval by Town Council or Council’s designate;
- f) Each program in this CIP is considered active if Council has approved implementation of the program, and Council has approved a budget allocation for the program (as applicable);
- g) As a condition of application approval, the applicant may be required to enter into a loan or grant agreement with the Town. This Agreement will specify the terms, duration and default provisions of the incentive to be provided. This Agreement is also subject to approval by Town Council or Council’s designate;
- h) Where other sources of government and/or non-profit organization funding (Federal, Provincial, Municipal, CMHC, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, etc...) that can be applied against the eligible costs are anticipated or have been secured, these must be declared as part of the application. Accordingly, the loan/grant may be reduced on a prorated basis;
- i) The Town reserves the right to audit the cost of any and all works that have been approved under any of the financial incentive programs, at the expense of the applicant;

- j) The Town is not responsible for any costs incurred by an applicant in relation to any of the programs, including without limitation, costs incurred in anticipation of a grant and/or loan;
- k) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the Town, the Town may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant and/or loan, and require repayment of the approved grant and/or loan;
- l) The Town may discontinue any of the programs contained in this CIP at any time, but applicants with approved grants and/or loans will still receive said grant and/or loan, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements, and applicants with approved loans will still be required to repay their loans in full;
- m) All proposed works approved under the financial incentive programs and associated improvements to buildings and/or land must conform to any Design Guidelines put in place by the Town in the respective community improvement project area, and all other Town guidelines, by-laws, policies, procedures, and standards;
- n) All works completed must comply with the description of the works as provided in the application form and contained in the program agreement, with any amendments as approved by the Town;
- o) Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with applicable Official Plan(s), Zoning By-law and other planning requirements and approvals at both the local and regional level;
- p) All improvements made to buildings and/or land shall be made pursuant to a Building Permit, and/or other required permits, and constructed in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and all applicable zoning requirements and planning approvals;
- q) When required by the Town outstanding work orders, and/or orders or requests to comply, and/or other charges from the Town must be satisfactorily addressed prior to grant and/or loan approval/payment;
- r) Property taxes must be in good standing at the time of program application and throughout the entire length of the grant/loan commitment; ; where a property owner is applying for funding and property taxes are not in good standing, the value of the grant reimbursement will be applied to the outstanding property taxes AND the owner is required to enter into a payment agreement with the Town that will result in the payment of property tax arrears within a two-year period.
- s) Town staff, officials, and/or agents of the Town may inspect any property that is the subject of an application for any of the financial incentive programs offered by the Town; and,
- t) Eligible applicants can apply for one, more or all of the incentive programs contained in this CIP, but no two programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost. Also, the total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the particular property for which an applicant is making application under the programs contained in this CIP and any other CIPs, shall not exceed the eligible cost of the improvements to that property under all applicable CIPs.

### **Program Support is Discretionary**

Application approval under this CIP and eligibility for funding is determined solely by the Town based on its evaluation. No assumptions are to be made as to funding access and scale of assistance. This CIP proposes maximums/limits for funding support which may or may not be granted by the Town based on the merits of an application. The Town may terminate this CIP at its discretion. Similarly, it may change or alter application and other procedures outlined in this CIP where such changes are not deemed material requiring a public consultation.

### **Retroactivity**

Financial incentive programs under the CIP will commence following the adoption of the CIP by Council, with no exception. Retroactive funding will not be provided for rehabilitation/development works completed/commenced prior to the adoption of this CIP by Council.

## **6. Monitoring Program**

### **Purpose**

The CIP program will be monitored for effectiveness on an annual basis with an interim review in year 3 (and a detailed review in Year 5) to determine whether each program has met the goals of the CIP. At the end of each year of each program, a published estimate of private sector investment leveraged by each approved funding allocation (by application) should be provided.

The purpose of the Monitoring Program is to:

- a) Track funds provided by the CIP to owners and tenants of land located within the Blind River CIPA;
- b) Funds dispersed through the CIP incentive programs to determine which programs are being most utilized;
- c) Assess the economic impact associated with projects taking advantage of the CIP;
- d) Determine whether program adjustments are required; and
- e) Provide the basis for reporting the results of the CIP, and specifically the uptake and success of Financial Incentive Programs, to Town Council.

## Key Performance Measures

The overall CIP should be monitored as follows.

### General Baseline Data

At the inception of the CIP, general baseline data should be gathered through the following actions (contingent on staff resources):

1. Compile inventory of vacancies (build on baseline vacancy mapping completed by consultants) and use it as a baseline to then monitor and compare results annually;
2. Develop a database that contains the current assessed value of the properties located within the CIPA boundaries to have a baseline to compare the growth in property assessment in the later years of the plan.

### General Variables

For each approved incentive program, the following general variables should be measured and recorded:

1. The number of applications submitted and the number of successful applications;
2. Qualitative assessment as to the impacts of development on the town, including reference to employment generated.

### Overall CIP Performance Measures

- a) Overall uptake of each program and the number of unsuccessful applications;
- b) Total amount of committed funding annually;
- c) Total amount of private-sector investment that resulted;
- d) Applicant satisfaction with application process, communication materials and protocols;
- e) In year 2, evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational and funding structure of the CIP process, composition and operation of the evaluation committee, amount of staff resources and other resources to administer, monitor and market the plan.

### Objective CIP Measures

- a) Approved value of grants, in total and by program
- b) Timing of completion of projects and payment of grants
- c) Property tax assessment, if relevant
- d) Appearance of completed projects (with 'before' and 'after' photos)
- e) Number of façade, building, and property renewal and restoration projects funded
- f) Number of new businesses established within the CIPA
- g) Sustainability of business after 2nd year of operation



- h) Number of expansions to existing businesses in the CIPA
- i) Number of new job positions that are associated with projects funded
- j) Value of private sector investment leveraged as a result of funding
- k) Value of public sector investment leveraged
- l) Value of Tax Increment on non-residential properties as a direct result of projects funded by the CIP (i.e., not due to a general tax increase/decrease or a change in assessment for any other reason)

### Reporting

An annual report will be prepared to highlight the successes and achievements of the CIP. The report will be presented to Town Council for consideration. The report may recommend adjustments/amendments to the Plan, on the results collected through the monitoring program. As well, feedback from users of the CIP should be considered and utilized to adjust the incentive programs in order ensure that they are effective for a range of project types and sizes in the Community Improvement Project Area.

## 7. Marketing Plan

### Purpose

It is very important to the successful implementation of this CIP that the Town's incentive programs, and other initiatives be effectively communicated to property owners, business owners, developers, potential end users, and residents within the Community and beyond.

The purpose of this Marketing Plan is to provide general guidance for the proactive and regular advertisement and marketing of the Town's CIP program and the planned improvements and actions being taken by the Town to actively support revitalization within the Community Improvement Project Area.

It is recommended that the Town budget for and implement a Marketing Plan that:

- a) Provides direction on how to obtain information on available incentive programs, including program guides and application forms, as well as assistance and advice from Town staff on making application for the incentive programs;
- b) Actively promotes application for the available incentive programs;
- c) Informs property and business owners and developers with regard to actions planned by the Town to improve the investment environment within the CIPA; and,

- d) Publicizes recent development and business activity and success stories within the Project Areas, especially those that have taken advantage of the Town's available CIP incentive programs.

### Target Audience

The Marketing Plan should be targeted to:

- a) Existing property owners and business owners in the CIPA;
- b) Business owners outside the CIPA, both within the Town and the region;
- c) Business associations;
- d) Support professionals, including real estate professionals, lending institutions such as banks, planning consultants, architects, and others; and, the general public.

### Marketing Tools

The marketing of the CIP programs and municipal leadership actions should be a comprehensive multi-media campaign containing information, education and advertising components.

The following key tools are recommended to implement the Marketing Plan:

- a) An easy to read online (electronic) and hardcopy marketing brochure that provides an overview of the CIP initiative and the financial incentive programs available from the Town, including basic information on the programs and how to apply;
- b) Inclusion of this brochure in the Town's annual property tax billing for all properties within the CIPA;
- c) An information package (online and hardcopy) including fact sheets for each program which provide all details pertaining to the CIP incentive programs such as eligibility requirements, guidelines, application instructions etc. to be sent to both property owners and tenant businesses in the CIPA.
- d) A publication (e.g., a newsletter) containing an overview of the financial incentive programs available from the Town, including general program requirements and how to apply, highlights of planned improvements, updates on improvements that are under construction, and profiles of projects and new/expanded businesses that take advantage of the CIP incentive programs;
- e) Profiling of the incentive programs and revitalization success stories in planning and economic development publications, newsletters and other publications published by the Town;
- f) Stories in local media (newspaper, radio, web) on the CIP and revitalization success stories in the CIPA;

- g) A section on the Municipality's web site devoted to the CIP, including information on Financial Incentives and the application process;
- h) Periodic presentations to the target audience on the available CIP incentive programs, Town activities/ improvements, business and redevelopment success stories in the CIPA; and,
- i) Information displays could at local community events, conferences, and at municipal buildings, to broadly promote the CIP.
- j) Annual progress reports to outline the success of the CIP over the period of one year and to serve as case studies for future applicants. The Town may also identify target businesses and properties where improvements would be most desirable, and arrange short visits with owners/managers, to ensure awareness and encourage take-up. These activities may be completed as part of the initial launch of the CIP program, and repeated annually or every few years as 'reminders' of the CIP opportunities.
- k) Media Releases and profiles of successful projects and initiatives should be sent to both local and outside media

## 8. Conclusion

The programs and actions contained in this CIP have been developed specifically to address the identified community improvement needs in the designated Project Area. The downtown, and the incentive programs that can be made available by Council within the downtown, have been prioritized based on the direction provided by the strategic planning process and extensive stakeholder and public input. The preparation of this CIP has benefitted greatly from community consultation, input from business and resident stakeholders, as well as Council and Town staff.

The adoption and approval of this CIP will provide the comprehensive framework to guide the incentive programs needed to achieve the Vision contained in this CIP for each of the Town's commercial core areas, and address community improvement needs in the rest of the town. Successful implementation of this CIP will require a commitment by Council in terms of financial and human resources to implement, administer, and monitor the incentive programs.

Experience in other municipalities has shown that early and effective implementation of the Marketing Strategy will help to make property and business owners aware of the Town's incentive programs. This will result in a more successful CIP. Ongoing monitoring of the performance of the incentive programs and adjustment of the programs as required will also help to ensure the long-term effectiveness and success of this CIP.

## 9. Appendices

