

To:	Chair and Members of Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee
Committee Date:	September 6, 2018
Subject / Report No:	CAOR-ED-18-18
Title:	Community Improvement Plan Program
Prepared by:	Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning Savanna Myers, Manager of Economic Development
Reviewed by:	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
Lower Tier(s) Affected:	All Grey County
Status:	

Recommendation

1. That Report CAOR-ED-18-18 regarding the Community Improvement Plan Program be received; and
2. That staff be directed to prepare a presentation and report for County Council on September 27, 2018.

Executive Summary

Growing the Grey County Economy is one of the three goals in the County Strategic Plan. Following discussions with member municipalities looking for new tools to grow their assessment base and become more investment ready, earlier this year Planning and Economic Development staff initiated the development of a Community Improvement Plan Program. The first draft of the CIP Program is complete. An extensive process of stakeholder consultation is recommended in order to refine the program and have it ready for formal adoption in Q2 2019.

Background and Discussion

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is developed by municipal planners and economic developers working collaboratively to develop policies and incentives targeting specific types of growth and investment. Grey County and the local municipalities have identified a need for a Community Improvement Plan Program to help promote and enable prioritized development across the County as outlined in the County Official Plan.

Grey County hopes to have an inventory of Investment-Ready properties and to realize its economic development vision of being 'Open for Business'; while ensuring County Council's goal of 'Growing the Grey County Economy' is met. This CIP Program is meant to enable and boost development momentum across the region and enhance the regional ecosystem from the ground up, which is where investment happens. The intent of this Program is to offer targeted incentives countywide including within settlement areas as well as in our rural areas.

This CIP Program will provide a menu of incentives to promote and support the following types of development and revitalization projects:

- Increase attainable housing stock, including secondary suites, multi-unit housing, purpose built rental housing, rooming house developments and apartment dormitory style developments;
- Increase value added agricultural uses, agri-tourism, and facility improvement projects;
- Promotion of the development, redevelopment and/or conversion of brownfield, vacant, and grey field properties;
- Support for downtown revitalization of store fronts, publically-used frontages, and streetscapes; and
- Support adaptive re-use of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings.

CIP Program Process

The CIP Program began following several discussions with the Grey County Economic Development Working Group in 2017 regarding 2018 priorities and work plans.

A draft CIP Program has been developed based on initial input received from several Economic Development Working Group discussions as well as community input received as part of Recolour Grey, Affordable Housing Study, Mayor's Attainable Housing Forum, etc.

The preparation of a CIP must be consistent with applicable provincial, regional, and local policy. The first section of the draft document provides an overview of the legislation, policies and studies relevant to the preparation of a CIP for each Municipality. The second section outlines priority areas, followed by eligibility and procedure, incentives and an appendix inclusive of definitions, general terms of incentive programs, links to complementary programs, proposed administration, by-law templates, OMAFRA research documents and an application template.

Given the research and input collected throughout this process, the following five priority areas have been identified in an effort to encourage development and grow the assessment base:

- **Residential:** To increase attainable housing stock, including secondary suites, multi-unit housing, rooming house developments, purpose built rental housing, and apartment dormitory style developments.
- **Agricultural:** To increase agricultural value-add, agri-tourism, and facility improvement projects.
- **Vacant/Brownfield:** To promote the development, redevelopment and/or conversion of brownfield, vacant, and grey field properties.
- **Downtown:** Downtown revitalization of store fronts, publically-used frontages, and streetscapes; reduction of vacant storefronts and increased residential capacity.

- **Residential and Commercial:** Adaptive re-use of commercial, industrial and institutional buildings, support development of new commercial uses.

To enable these priority areas, an a la carte menu of incentives have been proposed, recommending a mixture of grants, fee waivers and deferrals, tax equivalent financing and surplus land grants.

Menu of Recommended Incentives	
Study & Design Grant	Permit/Application Fee Exemption
Development Charge Exemption/Deferral	Brownfield Tax Assistance Grant
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant	Vacant Lands Tax Assistance Grant
Heritage Property Tax Relief	Housing Rehabilitation & Conversion Grant
Surplus Land Grant	Buildings & Land Improvement Grant
Start Up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant	Vacant Building Conversion/Expansion Grant
Façade, Signage & Property Improvement Grant	Destination Infrastructure Grant

It is the expectation of staff that each municipal CIP will be unique to their community, enabling development and enhancement aligned with local priorities, in addition to supporting overarching County priorities such as affordable and attainable housing.

The draft was shared with municipal CAOs, EDOs and Planning staff on August 24, 2018 for review. On August 29 County Economic Development and Planning Staff hosted a Planning 101 session with the same municipal stakeholders to engage in a formal review and discussion of the draft.

County and Municipal staff had a good discussion focused on topics such as requirements to designate, adopt and implement a CIP, structure and administration, budgeting and cost containment, performance measurement, marketing and a review of the recommended incentives menu. Stakeholders reinforced the need for the program to be targeted, at the same time, ensuring flexibility in the program to drive projects and demonstrate a strong return on investment.

All agreed in the need to take the time now to ensure the program is well thought out and comprehensive enough to adapt as scenarios change to ensure the program's best success. As such, the following next steps were discussed to continue the process.

Next Steps

There are several necessary steps still ahead before the CIP Program will be ready for approval and implementation. The initial draft is being reviewed by CAOs, EDOs and Planning staff as well as by municipal and county finance teams. With support from the Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee, a presentation to County Council will take place.

Each municipality will also need to seek input from key stakeholders such as developers, Downtown Improvement Areas and Chambers of Commerce to ensure the incentives are

valuable and will be used. Input will be obtained from County Council in and the Councils of each member municipality in Q1 2019.

Once discussions have taken place and drafts are nearing their final form, presentations and reports to Council and public meetings will be required. Each municipality is in a different position in terms of these requirements. Some will require a local official plan amendment in addition to the CIP public meeting, where others will only require an amendment to their existing CIPs for land areas and programs. County staff will work with member municipalities to help complete these necessary steps.

Following the public meetings, final documents will be prepared and circulated to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Approval of CIPs and associated budgets will ultimately be the choice of each local municipal Council.

This process is expected to take six to eight months, with approvals and implementation possible by the spring of 2019.

Legal and Legislated Requirements

The Community Improvement Plan Program has been drafted with due regard for S.28 of the Planning Act and O.Reg. 550/06 Prescribed Matters – Upper Tier Community Improvement Plans.

Financial and Resource Implications

As part of the 10 year capital plan, 2019 to 2029, staff has proposed a county contribution of \$20,000 per municipality for a period of five years, 2019 to 2024. In addition to the cash contribution, the County would also participate in the County tax portion of tax increment financing and provide relief to planning application fees and development charges as determined by the CIP program. Surplus land will also be considered as determined by the CIP program. All financial implications are being carefully reviewed and subject to Council approval during the 2019 budget process and beyond.

Relevant Consultation

Internal – CAO, Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Housing, Manager of Economic Development, Economic Development Officers, Senior Planner, Planning Summer Student

External – Economic Development Working Group, Municipal Chief Administrative Officers, Municipal Planning Staff, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Appendices and Attachments

None.