

<b>To:</b>	Chair and Members of Economic Development and Planning Advisory Committee
<b>Committee Date:</b>	January 30, 2018
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	PDR-ED-05-18
<b>Title:</b>	Community Improvement Plan Development
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Randy Scherzer, Director of Planning Savanna Myers, Manager of Economic Development
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Kim Wingrove, Chief Administrative Officer
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All of Grey County
<b>Status:</b>	Recommendation adopted by Committee as presented per Resolution ED04-18; Endorsed by Committee of the Whole February 8, 2018 per Resolution CW59-18;

## Recommendation

1. That Report PDR-ED-05-18 titled **Community Improvement Plan Development** be received; and
2. That staff be directed to develop a community improvement plan program that would provide potential incentives to address current economic development barriers and that would help support member municipalities initiatives and priorities through existing or future community improvement plans.

## Executive Summary

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that allows municipalities to direct funds and implement policy initiatives towards a specified project area. Some of our member municipalities either have existing CIP's or are working on CIP's to address local initiatives and priorities. Projects such as Recolour Grey and the Local Agri-Food Strategy have lead staff to consider the positive impact possible from a Grey County CIP program. As such, staff are recommending that the County develop a community improvement plan program in 2018 to be potentially implemented in 2019 that would explore potential incentives to address current economic development barriers (e.g. affordable/attainable housing). The community improvement program would also be designed to support member municipalities' initiatives and priorities through existing or future community improvement plans.

## Background and Discussion

A Community Improvement Plan is a tool where municipal planners and economic developers can work hand in hand to develop policies and provide incentives targeting specific types of growth and investment.

A number of member municipalities offer a CIP which may assist businesses with renovations, brownfield clean-up, incentives for development, affordable housing loans and other priority areas. CIP programs vary from municipality to municipality.

Existing CIPs in Grey County:

- Owen Sound – façade incentive, brownfield, heritage tax incentive (up to \$7,500), vacant land tax assistance, development charges refund
- Municipality of Meaford – downtown CIP (façade program, environmental study grant, brownfields tax assistance, application fee grants, commercial development charge grant and tax incremental grant), municipal wide/economic CIP (study and business plan grant, building and lands improvement grant for commercial, industrial or value added-agricultural, development charge and municipal fee grant and tax incremental grant)
- Hanover – downtown/façade incentive (up to \$15,000)
- Town of The Blue Mountains – design (no financial incentives)

Proposed CIP development in Grey County:

- Grey Highlands
- Southgate
- Chatsworth

Findings from ReColour Grey and the Local Agri-Food Strategy have lead staff to consider the positive impact possible from a Grey County CIP program. Staff would like to further investigate this opportunity and if proven advantageous, develop a draft program in partnership with member municipalities that could potentially be implemented in 2019.

Preliminary consultation with members of the Economic Development Working Group demonstrates support for continued investigation to develop a draft CIP program. Staff sees this as an opportunity to tackle some of the County's most pressing economic development barriers such as affordable/attainable housing. Staff also sees this as an opportunity to support local CIP initiatives and priorities in a strategic and collaborative approach to help grow the Grey County economy as identified as goal one of the Corporate Strategic Plan.

There are two options available for Grey County. Option one is similar in nature to Elgincentives where CIP templates are developed by the County for adoption at the lower tier. The second option is a County-wide CIP which was introduced by the County of Frontenac. The second option requires approval from the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

## Legal and Legislated Requirements

Community Improvement Plans are permitted under Section 28 of the Planning Act. Municipal councils need to adopt official plan policies and a by-law designating a CIP project area. The project area can be identified as the entire municipality. Currently only lower-tier municipalities and prescribed upper-tier municipalities are permitted to develop a CIP. The only prescribed upper-tier municipalities are Regions and the County of Frontenac who requested the Minister to be prescribed. The County could request the Minister to be prescribed through a motion from Council. This may take several months to be considered and there are no guarantees that the Minister will approve the request. Upper-tier CIP's are also limited in dealing with certain matters such as:

- Infrastructure that is within the upper-tier municipality's jurisdiction
- Land and buildings within and adjacent to existing or planned transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development and redevelopment, and
- Affordable housing

Given that upper-tier CIP's are limited in scope, it may be beneficial to create a CIP template that can be applied county-wide for adoption by the local municipalities. Incentive based programs that can be considered as part of the CIP program can involve:

- **grants, loans and land** under section 28 of the Planning Act, and
- **tax assistance** under section 365.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001

## Financial and Resource Implications

There are no funds anticipated for the development of the CIP program. Staff from Planning and Economic Development has included this initiative in 2018 work plans.

Recommendations regarding funding of the CIP will be presented for consideration following a further report to Council and could be considered as part of the 2019 budget.

## Relevant Consultation

Internal (list) – Chief Administrative Officer, Director of Finance, Planning and Economic Development staff.

External (list) – Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Grey County Economic Development Working Group.

## Appendices and Attachments

[Community Improvement Plan One Sheet, Ministry of Municipal Affairs](#)

[Elgincents Brochure](#)