

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF GEORGINA

REPORT NO. SI-2025-0002

**FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF
COUNCIL**

April 2, 2025

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
PLAN (CIP) GRANT PROGRAMS**

1. RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council receive Report No. SI-2025-0002 prepared by the Economic Development and Tourism Division, Strategic Initiatives Department dated April 2, 2025 respecting proposed modifications to the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Grant Programs.
2. That Council adopt the proposed modifications to the Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Grant Program as follows:
 - Enhance the scope of the Accessibility Grant in order to support interior renovations intended to improve accessibility.
 - Increase the maximum allowable grant for all grant streams within the Community Improvement (CIP) Grant Program from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

2. PURPOSE:

- 2.1 The current scope of the CIP Accessibility Grant provides funding for exterior upgrades only. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to increase the scope of the Accessibility Grant to support interior renovations required to improve accessibility. This includes but is not limited to creating barrier free washrooms, widening doorways/hallways, creating a level floor and floor transitions (lifts).
- 2.2 This report also seeks Council approval to increase the maximum funding for each of the different grant programs (Accessibility, Façade, Heritage, Landscape) from \$5,000 to \$7,500.

3. BACKGROUND:

In 2014, the Town of Georgina approved a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) and implemented four of the Grant Programs suggested in the Plan for the designated improvement areas of Jackson's Point, Keswick and Sutton (Bylaw No. 2014-0086 (CIP-1)). Community Improvement Plans are intended to address the need for the revitalization of certain areas within a community through private and public investment. The existing CIP Grant Program assists businesses and commercial property owners in these designated areas by contributing up to 50 per cent to a

maximum of \$5,000 for property improvements covered under the scope of the four programs.

Community Improvement Plans are developed to provide financial incentives to facilitate and encourage development and continued investment in these designated areas by businesses and private commercial landowners. The intent is that the grants will encourage and help to leverage private investment and revitalization of commercial areas.

The implementation of Community Improvement Plans and associated grant programs are provided for under Section 28 of the Planning Act.

4. ANALYSIS:

The current Accessibility Grant funds exterior renovations to businesses in an effort to improve accessibility in the amount of 50% of the project up to a maximum of \$5,000. Given the desire to encourage investment in our historic downtowns and improve the ability for all to navigate within commercial spaces, and the continued need to support revitalization efforts, Staff recommend that the scope of the Accessibility Grant be modified to include interior renovations. Promoting and enhancing accessibility contributes to building more inclusive communities that welcome and serve everyone. Expanding the scope of the Accessibility Grant will empower business and property owners to invest in necessary upgrades, ensuring their spaces meet the diverse accessibility needs of the community. Such investments not only broaden the customer base but also foster an improved quality of life for the community.

These proposed enhancements to the Accessibility Grant will create additional incentives and further support for BIA businesses to proactively address the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Building Code, and to respond effectively to growing public expectations for a more inclusive community. The proposed grant modifications are in alignment with emergent accessibility themes and priorities that Staff anticipate to be recommended in the update to Georgina's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP). Evidence obtained from more than 500 MYAP project survey responses substantiates the public's need and desire for such changes.

Staff note that in the Council approved Corporate Strategic Plan and the recent approval of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Downtown revitalization is a key area of focus. The proposed modifications support revitalization and encourage participation in the CIP Programs. Increasing the maximum funded costs from \$5,000 to \$7,500 also supports businesses and landowners with larger projects and reflects the increased costs associated with these types of improvements.

It is important to note that with Sutton's High Street construction project expected to commence in 2026, these modifications to the CIP Programs will help private

businesses to leverage the revitalization and streetscape enhancements planned as part of the Town's infrastructure replacement and streetscape enhancement project.

5. RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Diversifying the local economy

Creating a vibrant, healthy, and safe community for all

Create lively downtowns and public spaces

This report is also aligned with the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and the Town's soon to be released update to the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

6. FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The 2025 budget allocates \$40,000 for the delivery of the CIP Grants. Given the increase in the maximum funding amounts and in anticipation of the High Street construction and desire to support revitalization through private investment, staff will monitor the CIP Program budget and uptake to determine if future modifications are necessary. The CIP Program is just one of the tools in place to support business investment, retention and expansion.

7. PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND NOTICE REQUIREMENTS:

No public consultation or statutory notice is required prior to the consideration of Report SI-2025-0002.

8. CONCLUSION:

To continue to support businesses in the designated improvement areas and leverage the enhancements being undertaken on High Street, Staff are recommending that Council approve the modifications as outlined above.

APPROVALS

Prepared By: Julie Cain – Economic Development Officer

Reviewed By: Karyn Stone – Manager of Economic Development and Tourism Division

Recommended By: Shawn Nastke – Director of Strategic Initiatives

Approved By: Ryan Cronsberry – Chief Administrative Officer