



**COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)
REVIEW AND UPDATE STUDY
BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS REPORT
FEBRUARY 2025**

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This project is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

Introduction

Introducing the Wellesley CIP Review and Update Study

In 2017, the Township of Wellesley adopted its first Community Improvement Plan (CIP), the [Core Areas CIP](#), which focused on establishing a set of financial and non-financial incentives to contribute to the overall vitality, regeneration, and economic prosperity of the Township – with a primary focus on the Core Areas of Wellesley and St. Clements. With input from stakeholders and members of the community, it was determined in 2017 that these Core Areas would benefit most from a comprehensive, strategic, and flexible framework for the beautification and revitalization (i.e., physical and aesthetic improvements) of public and private properties.

In 2024, a review of the Township's Core Areas CIP was initiated to understand if updates may be required, and the purpose of this report is to share the results of the study. The 2024 CIP Review and Update Study has been funded in part by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. It is intended to:

- Assess the results of the Township's Core Areas CIP to-date;
- Obtain input from the Township and community on current priorities/programs; and
- Identify opportunities for a new and improved CIP.

Why a Review?

Social, environmental, political, and economic landscapes have changed across the Province, Region, and Township since the current 2017 CIP was adopted. Due to circumstances such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, challenging and uncertain economic conditions, a nation-wide housing crisis, and numerous changes to Ontario's planning legislation, municipalities across Ontario are using CIPs in more creative and adaptable ways than they were. As such, this project is intended to review and update the Township's existing Core Areas CIP to respond to various changes, increase access to incentive programs, and take into consideration the current goals and needs of stakeholders, business owners, landowners, and the community.

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the existing Core Areas CIP and the results of implementation since 2017; findings from a review of comparable CIPs implemented in the past few years; and recent input from the community on current needs and priorities. This report concludes with a set of recommendations for updating the Township's current Core Areas CIP.

Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Basics

What is a CIP?

Community improvement planning is a municipal planning tool used across the province and legislated by the Ontario Planning Act. A CIP is a land use planning document that helps implement Official Plans and Zoning By-laws and focuses on the use of land and buildings. The following are important definitions from the Planning Act with respect to CIPs:

28(1) ***“community improvement”*** means the planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary.

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

“community improvement project area” means a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community improvement of which in the opinion of the council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

According to the Planning Act, once a plan for the community improvement of a community improvement project area has been prepared, the Township can provide financial incentives like grants or loans to help with community improvement projects:

28(7) *For the purpose of carrying out a municipality’s community improvement plan that has come into effect, the municipality may make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or any part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8).*

A CIP can help achieve local Township goals by providing grants, loans, and other incentives to landowners within a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA).

In addition, the Planning Act states that eligible costs of a CIP may include costs related to *environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment,*

construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities. This is a very wide range of eligible costs and provides the Township with significant flexibility in creating CIP programs.

How are CIPs used?

For nearly 30 years, CIPs have been used across Ontario to improve downtown or ‘core areas’, as well as remediate brownfield (i.e., contaminated) sites. Legislation provides significant flexibility in the use of CIP tools and in the past decade municipalities have started using CIP tools to address a wider range of needs and opportunities, such as:

- Redevelopment and Intensification
- Sustainability and Energy Efficiency
- Agricultural Diversification
- Walkability and Mobility
- Accessibility
- Heritage Conservation
- Housing Options and Affordability
- Economic Development

Provincial CIP Policy Direction

Since the adoption of the 2017 Core Areas CIP, the new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) came into effect (October 20, 2024), which emphasizes that Ontario will continue to be a great place to live, work and visit where all Ontarians enjoy a high standard of living and an exceptional quality of life, through the creation of complete communities. Section 2.1.6 of the PPS requires planning authorities to support the achievement of complete communities by:

- a. accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multimodal access, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses (including schools and associated childcare facilities, long-term care facilities, places of worship and cemeteries), recreation, parks and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs;
- b. improving accessibility for people of all ages and abilities by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society; and
- c. improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.

Intensification and redevelopment are specifically identified by the PPS as an approach to achieving complete communities, as follows:

- Planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities, including by planning for a range and mix of

housing options and prioritizing planning and investment in the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities. (2.3.1.3)

- To support the achievement of complete communities, a range and mix of housing options, intensification and more mixed-use development, strategic growth areas should be planned: a) to accommodate significant population and employment growth; b) as focal areas for education, commercial, recreational, and cultural uses; c) to accommodate and support the transit network and provide connection points for inter- and intra-regional transit; and d) to support affordable, accessible, and equitable housing.(2.4.1.2)
- Planning authorities should: c) permit development and intensification in strategic growth areas to support the achievement of complete communities and a compact built form. (2.4.1.3)

In addition, the PPS 2024 states that planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities by, among other things, permitting and facilitating all types of residential intensification, including the development and redevelopment of underutilized commercial and industrial sites such as shopping malls and plazas for residential use, development and the introduction of new housing options within previously developed areas, and redevelopment which results in a net increase in residential units (Policy 2.2.1.b).

Finally, the 2024 PPS provides direction on agricultural uses, and specifically permits agri-tourism activities, which are defined as farm-related tourism uses, including limited accommodation such as a bed and breakfast, that promote the enjoyment, education or activities related to the farm operation. Given that agriculture is the predominant use of land and key component of the Township's economy and plays an important role in the township's environmental sustainability, cultural heritage and social well-being, this could be important to consider through the CIP update.

Overall, the 2024 PPS supports the use of CIPs by generally emphasizing community revitalization and sustainable development across the Township. The Township's updated CIP can help achieve local and Provincial growth priorities, support economic development, and encourage the development of complete communities in Wellesley.

Local CIP Policies

Chapter 5 of the Township of Wellesley Official Plan outlines policies for community improvement. These policies have been put in place to enable the implementation of a CIP as defined by the Planning Act:

- 5.1.1 *Council may pass a by-law to designate part of, or the entire township, as a Community Improvement Project Area in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act. Within a designated Community Improvement Project Area, Council may prepare and adopt a Community Improvement Plan to promote*

maintenance, rehabilitation, revitalization, remediation and/or conservation of selected lands, buildings and/or communities.

5.1.2 Council will consider the characteristics of an area to be designated for community improvement. A Community Improvement Project Area will have one or more of the following characteristics:

- a) the presence of conflicting land uses;
- b) the presence of buildings in need of renovation, rehabilitation, improvement or replacement;
- c) deficiencies in terms of open spaces, parks, community facilities or landscaping;
- d) a significant deterioration of infrastructure; and/or;
- e) deficiencies in terms of flood protection.

5.1.3 In order to provide for the rehabilitation of a Community Improvement Project Area with an approved **Community Improvement Plan**, Council may:

- a) acquire land within the community improvement project area and clear, grade or otherwise prepare the land for community improvement;
- b) construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land that has been acquired by Council;
- c) sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land that has been acquired by Council;
- d) provide grants or loans to property and building owners within the Community Improvement Project Area;
- e) enforce by-laws and policies dealing with property maintenance; and,
- f) encourage the private sector and the public to be involved with initiatives in Community Improvement Project Areas.

5.1.4 The Township may provide grants, loans or other assistance as Township Council deems appropriate for the purposes of carrying out programs as described in Regional **Community Improvement Plans**.

Township of Wellesley Strategic Plan (2019-2023)

Since adoption of the 2017 Core Areas CIP, the Township has prepared a new Strategic Plan (2019 to 2023), which provides direction on opportunities for updating the existing CIP and financial incentive programs. The Strategic Plan includes the following vision statement:

“One Township of many communities. Rural by nature. Modern by design. United by technology. Empowered by best practices.”

The Township’s Strategic Plan also identifies four strategies to achieve this vision:

1. Working with the communities within our Township to build common understanding and celebrate our uniqueness.
2. Working with our neighbouring Townships to seek out operating efficiencies.

3. *Partnering with the world-class technical and agricultural institutions at our doorstep to enable low-impact growth via leading edge technologies.*
4. *Engaging regional, provincial, and federal governments, as well as industry and academic institutions, to seek out and deploy best practices in rural/urban planning and governance*

By pursuing this vision, the Township aims to bolster the community by fostering a thriving economy, sustainable transportation, environmental stewardship, sustainable growth, healthy, safe and inclusive communities, and responsive, engaging government services.

The Strategic Plan also identifies an additional fourteen strategic issues to focus on, listed below in alphabetical order:

1. Affordable/Age-Appropriate/Available Housing
2. Business and Tourism Support
3. Environmental Stewardship
4. Fiscal Responsibility
5. Health Promotion
6. Infrastructure Improvement & Management
7. Intensification, Zoning, Development and Growth
8. Internal Efficiencies & Shared Services
9. Non-Motorized Vehicle Management
10. Opportunities for Youth & Seniors
11. Public Engagement
12. Public Transit/Access to Urban Services
13. Recreation/Community Facilities & Programs
14. Retention of Small Town/Rural Culture and Identity(s)

Regional CIP Policies

Another significant change that has occurred since the adoption of the Township's 2017 Core Areas CIP is the role of Regional government in local Township planning. As a result of Provincial Bill 23, *More Homes Built Faster* (2022), the Regional Municipality of Waterloo has been relieved of its land use planning approval power and is no longer responsible for upkeep of an official plan. Its seven local municipalities, including the Township of Wellesley, will operate using both the Regional Official Plan and their current area municipal official plans for a period of time in order to make planning decisions. The Region's role in the planning process will now be that of a commenting body focused on its infrastructure, services and lands, in areas such as water protection and water and wastewater infrastructure, transit and transportation, affordable housing, waste management and the regional airport.

That said, in accordance with the Ontario Planning Act, the Region is still permitted to participate in financial incentives offered through a lower-tier municipal CIP:

Grants or loans re eligible costs

(7) For the purpose of carrying out a municipality's community improvement plan that has come into effect, the municipality may make grants or loans, in conformity with the community improvement plan, to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area, and to any person to whom such an owner or tenant has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan, to pay for the whole or any part of the eligible costs of the community improvement plan. 2006, c. 23, s. 14 (8).

The current 2017 CIP encourages Regional participation in the Township's financial incentive programs:

The Township and Region could also develop a Strategy for Regional Participation in other financial incentives. A Working Committee made up of Township and Region staff could be organized to discuss options/develop a strategy for the Region's participation, including:

- ***The Region's goals, objectives, and policy framework for participation in local CIP programs;***
- ***Options for Region participation in certain Financial Incentives offered through the Plan; and***
- ***Parameters for participation, such as the review/approval of applications, and agreement execution.***

Finally, the current Regional Official Plan provides policies that permit the Region to participate in the provision of grants and loans through the Wellesley CIP:

10.B.8 The Region may provide grants, loans or other assistance as Regional Council deems appropriate for the purposes of carrying out programs as described in Area Municipal Community Improvement Plans.

The Region also currently provides a range of financial incentive programs through existing community improvement plans, which eligible landowners in Wellesley could access, in addition to any Township-offered CIP incentives:

- **Regional Development Charge Exemptions (Brownfields):** The Regional Development Charge Exemption (Brownfields) program provides incentives for development on remediated brownfield sites by allowing for reimbursements of remediation costs up to 50%, with a maximum of \$1,000,000 (less any other financial aid).
- **Development Charge Exemption for Industrial Development:** This program provides Development Charge exemptions for the enlargement of existing industrial buildings by 50% or less.

- **Waterloo Region Heritage Foundation Property Grant:** This program provides a capital grant of up to 50% of project costs to owners of heritage properties, as designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, for maintenance, restoration, projects, events and publications.
- **New Multi-Residential Developments:** This program allows for multi-residential buildings (6+ units with a building permit issued after April 11, 2001) to qualify for a tax ratio of 1.000 for 35 years after assessed.

Review of 2017 Core Areas CIP

Goals and Objectives

The current CIP places an emphasis on the vitality, regeneration, and economic prosperity of the Township's urban and rural Core Areas. As such, the following three goals and associated objectives were set for the Township of Wellesley Core Areas CIP:

1. Attract and Retain People and Businesses in the Core Areas.

- a. Increase the number of business enterprise start-ups and expansions;*
- b. Retain and support existing businesses;*
- c. Attract tourism to the Township*
- d. Reduce the number of vacant, under-utilized, or non-performing buildings and properties;*
- e. Increase the number and type of residential units within the Township's Core Areas; and*
- f. Increase and diversify the Township's overall tax base and revenues.*

2. Restore and Beautify Core Areas

- a. Implement aesthetic improvements to private property such as improvements to facades, signage, and landscapes;*
- b. Implement functional improvements to public and private property, such as structural repairs to buildings and improvements to parking, infrastructure and accessibility; and*
- c. Apply dedicated Township funds and resources for improvements to community facilities, streetscapes, and public spaces/the public realm*

3. Protect and Enhance the Heritage Features and Distinctive Character of Core Areas

- a. Assist with the conservation of cultural heritage resources and landscapes;*
- b. Prioritize improvement projects that recognize and enhance the Township's natural and cultural heritage resources as a significant community asset;*
- c. Introduce a set of Façade and Design Guidelines to enhance existing community character;*
- d. Implement signage to promote Wellesley and contribute to a unique visitor experience; and*
- e. Ensure that all community improvement projects are implemented in a manner that is consistent with the Township's vision and goals for urban design.*

To be eligible for financial incentives offered through the CIP, an improvement project must support the goals and objectives listed above. As well, in the current CIP, measures have been outlined in Section 9 to assist in the monitoring of each of the goals listed to measure the effectiveness of the CIP.

Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs)

To achieve the goals and objectives identified above, two CIPAs have been identified in the 2017 CIP, as described below and shown in the maps:

- The Primary Core Areas CIPA; and
- The Secondary Core Areas CIPA.

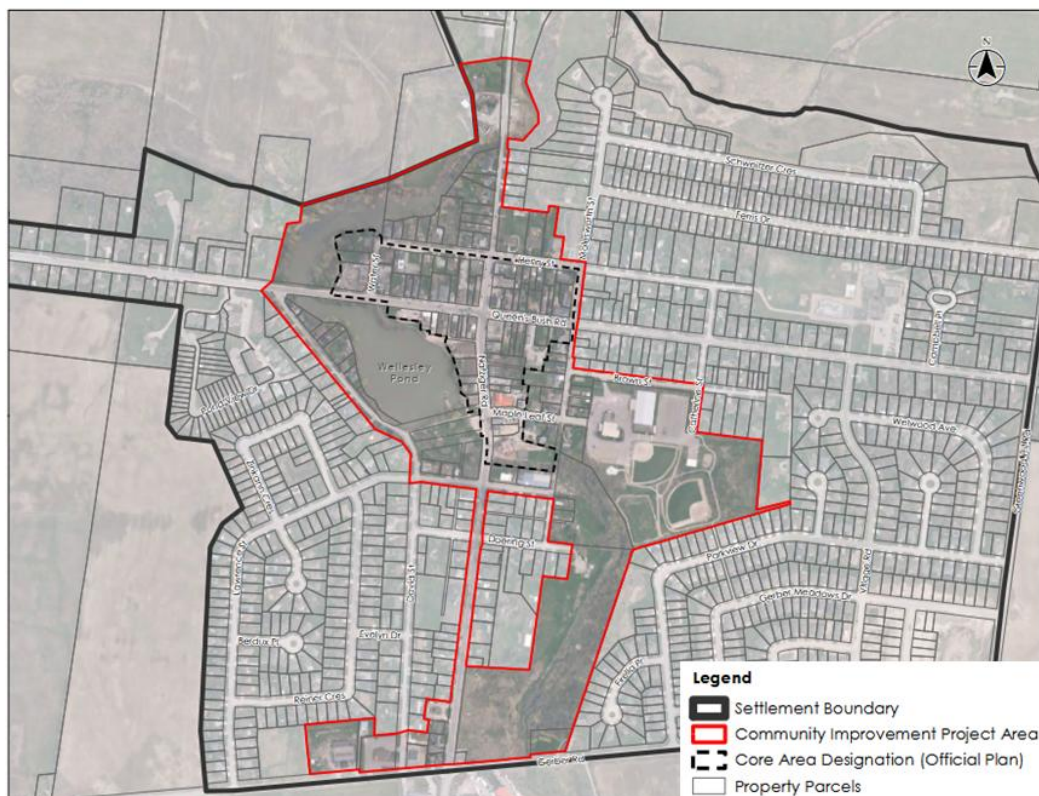
By identifying the two CIPAs, the Township intended to phase improvements based on priority. The Primary Core Areas CIPA has been the focus of the CIP for the first years of implementation. The CIP states that once the CIP has been successfully implemented in the Primary Core Areas CIPA, some or all of the programs in the CIP could then be made available in the Secondary Core Areas CIPA.

Primary Core Areas CIPA

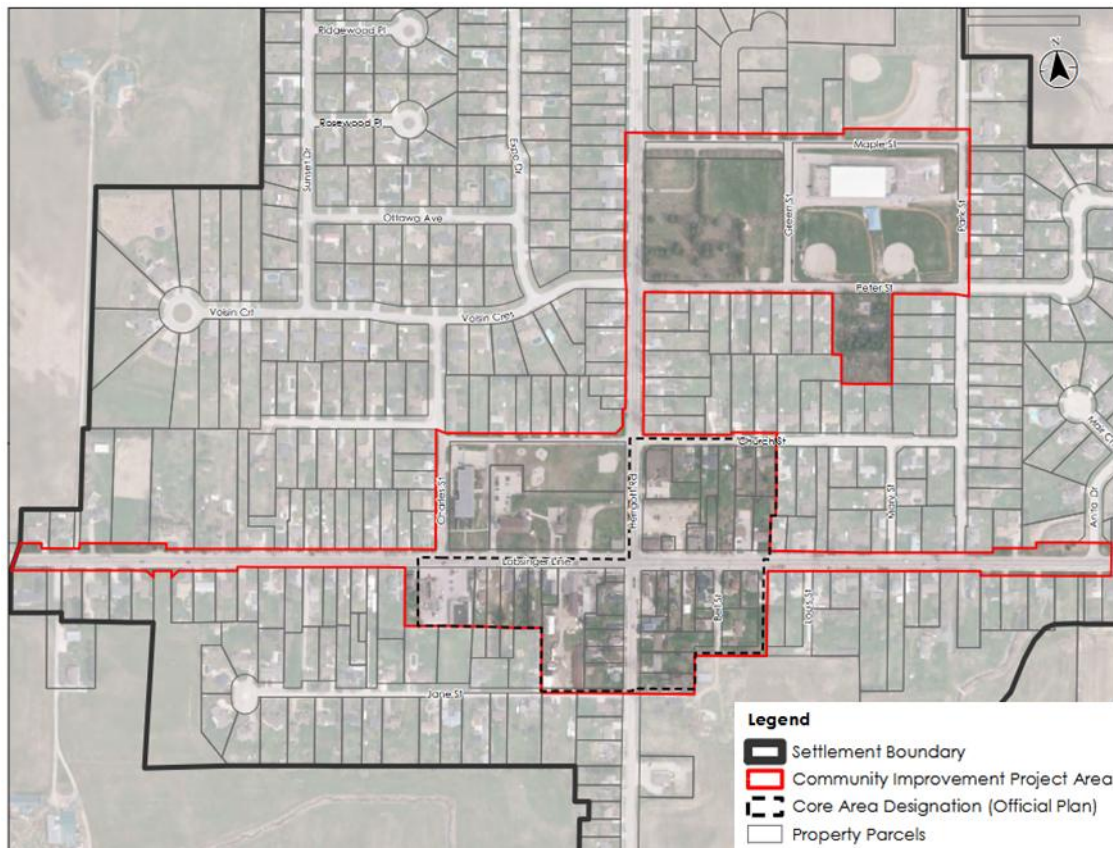
The Township's Primary Core Areas CIPA includes the following, as shown above:

1. The Wellesley Urban Area (per the Township Official Plan) and surrounding lands; and
2. The Service Settlement Area of St. Clements (per the Township Official Plan) and surrounding lands.

The Wellesley Primary Core Area CIPA:



The St. Clements Primary Core Area CIPA:



Secondary Core Areas CIPA

The Secondary Core Areas CIPA includes the core commercial areas of the Township's Service Settlements, which include:

- Crosshill;
- Hawkesville;
- Heidelberg;
- Linwood; and
- Wallenstein.

In some cases, these Core Areas include only a small number or cluster of commercial businesses; however, they have been included because they provide an economic role in supporting the broader Township and Regional Countryside. In terms of the distribution of financial incentives, the current CIP states that the Secondary Core Areas CIPA will not be prioritized until significant improvements have been realized in the Primary CIPAs.

Financial Incentive Programs

Through the Township's Core Areas CIP, the Township may provide financial incentives to eligible applicants within the CIPAs identified above. These 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 of the Core Areas CIP. The following financial incentive programs are established in the 2017 CIP.

2017 Financial Incentive Programs

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM	PURPOSE	VALUE	ELIGIBLE COSTS
Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Rebate	To offset the planning and building fees	Up to 50% eligible fees up to \$2,500; or 100% for Priority Sites.	Planning application fees and building or demolition permit fees.
Design and Study Grant	To aid with initial background planning and design	Up to 50% of total cost up to \$2,500 per project and/or property.	Concept plans, structural analysis, Traffic Impact Assessments, site plan drawings, environmental studies, and other studies or plans as required.
Façade, Signage, and Landscape Improvement Grant	To promote aesthetic and functional improvements	Up to 50% of eligible costs up to \$5,000 per project and/or property; \$10,000 per project and/or property when certain criteria are met.	Restoration or replacement of exterior and interior building components, elements, infrastructure, and design.
Building and Accessibility Improvement Grant	To assist with improvements to existing buildings to increase accessibility for people with disabilities	Up to 50% eligible costs up to \$2,500; or \$7,500 for Priority Sites.	Systems, Weatherproofing, Installation of ramps, elevators, lifts, and/or automatic door openers, and more.
Parking Optimization Grant	To encourage the creation of new private parking spaces within the CIPAs	Up to 50% eligible costs up to \$2,500; or \$7,500 for Priority Sites.	Public bicycle parking, improvements to rear or side yard parking, repairs or improvements to

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM	PURPOSE	VALUE	ELIGIBLE COSTS
			existing parking areas, proper signage to designate reserved parking, and professional engineer, architect, or planner services.
Commercial and Affordable Housing Conversion and Expansion Grant	To assist in the small-scale conversion of existing vacant space	Up to \$20 per square foot of converted or expanded floor space up to \$7,500; or \$10,000 for Priority Sites.	Construction and renovation costs, adaptive reuse of derelict structures, services of a professional engineer, architect, or planner to design.
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG)	To defer part of the increase in property taxation caused by property improvements	100% of tax increment, decreasing by 20% each year; minimum 80% for Priority Sites.	Demolishing buildings, adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, and retrofit works, upgrading on and off-site infrastructure.

Other Programs and Requirements

2017 Township-initiated Programs

The 2017 Core Areas CIP identifies Township-initiated programs an approach for the Township to participate in community improvement. While Financial Incentive Programs are dependent upon private sector participation for results, Township-initiated Programs use municipal resources, such as staff time and funds, to provide proactive and visible leadership in achieving the objectives of the CIP. The current CIP identifies the following:

- The Township may identify '**Priority Sites**' that are properties meeting key priorities for community improvement. Priority Sites may be identified by Township Council on an annual basis or at the term of Council and may be updated or revised at any time at the sole discretion of Township Council. By identifying Priority Sites, the Township may provide increased grant values to successful applicants.
- To improve and enhance the consistency of **streetscape and public realm design** within the core areas, the Township could invest in improvements to downtown public amenities and public spaces and promote a design that is generally consistent with the community identity.

- The Township could invest in **gateway features and signage improvements** which would help promote Wellesley's brand and image. Coordinated Township signage and wayfinding and local mapping could be developed as part of this initiative to highlight destinations, including significant cultural resources, entertainment options, and opportunities for buying local.
- To improve the availability of **parking** in Wellesley and St. Clements in particular, the Township could optimize existing on and off-street parking through public investment.
- To protect heritage resources within the Township of Wellesley (as a whole), the Township could undertake a **Master Heritage Plan Study** to research and identify tangible and intangible heritage resources for conservation, protection, and promotion.

Public Realm and Streetscape Improvements

The 2017 Core Areas CIP also identified a Public Realm and Streetscape Improvement Strategy that was intended to improve and enhance the Core Areas, through the following:

- Traffic calming measures;
- Key intersection improvements and crosswalks;
- Streetscape, sidewalk, and boulevard treatments;
- Street furnishings (i.e., lampposts, street signage, benches, planters, garbage bins);
- Public art installations; and
- Tree planting and planting beds.

These improvements are intended to draw in businesses and visitors to the area through aesthetic enhancement of the Core Areas. The Township plans to implement these concepts gradually and over the long-term through collaboration with public and private-sector partners.

Urban Design Guidelines

The 2017 CIP also includes a set of urban design guidelines that are meant to guide architectural, landscape, and general improvements to buildings, properties and streets within the CIPAs and also support and guide well-designed projects within the CIPAs. Financial incentives will only be approved where proposed projects are consistent with urban design guidelines.

Funding, Implementation, and Results

Since 2017, as part of the annual Township budgeting exercise, Council has approved a community improvement budget of approximately \$20,000 per year for financial incentives that Council has identified that year, if any. The Township also implements a rolling budget so that any unused funds are available for the next fiscal period. At present, there is approximately \$60,000 of budget in the Core Areas CIP reserve.

As of 2024, a total of 11 applications have been received and approved through the Core Areas CIP programs, as shown below.

CORE AREA	INCENTIVE PROGRAM	VALUE OF GRANT	PROJECT VALUE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Wellesley	Signage	\$3,220.50	\$6,440.00	new signage at Funeral Home
Wellesley	Signage	\$5,000.00	\$10,418.00	new signage for vet clinic
Wellesley	Signage	\$1,760.00	\$3,520.00	new sign for salon
Wellesley	Facade/ accessibility	\$2,500.00	\$12,000.00	new entrance and doorway/windows for doctors' office
Wellesley	Façade	\$4,400.00	\$8,800.00	new siding, roof, lighting
Wellesley	Façade and signage	\$3,504.00	\$7,008.00	signage and new windows
Wellesley	Accessibility and façade	\$5,000.00	\$40,000.00	improvements to ramp and entrance to Pym's grocery store
Wellesley	Façade and fees	\$5,082.89	\$46,750.00	replace entrance and awning to Schmidt Pantry
St. Clements	Accessibility and façade	\$7,575.00	\$32,000.00	new entrance and façade improvements
St. Clements	Signage	\$4,146.46	\$8,292.00	new signage for St Clements plaza
St. Clements	Signage	\$570.50	\$1,141.00	new signage for "In Seasons" store mounted on building
TOTAL:		\$42,759	\$176,369	

In total, just over \$175,000 has been invested in the Wellesley and St. Clement CIPAs by private land and business owners, and the Township has contributed just over \$42,000 on top of that.

This means that for every dollar invested by the Township, there is a return of approximately \$3.13 from private sector investments. This indicates a strong leverage of public funding to stimulate private investment in community improvement projects.

Scan of Relevant CIPs in Other Municipalities

Although CIPs have been a planning tool in Ontario for 30 plus years, their popularity has increased in the last 10 years. This trend coincides with the expansion of Section 28 tools, allowing municipalities to address more community needs, while also allowing regional governments to engage in local CIPs and vice versa.

CIPs continue to evolve in terms of how they respond to emerging land use planning needs such as community revitalization, housing, the movement of people, among a variety of other applications. The following CIPs are recent examples of how municipalities across Ontario are using this planning tool in broader ways to improve their communities.

Bolton Community Improvement Plan (2023)

The Bolton CIP was adopted by the Town of Caledon Council in 2023, and provides grants to property owners seeking to renovate, develop, or redevelop their business spaces within the defined CIPA. Many of the programs in the Bolton CIP are similar to the Township's existing incentives, but for the purposes of this review, are not included in this table. The programs and incentives listed below are unique initiatives that the Township could use to inform the CIP update process, which are not already included in the 2017 Core Areas CIP and address contemporary planning topics such as sustainability, housing, pedestrian activity, and public art.

PROGRAM	DETAILS
Energy and Carbon Reduction Grant Program	To improve energy efficiency for commercial, mixed-use, institutional, or industrial buildings within Bolton Core, Commercial Corridor, or Industrial Area Precincts. 3 streams are identified in the CIP: Stream 1: 50% eligible costs to max \$10,000 Stream 2: 50% eligible costs up to \$25,000 Stream 3: 50% eligible costs up to \$40,000
Development Charge Grant Program	Offers a grant to offset the cost of Development Charges for office, commercial, and mixed-use properties within the Bolton Core and Commercial Corridor Precincts equal to 50% or \$15,000 of applicable development charges.
Flood Mitigation and Protection Grant Program	For improvements related to flood protection and mitigation for commercial, mixed-use properties within the Bolton Core Precinct. Equal to 50% of total eligible costs, to a maximum of \$5000, whichever is less.

Privately Owned Public Spaces and Public Art Grant Program

For office, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use properties and buildings within the Bolton Core. Designated non-residential heritage properties are also eligible. To improve privately owned public spaces regularly used by the community. Grant equal to 50% of total eligible costs, to a maximum of \$3500.

Patio and Outdoor Café Grant Program

For the installation or improvement of permanent sidewalk patios or outdoor cafes for commercial and mixed-use properties within the Bolton Core. The grant equals to 50% of total eligible costs to a maximum of \$5000, whichever is less.

Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands CIP (2024)

The Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands CIP was approved by Council on February 12, 2024, and provides grants and programs to increase Township vitality. Many of the programs in the Leeds and the Thousand Islands CIP are similar to the Township's existing incentives, but for the purposes of this review, are not included in this table. The programs and incentives listed below are unique initiatives that the Township could use to inform the CIP update process.

PROGRAM	DETAILS
Secondary Dwelling Unit Support Program	To support applicants with the costs of creating secondary dwelling units or bringing a secondary dwelling unit "up to code" with the provision of a grant. The grant supplies 50% of project costs, up to \$5000, with no more than \$1000 of the grant being used for professional fees.
Agri-Ecotourism Program	Offers a grant to assist with the cost of improving agriculture-related buildings for ecotourism or agri-tourism in the Township's rural areas equal to 50% or \$5000 of applicable project costs.

The Municipality of Meaford, 2022

The Municipality of Meaford CIP was approved by Council in 2022, and provides grants and programs to promote long-term sustainability, vitality, and quality of life. Many of the programs in Meaford CIP are similar to the Township's existing incentives, but for the purposes of this review, are not included in this table. The programs and incentives listed below are unique initiatives that the Township could use to inform the CIP update process.

PROGRAM	DETAILS
Affordable Housing Loan Program	Intended to encourage and offset the up-front costs of creating new affordable rental housing units, including

Tourism Destination Loan
Program

accessory apartment dwelling units. A loan paid back in full between 4-10 years of the program is eligible for a 2.5 reduction per year, based on the original loan amount.

Offers a loan to assist with investment of infrastructure that supports the creation and upgrading of publicly accessible community destinations to enhance tourism opportunities and experiences. The loan provides up to 100% of eligible costs, to a maximum of \$50,000, with a minimum amount of \$10,000.

Consulting with the Community

Summary of Events

Three public and stakeholder workshops were held at the end of 2024 and early 2025 to consult with the community on potential changes to the 2017 Core Areas CIP, in addition to a Council presentation and discussion. The meetings were held as follows:

- Business and Landowner Workshop, held on December 2, 2024;
- Public Workshop, held on December 3, 2024;
- Council presentation, held on December 18, 2024; and
- Combined stakeholder and public discussion of options, held on January 21, 2025.

The workshops contained the following:

- An overview of the study;
- An overview of CIPs and how they work;
- A review of the 2017 Core Areas CIP;
- A discussion of potential updates; and
- A discussion of next steps and opportunities.

Notice for these public meetings was given through social media, newspaper advertisements, and through personal invitations.

Summary of Inputs and Key Themes

The engagement meetings saw more than 25 participants across the 3 workshops, in addition to Township staff and members of Council. The following is a summary of input and ideas received.

Common Themes/Ideas about Updating the CIP

The following themes and ideas came up most frequently regarding opportunities to update the existing CIP. A more thorough review of the consultation activities/questions and input is providing following this summary.

- Incentives could be provided to support agritourism initiatives across the Township.
- The existing CIP has been successful with a great return on investment (ROI).
- Marketing of the CIP could be improved to spread the word and enjoy more success.
- Is there an opportunity to improve connectivity, mobility and safety across the Township through the CIP?
- The CIP should continue to support downtown core enhancement/creating strong downtown identities.
- The CIP should also support sustainable development and green building/energy initiatives.

- Incentives that diversify the housing stock, such as additional residential units and second storey apartments should be provided.
- The CIP should continue to support improved signage, wayfinding and placemaking.
- Identifying priority sites where incentives can be increased is a good idea.
- Revitalization and beautification (including maintenance/upkeep) is important.
- There should be a fair Township-wide approach to funding distribution that ensures consistency and transparency, and the incentive programs should be offered more broadly.
- Incentives could also be provided more broadly to different land uses/owners (i.e., residential) and not-for profit groups.

Start, Stop, Continue Assessment-

Community workshops focused on a 'Start, Stop, Continue' assessment in order to identify potential updates/revisions to the CIP. Input is documented in the following table.

Start...

- Applying CIP tools to all geographical parts of the Township.
- Broadening the scope of the CIP to address economic development and quality of life, beyond beautification. Address housing, and community wellness.
- Specifically identify not-for profits/service groups as eligible applicants.
- Incentivizing diversity in parking options and opportunities.
- Enhancing Township marketing reach and CIP awareness.
- Programs that speak to the goals of upholding property standards.
- Increasing transparency and awareness about the program, how to apply for incentives, the status of applications, and what criteria are used to determine eligibility and merit.
- Focusing on goals of...
 - The creation of spaces that people want to work, live, play, and learn in
 - Creating strong downtown identities
 - Mobility and safety
 - Enhancing streetscape aesthetics
 - Informative, attractive, and effective signage
 - Housing stock variety
 - Agritourism
 - Parking (inclusive of electric vehicles and horses and buggies)
 - Environmental preservation, integration, and consideration
 - Signage improvement
- Using a first-come first-served incentive model that includes:
 - Setting aside funds for each area;
 - Making sure incentives and the CIP are well-publicized and easy to access;
 - Having a clear application process with set deadlines (e.g., annually or bi-annually);



- Using a fair scoring system to prioritize applications based on their impact and value;
- Creating separate incentive application pools for residential, commercial, and agricultural projects to encourage fair competition.
- Proving a clear and transparent process for deciding between equally ranked applications.
- Providing incentives such as...
 - Development Charge Deferral/Exemption
 - Parking and Mobility Grant
 - Accessory Residential Unit (ARU) Grant
 - Green Energy Grant
 - Interest-free Loans
 - Financial incentives for road maintenance, such as snow clearance
 - Rental Housing Grant
 - Fee Rebate for new commercial development
 - Engineering-related incentives
 - Agricultural-related incentives
 - Subsidized taxes/tax-related incentives
 - Incentive bonuses for meeting certain criteria
- Make incentives available based on a bi-annual intake. Applications can be reviewed against each other and awarded based on how well goals and objectives are met.
- Township should commit to rapid review and turnaround for the review and award of incentives.
- Improve marketing efforts. The following marketing ideas could be considered:
 - Mailouts with critical documents, such as tax bills
 - Postcards
 - Advise of front counter when planning and permit enquiries are made.

Stop...

- Designating only urban areas as areas of focus for the Township's CIP.
- Using primary and secondary tiering as a basis for determining merit.

Continue...

- Increasing funding and raising limits for important building repairs and improvements.
- designating priority sites for CIP incentives.
- Working towards the goals and objectives of that were identified in the original CIP, refreshed as:
 - 1. Getting More People and Businesses into Core Areas
 - 2. Restoring and Elevating Core Areas
 - 3. Protecting and Restoring Heritage Features and Distinctive Character of Core Areas
- Offering incentives such as...



- Façade, landscape (inclusive of tree-planting), and signage improvement grants

Community Survey Results

On January 21, 2025, an additional public workshop was held where a community survey was launched. This following section highlights the responses received.

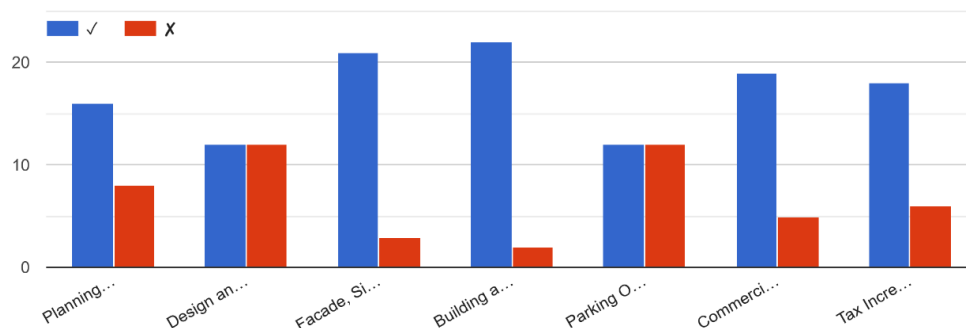
Respondent Overview

- There were 24 survey responses
- Approximately 54% of respondents live in Wellesley and did not own a business
- There was a relatively equal distribution of respondents that own a business within the communities of Heidelberg, Hawkesville, St. Clements, and Linwood, with one (1) business within each community
- Two (2) respondents have businesses based in Wellesley

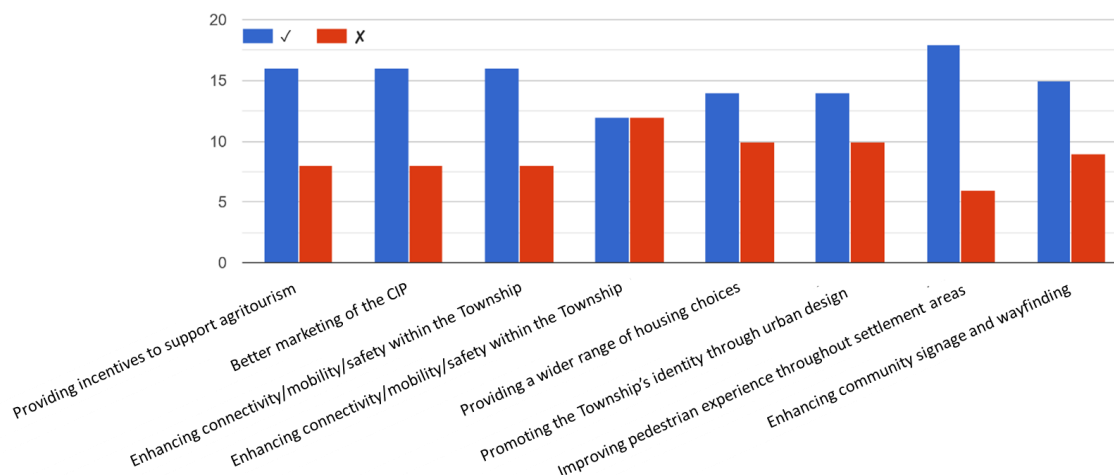
Survey questions were geared toward participant understanding of the existing CIP, including awareness, potential improvements to be made, a review of the existing goals, ideas for new CIP incentive programs and communities / locations for CIPs. Findings include:

- **79.2%** of respondents were unaware of the benefits that the CIP incentives can provide to local businesses, indicating a need for improved marketing and promotion strategies
- The **top three (3) issues** for the updated CIP to focus on included:
 1. Revitalization of Core Areas (66.7%)
 2. Views, streetscapes, and beautification (58.3%)
 3. Trails, parks, and recreational facilities (58.3%)
- The majority of respondents found that the 2017 goals were still relevant, however there were notable concerns for Goal 3: Protect and Enhance the Heritage Features and Distinctive Character of the Core Areas than the other two. Concerns tended to revolve around prioritizing economic growth and affordable housing.
- Respondents identified additional goals for the updated CIP. They included:
 - Environmental protection and enhancement
 - Diversity and Inclusion
 - Strengthening municipal services to accommodate future growth
 - Creating social spaces, events, and areas for people to naturally connect in public
 - Encouraging affordable housing
- **Wellesley (62.5%), St. Clements (50%) and Heidelberg (37.5%)** were the top three (3) areas to benefit most from community improvement initiatives and investments (such as repair, rehabilitation, redevelopment, growth, and revitalization)

- Respondents shared which 2017 financial incentives they felt should be carried forward to the updated CIP, the responses varied – as shown in the table below:



- Respondents were asked which areas identified in initial engagement should be addressed in the updated CIP, their responses are shown in the chart below.



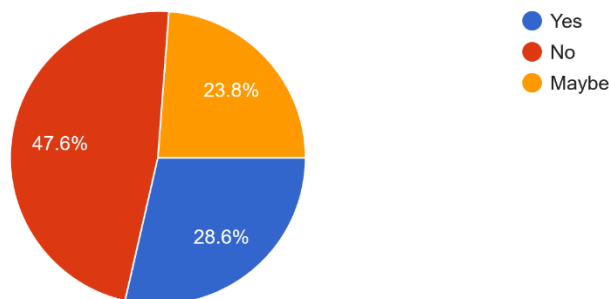
The elements provided were generally supported by participants, with the exception of supporting green building practices, which had an equal distribution of respondents in favour of its implementation (12 respondents) and those opposed (12 respondents).

- Respondents identified additional areas for improvement, including: neighbourhood placemaking grants, cite cross country skiing trails, St. Clements playgrounds and community centre as key areas, the restoration of historical buildings and landmarks; and tourism incentives to promote more visitors to Wellesley Township
- Key sites, buildings, and other features to prioritize for community improvement initiatives include:
 - The Carriage Sculpture
 - Streetcars in all centres, buildings that are in disrepair in Wellesley Village
 - 3590 Lobsinger Line and 3575 Lobsinger Line, in the core of St. Clements

- The Wellesley Pond
- Walking Trail in Hawkesville
- Hawkesville Community Centre
- 4 Corners in downtown Wellesley
- Former Chop House in Wellesley
- Childcare options at community centre
- Heidelberg main intersection vacant lot and abandoned house
- The historical Queen's Hotel and the Royal Hotel
- The main intersections of both St. Clements and Wellesley
- The new Wellesley Lounge and Pym's Village Market

Respondents shared that these improvements could be made by:

- Provincial funding
 - Historical plaques along walking trails to identify historical sites
 - Where necessary, rebuilding/repairing the site directly
 - Painting crosswalks, greenery murals on the sides of businesses to reflect the history of the community
 - Offering large grants to complete the identified works
 - Installing community gardens, parkland, or encouraging business operation
 - Encouraging restoration efforts
 - Locations in disrepair should be mandated by the Township to maintain an appropriate level of visual appearance for downtown/core properties. Attempts to contact private owners to offer funding for the restoration of these properties in their facades and landscaping may be needed.
- **76.2%** of respondents did not think or did not know if CIP funding would benefit themselves or their businesses in the future.



Many participants identified that they would not be eligible or did not have a business.

Respondents that indicated they would or may benefit, cited that accessibility, beautification, and signage grants would be most useful (i.e. curb improvements).

A respondent highlighted that they would like to start their own business and the CIP funding provides potential to aid in this.

- Additional comments and suggestions made by respondents included:
 - “Develop and enrich more local Heritage resources”
 - “The Township purchased concrete planters and concrete benches in the past. These planters have never been used in the town of St Clements. I would like to see these planters and benches used to beautify the centre intersection of our town. I would also like to see large Wayfinding signage installed along Lobsinger Line coming into St Clements from both Heidelberg and Crosshill identifying the various businesses that are located within the town. The businesses can be charged a rental fee to participate on the signage and the original cost to install the sign structure, secure necessary permits and maintain the rental contracts can be borne through the CIP funding and managed by the Township.”
 - “Rebate of development charges (portion or %)? for expansion of existing building - this is a barrier to improving physical space of my business”

Ideas and Options for a Township CIP

Based on the work completed (i.e., review of current legislation, policies, local plans; scan of contemporary CIPs elsewhere; and consultation with local businesses, landowners, and the public), the following ideas and options have been identified for updating the Wellesley Core Areas CIP.

Community Improvement Goals and Objectives

The updated CIP could focus on several additional goals and Township objectives to enhance the Township's vitality and respond effectively to current community needs, while retaining all existing programs and incentives:

- 1) **Address Housing Initiatives:** The CIP could continue to incentivize the development second-floor apartments and multi-unit housing, as permitted by the official plan and zoning by-law. It could also include an incentive program to specifically address the provision of Additional Residential Units (ARUs). This approach would help diversify housing options.
- 2) **Enhance Economic Development through Agri-Tourism:** The Township could promote agri-tourism as a vital component of local economic development. By introducing targeted incentives for businesses that facilitate farm-related tourism activities, Wellesley could attract visitors and stimulate economic growth while showcasing its agricultural heritage, particularly within rural mixed-use/agricultural clusters.
- 3) **Invest in Public Spaces and Places:** The CIP could carry forward recommendations/programs for investments in infrastructure and public spaces that enhance the overall quality of life for residents. This includes improving community amenities, connectivity, and accessibility to ensure that Wellesley and St. Clements are prioritized. Financial incentives could be included that address: public art, privately owned public spaces, and other amenities on private property, such as sidewalk cafes.
- 4) **Protect and Preserve Heritage and Community Character:** The Township could establish guidelines that safeguard unique heritage features and promote the cultural identity of neighborhoods. This would encourage the conservation of local architecture and landscapes in both the urban and rural contexts, ensuring that community development respects Wellesley's rich history.
- 5) **Incorporate Sustainability Practices:** The CIP could promote green initiatives and energy efficiency by introducing grants and incentives for environmentally sustainable building practices. This approach would align with the Township's commitment to

sustainability and the protection of natural resources outlined in the Official Plan. These should primarily be offered to commercial and employment land uses.

- 6) **Ensure Equitable Access to Funding and Incentives:** The Township could continue to ensure a transparent and inclusive process for accessing CIP incentives. Resources could be made available to a broader audience, including non-profit organizations and diverse land uses, to foster community involvement across all designated areas.

Community Improvement Project Areas

The CIP could broaden its geographic focus to encompass all critical areas of Wellesley, ensuring that revitalization and improvement initiatives benefit:

- 1) **Core Areas:** As the heart of the Township, the urban area could remain a focal point for improvements, in addition to St. Clements, per the current Core Areas CIP. Investments in infrastructure, public spaces, and housing within this area would enhance accessibility, promote economic activity, and improve the overall quality of life for residents and visitors alike. The Township could ensure that development supports the Planned Township Structure and contributes to complete communities, as outlined in the Official Plan. However, these areas would no longer be the primary focus of the CIP.
- 2) **Rural Settlement Areas:** The CIP could extend its reach to include the rural settlement areas, such as Linwood, Crosshill, Hawkesville, Heidelberg and Wallenstein, where there is an existing cluster of commercial and community development. These are vital areas contributing to the Township's character. Targeting these areas for revitalization would ensure that residents in more rural contexts also receive the benefits of community improvement initiatives, including enhanced amenities and infrastructure that cater to mixed forms of residential development.
- 3) **Countryside:** The countryside could also be considered within the CIP's scope, with initiatives aimed at promoting agri-tourism activities. This includes promoting eco-friendly practices and protecting agricultural land, ensuring that the rural landscape remains a vital asset to the community.

Financial Incentive Programs

The financial incentive programs could be expanded to better support various community needs while carrying forward all existing programs and concepts:

- 1) **Creation of Additional Residential Unit (ARU) Incentives:** The Township could create specific grants or loans for projects that introduce additional residential units, in line with the Official Plan's direction for future housing demands in settlement area.

- 2) **Support Agri-Tourism Initiatives:** The CIP could introduce targeted incentives for agri-tourism that promote local farms and agricultural experiences. Grants could be provided for the development of facilities that host farm tours, workshops, and events, enriching the community's economic landscape while preserving its agricultural roots.
- 3) **Incentives for Placemaking and Public Amenities on Privately Owned Properties:** The Township could establish a financial incentive program aimed at enhancing placemaking efforts on privately owned properties. This program could encourage property owners to create inviting public spaces, such as outdoor cafes, community gardens, and public art installations. By promoting the activation of these spaces, the Township could foster a sense of community, encourage social interactions, and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the area. These initiatives would contribute to vibrant spaces that benefit residents and visitors alike.
- 4) **Top-Up Program (Sustainability):** The CIP could promote green initiatives and energy efficiency by introducing grants and incentives for environmentally sustainable building practices on commercial and industrial properties. This approach would align with the Township's commitment to sustainability and the protection of natural resources outlined in the Official Plan.

Implementation

To ensure the effective rollout of the updated CIP, the following actions could be taken:

- 1) **Establish a Clear Timeline:** The Township could create a more detailed timeline for the intake of financial incentive applications, with specific milestones for providing efficient review and approvals/decision-making. Clearly assigning roles and responsibilities to Township staff and stakeholders could ensure accountability and facilitate collaboration.
- 2) **Implement a Comprehensive Marketing Strategy:** The Township could undertake additional marketing activities to raise awareness about the updated CIP, its goals, and available financial incentives. Engaging residents and businesses would inform them of how they can benefit from the programs and participate in community improvement efforts.
- 3) **Explore Partnerships:** The Township could seek partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and educational institutions to leverage resources and expertise for implementing CIP initiatives, especially in affordable housing and agri-tourism.