

**The Corporation of the Town of Deep River**  
**REPORT**  
**2025-PLAN-09**

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**Council Meeting Date: March 25, 2026**  
**Council Meeting Time: 6:00 PM**  
**Council Meeting Place: Council Chambers**

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**Subject: Draft amendments to the Community Improvement Plan**

**Author: Christian Kaiser, Director of Growth and Sustainability**

**Eric McQuestion, Intern Building Inspector; By-law Enforcement Officer**

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**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** report number 2026-PLAN-02, “Draft amendments to the Community Improvement Plan” be received,

**THAT** Council endorses the proposed amendments to the Town of Deep River Community Improvement Plan, including the expansion of the Community Improvement Project Area and the introduction of new and revised financial incentive programs,

**THAT** Council directs staff to inform the public of the proposed draft changes to the Town of Deep River’s Community Improvement Plan, and gather feedback and additional suggestions,

**AND THAT** Council direct staff to proceed with the statutory notifications of public agencies required under the Planning Act, including the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; and

**THAT** Council direct staff to bring forward a final Community Improvement Plan, Official Plan Amendment, and associated by-law amendments for consideration of adoption following the completion of the public consultation process.

**BACKGROUND:**

A Community Improvement Plan is a tool provided by the Municipal Act, 2001, and the Planning Act, 1990, allowing municipalities to assist with the maintenance, rehabilitation, development and redevelopment of targeted areas. Municipalities can provide financial incentives like grants or loans, to property and business owners to directly support improvements and investments in buildings and lands within a defined project area.

In 2021, Council adopted By-laws 31-2021 and 39-2021, establishing a Community Improvement Plan focused on the downtown core. The intent of the original Downtown Community Improvement Plan (DCIP) was to support revitalization of the downtown through targeted financial incentives and public realm improvements.

Since its adoption, the program has supported a number of improvement projects; however, the geographic scope and range of eligible programs have limited its overall uptake and effectiveness.

At their meeting of December 17, 2025, staff presented a report identifying opportunities to modernize and expand the Community Improvement Plan. Council directed staff to proceed with reviewing and updating the CIP to better reflect current community needs and economic development priorities, including:

- Reviewing the goals of the current CIP against those of Council’s Strategic Plan and updating them as necessary.
- Expanding the list of eligible projects to align with those eligible under the County of Renfrew’s regional improvement plan (the HYPE program).
- Increasing the maximum funding amount for all categories to match those provided under the HYPE program.
- Expanding the CIP Area to include all of Deep River to encourage private investment across the various commercial and recreational areas.

Based on that direction, staff have prepared a revised Community Improvement Plan (attachment 1).

**ANALYSIS & RATIONALE:**

The proposed updates are intended to position the CIP as a broader economic development tool that supports investment not only in the downtown core, but also along key areas such as the Highway 17 commercial corridor and other strategic locations within the municipality. The expanded geographical scope and financial incentive programs will also support the overall long-term growth of the Town.

**Draft amendments to the Community Improvement Plan**  
Report Number 2026-PLAN-02

***Updated goals and actions***

The current CIP’s goals and objectives were reviewed against the Town’s Strategic Plan, and progress towards achieving them assessed. Some modifications to the existing goals’ objectives are proposed (primarily references to the downtown were expanded to all commercial and business areas), and new goals added:

Goal	Objectives
Improve the visual and functional aspects of the business and commercial areas of Deep River	Improve the commercial and business building facades and signage through façade and signage improvement grant programs.
	Repair / replace the sidewalks and canopies in the Downtown area.
	Update the streetscape of the Downtown and residential streets by providing amenities such as furnishings and waste receptacles, and by adding landscaping such as shade trees and planter boxes.
Encourage the use of active transportation options (non-motorized transportation) by improving the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and other users within Deep River.	Repair / replace existing sidewalks in poor condition.
	Improve the safety and convenience of the existing network of pedestrian and cyclist street crossing.
	Improve and expand the sidewalk network, considering upgrades to multi-use pathways where feasible.
	Provide additional bicycle parking and related amenities in the downtown core.
	Extend / upgrade the sidewalk network along the Hwy17 corridor.
	Develop an Active transportation plan
Promote a favourable climate to encourage private investment for the development, redevelopment, revitalization, and improvement of the Town.	Support private investment in the development and redevelopment of private properties by offering financial incentive and grant programs for projects which align with the Town’s goals.
	Encourage investment in private lands and properties by investing in municipally-owned lands and amenities.

***Main components of the CIP***

To achieve these goals, the CIP consists of two key components that work together to support the development, redevelopment, revitalization, and investment. The Municipal Leadership Strategy identifies the actions that Council and the Town intend to undertake as part of the CIP. Municipal investment demonstrates the Town’s commitment and is an integral part of encouraging private landowners to invest in their property.

The Town has been achieved significant progress against the municipal leadership initiatives identified in the current CIP, which focus on developing a cohesive streetscaping strategy and infrastructure upgrades in the downtown area.

The proposed list of municipal leadership initiatives in the updated CIP includes:

- Long-term planning:
  - **Develop a Trail and Active Transportation Plan** which identifies cross-town routes and explores connectivity with inter-regional trail networks. Note that this initiative is also identified in the Recreation and Culture Plan development work).
  - Expand and further develop the conceptual **Waterfront improvement strategy** developed in 2022, including strategies to acknowledge and celebrate the Town's indigenous heritage and links to the Ottawa River
- Infrastructure rehabilitation and improvement
  - Continue to implement the primary components of the **Downtown Streetscape Strategy** through improvements to infrastructure, public amenities, landscaping, etc.
  - Work with property owners to identify and implement strategies to **improve the downtown canopies**.
  - Identify and implement improvements to the **functionality and accessibility of the Town's sidewalk network**; support the implementation of the Town's **Accessibility Plan**.

The Financial Incentive program is design to encourage and support private investment which supports the goals of the CIP and the Town's other plans. The set of incentive programs has been expanded to incorporate a wider variety of improvement types, and has been aligned with the County of Renfrew's HYPE program. The list of incentives now includes:

- **Building and property improvement** related grants to support façade and signage improvements, accessibility upgrades, crime prevention, and other related projects
- **Planning and development fee** grants to offset some of the costs associated with development and permitting fees and studies.
- **Housing development grants** to support brownfield redevelopment and infill, and the development of a variety of affordable housing types.
- **Economic vibrancy grants** to support sidewalk patios and pop-ups.

### ***Approval Process***

The proposed changes to the CIP will require:

- An amendment to section 6.2.4 and Schedule D of the Town's Official Plan which describes the Community Improvement Plan Area.
- An amendment / replacement of by-law 39-2021 which designates the Community Improvement Plan Area
- An amendment / replacement of by-law 31-2021 to adopt the amended Community Improvement Plan

The Planning Act lays out the required amendment process for Official Plan amendments and similarly CIP amendments. This process includes public consultation. Upon Council's endorsement of the proposed changes, staff will initiate the public consultation and public agency notification process. This will include public advertising of the proposed draft and an associated community survey. Staff will send targeted communications to local business owners inviting feedback. Depending on the feedback received, staff will consider holding an open house to allow for more detailed questions from the public.

Formal notifications of the proposed amendments will be sent to the County of Renfrew, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and other public agencies as required by the Planning Act.

### **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

Various goals, objectives, actions, and financial grants and funding amounts were considered in preparing this report. Those presented in the proposed CIP are aligned with the Town's Strategic Plan, draft Recreation and Culture Master Plan, and Asset Management Plan, and the County of Renfrew's HYPE program.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The recommendations of this report will require some direct expenses related to the public consultation process. These expenses are included in the 2026 budget; no additional funding is required.

Note that since Council adopted the CIP in 2021, funding for the financial incentive program has been included in the Town's operating budget. In 2026, the amount allocated was \$25,000. Staff anticipate that the proposed amendments will result in higher application rates.

The County of Renfrew's HYPE program reimburses lower tier municipalities up to 50% of eligible grants the municipality awards. This allows the Town to increase the maximum grant amount that can be awarded for any specific project, without an equivalent increase in the Town's portion of the grant.

Note that, since the County only reviews and approves HYPE grants **after** the Town approves an application, there is some risk the County does not approve an application. This would mean that the Town would have to cover the full award amount for that application. Aligning our incentive program criteria as closely as possible with that of the County will minimize this risk.

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN:**

**A Vibrant and Growing Community** - We will strengthen our economic vitality and support population growth for a diverse, dynamic, and inclusive community.

- Improve the vibrancy of our downtown and commercial areas
- Engage and support our small business community
- Encourage and support sustainable housing development

**Community Wellness and Quality of Life** - We will build a healthier and more inclusive community

- Improve and enhance accessibility, walkability, and connectivity throughout town

**Fit for Purpose Infrastructure** - We will actively manage and enhance our infrastructure to meet the needs of our community.

- Focus on improvements to our infrastructure

**CONSULTATIONS:**

- City of Pembroke Economic Development department
- County of Renfrew Economic Development department

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**Attachment 1:** Proposed draft Community Improvement Plan