

URBAN & RURAL COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

January 2017



Township of Springwater

Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan

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1. Introduction

This Community Improvement Plan (CIP) provides key revitalization and improvement strategies for the Township of Springwater in order to stimulate and support growth in local industries, businesses, tourism, *agri-tourism*, and *value-added agricultural facilities* in both the *Townships* urban and rural areas. The Plan defines revitalization goals and objectives for the *Township* and establishes Financial Incentive Programs, and a Governance and Implementation Strategy that will help to achieve the stated goals and objectives, and that will contribute to revitalization within the *Township*. This Plan takes a long-term approach to the revitalization of Springwater. Revitalization will take time, and is best accomplished through incremental, small improvements and interventions that will collectively add up to more significant and visible changes over time.

1.1 The CIP's Purpose and Approach

The purpose of the Township of Springwater Urban and Rural CIP is to support local industries, businesses, tourism, *agri-tourism*, and *value-added agricultural facilities* by establishing programs that will by promote private sector investment and revitalization. To accomplish this, the CIP establishes financial incentives for private property owners and tenants throughout the *Township*. The purpose of these Financial Incentive Programs is to encourage private property owners to make investments resulting in spin-off benefits within the key economic sectors of the *Township*. In addition to Financial Incentive Programs, the CIP outlines a governance and implementation strategy for the on-going improvement of the *Township*.

The CIP Financial Incentive Programs enable the *Township* to issue financial incentives to residents and business owners in the form of grants that assist with property or building improvements, redevelopment, and/or infill development. These improvements are accomplished through the provision of tax increment equivalent grants, rebating planning and application fees, and/or providing direct grants to assist in financing a portion of eligible projects. The CIP may also be used to stimulate the growth of key economic sectors, such as tourism, *agri-tourism* and *value-added agricultural facilities* through the provision of incentives and programs aimed at supporting existing associated businesses or by stimulating the development of new opportunities. The CIP is not only intended to assist private property improvements, but also functions as a comprehensive revitalization strategy that coordinates and prioritizes revitalization and economic growth initiatives within the *Township*, such as signage improvement, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets, for example.

The Springwater Urban and Rural CIP contains the following sections:

- Section 2 outlines the Revitalization Objectives for the CIP;
- Section 3 details the Financial Incentive Programs, including the purpose, intended outcomes, eligible costs, grant values, payment and eligibility criteria;
- Section 4 details the governance and implementation strategies that will be led by the *Township*;
- Section 5 outlines Plan Administration; and,
- Section 6 provides a strategy for CIP monitoring and evaluation.



The CIP is intended to be implemented over a ten-year period; however this timeframe can be extended beyond ten-years, if desired by Council. The CIP recognizes that there are limited resources to implement all of the intended improvements envisioned by this Plan. As such, programs and strategies may be spread out over time, and can be ‘activated’ or ‘de-activated’, as needed and as directed by Council. The CIP was designed to ensure that the *Township* makes the best use of limited financial resources, and further that Financial Incentive Programs can be adjusted based on the Plan’s performance, budgetary considerations and the needs of the community.

1.2 Background

A CIP is a planning tool used by municipalities in Ontario to assist in community revitalization. A CIP often serves as a catalyst for achieving economic, community planning and urban development goals. Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities use CIPs to enable a wide range of programs and policies that encourage private investment and support strategic municipal initiatives intended to assist in the revitalization of an area or areas where community improvement is perceived to be desirable for social or community economic development reasons. CIPs can also assist in advancing the goals of Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe as they pertain to the development of ‘complete communities’. As per the Growth Plan, complete communities are those that meet people’s day to day needs by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing and community infrastructure, including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space for residents.

In 2013 and 2014, the County of Simcoe allocated grant funding to the *Township* to assist in the advancement of local economic development initiatives. The *Township* has dedicated a portion of the grant funding to the preparation of an Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan (CIP).

The Township of Springwater has a population of approximately 18,000 people and consists of eight Urban Settlement Areas including Midhurst, Elmvale, Snow Valley, Centre Vespra, Minesing, Anten Mills, Phelpsston and Hillsdale. The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006, allocates a population target of 24,000 persons and 5,600 jobs to Springwater up to 2031.

MMM Group Limited, a WSP Company, (MMM) was retained by the Township of Springwater in 2015 to undertake the Phase 1 Community Improvement Plan Strategy Report. The CIP Strategy Report includes:

- A summary of the existing planning policy framework;
- A strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats (SWOT) analysis;
- A description of potential Financial Incentive Programs;
- A description of the potential municipal leadership strategies; and,
- Recommendations for specific programs for inclusion in the CIP.

On April 6th, 2016, Council received the CIP Strategy Report and endorsed the commencement of the Phase 2 Urban and Rural CIP, which includes the development of this Urban and Rural CIP and the associated programs, administration and implementation.

1.3 How to Use This Plan

The success of a CIP is closely tied to the ease of implementation. As such, this section identifies who will use this plan and how private property owners and tenants can take advantage of and assist in the implementation of various Financial Incentive Programs.

Instructions for private property owners and tenants interested in obtaining financial incentives:

This Plan enables the *Township* to issue financial incentives to private property owners who wish to undertake improvements to their building or property, and/or develop or redevelop their land. A private property owner and/or tenant with property within the *Township* and who is wanting to utilize the Financial Incentive Programs is required to contact the Township of Springwater directly to discuss their project and to determine the types of Financial Incentive Programs that would be applicable. This discussion will involve a review of the general eligibility criteria (Section 3.2) and program-specific eligibility criteria (Item E of Subsections 3.1.1 to 3.1.8). In addition, the property must be located within the Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) to be eligible for the incentives.

It is strongly encouraged that individual property owners who are interested in obtaining a financial incentive, read this Plan. Section 3.0 of this Plan outlines the Financial Incentive Programs that are available, subject to available funding, which may change from year-to-year. For each incentive, the reader will find:

- a) The purpose and intended outcomes of the financial incentive;
- b) A list of projects that are eligible for the financial incentive;
- c) Details of the program, including a description of the amount of the grant and how the grant is calculated;
- d) A description of the timing of grant payment and what is required in order to obtain the grant; and,
- e) A list of program-specific eligibility criteria that must be complied with in order to receive the grant.

The *Township* will advise *applicants* how the application and grant process works, and what supporting documents *applicants* will be required to provide when submitting an application.

The CIP will be used by property owners, tenants, *Township* staff and Council, as follows:

- Property owners and tenants will use the Financial Incentive Programs included in the CIP, subject to the eligibility criteria, and will receive assistance from the *Township* when initiating and completing applications for specific financial incentives;
- *Township* staff is responsible for program administration and for Plan marketing, and monitoring. Staff will also be responsible for identifying and initiating Plan amendments, if required;
- *Township* Council is responsible for funding the Financial Incentive Programs, and implementing the leadership strategies, through the annual budgeting process.

1.4 Legislation and Policy Overview

1.4.1 Authority to Prepare this Plan

Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, provides the authority for municipalities to prepare Community Improvement Plans (CIP). A CIP enables municipalities to provide grants or loans to private property owners to assist businesses and industrial and commercial enterprises. This type of direct or indirect financial assistance is otherwise prohibited under Section 106(1) and (2) of the *Municipal Act*, unless a municipality exercises these specific powers granted under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the *Planning Act*.

In order to develop a CIP, the *Planning Act* requires that municipalities have policies in their official plans related to community improvement, and have identified a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) for the CIP applies. A Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) is:

“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 reasons” (Section 28 (1)).

A CIPA is established through the passing of a by-law by Council (Section 28 (3)).

The term community improvement is defined in Section 28 (1) of the *Planning Act*, as:

“...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.”

The Community Improvement Plan may be used by a municipality to:

“construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the Community Improvement Project Area in conformity with the Community Improvement Plan, and sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any such buildings and land appurtenant thereto.” (Section 28(6a))

and/or:

“sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any land acquired or held by it in the Community Improvement Project Area any person or governmental authority for use in conformity with the community improvement plan.” (Section 28 (6b))

As per Section 28(7) of the *Planning Act*, a municipality may issue grants and loans to property owners and tenants to assist in paying for eligible costs. Eligible costs 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” (Section 28(7.1)). Under no circumstance



can the amount of a grant or loan made in respect of particular lands and buildings exceed the eligible cost of the Community Improvement Plan with respect to those lands and buildings (Section 28(7.3)).

1.4.2 Township of Springwater Official Plan

In order to implement a Community Improvement Plan (CIP), the *Planning Act* requires that policies exist within a municipality's Official Plan relating to community improvement. Currently, Section 24.2 of the Township of Springwater Official Plan provides policies for community improvement, including criteria for the selection of Community Improvement Areas, the prioritization of community improvement projects and the implementation of Community Improvement Plans or programs. Section 24.2.2.1 states that community improvement initiatives should be directed to achieve the following goals:

- a) To stabilize and enhance existing development by providing a safe, convenient and attractive environment;
- b) To provide for and encourage the ongoing maintenance, improvement, rehabilitation and renewal of the Settlement Areas residential, commercial and industrial areas; and
- c) To maintain and improve the economic base of the Municipality.

Section 24.2.3.1 further establishes specific objectives to achieve community improvement goals as follows:

- the maintenance and upgrading of existing housing stock infrastructure;
- alleviating or eliminating existing land use compatibility issues in Settlement Areas;
- improving Settlement Areas to address deficiencies with vehicular and pedestrian movement and environmental characteristics;
- supporting efforts for private sector maintenance of buildings; undertake fiscally responsible community improvement projects;
- ensuring adequate supply of community and recreational services;
- accommodating economic growth and foster private investment in Settlement Areas;
- ensuring property and building maintenance;
- establishing a framework to guide improvement expenditures; and,
- enhancing and conserving heritage buildings.

The Official Plan states that the *Township* may implement the community improvement goals and objectives by designating the whole or a portion of the *Township*, by by-law, as a Community Improvement Area for the purpose of the preparation and implementation of a Community Improvement Plan (Section 24.2.6.1).

Further, Official Plan Section 24.2.6.1 establishes the methods by which the *Township's* community improvement goals and objectives can be pursued:

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- a) By designating, by by-law, the whole or part of any Community Improvement Area for the purpose of the preparation and implementation of “Community Improvement Plans” pursuant to the appropriate section of the *Planning Act*;
 - b) By participating in available provincial or other funding programs or opportunities to assist in the implementation of a Community Improvement Plan;
 - c) By encouraging the participation of the private sector in the implementation of a Community Improvement Plan, including infilling and redevelopment policies;
 - d) By supporting and encouraging the participation of local community groups, service clubs and other public organizations in the implementation of the Community Improvement Plan, particularly as their assistance might relate to recreational uses and community facilities and services;
 - e) By improving, acquiring or disposing of land and/or buildings in the designated area in accordance with a Community Improvement Plan;
 - f) By upgrading utilities, municipal services and recreational and community facilities; and,
 - g) By the application of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to support the preservation of historic or architectural significant buildings and the use of funding programs under the Act.

1.4.3 Basis of this Plan

The Township of Springwater CIP is based on the following:

Terms of Reference

In September 2014, the *Township* issued a request for proposal (RFP) identifying the scope of work and deliverables for undertaking the Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan Strategy, and the Community Improvement Plan. The CIP for Springwater is to focus on providing tools necessary to maintain and enhance various urban settlement areas, and focus on building upon existing principles for architectural design considerations for built form. The scope of work specifically noted the following incentives to be considered through the CIP, and as outlined in the *Township’s* Official Plan:

- Incentive programs for the enhancement or renovating of existing tourism related businesses outside the *Township’s* urban settlement areas;
- Funding to stimulate investment in new tourism, *agri-tourism* and *on-farm value added* opportunities;
- Funding to support the enhancement of streetscapes and landscaping, accessibility, facades and business signage, preservation of heritage buildings, community infrastructure, brownfield renewal, environmental sustainability within the *Township’s* settlement areas; and,
- Development Charge (DC) fee reductions for desired and identified business types inside and outside of the settlement areas.



Consultation

This Plan has been prepared with meaningful input from community members, residents, stakeholders, interested parties, *Township* Staff and Council. The programs contained within this Plan were developed through consultation with the aforementioned parties to ensure that the programs meet the needs of the *Township* and *applicants* who will be ultimately implementing and taking advantage of the programs. Input from participants directly influenced the programs outlined in the CIP, as well as the eligibility criteria established to access programs.

The consultation program during the Phase 1 CIP Strategy Report process included two public meetings, and a presentation to Council. The Phase 2 CIP consultation program includes, one public meeting, one statutory public meeting and a presentation to Council.

Urban and Rural Springwater CIP Strategy Report (Phase 1)

The Urban and Rural Springwater CIP Strategy Report (Phase 1) was received by Council for information on April 6, 2016. At that time, Council directed Staff to initiate Phase 2, which includes the development of this Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The purpose of the Phase 1 Strategy Report was to outline a framework for the preparation of the Township of Springwater Urban and Rural CIP. The Strategy provides a summary of the background work to support the preparation of the CIP and acts as a companion document to the Springwater Urban and Rural CIP. The Strategy identifies local needs and issues that should be addressed in order to better advance business development and revitalization goals, as well as to attract investment in the rural and settlement areas within the *Township*.

2. Revitalization Goals and Objectives

This Plan details Financial Incentive Programs and municipal-led implementation strategies for the long-term revitalization of Springwater’s urban and rural areas. These programs and strategies are closely linked to the following revitalization goals and objectives as determined through consultation with the community, stakeholders, business owners and the *Township*. Any new Financial Incentive Program application will be evaluated to ensure that the application is consistent with, and supports the stated goals and objectives.

The following are revitalization objectives for the Springwater Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan:

Goal	Objectives
1. Enhance and promote local businesses within settlement areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote upgrades to business signage and commercial building facades to enhance the overall streetscape. b) Promote upgrades to and reuse of underutilized buildings within Settlement Areas. c) Promote the development of <i>roofed accommodation</i>, (i.e., bed and breakfasts) within Springwater’s settlement areas to provide accommodation for local tourists. d) Promote the development of affordable housing within the <i>Township</i>.
2. Promote agricultural diversification, tourism and local recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage the development and enhancement of value-added agricultural uses, <i>agri-tourism</i> and <i>on-farm diversified facilities</i>, such as <i>roofed accommodation</i> (i.e., bed and breakfasts), as permitted in the Official Plan. b) Continue to promote local festivals and events in Springwater. c) Promote active recreation and the continued development or enhancement of the trail network within the municipality.
3. Encourage job creation and local employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote the use of local resources and materials for improvements. b) Encourage redevelopment or adaptive re-use of under-utilized employment areas and buildings. c) Promote Springwater as a community to live, work and play.
4. Enhance and promote community character and local heritage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage redevelopment or adaptive re-use of older buildings in a sensitive manner and that contributes to the community character. b) Support the revitalization of historical buildings and sites. c) Identify and promote Springwater’s identity and unique community offerings.
5. Engage the landowners, stakeholders, and the local community in the revitalization of Springwater.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage continued involvement by the local Business Improvement Association (BIA). b) Encourage investment in privately owned property that will enhance the public realm. c) Encourage involvement by the County of Simcoe, local conservation authority and other public agencies.

3. Financial Incentive Programs

3.1 Financial Incentive Programs

Financial Incentive Programs will be offered to help stimulate private investment in the *Township* and to achieve the revitalization objectives outlined in Section 2 of this Plan. *Township* Council will have the ability to “activate” and/or “deactivate” Financial Incentive Programs by way of Council approval and during annual budgetary reviews. This provides Council with flexibility to adjust active programs based on the CIP annual budget, as well as on the success of each program. The success of each program will be determined based on the results of a Monitoring and Evaluation Program proposed as part of this CIP (Section 6.1). Furthermore, once the Financial Incentive Program has been established by way of this Plan, Council can approve a program to be activated, or deactivated without having to amend the Plan. The availability of funding for the CIP programs will be determined during the *Township’s* annual budget process and approved by Council. The Council approved annual CIP budget and associated “activated programs” will set program priorities and financial limits for each year of implementation.





3.1.1 FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT (EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS)

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The Façade Improvement Grant is intended to encourage commercial and agricultural property owners and tenants to revitalize, rehabilitate and restore building façades in order to encourage high-quality, attractive improvements to eligible commercial, mixed-use, and *agricultural-related* commercial buildings. The grant is focused on exterior improvements to buildings that will support local businesses (both urban and rural) and tourism.

This program is applicable to both the settlement and rural areas of the *Township*.

B. Eligible Projects

1. The following projects are eligible for the Façade Improvement Grant, in accordance with the program eligibility criteria:
 - a) Repair, replacement or restoration of façade materials, such as masonry, brickwork, wood siding, plaster, metal shingles and/or architectural detailing;
 - b) Repair, replacement or installation of awnings and canopies;
 - c) Repair, replacement or installation of energy efficient exterior lighting;
 - d) Painting or installation of wall murals or similar wall art;
 - e) Replacement or restoration of windows;
 - f) Installation or improvement of a sidewalk café that is located at the edge of or directly adjacent to the public sidewalk. For clarity, an outdoor sitting area that is not directly adjacent to a public sidewalk is not eligible (i.e., rear yard patios);
 - g) Costs associated with professional architectural services or heritage professionals in association with the design of the above eligible projects; or,
 - h) Any combination of the above.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum amount of a Façade Improvement Grant is \$5,000 or 50% of the eligible costs, whichever is the lesser.

D. Payment of Grant

1. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Plan's *Administrator*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. The façade improvement must be visible from a public street, or, as may be the case for a property outside of the settlement areas, part of a view corridor or vista visible from a public street.
3. Within Settlement Areas, only commercial buildings, office buildings, institutional buildings and *mixed-use* buildings are eligible for this grant. Buildings may or may not be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to be eligible for this grant.

4. Within Rural Areas, agricultural or commercial buildings are eligible provided they:
 - a) are open to the visiting public;
 - b) are bordering a public street, part of a public entry to private land, and/or occupy significant vistas or view corridors visible from a public street; and,
 - c) represent *value-added agricultural facilities, on-farm diversified uses, and/or agri-tourism.*
5. Single detached dwellings and other buildings where the sole use is residential are not eligible for this grant.
6. Façade improvements for properties located within Elmvale's Commercial District and that are subject to the Elmvale Commercial District Façade Guidelines should be consistent with those guidelines.
7. Where a property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* or listed by the *Township* as having cultural heritage value, *applicants* may be required to submit historical research and documentation on the subject property in support of the grant application. The Façade Improvement Grant may be combined with the Historic Property Improvement Grant.
8. All grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by *Township* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.





3.1.2 SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENT GRANT

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

A Signage Improvement Grant is intended to promote the creation, improvement and/or replacement of wall signage that is consistent with the character of the area, in order to attract customers to a commercial business.

This program is applicable to both the Settlement and Rural Areas of the *Township*. Signage Improvement Grants can assist with the design and placement of onsite signage associated with local businesses, retail uses, *agri-tourism* and/or other *value-added agricultural facilities*. One key objective of this program is to encourage the replacement of back-lit signage with front-lit signage.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Replacement, repair, improvement or installation of signage associated with commercial office, tourism uses, *agri-tourism* or *value-added agricultural facilities* that are open to the visiting public, including:
 - a) Primary signs attached to buildings, particularly signs that are a part of a façade's sign board area or a sign located above a buildings entrance or porch;
 - b) Hanging signs, which may be used as primary signs or secondary signs, that complement the main building signage; and,
 - c) Stand-alone business signs in front yards, to attract retail customers and tourists and where landscaping is provided.
2. Back-lit signs are **not** eligible for this grant.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum amount of a Signage Improvement Grant is \$1,500 or 50% of the eligible costs, whichever is the lesser.

D. Payment of Grant

1. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Plan's *Administrator*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. The sign must be visible from a public street, or, in the case of a property in the Rural Areas, may also be part of a significant public view corridor or vista.
3. Within Settlement Areas, only new or existing signs located on commercial buildings, office buildings, institutional buildings and *mixed-use* buildings are eligible for this grant. Buildings may or may not be designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
4. Within Rural Areas, new or existing signs associated with agricultural or commercial uses are eligible so long as the signs:
 - a) Attract retail customers and tourists to uses that are open to the visiting public;

- b) are bordering a public street, part of a public entry to private land, and/or occupy significant public vistas or view corridors visible from a public street; and,
 - c) represent or advertise *value-added agricultural facilities, on-farm diversified uses, and/or agri-tourism.*
5. The project shall comply with the *Township's* Sign and Advertising Devices By-law and receive a permit as may be required in accordance with the By-law.
6. All grants shall be subject to receiving any required approvals or permits, as required by *Township* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.





3.1.3 BUILDING RESTORATION, RENOVATION OR IMPROVEMENT GRANT (INTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS OR EXPANSIONS)

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

This incentive targets private sector investment in interior building renovations or building expansions which are intended to improve the viability of older commercial or *industrial* (employment) buildings. Alternatively this incentive also targets improvements to agricultural buildings for *value-added agricultural facilities* or *on-farm diversified uses*, such as *agri-tourism*. This grant will help property owners overcome financial barriers related to renovations, improvements, refurbishment or expansion of existing buildings to allow for:

- the re-use of vacant or underutilized commercial or *industrial* buildings; and
- the re-purposing of agricultural buildings to support *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, such as *agri-tourism*.

Renovations, improvements and refurbishment activities may include upgrades to fire safety services, ventilation systems, electrical systems, pumping, roof repairs, stairs and railings to meet Building Code. Additionally, renovations may include expansions to the existing building footprint to provide additional area to accommodate commercial, *industrial*, *value-added agricultural facilities* or *on-farm diversified uses*.

This program is applicable to both the settlement and rural areas of the *Township*.

B. Eligible Projects

1. The following projects are eligible:

- a) Renovations, restorations or improvements to ground floor vacant space to provide or enhance commercial spaces, including restaurants, retail, professional offices, personal or professional services, cultural facilities, educational services, etc.;
- b) Renovations, restoration or improvements to upper storey space (whether vacant, office, commercial or other non-residential use) to convert into new residential units provided that the ground floor space is a commercial or office space (i.e., in a *mixed use* building);
- c) Conversion of a building or a portion of a building into a hotel, inn or bed and breakfast;
- d) Conversion of existing ground floor commercial space to better suit a new commercial use (e.g., retail to restaurant);
- e) Re-purposing an agricultural building to support a *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, such as *agri-tourism*;
- f) Expansions or additions to existing underutilized buildings to allow the space to be more effectively used to support or provide for local businesses, commercial activities, a *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, such as *agri-tourism*;
- g) The services of a professional engineer or architect to design and plan the conversion; or,

h) Any combination of the above.

2. The following projects are not eligible:

- a) New development;
- b) Non-permanent or moveable components used by the business, such as appliances, furnishings, interior signage and light fixtures; and,
- c) Decorative and finishing elements and materials, such as painting, finished flooring surfaces, drywall, shelving, counters/bars, and similar elements.
- d) Restoration, renovation or improvement to residential buildings.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum amount of a Building Restoration, Renovation or Improvement Grant is \$5,000 or 50% of the eligible costs, whichever is the lesser.

D. Payment of Grant

1. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Plan's *Administrator*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

- 1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
- 2. All building types shall be eligible for this grant, provided that the grant relates to a proposed commercial, office or *mixed use* within the Settlement and/or Rural Areas (where permitted), and a *value-added agricultural facility*, or *on-farm diversified use* in the Rural Areas. Residential uses or buildings are not eligible for this grant.
- 3. Buildings must be open to the general public or provide for local employment.
- 4. All grants shall be subject to receiving required approvals or permits, as required by *Township's* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.





3.1.4 DEVELOPMENT CHARGE REBATE

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The purpose of this rebate program is to provide assistance for the development and redevelopment of sites by reducing Development Charges (DC) in both the settlement and rural areas of the *Township*.

The Township of Springwater describes development charges as “one-time fees levied by the *Township* on new residential and non-residential properties to help pay for a portion of the growth-related capital infrastructure requirements. [...] Growth-related spending authority is approved annually as part of the *Township*’s budgeting process with only those capital projects included in the current Development Charges Background Study being eligible for funding.” Fees are established in accordance with By-law 2014-003 and depending on the use and location within the *Township*, fees are calculated based on a combination of the cost per square metre, cost per lot, cost per hectare, or a cost per unit-basis.

For *industrial* properties, this program can be used in conjunction with the County of Simcoe’s Development Charges (DC) Abatement program. The County of Simcoe has a “Development Charges Abatement Program” that allows a local municipality to participate provided that the local municipality has an approved local DC Abatement program for *industrial* uses. The *County* will waive DCs based upon the same time limits, percentages and conditions as that of the local municipality, as it pertains to *industrial* lands and buildings only. The *County*’s DC Abatement Program is to remain in effect until 2019, at which time it may be re-evaluated and extended with the same provisions and without an amendment to this CIP. The percent reduction provided by the *Township* will also be waived by the *County* in relation to their DCs.

DC’s associated with other uses, such as commercial or *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, are not eligible for the *County*’s equivalent rebate.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized commercial buildings, *industrial* buildings, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, which are subject to the *Township*’s DCs.
2. Development or redevelopment located in either the settlement or rural areas of the *Township*.
3. Only *industrial* properties are eligible to apply for the *County*’s DC abatement program. Commercial buildings and uses shall not be included in the *County*’s DC abatement program.
4. Residential buildings are not eligible for this program.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum amount of a Development Charge Rebate is 60% of the *Township*’s Development Charge.

2. The *County* will waive DC's at the same percentage for *industrial* uses, and with the same conditions to that of the Township of Springwater. Buildings and/or uses that are subject to a reduction in *County* DC's must speak directly to *Township* and *County* staff.

D. Payment

1. The owner shall pay 100% of the applicable *Township* DCs at the time of Building Permit Issuance. Once the building or structure is deemed complete, as determined by the date of occupancy issued under the Ontario Building Code, the *Township* will issue a rebate in the value of 60% of the total DC amount.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. All building types shall be eligible for this rebate, provided that an *industrial*, commercial or office development is being proposed and is within the settlement or rural areas.
3. This rebate is subject to receiving required approvals or permits, as required by *Township's* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.





3.1.5 PLANNING AND BUILDING PERMIT FEE REBATE

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The planning and building permit fee rebate program offers rebates on required fees including the *Township's* planning application fees and/or building permit fees, where a building permit is required for a construction project. The rebate will help to reduce the costs to making major private property improvements and encourage desired improvements throughout the *Township*.

Fee reductions apply to the following applications types:

- Site Plan Approval;
- Minor Variance;
- Severance;
- Demolition Permit
- Building Permit; and/or
- Sign Permit.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Redevelopment of a property for commercial, office, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*;
2. Major additions to a commercial, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area;
3. Signage requiring a sign permit, in accordance with *Township By-law 2009-055*, for commercial, office, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*;
4. Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner; or,
5. Any combination of the above.

C. Program Detail

1. The planning application and building permit fee rebate will be a maximum of \$2,500 or 100% of the *Township's* fees, whichever is the lesser.

D. Payment

1. The rebate is provided after the site works (including construction) are complete to the satisfaction of the Plan's *Administrator*. This includes full payment of any applicable planning fees by the *applicant* at time of submission. Upon project completion a rebate for eligible fees, up to the stated maximum is provided to the *applicant*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. Planning or Building Permit Applications relating to works in either the settlement or rural areas, providing that the works relate to the redevelopment or improvement of commercial, office, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*;
3. Residential uses are not eligible for this rebate.
4. All rebates shall be subject to receiving required approvals or permits, as required by *Township's* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws



3.1.6 HISTORIC PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT GRANT

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

Intended to encourage the conservation of historic buildings and properties in the *Township*, including properties listed as being of historical interest and properties designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This grant provides incentives for owners of *historic properties* to renovate or refurbish the properties in a manner that is consistent with and complementary to the heritage character.

The design of improvements should be based on historical documentation and primarily be intended to restore or preserve the property's heritage attributes. Adaptive re-use of heritage properties is also encouraged to ensure the long-term viability of these historically significant properties.

This program can be used in conjunction with the Township's Heritage Tax Refund Program, established in By-law 2005-014, along with the County of Simcoe Heritage Tax Refund Program.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Restoration or preservation of historical attributes for properties listed on the *Township's* Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Interest or Value that are either Designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* or Listed, as per sub-section 27(1.2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. This may include the following activities:
 - a) Repairs or restorations to porches, verandahs, cupolas, columns, brackets, soffits and fascia;
 - b) Removal of siding and detailing that is not considered heritage;
 - c) Repair or restoration of historic exterior cladding, based on historic documentation;
 - d) Repairs or restoration of windows and doors or other structural openings to original conditions, based on historic documentation;
 - e) Repairs or restoration of decorative architectural detailing, millwork and trim as well as chimneys, based on historic documentation; and,
 - f) Masonry and stonework, including cleaning of masonry and stonework using non-destructive cleaning methods.
2. Repairs that are critical to the stabilization and conservation of the property, including repairs to the roof and eaves, exterior cladding, windows, foundation and draining and other repairs to serious structural faults;
3. Renovations and sensitively-designed additions to facilitate the adaptive re-use of the property, including conversion to commercial, office, institutional uses or to a mix of uses.
4. Services of a licensed professional engineer, architect or a certified heritage professional to design or advise upon the proposed works, including research on the historical documentation of the listed or designated property; or,
5. Any combination of the above.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum amount of the grant is \$5,000 or 50% of the eligible costs, whichever is the lesser.
2. This program may be combined with the Façade or Signage Improvement Program and/or Building Repair and Renovation Program.
3. The maximum amount of the grant for services of a licensed professional engineer, architect or a certified heritage professional shall not exceed 15% of the grant.

D. Payment of Grant

1. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Plan's *Administrator*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan.
2. Eligible properties must be either designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* or listed in the *Township's* Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Interest or Value at the time of application. The *Township* may update the register from time-to-time. As the eligibility for this grant is based on the heritage status of the property or building, the existing use of the building is not to be used as a factor in the determining eligibility.
3. *Applicants* shall be required to submit historical research and documentation on the subject property in support of the grant application.
4. If the subject property is listed on the *Township's* Register, but is not designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *Township*, at its sole discretion, may recommend to the Springwater Heritage Committee that the property be designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in order to be eligible for this grant. If the *Township* determines that designation of the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* is not desirable for designation, then the listed property shall be eligible for this grant as a property on the Heritage Register.
5. All grant applications will be subject to review by the Springwater Heritage Committee
6. All grants shall be subject to receiving any required approvals or permits, as required by *Township's* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws





3.1.7 TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT FINANCING GRANT

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

The Tax Increment Equivalent Financing Grant is intended to remove the perception of a tax increase as a barrier to investment in property, and encourage significant property investments. This program assists by reducing the impact of a potential property tax increase resulting from a major improvement by phasing in the tax increase over a number of years. The grant is determined based on the incremental change in the property tax owed following completion of the development project. The grant is paid to the property owner on an annual basis and in decreasing amounts until the property owner is paying the taxes without any assistance.

Only major property improvements which actually result in a property tax increase are eligible. This program is applicable to both the settlement and the rural areas of the *Township*. The grant is paid annually in decreasing amounts until the owner is paying the total taxes without any assistance. The program is intended to encourage the development of non-residential uses that will increase the *Township's* tax base over time.

The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant cannot be combined with any other type of grant.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Redevelopment of a property for commercial, office, *industrial*, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses* that results in an increased tax assessment;
2. Major additions to a commercial, *industrial*, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses*, involving an increase of at least 25% of the existing gross floor area that results in an increased tax assessment; or
3. Any combination of the above.

C. Program Detail

1. The Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is offered to eligible property owners where municipal property tax has increased as a result of development, redevelopment or any major improvements to a property. The difference between the current tax assessment (i.e., prior to improvements) and the new tax assessment (i.e., after improvements) is the "tax increment". The property owner is required to provide documentation of the prior and post-tax assessments to the *Township*.
2. The tax increment is granted to the property owner on an annual basis and in decreasing amounts, for a maximum period of ten (10) years.
3. In year one, the amount of the grant may equal up to 90% of the tax increment. In subsequent years, the amount of the grant shall decrease until it reaches zero (i.e., Year 1 = 90%, Year 2 = 60%, Year 3 = 30%, etc.).
4. The total amount of any Tax Increment Equivalent Grant shall not exceed 50% of the total cost of the improvements or \$5,000 annually, whichever is the lesser. The period may range from 1 to 10 years, at the sole discretion of the *Township*.
5. Eligible costs include costs associated with the eligible projects noted below that result in a significant increase to the tax assessment of the property.

6. The *Township* will determine the precise terms of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant.

D. Payment of Grant

1. Following completion of the property improvements and receipt of the revised property tax statement, the property owner will be responsible for paying their taxes in full. The grant will be re-paid to the owner upon full payment of taxes, based on the applicable terms of the grant.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. Properties containing *industrial*, employment, commercial, office, *mixed use*, *value-added agricultural facilities*, or *on-farm diversified uses* are eligible for this grant.
3. Residential uses are not eligible for this grant.
4. At its sole discretion, the *Township* may require the *applicant* to submit a business plan, prepared to the satisfaction of the Township of Springwater, in relation to an application for the tax increment equivalent grant.
5. The property shall be improved such that the amount of improvements undertaken are sufficient to result in an increase in the assessed value of the property.
6. If the total value of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is significantly less than the *applicant's* estimated value, at the sole discretion of the *Township*, the *applicant* may be given the opportunity to withdraw their application for the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant program, and submit an application for one or more of the other incentive programs in this Plan.
7. An approved Tax Increment Equivalent Grant is non-transferrable to new property owners and cannot be transferred by the original *applicant* to another property.
8. All grants shall be subject to receiving any required approvals or permits, as required by *Township's* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws



3.1.8 ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS GRANT

A. Purpose and Intended Outcomes

This program encourages property owners to make accessibility improvements to their commercial, tourist or recreational properties in order to bring them into compliance with Provincial Legislation. Relevant legislation includes the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), which applies to all public, private and not-for-profit organizations with at least one (1) employee in Ontario; and the Ontario Human Rights Code – “Equal Rights and Opportunities and Freedom from Discrimination”.

Accessibility improvements should not greatly compromise the character of the building or property and as such, this grant will help owners in designing and implementing accessibility improvements that maintain key architectural elements. Improvements may include installation of accessibility ramps, automatic doors, or improving entryways.

B. Eligible Projects

1. Installation of new or improvement of existing automatic doors, wheelchair access ramps, entryway widening, leveling or repairs to pathways/accesses, which clearly improve accessibility of a commercial, tourist or recreational building or property.
2. Improvements to stairways/steps, provided the improvements are designed to maintain architectural elements of the property and are considerate of the existing site landscaping. Landscaping improvements may also be made in combination with the improvements, where applicable.

C. Program Detail

1. The maximum grant of \$1,500 or 50% of the eligible costs, whichever is the lessor.

D. Payment of Grant

1. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements, to the satisfaction of the Plan’s *Administrator*.

E. Eligibility Criteria

1. All General Eligibility Criteria included in Section 3.2 of this Plan will apply.
2. *Industrial, employment, commercial, mixed use, value-added agricultural facilities, or on-farm diversified uses* are eligible for this grant. Residential uses are not eligible.
3. All grants shall be subject to receiving any required approvals or permits, as required by *Township’s* by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws

3.2 General Financial Incentive Eligibility Criteria

In addition to program specific eligibility criteria, the following General Eligibility Criteria have been established. In order for a project to be eligible for one of the Financial Incentive Programs contained in Section 3.1, the following must be satisfied:

1. **Complete Application:** Submission of a complete Financial Incentive Application, including all supporting documentation as outlined in Section 5.4 of this Plan is required. The *Township* will review and approve the application prior to commencing the community improvement works.
2. **Eligible applicants:** *Applicants* must either be the property owner, an agent acting on behalf of the owner or tenant of the property with written authorization from the owner to perform or undertake the works.
3. **Community Improvement Project Area:** Projects must be located within the *Community Improvement Project Area*, as designated by by-law, in order to be eligible for any incentive program.
4. **Plan Goals and Objectives:** A project must contribute to achieving the relevant goals and objectives as outlined in Section 2 of this Plan.
5. **Design Guidelines:** All projects must be consistent with applicable and relevant urban or architectural control guidelines, including the Midhurst Secondary Plan and the Elmvale Commercial District Façade Guidelines.
6. **Improvement to a Property:** A project must represent an improvement to a property or building, and not be considered a regular or life-cycle maintenance activity. A project must also be considered to be permanent in the opinion of the Plan's *Administrator*. Non-permanent structures which are not eligible for programs may include, but are not limited to: trailers, sheds, hanging planters, wall decorations, interior and exterior furniture and similar non-permanent structures and decorative elements.
7. **Conformity with Local Policies, By-laws and Guidelines:** The project must be in conformity with the *Township's* Official Plan, Zoning By-law, guidelines and procedures (i.e., sign by-law), as well as other relevant legislation and code, such as the Ontario Building Code.
8. **Good Standing:** The property must be in good standing with regard to taxation and all other financial matters at the time of application.
9. **Consistency with Proposed Works:** Completed community improvement works must be consistent with the project description and supporting materials provided and approved through the CIP application process. Should the completed works not be consistent with the original and approved project description, the *Township* is permitted to delay, reduce or cancel the approved program benefits and require the repayment of any incentive program benefits that have been issued.
10. **Maximum Total Incentive Amount:** The total amount of all incentive benefits must not exceed the project's costs and, if combined with another program, shall not exceed a total value of \$10,000.
11. **Combined Programs:** Incentive programs may be combined, with the exception of the tax increment equivalent grant, which shall not be combined with any other program. Within a two (2) year period, a maximum of two (2) approved incentive program applications are permitted per property. Any eligible costs shall only be counted under one grant program, and not duplicated in



separate programs. Furthermore, in no case shall the total amount of all grants exceed 50% of total eligible costs.

12. **Retroactive Applications:** Applications for a Financial Incentive Program shall only relate to improvements that are to be initiated and completed after Council adoption of the Community Improvement Plan. Applications for improvements that were initiated prior to Council adoption are not eligible for the Financial Incentive Programs.

4. Governance and Implementation Strategy

In addition to the financial incentives available to encourage private property owners and tenants to participate in revitalization, this Plan outlines a governance and implementation strategy for the *Township* to participate in and support revitalization through other initiatives.

The implementation strategy contains initiatives that are opportunities for the *Township* to improve the community in conjunction with the private sector investments being made through the Financial Incentive Programs.

This Plan recognizes that the implementation of the initiatives will be subject to funding availability, relative urgency and need. The suggested timing of each initiative should be considered a target for the *Township*, allowing the *Township* to engage in these programs at its sole discretion.

4.1 CIP Marketing Strategy

The success of the CIP will be linked to the community and stakeholder's knowledge of the Plan and the benefits of its programs. As such, the *Township* should seek to implement the marketing strategies found below, following approval of the CIP by *Township* Council. CIP marketing will increase awareness of the programs and encourage utilization. Strategies should be creative and innovative, in order to attract attention and increase awareness of the programs that have been activated or funded in a certain year.

Ongoing marketing should include the preparation of a CIP successes newsletter, including before and after pictures to motivate others to apply for program funding.

The Plan's *Administrator* should consider the following marketing strategies:

- **Website:** A CIP webpage should be established on the *Township's* website that includes:
 - A summary of the CIP and the programs available
 - Approved CIP
 - Application forms and requirements
 - Contact information for the Plan's *Administrator*
 - Recent CIP successes
- **Publications:** The *Township* may consider preparing the following publications:
 - **CIP Newsletter or Brochure** – to be prepared shortly after the CIP is approved. The Newsletter/ Brochure will summarize what the CIP is, the programs available, who can take advantage of the programs, the application process and the Plan *Administrator's* contact information. The Newsletter can initially be distributed to local stakeholders, business owners, Business Improvement Areas, etc. This Newsletter / Brochure should be updated from time to time to illustrate CIP successes through before and after photography.
 - **Digital Newsletters** – to be prepared and emailed on a quarterly or bi-annual basis, summarizing the CIP, available programs and recent CIP successes, including before and after photographs.

- **Monitoring Reports:** Information collected through the program monitoring may be communicated to the community, key stakeholders, Council and *Township* staff. This will be used to promote the program successes and generate interest.
- **Respond to Public Questions or Comments:** The Plan’s *administrator* should be available to answer questions and to discuss the programs with interested *applicants*. The *administrator* should also be available for pre-consultation meetings with *applicants*, and where/when required, attend site visits with the *applicant*.
- **Interactive GIS:** The *Township* should consider utilizing the existing GIS system to map active and completed CIP projects.
- **Other Initiatives:** The *Township* may determine other marketing opportunities to ‘spread the word’ about the CIP, including, information booths at community events.

4.2 Leadership and Implementation Strategy

The Leadership and Implementation Strategy outlines a series of actions, projects, programs and tools that have been identified as opportunities for the *Township* and key stakeholders to improve the community, in conjunction with the private sector investment through the Financial Incentive Programs. Some of the projects will require additional capital investment, studies, or municipal staff time, while others re-emphasize the need to implement recommendations contained within existing plans.

This strategy outlines timing and prioritization in order to implement the projects over the course of the next 10 years. Projects should be coordinated with one-another where appropriate, and with other initiatives being led by either the *Township* or other stakeholders, such as the *County* or conservation authority. The following projects were identified in the CIP Strategy Report and through consultation with the community:

CULTURAL AND AGRI-TOURISM STRATEGY

Details

The *Township’s* Municipal Cultural Plan (2012) recommended the development of an integrated Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy to promote “local agricultural products and rural life activities available to locals and visitors through events, fixed attractions or products and services”. The Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy will also help to achieve the goals and objectives of the CIP by ensuring that the Strategy supports the agricultural community in developing, growing and effectively marketing *agri-tourism, value-added agricultural facilities, and on-farm diversified uses*.

As a starting point and to support this initiative, the *Township* may wish to appoint or identify an agri-business economic development officer to serve as the municipal liaison with local farmers. Consistent with the recommendations of the Municipal Cultural Plan, the *Township* should establish a working group to better define the strategy, identify objectives and actions for implementation. The Strategy will build on the relevant action items identified in the Township of Springwater Economic Development Strategy, by integrating with the Cultural and Agri-tourism Strategy.

Timing

The Municipal Cultural Strategy identified that the Cultural and Agri-Tourism Strategy was to be implemented in the medium term (4-6 years). Given that some time has passed, it is recommended that this Strategy be implemented in the short to medium term (2-6 years).

IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECTIONAL AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE, AS PER MUNICIPAL SIGNAGE PROGRAM (2012)

Details

The *Township's* Municipal Signage Program was developed in 2012, in response to a need for additional signage to better connect community assets and tourist attractions. In early stages of the signage program, Gateway and Community Signage was implemented. The next phase of implementation is the Directional and Wayfinding Signage. During the public consultation meetings, directional and wayfinding signage was identified as a priority to further enhance tourism and support local businesses. In support of the CIP Financial Incentive Programs, the *Township* should continue to implement the recommendations of the Municipal Signage Program, with specific priority for the implementation of Directional and Wayfinding Signage. The Directional and Wayfinding Signage will help promote and advertise the *Township's* tourist attractions, cultural heritage, and settlement areas.

Timing

Implementation should be consistent with capital funding planned for the existing Municipal Signage Program.

COMPREHENSIVE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Details

The *Township* has developed design guidelines as part of the Midhurst Secondary Plan and the Elmvale Commercial District Façade Guidelines. The *Township* may consider developing a more comprehensive set of design guidelines that address private property improvements in the Settlement and Rural areas, as well as public realm improvements for the *Township* as a whole. The guidelines will assist in the evaluation of Financial Incentive Program and development applications, and will address:

- **Streetscape and Public Realm** – to create a consistent, pedestrian-oriented approach to streetscaping throughout the *Township* that will complement the *Township's* Municipal Signage Program, visually unify the spaces, and enhance visual connections and relationships. This would include a consistent approach to street furniture, lighting, planting, as well as the identification of key gateways or focal points throughout the *Township*, where additional design features may be added (i.e., upgrading cross walks at key intersections, or the introduction of banner advertisements along lamp posts).
- **Accessibility** – improve universal accessibility throughout the *Township*, in both the public and private realms. In the public realm, this relates to the introduction of a consistent approach to streetscaping that accommodates persons of all ages and mobility. In the private realm, design guidelines will provide private property owners with direction on how best to

implement accessible infrastructure while continuing to maintain and enhance a building's character.

- **Façade Improvement Guidelines** – to encourage façade improvements that are sensitive and consistent with the historic built form and that enhance the overall streetscape. Guidelines will encourage property owners to restore historic façades, where feasible. In non-historic buildings, improvements should consider the surrounding context in terms of materials, colours and scale.
- **Signage Improvement Guidelines** – will provide direction for those private property owners wishing to upgrade or update commercial signage. Guidelines should:
 - encourage signage that is consistent with the surrounding character within the more historic settlement areas;
 - discourage the implementation or replacement of back-lit signage;
 - encourage front-lit signage where and when lighting is required;
 - encourage hanging signs that are perpendicular to the building frontage along main streets and/or perpendicular to the road in rural areas; and,
 - limit the number of signs per business.
- **New Buildings and/or Additions** – will provide direction for property owners wishing to redevelop or add an addition to an existing commercial or agricultural building either in the settlement or rural areas. Guidelines will provide direction on the location, scale, and architectural features of these structures. For example, buildings should be setback from the street edge and be of a scale that is consistent with the surrounding built form and additions should be sensitive to the existing built form character, and utilize materials that are complementary, not necessarily consistent with, the existing building materials. New buildings or additions to provide for *value-added agricultural facilities* or *on-farm diversified uses* should similarly be consistent with the predominant built form and setbacks associated with that property.
- **Implementation Plan** – will identify the types of development proposals that are to be consistent with the guidelines, and roles and responsibilities of the Township and private developers, including the responsibilities of the *Township* in implementing the public realm improvements. Implementation of streetscaping elements should, where feasible, occur as part of other roadway maintenance activities and may also seek to integrate with any *County* road upgrades or ongoing studies and required roadway improvements.

The guidelines will ensure that new development, additions and upgrades create accessible, safe and vibrant pedestrian and cyclist friendly streetscapes, with a safe interface between modes of traffic (motorist, cyclist, pedestrian), particularly within settlement areas.

Timing

Guidelines should be developed following the completion of the CIP and should be used as a tool when reviewing Financial Incentive Program applications as well as new development and/or site plan applications. Guidelines should also clearly identify timelines for implementation of public realm improvements.

TRAILS AND PATHWAYS IMPLEMENTATION

Details

The *Township* is home to a unique network of trails, conservation areas and heritage features that are located throughout the municipality, acting as links between the settlement and rural areas. In 2008, the *Township* completed a Trails Master Plan that established a framework for the development of a comprehensive interconnected trail system. More recently, the Township of Springwater Municipal Cultural Plan (2012) noted that the future development and promotion of the trail system is a priority for residents. In 2014, the County of Simcoe developed a Trails Strategy. These plans and strategies provide a strong foundation for trail network expansion. Through the implementation of the CIP, the *Township* may seek to further implement the recommendations of the Trails Master Plan and work together with the Region with respect to their Trails Strategy. Furthermore, and consistent with the recommendations of the Municipal Cultural Plan, the *Township* may seek to further promote the trail system and the tourist attractions that the trails connect.

Improvements to existing trails may include signage and wayfinding tools that communicate the area's natural and cultural history, and that further enhances connectivity through active transportation between settlement areas.

Timing

Trails and pathway improvements and construction should occur as funding becomes available in partnership with local conservation authorities and active transportation/cycling organizations.

PREPARATION OF LANDS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Details

Planning Act Sections 28 (3) and (6) provide municipalities with the authority to assist in the preparation of lands for community improvement through:

- acquisition, holding, clearing, grading, or other activities,
- construction, rehabilitation, improvement or repair to buildings on these lands; and
- selling, leasing or disposing of the lands.

As such, the *Township* may, acquire underutilized lands or buildings for the purposes of revitalization or to establish or link trail systems; and/or sell or lease properties or buildings that have been acquired by the *Township*.

The goal of this strategy is to allow the *Township* to assist in readying underutilized or derelict lands for development by the private sector, or in partnership with the public sector.

Timing

This strategy may be implemented at any point while the CIP is in place and as opportunities arise.

5. Plan Administration

5.1 General

The Plan will be administered by the Township of Springwater, including *Township Council* and the Plan's *administrator*, as detailed in Section 5.3 of this Plan.

1. The Township of Springwater's Urban and Rural Community Improvement Plan is to be read and interpreted in its entirety.
2. Interpretation of the Plan will be at the sole discretion of the *approval authority* or *Township Council*, as the situation may dictate.
3. The Plan is intended to be implemented over a 10-year period; however, implementation can occur beyond the 10-year timeframe.

5.2 Community Improvement Project Area

A Community Improvement Project Area is an area of the *Township*, as defined through a separate by-law, to which the Community Improvement Plan applies. The Community Improvement Project Area can be amended independently of the Community Improvement Plan; however, a Community Improvement Project Area must be defined and enacted by by-law in order for the programs, policies and strategies of this Plan to be activated, utilized and implemented.

1. A Community Improvement Project Area is an area to which this Community Improvement Plan applies. Properties located outside of the currently designated Community Improvement Project Area are not eligible for financial incentives.
2. The Community Improvement Project Area is maintained separately from this Plan and is designated through a by-law of Council. Council may amend the Community Improvement Project Area through the passing of a new Community Improvement Project Area By-law that would replace the current Community Improvement Project Area By-law.
3. Council may dissolve the Community Improvement Project Area(s) by by-law should they determine that the objectives of the Plan have been carried out. Dissolving the Community Improvement Project Area(s) will render the Plan inoperable.

5.3 Administration of Financial Incentive Programs and Budget

Upon approval of this Community Improvement Plan, the *Township* will appoint a *Plan Administrator* who will be responsible for administering the Plan on a day-to-day basis, including coordination with the *Approval Authority*. *Township Council* and key stakeholders will also play an important role in the administration of this Plan, as defined below.

Administrator

1. The *Township* appointed *administrator* will be responsible for managing the day-to-day responsibilities of this Plan, including: undertaking pre-consultation meetings with potential *applicants* for financial incentives; coordinating application submissions and review with the *approval authority* and Council; leading activities to market the Plan (Section 4.1); and fulfilling the responsibilities of the Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (Section 6.0).

Council and Approval Authority

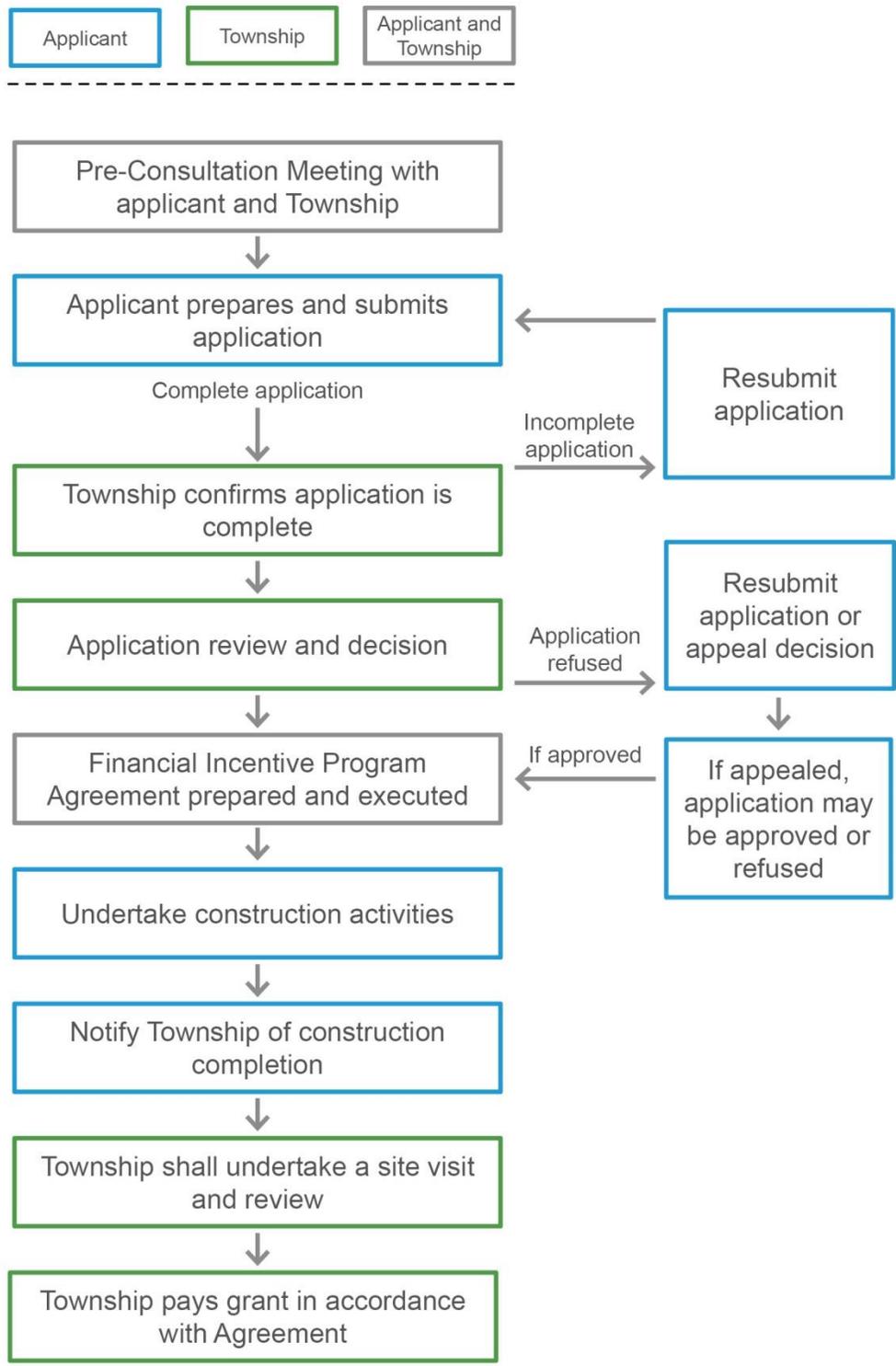
2. **Approval Authority:** Council is responsible for making decisions on financial incentive applications; however, Council may at its discretion appoint an alternate *approval authority* to fulfill all or some of the responsibilities noted below. The *approval authority* will be appointed to review and make decisions on applications for financial incentives. If no *approval authority* is appointed, the responsibilities for the *approval authority* as outlined in this Plan will apply to Council. The *approval authority* is responsible for:
 - a) Reviewing the applications for financial incentives and providing comments;
 - b) Providing a final recommendation for approval or refusal of the application which will be communicated to the Plan *administrator*; and
 - c) Providing input to the program monitoring report and recommendations on plan adjustments or amendments.
3. **Program Funding:** Council will be responsible for establishing a Community Improvement Plan budget that will fund the Financial Incentive Programs. Council may rely on the *administrator* and the Plan monitoring (Section 6.1) for recommendations with respect to program uptake and grants issued in order to determine the appropriate Plan budget and program funding.
 - a) Council may choose to fund any one or more of the Financial Incentive Programs, or not to fund any in a given year.
 - b) Council may choose to assign any portion of the total financial incentives budget to any one or more Financial Incentive Programs.
4. **Leadership and Implementation Strategy:** The implementation, funding, detailed design or execution of any recommended projects, programs or studies contained in the Leadership and Implementation Strategy (Section 4.2) will be considered annually by Council in consultation with the *administrator*. The projects, programs or studies identified in Section 4.2 of this Plan will be funded and implemented distinctly from the financial incentives and be subject to budget allocation.
5. **Refusal of Financial Incentive Program Applications:** Where an *approval authority* has been appointed and an application has been refused, the *applicant* will be given the option to appeal the application to Council. The *Administrator* will coordinate the meeting with Council to hear the appeal. Council will make the final decision on the application in consideration of the *administrator's* report and the *applicant's* reasons for appeal.

5.4 Application Process and Submission Requirements for Financial Incentives Programs

The Financial Incentive Program Application process and requirements are summarized below and illustrated in the following flow-chart;

1. **Pre-Consultation Meeting:** All *applicants* are encouraged to meet with the *Township* prior to submitting an application to discuss the project and submission requirements.
2. **Application Submission:** The *applicant* will submit the following information to the *Township*, as confirmed through the pre-consultation meeting:
 - a) Completed Application Form (required);

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- b) Two quotes for the proposed construction work;
 - c) Drawings for the proposed work (site concept, elevations, floor plans, etc.);
 - d) Photographs of the existing property;
 - e) Any historical documentation or information available for the property, if applicable; and/or
 - f) Any other information as may be appropriate based on the nature of the application (i.e., tax assessment).
3. **Confirmation of Complete Application:** The *administrator* will review the application to confirm that all of the necessary information and documentation has been provided. The *administrator* will contact the *applicant* if any additional information is required.
 4. **Application Review and Decision:** The *administrator* will circulate the application to the *approval authority* for review. The *approval authority* will provide a recommendation for approval or refusal of the application:
 - a) Approval: The *applicant* will be notified and the application will proceed through the remaining steps.
 - b) Refusal: The *applicant* will be notified and provided with the reasons for refusal. The *applicant* will have the option to re-submit their application, or, if the *approval authority*, is not *Council*, the *applicant* will have the option to appeal the decision to *Council*.
 5. **Execution of the Financial Incentive Program Agreement:** The *administrator* will prepare a Financial Incentive Program Agreement that outline the terms and payment of the grant and other relevant conditions. The agreement will be signed by the *applicant* and the *Township*.
 6. **Commence Construction:** The *applicant* may commence construction, in accordance with the documents submitted to the *Township*.
 7. **Construction Completion:** The *Applicant* informs the *Township* when construction is completed. The *Township* may undertake a site visit to take “after” photographs and confirm that the *applicant* has met any terms and conditions outlined in the Financial Incentive Program Agreement.
 8. **Township Pays Grant:** The grant is paid to the *applicant* upon confirmation that that works have been completed in accordance with the Financial Incentive Program Agreement and plans submitted as part of the application.



Financial Incentive Application Process

5.5 Administration of Leadership and Implementation Strategy

1. The Township of Springwater will administer and implement the projects identified as part of the Leadership and Implementation Strategy (Section 4.2). Many of the plans, policies and strategies have been integrated with recommendations contained in other strategic documents or plans to assist in ease of implementation.
2. Projects are intended to be implemented within a ten (10) year period; however, this timeframe may be extended.
3. All projects are subject to individual budgetary approval from Council.
4. The *administrator* will report on the status of the projects as part of the annual Plan Monitoring Report (Section 6.1).

5.6 Glossary

Administrator	The Township of Springwater staff member delegated the responsibility of administering this Plan on a day-to-day basis, including coordinating with the <i>Approval Authority</i> .
Agricultural use	The growing of crops, including nursery, biomass, and horticultural crops; raising of livestock; raising of other animals for food, fur or fibre, including poultry and fish; aquaculture; apiaries; agro-forestry; maple syrup production; and associated on-farm buildings and structures, including, but not limited to livestock facilities, manure storages, value-retaining facilities, and accommodation for full-time farm labour when the size and nature of the operation requires additional employment, as per the Provincial Policy Statement (2015)
Agri-tourism uses	Those 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, as per the Provincial Policy Statement (2015)
Agriculture-related uses	Those farm related commercial and farm-related <i>industrial</i> uses that are directly related to farm operations in the area, support agriculture, benefit from being in close proximity to farm operations, and provide direct products and/or services to farm operations as a primary activity, in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2015).
Applicant	The registered owner, assessed owner or tenant of lands and buildings within the Community Improvement Project Area, and any person to whom a registered owner, assessed owner or tenant of lands and buildings within the Community Improvement Project Area has assigned the right to receive a grant or loan; unless otherwise specified. <i>Applicants</i> may also be referred to as “building owners” or “property owners” throughout this Plan
Approval Authority	The person or person(s) assigned by Council to evaluate and make a decision on applications for financial incentives as part of the CIP. If no approval authority is appointed, the responsibilities for the approval authority as outlined in this Plan will apply to Council.

Roofed Accommodations	A year-round, permanent fixed roof accommodations within or as an extension to existing buildings and including hotels/motels/Bed and Breakfast establishments. This excludes camp grounds, cottage rentals or trailer parks. These may be integrated into the rural and/or settlement areas of Springwater.
Community Improvement	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, <i>industrial</i> , public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary, in accordance with Section 28 of the <i>Planning Act</i> .
Community Improvement Plan	A plan for the community improvement of a Community Improvement Project Area, in accordance with Section 28 of the <i>Planning Act</i> .
Community Improvement Project Area	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, in accordance with Section 28 of the <i>Planning Act</i> .
County	The County of Simcoe.
Historic Property	Any property considered by the <i>Township</i> to be of historical and cultural interest as identified in the Municipal Heritage Register and/or any property designated under Part IV or Part V of the <i>Ontario Heritage Act</i> .
Industrial	A building or area used and designated for businesses and economic activities including but not limited to, manufacturing, warehousing, offices, which may have very limited associated retail and ancillary facilities, as per the Count of Simcoe Industrial Development Charges (DC) Abatement Program By-law No. 6297.
Mixed Use or Mix of Uses	A building containing a combination of commercial uses (retail, personal services, restaurants, offices, etc.), and/or residential uses, provided that there are commercial uses at grade.
On-farm Diversified Uses	Uses that are secondary to the principal <i>agricultural use</i> of the property, and are limited in area. On-farm diversified uses include, but are not limited to, home occupations, home industries, agri-tourism uses, and uses that produce value-added agricultural products, in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement (2015).
Township	The Township of Springwater.

Value-added Agricultural Facilities	<p>means, facilities that transform raw commodities into new forms to enhance their value. Value-added facilities that do not meet the PPS definition of <i>agricultural uses</i> may meet the PPS definition for “agriculture-related uses” or “on-farm diversified uses”, depending on the nature of the operations and if they are located on a farm. Examples of Value-added agricultural facilities include pressing apples and bottling cider, making wine, milling grain, processing cherries, and preserving and roasting grain for livestock feed. (source: Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas, Draft for input and discussion, OMAFRA, 2015)</p>
Value-retaining Agricultural Facilities	<p>means, facilities located on farms that serve to maintain the quality of raw commodities produced on the farm (i.e. prevent spoilage) to ensure they remain saleable. A value-retaining facility should be related to the type of farm operation where it is located.</p> <p>These facilities include those involving refrigeration (cold storage), controlled-atmosphere storage, freezing, cleaning, grading, drying (e.g. grains, oilseeds, tobacco) and simple packaging that helps maintain the quality of farm products. Value-retaining facilities may also include operations that provide a minimum amount of processing to make a farm product saleable, such as grading eggs, evaporating maple syrup and extracting honey. (source: Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas, Draft for input and discussion , OMAFRA, 2015)</p>

6. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

6.1 Plan Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to gauge and determine success of the CIP and its programs, and to inform future funding and program activation decisions, the *Township* should establish a clear monitoring strategy that includes the following key steps:

- **Establish Baseline Conditions** – The *Plan Administrator* should collect information to establish the baseline conditions for which the plan’s success will be evaluated against. Information to be collected should include: number of building and sign permit applications that have been submitted and for which type of improvement, vacancy rate for commercial units, number of listed and designated properties, total number of visitors to the *Township* and number of businesses.
- **Create Database and Input Data for Monitoring the Plan and Applications** – The *Township* should establish a database to monitor, Financial Incentive Program inquiries and submitted, approved and denied applications. The *Plan’s Administrator* will be responsible for entering program inquiries and all application data. The database should include the following information:
 - Active programs – *Township* approved annual budget for grants;
 - Pre-consultation meetings – Meeting date and type of pre-consultation meeting;
 - Formal application submissions – Property location, project description, application type, value of grant being requested, total construction value of project, application status, property tax assessment prior to project approval, and photographs of the existing building / property (‘before photographs’), etc.
 - Approved Financial Incentive Program Applications – Approved value of the grant, total project construction costs, completion timing and grant payment, tax assessment after project completion, photographs of the completed project (‘after photographs’);
 - Denied Financial Incentive Program Applications – Reason for application being denied, and recommended next steps for the *applicant*;
- **Prepare an Annual Report and Recommendations:** The *Plan Administrator* will prepare an annual report to *Township Council* outlining key program indicators, as collected in the CIP database, including:
 - Total number and types of inquiries or pre-consultation meetings,
 - Total number and type of applications,
 - Construction and grant values;
 - Economic multiplier for each Financial Incentive Program (i.e., value of *Township* investment as compared to value of private sector investment)
 - Status of Governance and Implementation;
 - Status of approved *Township* CIP budget; and
 - Recommendations, if applicable, on programs that should continue to be funded, requirements for modifications and/or amendments to the Plan.

The Report will be used as a basis to determine program success, and whether funding or active programs need to be adjusted. For example, based on the findings of the annual report, *Township* Council may decide to increase or decrease the allocated program budget, and/or activate/deactivate specific programs.

6.2 Adjustments and Amendments to this Plan

The following table summarizes which modifications and/or activities require modifications to the Plan.

Type of Plan Modification or Activity	Amendment to the Plan?	
	Yes	No
Discontinue funding to any program, or discontinue funding to all programs		✓
Changes to the amount of the annual Community Improvement Plan budget allocated to fund the Financial Incentive Programs (total or program specific allocation)		✓
Remove or add “eligible costs” to a Financial Incentive Program	✓	
Modify, remove or add to the “eligible properties” or any other eligibility criteria within each incentive program (Section 2.3), the general eligibility policies (Section 3.3)	✓	
Changes to the maximum amount of a grant, or to the percentage identified for calculating maximum grant value or eligible costs.	✓	
Permanently remove a Financial Incentive Program from this Plan	✓	
Insert a new Financial Incentive Program	✓	
Modify, remove or add to the visions, goals or objectives	✓	
Modify a Community Improvement Project Area		✓ Requires a new Community Improvement Project Area By-law
Delegate Council’s default authority for approving financial incentives to a committee or an individual, or return of responsibilities to Council		✓ Delegation generally requires a by-law subject to Section 23.1 of the Municipal Act
Discontinue implementation of the Plan		✓