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Public Hearings Committee – January 07, 2025

Subject: Community Improvement Plan Update
Report Number: CD 25 -01
Division: Community Development
Department: Economic Development
Ward: All Wards
Purpose: For Public Meeting

Recommendation(s):

That staff Report CD-25-01 regarding the Community Improvement Plan update be received for information; and

That any comments received as part of the public meeting be considered in a future recommendation staff report.

Executive Summary:

Norfolk County's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was established in 2007 and subsequently updated in 2015 under the Planning Act and Norfolk Official Plan. The existing CIP area is county-wide with specific incentives as part of the program applying to specific areas of Norfolk County (i.e. urban area, agricultural area, hamlet area, lakeshore area). The existing Norfolk County CIP consists of nine (9) incentive programs, divided into three categories: studies/pre-development, building/property improvement, tax incentives.

A CIP Review study was conducted, including public open house and feedback. No amendments to the existing CIP policies within the Norfolk Official Plan or the CIP area itself are proposed. The specific programs of the plan are proposed to be updated, along with the goals and objectives, new incentive programs are proposed to encourage new housing types and levels of affordability, brownfield tax increment grant, update eligibility requirements and other procedural changes and process improvements.

Discussion:

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool under section 28 of the Planning Act used to stimulate private sector investment through grants, loans and rebates to achieve community improvements to rehabilitate and revitalize specific areas of the municipality and may include specific objectives (e.g. environmental remediation, downtown revitalization, etc.).

Norfolk County’s CIP was established in 2007 and subsequently updated in 2015. The Norfolk County existing CIP applies county-wide and specific incentives are limited to specific areas of Norfolk County (i.e. urban area, agricultural area, hamlet area, lakeshore area). The existing Norfolk County CIP consists of nine (9) incentive programs, divided into three categories:

Study / Pre-Development Grants	Building / Property Improvement Incentives	Tax Incentives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural and Design Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Remediation Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Building Façade Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping, Signage, and Property Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Conversion/Rehabilitation Grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Increment Grant

In 2024, Norfolk County retained J.L.Richards and Associates Limited (JLR) to assist with an update to its CIP to provide new and effective opportunities for community revitalization and a competitive advantage for existing local businesses and future investment.

The CIP update project consisted of 3 phases:

1. **Project Initiation** – *Completed Spring 2024*
 - Consisting of the project kick-off, development of a consultation plan and data collection.
2. **Background Research** – *Completed Summer 2024*
 - Analysis of the existing CIP and best practices
 - Consultation with key stakeholders
 - Preparation of Background Report
3. **Draft CIP Update** – *current phase*
 - Drafting of CIP
 - Public Open House
 - Review of CIP by Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Revised CIP informed by public and stakeholder feedback
 - Statutory Public Meeting
 - Council adoption of CIP update

Attached to this report is the Background Report (Attachment A) and draft Community Improvement Plan (Attachment B) prepared by JLR. The Background Report provides a summary of the legislative, policy and community level context for the CIP. It conducts a

critical analysis of the existing CIP program using monitoring data, best practices and stakeholder feedback received at the June 2024 focus groups and includes recommendations for improvements. The Background Report is intended to support Norfolk Council and public understanding of the current CIP and the needs of the County, to provide direction.

The Background Report concludes that the existing CIP has been effective at stimulating private sector investment, with 65 applications received and approved over the past 4 years. Unique to Norfolk County is the Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant, which is used to provide assistance towards the conversion and re-use of existing agricultural buildings for new or expanded on-farm diversified uses or other value-added agricultural activities. This is an innovative incentive that is starting to receive wider adoption in other CIPs across southern Ontario. Incentives like the Building Façade Improvement and Landscaping, Signage and Property Improvement grants within the Norfolk County CIP are the most popular incentives among applicants and are focused in the urban and hamlet areas.

In terms of updates, to improve the uptake of the CIP, align with the County's strategic goals, and provide new opportunities for improvements, the Background Report provided the following recommendations:

1. Update grant names to use plain language and better reflect eligible costs covered.
2. Update goals and objectives to reflect current local needs such a housing affordability, business attraction and support for small business.
3. Eliminate the current Architecture and Design incentive. Costs currently covered under that current incentive could be included as eligible costs within all other incentives. Expand eligible professional fees to include professional planners for support with planning applications.
4. Modify existing Planning Application Fees and Building Permit Fees Grant to include a single upset limit of \$4,000 covering all eligible fees.
5. Create a new incentive to encourage the development of new housing types and levels of affordability, including additional dwelling units, purpose built rental units and upper-level residential units within commercial buildings.
6. Create a new Tax Increment Grant program to be targeted towards particular CIP objectives or modelled after the County of Brant which covers costs associated with the rehabilitation of brownfield sites, where appropriate with existing Brownfield incentives provided by the County. Applicants who receive a Development Charge exemption will not be eligible for this grant.
7. Establish two intake windows per year with fixed deadlines rather than a rolling admission process.
8. Establish a new agreement template required by applicants upon approval of an incentive.
9. Establish a glossary for the CIP including definitions for each category of uses.
10. Update eligibility criteria for consistency with new definitions.
11. Continue to delegate CIP incentive approval to staff for all but the Property Tax Increment Grant.

12. Establish a monitoring database for regular review of uptake, effectiveness, and evaluation against the CIP's goals and objectives.
13. Develop a marketing strategy for the CIP, including brochures, user-friendly tools, and communications pieces, as well as potential interactive mapping for public view of the success of the program.

The draft CIP has been updated to include the aforementioned recommendations. While not a formal recommendation, the Background Report also identified potential incentives that could be included within the CIP. These include new incentive to encourage energy efficiency and sustainable developments and a new incentive for public art and amenities such as temporary commercial kiosks or recreational activities. These potential incentives can be considered in future years.

An Open House to review the draft CIP was held on November 6, 2024 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Notice of this public meeting was advertised in the newspaper on December 11, 2024. Following this Public Meeting, the draft CIP will be updated to address any comments received and presented to Council for a final decision.

Financial Implications:

The 2025 Proposed Levy Supported Operating budget contains an allocation of \$130,900 for the Community Improvement Plan program. To date, no adjustments to this budget are being recommended as a result of this report. All successful applicants will be awarded within the allocated budget amounts for this program. If an influx of applications arise as a result of the updates described in this report, future budget amendments will be brought forward for Council consideration at that time.

Strategic Plan Linkage:

This report aligns with the 2019-2022 Council Strategic Priority "Foster Vibrant, Creative Communities" and "Create an Optimal Place for Business".

Explanation: The development of this CIP is supportive of many of Norfolk County 's objectives for economic growth. This CIP will create incentives which support innovation and removes barriers to economic development and protect and enhance the agricultural viability.

In addition, the CIP refresh was a 2024 action priority from the New Economic Development Strategy, Goal 4.3.b Revitalize and promote Norfolk's CIP grant program

Conclusion:

A recommendation report will be provided following review of the circulation, planning considerations and this statutory public hearing meeting regarding the CIP update.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Community Improvement Plan Update Background Report
Attachment B - Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Update

Approval:

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Al Meneses, CAO

Reviewed By:
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Norfolk County Community Improvement Plan Update



Background Report



Norfolk County Community Improvement Plan Update Background Report

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1.0 Introduction

Norfolk County (“the County”) is a reconstructed single-tier municipality consisting of several smaller communities including the former Town of Simcoe, the Townships of Norfolk and Delhi, and part of the former City of Nanticoke. In 2021, the County had a population of 67,490, which included growth of 5.4% since 2016, the previous census period. The County is notable for its beaches along Lake Erie, villages and towns, agricultural lands and environmental features including the Long Point Biosphere Reserve. The County’s economy is focused on health care, retail trade, and agriculture, tourism, and small to mid-sized businesses serving locals and visitors.

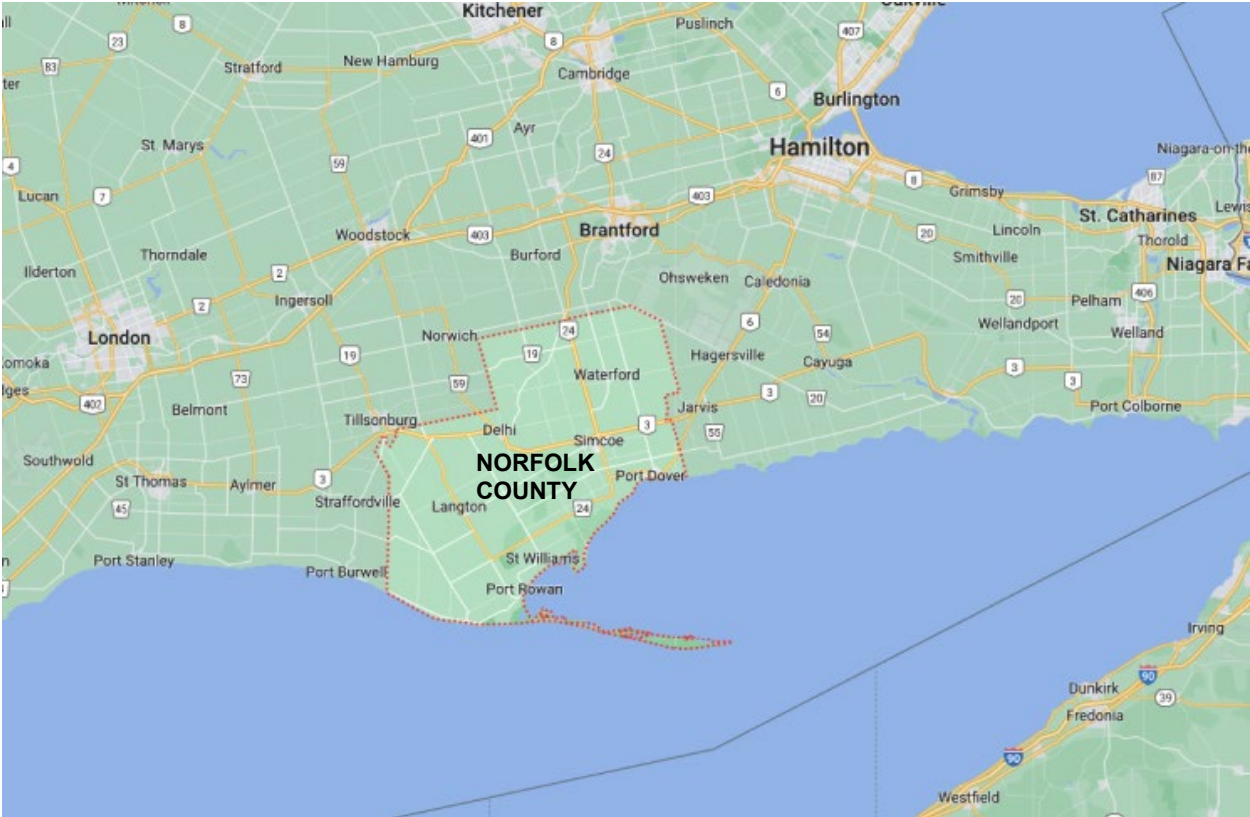


Figure 1: Norfolk County Location Map (Image Source: Google Maps)

The County’s first CIP was adopted in 2007 and updated in 2015. In 2024, the County wishes to update its Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to provide new and effective opportunities for community revitalization and a competitive advantage for existing local businesses and future investment.

1.1 Purpose of a CIP

The purpose of a CIP is to allow for municipal incentives to stimulate private sector investment in the community. A CIP is a planning tool that establishes a framework for achieving community improvements to rehabilitate and revitalize project areas.

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The CIP includes incentives to stimulate or encourage private and public sector investments and may include design guidelines for public and private sector improvements. The CIP can provide programs for municipal grants and loans for private sector improvements.

The Norfolk County CIP update will be provided within the legislative context of the *Planning Act*, the *Municipal Act* and in keeping with the enabling policies provided by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the Norfolk County Official Plan (OP).

1.2 Objective of this Report

This report is intended to provide a summary of the legislative, policy, and community level context for the development of an updated CIP for Norfolk County. This report will be shared with the County's CIP Committee and Council for information and discussion which will direct the creation of an updated CIP.

The following report sections include a review of legislation, County policy establishing the permission and objectives for an updated CIP, and a summary of recently adopted in effect CIPs in surrounding municipalities and concludes with an analysis and recommendation for the CIP program's development and implementation. A review of the levels of success related to the previous CIP will also be conducted. It will be determinative to identify the success and failures of the program in the past.

2.0 Legislative Review

2.1 Municipal Act

Municipalities, such as the County, are prohibited from directly or indirectly assisting industrial or commercial businesses by granting bonuses, as set out in Sections 106(1) and (2) of the *Municipal Act*.

Prohibited actions include:

- Giving or lending money or municipal property;
- Guaranteeing borrowing;
- Leasing or selling any municipal property at below fair market value; and
- Giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge, or fee.

There are minimal exceptions to this prohibition. First, under Section 106.1, recently added under Bill 185, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations for municipalities to grant direct assistance to specified manufacturing, industrial, or commercial businesses during a specified period, if deemed desirable for provincial interests and investment. Second, Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act* provides an exception to this bonusing rule for municipalities exercising powers under the provisions of Section 28(6), (7), or (7.2) of the *Planning Act*, which allows municipalities to pass a by-law designating a Community Improvement Project Area and specifying a community improvement plan. In addition, Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act* operates within the framework of Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. Section 365.1(2) of the *Municipal Act* allows the County to pass a By-law providing tax assistance to an eligible property in the form of deferral or cancellation of part or all the municipal taxes levied on that property during the rehabilitation period and development period of the property, both as defined in

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Section 365.1(1) of the *Municipal Act*. The County may also apply to the Minister of Finance to provide matching education property tax assistance.

2.2 Planning Act

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* allows the County, through its OP, to designate a “Community Improvement Project Area” by adopting a By-law that implements the objectives of a CIP for the Community Improvement Project Area. Once a CIP has been adopted by Council and comes into effect, the County may exercise authority under Section 28(6), (7), or (7.2) of the *Planning Act* or Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act* for Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act* to be applied.

The *Planning Act* defines a “Community Improvement Project Area” (CIPA) 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 the buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.”

‘Community Improvement’ is “the planning or replanning, design or redesign, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable, or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary,” as defined in Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act*.

Through a CIP, the County may:

- Acquire, hold, clear, grade, or otherwise prepare land for community improvement (Section 28(3) of the *Planning Act*);
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate, or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in conformity with the community improvement plan (Section 28(6) of the *Planning Act*);
- Sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by it in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan (Section 28(6) of the *Planning Act*); and
- Make grants or loans, in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement 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 whole or any part of the eligible costs of the Community Improvement Plan (Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*).

The first three activities are within the County’s responsibility to direct and implement and are discussed further in Section 5.0 of this report. The latter activity, while incentivized by the County, is implemented through the private sector, by property owners who take part in the CIP. It is the encouragement of these private sector investments which form the basis of this report and recommended CIP program.

The *Planning Act* further specifies the following for CIP programs:

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- Amending the CIP requires consultation with approval authorities and the public, including a public meeting, and the Community Improvement Plan's review by the Ministry (Section 28(5& 5.1)).
- Eligible costs of a CIP may include costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction, and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements, or facilities. (Section 28 (7.1)).
- The total of all grants, loans, or tax assistance given by the County cannot exceed the total eligible funds of the CIP program (Section 28(7.3)).
- Following adoption of the amended CIP by Council, within 20 days of the notice of adoption, the CIP may be appealed by MMAH or delegated approval authority, a registered property owner of land to which the plan would apply, a specified person (e.g., utility company, railway operator etc.) or public body who made oral submissions at the public meeting or provided written comments to Council (Section 17).

3.0 Policy Review

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement 2020

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is issued under Section 3 of the *Planning Act* and is intended to guide municipalities in making planning decisions. The *Planning Act* requires that municipal decisions in respect to the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter “*shall be consistent with*” the PPS.

The PPS supports efficient land use and development patterns. Section 1.3.1 requires that planning authorities promote economic development and competitiveness through the following:

- b) Providing opportunities for a diversified economic base, including maintaining a range and choice of suitable sites for employment uses which support a wide range of economic activities and ancillary uses, and take into account the needs of existing and future businesses.*
- d) encouraging compact, mixed-use development that incorporates compatible employment uses to support liveable and resilient communities, with consideration of housing policy 1.4.*
- e) Ensuring the necessary infrastructure is provided to support current and projected needs for economic development opportunities.*

The PPS further encourages economic stability, and business growth and retention. Section 1.7.1 of the PPS states that “long-term economic prosperity” should be supported by:

- a) Promoting opportunities for economic development and community investment-readiness.*

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- b) *Encouraging residential uses to respond to dynamic market-based needs and provide necessary housing supply and range of housing options for a diverse workforce.*
- c) *Optimizing the long-term availability and use of land, resources, infrastructure, and public service facilities.*
- d) *Maintaining and where possible, enhancing the vitality and viability of downtowns and main streets.*
- e) *Encouraging a sense of place by promoting well-designed built-form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes*
- f) *Promoting the redevelopment of brownfield sites.*
- g) *Providing for an efficient, cost-effective, reliable multimodal transportation system that is integrated with adjacent systems and those of other jurisdictions and is appropriate to address projected needs to support the movement of goods and people.*
- h) *Providing opportunities for sustainable tourism development.*
- i) *Sustaining and enhancing the viability of the agricultural system through protecting agricultural resources, minimizing land use conflicts, providing opportunities to support local food, and maintaining and improving the agri-food network.*
- j) *Promoting energy conservation and providing opportunities for increased energy supply.*
- k) *Minimizing negative impacts from a changing climate and considering the ecological benefits provided by nature; and*
- l) *Encouraging efficient and coordinated communications and telecommunications infrastructure.*

Therefore, the PPS supports investment in settlement areas as a method to achieve the goals of promoting a diversified economic base, a wide range of economic activities, and economic stability through business growth and retention. This CIP updated is being undertaken to be consistent with the PPS issued under the *Planning Act*.

3.2 Norfolk County Official Plan

The OP was adopted on May 9, 2006 and approved by the MMAH in 2008 and was updated as part of the 5 year review in 2018. It outlines the goals, objectives, and policies to manage land use and its impacts on cultural, social, economical and natural environments.

Section 2.2.1.2 outlines the County's economic development objectives, which are summarized below:

- Guiding the maintenance and growth of economic activity through the development of proactive and flexible land use policies;

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- Fostering tourism along the lakeshore area and in other areas of the County through the development of a wide range of visitor accommodations, the protection and enhancement of the County's unique character and the appropriate management of lakeshore resources;
- Recognizing and preserving the significance of the rural context and agricultural heritage in the County's economy;
- Ensuring the continued economic strength of agriculture and the viability of farm operations through the provision of opportunities for small scale businesses that are secondary farm operations and the protection from incompatible land uses; and,
- Encouraging the revitalization and improvement of the Downtown Areas as vibrant mixed-use areas, while recognizing and conserving their heritage.

Section 4.4 of the OP outlines policies to support agricultural economic viability and states that the County may establish grants or loans to assist with capital upgrades and investments relating to farm operations, on-farm diversified uses, the installation of accessory green energy infrastructure and measures that improve/protect water quality. Section 4.8 speaks to potentially contaminated lands and states that the County may prepare CIPs for known contaminated lands and include incentives to encourage the remediation and redevelopment of those sites.

Section 9.5.2.a) of the OP outlines the measures and activities by which community improvement will be accomplished:

- i) *the ongoing maintenance, rehabilitation, redevelopment and upgrading of areas characterized by deficient, obsolete and/or deteriorated buildings, land use conflicts, environmental contamination, deficient municipal hard services, social, community, recreational services, or economic instability;*
- ii) *the establishment of programs to encourage private sector redevelopment and rehabilitation that addresses identified economic development, land development, environmental, housing, and/or social development issues/needs;*
- iii) *the designation by by-law of Community Improvement Project Areas, the boundary of which may be the whole of Norfolk County or any part thereof; and iv) the preparation, adoption and implementation of Community Improvement Plans, pursuant to the Planning Act.*

Section 9.5.2.b) states that designation of a CIP project area shall be based on one or more of the following conditions being present:

- i) *buildings, building facades, and/or property, including buildings, structures and land of cultural heritage value or interest, in need of conservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment;*
- ii) *non-conforming, conflicting, encroaching or incompatible land uses or activities;*
- iii) *deficiencies or deterioration in physical infrastructure including, but not limited to, the sanitary sewer system, storm sewer system, and/or watermain system, roads, parking facilities, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, streetscapes and/or street lighting;*

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- iv) poor road access and/or traffic circulation;*
- v) deficiencies in community and social services including, but not limited to, public open space, municipal parks, neighbourhood parks, community centres, libraries, arenas, other recreational facilities, and public social facilities; vi) inadequate mix of housing types;*
- vi) known or perceived environmental contamination;*
- vii) poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes, urban design and other physical amenities;*
- viii) built or natural heritage resources that need to be preserved, rehabilitated or renewed;*
- ix) high commercial or industrial vacancy rates;*
- x) shortage of land to accommodate widening of existing rights-of-way, building expansion, parking and/or loading facilities;*
- xi) other impediments to the repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment of underutilized land and/or buildings;*
- xii) any other economic, environmental, or community development reasons; and/or*
- xiii) there is the potential for, or existence of, a Business Improvement Area.*

Section 9.5.2.c) states that CIPs shall be prepared and adopted to:

- i) encourage the renovation, repair, rehabilitation, remediation, redevelopment or other improvement of land and/or buildings;*
- ii) encourage residential and other types of infill and intensification;*
- iii) upgrade and improve municipal services and public utilities such as sanitary sewers, storm sewers, watermains, roads and sidewalks;*
- iv) encourage the conservation, restoration, adaptive reuse and improvement of buildings exhibiting significant cultural heritage value or interest;*
- v) encourage the construction of a range of housing types and the construction of affordable housing;*
- vi) improve traffic circulation within the Community Improvement Project Areas;*
- vii) encourage off-street parking and provide municipal parking facilities where feasible and appropriate;*
- viii) promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the Downtown Areas as the focus of pedestrian oriented retail, commercial, office, civic, cultural, entertainment and government uses;*

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- ix) facilitate and promote community economic development;*
- x) improve social, community or environmental conditions;*
- xi) improve community quality, safety and sustainability;*
- xii) improve energy efficiency;*
- xiii) upgrade and improve tourism infrastructure, including agri-tourism facilities;*
- xiv) improvements or alterations to agricultural properties, buildings, facilities and structures;*
- xv) improve landscaping, signage, parking and pedestrian access and storm drainage facilities; and/or*
- xvi) encourage environmental remediation, including environmental site assessments on contaminated or potentially contaminated properties.*

Section 9.5.2.d) outlines that the County may undertake a range of actions to implement the CIP including but not limited to grants, loans and other financial assistance, the provision of information packages and the municipal acquisition of lands and/or buildings.

Therefore, the existing Official Plan contains extensive policies which will guide the review and update of the County's existing CIP.

3.3 Norfolk County Strategic Plan 2022-2026

The County's 2022-2026 strategic plan sets goals to accomplish the mission of "providing valued public services that our responsive to our community's needs". The strategic plan has 5 strategic areas of focus: Empowering Norfolk, Building Norfolk, Connecting Norfolk, Serving Norfolk and Sustaining Norfolk.

The Empowering Norfolk area of focus, sets an overall goal to put the tools and resources in place to ensure success and includes relevant objectives to:

- **Create a place where businesses and residents can thrive:** Developing strategies that support our changing needs and encourages innovation in Norfolk.
- **Foster and build partnerships with the community:** Partnering with the community, institutions and industry to address the needs of Norfolk.

The Building Norfolk area of focus, establishes the goal to develop the infrastructure and support needed to create complete communities and includes the objective to:

- **Provide a solid infrastructure foundation:** Ensuring that Norfolk has all of the hard infrastructure (water, sewer, roads and parks) for current and future needs.

The Sustaining Norfolk area of focus, sets a goal to create a sustainable community and positive legacy and includes the objective to:

- **Protect and strengthen our agricultural and natural heritage:** Supporting and empowering our farming community while respecting our environment.

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The development of this CIP is supportive of many of the County’s objectives for economic growth. This CIP will create incentives which support innovation and removes barriers to economic development and protect and enhance the agricultural viability.

4.0 Stakeholder Consultation

4.1 Consultation Strategy

Stakeholder engagement is a key component of the CIP process as public involvement can help identify CIP focus areas, identify problems, build consensus, and ensure “buy-in” of the plan. Local knowledge is especially important and valuable to inform the incentives recommended as part of the CIP. The *Planning Act* requires that Community Improvement Plans be developed through public consultation.

At the outset of the project, County staff identified four key stakeholder groups for consultation during this update. These included the agricultural community, the development community, the local business community, and the general public.



To consult with these groups, County staff and JLR carried out the following activities:

- Presented at the July 10th, 2024 meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, participated in discussion, responded to questions, and received comments on the CIP program
- Hosted a focus group on July 17th, 2024 for developers and members of the home builder’s association to discuss the CIP and development trends in the County in an informal, small-group setting.

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- Hosted a second similar focus group on July 18th, 2024 for members of the Business Improvement Association and the County’s Economic Development Advisory Committee.
- A brief survey to past applicants of the CIP program to gather their feedback on successes and challenges and any new ideas for the update.

In addition, at later stages of the project, there will be opportunities for further public consultation. This includes:

- An in-person public open house, expected in the Fall 2024, to present the updated draft CIP document, respond to questions, and gather public feedback. County staff and the consultant planners will be present to answer questions and receive comments.
- A Statutory public meeting of Council to present a revised updated CIP, expected early 2025. This meeting is a formal opportunity for Council to review and discuss a final version of the CIP and for the public to present their comments on the CIP to Council. County staff and the consultant planners will be present to answer questions and receive feedback for final revisions to the CIP.

4.2 Consultation Feedback to Date

The following is a high-level summary of the input received during the three consultation meetings carried out in July 2024. For comprehensive comments, please see **Appendix A**.



Local Needs and Opportunities

Participants were asked to identify trends, opportunities, and demands for their industry which a CIP could support. Responses included:

- Large and growing opportunity for tourism and tourism-supporting industries, such as commercial and dining and event spaces;
- More local jobs and denser employment needed within the County to support local commercial business and expand business hours;
- Opportunity to increase awareness, education, and consumer support of local farms and farm businesses;
- There is great momentum to capitalize on space improvements in the County which are drawing new visitors and current residents;
- Local transit, parking, and tourism accommodation can be limitations for business;
- Housing affordability is a local need and there are opportunities for new housing types to create more affordable housing options;
- Improvements needed for farm-worker housing (bunkhouses);

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Areas to Improve the Current CIP

- There is community interest in the County taking a flexible, “can-do” approach to support business and development to bring new projects, investment, and ideas to life.

Participants were asked their familiarity with the CIP and feedback they had based on word of mouth, previous experience, or general understanding of the program. Responses identified:

- While the CIP was a generally useful program for business owners, too few people knew about it or how to make use of it;
- The CIP’s limited eligibility for certain incentives excluded otherwise viable improvement projects;
- The CIP lacks clearly stated processes to determine eligibility based on proposed project, land use, zoning;
- Applicants are limited by high start up costs even before the CIP application stage;
- A lack of direction in the CIP for the types of improvement projects that are or are not eligible and how applicants might apply those to their own properties;
- Potential applicants face challenges related to timing, funding, and professional expertise specific to the planning and building processes needed to implement improvement projects;
- Administration of the CIP program, in addition to planning and building processes associated, were often time and resource intensive for applicants, which can negatively impact time sensitive projects.
- Applicants need timely responding to inquiries, applications, and clear communication about timing of payment;
- Overall, past participants described experiences working with County staff as positive, informative, and praised staff’s helpfulness with responding to questions.



New Ideas and Priorities for an Updated CIP

Participants also provided input into the ways in which CIP funding and administration could better incentivize and support applicants carrying out improvements, and whether there are ideas from other communities that Norfolk might look to for inspiration. Responses included:

- To amplify CIP support for the tourism industry
- To make opportunities for applicants clearer and to clearly establish and articulate the potential ROI to incentivize uptake of the CIP;
- Interest for incentives related to:

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- Accessibility for older buildings,
- Beautification and improved aesthetics,
- Support for artisanal and unique businesses,
- Improved signage, especially to promote on-farm commercial activities,
- Uptake of environmental sustainability initiatives;
- To promote the program far and wide for stronger community awareness;
- To keep paperwork and administration of the CIP as simple as possible for applicants;
- To review CIP incentive and total program funding values for currency with real-world costs and comparable municipalities;
- To increase flexibility for eligible projects, costs, and property types and consistency across County policy and Zoning;
- To simplify and support CIP applicants through the processes adjacent to and necessary for CIP projects (E.g. planning applications, building permitting, complementary funding opportunities) as much as possible;
- To increase flexibility in the program requirements, where appropriate, e.g. reducing the requirement of two quotes when applicants have existing relationships with a contractor or the work is not commonly done;
- To increase turnaround time from application to approval, to allow applicants a better understanding of when construction can begin;
- To empower staff to carry out the CIP administration with authority and efficiency;
- To demonstrate commitment to the CIP from Council, and accountability and transparency from staff for implementation.

The above findings from consultation to date inform the review and recommendations of Section 5 of this report.

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5.0 Background & Best Practice Review

JLR conducted a review of the existing Norfolk CIP and CIPs from comparator municipalities adopted within the past five years.

5.1 Existing Norfolk County Improvement Plan

The County's first CIP and CIPA was adopted by Council in 2007. This was replaced with an updated CIP in 2015.

5.1.1 CIPA

The 2015 CIP designated the entire municipality as the CIPA. It also specified four distinct areas of the County, including urban, hamlet, agricultural and lakeshore special policy areas. Each area corresponds with Schedule A-1 of the Norfolk Official Plan.

5.1.2 Goals & Objectives

The 2015 CIP also established the scope, goals and objectives of the program. The goals for the program expand on those of the County's Official Plan, including to:

1. create a planning framework that promotes a flexible and adaptable economic environment;
2. revitalize urban and downtown areas;
3. promote community health, safety, and broad aesthetic appeal;
4. encourage and attract private sector investment throughout the county, including in the rural commercial, agricultural and agri-tourism areas;
5. enhance the physical/built environment and its visual appearance by encouraging building and site maintenance, improvement, repair and rehabilitation;
6. provide opportunities for new investments in the agricultural and hamlet areas;
7. improve the viability of farming and the agricultural sector by promoting various value-added investment opportunities and strengthening agri-business, agri-tourism (e.g. on farm bed and breakfast accommodation) and small scale on-farm processing;
8. improve the economic viability of existing hamlets by improving the physical and visual qualities of the hamlets;
9. support the growth of overnight tourism visits and expenditures in the county;
10. encourage long-term sustainable investment in the community, within a framework of sound fiscal management;
11. facilitate the remediation and redevelopment or reuse of brownfield sites; and,
12. provide municipal leadership in encouraging community improvement.

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The objectives established include to:

1. *identify a range of programs that will assist individual businesses in the County to **expand** their operations and **improve** the physical and visual attractiveness of their facilities;*
2. *encourage redevelopment in keeping with "**smart growth**" principles such as sustaining a strong economy, building a strong community and promoting a healthy environment;*
3. *encourage activities that improve the County's importance as a **destination** for residents and visitors;*
4. *strengthen the vitality and **economic viability** of the businesses within the County;*
5. *stimulate new investment in public and private lands, particularly with respect to **agricultural value-added** activities and rural commercial opportunities;*
6. *encourage **building improvements** that meet or exceed current Ontario Building Code and Fire Code requirements;*
7. *improve and maintain existing **building inventory**;*
8. *encourage businesses to upgrade their facilities to provide **improved accessibility**;*
9. *encourage consistency in **signage** while recognizing the importance of diversity and character of the existing building and areas;*
10. *enhance **streetscaping and landscaping** and improve pedestrian and vehicular movement;*
11. *improve the **visual characteristics** of the business community to provide a more pleasant shopping experience for patrons;*
12. ***promote and enhance the downtown core** as the commercial, administrative and cultural centre of the urban areas;*
13. ***preserve heritage resources** of architectural and historical significance and encourage improvement consistent with the history of the buildings and the area; and*
14. *reduce or eliminate **environmental hazards**.*

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5.1.3 Incentives

The previous CIP also establishes eligibility requirements and incentives available to private property owners. There are currently nine CIP incentives in the following three categories:

<i>Study / Pre-Development Grants</i>	<i>Building / Property Improvement Incentives</i>	<i>Tax Incentives</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Architectural and Design Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Remediation Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Building Façade Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping, Signage, and Property Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Improvement Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Conversion/Rehabilitation Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Increment Grant

Details of each incentive are shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Existing Norfolk CIP Incentives

Program	Purpose	Eligibility	Maximum Grant
Architectural and Design Grant	To offset the costs associated with preparing the necessary plans and drawings that will outline the extent of the improvements being applied for	<p><u>Location:</u> in all areas of the County</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only</p> <p><u>Required association with other CIP Incentives:</u> Yes</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Costs of architectural, engineering and site plans for building facade improvements, Building Code or Fire Code retrofits, signage improvements, landscaping, and property infrastructure improvements</p> <p><u>Who can apply:</u> Owner or authorized tenant</p>	Maximum \$1,500 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution. Of the applicant.
Environmental Remediation Grant	To promote the remediation of environmental contamination on eligible properties. Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) are not eligible for funding under this program. The program is designed for costs of site remediation.	<p><u>Location:</u> in all areas of the County</p> <p><u>Use:</u> N/A</p> <p><u>Required association with other CIP Incentives:</u> No</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental remediation, including the cost of preparing a Record of Site Condition (RSC); • Removal of contaminants; • Placing clean fill and grading. <p><u>Who can apply:</u> Owner or authorized tenant</p>	Maximum \$15,000 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.

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Program	Purpose	Eligibility	Maximum Grant
Planning Application Fee and Building Permit Fee Grant	To stimulate and encourage development and property improvements, and to provide assistance with the associated costs.	<p><u>Location:</u> in all areas of the County</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only</p> <p><u>Required association with other CIP Incentives:</u> Yes</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Development application fees (minor variance, site plan approval, zoning by-law amendment, and official plan amendment) and building permit fees for eligible works.</p> <p><u>Who can apply:</u> Owner or authorized tenant</p> <p>*Not available to applicants who are not successful in receiving approval from the Planning or Building departments.</p>	50% of the eligible planning and building permit fees, to a maximum of \$3,000 in building permit application fees \$1,000 in planning application fees.
Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant	To provide assistance towards the conversion and re-use of existing agricultural buildings for new or expanded value-added agricultural activities	<p><u>Location:</u> Agricultural Area</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only.</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> examples of eligible agricultural building and facilities improvements include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facade improvements (similar to those noted in the Facade Improvement Program); • substantial physical improvements or alterations made to existing agricultural properties, buildings and facilities, including source water protection activities, renovations or additions to barns/storage buildings, agricultural/food processing facilities, and greenhouses; 	Maximum \$15,000 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.

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Program	Purpose	Eligibility	Maximum Grant
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> agri-tourism uses including renovations for bed and breakfast establishments and other facilities open to the public, provided such uses are consistent with the requirements of the Norfolk County Official Plan <p><u>Who can apply:</u> Owner</p>	
Building Façade Improvement Grant	To assist property owners of existing buildings to maintain their long-term viability and to assist property owners of vacant properties/spaces in increasing the marketability of their property in order to secure tenants.	<p><u>Location:</u> urban, hamlet and lakeshore area. Eligible facades must be an existing storefront retail property in a downtown, hamlet or lakeshore area with high-volume street visibility</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only.</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Examples of eligible facade improvements include, but are not limited to masonry cleaning, restoration and stabilization; installation of storefront awnings; redesign of storefronts; window repair and restoration; installation of appropriate signage; painting of woodwork; renovation of storefronts; replacement or repair of cornices, eaves, parapets, and other architectural features; or entranceway modifications.</p> <p><u>Ineligible costs:</u> landscaping, building insulation, roof work, and interior work. In-kind contributions are not eligible costs.</p>	Maximum \$10,000 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.
Landscaping, Signage and Property Improvement	To provide assistance for upgrading the open areas associated with the property.	<p><u>Location:</u> Urban, Hamlet and Lakeshore Area.</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only.</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Landscaping improvements between parking areas and the roadway, or between parking areas and the building; improvements to signage located on the owner's property; driveway entrance and walkway improvements;</p>	Maximum \$2,000 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.

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Program	Purpose	Eligibility	Maximum Grant
		<p>improvements to parking lots and associated storm drainage facilities.</p> <p><u>Ineligible costs:</u> Directional signage is not eligible for grant funding.</p>	
Structural Improvement Grant	To offset the costs associated with structural improvements to the interior of buildings for existing commercial operations.	<p><u>Location:</u> in all areas of the County</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Renovations and/or retrofits to improve accessibility (as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), Building Code and Fire Code Standards and health and safety features of the facility; adaptive re-use of derelict or underutilized structures (e.g. conversion of a closed school or barn to another use).</p> <p><u>Ineligible costs:</u> Cosmetic upgrades such as flooring, windows and doors are not eligible for grant funding.</p> <p>Participants in the agricultural buildings and facilities improvement grant are not eligible</p>	Maximum \$5,000 per application, based on a 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.
Residential Conversion/Rehabilitation Grant	To assist with the conversion of unused or underused upper floor or rear space to new residential or commercial use.	<p><u>Location:</u> Urban, Hamlet and Lakeshore Area.</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only.</p> <p><u>Eligible costs:</u> Renovations and/or conversion of unused or underused upper floor or rear space to new residential or commercial activities; adaptive re-use of derelict or underutilized structures (e.g. conversion of a closed school to another use).</p>	Up to \$4,000 per dwelling unit or new commercial unit, to a maximum of \$8,000, 50/50 matching contribution of the applicant.

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Program	Purpose	Eligibility	Maximum Grant
<p>Property Tax Increment Grant</p>	<p>To provide an economic incentive for the rehabilitation of properties by providing a grant to the owner of the property to pay a portion of the local taxes (excluding education taxes) attributable to the increased assessment over a five (5) year period.</p>	<p><u>Location:</u> in all areas of the County</p> <p><u>Use:</u> Non-residential only</p> <p><u>Minimum Building Permit Fee:</u> \$6,500</p> <p><u>Eligible Projects:</u> must demonstrate specific performance expectations directly related to full-time permanent job creation, capital investment, business expansion, community and downtown revitalization goals, etc.). Grant is only available for existing structures and is restricted to projects comprising building renovations, refurbishing, repurposing or expansions.</p> <p><u>Eligible Costs:</u> include adaptive re-use of derelict or underutilized structures, such as the conversion of closed school sites or a barn to other uses. Further, they also include substantial physical improvements or alterations made to existing agricultural properties, buildings and facilities, source protection activities, renovations and additions to barns, agri-tourism, etc.</p> <p>*This grant is non transferable.</p>	<p>The grant is calculated based on the increased assessment value after the renovation/construction, as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), at the tax rate that was applicable in the year the renovation or construction was completed. The grant will be provided on a declining basis over a period of 5 years.</p> <p>The total value of grants for the property shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings.</p>

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5.2 CIP Program Success to Date

Application data for the years 2021-2024 was reviewed for this report. The current year included data up to July 2024. Tables 2-4 demonstrate applications received over the course of each year and number of applications received concurrently since that time.

Table 2: Applications Received and Funds Paid by Year

Year	# Applications Received	Total Funds Paid (completed projects)
2021	20	\$ 116,201.00
2022	22	\$ 145,014.80
2023	10	\$ 35,712.90
2024	14	\$ 19,985.50
Total	66	\$ 316,914.20

Table 3: Applications Received and Funds Paid by Incentive

Incentive	# Applications Received	Total Funds Paid (completed projects)
Agricultural Building and Facilities	1	\$ -
Planning Application Fee and Building Permit Fee	5	\$ -
Building Façade Improvement	22	\$ 101,416.97
Landscaping, Signage and Property Improvement	17	\$ 42,280.00
Residential Conversion/ Rehabilitation	1	\$ -
Architecture and Design	3	\$ 23,139.00
Structural Improvement	2	\$ 5,000.00
Environmental Remediation	1	\$ 15,000.00
Property Tax Increment Grant	2	\$ 42,841.80
Not Specified	11	\$ 68,382.93
Total	65	\$ 298,060.70

Table 4: Number of Incentives Applied for Per Single Property for the Period 2021-2024

# Incentives Applied / Property	# Applications Received	Percentage of Total Application Volume
1 incentive / property	55	85%
2 incentives / property	6	9%
3 incentives / property	2	3%
4 incentives / property	2	3%

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In recent years, the CIP has had a fund allocation of \$139,000 for all incentive programs¹. Per year, the County has averaged approximately 17 applications, with average annual funds paid of approximately \$99,000.

The majority of applicants (85%) applied for or have been approved for a single incentive. However, in 10 cases, an applicant applied for two or more incentives for improvements to a single property. The highest number of incentives applied for concurrently is four (4).

The most popular incentives have been for building façade and landscaping, signage and property improvement. The incentives for environmental remediation, agricultural buildings and facilities, and residential conversion/rehabilitation have seen the least uptake. The latter two incentives have received applications for projects which are yet to be completed to fulfil award of the funds.

5.3 Existing CIP Implementation & Promotion

Norfolk County Economic Development department is responsible for administration and promotion of the CIP. At present, the Economic Development Coordinator acts as the administrator of the and first point of contact for the program.

The CIP accepts applications on a rolling basis throughout the year. The full CIP process for applicants currently includes the following:

1. Pre-Application Consultation

- Potential applicants meet with County Economic Development staff (“staff”) to discuss their project, eligibility, program requirements, and any supporting documents required.

2. Application Submission

- Applicants submit the application form and required supporting documents. The application form is available online or in printable pdf format.

3. Application Review

- Staff evaluate the application against CIP criteria and County policies and by-laws. Staff visit the site and take before photos.

4. Approval

- If approved, staff issue approval of the application and share terms of the program with the applicant via email. The County may also issue a press release to promote the project and program.

5. Project Completion & Payment

- Construction begins only after approval has been granted and all applicable permits are issued. When the project work has been completed, Staff may visit the site and take after photos. The County only issues payment once the project has been fully inspected and is confirmed as complete.

¹ Applicants have six months to complete work on approved applications, with possible extension to 12 months. It is not uncommon for fees to be allocated in the year the application was received and paid in a later year, resulting in higher fees paid than allocated by Council for the calendar year.

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In addition to ensuring the smooth delivery of the above application process, staff continuously monitor the progress, promotion, and funds for the individual projects and overall program. Staff regularly report on CIP program operations and success to Council.

Information about the CIP can be found primarily through Business Aid & Grants page of the County's Economic Development website. This includes a summary of the incentive options, the online application form, and contact information for the department.

A four-fold brochure of the CIP (Appendix A) is also currently available. This outlines the incentives available, eligibility, the application process, and before and after photos of a previous CIP project. The brochure provides a user-friendly introduction to the program, to complement the more technical incentive policy documents approved by Council.

5.4 Community Improvement Plan Precedents & Recommendations

A review of recently updated/adopted CIP programs in other southwestern Ontario municipalities was completed to determine whether modifications to existing incentives or new incentives should be implemented by the County. Common and distinct themes are summarized in the following subsections.

5.4.1 CIP Project Areas

Municipalities are directed to designate, by by-law, a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) to which the CIP applies. This may include specific areas or the entire municipal boundary. The current Norfolk CIP designates the entire County as a CIPA. However, there are certain 'eligible areas' (i.e. lakeshore, hamlet) in which only specific programs will apply.

The majority of Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs) apply to all lands within the municipalities. Some municipalities which adopt a municipal-wide CIP further specify priority areas within the CIPA. For example:

- The Town of Tillsonburg designates the entire municipality as the CIPA but also includes a schedule which identifies the Central Area for eligibility for specific incentives in the CIP, such as the Alleyway Façade Improvement Program, where only residential and commercial properties within the Central Area are eligible.
- The Town of Hanover CIP designates the entire municipality as the CIPA, but also includes a schedule indicating targeted properties to receive priority approval in the case that multiple projects apply for competing incentives.

Some exceptions include CIPs targeted exclusively towards downtown commercial cores, redevelopment of historical industrial or built heritage significance, or primary urban transportation corridors. For example, the County of Brant Downtown Paris CIPA only applies to the boundaries of downtown Paris.

Recommendation

We recommend that the County maintain its existing CIPA to promote community improvement county-wide, with specific community improvement incentives targeted to specific areas of the community.

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5.4.2 CIP Objectives & Priorities

Most CIPs establish goals of the CIP program to further define the intended form of community improvement. The majority of CIPs establish 3-10 high-level goals across a wide range of potential outcomes or land use types for which to prioritize projects (e.g. built heritage preservation, energy efficiency, protection of natural environment, brownfields remediation).

The existing Norfolk County CIP reiterates the 12 goals of the Official Plan for community improvement. Goals of the CIP are important to articulate what the CIP broadly intends to achieve for the County. These goals currently reflect a focus on the physical and aesthetic improvement of the built environment, economic diversification for the agricultural sector, tourism development, and sustainable fiscal and municipal leadership for community improvement generally.

Objectives have also been established, as described in section 5.1 of this report. Objectives direct the implementation of the CIP's goals and can guide decision making, such as through the delivery of particular targeted incentives. The current CIP includes 14 objectives covering a wide range of potential outcomes and priorities.

Based on our best practices review, there are multiple ways in which CIP goals and objectives can be laid out:

1. Establishment of one high level goal or vision, supported by a series of objectives.

For example, the Town of Tillsonburg CIP establishes the primary goal "To promote development in the central areas and employment lands by encouraging property and business owners to improve the visual quality and function of buildings with a view to enhancing the long-term viability and economic stability" which is then supported by a series of objectives such as:

- facilitate the ongoing viability, vitality and revitalization of the Central Area of the Town.
- encourage long-term investment that improves the economic climate of the Town.
- improve the physical and visual quality of the existing building inventory.
- promote a visually attractive, safe and clean public realm that is accommodating and accessible to all users.

2. Establishment of separate goals supported by goal specific objectives.

The County of Brant CIP establishes separate goals with specific objectives to support its implementation of the overall vision, such as:

Goal:

- Improve tourism and visitor experience in Downtown Paris and through the County.

Objectives:

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- Provide additional bicycle parking to better accommodate cycling tourism.
- Enhance views and access to the waterfront, including the possibility of a pedestrian waterfront boardwalk.
- Explore opportunities for improved waterfront access and trail development.
- Improve wayfinding signage to communicate tourism opportunities, parking and trails/cycling routes.

3. Establishment of separate goals and separate objectives

This is the format employed by the current CIP. A further example is that of the Township of Wellington North, whose CIP establishes general goals identifying high level intended outcomes such as:

- To provide incentives for businesses to enhance their buildings presentation and function to the public.
- To stimulate pride in our urban downtowns, Wellington North hamlets and the agri-based enterprises found in Wellington North's rural areas.
- To contribute to the overall enhancement of our communities as a place for family friendly business.

The objectives which follow are more specific and are aimed at supporting the achievement of all goals:

- To provide for rehabilitation or improvement of commercial, institutional and industrial façades, through the use of municipally assisted programs and funding sources.
- To provide an incentive for private investment through the use of municipally assisted programs, (e.g. tax incentives, grants, loans) and funding sources.
- To improve the physical, functional and aesthetic amenities of buildings in downtown Mount Forest, Arthur, hamlets and agricultural areas while stimulating private investment, revitalization, and sustainability.

In all cases, the establishment of goals and objectives can be used to determine priorities for the incentives, their value, and their applicability throughout the term of a CIP. It is the goals and objectives of the CIP that set Council's priorities, and essentially define community improvement for the purposes of granting incentives under Section 28 of the Planning Act. Well articulated goals and objectives are necessary for effective monitoring to ensure that the CIP is generating strong value for the community. It is therefore important to ensure that the goals and objectives are fully representative of the types of outcomes Council wishes the CIP to achieve.

Recommendation

Given the wide-spread nature of the CIP, it is recommended that the County continue its current approach to identifying separate goals and objectives which apply to the entire CIPA area.

Since 2015, the County has seen new demands and economic conditions, such as housing needs and industry-specific demands, which should be reflected in the CIP goals and objectives. It is recommended that the CIP goals and objectives be reviewed, revised, and added to through this CIP update. We recommend that Council review and consider additions to

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the current CIP goals and objectives to reflect changing local needs. Based on staff and stakeholder input to date, we recommend goals reflect the following local needs:

- A range of housing options and affordability;
- Attracting new business and industry to the County;
- Support for local farming and farm-related businesses; and
- Increased tourism and support for small business.

As the objectives are intended to direct the implementation of the CIP and can more specifically target local priorities, we further recommend that the County review and narrow the existing objectives of the CIP. This will more succinctly direct the focus of the incentives offered through this current update. These objectives, in addition to the incentives, may be reviewed and revised regularly throughout the lifespan of the program to be responsive to local priorities.

5.4.3 CIP Incentives

Most CIPs make use of similar incentives across a range of potential community improvement outcomes. Common incentives include those which provide funds in support of all stages of an improvement project, such as:

- Costs related to technical studies, designs, and business planning to determine feasibility or need for a particular improvement.
- Fees related to planning applications, building and related development permits, or development charges.
- Tax increases associated with increased property value assessment as a result of improvement activities.
- Costs to repair, rehabilitate, upgrade, or replace features of an existing property for the purposes of improvement.
- Costs to construct new buildings or improvements to vacant or underutilized properties for the purposes of improvement.

Table 5 (following page) demonstrates the most common incentive programs identified in the current review. Below is a summary of each and discussion of how they differ across municipalities:

- **Professional drawings and services**

Typically, professional drawings and services were combined with a different incentive program separate incentive program (i.e. facade or exterior building improvements). In all cases, municipalities would only cover costs associated with producing drawings required for a specific community improvement incentive. Generally, the incentives would cover 50 percent of the costs up to a maximum amount between \$1,500 to \$2,500 with some exceptions. These grants generally applied to non-residential projects with some exceptions for affordable or multi-unit residential. Adding professional fees as eligible costs under different incentive programs rather than a

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separate program may be preferred for ease of reference. Non of these CIP programs covered fees for a professional planner, which was a limitation raised at the stakeholder focus groups.

- **Brownfield/Environmental remediation, studies and clean-up**

This was a popular incentive, found in five out of the six municipalities reviewed. Typically, the completion of a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment was a requirement for this grant. Some CIP programs in the County of Brant, Town of Tillsonburg and Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc also cover the costs over other environmental studies including subsequent Environmental Site Assessments. Most programs would cover 50% of the costs and the most common maximum contribution amount was \$15,000.

- **Planning application fees and building permit fees**

The planning application fees and building permit fee grants were another common grant found in five out of the six municipalities reviewed. Often municipalities cover the full cost of the fee and range significantly in terms of the maximum grant that would be provided. The Town of Tillsonburg CIP was unique in the sense that the total contribution amount depends on the total value of the project, and they only cover building permit fees.

- **Agricultural building / facilities improvements, agri-tourism / on-farm diversified uses**

This was a less common incentive only found in two out of the six municipalities reviewed (including Norfolk County). The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc program is wide ranging and eligible projects include other uses which support the rural economy such as industrial and commercial uses. Both grants cover 50% of the construction costs to a maximum grant of \$15,000.

- **Façade or exterior building improvements**

This incentive was found in five out of the six municipalities reviewed and generally only applied to non-residential properties with some exceptions in the County of Brant and Town of Tillsonburg. Most programs cover only 50% of the costs but range in terms of the maximum contribution limits. Typically, the contribution limit ranges between \$10,000 to \$15,000 for a single façade.

- **Landscaping, parking, or property improvements**

This incentive was found in three out of the six municipalities. In the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc CIP it is covered under the larger beautification program whereas the County of Brant Downtown Paris CIP has two separate grants: one to cover landscaping and signage and one to cover parking. The County of Brant Downtown Paris CIP parking grant also covers the development of sidewalk cafes and seating areas. All grants only cover 50% of the construction costs and given the variety of coverages, differed in terms of maximum contribution amounts.

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Table 5: Best Practices Review of Common CIP Incentives

Incentive	Norfolk County CIP	County of Brant Downtown Paris CIP	Town of Tillsonburg CIP	Municipality of Grey Highlands CIP	Township of North Wellington	Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc CIP
Professional drawings and services and professional services costs	Yes	Yes ²	Yes	No	Yes ²	Yes ²
Environmental remediation, environmental studies (not including Phase One ESA)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Planning application fees and building permit fees	Yes	Yes	Yes ³	Yes	No	Yes
Agricultural buildings and facilities improvements, on-farm diversified uses and agri-tourism uses	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes ⁴
Façade or exterior building improvements	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Landscaping, parking, or property improvements	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Accessibility improvements or structural building code/ fire code improvements or health and safety improvements	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Housing related improvements	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Tax increment grant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Public art and amenities	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Energy efficiency and environmental improvements	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

² Covered under separate program

³ Only covers building permit fees

⁴ Covers other uses which contribute to rural economy (i.e. industrial, commercial)

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- **Accessibility improvements, or structural building code/ fire code improvements or health and safety improvements**

Grants related to accessibility, code and health and safety improvements were covered in four out of the six municipalities and were limited to non-residential buildings. Some municipalities chose to only cover costs associated with accessibility improvements (i.e. Town of Tillsonburg, Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and Municipality of Grey Highlands), whereas the County of Norfolk covers accessibility and code improvements. Generally, municipalities match 50% of the cost and maximum contributions range from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

- **Housing related improvements**

Housing related incentives were found in half of the CIPs reviewed. In Norfolk County and the County of Brant, the grants are focused on converting upper floors or underutilized space within commercial buildings to accommodate residential units to facilitate the creation of mixed-use buildings while still retaining commercial uses along the street. In Strathroy-Caradoc, housing incentives are provided to encourage the development of additional residential units or attainable housing. Some programs cover construction costs (i.e. Norfolk County) whereas others also provide a development charge grant (Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc).

- **Tax increment grant**

This was a common program found across four out of the six municipalities reviewed. This generally applied to a wide range of property types in municipal CIPs with the tax increment grant offered for up to period of 10 years. However, Norfolk County currently provides a similar incentive with a grant period of up to five years. These tax assistance programs provide a rebate of a percentage of the increase in municipal property taxes after improvement. The proportion of the grant declines annually over the five-year period. It should be noted that for Norfolk County, the program is a Tax Increment Equivalent Grant and applies to any property where redevelopment or improvement will result in increased property values but does not currently include costs associated with rehabilitating and redeveloping a brownfield site.

The County of Brant provides a Brownfield Property Tax Assistance Grant which waives all or part of the taxes specific to brownfield sites during the remediation stage. The County of Brant grant is unique in that the value is determined based on the cost of environmental studies (not including a Phase One and Two environmental site assessments), the cost of environmental consultant fees or property insurance during the renovation and costs of environmental remediation, to a maximum of 100% of the cost of municipal taxes for the property. In addition, the County of Brant incentive eligibility requires the completion of a Phase Two ESA which included a detailed remediation plan.

The Province also provides a Brownfields financial tax incentive program which allows municipalities to apply on behalf of local brownfield owners to qualify for matching education tax assistance. Both the County of Brant and Municipality of Strathroy CIP speak to this program under their CIPs.

The County currently has a development charges rebate in place for Brownfield development. Should the County wish to include a similar TIEG specific to Brownfield

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Development, there should be further discussion to ensure that neither incentives unnecessarily duplicates or reduces the impact of the other.

- **Public art and amenities improvements**

Only two out of the six municipalities reviewed provide CIP incentives to encourage the development of public art on non-residential properties. These incentives are intended to encourage art programming such as mural work, sidewalk art, site amenities, status and displays. The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc Public Art and Interim Use Program further provides funding to establish a temporary or interim use on a vacant or underdeveloped private property such as a community garden, seasonal kiosk or parklet. The two municipalities differed in terms of maximum funding: Strathroy-Caradoc matches 50% of the costs to a maximum of \$7,500 whereas Wellington North covers 100% of the costs to a maximum of \$2,500.

- **Energy efficiency and environmental improvements**

Only the Township of Wellington North and Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc include CIP incentive programs to encourage energy efficiency and environmental improvements. These grants generally cover costs related to improving the energy efficiency of buildings, facilitating small scale renewable energy projects and implementation of active or sustainable transportation infrastructure (i.e. Bike racks, EV charging stations). The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc further covers costs associated within implementing green infrastructure such as porous concrete or vegetated stormwater swales. Both Municipalities cover 50% of the costs but differ in terms of maximum grant limits (\$5,000 for Wellington North and \$10,000 for Strathroy-Caradoc).

Recommendation

Based on our research and feedback received from staff and key stakeholders, we are recommending that the County make the following modifications to its CIP incentives:

- Cover costs associated with professional drawings and services under relevant CIP programs and remove separate incentive program. It is recommended that the eligible professional fees be further expanded to cover the costs of a professional planner.
- Modify existing Planning Application Fees and Building Permit Fees Grant to remove different grant limits for different applications and include one upset limit of \$4,000 to allow the applicant to choose which fees they would like covered.
- Rename the 'Structural Improvement Grant' to the 'Accessibility and Safety Renovation Grant' to better reflect the eligible costs covered.
- Rename the 'Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant' to 'Agricultural and On-Farm Diversified Uses Grant' to highlight that the costs to construct agri-tourism, farm help housing, and other secondary farm occupation are eligible under this grant
- Create new housing incentive(s) for the development of additional residential units, purpose built rental units, and the conversion of underutilized space to residential units.

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- Remove the the Residential Conversion/Rehabilitation Grant as a new housing incentive has been created, only one application has been received for this incentive between 2021-2024 and there are other incentives available to improve underutilized non-residential space.s
- Create a new Tax Increment Grant program. This could be targeted towards particular priorities, such as affordable housing. A similar incentive to the County of Brant which covers costs associated with the rehabilitation of brownfield sites, referencing the Provincial BFTIP program, is also recommended and would require further review to ensure compatibility with existing Brownfield incentives at the County. It should be noted that the County’s Development Charge By-law exempts brownfield development that has been approved by the City from the portion of development charges equivalent to the cost of environmental remediation. It should be noted that an applicant could not receive financial assistance under both programs as this would be considered “double dipping” therefore, the grant would need to include eligibility criteria that the applicant is not receiving a development charge exemption. The County may want to consider whether they would like to continue with both programs or whether the development charge exemption should be revisited.
- In the future, Council may want to consider new incentives to support environmental sustainability and tourism and culture, such as:
 - a new CIP incentive program for public art and interim uses similar to the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc but recommend a budget similar to Wellington North.
 - a new CIP incentive program to promote energy efficiency and sustainable developments, similar to the Township of Wellington North.

5.4.4 Maximum Grants Available Per Applicant

The total budget available within a CIP is generally established on an annual basis by Council. Municipalities may also choose to include a maximum amount of grant available, or a maximum number of applications permitted to ensure one property owner does not utilize the total budget available for the CIP.

Within the Norfolk County CIP, the total amount of financial incentives available to one property owner shall not exceed \$20,000 within one calendar year. However, it does not set a limit in terms of the total amount of grants which can be applied for. Norfolk County monitoring data demonstrates that this total maximum amount is rarely achieved, with typically only one applicant per year approved for the total amount of \$20,000. Therefore, the maximum amount is appropriate and ensures that financial incentives are distributed more fairly amongst property owners.

The Municipality of Grey Highlands CIP sets a lower maximum financial incentive limit of \$3,000 per property owner and limits the total number of applications to three over a five-year period. In contrast, the County of Brant and Town of Tillsonburg CIPs do not specify a total maximum incentive limit per person rather they state that the Review Committee may determine the total amount granted and may deduct grants and incentives at its sole discretion. Similarly, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc CIP does not specify a maximum amount but rather specifies which grants or incentives may be combined.

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Recommendation

No changes are recommended to the total maximum grant amount per property owner per calendar year.

5.4.5 Eligibility and Application

Within all CIPs, municipalities outline eligibility and requirements for application to each incentive program. As the CIP acts as the document for which the program is administered and communicated, it is important that such details are clearly delineated.

CIPs also outline the application process and evaluation procedures. Many CIPs include a particular scoring matrix to determine priority in the case of a high volume of applications. In some years, a municipality may identify priority incentives or outcomes for which evaluation of multiple applications may hold different weighting. In these cases, the CIP documents have been amended by resolution of Council to indicate which incentives take priority for that CIP program year.

There are generally two processes for accepting and evaluating applications. The County currently accepts applications on a rolling basis year-round. This allows the greatest flexibility for applicants to apply throughout the year at their convenience. However, this approach runs the risk of CIP funds being exhausted early in the year with a smaller pool of applications. This approach can also require substantial staff resources and cause longer turnaround times during “busy” periods, without the County’s ability to plan in advance for appropriate staff resources allocation. An alternative approach is to establish an intake window and review period. Some municipalities hold one or two intake windows throughout a fiscal year, and establish a set timeframe for application submission, evaluation, and approval deadlines. While this approach offers stricter periods for applications to be submitted, it can benefit Municipal planning for staff resourcing and provide clarity for applicants on the overall timeline for approval.

In general, most municipalities will include the following general eligibility criteria within their CIPs:

- Must obtain approval for any grant funding prior to commencing work on a project.
- Consistency with the goals and objectives of the CIP.
- Conformity with the Official Plan and Zoning By-law and compliance with the Ontario Building Code.
- Applicant must be property owner or authorized agent.
- Required documentation including application forms, photos of existing property, a minimum of two cost estimates and conceptual or professional drawings.
- Properties must not be in tax arrears or have outstanding bills or have other issues with non-compliance.
- Property owner cannot be in litigation with the Municipality.
- Requirement to enter into an agreement with the Municipality prior to the commencement of work.

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Some municipalities like the County of Brant and Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc also include minimum grant amounts. The Town of Tillsonburg CIP includes the requirements that the total value of grants not exceed 50% of the cost of works and set maximum timelines for the completion of works. Typically, all municipalities require that the work commence after the grant application is approved, however the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc CIP does provide the Municipality with the discretion to cover works completed prior to approval of the CIP application. However, this is not advisable as it is difficult to corroborate the exact value of works completed.

The general eligibility criteria of the CIP in combination with the specific eligibility criteria of the incentive is reviewed to determine if the application will be approved. Once the application is approved, applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Municipality which will outline the value of the grant approved, requirements for reporting to receive payments and other clauses which can result in funding being removed. This agreement would then be signed by both the applicant and delegated approval authority at the Municipality. In the case of Norfolk County, the applicant and municipality do not sign an agreement and rather a letter is provided by the County which outlines the total grant amount approved and duration in which the commitment remains valid.

Recommendation

No changes are recommended to Norfolk eligibility criteria for current incentives.

It is recommended that Norfolk County establish two intake windows per year. During this period, applications could be submitted, evaluated, and approved or denied. Application inquiries and preconsultation could take place outside of this intake window to allow for greater flexibility for applicants in preparation. This approach would benefit the County and allow for greater certainty in staff resourcing and improve response timelines for applicants.

It is recommended that Norfolk County require applicants to sign an agreement with the County once approval has been granted. This will provide transparency and will outline requirements that need to be satisfied to secure the agreed upon funding.

In addition, there were concerns raised about needing to be within a commercial zone to qualify as a non-residential use for certain program specific eligibility criteria. This was not specifically outlined within the County's eligibility criteria. To address this concern, rather than utilize zoning it is suggested that definitions for each category of uses be included within the CIP.

5.4.6 Administration, Monitoring and Marketing.

CIPs outline the procedures for administration, reporting and monitoring of the plan over time. Generally, there is the requirement to establish a plan "administrator" to manage the day-to-day responsibilities, application intake and the preparation of agreements. In some municipalities, Council or a Review Committee issues the ultimate decision on a CIP application, in others the Council delegate has the authority to issue the decision, save for grants involving tax incentives. Norfolk County currently delegates the approval authority of CIP grants to its plan administrator whereas Council or a review committee is the approval authority in the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and Township of Wellington North.

CIPs will also include a monitoring and reporting strategy which outlines the requirements for annual database collection and review which generally include:

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- Number of applications received
- Number of applications approved and their respective grant programs
- Total value of grants issued
- Total value of construction

Norfolk County CIP monitoring data is generally reflective of the above however this requirement is not outlined in its CIP. Some municipalities choose to include additional criteria that are aligned with its CIPs goals and objectives. For example, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc includes baseline data like the amount of new commercial/industrial floor space added, number of new housing units added, and number of attainable housing units added to measure progress in terms of its objectives and goals. There is value in monitoring these and similar outcomes of CIP projects to provide quantitative data to demonstrate the private sector investment that has been stimulated as a result of the CIP.

Some municipal CIPs will include a Marketing strategy to promote engagement and uptake in the program. Marketing strategies can include brochures, a dedicated project webpage, info-sheets and social media promotion and advertisement. Marketing strategies are included with the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, County of Brant and Municipality of Grey Highlands CIPs. Currently there is no marketing strategy with the Norfolk County CIP, but the CIP does have a dedicated webpage. Info-sheets and brochures are beneficial for individuals trying to navigate the process as they simplify steps and outline other potential considerations like official plan policies, zoning by-law regulations and Building Code. The existing brochure for the Norfolk County CIP is outdated and requires updating.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the approval of CIP incentive programs continue to be delegated to staff to streamline the approval process. It is recommended that the County develop an evaluation matrix demonstrating decision making for approval. Should an applicant disagree with the decision of staff and results of the evaluation matrix, it is recommended that the County establish a process for applicants to appeal the application decision to Council or an alternative delegated authority, such as the Chief Administrative Officer.

Further, it is recommended that the CIP include monitoring requirements for a database to review the effectiveness and achievement towards the CIP's goals. This could demonstrate uptake of CIP programs including the number of applications received, the number of applications approved and their value, the value of construction and other objective and goal-based criteria such as the number of new housing units added, or new commercial space added.

A Marketing Strategy is recommended to promote uptake and further encourage community improvement.

5.4.7 Additional CIP Details

Many CIPs also include the following sections for clarity of administration. These supplementary materials may form part of the CIP by-law adopted by Council or exist as standalone documents for reference through administration of the CIP. Examples include:

- Glossaries/definitions;

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- Schedules identifying the CIPA or particular target areas within the CIPA;
- Reference to urban design or similar guidelines;
- Toolkits to support applicants;
- Application forms; and
- “How-to” or explanatory materials; and,
- Scoring criteria/application review criteria.

Outside of the application form, the Norfolk County CIP does not contain any of the other supplementary materials referenced above. Through our best practice review, the County of Brant, Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc and Grey Highlands CIP all contain glossaries to assist with interpretation and application. Further, the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc CIP contains mapping of eligible stream zones in the CIP. Urban Design Criteria was also identified in both the County of Brant and Municipality of Grey Highlands CIP.

Recommendation

To assist with interpretation and application, it is recommended that the Norfolk County CIP include a glossary of definitions, including a definition for non-residential development to limit interpretation issues arising from the Zoning By-law. In addition, currently Norfolk County staff rely on the Official Plan mapping to determine the eligible areas (i.e. lakeshore, hamlet etc.) for certain CIP programs. This poses an issue as the Official Plan has been updated to no longer utilize the same terminology as the CIP for its community structure areas. As the eligible area criteria tends to be based on whether the property is within an settlement or rural areas, it is recommended that the CIP use the terms “settlement area” and “agricultural area” rather than urban, hamlet, agricultural or lakeshore area. This terminology is consistent with terminology in the PPS which the Official Plan will be required to be consistent with. Urban Design criteria is not recommended at this time.

As stated in the previous section, marketing materials such as brochures, and explanatory materials are recommended for the Norfolk County CIP. This can include an interactive GIS map on the County’s Website which shows which properties have received funding from the CIP program and under which incentives to provide inspiration for other property owners.

5.5 Federal and Provincial Funding Opportunities

In addition to the CIP program incentives recommended later in this report, there are a variety of external funding opportunities which the County could leverage, or support prospective CIP applicants in leveraging, to provide supplemental support towards the County’s community improvement goals.

The following are some examples of relevant funding opportunities:

5.5.1 Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP)

The [BFTIP](#) is a financing tool from the Province which helps municipalities provide education tax assistance to help clean up brownfield properties. Under the program, municipalities can get matching education property tax to match the municipal property tax assistance offered through their CIPs to help offset remediation costs. This program is applied for per property and to be eligible a property must be covered by a Community Improvement Plan and have results from a

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Phase Two environmental site assessment. Municipalities must apply for this grant on behalf of brownfield property owners and must have approved the property for a municipal tax assistance grant.

5.5.2 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

CMHC provides funding for municipalities and organizations with the goal of accelerating and advancing a variety of housing options. Prospective CIP applicants may be interested in pursuing funding complementary to the CIP for new housing projects or models through the [Affordable Housing Innovation Fund](#).

5.5.3 Natural Resources Canada

The [Climate-Resilient Coastal Program](#) provides funding for pilot projects to reduce the impacts of climate change and improve climate resiliency within coastal communities.

5.5.4 Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs

Through the [Rural Economic Development Program](#) municipalities may apply for cost-sharing funding through two streams. The first supports projects to support economic growth in rural communities through positioning to attracting and retaining jobs and investment. The second stream supports projects which improve strategic physical community assets as identified by the community. This funding is available to municipalities, not individual businesses, and could be employed by the County to support supplementary community improvement works suggested through community consultation which fall outside of the scope of a CIP.

5.5.5 Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure

Municipalities are eligible to apply to the Province's [Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund](#), which supports repair and expansion of drinking water, waste water and stormwater infrastructure. The [Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund](#) similarly funds construction and maintenance of core infrastructure owned by a municipality. Funding for the latter program is provided to rural, northern, or small municipalities (populations <100,000) on an allocation basis.

5.5.6 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)

Through FCM's [Green Municipal Fund](#), municipalities are eligible for a range of grant opportunities to support the planning, piloting of implementation or construction of various projects to support sustainability.

5.5.7 Association of Municipalities (AMO)

The [Canada Community-Building Fund](#) provides federal funding for local infrastructure across a range of 18 categories, including but not limited to, broadband connectivity, brownfield redevelopment, community energy systems, recreation, culture, tourism. The AMO allocates funding per capita across all Ontario municipalities annually. Funds can be used by the municipality directly, transferred to another party, such as through a CIP program for eligible work, or held for future years.

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6.0 Summary and Next Steps

This report has reviewed the legislative and policy support for a CIP, summarized the County's existing CIP and input provided by members of the local agricultural, development, and small business community, provided a comparative overview of common and innovative features of recent CIPs from similar municipalities, and shared a list of supplementary funding opportunities. This background report is intended to support Council and public understanding of the current CIP and the needs of the County, to provide direction to staff for the preparation of an updated CIP. In support of this, the following includes an overview of the recommendations provided throughout this report.

- Maintain the existing County-wide CIPA. Specific incentives could be limited to specific areas (e.g., urban, rural) or land uses within the community.
- Review the goals for the entire CIPA. Review and consolidate the objectives of the to communicate priorities of the Norfolk CIP for this update. Include new goals and objectives to reflect current local needs such as housing affordability, business attraction, and support for small business.
- Eliminate the current Architecture and Design incentive. Costs currently covered under that current incentive could be included as eligible costs within all other incentives. Expand eligible professional fees to include professional planners for support with planning applications.
- Modify existing Planning Application Fees and Building Permit Fees Grant to include a single upset limit of \$4,000 covering all eligible fees.
- Discuss the potential of adding new incentives for a focus on environmental sustainability and arts and culture, such as:
 - a new incentive for public art and amenities such as temporary commercial kiosks or recreational activities.
 - a new incentive to encourage energy efficiency and sustainable developments.
- Rename the 'Structural Improvement Grant' to the 'Accessibility and Safety Renovation Grant' to better reflect the eligible costs covered.
- Rename the 'Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant' to 'Agricultural and On-Farm Diversified Uses Grant' to further communicate the potential improvement outcomes of this incentive.
- Add a new incentive to encourage development of new housing types and levels of affordability, including for additional dwelling units, purpose built rental units, upper-level residential units within commercial buildings.
- Remove the Residential Conversion/ Rehabilitation grant to avoid duplication with a new housing incentive and direct funding to other incentives to improve non - residential spaces
- Create a new Tax Increment Grant program to be targeted towards particular CIP objectives or modelled after the County of Brant which covers costs associated with the rehabilitation of brownfield sites, where appropriate with existing Brownfield incentives provided by the County. Applicants who receive a Development Charge exemption will not be eligible for this grant.

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- Establish two intake windows per year, during which applications could be submitted, evaluated, and approved or denied. Application inquiries and preconsultation could take place outside of this intake window.
- Establish a new agreement template required by applicants upon approval of an incentive.
- Establish a glossary for the CIP including definitions for each category of uses.
- Update eligibility criteria for consistency with new definitions.
- Continue to delegate CIP incentive approval to staff for all but the Property Tax Increment Grant.
- Establish a monitoring database for regular review of uptake, effectiveness, and evaluation against the CIP’s goals and objectives.
- Develop a marketing strategy for the CIP, including brochures, user-friendly tools, and communications pieces, as well as potential interactive mapping for public view of the success of the program.

A summary of next steps for the project is below:

Phase / Task	General Timeline
Draft Updated CIP	September 2024
Submission to MMAH for Review of the Draft CIP (approx. two months)	October 2024
Prepare Update Memo for Staff to inform Annual Budget Processes	October 2024
Public Open House of Draft CIP*	October 2024
Final revisions to Draft CIP	December 2024
Statutory Public Meeting*	January 2025
Council presentation and possible CIP adoption*	February 2025

Items with an asterisk are public events and the community is encouraged to attend and provide feedback. Throughout the project, anyone wishing to provide feedback or submit questions related to the CIP project can contact the County’s Planning Department.

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Norfolk County Community Improvement Plan Update Background Report

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Appendix A

Focus Group Responses

**Norfolk County Community Improvement Plan Update
Background Report**

Appendix B

Existing CIP Brochure



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Summary of Focus Group Consultation

Comment	Focus Group
Question 1: What are the biggest trends or demands you see for business in Norfolk?	
Wellington Park upgrades bringing lots of people to the region	EDAC - Small Business
resident population insufficient to support small business without tourism support	EDAC - Small Business
need to understand what we're missing in terms of services	EDAC - Small Business
festivals? Conferences?	EDAC - Small Business
missing accommodations for tourists	EDAC - Small Business
artisanal/ agricultural businesses	EDAC - Small Business
business hours are limited	EDAC - Small Business
huge opportunity for tourism	EDAC - Small Business
need for innovation/ flexible/problem solving attitudes	EDAC - Small Business
guidance through this process - and beyond the CIP	EDAC - Small Business
transit is a limitation	EDAC - Small Business
start up challenges for small business re: building & planning	EDAC - Small Business
what works elsewhere doesn't in Norfolk	EDAC - Small Business
planning costs/time limit funds for new business	EDAC - Small Business
Commuter based community - lack on in community jobs	Development Community
Can do attitude - timing is crucial	Development Community
attached units are popular for affordability/ smaller housing types for affordability	Development Community
Affordability	Development Community
Increases to DCs impact affordability	Development Community
bureaucracy/approvals and timing	Development Community
Need creative solutions to retrofitting farmer bunkhouses	Agricultural Advisory Committee
tile drainage is a high cost	Agricultural Advisory Committee

training and expertise costs associate with sustainability	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Norfolk has a higher promotion of women farmers than the rest of Ontario - something to support women farmers and encourage this	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Question 3: How could project-based funding support demands or alleviate challenges?	
Revisiting limits for grants due to increasing costs	EDAC - Small Business
Timing is crucial	EDAC - Small Business
Funding to help with parking	EDAC - Small Business
pedestrian connectivity	EDAC - Small Business
awareness of programs available for small business	EDAC - Small Business
Accessibility for older buildings	EDAC - Small Business
beautification/aesthetic focus	EDAC - Small Business
Back dated costs would be helpful	EDAC - Small Business
flexibility for eligible costs	EDAC - Small Business
How to support multiple businesses facing similar challenges?	EDAC - Small Business
Current program good for business owners	Development Community
promotion	Development Community
ROI is crucial.	Development Community
in-kind labour costs could be supported; suggestion to use a similar formula to the Tourism Development Fund to calculate these costs	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Support for participating in sustainability programs (on farm)	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Agricultural business awareness and promotion programs (e.g. Bite of Brant; Buy-local campaigns)	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Signage for on-farm diversification would be key	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Increased on-farm sales support	Agricultural Advisory Committee
Question 4: For those with experience using a CIP, what worked well? What could be improved?	
Commercial zoning exclusive of commercial uses in non-commercial zones. Exclusion thwarted significant efforts to contribute to local economy	EDAC - Small Business

Question 5: What might make you hesitant to use project based funding through a CIP?	
ROI	Development Community
bureaucracy/approvals and timing	Development Community
Keep it simple	Development Community
Question 6: What have you seen done in other municipalities that you'd like to see in Norfolk?	
Clear expectations	Development Community
Demonstrated accountability from staff and council	Development Community
Outsourcing or ways to keep resources on track/time	Development Community
empowered staff and consistency across departments	Development Community
Project Canary Kitchener	Development Community
Question 6: What have you seen done in other municipalities that you'd like to see in Norfolk?	
Clear sense of direction/goals for the CIP	Development Community
Consulting services for new and re-development	Development Community
align policy/zoning for future growth	Development Community
Bite of Brant - farm education and promotion event	Agricultural Advisory Committee
General Comments	
Commercial zoning was integral to determining eligibility. If you had a residential zoned property with an exception to permit a commercial use, you were not eligible.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Not a lot of support for tourism and tourism is a "bird in the hand" for Norfolk. Tourism allows outside money to be spent in Norfolk which is good for businesses. Broadening scope to support tourism is necessary.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Planning and Building process is limiting new business growth as they do not have the funds to hire professionals (e.g. planners) to assist them through the process. Small businesses need to be helped by people at the County.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Lots of paperwork.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Not related to CIP but concerns raised regarding the lack of direction provided by staff where the interpretation is more "grey". Examples of what is possible would be helpful.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Experiencing road blocks before they can get to the CIP process.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Business hours can be a constraint. Many shops close early.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Need better community awareness of CIP program.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group

Found that the post COVID relief fund was a good grant program as it allowed the applicant to back date expenses. This would be something that is beneficial for the CIP.	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Marketing Program - Make it simple	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Facing parking limitations and community is very against CIL	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Council needs a clearer explanation of costs	EDAC Small Business Focus Group
Review individual incentive values and maximum total cap per application	EDAC Small Business Focus Group

Norfolk County

Community Improvement Plan

Update

December 2024



J.L. Richards
ENGINEERS · ARCHITECTS · PLANNERS

Norfolk County
Community Improvement Plan

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Introduction

What is a CIP?

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool for municipalities to provide financial incentives (e.g. grants, loans, and rebates) for maintenance, rehabilitation, and redevelopment of properties which would contribute to improvement in the community.

This CIP document includes information about the establishment of this CIP, its goals and incentives, and how the CIP will be administered by staff and Council. Council may update this CIP and its incentives by resolution at any time.

Background & Basis

The County has had a CIP in place since 2007. This CIP has been updated to respond to community feedback and reflect changes to the County's economic context over time.

Under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities have the authority to designate a Community Improvement Project Area and prepare and adopt a CIP. Under Section 106(3) of the *Municipal Act*, municipalities may provide financial assistance to private property owners for the purposes of a CIP.

The purpose of the CIP is to implement the direction of the County Official Plan (Section 9.5.2) for community improvement through:

1. *the maintenance, rehabilitation, redevelopment and upgrading of areas with deficient, obsolete and/or deteriorated buildings, land use conflicts, environmental contamination, deficient municipal hard services, social, community, recreational services, or economic instability;*
2. *establishing programs to encourage private sector redevelopment and rehabilitation that addresses identified economic development, land development, environmental, housing, and/or social development issues/needs;*
3. *the designation by by-law of Community Improvement Project Areas, the boundary of which may be the whole of Norfolk County or any part thereof; and*
4. *the preparation, adoption and implementation of Community Improvement Plans, pursuant to the Planning Act.*

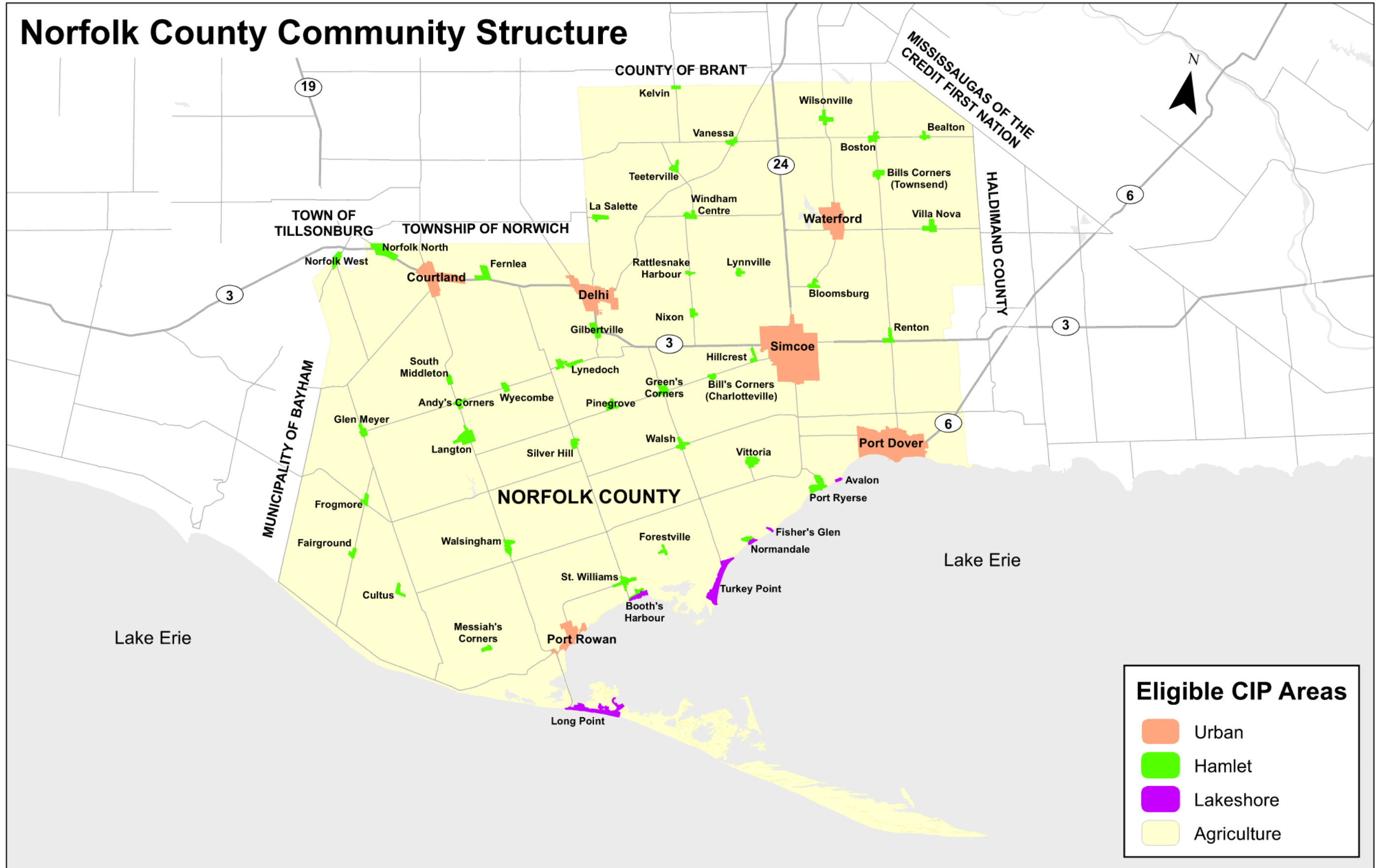
The CIP must be consistent with provincial policy and conform to the County's Official Plan.

Community Improvement Plan Area

A CIP may apply to all or part of the County. This CIP applies to the entire municipality, as designated by by-law. Figure 1 demonstrates the sub-areas of the CIP. For detail, please refer directly to Schedule A and B of the County Official Plan.

Each incentive of this CIP will refer to one or more eligible area as shown in Figure 1. Eligibility may also be determined for particular uses within each designation, as defined in the glossary. All applicability and eligibility for the CIP will be determined at the discretion of the County. Please note that all activities undertaken through this CIP on any property within the municipality are also subject to the policies of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.

Figure 1. County of Norfolk Official Plan Map and Designations



Goals

Through this CIP, the County aims to achieve the following goals:

1. encourage the renovation, repair, rehabilitation, remediation, redevelopment or other improvement of land and/or buildings;
2. encourage residential and other types of infill and intensification;
3. encourage the conservation, restoration, adaptive reuse and improvement of buildings exhibiting significant cultural heritage value or interest;
4. encourage the construction of a range of housing types and the construction of affordable housing, in support of the goals of the Haldimand Norfolk Housing and Homelessness Plan (2020-2030)
5. promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the Downtown Areas as the focus of pedestrian oriented retail, commercial, office, civic, cultural, entertainment and government uses;
6. facilitate and promote community economic development;
7. improve social, community or environmental conditions;
8. improve community quality, safety and sustainability;
9. improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
10. upgrade and improve tourism infrastructure, including agri-tourism facilities;
11. encourage improvements or alterations to agricultural properties, buildings, facilities and structures;
12. improve landscaping, signage, parking and pedestrian access and storm drainage facilities;
13. encourage environmental remediation, including environmental site assessments on contaminated or potentially contaminated properties.
14. encourage off-street parking and provide municipal parking facilities where feasible and appropriate;
15. improve traffic circulation; and/or
16. upgrade and improve municipal services and public utilities such as sanitary sewers, storm sewers, watermains, roads and sidewalks;



To achieve these goals, the County may provide grants, loans, and other financial assistance, information packages, and acquire lands or buildings for community improvement. These activities will be outlined throughout this CIP.

Objectives

The following objectives communicate the County's priorities for the CIP and will guide staff decision making when implementing the CIP incentives.

The objectives for this CIP are:

1. *to strengthen the vitality and **economic viability** of businesses within the County, including the **expansion** of operations;*
2. *to support individual businesses to improve the **physical and visual attractiveness** of their existing buildings and facilities, including building improvements that meet or exceed current Ontario Building Code, Fire Code, and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act;*
3. *to encourage **redevelopment and remediation** of underutilized or vacant properties or buildings;*
4. *to improve the County's importance as an attractive **destination** for residents and visitors;*
5. *to encourage the **creation or rehabilitation of housing**, of various sizes, tenures, and affordability levels;*
6. *to support new economic opportunity for agricultural businesses, including **agricultural value-added** activities and **rural commercial opportunities**;*
7. *to enhance **streetscaping, landscaping, signage, and visual characteristics** of the business community while recognizing the importance of diversity and character of the existing building and areas; and*
8. *to improve **environmental sustainability** and mitigate the effects of climate change.*

Incentives



Agricultural and On-Farm Diversified Uses Grant

Stream: Building/Property Improvement Incentives

Purpose

To aid towards the conversion and re-use of existing agricultural buildings for new or expanded value-added agricultural activities, on-farm diversified uses, and rural commercial opportunities. It is designed to encourage businesses to expand their operations and improve the physical and visual attractiveness of their facilities.

Grant Amount Available

The grant amount available for this program is up to sixteen thousand five hundred dollars (\$16,500) per property (excluding HST), based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant.

Eligible Costs

Eligible Costs: Examples of eligible agricultural building and facilities improvements include, but are not limited to:

- facade improvements (similar to those noted in the Building Facade Improvement Program);
- substantial physical improvements or alterations made to existing agricultural properties, buildings and facilities, including source water protection activities;
- on-farm housing for farm workers directly related to farm operations on the subject lands;
- renovations or additions to barns/storage buildings, agricultural/food processing facilities, and greenhouses;
- agri-tourism and on-farm diversified uses, including renovations for bed and breakfast establishments, pick-your-own, farm markets, and other facilities open to the public, provided such uses are consistent with the requirements of the Norfolk County Official Plan.
- Costs of professional services for architectural, planning engineering and site plans or drawings for eligible improvements are also eligible.

Ineligible Costs: In-kind contributions are not eligible contributions.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in the agricultural area only.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The program is available to property owners only.
- B. Non-Retroactive: This grant will not be offered retroactively for costs incurred prior to the approval of the application.
- C. Type of Buildings: All non-residential buildings in the agricultural area are eligible properties.
- D. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- E. Encroachments: Where a sign, awning or lighting projects onto the municipal road allowance, the grant will be conditional upon the Applicant entering into an encroachment agreement with Norfolk County.
- F. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment (cancelled cheques or bank records), and final inspection of any works covered by the program.

Environmental Remediation Grant

Stream: Study/Pre-Development Incentives

Purpose

To promote the remediation of environmental contamination on eligible properties. The program is designed for costs of site remediation, one of the key stumbling blocks in the redevelopment of contaminated sites in Norfolk County.

Grant Amount Available

The maximum Environmental Remediation Grant amount is sixteen thousand five hundred dollars (\$16,500) per property (excluding HST) and is based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant. The grant amount will be calculated based on fifty percent (50%) of the actual cost of the remedial work.

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs for Environmental Remediation include costs to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property. This includes the cost of:

- A. Environmental remediation, including the cost of preparing a Record of Site Condition (RSC);
- B. Removal of contaminants;
- C. Placing clean fill and grading.

Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) are not eligible for funding under this program. In-kind contributions are not eligible contributions.

Eligible Area

The program is available in any of the CIP areas, subject to all other policies of this CIP.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Assignee Permission: The grant is only available to property owners or an assignee with written permission from the property owner.
- B. Required Documentation: Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) indicating remedial work and Phase III ESA (Remedial Work Plans) documentation must be provided to Norfolk County with the Application.
- C. Required Reports and Evidence of Completed Work: For the grant to be paid, a Remediation Report from a Qualified Person that demonstrates that the subject property meets the applicable regulation standards for soil and ground water must be presented. Evidence of the paid invoices for the remediation work must be presented.
- D. Project Completion: The project must be completed by a Qualified Person, as defined by the Environmental Protection Act, O. Reg. 153/04.
- E. Other Grants: The total value of any grant provided under this incentive will be deducted from the eligible program costs for the Brownfield Tax Increment Grant incentive.
- F. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

The grant will be advanced upon approval of all submitted documentation. This includes receipt of one (1) electronic copy of the final Remediation Report with the original invoice indicating that the study consultants have been paid in full. Staff of Development and Cultural Services will review the report for conformity with the submitted work plan and eligibility criteria. If the submitted report does not conform to the submitted work plan or is not to the satisfaction of Norfolk County, payment may be declined.

Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant

Stream: Study/Pre-Development Incentives

Purpose

To stimulate and encourage development and property improvements, and to provide assistance with the associated costs.

Grant Amount Available

Grants will be provided in the amount of fifty percent (50%) of the eligible planning and building permit fees, to a maximum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) in total fees.

Eligible Costs

- A. Eligible Costs: Development application fees (minor variance, site plan approval, zoning by-law amendment, and official plan amendment) and building permit fees for eligible works.
- B. Eligible Projects: those related to other incentive programs in the approved CIP and properties located within the Community Improvement Project Area.
- C. Ineligible Projects: The grant is not available to Applicants who are not successful in receiving approval from the Planning or Building Departments.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in any of the CIP areas, subject to all other policies of this CIP.

Other Eligibility Requirements

The following eligibility requirements apply to the Planning Application Fee and Building Permit Fee Grant:

- A. The Applicant must either be the registered owner of the property or a tenant with the written permission of the registered owner of the property.
- B. Applicability: This program only applies for approvals related to other incentive programs in the approved Community Improvement Plan and properties located within the Community Improvement Project Area. Applications solely requesting the Planning Application Fee and Building Permit Fee Grant will not be approved.
- C. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- D. Application and Approval Required before Work Commences: All Applicants shall submit an application for the specific program(s) to Norfolk County prior to the commencement of any works. Financial incentives offered in the Community Improvement Plan will not be offered retroactively for costs incurred prior to the approval of the application.
- E. Cost of Rehabilitation: The total value of grants received for a subject property shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings.
- F. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

All fees related to Planning Applications and Building Permits will be paid when a completed application is submitted to the Planning Department or Building Department for review. When the Applicant receives approval for the Planning Application or the Building Permit is issued, the Economic Development Department will initiate the grant payment. The grant is not available to Applicants who are not successful in receiving approval from the Planning or Building Departments.

Building Façade Improvement Grant

Stream: Building/Property Improvement Incentives

Purpose

To assist property owners of existing buildings to maintain their long-term viability and to assist property owners of vacant properties/spaces with public visibility with increasing the marketability of their property in order to secure tenants.

Grant Amount Available

The grant amount available for this program is up to eleven thousand five hundred dollars (\$11,500) per property (excluding HST), based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant. The grant amount will be calculated based on fifty percent (50%) of the actual cost of the project.

Eligible Costs

Eligible Costs: Examples of eligible facade improvements include, but are not limited to:

- masonry cleaning, restoration and stabilization;
- installation of storefront awnings;
- redesign of storefronts;
- window repair and restoration;
- installation of appropriate signage;
- painting of woodwork;
- renovation of storefronts;
- replacement or repair of cornices, eaves, parapets, and other architectural features;
- entranceway modifications; or
- professional services for architectural, planning, engineering and site drawings or plans for eligible building facade improvements.
- Eligible costs shall be the original estimate or the actual cost, whichever is less.

Ineligible Costs: Improvements not eligible include: landscaping, building insulation, roof work, and interior work. In-kind contributions are not eligible costs.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in the Urban, Hamlet, and Lakeshore Areas. Eligible buildings must be an existing storefront retail property with street visibility, to the satisfaction of the County.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The program is available to property owners only. Tenants are not eligible.
- B. Type of Buildings: All non-residential buildings are eligible properties.
- C. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.

- D. Assignee Permission: Approved grants are not transferable to any other property, but may be transferred to a new owner of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant.
- E. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment (cancelled cheques or bank records), and final inspection of any works covered by the program.

Landscaping, Signage and Property Improvement Grant

Stream: Building/Property Improvement Incentives

Purpose

To provide assistance for upgrading the open areas associated with the property, including parking areas, boulevards, and other landscaping features. New or replacement and upgrading of existing signage, including street numbering and awnings (seasonal or permanent), is eligible for this program.

Grant Amount Available

The grant amount available for this program is up to three thousand five hundred dollars (\$3,500) per property (excluding HST), based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant.

Eligible Costs

Eligible Projects:

- Landscaping improvements between parking areas and the roadway, or between parking areas and the building;
- improvements to signage located on the owner's property;
- driveway entrance and walkway improvements;
- improvements to parking lots and associated storm drainage facilities;
- improvements may include aesthetic, access, safety, or environmental improvements;
- Professional services for architectural, planning, engineering and site plans or drawings for improvements are also eligible.

Ineligible Projects: Directional signage is not eligible for grant funding.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in the Downtown, Hamlet, Resort Residential, and Agricultural designations and the Lakeshore Secondary Plan Special Policy Area.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The Applicant must either be the registered owner of the property or a tenant with the written permission of the registered owner of the property.
- B. Type of Buildings: All non-residential buildings are eligible properties.
- C. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- D. Assignee Permission: Approved grants are not transferable to any other property but may be transferred to a new owner of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant.
- E. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment (cancelled cheques or bank records), and final inspection of any works covered by the program.

Additional Unit, Rental and Affordable Housing Grant – New!

Stream: Building/Property Improvement Incentives

Purpose

To encourage the creation of new residential units, particularly those intended for purpose-built rental tenure or intended to be affordable. This includes the construction of new units and the conversion of existing non-residential spaces to residential units.

“Purpose-built rental”, for the purposes of this incentive, is defined as a unit which is or will be the primary place of residence for one or more individuals who are given occupancy under a lease for a period of one year or more.

“Affordable” rents will refer to a rental amount calculated per unit that will be maintained as “affordable” for a period of 10 years or more. An “affordable” rental unit will be calculated where the rent is no greater than the lesser of:

- i. The income-based affordable rent for the residential unit set out in the Affordable Residential Units Bulletin.
- ii. The average market rent identified for the residential unit set out in the Affordable Residential Units bulletin.

Grant Amount Available

The grant amount available for this program is up to five thousand five hundred dollars (\$5,500) per new residential unit created, to a maximum of eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000), excluding HST, based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant.

Rental residential units which meet the criteria for “affordable” rents will be eligible to receive an additional fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,500) per unit, to a maximum total grant of thirteen thousand five hundred dollars (\$13,500).

Eligible Costs

- Costs to construct an additional residential unit;
- Costs to construct new buildings with one or more purpose-built rental residential units or affordable rental residential units;
- Costs of renovations and/or conversion of unused or underused upper floor or rear space within existing commercial units to new purpose-built residential units or affordable residential units;
- Costs of rehabilitation of existing underutilized buildings to new purpose-built residential units, where appropriate, at the discretion of the County;
- Costs of professional services for architectural, planning, engineering and site plans or drawings for improvements are also eligible.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in the Urban, Hamlet, and Lakeshore areas.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The Applicant must be the registered owner of the property.
- B. Type of Buildings: All existing residential buildings are eligible properties. Existing commercial or institutional buildings are also eligible for conversion to residential buildings or residential units within mixed-use buildings, where permitted by the Zoning By-law.
- C. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- D. Purpose-Built Rental: Proposed rental residential units must meet the definition of purpose-built rental defined in this CIP.
- E. Affordable Rents: Proposed affordable rental residential units must meet the definition of "Affordable rents". The affordable rate is required to be maintained for a period of 10 or more years.
- F. Minimum Value: The costs of construction, renovation, or rehabilitation for the project must have a minimum permit value of six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) in order for the project to qualify.
- G. General Program Terms also apply.

Grant Payment

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment, and final inspection by both the Building Department and the Fire Department to verify adherence to codes.

Accessibility and Safety Renovation Grant

Stream: Building/Property Improvement Incentives

Purpose

To offset the costs associated with structural improvements to the interior of buildings for existing commercial operations and to provide assistance with renovations/retrofits to improve accessibility (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), Building Code and Fire Code Standards and health and safety features of the facility. It is intended to upgrade the physical conditions of buildings to improve their safety and accessibility.

Grant Amount Available

The grant amount available for this program is up to six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) per property (excluding HST), based on a fifty/fifty (50/50) matching cash contribution of the Applicant.

Eligible Costs

Eligible Projects:

- Renovations and/or retrofits to improve accessibility (as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), Building Code and Fire Code Standards and health and safety features of the building;
- adaptive re-use of derelict or underutilized structures (e.g. conversion of a closed school or barn to another use);
- Costs of professional services for architectural, planning, engineering and site plans or drawings for improvements are also eligible.

Ineligible Costs: Cosmetic upgrades, such as to flooring and windows, are not eligible for grant funding.

Eligible Areas

The program is available in any of the CIP areas, subject to all other policies of this CIP.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The program is available to property owners only. Tenants are not eligible.
- B. Type of Buildings: All non-residential buildings are eligible properties.
- C. Multiple Incentives: Participants in the Agricultural Buildings and Facilities Improvement Grant are not eligible.
- D. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- E. Assignee Permission: Approved grants are not transferable to any other property, but may be transferred to a new owner of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant.

Grant Payment

The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment (cancelled cheques or bank records), and final inspection of any works covered by the program.

Property Tax Increment Grant

Stream: Tax Incentives

Purpose

To provide an economic incentive for the improvement of properties by providing a grant to the owner of the property to pay a portion of the local taxes (excluding education taxes) attributable to the increased assessment over a five (5) year period.

Grant Amount Available

- A. Calculation: The grant is calculated based on the increased assessment value after the renovation/construction, as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), at the tax rate that was applicable in the year the renovation or construction was completed.
- B. Period: The grant will be provided for approved projects on a declining basis over a five (5) year period. Assessment is fixed from year one and the change in assessment will be determined by MPAC assessment such that the market value portion of increased assessment is not eligible.
- C. Ineligible Tax Increases: Tax increases resulting from general re-assessments, changes in tax legislation, or increases in the tax rate are not eligible to be considered for the purposes of calculating this grant.

Sample Grant Calculation:

Year of Increased Assessment Value	Grant as a Percentage of the Year One of the Municipal Portion on Increased Assessment Value
Year 1	100%
Year 2	80%
Year 3	60%
Year 4	40%
Year 5	20%
Year 6	0%

- D. The total value of grants received for a subject property shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings. The amount of the grant over the life of the program shall not exceed eligible costs as per Section 28(7) and 28(7.3) of the Planning Act, as amended.

Eligible Costs

Eligibility for Property Tax Increment Grants is restricted to property improvements which meet one or more objectives of this CIP, and which would qualify as eligible projects or costs as defined by any of the CIP incentives.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in any of the CIP areas, subject to all other policies of this CIP.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure type: The Applicant must be the registered owner of the property.
- B. Building Permit Value: The building permit for the project must have a minimum permit value of six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) in order for the project to qualify.
- C. Performance Expectations: Projects considered for Property Tax Increment Grants must demonstrate specific performance expectations directly related to full-time permanent job creation, capital investment, business expansion, community and downtown revitalization goals, etc.)
- D. Grant Available for Existing Structures Only: Eligibility for Property Tax Increment Grants is restricted to projects comprising building renovations, refurbishing, repurposing, and expansions. Substantial physical improvements or alterations made to existing structures including façade, structural, and site improvements are eligible costs.
- E. Application Required before Commencement of Work: All Applicants shall submit an application for the specific program(s) to Norfolk County prior to the commencement of any works.
- F. No Retroactive Approvals: Financial incentives offered in the Community Improvement Plan will not be offered retroactively for costs incurred prior to the approval of the application.
- G. Brownfield Properties: Brownfield properties are not eligible for the Property Tax Increment Grant and are directed to the Brownfield Tax Increment Grant.
- H. Agreement: All Applicants that are approved to receive a Property Tax Increment Grant will enter into Site-Specific Funding Agreement with Norfolk County that specifies the terms of the grant.
- I. Public Disclosure of Information: Information regarding the grant amount issued, the nature of the project and photographs thereof, the total investment of the project by the private sector, and the address of the property to which the grants are associated are all public information that will be included in promotional material and/or in a media release. Applicants will be required to allow this information to be released to the public and to participate in public reviews of the program in future.
- J. Priority Applications: In the event that the budget remaining for the year is insufficient to fund all applications on hand, projects demonstrating the greatest impact to the community (i.e. job creation and total capital investment) will be chosen for funding.
- K. Transference: Approved grants are not transferable to any other property but may be transferred to a new owner of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant.
- L. Availability of Funds: As part of the annual budget deliberations, Council will review the availability of funds for grant purposes.
- M. Council's Right to Discontinue or Cancel Program: Norfolk County may discontinue or cancel a program at the sole discretion of Council.
- N. Application: The Applicant must submit an application including a detailed proposal and **at least two estimates** for consideration, prior to commencement of the improvement works. The Director of Strategic Innovation and Economic Development (Director), or designate, shall review each application to ensure the eligibility of the Applicant.
- O. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.

- P. Disclosure of Tax Arrears, Liens, Orders, Claims, etc.: If lands or buildings have any tax arrears or any other legal claim, lien or order that may adversely affect title of the property, other than a mortgage in good standing, this information shall be disclosed to the Director, or designate, during its review of the Application.
- Q. Approval by Council: The Director, or designate, shall submit a report to Norfolk County Council with a recommendation for the Application. Applications for funding under the Property Tax Increment Grant program must be reviewed and approved by Norfolk County Council.
- R. Pre-Improved Assessed Value: The pre-improved assessed value of the property will be the MPAC assessed value of the property on the date of the application for the building permit.
- S. Completion of Project: The Chief Building Official, or designate, will inspect and approve improvements of the building upon completion, as required. Improvements must be consistent with any existing design guidelines or other policies.
- T. Audit: Norfolk County may undertake an audit of work completed and associated costs if it is deemed necessary.
- U. Compliance with Policies and Standards: All works approved through the Community Improvement Plan shall comply with all Municipal policies and standards, including zoning, design guidelines (if any) and heritage matters and will be subject to planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.
- V. Outstanding Work Orders: Any outstanding work orders registered against the subject property must be satisfied prior to the grant being made or be satisfied as part of the proposed work.
- W. Conditions for Issuing Grant: For the grant to be paid, the final project must be significantly consistent with the project outlined at the application stage. Otherwise, staff may refuse to issue a grant. Implementation of Agreement: On completion of the project, if the construction complies with all applicable program guidelines, including verification of eligible costs, the owner(s) and Norfolk County will implement a Site-Specific Funding Agreement.
- X. Nature of Agreement: The Site-Specific Funding Agreement will stipulate the pre-improved and post-improved assessed value, applicable municipal tax rate of that year, the amount of the grant in that year, the method to be used to calculate the grant in the subsequent four years, and the anticipated delivery dates of the grant.

Grant Payment

- A. Schedule: The grant will be provided in accordance with a schedule to the registered owner(s) of the property on an annual basis, as outlined in the Site-Specific Funding Agreement between the owner(s) and Norfolk County.
- B. Other Conditions: Norfolk County shall not pay an annual grant that exceeds the County's portion of the property tax collected in any year.
- C. Demolition Forfeits Grant: If the property is demolished, in whole or in part, before the expiration of the grant period, the grants shall cease and all previously received grant payments will be repayable to Norfolk County.
- D. Annual Confirmation of Taxes Paid: It is the responsibility of the Applicant to confirm that taxes, utilities and any other municipal financial obligations have been paid in November of each year, and to request that the grant be paid in December of each year if taxes are paid. The grant payment must be recorded in the County financial system in the appropriate fiscal year. Applicants who do not confirm that taxes are paid and request the grant before the deadlines may forfeit their right to the grant.
- E. County Option to Terminate Future Grant Payments: All property tax installments owing for each year must be fully paid for the entire year prior to the provision of any annual grant amount under this program. If a property tax installment is missed, or payment is late, Norfolk County will have the option, without notice and at its own discretion, to terminate all future grant payments.

Brownfield Tax Increment Grant – New!

Purpose

To provide an economic incentive for the rehabilitation and remediation of brownfield properties by providing a grant to the owner of the property to pay a portion of the local taxes (excluding education taxes) attributable to the increased assessment over a five (5) year period.

Grant Amount Available

- E. Calculation: The grant is calculated based on the increased assessment value after the renovation/construction, as determined by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), at the tax rate that was applicable in the year the renovation or construction was completed.
- F. Period: The grant will be provided for approved projects on a declining basis over a five (5) year period. Assessment is fixed from year one and the change in assessment will be determined by MPAC assessment such that the market value portion of increased assessment is not eligible.
- G. Ineligible Tax Increases: Tax increases resulting from general re-assessments, changes in tax legislation, or increases in the tax rate are not eligible to be considered for the purposes of calculating this grant.

Sample Grant Calculation:

Year of Increased Assessment Value	Grant as a Percentage of the Year One of the Municipal Portion on Increased Assessment Value
Year 1	100%
Year 2	80%
Year 3	60%
Year 4	40%
Year 5	20%
Year 6	0%

- H. The total value of grants received for a subject property shall not exceed the cost of rehabilitating the lands and buildings. The amount of the grant over the life of the program shall not exceed eligible costs as per Section 28(7) and 28(7.3) of the Planning Act, as amended.

Eligible Costs

Eligibility for Property Tax Increment Grants is restricted to brownfield remediation or rehabilitation on properties. Projects must have previously conducted a Phase II ESA and show demonstrated viability of property improvement. Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) are not eligible for funding.

Eligible Areas

The program is available to properties in any of the CIP areas, subject to all other policies of this CIP.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- A. Tenure Type: The Applicant must be the registered owner of the property.
- B. Building Permit Value: The building permit for the project must have a minimum permit value of six thousand five hundred dollars (\$6,500) for the project to qualify.
- C. Performance Expectations: Projects considered for Property Tax Increment Grants must demonstrate specific performance expectations directly related to property or building rehabilitation.

- D. Grant Available for Existing Structures Only: Eligibility for Property Tax Increment Grants is restricted to projects comprising building renovations, refurbishing, repurposing, and expansions. Substantial physical improvements or alterations made to existing structures including façade, structural, and site improvements are eligible costs.
- E. Application Required before Commencement of Work: All Applicants shall submit an application for the specific program(s) to Norfolk County prior to the commencement of any works.
- F. Agreement: All Applicants that are approved to receive a Property Tax Increment Grant will enter into Site-Specific Funding Agreement with Norfolk County that specifies the terms of the grant.
- G. Transference: Approved grants are not transferable to any other property but may be transferred to a new owner of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant.
- H. Council's Right to Discontinue or Cancel Program: Norfolk County may discontinue or cancel a program at the sole discretion of Council.
- I. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application.
- J. Estimates & Proposal: The Applicant must submit an application including a detailed proposal and **at least two estimates** for consideration, prior to commencement of the improvement works. The Director, or designate, shall review each application to ensure the eligibility of the Applicant.
- K. Approval by Council: The Director, or designate, shall submit a report to Norfolk County Council with a recommendation for the Application. Applications for funding under any Property Tax Increment Grant program must be reviewed and approved by Norfolk County Council.
- L. Pre-Improved Assessed Value: The pre-improved assessed value of the property will be the MPAC assessed value of the property on the date of the application for the building permit.
- M. Completion of Project: The Chief Building Official, or designate, will inspect and approve improvements of the building upon completion, as required. Improvements must be consistent with any existing design guidelines or other policies.
- N. Audit: Norfolk County may undertake an audit of work completed and associated costs if it is deemed necessary.
- O. Compliance with Policies and Standards: All works approved through the Community Improvement Plan shall comply with all Municipal policies and standards, including zoning, design guidelines (if any) and heritage matters and will be subject to planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.
- P. Outstanding Work Orders: Any outstanding work orders registered against the subject property must be satisfied prior to the grant being made or be satisfied as part of the proposed work.
- Q. Conditions for Issuing Grant: For the grant to be paid, the final project must be significantly consistent with the project outlined at the application stage. Otherwise, staff may refuse to issue a grant. Implementation of Agreement: On completion of the project, if the construction complies with all applicable program guidelines, including verification of eligible costs, the owner(s) and Norfolk County will implement a Site-Specific Funding Agreement.
- R. Demolition Forfeits Grant: If the property is demolished, in whole or in part, before the expiration of the grant period, the grants shall cease, and all previously received grant payments will be repayable to Norfolk County.
- S. Nature of Agreement: The Site-Specific Funding Agreement will stipulate the pre-improved and post-improved assessed value, applicable municipal tax rate of that year, the amount of the grant in that year, the method to be used to calculate the grant in the subsequent four years, and the anticipated delivery dates of the grant.
- T. Applicability to Provincial Funding: Applicants may be eligible to apply for concurrent funding at the provincial level, such as the Provincial Brownfields financial tax incentive program (BFTIP) to receive assistance with the education portion of property taxes.
- U. All applicable general terms also apply.

Grant Payment

- F. Schedule: The grant will be provided in accordance with a schedule to the registered owner(s) of the property on an annual basis, as outlined in the Site-Specific Funding Agreement between the owner(s) and Norfolk County.
- G. Other Conditions: Norfolk County shall not pay an annual grant that exceeds the County's portion of the property tax collected in any year.
- H. Annual Confirmation of Taxes Paid: It is the responsibility of the Applicant to confirm that taxes, utilities and any other municipal financial obligations have been paid in November of each year, and to request that the grant be paid in December of each year if taxes are paid. The grant payment must be recorded in the County financial system in the appropriate fiscal year. Applicants who do not confirm that taxes are paid and request the grant before the deadlines may forfeit their right to the grant.
- I. County Option to Terminate Future Grant Payments: All property tax installments owing for each year must be fully paid for the entire year prior to the provision of any annual grant amount under this program. If a property tax installment is missed, or payment is late, Norfolk County will have the option, without notice and at its own discretion, to terminate all future grant payments.

DRAFT

General Program Terms

In addition to the terms in this section, please see the eligibility requirements for each incentive.

Applicable to all Incentives

Eligibility

- A. Tenure Type: Unless otherwise noted, property owners and tenants are eligible to apply for an incentive. Tenants will be required to submit written approval from the property owner.
- B. CIPA: Any property within the Community Improvement Project Areas may be eligible, subject to the eligibility of the specific incentive and its associated use.
- C. Land Use: Property eligibility may be dependent on the existing and proposed use of the property or building. Definitions of land or building uses for the purposes of eligibility are defined in the CIP Glossary.
- D. Single Party Agreement & Transfer: Only one party can be issued an agreement for the same project or property (e.g. owner and tenant). If an agreement has been signed and then the property changes hands, the agreement would be transferrable to the new property owner.
- E. Multiple Incentives: Applicants may apply for multiple incentives for a single project, up to the maximum grant amount, where all criteria and conditions are met.
- F. Multiple CIP Funding Cycles: Applicants may apply for multiple incentives for a single property over the course of several CIP funding cycles (years) up to the maximum grant amount. Once the maximum grant amount is reached, eligibility will be restricted for a period of five (5) years, after which point Applicants will again be eligible for further CIP applications.
- G. Application Required: All Applicants must submit an application for the CIP incentives. Applications include a detailed proposal and **at least two (2) estimates** for consideration. Work completed before an application is approved or an agreement is executed are not eligible.

Application

- H. Non-Retroactive Application: Applications must be submitted prior to beginning and project work. Costs for work completed prior to application submission are not eligible.
- I. Pre-application Meeting: Prior to submitting an application, Applicants are required to meet with staff to discuss their project and application requirements.
- J. Required Documentation: Submission of drawings and/or plans may be required as part of the application. Applicants may be required to submit supplementary materials, such as a business plan or technical reports for their project. The individual incentives, preconsultation with County staff, and the application form will identify information required to specify an application, including circumstances where plans are required to be stamped by a qualified professional (e.g. architect, engineer, designer).
- K. Approvals Sought: As part of application submission, and with the assistance of staff, the Applicant is responsible for contacting other utilities and agencies (e.g. utility providers, Conservation Authority) that may have to approve the development.
- L. Completeness: County staff have full discretion to deem that an application has included all required components and is complete. Applications cannot be approved until deemed completed.
- M. Application Timelines: Applications will be accepted during the application window, twice annually. The County reserves the right to change the application windows, or switch to a rolling, first-come-first-serve basis at any time.

Approval

- N. Review: The Director, or designate, shall review each application to ensure the eligibility of the Applicant and shall approve successful applications in accordance with the provisions of the Policy.
- O. Priority Applications: Applications will be reviewed and evaluated during the application window. In the event that the budget remaining for the year is insufficient to fund all applications on hand, projects demonstrating the greatest overall impact to the community (i.e. job creation and total capital investment) will be chosen for approval.
- P. Public Disclosure of Information: Information regarding the grant amount issued, the nature of the project and photographs thereof, the total investment of the project by the private sector, and the address of the property to which the grants are associated are all public information that may be included in promotional material and/or in a media release. Applicants will be required to allow this information to be released to the public and to participate in public reviews of the program in future.

Agreement

- Q. Agreement: Approved Applicants will be required to enter an agreement with the County specifying the terms of the grant. Terms will include the total amount of the grant, entitlement if conditions change, the Applicant's obligations, defaults on agreement, and provisions for audits. Work completed before an agreement is executed are not eligible.
- R. Amendment: Executed agreements, including conditions of the agreement, may be amended by the Director, where changes are agreed upon in writing and an amended agreement is executed by all applicable parties.
- S. Encroachments: Where a sign, awning or lighting projects onto the municipal road allowance, the grant will be conditional upon the Applicant entering into an encroachment agreement with Norfolk County.
- T. Conditions: By signing the Application Form, all Applicants that are approved to receive a grant have entered into an agreement with Norfolk County agreeing to abide by the conditions of this CIP.
- U. Conditions not Met: If the Applicant does not comply with all conditions of the agreement and other relevant municipal requirements, all financial incentives provided under the CIP must be repaid to the County with interest.

Expiration

- V. Approval Period: Written confirmation of the commitment will be given and will be valid for nine (9) months. If eligible improvements are not completed within this time, the commitment may receive a justifiable extension to a maximum of 18 months, at the Director's discretion.
- W. Extension: Requests for extension of the approval term may be submitted and are subject to approval by the Director.
- X. Program Discontinuation: Norfolk County may discontinue or cancel a program at the sole discretion of Council.

Project Completion

- Y. Inspection of Project: The Chief Building Official, or designate, will inspect and approve improvements of the building upon completion, as required.
- Z. Evidence of Completed Work: Norfolk County may undertake an audit of work completed and associated costs if it is deemed necessary.
- AA. Consistency with Proposed Project: For the grant to be paid, the final project must be significantly consistent with the project outlined at the application stage. Otherwise, staff may refuse to issue a grant.

BB. Demolition Forfeits Grant: If a building is demolished prior to the completion of the related work, the grant is forfeited and will be recovered by Norfolk County.

Maximum Grant

- CC. Total Incentives Amount: Where a property and project are eligible for multiple incentives, the total financial incentive in the form of all grants for an individual property shall not exceed \$20,000. This excludes the Tax Increment Grant, which may be provided in addition to any other grant.
- DD. Multiple Incentives: Incentives are not meant to preclude an Applicant from being eligible for other grant, loan, or incentive programs offered by other agencies or as part of future years of this or another CIP.
- EE. Incentive to not Exceed Costs: The total amount of all financial incentives approved, including the Tax Increment Grant, may not exceed the total cost of the eligible project.

Works Already Begun

FF. Non-Retroactive: Grants are not applied retroactively to works started or completed prior to an application. Costs for work completed prior to application submission are not eligible.

Compliance with Policy and Applicable Law

- GG. Legal Requirements: Any project and all works undertaken through this CIP shall meet all applicable legal requirements of the County and any other agency. This includes conformity to County policies and plans and compliance with By-laws, including but not limited to the County's Zoning By-law and Property Standards By-law.
- HH. Project Compliance: All works approved through the Community Improvement Plan shall comply with all Municipal policies and standards, including Official Plan policies, design guidelines (if any), and heritage matters, and will be subject to planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.

Tax Arrears or Other Charges

- II. Ineligibility: Properties and buildings are not eligible if they have tax arrears, legal claims, liens, or any other orders, charges, or claims which may adversely or abnormally affect the titles of the property, other than mortgages in good standing. An exception to this may be approved for Environmental Site Assessment Grants.
- JJ. Disclosure: If lands or buildings have any tax arrears or any other legal claim, lien or order that may adversely affect title of the property, other than a mortgage in good standing, this information shall be disclosed by the Applicant when applying.

Transferability

- KK. Non-Transfer to Property: Unless otherwise specified, approved grants allocated to a specific property are not transferrable to another property.
- LL. Transferability to Owner: Unless otherwise specified, approved grants may be transferred to a new owner/operator of an approved property, provided the new owner meets and agrees to the terms and conditions of the grant or loan.
- MM. The County may register a lien on the property.

Grants Payable Upon Project Completion

NN. Project Completion: Unless otherwise specified, grants will be advanced to the Applicant upon the full completion of the works, final inspection and approval, and/or issuance of any required

certificates, to the satisfaction of the County. Progress payments will not be made, unless otherwise specified.

Norfolk Led Initiatives

The incentives above are intended to encourage private sector investment towards the community improvement goals and objectives. In addition to such improvement, the County may also choose to invest in the same objectives through activities and improvements to public spaces. The County may chose to pursue the goals and objectives of community improvement through:

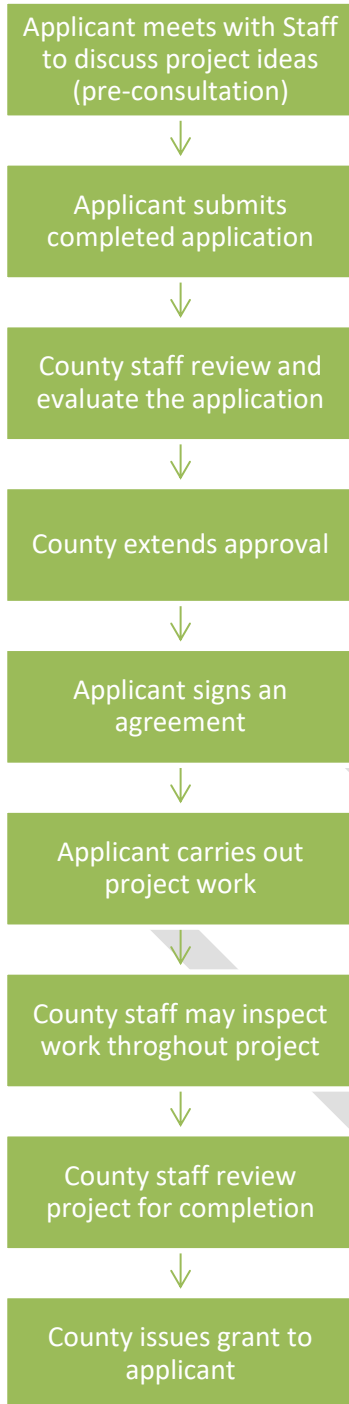
- Selling, leasing, or acquiring municipal land or buildings;
- Capital improvement projects;
- Construction, repair, and rehabilitation of public spaces or buildings, such as:
 - Parking areas, landscaping, or streetscaping;
 - Public art, monuments, or attractions;
 - Sidewalks, pedestrian or active transportation access, or wayfinding and directional signage;
- Improvements to the CIP program and associated processes for Applicants;
- Review of, and initiatives to remove, administrative or procedural barriers to private sector investment, where appropriate;
- Additional studies to identify and recommend improvements to future implementation of the CIP program.



Implementation

Administration

Application & Grant Administration Process



1. Pre-consultation meeting: The Applicant should arrange a meeting or consultation with staff to discuss their project, determine program eligibility, proposed scope of work and project timing.
2. Application Process: The Applicant must submit an application, including a detailed proposal, “before” photos, and **at least two estimates** for consideration, prior to commencement of any works. The Applicant will be required to disclose if the lands or buildings have any tax arrears or any other legal claim, lien or order that may adversely affect title of the property, other than a mortgage in good standing. The application window will be open twice annually, for a period of two months, from March 1 to April 30 and October 1 to November 30.
3. Application Review: The Director or designate, shall review each application to ensure the eligibility of the Applicant and evaluate applications against the evaluation matrix. Council holds the sole authority to review Tax Increment Grants.
4. Application Approval: The Director or designate shall approve successful applications in accordance with the provisions of the Policy.
For Tax Increment Grants, Council holds the sole authority to approve applications. In these cases, CIP applications will be reviewed and presented to Council at a special meeting of Council twice annually following the intake window.
5. Agreement: The Director, or designate issues an agreement to the Applicant to be executed. Agreements will be valid for nine (9) months. If eligible improvements are not completed within this time, the Applicant may request a justifiable extension, to a maximum of 18 months, at Council’s or designate discretion.
6. Project Work Begins: The Applicant begins project work.
7. Inspection of Project: The Chief Building Official, or designate, may inspect and approve improvements of the building at any point during or at completion of the project, as required. Improvements must be consistent with any existing design guidelines or other policies.
8. Review of Project Completion: County Staff, the Chief Building Official, or designate, will review the project for completion. For the grant to be paid, the final project must be significantly consistent with the project outlined at the application stage. Otherwise, staff may refuse to issue a grant.
9. Grant Payment: The grant will be payable upon completion of the works, submission of paid invoices, proof of payment (cancelled cheques or bank records), and final inspection of any works covered by the program. Note: if a building is demolished prior to the completion of the related work, the grant is forfeited and will be recovered by Norfolk County.

Required Documents

Independent from this CIP document, the County will provide application forms for the incentives and TIG incentives and agreements for successful Applicants. The County may also provide instructional and promotional materials to support uptake and participation in the CIP program.

Financing the CIP Program

Council will establish an annual budget for the incentives of this CIP. Funds may be allocated to municipal initiatives under the goals of the CIP as well as the incentives. Council may entertain various approaches to long-term financing of the CIP, including the establishment of a reserve fund.

Grants will be made available subject to available funding. There may be instances when an application cannot be processed during a given intake window or fiscal year, in which case it may be considered in a subsequent period, subject to funding. Alternatively, the maximum grant available for any project may have to be reduced. As part of budget allocations, Council may allocate funds to specific targeted programs (e.g. component to priority locations or business sectors) and may update this CIP accordingly.

A grant or loan application may be approved for an amount less than the determined entitlement and less than the maximum amount allowed under a given program. Staff will work with the Applicant to consider adjustment to the grant request to work within the County's budgetary restrictions. Where the grant amounts requested exceed the County's available budget for a given intake window or year, the Applicant may opt to defer the grant application to a subsequent period.

Discontinuation of Programs

The County may at any time discontinue any given program. Any existing Applicants approved for incentives of the program at the time of discontinuation will continue to receive the grant as determined for their properties until the conclusion of the approved project.

Monitoring and Amendment

The County commits to regular review of the CIP program and its effectiveness. The County may amend this CIP as necessary to implement learnings and maintain program success.

Council will review the availability of funds for the CIP incentives as part of annual budget planning. Funding availability will not require amendment to the Plan. Should the County decide to update the CIP area or CIP program with new goals, objectives, incentives, or eligibility requirements, an amendment to the adopting by-laws will be required.

The County will monitor the CIP through the following quantitative and qualitative measures, where applicable:

- Number of applications received;
- Number of applications successful;
- Number of projects leading to construction;
- Number of projects completed (generally and per incentive);
- Before and after photographs of completed projects;
- Area of each residential, commercial, agricultural, industrial, and institutional spaces created or rehabilitated;
- Number of new residential or commercial units created or rehabilitated;

- Number of affordable residential rental units created or rehabilitated;
- Number of jobs created (generally and per incentive);
- Value of grants distributed (generally and per incentive);
- Value of resulting construction (total and per incentive);
- Value of tax increments based on improvements (total and per incentive);
- Increase in value of assessed properties (total and per property);
- Value of private sector investment (total and per property);
- Feedback from Applicants and program participants;
- Public comments received; and
- Tracking of non-municipal promotion (e.g. social media, news articles) of the program.



Glossary



Affordable Rent: for rental housing, means a residential unit where the rent is no greater than the lesser of:

- i. The income-based affordable rent for the residential unit set out in the Affordable Residential Units Bulletin.
- ii. The average market rent identified for the residential unit set out in the Affordable Residential Units bulletin.

Brownfield site: means undeveloped or previously developed properties that may be contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant.

Greyfield site: means previously developed properties that are not contaminated. They are usually, but not exclusively, former commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict, or vacant.

Calendar Year: means the 12-month period from which the CIP programs begins each year. The date at which CIP programming begins will be determined during Council's annual budgetary process.

Property Uses: refers to the type of use of the land and buildings for a subject property. It may refer to both existing or proposed uses of the property. All uses are subject to the Policies of the County Official Plan and Zoning By-law. Property uses defined for the purposes of this CIP may include, but are not limited to:

Agricultural Use: means the growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment.

Agriculture-related Use: means those farm-related commercial and farm-related industrial uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity.

Commercial Use: means activities within land areas which are predominantly connected with the sale, rental and distribution of products, or performance of services.

Industrial Use: means activities, lands, or places of business which store, process, or manufacture materials. Industrial Uses may range from light to heavy, as determined by the Province's D Series Land Use compatibility Guidelines.

Institutional Use: means the use of land, buildings or other structures for some public or social purpose, excluding any commercial use or for commercial business purposes. Examples may include governmental, educational, religious, charitable, philanthropic, or other similar uses.

On Farm Diversified Use (OFDU): means uses that are secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products, and electricity generation facilities and transmission systems, and energy storage systems.

Residential Use: means the use of a building or portion thereof for one or more dwelling units. A residential use may be a primary or secondary use of a property (E.g. a residence on a farm).

Purpose Built Rental: means a unit which is or will be the primary place of residence for one or more individuals who are given occupancy under a lease for a period of one year or more.