

The City of Owen Sound Community Improvement Plan



December 2020



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Glossary

Administrator or Plan Administrator means the City's Director of Community Services or their delegate.

Affordable/Attainable Housing can be defined as housing which accounts for no more than 30% of a household's gross income. Affordable/Attainable housing is housing that gives a household the ability to enter the local housing market before graduating to successively higher levels of housing within the market. Implicit in this definition of attainability is the idea that a range of housing options (type, size, tenure, cost) exist in the local market, allowing households at various income levels to find and secure suitable housing as their needs or means change.

Applicant, unless otherwise indicated, means a registered owner, assessed owner or tenant of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area who has a right to apply for one or more financial incentive(s) in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

Approval Authority means the body responsible for approving or denying financial incentive applications. By default, the approval authority is City Council. However, Council may designate an approval authority in accordance with the policies of this Plan.

Brownfield means a site that is contaminated from a former use and is usually, but not exclusively, a former industrial or commercial property that is underutilized, derelict or vacant.

Certificate of Property Use means a certificate of property use issued in accordance with Section 168.6 of the *Environmental Protection Act*. The Certificate of Property Use may outline actions or restrictions on use or construction in relation to managing adverse effects of contaminants, as outlined in a risk assessment

City means the Corporation of the City of Owen Sound.

Community Improvement unless otherwise specified, is as defined in accordance with its definition under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.



Community Improvement Plan (CIP) unless otherwise specified, is defined in accordance with its meaning under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

Community Improvement Project Area unless otherwise specified, is as defined in accordance with its meaning under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*.

Community Improvement Works refer to the activities undertaken in accordance with the policies of this Plan, including activities that may be funded by the financial incentives.

Council means the Council of the City of Owen Sound.

Development Period means a period that begins when the Rehabilitation Period ends and concludes on the earlier of a) the end date specified in the municipal property tax assistance bylaw or b) when the property tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs, as per section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001.

Eligible Applicant means an applicant (as defined above) who meets all the general and program specific requirements of the financial incentive programs and prepares and submits an application for a grant or loan that is in accordance with the specific requirements of the program, as outlined in this CIP. The Plan Administrator reserves the right to determine whether an applicant is eligible for the financial incentive programs.

Financial Incentive Program means a program listed in Section 5 of this Plan.

Financial Incentive Program Agreement means an agreement executed between the City and a successful applicant for a financial incentive program, as required by this Plan.

Greenfield Property means a vacant property that has no prior history of development, or an agricultural use that has not been developed or redeveloped for urban uses. In determining whether a property is considered a Greenfield, the Approval Authority, in consultation with the Plan Administrator, shall have sole discretion.



Greyfields are underutilized properties that have been affected by development, but not to the extent required to be considered a brownfield site. Unlike brownfield sites, greyfield sites have not endured significant environmental damage. An example of a greyfield would be a property containing an abandoned restaurant.

Gross Floor Area means ‘Floor Area, Gross’ as defined by the City’s Zoning By-law in force and effect at the time of interpretation and/or application.

Heritage, when used as an adjective, means historic and significant with respect to cultural heritage value or interest. Heritage, when used in designated heritage buildings or properties, refers to designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Similarly, the term heritage, when used in reference to a Heritage Conservation District as designated in accordance with Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Mixed Use means a combination of a mix of commercial uses (retail, restaurant, office) along with dwellings units located either in the upper storey(s) or the rear of the same building.

Multi-unit Residential means a building or structure containing three or more self-contained dwelling units. For clarity, this does not include townhouses or row houses.

Plan or **this Plan** means the City of Owen Sound Community Improvement Plan, unless otherwise specified.

Rental Housing Developments means Rental Housing Development as defined by the City’s Development Charges By-law in force and effect at the time of interpretation and/or application.

Qualified Person is a person as defined by Section 168.1 of the *Environmental Protection Act*, Ontario Regulation 153/04 (as amended by Ontario Regulation 66/08) who meets the qualifications to be a qualified person for the purpose of:

- Conducting or supervising a Phase I environmental site assessment;
- Conducting or supervising a Phase II environmental site assessment;
- and



- Completing the certifications that must be completed by a qualified person in a record of site condition in respect of a property.

A qualified person is considered to meet the qualifications to be a qualified person if:

- The person holds a license, limited license or temporary license under the *Professional Engineers Act*; or
- The person holds a certificate of registration under the *Professional Geoscientists Act* and is a practicing member, temporary member or limited member of the Association of Professional Geoscientists of Ontario.

Record of Site Condition means the record of site condition prepared and filed in accordance with Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.

Risk Assessment means an assessment of risks prepared and filed in accordance with Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.

Rehabilitation Period means the period starting from the date a municipal property tax assistance bylaw is passed to the earlier of a) eighteen months, b) the date a Record of Site Condition is filed, or c) when the property tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs (as defined) under Section 168.4 of the *Environmental Protection Act*.

Vacant Land is land that does not contain any permanent structures and is not environmentally damaged.

Zoning By-law means the City's Zoning By-law (2010-078, as amended), or its successor.



1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Community Improvement Plan (CIP)?

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that allows municipal planners and economic developers to work together to create policies and provide incentives targeting specific types of growth and investment.

A CIP, in a broad sense, encourages activities that contribute to the economic development, beautification, quality of life, aesthetic improvements, environmental sustainability, and the creation of a sense of place. The City of Owen Sound has identified a need for a CIP program to help promote and enable prioritized development across the City and to support and complement Grey County's Official Plan.

A CIP for the City of Owen Sound has been prepared to serve as a long-term strategy to revitalize the community, improve the quality of life of the community's residents, better utilize under-developed properties and to support private investment in land and buildings.

1.2 Purpose of this Plan

The CIP Program will provide a menu of incentives to promote and support the following types of priority development and revitalization projects aligned with many of the priorities at the County level; generally,

- Increasing attainable housing stock and particularly the supply of rental housing;
- Increasing facility improvement projects and retaining employment opportunities;
- Promoting the redevelopment and/or conversion of brownfield, vacant and greyfield properties;
- Supporting downtown revitalization of storefronts and streetscapes; and,
- Supporting the adaptive re-use of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings.

The revitalization and improvement of the community will take many different forms and will require the participation of the City of Owen Sound,



the County, the public, developers, and various stakeholders. This Plan establishes a set of financial incentive programs aimed at encouraging private investment to undertake the above-noted activities. Eligible projects are listed for each incentive program, along with details regarding the value of the financial incentive and how it is being calculated. The Plan recognizes that improvements achieved through the various CIP initiatives can serve as catalysts for further private investment and are therefore critical to an overall revitalization strategy.

1.3 Application of this Plan

Activities under this CIP can only take place within the designated Community Improvement Project Area. The entirety of the City is designated as a Community Improvement Project Area as indicated in Schedule 'A' of this Plan. In addition, Council has identified the Downtown and Harbour Area as a Community Improvement Project Sub-area, as indicated in Schedule 'B' of this Plan. Council may choose to modify the Community Improvement Project Area or add additional Sub-areas through an amendment to this Plan.

Generally, the purpose of this Plan is to promote the revitalization of the City of Owen Sound which manifests in the form of façade improvement in the City's downtown, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, improvements to upper storeys, brownfield remediation, streetscaping, parking, and accessibility improvements, among other things.

1.4 How to Use this Plan

The City of Owen Sound's CIP enables the City and the County to issue financial incentives to private property owners interested in undertaking improvements to their buildings or properties, or to developing or redeveloping their land. The financial incentive programs outlined in this CIP will be used by local businesses, property owners, and tenants, and are intended to facilitate community-enhancing property and building improvement projects.

This CIP is intended to be read and interpreted in its entirety. Interpretation of the Plan will be at the sole discretion of the Plan Administrator and City Council or its designated approval authority. Programs will be made



available only when Council assigns incentive funds. Available funding for incentive programs may change on an annual basis based on Council's consideration and to reflect the City's evolving community improvement needs without an amendment to this Plan.

Interested property owners and tenants are encouraged to review this CIP and contact the City's Community Services Department, Planning & Heritage Division to confirm their eligibility, discuss their project, and to identify the types of financial incentives that could be applicable.

2. Basis of the Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

The preparation of a CIP must be consistent with applicable upper-tier and local policy. This section provides an overview of the legislation, policies and studies relevant to the preparation of the City's CIP.

2.1 Municipal Act

Section 106 (1) and (2) of the Ontario Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, C.25 prohibits municipalities from directly or indirectly assisting manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses. Prohibited actions include:

- Giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money;
- 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.

This prohibition is generally known as the "bonusing rule". Section 106 (3) of the Municipal Act provides an exception to this bonusing rule for municipalities exercising powers under subsection 28 (6), (7), or (7.2) of the Planning Act or under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act. It is the exception under Section 28 of the Planning Act that allows municipalities with enabling provisions in their Official Plans to prepare and adopt CIPs.

Section 365.1 and 365.2 of the Municipal Act provides the authority to allow municipalities to pass by-laws providing tax assistance to an eligible property in the form of cancellation of all or part of the taxes levied on the



property for municipal and education purposes during the “rehabilitation period” and the “development period” of the property.

2.2 Planning Act

Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act, R.S.O. 1009 C.P 13 provides the legislative framework and authority for preparing CIPs, and establishes the types of programs that the CIP may enable.

2.2.1 Community Improvement Definition

Community improvement is defined in Section 28(1) of the Planning Act as, the, “planning or re-planning, design or redesign, subdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area”.

It also includes, “the provision of residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable, or other uses, building or structures, works, improvements of facilities or spaces, as may be appropriate or necessary”, within a community improvement project area.

2.2.2 Community Improvement Project Area

Where a municipality has enabling Official Plan policies, Section 28(2) of the Planning Act permits the municipality to pass a by-law designating a “community improvement project area” and to prepare a CIP. Once the CIP has been adopted by the municipality and comes into effect, the municipality may exercise authority under section 28(6), (7), or (7.2) of the Planning Act or section 365.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001 in order that the exception provided in Section 106(3) of the Municipal Act will apply.

2.2.3 Community Improvement Tools and Activities

Sections 28(3), (6) and (7) of the Planning Act allow municipalities, when carrying out a CIP within a Community Improvement Project Area, to:

- Acquire and hold land;
- Clear, grade or otherwise prepare the land for community improvement;



- Construct, repair or rehabilitate or improve buildings on the land held by the municipality. Lease, sell or otherwise dispose of such buildings;
- Sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land or acquire by the municipality to any person or government authority for the use in conformity with the CIP; and,
- Make grants or loan to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area for the purpose of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the CIP.

Section 28 (7.1) of the Planning Act specifies that eligible costs include “costs related to environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provisions of energy efficient uses, buildings structures, works, improvements or facilities.

2.2.4 Transfer of Grants Between Upper-tier and Lower-tier Municipalities

Section 28 (7.2) of the Planning Act allows an upper-tier municipality to make grants or loans to the Council of the lower-tier municipality for the purposes of carrying out a CIP. The upper-tier municipal Official Plan must have enabling official plan policies relating to the making of grants and loans for CIP purposes.

2.2.5 Other Relevant Sections

Section 17 of the Planning Act outlines the statutory process for adopting the CIP, including the provision of at least one public meeting to be held a minimum of 20 days after making the CIP publicly available for review.

Section 28(7.3) of the Planning Act specifies that the total of all grants and loans made in respect of particular lands and buildings under Section 28 (7) and (7.2) of the Planning Act and tax assistance provided under Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act in respect of the land and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the CIP with respect to those lands and buildings.



2.3 Development Charges Act

Section 5 of the *Development Charges Act* allows a municipality to provide a full or partial development charge exemption for certain types of development. Exemptions must be indicating within a Development Charges By-law.

2.4 Ontario Heritage Act

Section 39 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipalities to pass by-laws to offer grants and loans to owners of properties designated under Part IV of the Act. The grants and loans may be offered for the purpose of paying for whole or part of the cost of alteration on such terms as City Council may prescribe. The grants or loans offered by a municipality could also be used for the rehabilitation or restoration of the property as a whole.

2.5 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2020

The PPS (2020), provides municipalities with policy direction and guidance related to land use planning and development. The PPS directs growth to settlement areas and promotes densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use infrastructure and public service facilities, minimize negative impacts, and support transit and active transportation. The CIP is a planning tool which can actively implement the policies of the PPS that generally support redevelopment, intensification, remediation of brownfields, urban renewal, sustainability, the enhancement of the vitality of downtown areas, and long-term economic prosperity.

2.6 County of Grey Official Plan, 2018

The Grey County Official Plan provides guidance on local CIP areas and programs. Section 9.16 of the County Official Plan states that local municipal councils may by by-law, designate all or part of a local municipality as a Community Improvement Area. The goal of any Community Improvement Area is to foster and co-ordinate the physical improvements and maintenance of older or neglected areas of a community for environmental, social, or community economic reasons.



Community Improvement Areas are intended to achieve the objectives indicated in the County's Official Plan. Objectives relevant to the City of Owen Sound context include:

- a) To ensure the maintenance and renewal of older housing stock;
- b) To promote intensification and the creation of affordable and attainable housing units;
- c) To foster redevelopment, reuse and/or maintenance of existing brownfield sites, vacant sites, greyfield sites, and/or current commercial and industrial sites;
- d) To enhance the visual appeal of downtown core areas and neighbourhoods;
- e) To encourage the preservation and adaptive reuse of built heritage;
- f) To promote energy efficiency and sound environmental design; and,
- g) To foster economic growth;

Community Improvement Plans will be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for review and comment. The County may provide grants, loans or other assistance as County Council deems appropriate for the purposes of carrying out programs as described in lower-tier municipal CIPs.

2.7 County of Grey Housing and Homelessness Plan

The mission of the Grey County Housing and Homelessness Plan is to collaborate with community partners and private enterprises to develop a coordinated system of services needed by residents of the County to obtain, maintain, and sustain safe, appropriate and affordable housing.

The plan identifies four key strategic areas to accomplish this mission; one of which includes sustaining and creating affordable housing. The CIP is a planning tool that supports affordable housing projects and can contribute to the advancement of the Housing and Homelessness Plan mission by maximizing on municipal resources to incentivize new affordable housing and by establishing a link between affordable housing and a key municipal economic development initiative.



2.8 City of Owen Sound Strategic Plan, 2015

The Strategic Plan sets the overall direction and vision for the City of Owen Sound as a place, “Where you *Want* to Live”. Four pillars: Economy, Environment, Finances, and Society and Culture are identified; which are intended to guide the development of the Strategic Plan to the year 2020.

The City’s CIP is a key implementation tool in achieving the objectives and actions outlined within each of the four pillars. Of particular relevance are the pillars of Economy and Society and Culture which encourage residential and mixed use development and promote and enhance Owen Sound’s built heritage through the implementation of CIP incentive programs such as the Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program, the Heritage Property Tax Relief Program, and the Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program.

Through financial incentives, the CIP can directly contribute to the achievement of other economic objectives such as retaining and growing existing businesses and business and opportunities, attracting new investment, and encouraging residential and mixed use development.

2.9 City of Owen Sound Official Plan, 2006

The City of Owen Sound Official Plan was adopted by City Council in March of 2006 and provides policies, goals and objectives to guide the development and redevelopment of lands within the City to 2026. The Official Plan policies have been considered in the preparation of this CIP.

2.9.1 Goals and Objectives of the Official Plan

The following goals provide direction on land use planning matters within the City of Owen Sound:

1. To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment;
2. To foster a vital and diverse local and regional economy;
3. To promote and encourage the growth and development of the City while addressing a variety and mix of land uses;



4. To be a welcoming, safe and supportive community that is equitable and supportive in providing for diverse needs and that celebrates its cultural heritage;
5. To improve, maintain and expand municipal infrastructure.

2.9.2 Community Improvement Planning Policies

Section 8.2.2 of the City's Official Plan provides policies for Community Improvement Areas. Policy 8.2.2.1 states that the City shall, where warranted, identify Community Improvement Areas, adopt Community Improvement Plans, and implement Community Improvement Projects pursuant to the Planning Act.

Policy 8.2.2.3 mirrors the language of the Planning Act and provides the conditions that shall be present for the designation of a Community Improvement Project Area which include, but are not limited to:

- Buildings and/or properties, including those of historical and/or architectural significance, in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment;
- Known or suspected environmental contamination;
- Poor overall visual quality, including but not limited to, streetscapes, urban design and other physical amenities;
- Built or natural heritage resources requiring preservation, rehabilitation, or renewal;
- High commercial or industrial vacancy rates; and,
- Any other economic, environmental or community development reason.

Policies 8.2.2.4 and 8.2.2.5 collectively provide the types of objectives that the City's CIP shall achieve and the types of incentives which may be offered including, but not limited to, the municipal acquisition of land and/or buildings and the provision of public funds such as grants, loans and other financial instruments.



2.9.3 Other Relevant Policies

The City's Official Plan provides general policies pertaining to built and cultural heritage, brownfield and vacant lands, and urban design which are relevant to the City's CIP.

2.9.3.1 Built and Cultural Heritage

The City's Official requires the conservation of significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. The City may initiate the designation process for those properties having significant cultural heritage value or interest, or may designate Heritage Conservation Districts where the character of older neighbourhoods and areas of the City have significant heritage value.

Policy 7.2.2.5 of the Official Plan encourages owners of recognized heritage resources to have their properties designated and states that the City will consider incentives such as tax relief, to encourage the protection, maintenance and rehabilitation of heritage resources. This policy states that the CIP shall continue to provide a property tax relief program for eligible heritage properties.

2.9.3.2 Brownfields and Vacant Lands

The City's Official Plan generally supports intensification through the remediation of brownfield sites and redevelopment of vacant lands. Policy 7.1.6.3 specifically states that the redevelopment of contaminated industrial sites shall recognize and implement, where appropriate, the provision of Provincial brownfield initiatives and legislation. The City may offer a brownfields tax incentive program to encourage the redevelopment of these sites in accordance with the provisions of the CIP. Policy 7.1.6.4 states that former industrial sites in the Downtown and Harbour Area, including former railway corridors, may also be considered for redevelopment in accordance with the City's CIP.

Policy 4.2.3.3 of the Official Plan encourages the infilling of vacant sites along pedestrian retail frontages and the upgrading of storefronts and signage. The City's CIP shall continue to provide programs that support these initiatives.



2.9.3.3 Urban Design

The City's Official Plan promotes a high standard of design in its public works and in the design of public and private development. Well-coordinated and designed streetscapes are encouraged most notably in commercial areas and along arterial roads. An objective of the Official Plan is to maintain community improvement initiatives which encourage enhancements to building facades and structural improvements, particularly in the Downtown and Harbour Area.

Design of community improvement initiatives in the City's Downtown and Harbour Areas shall be consistent with the City's Urban Design and Master Plan Strategy for the Downtown and Harbour Area.

3. Approach to Community Improvement

Community improvement is a long-term process involving incremental improvements. Over time, many improvements can yield real and visible results. A series of goals and objectives, guided by a long-term vision, can be used to evaluate individual decisions to ensure that improvements are working towards achieving the desired ends.

3.1 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the CIP are informed by and meant to further the goals and objectives of the Official Plan (2006) and Strategic Plan (2015):

Goal 1: To protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment.

- a) Encourage and support the remediation and clean-up of environmentally contaminated lands.
- b) Encourage and support the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lands.
- c) Focus redevelopment, infill, mixed use and higher density developments in suitable locations in the Downtown and Harbour Area.

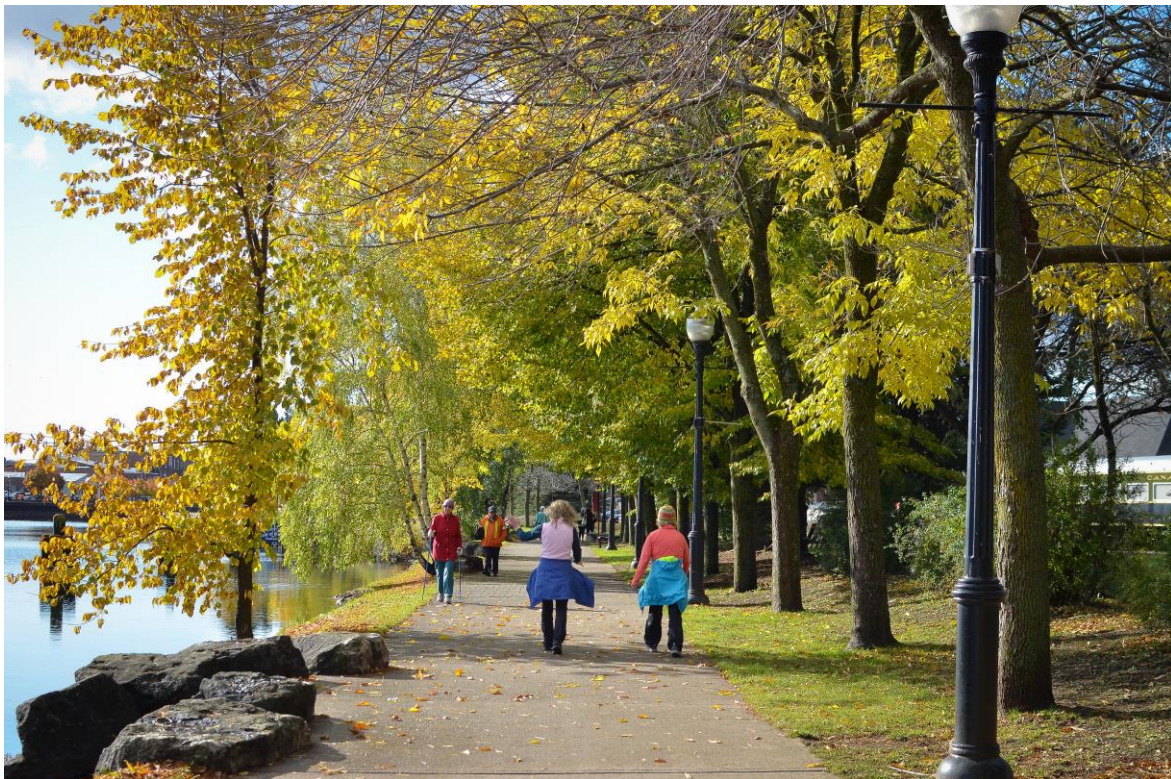


Goal 2: To foster a vital and diverse local and regional economy and promote and encourage the growth and development of the City.

- a) Attract new businesses and retain and support existing businesses in the City.
- b) Increase and diversify the City's overall tax base.
- c) Stimulate the supply of rental housing throughout the City.

Goal 3: To enhance the natural setting and built heritage of the City.

- a) Encourage owners of designated properties under the Ontario Heritage Act to maintain their properties and conserve and restore heritage attributes and resources for the benefit of the community.
- b) Implement functional and aesthetic improvement to properties such as façades, signage and landscapes.
- c) Promote the ongoing viability and revitalization of the Downtown and Harbour Area as the focus of pedestrian oriented retail, commercial, office, civic, cultural, entertainment and government uses.



Pedestrians walking at the Harbour.



4. Designated Community Improvement Project Areas

To achieve the goals and objectives of the CIP, the entire municipal boundary of the City of Owen Sound has been identified as a Community Improvement Project Area. However, the City intends to phase improvements based on City priorities and the availability of resources, which are subject to change over the implementation period of the CIP. A Community Improvement Project Sub-area, the Downtown and Harbour Area, has been identified to provide flexibility and an enhanced focus on this important part of the City. Additional Sub-areas may be identified in the future, as deemed appropriate by Council through an amendment to this Plan.

4.1 Schedule A: Community Improvement Project Area

All lands located within the municipal boundary of the City of Owen Sound, as shown on Schedule A of this Plan, are included within the Community Improvement Project Area and have been designated as such by Council. Financial incentive programs may be available to registered owners, assessed owners, and tenants of lands and buildings located within the Community Improvement Project Area, subject to a number of eligibility criteria as described in Section 5 and Section 6 of this CIP.

4.2 Schedule B: Community Improvement Project Area Sub-areas

The Downtown and Harbour Area, as shown on Schedule B of this Plan, has been identified as a Sub-area to respond to unique needs, issues and opportunities of the City within this area. Additional financial incentive programs that may be available to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings located within this Sub-area are discussed in Section 5.2.

City Council may identify additional Sub-areas as it deems appropriate through an amendment to this Plan.



Community Improvement Project Area Sub-areas:

Downtown and Harbour Area

- As designated on Schedule B of this Plan.
- Includes the Downtown Area, the West and East Harbour Planning Areas, and the West and East Waterfront Study Areas as indicated on Schedule B of the City's Official Plan.



View of 2nd Avenue East.



5. Financial Incentive Programs

Through the CIP, the City may provide financial incentives to eligible applicants within the Community Improvement Project Area and Sub-areas identified in Section 4. The incentive programs are intended to stimulate private investment and physical improvements to private property, where such improvements will result in or contribute to the goals and objectives set out in Section 3.1 and are consistent with applicable program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

5.1 City-wide Incentives

This section details the financial incentive programs that may be available to eligible applicants on a city-wide basis, as shown in Schedule 'A'.

5.1.1 Study and Design Grant

Purpose

To assist property owners with financing the costs of undertaking various studies in support of the completion of appropriate due diligence for eligible projects, and encourage a high standard of urban design in private development.

Eligible Costs

Studies and documents eligible to receive grant funding are outlined in the City's Study and Design Grant Guidelines.

Program Details

The grant is based on 50 percent (50%) of the actual cost of the eligible study, to a maximum of \$10,000. A maximum of two (2) grants may be given to any one property.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

Projects eligible to receive study and design grants may include: affordable housing development, brownfield developments, and heritage properties as defined by this Plan.



The City, as its sole discretion, may fund eligible studies and documents undertaken for new multi-unit residential, commercial or mixed use developments or redevelopments within the City's Downtown and Harbour Area.

The following eligibility criteria apply to the Study and Design grant:

- General eligibility criteria provided in Section 6 of this Plan.
- Proposals must be consistent with the City's Study and Design Grant Guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- The eligible study must be consistent with the study Terms of Reference approved by the City.
- The City will require the submission of the study work plan, the qualifications of the consultant, redevelopment plans for the property and other details required to satisfy the City with respect to the costs of the project, and the quality and extent of the work involved.

Payment of Grant

The grant will be paid upon completion and submission of the study to the satisfaction of the City.



Corbet Place (1050 1st Ave W) under construction



5.1.2 Development Charges Grant

Purpose

To incentivize construction and stimulate the supply of Rental Housing Development on a city-wide basis.

Eligible Costs

Rental Housing Developments, as defined in this Plan, are eligible to receive a grant equal to or less than the amount of Development Charges owed at the time of Building Permit issuance in accordance with the City's Development Charges By-law.

Program Details

This program applies only to Rental Housing Development, as defined in this Plan, on a city-wide basis.

The total amount of the Development Charges Grant shall not exceed the total amount of Development Charges paid for a purpose-built rental development. This incentive program may be combined with other incentive programs available under this CIP.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Grants on County Development Charges may also be eligible subject to the County's Development Charges By-law and provided that the project qualifies for one (1) or more incentives under this Plan.

Eligibility Criteria

- The development must qualify as a Rental Housing Development as defined by this Plan.
- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

Payment of Grant

Development Charges must be paid in full upon the issuance of a Building Permit. Rebates on the amount of Development Charges paid will commence after completion of the project, to the satisfaction of the City and



following first reassessment of the property by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC). The registered Owner shall enter into a Financial Incentive Program Agreement with the City detailing, among other matters, the amount of the rebate to be paid to the registered owner each year.

5.1.3 Surplus Lands and Buildings Grant

Purpose

This program is intended to apply where the City wishes to offer surplus lands or buildings for sale, lease, rent or redevelopment at reduced or no cost or with special development requirements or parameters attached. In all cases, the City's Sale & Other Disposition of Land By-law shall apply.

Surplus lands owned by the County may also be offered, from time to time, if approved by County Council.

Eligible Costs

Affordable housing projects, as defined by this Plan, may be given top priority under this program. If it is determined that the lands are not suitable for a residential use, they will be offered for other uses through a Request for Proposal (RFP) or through parameters of the agreement of purchase and sale.

Program Details

Proposals submitted will be assessed based on the criteria identified by RFP or through the agreement of purchase and sale. The proposal that best meets or exceeds the criteria will be awarded the lands and/or buildings.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan. Additional eligibility criteria will be identified through RFP or an agreement of purchase and sale to be released by the City or in some cases, the County.



5.1.4 Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program

Purpose

To encourage the revitalization of brownfields and promote the environmental cleanup and rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized lands, that have been contaminated from a former use.

Eligible Costs

In accordance with Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act, the City may defer or cancel all or part of municipal property taxes during the period in which a brownfield site is being remediated or redeveloped (the rehabilitation period and the development period, as defined in the Municipal Act). The City may also apply to the Minister of Finance, on behalf of the property owner, to have the education portion of the property taxes deferred or cancelled.

Eligible costs related to reducing the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the subject property to permit a record of site condition to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act. Eligible costs include costs for:

- Phase III Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), and Risk Assessment Plans, except where such costs have been included as part of a Study and Design Grant;
- Environmental remediation costs, including any action taken to reduce the concentration of contaminants on, in or under the property to permit a Record of Site Condition to be filed in the Environmental Site Registry under Section 168.4 of the Environmental Protection Act;
- Costs related to complying with any certificate of property use issued under Section 168.6 of the Environmental Protection Act;
- The costs of preparing a Record of Site Condition;
- Placing clean fill and related grading;
- Installing environmental and/or engineering controls or works. As specified in the Phase III ESA and/or Risk Assessment Plan;
- Monitoring, maintaining and operating environmental and engineering controls/works, as specified in the Phase III ESA and/or Risk Assessment Plan; and,
- Environmental insurance premiums.



Program Details

The City may pass by-laws to provide a deferral or cancellation of all or a part of the municipal property taxes on a brownfield site during the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period, as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act. The total value of the property tax assistance will not exceed the total eligible costs. The level and duration of the property tax assistance will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Prior to passing the by-law approving the property tax assistance, the City will be required to notify the Ministry of Finance. Within 30 days of passing the by-law, the City will also be required to notify the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Finance.

The City may apply for Provincial tax assistance, on behalf of the owner, to cancel or freeze all or a portion of the education portion of the property taxes. The application requires approval by the Minister of Finance and may be subject to different timelines than the approved municipal tax assistance. Municipal tax assistance is required in order to be eligible to receive Provincial tax assistance.

Applications may also be eligible for tax assistance from the County, to cover the County tax portion, subject to County Council approval.

An eligible property is not permitted to receive the Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive in combination another tax incentive program. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the appropriate incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than a tax incentive program, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible cost of rehabilitating the land and buildings.



Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- In order to be an “eligible property” as defined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act, a property must have had a Phase II Environmental Assessment undertaken which concluded that action is required to remediate the site.

Payment of Grant

The municipal portion of the property tax assistance is limited to the Rehabilitation Period and Development Period of the project. The municipal portion of the property tax assistance will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act. The municipal portion of the property tax assistance may start at the beginning of the Rehabilitation Period and run for a period specified by Council by by-law, but shall not extend beyond the time periods outlined in Section 365.1(1) of the Municipal Act, which is the earlier of:

- a) Eighteen (18) months;
- b) The date a Record of Site Condition is filed; or,
- c) When the total amount of property tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs.

The Development Period begins when the Rehabilitation Period ends and concludes on the earlier of:

- a) The end date specified by by-law; or,
- b) When the property tax assistance is equal to the eligible remediation costs.

The duration of property tax assistance may consist of both the Rehabilitation Period and the Development period, subject to the limitations for each period as described above. The implementing by-law is to specify whether the property tax assistance will occur during the Rehabilitation Period, the Development Period, or both.



5.1.5 Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG)

Purpose

To stimulate major investment by deferring part of the increase in property taxation as a result of adaptive reuse, building and property redevelopment or rehabilitation, and retrofit works for commercial and/or industrial properties.

Eligible Costs

The following types of costs may be eligible for the TIEG:

- Redevelopment or expansion of commercial and/or industrial properties involving an increase of at least 25 percent (25%) of the existing gross floor area;
- Adaptive reuse of a property to suit a new commercial/industrial use;
- Infrastructure works;
- Professional services by an engineer, architect or professional planner;
- Energy efficiency improvements; or,
- Any combination of the above.

Program Details

The amount of the TIEG is based on the increase in City and/or County taxes as a result of redevelopment or rehabilitation of a commercial or industrial property. The increase in taxation is phased-in over a ten year period as follows:

Year	Percentage of the Municipal and/or County tax increase that is deferred
1	100%
2	90%
3	80%
4	70%
5	60%
6	50%
7	40%
8	30%
9	20%
10	10%



Following the tenth year, the owner is responsible for paying the full amount of property taxes.

An eligible property is not permitted to receive the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant in combination another tax incentive program. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the appropriate incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than a tax incentive program, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- The applicant must be the registered owner(s) of the property and must undertake improvements to their buildings and/or property, which shall be sufficient size and cost to result in a re-assessment of the property.
- The tax increment does not include any increase or decrease in municipal taxes due to a general tax rate increase or decrease, or a change in assessment for any other reason.

Payment of Grant

Following approval by City Council, or its delegated approval authority, eligible applicants must enter into a Financial Incentive Program Agreement with the City. The TIEG is paid after improvements are completed to the satisfaction of the City. Grant payments will commence upon first re-assessment of the property by MPAC and once the property owner's taxes are fully paid. In subsequent years, the annual grant is recalculated and paid following payment of taxes in full.



5.1.6 Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program

Purpose

To assist owners of designated heritage properties in maintaining and restoring their properties for the benefit of the entire community. This program provides an incentive to owners to make regular investments in the ongoing conservation of their heritage properties.

Program Details

The Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program provides a rebate of up to 20 percent (20%) of the City, County and education portion of taxes to owners of designated heritage properties each year.

An eligible property is not permitted to receive the Heritage Property Tax Rebate in combination with another tax incentive program. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the appropriate incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than a tax incentive program, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to be eligible for the program, a property must contain a building, structure, or a portion of a building or structure that is:

- Designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or part of a heritage conservation district designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act (only those properties identified in the district plan as being of “medium” or “high” heritage value would be eligible); and,
- Subject to a heritage conservation agreement with the City or Ontario Heritage Trust.

A heritage conservation agreement is a voluntary legal agreement between the City and an owner to protect the heritage features of a property, and to encourage good stewardship of the property. The agreement may be provided as one of the following three options:

1. An easement agreement between the property owner and the City under section 37 of the Ontario Heritage Act; or



2. A conservation easement between the property owner and the Ontario Heritage Trust under Section 22 of the Ontario Heritage Act; or
3. A Heritage Conservation and Maintenance Agreement (HCMA) between the property owner and the City.

Property tax relief will only be made available to those owners who have made a long-term commitment to conserve their heritage properties through one of the above agreements. The City will regularly monitor this program to ensure that owners comply with their HCMA's.

The City requires that eligible properties be in good and habitable condition as determined by Council and/or the Municipal Heritage Committee.

All general eligibility criteria as outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through the City's Heritage Property Tax Relief Program Guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

Payment of Grant

To receive tax relief for a particular year, applicants must apply by February 28th of the following year. Owners of eligible heritage property must apply each year.



The former US Consulate (932 3rd Ave W), a designated heritage property in Owen Sound



5.1.7 Landscaping & Property Improvement Grant

Purpose

To encourage property owners and tenants of land to improve their properties, including parking areas, through the installation of appropriate landscaping, fencing, exterior lighting, pedestrian connections, street furniture, and patios.

Eligible Costs

Projects eligible to receive grant funding may include:

- Professional landscaping and/or the installation of alternative ground cover treatments that results in beautification and/or prepare for the impacts of a changing climate;
- Re-sodding, provided that it is a component of a larger landscaping improvement project;
- Repair, replacement and improvements to driveways and parking areas in rear or side yards such as permeable surfaces, decorative surfaces, or installation of landscaping in front yard or side yard parking areas;
- Installation or improvement of pedestrian walkways;
- Tree planting;
- Installation of benches or permanent planters;
- Services of a professional landscape architect to design the features noted above; or,
- Any combination of the above.

Under this program, the City may also fund the installation of or improvements to permanent rooftop and street level patios in the City's Downtown and Harbour Area. Patios located along 1st Avenue East or West facing the Inner Harbour will be given highest priority.

For clarity, an outdoor sitting area located on municipal property is not eligible. A temporary patio or temporary/moveable components of a patio (e.g. furniture) are not eligible to receive grant funding.



Program Details

The program provides two types of capital grants:

1. A capital grant up to 50 percent (50%) of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 for eligible projects **located outside of a priority area** identified by the City's Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Guidelines; **or**
2. A capital grant up to 50 percent (50%) of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000 for eligible projects **located within a priority area** identified by the City's Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Guidelines.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria as outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply.
- Proposals must be consistent with the City's Landscaping and Property Improvement Grant Guidelines, in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- Commercial, industrial, mixed use, and multi-unit residential properties are eligible to receive grant funding. For clarity, single detached dwellings and other residences are not eligible.

Payment of Grant

The grant will be paid as a single, lump sum payment upon completion of the improvements and provision of proof of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City.



5.1.8 Accessibility Improvement Grant

Purpose

To promote improvements to properties for the purposes of enhancing accessibility. It is intended that any improvements considered under this grant program will meet or exceed the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Building Code.

Eligible Costs

Examples of costs eligible to receive grant funding may include:

- Installation of new automatic doors and/or wheelchair access ramps;
- Widening of public entryways;
- Levelling or repairs to pathways, accesses and stairs.

The City, as its sole discretion, may fund accessibility improvements on the interior of buildings within the Downtown and Harbour Area (e.g. installation of an elevator or lift).

Program Details

The program provides a capital grant up to 50 percent (50%) of the eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000 whichever is less.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply.
- Proposals must be consistent with the City's Accessibility Improvement Grant Guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- Only commercial, industrial, mixed use and multi-unit residential properties are eligible to receive grant funding. For clarity, single-detached dwellings and other residences are ineligible.

Payment of Grant

The grant will be paid as a single, lump sum payment upon completion of the improvements and the provision of proof of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City.



5.2 Downtown and Harbour Area (Schedule B)

This section details the financial incentive programs that may be available to eligible applicants within the Downtown and Harbour Area shown on Schedule 'B'.

5.2.1 Vacant Lands Tax Assistance

Purpose

To assist property owners with financing the increased taxes resulting from the redevelopment of a vacant site in the City's Downtown and Harbour Area.

Eligible Costs

Costs associated with the redevelopment of a vacant site for commercial, industrial, mixed use or multi-unit residential development may be eligible for Vacant Lands Tax Assistance.

Program Details

Vacant Lands Tax Assistance is based on the increase in City and/or County taxes as a result of redevelopment or rehabilitation of vacant lands within the Downtown and Harbour Area. The increase in taxation is phased-in over a 10-year period as follows:

Year	Percentage of the Municipal and/or County tax increase that is deferred
1	100%
2	90%
3	80%
4	70%
5	60%
6	50%
7	40%
8	30%
9	20%
10	10%

Following the tenth year, the owner will be responsible for paying the full amount of property taxes.



An eligible property is not permitted to receive Vacant Lands Tax Assistance in combination another tax incentive program. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the appropriate incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than a tax incentive program, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

Payment of Grant

Following approval by City Council, or its delegated approval authority, eligible applicants must enter into a Financial Incentive Program Agreement with the City. Vacant Lands Tax Assistance is paid after improvements are completed to the satisfaction of the City. Grant payments will commence upon first re-assessment of the property by MPAC and once the property taxes are fully paid. In subsequent years, the annual grant is recalculated and paid following payment of taxes in full.



The former Russel Bros. lands (2198 3rd Ave E)



The former BCK lands (1144 1st Ave W)



5.2.2 Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to improve the appearance and encourage the restoration and rehabilitation of street-facing exteriors of buildings within the City's Downtown and Harbour Area. This program is intended to:

- Provide a distinctive, attractive downtown, and increase community pride;
- Make Downtown a more inviting and interesting place to walk and shop;
- Encourage the upgrading and re-use of deteriorating buildings; and,
- Protect, promote, enhance and celebrate the unique heritage of the City and particularly the Downtown and Harbour Area.

Eligible Costs

The program provides incentives to property owners and tenants who undertake structural improvements necessary to maintain the safety and integrity of a structure and/or make an improvement to the façade of a building that is supported by the City's Façade and Structural Improvement Guidelines.

Program Details

The following incentives may be offered to eligible applicants under this program:

1. Waiving Building and Sign Permit fees for façade and structural improvements;
2. Capital grant of up to 33 percent (33%) of the cost of single façade and structural improvements that satisfy design guidelines, to a maximum of \$5,000 (per project per year);
3. Capital grant of up to 50 percent (50%) of the cost of façade and structural improvements that satisfy design guidelines and result in second or double facades, to a maximum of \$7,500 (per project per year).

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.



Eligibility Criteria

Applications are assessed using the following criteria:

1. Consistency with the City's Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Guidelines and the original architectural design of the building;
2. The extent to which a project addresses life safety and major structural deficiencies, where applicable; and,
3. Overall benefits to the Downtown and Harbour Area and consistency with the City's Official Plan and other applicable policies.

Additions to buildings are not eligible for incentives under this program. All structural improvements shall comply with the requirements of the Ontario Building Code and applicable by-laws of the City.

Payment of Grant

Capital grants are issued upon completion of the improvements and submission of proof of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City. All works must be completed within 12 months of approval from Council or its delegated approval authority.



947 2nd Ave E, this building received a façade and structural improvement grant in 2014.



5.2.3 Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Program

Purpose

To assist new businesses and start-up companies to 'set-up-shop' by providing grants for the financing of permanent leasehold improvements to commercial or mixed use spaces that increase the marketability of the property and commercial rental units.

Eligible Costs

The following may be considered eligible permanent leasehold improvements and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan:

- Installation, alteration, repair and/or restoration of partitions or rooms;
- Installation, repair or reinstallation of plumbing, heating, HVAC, electrical fixtures, cable, telephone, fibre and other service-specific installations;
- Change, repair or re-installation of flooring, ceiling, walls, fixed cabinets and other structurally permanent elements;
- Painting, repainting, or re-facing of interior platforms, walls, and any surfaces;
- Installation of appropriate new interior signage or lighting;
- Installation or repair of exterior signage or lighting, not covered by the City's Façade and Structural Improvement Grant.

Program Details

The program provides a capital grant up to 50 percent (50%) of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000.

An eligible property is not permitted to receive Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant funding in combination with Vacant Building Conversion and Expansion Grant funding. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the most appropriate and beneficial incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than the Vacant Building Conversion and Expansion Grant, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.



Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply.
- Proposals must be consistent with the City's Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Guidelines, in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.
- Grant funding may be applied to start-up areas located on both the ground floor and upper storeys. Where a property has a vacant ground floor store front, the property owner and/or tenants located on the upper storeys are ineligible to receive grant funding until the ground floor store front is occupied.

Payment of Grant

The grant will be paid as a single, lump sum payment upon completion of the improvements and provisions of proof of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City.



The Frog Pond, a coffee shop in Owen Sound.



5.2.4 Vacant Building Conversion and Expansion Grant

Purpose

To assist in the conversion of existing vacant space into a new or more suitable commercial use or a mixed use, as defined by this Plan.

Eligible Costs

Types of eligible building conversions and/or expansions may include:

- Conversion of an existing vacant upper storey space or ground floor space into a rental dwelling unit(s) provided that the project meets the provisions of the City's Zoning By-law.
- Conversion of an existing storefront into a permitted and more suitable commercial space (e.g. retail to restaurant use) in accordance with the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-law;
- Conversion of non-conforming or vacant building space into a new permitted commercial or mixed use;
- Expansions of existing commercial uses to increase the gross floor area within the footprint of the existing building.

The following may be considered eligible costs incurred from a vacant building conversion or expansion and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan:

- Installation, alteration, repair and/or restoration of partitions or rooms;
- Installation, repair or reinstallation of plumbing, heating, HVAC, electrical fixtures, cable, telephone, fibre and other service-specific installations;
- Change, repair or re-installation of flooring, ceiling, walls, fixed cabinets and other structurally permanent elements;
- Installation, replacement, repair or restoration of other architectural or historic features;
- Services of a professional engineer, architect or planner to design and implement the project.

Program Details

The program provides a capital grant of 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, whichever is less.



An eligible property is not permitted to receive Vacant Building Conversion and Expansion Grant funding in combination with Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant funding. The applicant, in consultation with the City, is responsible for determining the most appropriate and beneficial incentive program.

Successful applicants may also be eligible for other financial incentive programs under this Plan, other than the Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant, provided that the total value of incentives does not exceed the total eligible costs.

Eligibility Criteria

- All general eligibility criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan apply.
- All proposals must be consistent with the City's Vacant Building Conversion and Expansion Grant Guidelines, in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

Payment of Grant

The grant will be paid as a single, lump sum payment upon completion of the improvements and provision of proof of expenditures to the satisfaction of the City.



Mudtown Station at 1198 1st Ave E was formerly the C.P.R railway station but has been converted to a restaurant and brewery.



5.3 Summary of Incentive Programs

5.3.1 City-wide Incentive Programs:

Incentive	Purpose	Funding
Study & Design Grant	To assist property owners with financing costs of undertaking various studies in support of the completion of appropriate due diligence and to encourage a high standard of urban design in private development.	50% of the actual cost of the eligible study, to a maximum of \$10,000. Maximum 2 grants per property.
Development Charges Rebate	To incentivize construction and stimulate the supply of Rental Housing Development on a city-wide basis.	Grant equal to or less than the amount of Development Charges owed for Rental Housing Developments.
Surplus Lands and Buildings Grant	Applies where the City wishes to offer surplus lands or buildings for sale, lease, rent or redevelopment at reduced or no cost or with special development requirements or parameters attached.	Lands and/or buildings at reduced or no cost, or with specific development criteria attached.
Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Program	To encourage the revitalization of brownfields and promote the environmental cleanup and rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized lands, which have been contaminated from a former use.	Deferral or cancellation of all or part of City, County or education portion of property taxes during rehabilitation or development.



Incentive	Purpose	Funding
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	To stimulate major investment by deferring part of the increase in property taxation as a result of adaptive reuse, building and property redevelopment or rehabilitation, and retrofit works for commercial and/or industrial properties.	Phase-in of the increase in City and/or County taxes as a result of redevelopment or rehabilitation of a commercial or industrial property.
Heritage Property Tax Rebate Program	To help owners of designated heritage properties maintain and restore their properties for the benefit of the entire community.	Rebate of up to 20% City, County and education portion of taxes to eligible owners of designated heritage properties.
Property and Landscaping Improvement Grant	To encourage property owners and tenants of land to improve their properties, including parking areas, through the installation of appropriate landscaping, exterior lighting, pedestrian connections, street furniture, and patios.	Capital grant up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 for projects outside a Priority Area, or to a maximum of \$10,000 for projects within a Priority Area, whichever is less.
Accessibility Improvement Grant	To promote improvements to properties for the purposes of enhancing accessibility.	Capital grant up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, whichever is less.



5.3.2 Downtown and Harbour Area Incentive Programs

Incentive	Purpose	Funding
Vacant Lands Tax Assistance	To assist property owners with financing the tax increase resulting from the redevelopment of a vacant site in the City's Downtown and Harbour Area.	Phase-in of the increase in City and/or County portion of taxes as a result of redevelopment or rehabilitation of vacant lands.
Façade and Structural Improvement Grant Program	To encourage restoration and rehabilitation of street-facing exteriors of buildings within the City's Downtown and Harbour Area.	Capital grant up to 33% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000 for single facades; capital grant up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$7,500 for double facades; waiving of Building and Sign Permit fees.
Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Program	To assist new businesses and start-up companies to 'set-up-shop' by providing grants for the financing of permanent leasehold improvements.	Capital grant up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5,000, whichever is less.
Vacant Buildings Expansion/ Conversion Grant	To assist in the small-scale conversion of existing vacant space into a new or more suitable commercial use or a mixed use.	Capital grant up to 50% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$10,000, whichever is less.



6. Implementation

This section details the general responsibilities of City Council and the Plan Administrator in the interpretation and implementation of this Plan. Section 6.3 provides general eligibility criteria which are applicable to all financial incentive programs under this Plan. Section 6.4 provides the general responsibilities of City Council in allocating funding to the financial incentive programs under this Plan.

6.1 Interpretation

Ultimately, this Plan and program specific guidelines enacted under 7.1.5 of this Plan, will be interpreted at the sole discretion of Council or its designated approval authority in consultation with the Plan Administrator. In some cases, as provided herein, interpretation and discretion may rest with the Plan Administrator.

6.2 Implementation Period

It is anticipated that this Plan will be implemented over a ten year period. Council may adjust this implementation period as it deems appropriate or necessary, subject to funding, as approved by Council. The Plan shall be reviewed for accuracy and effectiveness every five years.

Once Council is satisfied that the Plan has been carried out, Council may choose to dissolve the community improvement project by by-law which renders the Plan inoperative.

6.3 General Eligibility Criteria for Incentive Programs

The following General Eligibility Criteria are applicable to all incentive programs and must be met in order for an applicant to be considered eligible for any of the financial incentive programs. The General Eligibility Criteria must be read by the applicant in association with program specific eligibility requirements and program specific guidelines, where applicable.



6.3.1 Timing of Community Improvement Works

In order to be eligible for any incentive program contained with this Plan, a financial incentive program application form must be submitted to the City (accepted and processed by the Plan Administrator) prior to commencing any community improvement works. Complete applications must be submitted and approved prior to application for planning approval and/or building permit, as may be required, and prior to commencing community improvement works.

6.3.2 Only Property Owners or Tenants with Consent

Eligible applicants must be either the owner of the property, an agent for the owner of the property, or the tenant of a property to whom the owner has provided written consent for the application. Should ownership change hands prior to the approval of an application or while works are being undertaken, the tenant shall advise the City and obtain the new owner's authorization.

6.3.3 Greenfield Properties

In no case shall a Greenfield Property, as defined by this Plan, be eligible for financial incentive programs.

6.3.4 No Outstanding Property Tax Arrears

The property owner must not have outstanding property tax arrears and must be in good standing regarding taxation at the time of application and through the duration of the incentive benefit period, as identified within this Plan.

6.3.5 Number of Applicants per Property

There are no specific restrictions on the number of applications that may be submitted by a property owner or tenant in relation to a specific property. The intent of providing this flexibility is to allow applicants to phase in components of their projects over time, should it be necessary. However, the Plan Administrator may reject an application where it is of the opinion that the proposed works have already been undertaken as part of a previously approved application.



6.3.6 Complete Financial Incentive Application & Supporting Materials

In order to be eligible, all incentive program applicants must submit a completed application form and supporting materials such as detailed work plans, cost estimates and contracts, applicable reports, and any additional information as required by the City and indicated by program specific guidelines, where applicable.

6.3.7 Project in Accordance with Municipal By-laws, etc.

Community improvement works associated with an incentive program application must be in accordance with all by-laws, policies, procedures, standards and guidelines of the City in order to be approved.

6.3.8 Project in Conformity with the Official Plan & Zoning By-law

Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with the policies and standards provided by the City's Official Plan, and in accordance with applicable regulations, such as the Zoning By-law, and all other planning documents.

6.3.9 Project in Accordance with Planning Approvals & Building Permits

Community improvement works associated with an incentive program application must be undertaken pursuant to any application for planning approval and/or building permit, and any additional required permits, and shall be in accordance with the Planning Act, Ontario Building Code and other applicable law.

6.3.10 Conformity with Design Criteria

The proposed exterior design of buildings, including signage, associated with an incentive program application must be considered by the City as consistent with the desired goals for appearance/character of the City, in relation to the design criteria outlined in this CIP and any design guidelines adopted by the City in the future, as applicable. Council will consider details of exterior design proposed by each application when determining eligibility for incentive programs of the CIP. Council will use the design criteria as well as any future design guidelines adopted by the City as tools to characterize whether a project is considered desirable and meets the goals and objectives of this Plan.



6.3.11 Completed Works to be Consistent with Approved Application

Community improvement works undertaken and completed that are associated with an approved incentive program application must be consistent with the project description contained in the application form and supporting materials, and with the program agreement. Should the works not be consistent with the original project description to the satisfaction of the Plan Administrator, the City may delay, reduce or cancel the approved incentive program benefits and may, at Council's discretion, require repayment of any of the incentive program benefits.

6.3.12 Combination and Value of Incentives

The incentive programs made available under this Plan may be used individually or may be combined, subject to the exceptions outlined within the program details, eligibility criteria and program specific guidelines, where applicable. The total of all incentive benefits (including grants and refunds) provided to each applicant for each community improvement proposal for buildings or lands must not exceed the project's costs related to the planning or re-planning, design or redesign, subdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, and/or reconstruction and rehabilitation association with the application.

6.3.13 Maintenance or Life Cycle Replacements

Eligible projects are generally only considered to be improvements over existing features. The incentive programs are not intended to cover life cycle replacements or maintenance activities. Exceptions may be considered for original features of designated heritage buildings.

6.3.14 Grants to be a Maximum of 50% of the Eligible Costs

In no case shall the total amounts of all grants be greater than 50% of the calculated eligible costs of the project(s).



6.3.15 Minimum Grant of \$500

Should a grant have a value of less than \$500, the approval authority has the sole discretion to reject the application on the basis that the project is too minor and the administrative cost too high to be worth processing the grant. The City may establish through the financial incentive Program Guidelines, a minimum project value that must be satisfied for eligibility purposes.

6.3.16 Incentives not Available to City

In no case is the Corporation of the City of Owen Sound, including its internal departments and divisions, eligible to receive grant funding under this Plan. Tenants of City-owned buildings and lands may be eligible to receive funding if the project costs are being borne by the tenant(s).

6.4 Budgeting

This section details the general responsibilities of City Council in allocating funding to financial incentive programs under this Plan and where necessary, determining if changes to funding and incentive levels are necessary or warranted.

6.4.1 Annual Budget for Financial Incentive Programs

Council will establish an annual overall budget for financial incentive programs and may allocate all or a portion of the funds to individual programs based on annual priorities and the Monitoring and Evaluation process outlined in Section 8 of this Plan.

6.4.2 Changes to Funding Levels

In accordance with the Monitoring and Evaluation process outlined in Section 8, Council will determine if changes to funding and incentive levels are necessary or warranted in consideration of the City's financial circumstances and to ensure the functionality of this Plan.

Any changes to funding for the financial incentive programs of this Plan, will be made at the sole discretion of Council, without an amendment to this Plan.



6.4.3 Funding Sources

The City shall identify, explore and pursue external funding sources where possible to support the incentive programs, including Provincial funding sources, as may be made available from time to time, and Provincial or County participation in the financial incentives, where possible.

7. Administration

This section details generally how this Plan will be administered including, general roles and responsibilities for administration, and the general submission requirements and application process that is applicable to all financial incentive programs under this Plan, and may be further refined through program specific guidelines in accordance with Section 7.1.5 of this Plan.

7.1 General Administration

This section details the general roles and responsibilities of administration of this Plan.

7.1.1 Designation of Plan Administrator

For the purposes of implementation of this Plan, the Director of Community Services or their delegate is the designated Plan Administrator. An alternate Department, Division or member of Municipal Staff may be designated as the Plan Administrator by Council.

7.1.2 Designation of Approval Authority

By default, City Council will be the approval authority responsible for making decisions on financial incentive applications. Depending on the financial incentive program, consultation with the Community Services Committee/Heritage Committee may be required. Approval authority of Council may be delegated to a Committee or a member of municipal staff by by-law.

7.1.3 Administration of Financial Incentive Programs

The financial incentive programs outlined in this document will be administered primarily by the Plan Administrator and decisions about whether to approve financial incentive applications will be made by Council,



in consultation with the Community Services/Heritage Committee, where required, or by its designated approval authority.

7.1.4 Submission of Applications for Financial Incentives

Applications for financial incentives programs will generally be submitted and processed in accordance with Section 7.2.

7.1.5 Program Guidelines

Council may prepare and adopt specific program guidelines for any of the financial incentive programs outlined in this Plan. The guidelines will generally scope the broad eligibility criteria in this Plan and may indicate, among other matters, the specifics of how the plan components will operate, the nature of improvement projects that will be approved, the application and approval procedures, requirements for legal agreements, and in the case of competing projects (where applicable) how decisions will be made as to which project receives priority approval.

7.2 General Process and Submission Requirements

In order to be eligible for any of the incentive programs, applicants must submit a complete application in accordance with Section 7.2.1. As indicated in Section 7.1.5, where Council has adopted program guidelines for a specific financial incentive program, the program guidelines may detail additional process and submission requirements.

7.2.1 Minimum Submission Requirements

A complete application will generally include:

- Completed application forms; and
- Supporting materials such as plans, cost estimates and contracts, applicable reports, and any additional information required by the Plan Administrator and/or Council or its designated approval authority.

7.2.2 City Not Responsible for Applicant's Costs

The City is not responsible for any costs incurred by the applicant during the application process, including costs associated with preparing the materials which are required as part of a complete application.



7.2.3 Application Prior to Commencement of Works

An application must be submitted to the City prior to commencing any community improvement works. If an application is submitted following the commencement of community improvement works the application will be rejected upon receipt.

7.2.4 Applicant to Declare Other Funding

All sources of additional funding or incentives must be declared at the time of submission. The Plan Administrator is entitled to make recommendations for incentive reductions based upon any declared funding or incentive.

7.2.5 Administrator's Application Review

The Plan Administrator will initially evaluate all applications and supporting materials and offer a recommendation to Council or its designated approval authority who will make a final decision on the application(s).

7.2.6 Financial Incentive Program Agreement

Should the application be approved by Council or its designated approval authority, a Financial Incentive Program Agreement may be required which outlines, among other matters, the terms, duration, default and any other provisions of the incentive program. This agreement will be subject to approval by Council or its delegated approval authority and will be authorized by by-law, where required.

7.2.7 Requirement for Additional Information

Should the Plan Administrator, Council, or its designated approval authority require additional information, plans, studies, or any additional works related to the proposed project and incentive program application, the requested information and/or works must be adequately provided and/or undertaken prior to approval of the application.

7.2.8 Project Audit at the Cost of the Applicant

Upon approval and/or completion of community improvement works, the City, under direction of the Plan Administrator, reserves the right to audit the costs associated with any of the works described by the approved application for financial incentive(s). Audits will be undertaken at the expense of the applicant.



7.2.9 Inspection of Completed Project

Upon approval and/or completion of community improvement works, the City reserves the right to inspect any properties and/or buildings that are associated with an incentive program application offered within this Plan. Inspections are carried out by the Plan Administrator.

7.2.10 Failure to Meet Requirements

Should the applicant fall into default of the General Eligibility Criteria outlined in Section 6 of this Plan or fail to meet the detailed requirements of each of the incentive programs, the financial incentive program agreement, or any other requirements of the City, the City under the direction of the Plan Administrator, may delay, reduce or cancel the approved incentive program benefits and may require repayment of any of the incentive program benefits.

7.2.11 Discontinuation of Funding

The City may discontinue funding any of the incentive programs at any time; however, all applicants with approved incentive program benefits will continue to receive the benefits in accordance with the terms outlined in this Plan, subject to fulfilling any requirements and agreements and subject to available funding as approved by Council or its designated approval authority.

7.2.12 Cancellation of Grant due to Failure to Initiate the Project

Any program commitments may be cancelled if work does not commence within six months of the approval of an application, or in accordance with an agreement with the City.

7.3 Application Process for Incentive Programs

This section outlines the general application process for financial incentive programs available under this Plan. The City, at its sole discretion, may indicate or require additional processes through specific program guidelines.



7.3.1 Application Process

The City may implement either a “first come, first served” or an “intake window” process for receiving and making decisions on financial incentive applications. By default, this Plan is to be administered on a “first come, first served” basis. However, Council may choose to change the process in consideration of a recommendation of staff and/or a Committee of Council. Council has the discretion to modify the approval process for applications at any time. The general process types are outlined as follows:

First Come, First Served:	In a first come, first served application process, the City accepts grants applications throughout the year, provided funding is still available. Applications are processed and decided upon in the order in which they are received. When funding is exhausted, the City will close the application process until funding becomes available.
Intake Window:	In an intake window application process, the City may establish a set timeframe in which it will accept applications. All applications will be reviewed and decided upon at a meeting of Council or the delegated approval authority. During this process, funding may become exhausted. Accordingly, there may be a need to prioritize which approved applications will receive funding. Council or the designated authority will have the sole discretion to determine how the applications may be prioritized for funding.

7.3.2 Application Process Changes

Council may direct changes to the application process without an amendment to this Plan. Changes should be considered as part of the annual monitoring and evaluation of the Plan and in consideration of the recommendations provided by staff, and/or a Committee of Council.

7.3.3 Pre-application Consultation and Application Submission

Applicants are required to arrange and participate in a pre-application consultation meeting with the Plan Administrator, in order to discuss and



confirm matters such as, application requirements, program eligibility, and proposed scope of work, project timing, and supporting documentation requirements.

The applicant will be required to submit a completed application, which will include all the required application forms, in addition to any supporting documentation, as required by the Plan Administrator or by Council or its designated approval authority. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, the following materials:

- Photographs of the existing building condition or property;
- Historical photographs and/or drawings;
- A site plan and/or professional design study/architectural drawings;
- Itemized specification of the proposed works, including a work plan for the improvements and construction drawings; and/or
- At least two cost estimates for eligible work provided by licensed contractors or consultants, as appropriate in the context of the financial incentive program.

Once all the required forms and supporting materials are received, the Plan Administrator will undertake a preliminary screening of the proposal and application.

Based the results of the preliminary screening, the Plan Administrator may perform an initial site visit and inspection of the building/property, as necessary. The Plan Administrator will inform the applicant of the approximate time for the site visit and inspection. The applicant should also be present at the time of inspection, where possible.

If the application clearly does not meet the program requirements, the application will not be accepted.

If the application meets the program requirements, the application will be accepted. By accepting an application for any of the financial incentive programs, the Plan Administrator does not guarantee support or program approval.



7.3.4 Application Approval

Once an application is approved by Council or its designated approval authority based on the recommendation of the Plan Administrator, the Plan Administrator will forward a copy of the Recommendation Report and resolution of Council to the Applicant. The Plan Administrator and the Applicant will execute a Financial Incentive Program Agreement, where required, to be authorized through by-law by Council or its delegated approval authority.

If Council or the designated approval authority refuses an application, the Applicant may re-submit the application for reconsideration, provided the applicant has made consideration of the reasons for refusal.

7.3.5 Completion of Works and Payment

Once an application has been approved by Council or its designated approval authority and the required agreements signed and authorized by by-law, and once all the required approvals and permits for the work are secured, the applicant may commence community improvement works.

Payment of the financial incentive, in accordance with the Financial Incentive Program Agreement, will be provided upon successful completion of the approved works.

Prior to the issuance of the financial incentive, the applicant may be required to provide the Plan Administrator with final supporting documentation, which may include but is not limited to:

- Photographic evidence of the completed works;
- Invoices for all eligible work completed, indicating the total amount paid for eligible works; and/or
- Proof of payment to contractors, in full.

7.3.6 Final Site Inspection

If required, the Plan Administrator may perform a final site visit and inspection of the building/property (as necessary) in order to ensure that the project has been completed in accordance with the Financial Incentive Program Agreement.



7.3.7 Assurance of Conformity to the Program Requirements and Financial Incentive Program Agreement

Prior to issuance of the financial incentive payment, the Plan Administrator will ensure that all program requirements and details of the Financial Incentive Program Agreement have been satisfied.

7.3.8 Default on the Agreement

The Plan Administrator will take appropriate remedies as specified in the Agreement, if the applicant defaults on the Financial Incentive Program Agreement.

7.3.9 Payment of Grant

If all the program requirements and Financial Incentive Program Agreement requirements have been met to the Plan Administrator's satisfaction in accordance with the decision of Council or its designated approval authority, the Plan Administrator will issue payment of the approved grant in accordance with the general and specific program eligibility requirement, and the Financial Incentive Program Agreement.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

This Plan is primarily intended to be a flexible revitalization tool. As circumstances evolve, and as market forces, economic conditions, and financial resources change, the Plan will also need to evolve. Council or its designated authority will have the discretion to determine funding for the financial incentive programs. However, to inform decision making about the implementation budget, and to ensure that the programs are working as they are intended, the Plan should be monitored, evaluated and, if necessary, revised, on a regular basis.

8.1 Process for Monitoring and Evaluation

Immediately following adoption of this Plan, the City's Plan Administrator will begin to undertake the monitoring and evaluation activities in accordance with this section of the Plan.



8.1.1 Establishing the Monitoring Database

The Plan Administrator will develop a database to monitor the number, types and success of financial incentive applications. As applications for financial incentives are received, they will be recorded in the database.

Specific performance indicators will need to be identified and monitored. The selection of indicators will provide guidance about the success of the Plan and its individual programs. The Plan Administrator will work with relevant City Divisions (e.g. Building, Finance, Tax) to gather the following information from applicants:

- a) The approved/denied value of the grant and the total value of construction (the total public investment versus private investment);
- b) The effect of the incentives, such as the number of new residential units created and/or rehabilitated, the number and type of retail or businesses created, the number of trees being planted, etc.;
- c) The projected and actual increase in property assessments and property taxes, as may be applicable; and,
- d) Indirect indicators including economic indicators, qualitative indicators and other indicators such as:
 - i. Utilization of the total financial incentives program budget;
 - ii. Utilization of the various incentive programs;
 - iii. Total dollars spent on other specific variables which indicate advancement of the program (e.g. number of trees plants, number of metres of sidewalks improved, etc.);
 - iv. Other indicators, such as economic indicators, may be identified (e.g. number of new businesses established).

8.1.2 Determine Baseline Conditions

For the indicators identified in 8.1.1, the Plan Administrator will identify baseline conditions at the outset of the Plan implementation, so that variables may be compared from year-to-year, beginning with implementation of this Plan.

8.1.3 Collect Data

Throughout the course of a one-year review period, the Plan Administrator will enter information from application and pre-application consultation meetings into the database on an on-going basis.



8.1.4 Prepare Annual CIP Evaluation Report to Council

Based on the information obtained, the Plan Administrator in collaboration with other relevant City Divisions, will prepare an annual report to Council to evaluate this Plan and its individual programs, based on the changes to the baseline conditions established above, and based generally on the uptake of the programs and any new challenges that have emerged. The report will recommend adjustments to this Plan, including its terms, financial incentive programs and eligibility criteria, to improve the programs offered through the Plan. The report will provide recommendations based on the results of monitoring. Recommendations may include:

- Budget adjustments or funding strategies;
- Potential revisions to the Community Improvement Plan area;
- Adjustments to the financial incentive programs including the addition or discontinuation of programs, where necessary;
- Any necessary changes to plan administration or processes.

8.1.5 Program & Plan Adjustment

Based on the annual review and report to Council, adjustments to this Plan may be required, including:



Adjustments to the Plan:	Based on the monitoring and evaluation process, changes to the terms of this Plan, the eligibility requirements, or the financial incentive programs may be required. Council may also choose to discontinue funding for one or more of the financial incentive programs and may do so without amending this Plan. However, the permanent/change/removal of a financial incentive program or the addition of eligibility criteria or eligible costs will require an amendment to this Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the <i>Planning Act</i> .
Adjustments to Program Funding:	It is recognized that Council or its designated authority may choose to cease, reduce or increase funding to one or more of the financial incentive programs, based on an evaluation of this Plan. Adjustments to program funding, including the maximum amount of funding available to any one program (e.g. 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$10,000), or the amount of the annual budget will not require an amendment to this Plan.

The activities above are intended to be repeated on an annual basis throughout the life of this Plan.



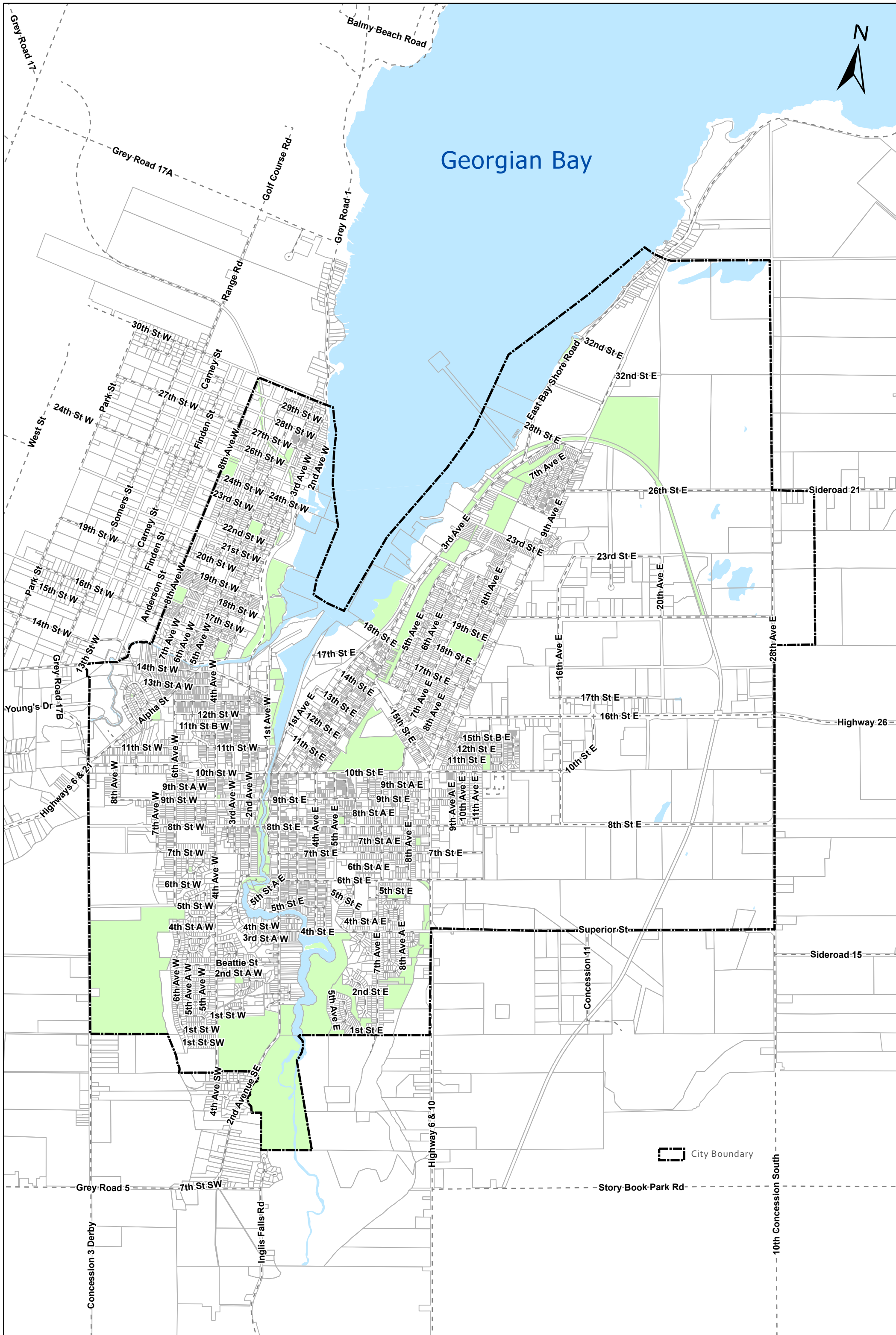
Schedules

Schedule A: Community Improvement Project Area

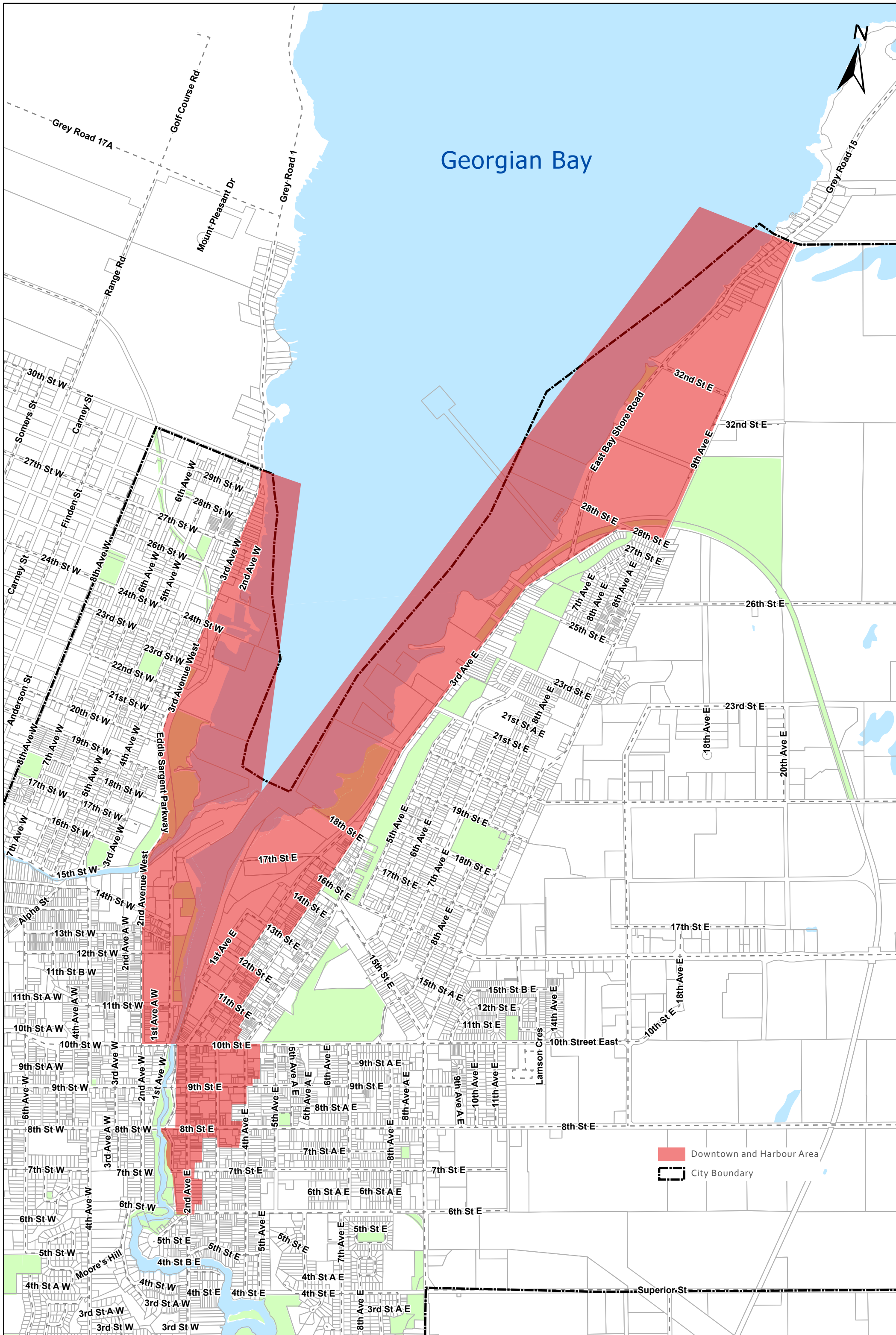
**Schedule B: Community Improvement Project Sub-Area:
Downtown & Harbour**

Schedule B1: Vacant Lands

Schedule A



Schedule B



Schedule B1

