

SOUTH DUNDAS

Community
Improvement
Plan
July 17, 2018



About the Community Improvement Plan

The Municipality of South Dundas is pleased to offer a community initiative that works toward improving our existing commercial industry. The Community Improvement Plan offers business and commercial owners (grants & loan) or renters (grants), within designated Community Improvement Areas, the opportunity to access funding through the form of grants and loans to improve their commercial buildings.

Finding the resources to improve an existing commercial business, whether it is improving an exterior façade, installing new signage or interior renovations, can be difficult. Through the Community Improvement Plan, grant and loan money will be made available in order to assist with exterior façade, signage and interior improvements. Improvements can range from the installation of new signage, to fully restoring historical features on a building.

Applications for this program are available through the Municipal office as well as the Municipal website. A Review Committee appointed by Council is responsible for the review of each application and the awarding of grants. Repayable loans are subject to Council approval.

This Plan is a guide for business owners/commercial property owners to use when considering funding options for their projects. The Plan lays out the eligibility criteria for each specific program as well as general guidelines to consider when undertaking an improvement project.



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1.0 Introduction

The Municipality of South Dundas is a growing municipality and is the perfect place to live or locate your business. South Dundas is strategically situated in Eastern Ontario and is linked to larger urban centres through a variety of transportation networks.

2.0 Community Improvement Plan

2.1 Overview

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that allows a municipality to direct funds and implements policy initiatives toward a specifically defined project area. Section 28 of the Planning Act gives municipalities that have enabling policies in their Official Plans, the ability to prepare and enact, through By-law(s), Community Improvement Project Area(s) and a Community Improvement Plan. The Community Improvement Plan is intended to encourage rehabilitation initiatives and/or stimulate development. Once implemented, the plan allows municipalities to provide grants or loans to assist in the rehabilitation of lands and/or buildings within the defined boundaries of a Community Improvement Project Areas.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Community Improvement Plan is to provide existing commercial businesses with financial incentives to improve their building's exterior facades, signage and/or building interior. Financial incentives will be in the form of grants and/or loans as made available through the Community Improvement Plan for eligible applicants.

2.3 Goals and Objectives

The objectives of the CIP include, but are not limited to:

- a) To maintain the well-being of areas in urban and rural settlement areas.
- b) To provide a safe, vibrant, pedestrian friendly environment;
- c) To provide an attractive and inviting environment;
- d) To provide a cleaner, healthier, safer environment;
- e) To increase employment, economic activity and investment;
- f) To provide for a balanced opportunity for growth and settlement;
- g) To ensure that community improvement projects are carried out within the Community Improvement Area. See Schedule A for the Map;
- h) To ensure the maintenance of the existing building stock;
- i) To encourage private sector investment and the strengthening of the economic base;
- j) To enhance the visual appearance of Community Improvement Project Areas;
- k) To revitalize the Urban Settlement Areas as commercial nodes and vibrant shopping destinations;
- l) To encourage the continued commercial vitality and economic viability throughout all seasons of the year;
- m) To integrate the conservation of heritage resources within development and infrastructure decisions which may affect those resources;
- n) To create an attractive image of the Municipality that reflects the character of the community;
- o) To protect and enhance the character of the Village centres.

3.0 Community Improvement Areas

The CIP is composed of a single Community Improvement Project Area encompassing the Municipality of South Dundas in its entirety.

4.0 Legislation

4.1 Municipal Act

Section 106 of the Municipal Act prohibits a Municipality from providing assistance:

- (1) *Despite any Act, a municipality shall not assist directly or indirectly any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses for that purpose. 2001, c. 25, s. 106 (1).*
- (2) *Without limiting subsection (1), the municipality shall not grant assistance by,*
 - a) *giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money;*
 - b) *guaranteeing borrowing;*
 - c) *leasing or selling any property of the municipality at below fair market value; or*
 - d) *giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee. 2001, c. 25, s. 106 (2).*

Section 106 (3) provides an exception to the above:

- (3) *Subsection (1) does not apply to a council exercising its authority under subsection 28 (6), (7) or (7.2) of the Planning Act or under section 365.1 of this Act. 2001, c. 25, s. 106 (3); 2002, c. 17, Sched. A, s. 23; 2006, c. 23, s. 34.*

4.2 Planning Act

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act permits municipalities to approve a Community Improvement Plan. The Act defines a Community Improvement Plan as:

“a plan for the community improvement of a community improvement project area.”

Section 28 (1.2) explains the process under which a Community Improvement Plan can be established:

Where there is an Official Plan in effect in a local municipality or in a prescribed upper-tier municipality that contains provisions relating to community improvement in the municipality, the council may, by by-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a community improvement project area. R.S.O. 1990, c. P.13, s. 28 (2); 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (3).

The Act further identifies provisions with respect to grants, loans, agreements and maximum eligibility. It additionally requires the municipality to have provisions set out in their Official Plan.

Section 28 (7.3) of the Planning Act states:

The total of the grants and loans made in respect of particular lands and buildings under subsections (7) and (7.2) and the tax assistance as defined in section 365.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001 or section 333 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006, as the case may be, that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement plan with respect to those lands and buildings. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8); 2006, c. 32, Sched. C, s. 48 (3).

4.3 Official Plan of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

The Municipality no longer has an Official Plan, the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Official Plan is the guiding/enabling document for Community Improvement Plans. The United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Official Plan (approved February 4, 2018), addresses the Community Improvement Plan, as follows:

8.14.5 Community Improvement – Section 28

1. *A Local municipality may, subject to the provisions of the Planning Act, carry out physical improvements within the community. The County may also make grants or loans to the Council of a local municipality for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan, on such terms as council considers appropriate. In establishing a Community Improvement Area, consideration shall be given to the following matters:*
 - A. *The extent or deficiencies in public services, **public service facilities or infrastructure.***
 - B. *Building stock, including municipal buildings, which do not meet a Local Municipality's **Property Standard By-law.***
 - C. *The presence of vacant buildings/lands that could be developed, redeveloped or converted to another use.*

- D. The opportunity to expand the supply of housing.*
- E. The need to improve the streetscape or aesthetics of an area.*
- F. The presence of incompatible land uses.*
- G. The presence of older industrial lands ('Brownfield') that exhibit deficiencies but provide opportunities for redevelopment.*

2. *The intent of this Plan is to recognize the entire County as a Community Improvement Area eligible for the establishment of one or more Community Improvement Project Areas.*

A Local Municipality may implement measures for community improvement including, but not limited to:

- A. The designation of Community Improvement Project Areas by by-law and the preparation of Community Improvement Plans for one or more project areas.*
- B. Scheduling community improvement projects in accordance with municipal budgets.*
- C. Enforcement of the Property Standards By-law.*
- D. Utilizing senior government funding programs and/or partnering or soliciting financial support or contributions in kind from the public or private sector.*
- E. Supporting, through the development of land use and design criteria, proposals for conversion, infill, redevelopment or intensification of land or buildings.*
- F. Pursuant to Section 28 (3) of the Planning Act, a Local Municipality may acquire and clear land for the purposes of implementing a program of community improvement.*
- G. Preparing appropriate policies and guidelines to direct streetscape improvements in residential, commercial and industrial areas.*
- H. Providing and encouraging buffering techniques to reduce the impact of incompatible land uses using mechanisms such as site plan control and development permits.*
- I. Considering the use of property tax or other financial or other incentives for the redevelopment of 'Brownfield' or older industrial or commercial areas or other areas considered suitable for redevelopment.*
- J. Supporting Municipal Heritage Committee and heritage conservation initiatives as set out in the heritage policies of this Plan.*

- K. *Providing grants or loans to the registered owners or assessed owners of lands and buildings within a community improvement project area to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of rehabilitating such lands, or in undertaking other measures which conform to the community improvement plan.*
- L. *To reduce flooding in hazard or flood prone lands by encouraging the conservation authorities to develop and identify a two zone concept for flood plain management in areas of historical development.*

4.4 Municipality of South Dundas Economic Development Action Plan

The Municipality of South Dundas adopted an Economic Development Strategic Plan on April 18, 2017. Section 11.4 Community Development includes the following action point:

- Undertake the creation of Community Improvement Plans for priority areas of South Dundas.

5.0 Commercial Building Improvement Grant and Loan Program

5.1 Purpose

To encourage and provide a program for exterior and interior design changes to stimulate redevelopment and revitalization of the Urban Settlement Area, Rural Settlement Areas and fringe commercial areas.

To encourage and provide a program to rehabilitate existing commercial/mixed use buildings. This will promote improvement of the physical exterior conditions, signage and interior improvements that would otherwise be considered cost prohibitive by a landowner.

5.2 Façade Improvement and Signage Grant Program Description

The Municipality is providing two different grant programs for which a commercial property business and/or owners can apply for: Façade Improvements, and Signage/Awnings. The following grants are meant to improve the exterior conditions of existing structures within the designated CIP areas and provide funding for new signage and awnings. The Façade and Signage/Awning grants are only applicable to existing buildings. A maximum grant of \$5,000 is available: \$4,000 for façade improvements (including design and permit fees) and \$1,000 for signage/awnings.



Façade Improvement Grant

A onetime grant of 50% to a maximum of \$4,000 is available to assist property owners or tenants or assignees (under the provisions of Section 5.5 Eligibility) to improve the façade. Applicable design fees and building permit fees are eligible costs. Grant applicants shall consider the entire façade of the building.

Signage and Awning Grant

A onetime matching grant of 50% up to a maximum of \$1,000 is available to assist property owners or tenants or assignees (under the provisions of Section 5.5 Eligibility) to improve or install appropriate signage or awnings on an existing commercial building.

General Terms

- i. Works as set out in the Agreement must be completed prior to the grant portion being distributed and upon submission of proof of payment.
- ii. An Owner/Tenant of a property may conduct the proposed works themselves, however, the Municipality will not grant funds for labour by the owner/tenant.
- iii. Works must be completed within one year of the approved agreement unless an extension of a defined period of time (not to exceed 3 months) is approved by the Municipality.
- iv. Grant funds are only released once the work is completed, receipts for the work are presented and work is completed to the satisfaction of the Municipality.
- v. Applications reviewed as they are submitted, subject to available budgeted funding.

5.3 Commercial Improvement Loan Program Description

The purpose of Commercial Improvement Loan Program is to provide an interest free loan to commercial property owners (as set out under section 5.5 Eligibility). All successful applicants must enter into an agreement with the Municipality in order to receive the loan. Applicants can apply for a loan for exterior façade improvements, signage and/or interior improvements.

Commercial Improvements

In addition to exterior façade improvements and signage, Owners of an eligible commercial building can apply for an interest free loan to help finance the restoration, repair or renovation of their building. Only owners of the building are able to apply to this program. Applicable design fees and building permit fees are eligible costs. Interior improvements are not eligible for grant money. For eligible costs, see section

General Terms

- i. An interest free loan up to a maximum of \$20,000 repayable over 5 years is available to assist commercial property owners to improve their building in accordance with the Commercial Improvement program.
- ii. An Owner of a property may conduct the proposed work themselves, however, the Municipality will not grant funds for labour by the owner.
- iii. Only the Owner of a property can apply for the loan program.
- iv. The loan portion is repayable over a five year period, interest free as set out in the Agreement.
- v. Works must be completed within one year of the approved agreement unless an extension of a defined period of time (not to exceed 3 months) is approved by the Municipality.
- vi. Loan funds are released when invoices are presented for the completed work.
- vii. Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted, however, availability of loans cannot be guaranteed.

5.4 Design Guidelines

The following design guidelines are to help the property owner embarking on a restoration or improvement project. All applications are subject to committee review. The following design guidelines are meant to provide an overview of what the Review Committee is looking for, however, the applicant is not limited to these suggestions.

Exterior Façade Improvements

Exterior façade improvements are meant to restore and improve the aesthetic looks of an existing building. The purpose of façade improvements may be to restore heritage features that have been covered up over time, to improve the quality of the materials or to enhance the street appeal of a business. The following recommendations for exterior façade improvements will be considered when reviewing an application.

- a) Repainting, cleaning or re-facing of the front façade and the side façades as long as the sides are consistent with the front façade improvements being completed and only for a reasonable distance from the front of the building considering sight lines from the street.
- b) Repair or restoration of façade masonry, brickwork or wood.
- c) Exterior woodwork.
- d) Replacement, repair or restoration of cornices, eaves, parapets and other architectural features.
- e) Paint (including removal, surface preparation, cleaning and/or painting).
- f) Installation or repair of exterior lighting.
- g) Restoration of historic features.
- h) Continuity with existing/surrounding buildings.
- i) Entranceway modifications that improve the appearance and/or access to the commercial units.
- j) Replacement or repair of windows and doors with improved energy efficiency as part of a comprehensive façade improvement.
- k) Architectural or design fees may be eligible up to \$500 as part of the total grant awarded for completed construction.

Signage

Signage is one facet of improving the façade of an existing building. Signs help identify the location of a business as well as attract and draw in customers. The following design guidelines are highly recommended for (but are not limited to) the improvement and installation of signs within community improvement areas.

- a) Signs must conform to Section 3.15 of the Ontario Building Code, as amended.

- b) Signs attached to the same building should be located at similar height and be of similar size.
- c) Large neon signs, internally lit signs and/or flashing signs are strongly discouraged.
- d) Signs that are to be located along a County Road must obtain a sign permit from the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.
- e) Signs that are not attached to a building must be less than 3.5 metres in height from the ground and must not block a public right-of-way.
- f) Signs should not cover up decorative, architectural and/or heritage features on a building.
- g) Shielded light sources are encouraged for the illumination of signs.
- h) Signs should not consume more than 25% of a window's surface.
- i) For buildings that are two storeys or greater in height, signs must be located no higher than the ceiling height of the first storey.
- j) Historic signs on existing buildings should be restored and reused if possible.
- k) Facia signs are considered as primary signs. Projecting/hanging signs are considered as secondary.
- l) Signs must be in accordance with the applicable Municipal, Provincial and Federal policies, by-laws, provisions, standards and guidelines.



Example of unacceptable forms of signage (backlit and neon signs)

Awnings

Awnings can add a decorative and historic touch to the front of a building. Awnings can also be used to further attract attention through the incorporation of signage.

- a) Awnings should not cover up decorative, architectural and/or heritage features.
- b) Awnings must comply with the building code.
- c) The installation or repair of canopies and awnings are encouraged.

- d) Signage may be incorporated into an awning for use as a secondary sign.
- e) Awnings should be used to project over individual windows or doorways.
- f) Retractable awnings and shed type awnings are encouraged.
- g) Awnings must be in accordance with the applicable Municipal, Provincial and Federal policies, by-laws, provisions, standards and guidelines.



*Example of an acceptable form of awning
(Retractable Awning)*

Façade Improvement Grant Example:

A commercial building owner located within the Community Improvement Project Area is interested in improving their exterior façade through the Municipality of South Dundas' CIP program. The Owner is also looking at installing a new sign to provide greater visibility of their store and to improve the exterior condition of their façade.

The breakdown of costs is as follows:

New Signage: \$800
 Exterior Improvements: \$3,500
 Total Cost of Project: \$4,300

Under the Façade Improvement Program the Owner is eligible for the following Grants:

New Signage Grant (50% of the eligible cost to a maximum of \$1,000): \$400
 Exterior Improvements (50% of the eligible costs to a maximum of \$4,000): \$1,750
Total Grants Payable: \$2,150

On the completion of the exterior façade improvements and sign installation, the Review Committee inspects the improvements and the conditions of the agreement. The Owner has met all the requirements as per the agreement set out with the Municipality and is provided with a grant totaling \$2,150.

Commercial Improvement Loan Guidelines

The following guidelines detail the types of works that are considered eligible costs under the commercial improvement loan program. Applicants are not limited to the following guidelines. Further suggestions/proposals will be subject to the discretion of the Review Committee.

- a) Entrance modifications to provide barrier-free accessibility;
- b) Installation/upgrading of fire protection systems;
- c) Repair/replacement of roof;
- d) Structural repairs to walls, ceilings, floors and foundations;
- e) Water/flood/weatherproofing;
- f) Repair/replacement of windows and doors;
- g) Paving and repairs to parking lots;
- h) Landscaping improvements;
- i) Extension/upgrading of plumbing and electrical services for the creation of retail or office space;
- j) Installation of new or the required improvements to heating and ventilation and air conditioning systems;
- k) Other similar repairs/improvements related to health and safety issues, as may be approved.
- l) Architectural or design fees may be eligible up to \$500 as part of the total loan awarded for completed construction.

5.5 Eligibility

The following criteria will be used when evaluating and considering an application made to the Commercial Building Improvement Grant and Commercial Building Improvement Loan Programs.

- a) Must be located within the Commercial Improvement Area.
- b) Properties that have a commercial use and are either commercially zoned and/or commercially assessed (either fully or partially).
- c) Successful applicants/properties may reapply for grants and loans. New applicants/properties may receive priority for funding. Only one CIP loan can be outstanding on a property.

- d) Applicants must be commercial building owners or tenants of the buildings who operate a business within the CIP area.
 - i. Applicants for the CIP Grant program may be tenants of a property with the authorization of the Owner.
 - ii. Applicants for the CIP Loan program must be the property Owners.
- e) The Applicant is required to enter into an agreement with the Municipality.
- f) An application for a Commercial Building Improvement Program (grant and/or loan) must be consistent with the Official Plan and the Community Improvement Plan's goals and objectives.
- g) The provision of grants and/or loans is subject to funding availability and yearly budget allocation from South Dundas Council. However, the Municipality of South Dundas is committed to offering financial incentives for this term of Council, and the Municipalities' level of commitment will be revisited at the beginning of each new term of Council.
- h) Works completed or started prior to approval by the Municipality are not eligible. Costs in excess of the Agreement are the responsibility of the Owner/Applicant.
- i) Applications will be accepted and reviewed as they are submitted, subject to availability of funds and approval by Council.
- j) Total value of all grants and loans under the program cannot exceed the value of the work done.
- k) Stacking of grants is allowed (funding provided through the Local CIP may be used in partnership with other funding sources.)
- l) Applicants may apply for both the grant and loan programs. Interior improvements are only eligible under the loan program.
- m) Property owners who are in arrears of taxes, water and sewer or any other municipal accounts receivable are not eligible to receive a grant or loan.
- n) To be eligible, all outstanding work orders must be satisfied and the applicant may not have any outstanding building permit or bylaw infractions.
- o) If the applicant is in default of any of the general or program specific requirements, or any other requirements of the Municipality, the Municipality may delay, reduce or cancel the approved grant/loan and require repayment of the approved grant/loan;

- p) The Municipality may discontinue any of the programs contained in this CIP at any time, but applicants with approved grants/loans will still receive said grant/loan, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements.
- q) Eligible applicants can apply for one, more or all of the incentive programs contained in this CIP, but no two programs may be used to pay for the same eligible cost. Also, the total of all grants and loans provided in respect of the subject property for which an applicant is making application under the programs contained in the CIP shall not exceed the eligible cost of the improvements to that property;
- r) Photographs of the properties/buildings that receive a grant/loan may be used by the Municipality to enable the monitoring and marketing of the CIP.
- s) Development must conform to the approved Official Plan, Zoning By-law and all other municipal by-laws, County By-laws, legislation and supporting regulations/approvals by other levels of government.
- t) Eligible façade improvements will include repair/restoration/ replacement/installation of exterior features including but not limited to the criteria as determined by the Municipality as set out in Section 5.4.

5.6 Application and Approval Process

Application Submission	Application Review and Evaluation	Application Approval	Payment of Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant submits application with supporting documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Committee reviews the application in the context of the goals and objectives of the CIP Committee recommends the application for approval by Council or rejects the application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If an application is approved, an agreement is executed between the Municipality and the Applicant Depending on the program, a by-law may be required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant demonstrates that work has been completed as per the agreement Funds are released or paid to the Applicant on completion of work

- a) Applicants are required to complete the application form.
- b) Applicants are required to submit supporting documentation such as specifications of the proposed project including plans, drawings, and photographs of the existing building, past photos or drawings.
- c) A minimum of two quotes is required for the requested works. Consideration will be taken if the owner is completing the work themselves; however personal labour is not an eligible cost under this program.

- d) Applicants are required to obtain all necessary building, encroachment or work permits.
- e) Applications may be circulated to any internal municipal departments for review and comment.
- f) The Review Committee will also consider the following criteria when reviewing applications: location, total project value, project necessity for business continuation and whether funding was previously granted to the applicant or property.
- g) If the application meets all relevant criteria, the Review Committee will recommend approval of the application to Council. A business plan may be a requirement by the Review Committee.
- h) Final decisions on applications, extensions and allocation of funds shall be made by Council. If the Municipality delegates its authority then the applicant shall be afforded an opportunity to appeal the staff/committee decision to Council.
- i) Upon approval by Council, the applicant will be required to sign a site specific agreement with the Municipality. Council will approve or refuse any incentive or combination of incentives.
- j) Upon completion of the façade, awning and signage works as set out in the agreement and upon payment by the applicant, they are to submit proof of payment to the Municipality along with photos of said works.
- k) Upon completion of the commercial improvement loan work, they are to submit copies of the relevant invoices to the Municipality along with photos of said works.
- l) The Committee will review the documentation, photos and conduct a site inspection.
- m) If the Committee is satisfied with the completed works as outlined in the agreement, a cheque requisition will be submitted as set out in the agreement.
- n) The cheque requisition will be part of the next available cheque disbursement by the Municipality.
- o) All work approved by Council must be completed within one year of the date of the agreement or the Agreement shall be null and void.

5.6.1 Terms of Loan Repayment

- a) The Recipient(s) shall repay the Loan as follows:
 - i. The term of the Loan shall be 5 years and the annual principal amount of the Loan coming due in each year shall be added to the Recipient(s)' municipal tax account and collected in the same manner as taxes as described in the Schedule B attached to the site specific agreement.
 - ii. The loan shall be interest free for the term of the loan, unless the loan is in default.
- b) The Recipient(s) acknowledges that the Loan and any interest thereon shall form a lien or charge upon the property until the Loan has been repaid in full.
- c) Should the property be sold prior to the fulfillment of the terms of the Agreement, the financial obligation shall immediately become due and payable, and shall be paid in full by the Recipient(s) before legal title can be transferred to the purchaser.
- d) The loan agreement is non-transferable.

6.0 Monitoring Program

The CIP is intended to provide a proactive approach to the redevelopment of commercial property within the Municipality of South Dundas. The CIP is an opportunity for job retention and creation, increased tax assessment etc. The Municipality will monitor:

- a) Jobs created/maintained
- b) Approved applications
- c) Unapproved applications and the reasons
- d) Increase in municipal property assessment as a result of improvements
- e) Compile participant comments on their experience
- f) Monitor visual appearance of the community

7.0 Marketing the CIP

The successful implementation of the CIP depends on the ability of the initiatives and funding opportunities to be effectively communicated to property owners, business owners, and community organizations. The CIP and application forms will be available at the Municipal Office and on the Municipal website.

8.0 Amendments to the CIP

As the plan is implemented, the Plan may be refined to best meet the goals and objectives outlined in this plan. The programs may be altered at any time without an amendment to the plan. An expansion of the CIP area or an increase to the value of the financial programs would require amendment of the Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act.

9.0 Review of the CIP

This CIP will be valid for five years from the date of Council adoption. The Municipality will have an opportunity to review the plan and bring forward recommendations prior to the lapsing of the five year period as to whether the program should continue. The program may be renewed for a maximum of 3 (three) years by by-law.

10.0 Definitions

Agreement shall mean the terms, duration and default provisions of the grant/loan between the property owner and the Municipality. The Agreement is also subject to approval by Council.

Applicant shall mean the registered owner, assessed owner or tenants of lands and buildings within the Community Improvement Project Area and any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan.

Community Improvement means the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, 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 therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary;

Community Improvement Plan means a plan for the community improvement of a Community Improvement Project Area;

Community Improvement Project Area means 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 buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

Eligible Costs shall include the cost of materials, equipment, building permits and planning fees, and contracted labour. The cost of a study to determine the feasibility of undertaking the rehabilitation project may be eligible subject to consultation with the Municipality. Grants will be paid upon completion of work and approval by the Municipality.

Owner means the registered owner of the lands and includes any successors, assignees, agents, partners and any affiliated corporations.

Municipality means The Corporation of the Municipality of South Dundas.



11.0 Section 2 – Regional Incentives Program

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1 SECTION 2— INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.0 PURPOSE

This section of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is supported and funded by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) and supported by local municipalities. The County developed these regional incentives as part of a broad, progressive framework to support broad economic development goals. As an upper-tier municipality with six unique local municipalities, SDG coordinates regional funding through this program to advance economic priorities where the need is the greatest and where there will be demonstrable County-wide benefits.

Regional economic initiatives focus on: **agriculture-related** projects, adaptive re-use of commercial, industrial, and institutional buildings/structures, and the development of **roofed accommodations** across the County. The County offers customized financial programs within these areas based on Council's annual priorities.

1.1 AUTHORITY UNDER THE *PLANNING ACT*

The Ontario *Planning Act* (Section 28) permits local municipalities to adopt CIPs to encourage revitalization, redevelopment, and to advance local economic priorities. These programs help address community planning issues, breathe life into downtowns, and support key sectors within the region.

The *Planning Act* allows upper-tier municipalities to participate in local CIPs through Section 28 (7.2), as follows:

Grants or loans between upper and lower-tier municipalities

The Council of an upper-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of a lower-tier municipality and the council of a lower-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of the upper-tier municipality, for the purposes of carrying out a community improvement plan that has come into effect, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, but only if the official plan of the municipality making the grant or loan contains provisions relating to the making of such grants or loans.

In recent years several upper-tier municipalities in Ontario have used this policy to create funding opportunities that expand the scope of local CIP programs.

1.1.1 SDG Official Plan

The SDG Official Plan serves as the Official Plan for both the County and its local municipalities. The SDG Official Plan includes two key policies that support the County's participation in local CIP programs:

3.5.1.10 Community Improvement:

Local municipalities may undertake community improvement projects as authorized under Section 28 of the Planning Act (see Section 8.12.5). County Council may also make grants or loans to the council of a lower tier municipality for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan, on such terms as council considers appropriate.

8.12.5 Community Improvement – Section 28

1. *A Local municipality may, subject to the provisions of the Planning Act, carry out physical improvements within the community. The County may also make grants or loans to the Council of a local municipality for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan, on such terms as council considers appropriate. In establishing a Community Improvement Area, consideration shall be given to the following matters:*
 - a. *The extent or deficiencies in public services, public service facilities or infrastructure;*
 - b. *Building stock, including municipal buildings, which do not meet a Local Municipality's Property Standards By-law;*
 - c. *The presence of vacant buildings/lands that could be developed, redeveloped or converted to another use;*
 - d. *The opportunity to expand the supply of housing;*
 - e. *The need to improve the streetscape or aesthetics of an area;*
 - f. *The presence of incompatible land uses; and*
 - g. *The presence of older industrial lands (e.g. brownfields) that exhibit deficiencies but provide opportunities for redevelopment.*
2. *The intent of this Plan is to recognize the entire County as a Community Improvement Area eligible for the establishment of one or more Community Improvement Project Areas.*

A local Municipality may implement measures for community improvement including, but not limited to:

- a. *The designation of Community Improvement Project Areas by By-law and the preparation of Community Improvement Plans for one or more project areas.*
- b. *Scheduling community improvement projects in accordance with municipal budgets.*
- c. *Enforcement of the Property Standards By-law.*
- d. *Utilizing senior government funding programs and/or partnering or soliciting financial support or contributions in kind from the public or private sector.*
- e. *Supporting, through the development of land use and design criteria, proposals for conversion, infill, redevelopment or intensification of land or buildings.*
- f. *Pursuant to Section 28 (3) of the Planning Act, a Local municipality may acquire and clear land for the purposes of implementing a program of community improvement.*
- g. *Preparing appropriate policies and guidelines to direct streetscape improvements in residential, commercial and industrial areas.*
- h. *Providing and encouraging buffering techniques to reduce the impact of incompatible land uses using mechanisms such as site plan control and development permits.*
- i. *Considering the use of property tax or other financial incentives for the redevelopment of 'Brownfield', older industrial areas, commercial areas, or other areas considered suitable for redevelopment.*
- j. *Supporting Municipal Heritage Committee and heritage conservation initiatives as set out in the heritage policies of this Plan.*
- k. *Providing grants or loans to the registered **owners** or assessed **owners** of lands and buildings within a community improvement project area to pay for the whole or any part of the cost of*

rehabilitating such lands, or in undertaking other measures which conform to the community improvement plan.

- I. To reduce flooding in hazard or flood prone lands by encouraging the conservation authorities to develop and identify a two-zone concept for flood plain management in areas of historical development.*

1.2 REGIONAL CONTEXT

The SDG Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2017) identified three high-level goals which anchor and qualify all strategic initiatives for the County over the next three to five years: Regional Promotion and Investment Attraction; Small Business and Entrepreneurship and Business Retention and Expansion; and, Investment Readiness. These goals provide an overarching vision for economic development planning.

Within this framework, the SDG Regional Incentives Program supports strategic economic development initiatives in the following areas:

- a) **Agriculture-related, agri-tourism**, and facility improvement projects;
- b) Regional trail expansion and development of trail systems;
- c) Adaptive re-use of commercial, institutional, and industrial buildings; and,
- d) Development of permanent **roofed accommodations**.

Regional financial incentives are available in the following municipalities:

- 1) The Township of North Dundas;
- 2) The Municipality of South Dundas;
- 3) The Township of North Stormont;
- 4) The Township of South Stormont;
- 5) The Township of North Glengarry; and
- 6) The Township of South Glengarry.

The SDG Regional Incentives Program is incorporated as part of a local CIP and offer additional economic development tools in an expanded area. In some cases, different components of a project may be eligible for both local and County funding, subject to the eligibility criteria of Section 2.2.

1.3 SDG REGIONAL ECONOMIC GOALS

1. Encourage redevelopment and private sector investment in existing building stock within the County to support employment, reduce the number of vacant buildings, and increase the assessment base;
2. Promote active recreation, tourism, and the continued development or enhancement of the trail network within the municipality especially within the waterfront area;
3. Stimulate investment in the agricultural sector by funding diverse, on-farm expansions and **agri-tourism**; and,
4. Increase the amount of tourist accommodation available within the County and enhance and expand existing establishments.

1.4 SDG REGIONAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM AREA

The approved program area includes all lands within the Municipality of South Dundas. These lands have been designated by By-law and are shown on Schedule A of this Plan.

The financial incentives included in this plan may be available to registered *owners* or tenants (upon written landowner consent) of land or buildings within the Project Area.

1.5 MUNICIPAL AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The County formed a Working Group in 2017 made up of planning and economic development staff and Councilors from the County and local municipalities. The Working Group reviewed the potential for regional involvement in local CIPs. Two models for developing a regional program were proposed: one consistent template for all municipalities; or, unique local CIPs with a consistent regional section. The County decided to move forward with a standard regional section that could be incorporated into the existing, unique, local CIPs. The Working Group agreed to continue to meet, as needed, to collaborate on public engagement and promotion.

In December 2017 the County confirmed a long-term funding commitment from Council; funds were subsequently included in the 2018 budget. The regional incentives scope, timeframe, and contents were developed in collaboration with the SDG Economic Development and Planning Group.

The County also engaged the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) at the outset of the process. The MMAH held a CIP training session for County and local municipal staff in December 2017 and offered advice and suggestions throughout the development process.

Beginning in February 2018, the County, in partnership with local municipalities, held six public consultations. Additionally, a survey to collect feedback and suggestions on the proposed regional incentives was made available online. Through these meetings with local business *owners* and residents, the County received valuable feedback including:

- Importance of local and regional trails and cycling networks;
- Providing funding to not-for-profit organizations;
- Encouraging collaboration between SDG Regional Tourism partners;
- Promoting areas across the County, not only downtown locations;
- Prioritizing projects which include accessibility initiatives; and
- Offering a variety of ways in which applicants can submit project proposals (i.e. online, live pitches, etc.).

2 FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

2.0 GENERAL

The County believes that 50% matching grant funding is a direct, predictable, and simple way to stimulate private sector investment, attract and retain businesses, and increase tax assessment. These grants are

available to all eligible property **owners** and authorized tenants, including bona fide non-profit organizations and local municipalities.

Where a property is eligible for local municipal funding through one of the incentive programs (e.g. façade improvement) the County will not fund the same incentive; however, the County may fund a different type of incentive on the same property (e.g. landscaping), as part of the overall project enhancement.

2.1 REGIONAL FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The following incentive programs may be offered during the term of this program, subject to the availability of County resources:

1. Façade, Signage, and Property Improvement Grant;
2. Building Improvement/Restoration Grant;
3. Building Conversion/Expansion Grant;
4. Outdoor Art Grant;
5. Trails Improvement Grant;
6. Planning, Design, and Study Grant;
7. Application and Permit Fees Grant;

The regional incentives are a collaborative effort between the County and local municipalities. Applications will generally be received by the local municipality and reviewed and approved by the County. The County will host an Implementation Committee made up of County staff, the Warden, and representatives from the local municipalities (who have applications during that intake period) to review applications for regional incentives. Funding for approved regional initiatives will flow directly to the local municipality and **not to the applicant**.

Detailed information about each program can be found in Section 2.3. Any number of the grants identified above may be put into effect during the term of this document, subject to the availability of funds and resources. The funds will be available to applicants County-wide on a first come, first served basis, provided that the eligibility, scoring, and award process criteria are met. Annually, the Committee responsible for the administration of the regional incentives program will make recommendations to County Council with respect to financial Incentives that will be offered for that year.

2.2 GENERAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants must meet the following general eligibility requirements:

- 1) All **owners** and authorized tenants of lands (who are authorized in writing by the **owner**) and the buildings within the local municipality are eligible to apply per the approved area designated by the By-law shown on schedule A.
- 2) The type of property or use subject to an application must be identified as eligible. Generally, this includes properties with full or partial commercial, agricultural, or outdoor/recreational use.
- 3) All proposed projects must demonstrate some level of improvement or rehabilitation over the existing conditions and not simply represent a life cycle replacement.
- 4) All projects must contribute to achieving one or more community improvement goals (as identified in Section 1.3), must conform to the County Official Plan, and must comply with the local Zoning By-law.

- 5) Incorporated non-profit groups (e.g. local fair boards, agricultural societies, and community groups) and local municipalities are eligible for regional improvement grants.
- 6) Applicants will be required to disclose **all** other funding sources, including government, private, or not-for-profit funding to support the project. The County will not fund the portion of a project already being funded by a local CIP; however, the County may fund a complementary aspect of the same project.
- 7) The Applicant will be required to enter into an agreement with the County and the local municipality.
- 8) A property may be eligible for multiple regional incentives and may submit multiple applications during the term of this document; however, the total combined value of grants approved through the County in any given year shall not exceed \$50,000 per property.
- 9) Financial incentives will not be applied retroactively to works started prior to approval of applications and any application for costs incurred prior to the adoption of this document will not be eligible.
- 10) For programs involving the granting back of fees, said fees must be paid in full, and the eligible amount will be granted back to the applicant.
- 11) The property **owner** must have no outstanding building permit, property standards orders, property tax arrears, or any other outstanding Municipal/County accounts receivable on the subject property at the time of application.
- 12) All works approved under this document shall comply with all relevant municipal policies and standards, including zoning, design guidelines (if any) and will be subject to planning and development approvals and building permits pursuant to the Ontario Building Code.
- 13) The grant approval will expire if work is not completed within 18 months from the execution of the agreement between the Applicant, the County and the local municipality. Any request for an extension beyond 18 months must be made in writing and is subject to the approval of the Implementation Committee.
- 14) Where funding requests exceed the County's budget for a given year, the Applicant may opt to defer the application to a subsequent year if funds are available.
- 15) The County reserves the right to discontinue any of the programs contained in this section at any time, but applicants with approved grants will still receive said grant, subject to meeting the general and program specific requirements.

2.3 INCENTIVE PROGRAM DETAILS

All eligible projects will be evaluated against the SDG Regional Economic Goals (found in Section 1.3).

2.3.1 Façade, Signage, and Property Improvement Grant

Objective

To assist with improvements to a building's façade or signage, or to assist with other eligible improvements to private property (i.e., parking and landscaping).

Grant Amount

For a façade improvement project, a grant may cover 50% of the eligible cost of the façade improvement to a maximum of \$10,000. The maximum value of the grant may increase to \$12,500 if the building has more than one street address and/or storefront, or if the building has more than one wall that is visible from a public street, or fronts onto a laneway or parking lot.

For a signage improvement project, a grant may cover 50% of the eligible cost of the signage improvement to a maximum of \$2,500. The maximum value of the grant may increase to \$5,000 if the building has more than one street address and/or storefront, or if the building has more than one wall that is visible from a public street, or fronts onto a laneway or parking lot.

For a property improvement project, a grant may cover 50% of the eligible cost of the property improvement to a maximum of \$10,000.

The grant will be provided upon successful completion of the approved project and following a final inspection of the works by the applicable authority.

Program Details

Grants may be offered to eligible property **owners** for one or any combination of these three categories of property enhancement.

The Applicant must submit an application including a detailed proposal and at least two written estimates for consideration, prior to commencement of any works.

For façade improvement, the following costs are eligible:

- 1) Restoration or replacement of exterior building treatments (such as brickwork/cladding/siding), cornices, eaves, parapets, windows, doors, and awnings;
- 2) Restoration or replacement of exterior lighting;
- 3) Exterior painting;
- 4) Chemical or façade cleaning;
- 5) Redesign of entrances including changes to improve accessibility; and/or,
- 6) Other similar improvements or repairs required to improve a building façade.

For a signage improvement project, improvements to the main storefront sign of buildings are eligible. Where a side and/or rear wall sign is visible from a public street or public space, or fronts onto a laneway or parking lot, improvements to these signs may also be eligible.

For a property Improvement project, improvements to the front yard of properties are eligible. Eligible costs include the following:

- a) Addition of landscaping features (plants/green space, including sod, trees, vegetation, etc.);
- b) Addition of permanent landscaping elements such as fencing, benches, planters, and lighting;
- c) Addition of new parking/existing parking area upgrades for cars, motorcycles, and bicycles;
- d) Improvements to rear building entrances and rear parking areas;
- e) Addition of walkways; and
- f) Such other similar improvements and repairs that may be necessary to improve a property.

2.3.2 Building Improvement/Restoration Grant

Objective

To assist with the improvement of existing buildings to improve aesthetics, bring buildings up to current building or fire code standards, and/or improve accessibility.

Grant Amount

For a Building Improvement/Restoration project, a grant may cover 50% of the eligible cost of the improvement to a maximum of \$10,000.

Program Details

The Building Improvement/Restoration Grant may be provided for the following related to projects on eligible properties:

- 1) Structural repairs to walls, ceilings, floors, and foundations;
- 2) Interior restoration and design;
- 3) Repair/replacement/installation of building infrastructure, such as roofing, windows, and doors;
- 4) Repair/replacement/installation of plumbing, electrical, HVAC, and fire protection systems;
- 5) Weatherproofing;
- 6) Improvements to accessibility;
- 7) Any other improvements that may bring a building up to code, or address health, safety, or risk management issues; and
- 8) The services of a professional engineer, architect or planner to design and implement the project.

The Applicant must submit an application including a detailed proposal and at least two written estimates for consideration, prior to commencement of any works.

2.3.3 Building Conversion/Expansion Grant**Objective**

To assist with large-scale conversion or expansion of existing vacant space into new commercial, mixed-use and other eligible uses. This grant is reserved for large, regionally significant projects resulting in the conversion of not less than 5,000 ft².

Grant Amount

A Building Conversion/Expansion Grant may be provided on approved applications to a maximum of \$40,000.

Program Details

This grant can be used for the following costs where eligible:

1. Conversion of non-commercial or vacant space into new commercial, mixed-use, secondary uses, and **agriculture-related** uses, and other eligible uses;
2. Conversion of upper storey space (whether vacant, office, commercial or other non-residential use) into new residential units;
3. Conversion of a building or a unit in a building into a hotel, inn or bed and breakfast;
4. Expansion of existing eligible uses to increase the gross floor area;
5. Environmental studies which are related to the conversion; and
6. The services of a professional engineer, architect or planner to design and implement the project.

2.3.4 Outdoor Art Grant

Objective

To support the installation of outdoor artwork that will promote local culture and heritage, improve aesthetics, and enhance tourism.

Grant Amount

An Outdoor Art Grant may be approved for 50% of the eligible cost of the improvements to a maximum of \$3,000.

Program Details

Eligible projects must be clearly visible from a public street or sidewalk.

The following types of permanent art are considered eligible:

1. Murals;
2. Sculptures;
3. Paintings;
4. Local heritage-based art pieces and displays;
5. Interactive art pieces and displays; and,
6. Any other art piece or display as approved by the Implementation Committee.

The following types of costs are considered eligible:

- a) Materials;
- b) Installation; and,
- c) Lighting and landscaping that highlights the public art.

2.3.5 Trails Improvement Grant

Objective

To promote the creation, development, preservation, management, and use of trails, especially those that connect to regional trail networks. Projects will be evaluated against regional economic development goals. Funding will be prioritized for projects that are regional in scope, promote or enhance well-established trails, include considerations for accessibility, and/or connect towns and villages.

Grant Amount

A Trails Improvement Grant may be approved for 50% of the eligible cost of the improvements to a maximum of \$10,000.

Program Details

The following costs are eligible:

1. Infrastructure or capital expenses including:
 - a. Renovation, construction or transformation of permanent spaces, parks or grounds, and/or pertinent and ancillary facilities;

- b. Furniture, fixtures or other non-portable equipment;
2. The acquisition of land essential to the connection or extension of an existing trail; and
3. Creation of new trails.

2.3.6 Feasibility, Design, and Study Grant

Objective

To assist with the completion of a range of studies and plans that investigate or support a new business or development project on individual properties.

Grant Amount

A Feasibility, Design and Study Grant may be provided on approved applications for 50% of the eligible cost of the improvements to a maximum of \$2,000.

Program Details

The following types of plans or studies will be eligible for the feasibility, design and study grant:

1. Concept plans;
2. Site plan drawings;
3. Feasibility studies;
4. Environmental studies;
5. Structural analyses;
6. Evaluation of existing and proposed mechanical, electrical and other building systems;
7. Traffic Impact Assessments;
8. Market analyses;
9. Business plans; and
10. Any other study or plan as approved.

The plan or study must provide new information about the feasibility and cost of an eligible use or provide details in support of a new business or development.

2.3.7 Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant

Objective

To grant a portion of the fees required for planning applications or building permits in relation to an improvement project.

Grant Amount

A Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant may be provided on approved applications that covers 50% of the municipal and/or County portion of the eligible cost to a maximum of \$2,500.

Program Details

Eligible costs include the following:

- 1) Municipal and County planning application fees, including minor variances, site plans, zoning by-law amendments or official plan amendments; and/or
- 2) Municipal building permit fees or change of use permits.

3 MONITORING, TERM, AND AMENDMENTS

The SDG Regional Incentives Program will be monitored for effectiveness on an annual basis to determine whether it has met the SDG regional economic goals. This will be done in partnership with local municipalities.

A variety of materials have been developed to assist in the implementation of the Regional Incentives program, including marketing and promotional aids, information and guidelines for applicants, etc. While these documents are an integral part of the Program, they are not included here, do not form part of this document, and may from time to time be amended by the County without the need for an amendment to this document.

The SDG Regional Incentives Program follows the term and review cycle detailed in the local CIP. Based on the results of monitoring and evaluation efforts, adjustments may be required. Technical amendments will be permitted at the discretion of the local municipality. Any change to the SDG Regional Incentive Program area or to the value or type of financial programs will require consultation and approval by the County and will require an amendment of the Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

4 DEFINITIONS

Agricultural use is defined as 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, as per the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

Agri-tourism includes those farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation, as per the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

Agriculture-related uses are 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, in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

Roofed Accommodations are defined as year-round, permanent fixed roof accommodations within or as an extension to existing buildings and including hotels/motels/Bed and Breakfast establishments. This excludes camp grounds, cottage rentals or trailer parks.

On farm diversified uses are 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, in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

Owner means the registered owner of the lands and includes any successors, assignees, agents, partners and any affiliated corporations.





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