

Background Information Report

Downtown Community Improvement Plan for the Town of Deep River

January 22, 2021



CIP is Unique Municipal Tool

The Town of Deep River initiated a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) project to create a strategy to revitalize and rehabilitate the Downtown Core.

A CIP is a unique municipal tool in Ontario designed assist with the maintenance, rehabilitation, development, and redevelopment of targeted areas by providing municipal incentives to encourage private sector investment in the community.

Community Improvement Plans generally focus on commercial and industrial properties, CIP funding programs can include residential, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable, or other uses, in addition to commercial and industrial uses.

The Downtown Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) was designated, by by-law No. 39-2020, by Council on October 7, 2020.

CIP Background Report

The Background Report:

- Presents the policy framework review for the preparation of the CIP;
- Presents the results of community and stakeholder consultation;
- Presents options for programs to be contained in the CIP;
- Provides recommendation on the formation of a CIP Strategy

Community Consultation

Broad community consultation was undertaken:

- ❑ **Business Owners** – a business owners survey was distributed to the business owners, tenants, and property owners within the Downtown Community Improvement Project Area.
- ❑ **The Community** – members of the public were invited to participate in an online survey which looked to assess the existing features of the downtown core.
- ❑ **Council** – individual interviews were held with various members of Council to gain their input on the downtown.
- ❑ **Town Staff** – individual interviews with various members of Town staff were conducted in person and over the phone.

Consultation Results

Consultation identified a number of key elements of the downtown in need of improvement:

- Canopies
- Sidewalks
- Building Façades
- Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety
- Building Accessibility
- Signage along the highway
- Parking
- Seating and Landscaping
- Garbage and Recycling receptacles

Recommendation #1: Financial Incentive Programs

Recommendations for financial incentive programs were based on input of the business owners, the property owners and tenants. The recommended financial incentive programs are:

- Façade Improvement Grant Program;
- Signage Improvement Grant Program;
- Building Improvement/Energy Efficiency Grant Program;
- Accessibility Improvement Grant Program;
- Tax Deferral Program (for 5 years); and
- Municipal Application/Permit Fees Grant.

Recommendation #2: Municipal Leadership Strategy

Recommendations for the Municipal Leadership strategy were developed with input from Town Staff and Council

- ❑ **Streetscaping Plan** – The Plan would provide a guide to improving the public lands within the Downtown Community Improvement Area.
- ❑ **Canopy Re-development** – The improvement/replacement of the canopies is a high priority as it was a key topic of discussion and identified as a priority in all four groups of consultation.
- ❑ **Infrastructure** – Downtown Deep River was established in the 1950s and are reaching their end of life. The replacement of the pipes concurrent with the canopies and sidewalks upgrades would create a cohesive appearance.
- ❑ **Gateway and Wayfinding** – Developing signage to draw those on the highway into the downtown was mentioned frequently during the consultation stage and identified as a key priority.

Next Steps

1. Acceptance of the Background Report
2. Preparation of the draft CIP Program for Council Consideration
3. Holding of a Public Meeting to introduce CIP Program to public and receive feedback
4. Finalize the CIP Program and adopt by By-law
5. Establish a 2021 Budget for Implement the CIP Program