



## Planning and Development Committee Report

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**To:** To the Chair and Members of the Planning and Development Committee  
**From:** Zach Gable, Senior Economic Development Officer  
**Date:** July 5, 2022  
**Report #:** RPT-22-160  
**Subject:** Amendments to Downtown Community Improvement Plans  
**Purpose:** For Approval

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### Recommendation

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That RPT-22-160 titled Amendments to Downtown Community Improvement Plans dated July 5, 2022 be approved;

And that the appropriate by-laws be prepared for signing by the Mayor and the Clerk.

### Strategic Plan Priority

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Strategic Priority 3 - Economic Resilience

### Impacts and Mitigation

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#### Social Impacts

Each downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) has a wide variety of goals and objectives. Broadly, the CIPs are intended to help support vibrant downtowns and encourage a high quality of design, conserve heritage characteristics and help increase housing stock in each downtown.

#### Environmental Impacts

CIPs are meant to encourage active transportation and where appropriate, modest intensification.

#### Economic Impacts

CIPs are intended to keep downtowns functioning as economic hubs for each community.

The balance of the CIP capital account is currently \$273,456. It is expected the CIP capital fund will need additional funds at a later date. While anticipating average expenditure by year has been challenging due to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, staff estimate average expenditure of \$75,000 per year for administration of the downtown CIPs.

### Report

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## Background

Through Section 28 of the Planning Act, Council has established CIPs and Design Guidelines for the downtown core areas of Burford, Paris, and St. George. CIPs give Council the ability to approve several different grants to support businesses and property owners within the cores to make property improvements.

As of this report date 45 downtown projects have been approved by Council across the three downtown cores with 34 projects that have been completed, 7 in progress and 4 applications have been withdrawn.

Uptake to date as of July 5<sup>th</sup> 2022:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Value of Grants</b>
Façade Improvement Grant	\$170,336
Signage Improvement Grant	\$29,559
Property and Private Parking Improvement Grant	\$13,673
Planning and Building Application Fee Grants	\$15,140
Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant	\$10,000
Adaptive Commercial Reuse Grant	\$20,000
<b><u>Total Value of Grants Approved by Council</u></b>	<b><u>\$273,456</u></b>
Total Remaining Funds in CIP Capital Account	\$285,956
<b>Total Construction Value of approved projects</b>	<b>\$1,069,242</b>

## Analysis

Given that three years have passed since the adoption of the St. George and Burford CIPs, staff took the opportunity to review and make the recommended amendments to all the existing downtown CIPs. The intent of these amendments is to help overcome implementation barriers, implement further support for accessibility, support businesses implementing public health best practices, as well ensure the grant levels are competitive and effective given rising costs associated with construction. Staff have also updated language so the CIPs better conform to the language in the approved draft Official Plan. Additionally the parking strategy has been removed from the Paris Downtown CIP as it has been superseded by the Downtown Paris Master Plan.

See Attachments 2, 3 and 4 for the Draft Amended Community Improvement Plans.

Below is a summary of the proposed amendments to the CIP grant programs.

Grant Program	Proposed Amendments
Façade Improvement Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater flexibility for accessibility improvements</li> <li>• Additional professional fees eligible</li> <li>• Increase grant value to \$10,000 from \$7,500 for properties</li> <li>• Corner properties or properties that also front municipal property increase to \$12,500 from \$10,000 if both street facing sides addressed</li> <li>• Properties that back onto the Grand River increase to \$15,000 from \$12,500 provided river facing and front facades are being addressed through the application</li> </ul>
Downtown Housing Improvement Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name Change to Downtown Housing Improvement Grant from Upper Storey Apartment Improvement Grant</li> <li>• Expand eligibility for all legal apartments per County Zoning-By-law</li> <li>• Increase grant value to \$10,000 from \$5,000 per unit</li> </ul>
Property and Private Parking Area Improvement Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand eligibility for outdoor seating in all yards</li> <li>• Increase flexibility, encourage more outdoor eating areas</li> </ul>
Planning and Building Application Fee Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase scope to include more projects in downtown areas</li> <li>• Expand eligibility to include site alteration permits, sign permits, development charges, fees associated with encroachment agreements</li> <li>• Increase grant value to \$10,000 from \$5,000</li> </ul>
Adaptive Commercial Reuse Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include major additions to a commercial or mixed-use property</li> <li>• Fund interior improvements related to restoration of heritage designated or identified properties</li> <li>• Increase grant value to \$15,000 from \$10,000</li> </ul>

A complete list of the intended changes to the grant programs is included as Attachment 1.

The amendments were reviewed by the CIP Review committee and supported. Additionally Economic Development and Tourism Staff have consulted internally as well with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Notice of the amendments was made through the Brantford Expositor.

The amendments also align with the Council approved Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan: Pillar 3: Building County of Brant's Downtown Core Areas, to protect County of Brant's downtown core areas from suburban retail growth.

**Summary and Recommendations**

Staff are recommending amendments to the existing downtown CIPs. As the County of Brant enters a period of economic recovery, the downtown CIPs provide an opportunity to support downtown businesses that have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 situation. The intent of these changes is to increase flexibility and ensure funding levels are effective.

**Attachments**

- 1. Summary of proposed amendments
- 2. Draft Amended Downtown Burford Community Improvement Plan
- 3. Draft Amended Downtown Paris Community Improvement Plan
- 4. Draft Amended Downtown St. George Community Improvement Plan

**Reviewed By**

Russell Press, Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
Alison Newtown, General Manager Strategic Initiatives

**Copied To**

Dani Tota, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator  
Jessica Kitchen, Planner  
Alyssa Seitz, Planning Administrative Assistant/ Secretary Treasurer to the Committee of Adjustment

**By-law and/or Agreement**

By-law Required	Yes
Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and /or Clerk	No