



COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

TOWNSHIP OF NORTH HURON



[Table of Contents](#)

Table of Contents	1
Section 1: Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose of a Community Improvement Plan.....	3
Section 2: Legislative Authority	4
a) The Planning Act and Provincial Policy	4
2.1: Provincial Planning Statement (2024)	4
Section 3: Official Plan and Zoning By-Law	5
Section 4: Rationale and Purpose	7
4.1 Background Information	7
4.2 Relevant Reports and Studies	7
4.2.1 CIP Amendment Survey (2024)	7
4.2.2 Huron County BR+E Survey (2022).....	8
4.2.3 Huron County Employment Land Strategy (2015).....	8
4.2.4 SWOT Analysis (2018)	9
4.2.5 Wingham BR+E Report (2011)	11
4.3 Purpose of the CIP.....	11
Section 5: Community Improvement Project Area.....	12
Project Area Selection Criteria.....	12
Section 6: Goals of the CIP	14
Section 7: Community Improvement Programs	15
7.1: Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program.....	15
7.2: Direct Grant for Structural Work Program	15
7.3: Agri Tourism Grant.....	17
7.4: Development Charges Grant	17
7.5: Planning Application, Building Permit Fee and Site Study Grant.....	18
7.6: Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program.....	18
7.7: Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Program.....	19
Section 8: Administration	20
Section 8.1: Application Administration	20
a) General Eligibility Requirements.....	20
b) Application Process.....	22

c) Payment of Grant.....	23
Section 8.2: Program Administration.....	24
a) Staff and CIP Review Committee Involvement.....	24
b) Budget.....	25
c) Marketing Plan.....	25
d) Application Intake.....	25
e) Monitoring Program.....	25
f) Data Collection.....	26
g) Reporting.....	26
h) Program Adjustments.....	26
i) Interpretation.....	26
j) Schedules and Appendices.....	26
Figure “1”.....	27
Appendix 1 - Façade Improvement Grant Eligibility Criteria.....	28
Appendix 2 – Direct Grant for Structural Work Eligibility Criteria.....	30
Appendix 3 – Agri-Tourism Grant Eligibility Criteria.....	33
Appendix 4- Development Charges Grant Eligibility Criteria.....	35
Appendix 5 – Planning Application, Building Permit Fees, and Site Study Grant Eligibility Criteria.....	36
Appendix 6 – Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Eligibility Criteria.....	37
Appendix 7 – Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Eligibility Criteria.....	38
Appendix E.....	39

Section 1: Introduction

The Township of North Huron is a lower-tier municipality in Huron County, Ontario, Canada. It was formed in 2001 when the Ontario government imposed amalgamation on municipalities throughout the province. Specifically, the former township of East Wawanosh was merged with the village of Blyth and the town of Wingham. North Huron and the surrounding area are home to many small to medium-sized industrial businesses, technical expertise, and entrepreneurial services. North Huron is also home to a robust agricultural community.

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool that encourages and leverages private investment by providing financial incentives to projects in geographically specific areas of a municipality to promote physical improvements and development. It is the goal of community improvement planning to encourage revitalization, development, redevelopment, and enhancement of businesses in CIP areas. Ontario's Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, contains directions for the creation and delivery of CIPs. This CIP amendment is a project of the Township of North Huron and is intended to promote long-term economic sustainability and welcome attractive features and new investments in North Huron which includes Wingham, Blyth, Belgrave, Auburn, and Whitechurch Ontario.

This report details the legislative authority for the program, provides information on the rationale and purpose, outlines the Community Improvement Project Area, and provides further information on the grant programs and eligibility.

This document is intended to provide information for potential applicants to the program and to act as a guideline for all involved parties throughout the entire CIP process.

1.1 Purpose of a Community Improvement Plan

Community Improvement Plans are widely used by municipalities across Ontario to focus and initiate change and development in areas of need. A CIP aims to leverage private investment to promote revitalization, redevelopment, and enhancement by providing financial incentives to projects within defined community improvement project areas. These areas can be defined as a municipality or an area(s) within a municipality.

In preparing the CIP, a detailed background review, staff, business and public consultation efforts have been conducted. Together with all these efforts were coordinated in order to ensure that the CIP reflected the needs and desires of the local community. This CIP draws on the background work of the previous CIPs developed for communities within North Huron as well as various documents and reports relating to community revitalization.

This CIP provides key revitalization and improvement strategies for the Township of North Huron to stimulate and support growth in the commercial downtown areas, local industries, value-added agricultural facilities, tourism businesses, and commercial businesses across the township. The plan defines revitalization goals and objectives for the Township based on relevant studies and plans and establishes more Financial Incentive Programs to meet these goals and objectives.

Informed by the review and consultation process, CIP areas and funding programs were identified that aligned with the legislative and policy framework while meeting the needs of the community.

Section 2: Legislative Authority

a) The Planning Act and Provincial Policy

Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act allows municipalities, where there are provisions in its Official Plan relating to community improvement, to designate by By-law a “Community Improvement Project Area” and prepare a “Community Improvement Plan”.

Section 28(1) of the Planning Act defines community improvement as “the planning or replanning, design or redesign, re-subdivision, 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”.

Section 28 of the Planning Act establishes and defines the term “community improvement project area” as “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” (S. 28(1)). Section 28(2) states that the Municipality may, by by-law, designate all or part of the Municipality as a community improvement project area.

Once a community improvement project area has been designated, a community improvement plan can be prepared for that area. A Municipality may use a community improvement plan to:

- acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land;
- construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the municipality;
- sell, lease or dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the municipality; and/or
- make grants or loans to owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area to help them pay for the cost of rehabilitating their lands or building

2.1: Provincial Planning Statement (2024)

The Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) is a provincial wide land use policy document that provides direction to municipalities. Planning and land use related matters and initiatives shall be consistent with the PPS.

The CIP aligns with the objectives of the PPS related to healthy communities and a strong economy. Community improvement is broadly supported through policies related to: redevelopment of underutilized commercial and institutional sites including for residential use and general regeneration, providing opportunities for economic activities, including in settlement areas and prime agricultural areas, encouraging residential intensification.

Section 3: Official Plan and Zoning By-Law

County of Huron Official Plan

The County of Huron Official Plan provides guidance to local municipalities for the development of local official plans. The Community Services section of the County Official Plan recognizes and supports the importance of community improvement, investment, and revitalization.

The community policies and actions include the following: “Local Municipalities are encouraged to develop and/or revise existing Community Improvement Plans to support investment in projects to benefit the community such as downtown revitalization, accessibility and affordable housing.”

Township of North Huron Official Plan

The North Huron Official Plan provides policies to guide land use decisions throughout the Township and has more locally specific policies and land use designations. North Huron’s CIP must conform to the policies of the Official Plan.

The relevant policies related to North Huron and the preparation of a CIP are discussed below.

a) Goals and Objectives

The North Huron Official plan provides a framework where specific goals and objectives of community improvement are outlined. The following policies which outline community improvement goals and objectives are found within the North Huron Official Plan:

Goals (Section 10.3.3)

- a) To encourage, support and aid in the co-ordination of private efforts to rehabilitate and/or redevelop property, which will have a positive impact on the well-being of the community, such as downtown revitalization, intensification, heritage preservation, affordable housing, high quality urban design and brownfield redevelopments.
- b) To improve the physical appearance and environmental condition of the community,
- c) To foster community pride,
- d) To attract business investment and new residents to the Township, and
- e) To involve the public in identifying areas needing of community improvement, what deficiencies exist and the improvement and rehabilitation priorities.

b) Project Area Selection Criteria

The Official Plan also provides guidance on the selection of community improvement project area by outlining specific criteria for project area selection. The following policy is found in the Official Plan:

Project Area Selection Criteria (Section 10.3.4.2)

In determining the location of a Community Improvement Project Area and preparation of a Community Improvement Plan, one or more of the following conditions shall exist:

- a) Buildings (including façades), structures, and / or properties which are of heritage or architectural significance in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation or redevelopment,
- b) Built or natural heritage resources in need of preservation or renewal,
- c) Areas where elements of the natural heritage or parks system present opportunities for municipal improvements that would encourage redevelopment and improved recreational facilities for the community,
- d) Non-conforming or incompatible land uses or activities,
- e) Deficiencies in physical infrastructure or community facilities and services,
- f) Lack of public and private parking facilities
- g) Areas susceptible to flooding and requiring protection,
- h) An inadequate mix of housing types,
- i) Known or perceived environmental contamination (i.e. brownfields),
- j) Poor visual quality, including streetscape and design,
- k) High industrial or commercial vacancy rates,
- l) Any other relevant social, economic, or environmental reason, and / or
- m) Demonstrated support by residents and taxpayers of the area.

Township of North Huron Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

The Township's Zoning By-law regulates development and permitted uses across the municipality through the use of land use zones and building provisions. This is an important tool for the implementation of the Community Improvement Plan, especially as it relates to defining and reviewing the eligibility criteria. Proposals and applications under the CIP will be required to meet the Zoning By-law requirements. The CIP shall not encourage or support projects which contravene the provisions or regulations of the Zoning By-law.

Community Improvement

Community improvement activities are intended to improve the existing condition of the built form through municipally-driven or incentive-based programs. Tools are available to the Township of North Huron through the Planning Act and the Municipal Act to stimulate community improvement, rehabilitation, and revitalization. This could be accomplished through

the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan within a designated Project Area. Area's worthy of preservation and enhancement would benefit from a detailed plan which outlines a program for community improvements.

Definitions

Community Improvement: means the planning or re-planning, design or redesign, re-subdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction or reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency of a community improvement project area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, community facility, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary. Community improvement also includes the provision of affordable housing.

Community Improvement Project Area: means a municipality or an area within a Township, 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.

Section 4: Rationale and Purpose

4.1 Background Information

In 2019, a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was adopted to help, support and revitalize the downtown core commercial areas of Blyth and Wingham within North Huron. This CIP amendment would seek to repeal the existing North Huron CIP and replace it with a broader, more comprehensive CIP that takes various historical and background reports into account.

4.2 Relevant Reports and Studies

As part of the broader Project, and the preparation of this CIP for North Huron, the following studies, reports, and surveys were consulted for relevant background information which supported the suggested programs and CIP areas described in this document:

4.2.1 CIP Amendment Survey (2024)

In October 2024, a CIP amendment survey was conducted and made available on the Township website for five weeks. The survey received feedback from 35 businesses and property owners across various regions of North Huron, including Auburn, Belgrave/East Wawanosh, Blyth, and Wingham.

The respondents represented a diverse range of property types: 37.1% were commercial property owners, 5.7% were industrial property owners, 62.9% were residential property owners, 40% identified as business owners, 5.7% were residential developers, and 8.6% were agricultural landowners or business operators.

The survey revealed that 51.4% of respondents were aware of the CIP grants previously offered to businesses in Downtown Wingham and Blyth, while 48.6% were not informed. Furthermore, an overwhelming 88.6% of respondents expressed support for expanding the CIP to encompass

the entire Township of North Huron. The Business or property owners provided support for new grant programs including 37.1% in favor of the Agri-Tourism Grant, 68.6% for the Development Charges Grant, 40% for Planning Application, Building Permit Fees, and Site Study Grants, and 37.1% backing the Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant as shown below. Based on the survey results and public consultation, various programs and CIP areas are included in the CIP document.

4.2.2 Huron County BR+E Survey (2022)

As per the Huron County BR+E Survey (2022), it is highlighted that planning should be done along the business lifecycle (start-up, growth and succession) and provide business support and training opportunities.

It is also highlighted under Theme 4 – Beneficial Business Support of the report that a majority of businesses are interested in receiving direct assistance and support, regardless of their sector or future plans. This covers a variety of training and support topics, the most popular of which is grant, funding, and loan programs. 10 (71%) businesses that plan on relocating their business indicated there is assistance that could be provided to prevent or assist with the relocation of their business within Huron County. As per the report, when asked what assistance or opportunities would be beneficial to support their business, 222 respondents selected access to information on grants, funding, and loans. North Huron is dominated by locally owned and operated businesses, making up 82% of business respondents. 86% of businesses are interested in federal/ provincial programs to assist with their expansion. Through this report, the majority highlighted the importance of access to information on grants, funding, and loans. Additionally, 41% of the businesses highlighted that the challenges to doing business include municipal property tax rates. The CIP area and programs outlined in this document offer a range of support, grant, and funding opportunities to all types of businesses and investors, regardless of their location. This inclusive approach ensures that anyone looking to contribute to the community's economic growth can access the resources and support they need to thrive.

4.2.3 Huron County Employment Land Strategy (2015)

As per the Huron County Employment Land Strategy (2015), it is stated that the industrial market has been relatively weak throughout Huron County in recent years including North Huron. Additionally, industrial development is not feasible in Huron County due to excessive site development costs (i.e. engineering works, stormwater drainage, required studies, development charges, building permit fees, etc.). It is also recommended in the report that area municipalities should consider absorbing a portion of the development costs associated with developing industrial lands. Given the potential challenges with respect to development feasibility, there is a need to reduce uncertainty associated with planning approvals and development costs. To address this, support and programs related to development charges rebate, building permit fees, and various studies fees have been added to the CIP.

4.2.4 SWOT Analysis (2018)

As part of the preparation of the North Huron CIP in 2018, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of Wingham and Blyth have been identified. The SWOT analysis report is summarized below:

Strengths

- Blyth theatre, Maitland River, Wingham library, Wingham post office, Blyth library, and Blyth post office.
- Blyth's Memorial Hall underwent renovations to improve the exterior's architectural and accessibility features
- Sidewalks include accessibility features such as tactile paving and a generous amount of curb cuts and level paving
- Cruickshank Park in Wingham is pedestrian friendly and adds a well-maintained green space with tree cover and benches
- Greenway trail, historic Bainton's Mill, Maitland River parklands, and many residences are located within a short walking distance from the downtown cores
- Zoning permits a range of uses in the downtown cores and generally provides for an appropriate built form
- Attractive additions such as landscaping, hanging flower baskets and planters
- Grocery store is located downtown in Blyth which brings shoppers to the downtown core on a regular basis
- Street lamps are visually appealing and add a consistent design element in the downtown core
- On-street parking is available throughout the downtown cores with some specifically marked as accessible parking spaces
- Attractive and distinctive historic architecture is prevalent throughout the communities and downtown cores
- Buildings create a defined street edge in many parts of the downtown cores
- Wide boulevard sidewalks that allow for accessible pedestrian movement and the occasional sign or street furniture

Weaknesses

- Many buildings lack accessible entries
- Many buildings are not maintained to the same standard as others
- Many buildings have had the original architectural detailing altered (cladding, painting, windows etc.)
- With exception to a few buildings, signage is inconsistent, unattractive and non-reflective of historic character

- Poor mix and range of amenities and business within downtown core which may cause residents to shop elsewhere
- Different building heights create an inconsistent streetscape and inability to provide architectural details
- Lack of pedestrian crossings may cause issues with pedestrian safety, especially in Blyth where there are no identified crosswalks or traffic lights
- Only a few benches and streetscape furniture are present in the cores

Opportunities

- Existing vacant buildings located within the downtown cores provide opportunity for additional retail, services, or community facilities
- The wide sidewalks along Josephine and Queen Streets could potentially accommodate streetscape improvements such as the addition of street trees, gardens and furniture
- Implementation of vegetation and streetscape features would benefit pedestrian comfort and help to minimize impacts from traffic
- Large brick walls provide opportunity for art such as wall murals
- Implementing crosswalks at main points in the downtown cores (particularly Blyth) would increase pedestrian safety and force traffic to slow down, possibly causing drivers to slow down and take a better look at what the downtown businesses have to offer
- Improvements to accessibility are possible, such as the addition of ramps or other entryway improvements
- Opportunities to help restore original architectural character of buildings and streetscape through rehabilitation, cleaning and maintenance
- Opportunity to construct decorative signs or additions such as awnings or lighting to liven downtown atmosphere and create a consistent theme or historic period for building details

Threats

- Existing vacant retail units in the cores may indicate a lack of commercial demand or high turnover rates for local businesses
- Poorly-maintained building façades are visually unappealing and may discourage shoppers
- Lack of traffic controls may cause a danger to pedestrians crossing the street and create an unpleasant pedestrian environment
- Wingham may still lack sufficient on-street parking for the demand of peak hours

Blyth

A strength in Blyth is the existing cohesion between the commercial façades and the standard of maintenance and aesthetic appeal the Village holds itself to. There are amenities and attractions

in Blyth that benefit from their walkability but community improvements are sought for Blyth by the addition of clearly identified entry points to the community and way finding that encourages exploration of the existing downtown core. Clearly defining community entry features help to enhance orientation, lend a sense of place and can generate increased civic pride. A facet of this identified future community improvement is the goal of increasing pedestrian safety in Blyth. Safety measures at key pedestrian crossings is a goal of this CIP, as well as adding accessibility features to the main street to ensure the commercial storefronts and attractions can be accessed by all.

Wingham

Wingham has a larger identified commercial area than Blyth and benefits from the close proximity to highway commercial uses and plazas that direct traffic and interest into town. There is the potential for a wide variety of commercial uses and attractions to be located in Wingham's identified CIP Project Area and contribute to economic development. To have those uses established in Wingham, a goal of this CIP is to enhance the existing physical structures that are available through repair or improvement and present Wingham's main street as an attractive and viable business location option. An increase in the visual attraction of Wingham has the potential to create a revitalized commercial area with a higher volume of pedestrian traffic.

Based on the SWOT analysis, it was concluded that North Huron's Critical needs are: Improve visual and structural state of buildings on the main streets; Support the creation of a barrier-free pedestrian environment; and, Improve pedestrian safety and public realm aesthetics. These needs are still relevant and there are programs included this new Plan to address all of the critical needs identified when the SWOT analysis report was developed.

[4.2.5 Wingham BR+E Report \(2011\)](#)

According to the Wingham BR+E Report from 2011, 97% of local businesses recognized the importance of supporting the farm community and agri-business as a key economic development priority. Additionally, 68% of respondents identified Agri-tourism as a major focus for attracting visitors to the area. This insight remains highly relevant today, as communities continue to explore sustainable and engaging ways to enhance their local economies through agriculture and tourism. To encourage agriculture sector growth, the need for greater access to government support and grants is included in the new CIP document.

[4.3 Purpose of the CIP](#)

The purpose of the North Huron CIP is to:

- Encourage the development and revitalization of vacant, underutilized, and inaccessible properties and buildings in North Huron; and
- Provide administrative procedures for the CIP which will ensure that the program is a functioning, flexible, and effective municipal tool.

- Stimulate private investment through the use of municipal financial incentive programs.
- Encourage property owners and developers to increase the supply and to improve the long-term sustainability and viability of existing and/or proposed affordable and/or attainable housing, multi-unit housing or rental housing units.
- Improve the physical appearance and economic health of the downtown commercial areas in North Huron.
- Encourage the maintenance and preservation of designated historic buildings and historically significant properties.
- Encourage accessibility initiatives among the businesses.
- Support new business start-ups and expansions to existing businesses.
- Retain and support existing businesses.
- Encourage value-added agricultural activities and on-farm diversified uses.
- Encourage energy conservation and support sustainable initiatives.
- Create employment opportunities and economic growth in North Huron.

Financial incentives (including incremental tax rebates) may be offered to private landowners or commercial/industrial tenants to assist them in improving their buildings and properties. These may change from year to year, at Council's discretion, based on budget priorities and feedback about the CIP programs from municipal staff and stakeholders.

Section 5: Community Improvement Project Area

The North Huron Official Plan (Section 10.3.4.2) outlines specific criteria for project area selection. The following policy is found in the Official Plan:

Project Area Selection Criteria

In determining the location of a Community Improvement Project Area (CIP area) and preparation of a CIP, one or more of the following conditions shall exist:

- a) Buildings (including façades), structures, and/or properties that are of heritage or architectural significance in need of preservation, restoration, repair, rehabilitation, or redevelopment,
- b) Built or natural heritage resources in need of preservation or renewal,
- c) Areas where elements of the natural heritage or parks system present opportunities for municipal improvements that would encourage redevelopment and improved recreational facilities for the community,
- d) Non-conforming or incompatible land uses or activities,
- e) Deficiencies in physical infrastructure or community facilities and services,
- f) Lack of public and private parking facilities
- g) Areas susceptible to flooding and requiring protection,
- h) An inadequate mix of housing types,
- i) Known or perceived environmental contamination (i.e. brownfields),

- j) Poor visual quality, including streetscape and design,
- k) High industrial or commercial vacancy rates,
- l) Any other relevant social, economic, or environmental reason, and/or
- m) Demonstrated support by residents and taxpayers of the area.

Based on consultation with staff, the Business Improvement Associations in Blyth and Wingham, public consultation, and surveys, North Huron Council has chosen to implement a CIP framework that guides community improvement for agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial lands in the entire municipality.

The first North Huron CIP was adopted in November 2018 with several application intake periods through 2019. The CIP was amended in the fall of 2019 to expand and include the Direct Grant for Structural Work program and additional criteria for this program. The community of Belgrave was added to the CIP Project Area through the Council's direction in the 2019 amendment to include commercially zoned properties in Belgrave as eligible for grants under the CIP. In 2024, the entire municipality area including Wingham, Blyth, Belgrave, Auburn, and Whitechurch has been selected as a CIP Project area.

The new CIP areas will cover the entire Township including agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial lands/properties in North Huron. It is determined based on results from previous studies, background study, public consultations, and surveys. As per the survey, 88.6% of businesses suggested including the entire municipality land for the CIP area. Additionally, based on the business consultations, some businesses suggested to extend the existing CIP areas to include the entire municipality of North Huron. This would ensure that all types of business projects, regardless of location, will be eligible to apply for the available grants supporting North Huron's economic growth. For residential lands, projects involving the construction of 10 or more residential units in an apartment or multiple-unit building will be eligible.

Section 6: Goals of the CIP

The goals of this CIP have been developed based on the comprehensive review of plans, reports, and input from the public, stakeholders, staff, and Council. Applications will be reviewed against the goals of the CIP and preference will be given to those projects which meet the goals of the Plan and identified critical needs of the communities.

The goals of the North Huron CIP are to:

- a) Enhance the physical/built environment and visual appearance of communities by supporting and encouraging building maintenance, improvement, repair, and/or rehabilitation in North Huron.
- b) Contribute to the revitalization and enhancement of commercial core areas in North Huron.
- c) Support the addition of community improvements that increase pedestrian safety and the walkability of the downtown areas.
- d) Encourage renovations to commercial buildings to increase accessibility.
- e) Focus urban growth on downtown or commercial core areas and support a healthy long-term mix of land uses that improve, develop and sustain services in North Huron.
- f) Create welcoming communities that attract new businesses, commercial enterprises, and industries.
- g) To retain and increase employment, shopping, tourism, and living opportunities;
- h) To motivate and leverage private sector investment.
- i) Encourage the development and revitalization of vacant, underutilized, and inaccessible properties and buildings in North Huron.
- j) Encourage property owners and developers to increase the supply and to improve the long-term sustainability and viability of existing and/or proposed affordable and/or attainable housing, multi-unit housing or rental housing units.
- k) Encourage the maintenance and preservation of designated historic buildings and historically significant properties.
- l) Support new business start-ups and expansions to existing businesses.
- m) Retain and support existing businesses.
- n) Encourage value-added agricultural activities and on-farm diversified uses.
- o) Encourage energy conservation and support sustainable initiatives.

Section 7: Community Improvement Programs

In this section, we outlined the various CIP programs available to eligible commercial, industrial, and agricultural property owners or tenants. The property owners or tenants, based on meeting the program's eligibility criteria described in Appendix 1,2,3,4,5,6 and 7 are invited to apply for any of the available programs. Successful applicants can receive financial support covering up to 50% of the eligible project costs, with a maximum grant of \$10,000 per property or project within a given calendar year.

7.1: Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program

The Commercial Façade Improvement Grant supports the development, upgradation, or revitalization of commercial façades within the North Huron Community Improvement Project Area. The Commercial Façade Improvement Program offers grants to eligible commercial or industrial building owners and tenants for front and exterior side façades, within the designated the Community Improvement Project Area in North Huron. This program will promote aesthetic and accessibility-related improvements to buildings that otherwise may not occur due to the cost premiums associated with these improvements. The purpose of the Façade Improvement Grant is to cover a portion of the project costs for exterior improvements to the public-facing facades of existing commercial and industrial buildings. Agriculture properties which are open to the visiting public and which represent value-added agricultural activity (e.g. farm retail outlet) may be eligible. Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, a Commercial Façade Improvement Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$8,000. Eligibility criteria for the Façade Improvement Grant Program are included in Appendix 1 of this Plan. Modifications and updates to the CIP and the eligibility criteria will be in accordance with Sections 17 and 28 of the Planning Act. Preference will be given to projects which clearly result in a distinct visual improvement.

Eligible buildings include commercial, mixed-use buildings, industrial, or agricultural properties within the area identified as the CIP boundary mentioned in this document. For the purposes of this program, a 'mixed-use' is a building with a commercial floor space in the front portion of the building with residential units to the rear and/or above the commercial use.

Properties must be zoned either Core Commercial (C4), Community Facility (CF) Highway Commercial (C3), Fringe Core Area Commercial (C5), or an existing special residential zone permitting commercial uses within the CIP project area to be eligible to apply for this grant program. Properties must be in compliance with the North Huron Zoning By-law at the time of application.

7.2: Direct Grant for Structural Work Program

The Direct Grant for Structural Work allows incentives to landowners, businesses, and developers that propose significant commercial, institutional, industrial, or residential, projects that substantially renovate, restore, improve, and upgrade a prominent building or structure or key vacant property within the North Huron Community Improvement Project Area. The Direct Grant for Structural Work Program offers grants to eligible building owners and tenants within the designated Community Improvement Project Area to undertake significant structural work.

Where a project requires substantial structural work to preserve building stock a grant up to 50% of the total cost of improvements may be considered. This program will promote energy efficiency, increased safety, updated residential rental and commercial supply, and accessibility-related improvements to buildings that otherwise may not occur due to the cost premiums associated with these improvements. Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, a Direct Grant for Structural Work may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$8,000. The eligibility criteria for the Direct Grant for Structural Work Program is included in Appendix 2 to this Plan. Modifications and updates to the CIP and the eligibility criteria will be in accordance with Sections 17 and 28 of the Planning Act.

The intent of a successful application to the Direct Grant for Structural Work program would accomplish more than one of the following:

- a) address structural and life safety issues to create usable and efficient floor space;
- b) improve property standards or preserve architectural significance;
- c) upgrade public infrastructure such as sanitary sewer, water, stormwater drainage, roadway, sidewalks;
- d) preserve or enhance employment opportunities;
- e) create affordable housing in a range of occupancies;
- f) enhance fire protection such as sprinkler systems, fire separations, and similar;
- g) improve energy efficiency or reduce water and sewer needs;
- h) enhance urban design on and around the subject lands and adjacent public space as well as linkages to trails, parks, core areas, and other focal points.
- i) support planting, replacement, and enhancement of healthy trees and landscaping; and,
- j) implement sound watershed planning practices that help mitigate, protect or reduce flooding impacts within the Maitland River watershed or other local or rural drainage areas.

Preference shall be given to projects that demonstrate the highest community benefit by addressing the greatest number of the criteria in this Section.

Eligible buildings include commercial, mixed-use buildings, and industrial properties within the area identified as the CIP boundary in North Huron. For the purposes of this program, a 'mixed-use' is a building with a commercial floor space in the front portion of the building with residential units to the rear and/or above the commercial use.

Properties must be zoned either Core Commercial (C4), Community Facility (CF) Highway Commercial (C3), Fringe Core Area Commercial (C5), or an existing special residential zone permitting commercial uses within the CIP project area to be eligible to apply for this grant program. Properties must be in compliance with the North Huron Zoning By-law at the time of application.

To qualify for a structural improvement grant, applicants must employ the services of design and construction professionals qualified for the size and scale of the project and sufficient to obtain permits under the Building Code. Township staff and/or members of the North Huron CIP Review

Committee shall score applicants for structural grants according to procedures and criteria set out by the Building Department and the CIP.

7.3: Agri Tourism Grant

The purpose of the Agri-Tourism Grant is to cover a portion of the project costs related to the implementation of new value-added agricultural activities, innovative technologies, or similar projects. Properties zoned for agricultural purposes in CIP areas only be eligible for this grant. This grant is intended to encourage agricultural property owners and tenants to diversify their on-farm offerings and expand into new markets. Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, an Agri-Tourism Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$10,000. The eligibility criteria for the Agri-Tourism Grant are included in Appendix 3 of this Plan. Modifications and updates to the CIP and the eligibility criteria will be in accordance with Sections 17 and 28 of the Planning Act.

7.4: Development Charges Grant

The purpose of the Development Charges Grant is to encourage the development and redevelopment of sites within the CIP project area. It is intended to waive the cost of the Township's development charges that are incurred by property owners through the development application and approval process to promote significant investments in industrial, and commercial properties and the development of attainable/affordable housing within North Huron. The development charges owed by an owner or tenant of a property for residential (at least 10 or more residential units in an apartment or multiple-unit building), commercial, and industrial development could pay the development charges in installments subject to the Council's approval.

Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, a Development Charges Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$10,000 subject to the Council's approval in 4 equal installments within 4 years. The eligibility criteria for the Development Charge Grant are included in Appendix 4 of this Plan. Modifications and updates to the CIP and the eligibility criteria will be in accordance with Sections 17 and 28 of the Planning Act.

For instance, a property owner is undertaking a major redevelopment project and is required to pay \$10,000 in development charges. Under this program, the property owner can pay the Development Charges in 4 equal installments over 4 years:

- **Year 1:** 2,500
- **Year 2:** 2,500
- **Year 3:** 2,500
- **Year 4:** 2,500

7.5: Planning Application, Building Permit Fee and Site Study Grant

This program is intended to help and encourage new development efforts by reducing regulatory costs associated with major improvements to private properties. The planning and building permit fee rebate program offer rebates on required fees including the Township's portion of planning application fees, associated study requirements related to planning applications, and/or building permit fees, where a building permit is required for a construction project. Study requirements associated with planning applications include background and feasibility studies including but not limited to nitrate studies, archaeology assessments, functional servicing reports, and compatibility studies. For residential land, projects involving the construction of at least 10 residential units in an apartment or multiple-unit building, and commercial and industrial properties will be eligible. Priority will be given to the projects that have a significant impact on the economic growth of North Huron. Fee reductions may apply to the following application types of work:

- Site Plan Approval;
- Minor Variance;
- Severance;
- Rezoning;
- Required studies associated with planning applications;
- Demolition Permit;
- Building Permit; and
- Sign Permit

Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, A Planning Application, Building Permit Fee, and Site Study Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$5,000. The eligibility criteria for the Planning Application, Building Permit Fee, and Site Study Grant are included in Appendix 5 to this Plan. Modifications and updates to the CIP and the eligibility criteria will be in accordance with Sections 17 and 28 of the Planning Act.

7.6: Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Program

The purpose of the Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) is to stimulate investment by effectively deferring part of the increase in property taxation because of building and property redevelopment or rehabilitation, and retrofit works for commercial and/or industrial properties. Grants may be provided on a sliding scale as established. This Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) program provides tax assistance to private land owners to encourage private sector investment in properties and buildings. The TIEG program will provide tax assistance equal to all or a portion of the municipal property tax increase (increment) upto 5 years following the completion of a project owned by a private land owner that has resulted in an increase in the assessed property value up to \$10,000. The eligibility criteria are included in Appendix 6 of this Plan.

Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (5 years):

- Year 1: 100% of the incremental tax increase (full rebate on the increased value)
- Year 2: 80% of the incremental tax increase
- Year 3: 60% of the incremental tax increase
- Year 4: 40% of the incremental tax increase
- Year 5: 20% of the incremental tax increase

For instance, a commercial property undergoes significant improvements that increase the assessed value of the property, resulting in an annual tax increase of \$10,000 due to the added value. The property owner would receive the following rebates based on the tax increment over 5 years:

- Year 1: 100% rebate → \$10,000 (full rebate on the tax increase)
- Year 2: 80% rebate → \$8,000
- Year 3: 60% rebate → \$6,000
- Year 4: 40% rebate → \$4,000
- Year 5: 20% rebate → \$2,000

7.7: Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Program

It is important to support business start-ups to drive economic growth, create jobs, and foster innovation. The purpose of the Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Program is to assist new businesses and start-up companies to 'set-up-shop' by providing grants towards permanent leasehold improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces within the Commercial zone that increase the marketability of the property and commercial rental units. Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, a Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$5,000. The eligibility criteria are included in Appendix 7 to this Plan

Section 8: Administration

The Township will be responsible for all administrative tasks related to the implementation of the CIP. There are separate processes for Application Administration and Program Administration; the next two sections correspond with these two items.

Section 8.1: Application Administration

a) General Eligibility Requirements

The following General Eligibility Requirements must be met in order for an application to participate in the CIP Program.

General eligibility requirements include:

1. A CIP application form must be submitted and approved prior to commencing any improvement works in addition to all required supporting information. Supporting information may include detailed work plans, cost estimates and contracts, applicable reports, and any additional information as required by the Township.
2. A building permit must be obtained as required. Planning approval, including site plan approval, must be obtained. No grant will be paid for a structural improvement unless a valid building permit is issued, all requisite inspections and certifications have been provided, final approval has been issued by the Chief Building Official, and certification is received that all accounts related to the construction work have been paid to the Township's satisfaction.
3. Eligible applicants must be either the owner of the property, an agent for the owner of the property, or the tenant of a property to whom the owner has provided written authorization for the application. Should a property be sold between the time of approval and completion of the project, the approved grant will be forfeited unless the applicant provides a written request for the grant to be transferred to the new owner; these decisions will be at the sole discretion of the Council.
4. While grants are not prohibited for the same property in subsequent years, preference will be given to projects on properties that have not previously benefited from the CIP program.
5. All proposed projects must be within the designated Community Improvement Project Area.
6. The property owner must not have outstanding tax arrears or any other financial obligation and must be in good standing with regard to taxation at the time of application and throughout the duration of the project construction period as identified within the CIP.
7. Community improvement works associated with a grant program application must be in accordance with all Township by-laws, policies, procedures, standards, and guidelines in order to be approved. Existing and proposed land uses must be in conformity with the policies and standards provided by the Township's Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and all other planning documents.

8. Applications are made per property, not per building façade. While some properties may contain multiple building façades, grants are only issued on a per property basis.
9. Registered owner(s) or authorized applicants must match the Township's contribution to any incentive with preference given to projects that contribute in excess of the Township's maximum 50% contribution.
10. To qualify for a structural improvement grant, applicants must employ the services of a contractor with proper certification under the Building Code, architect, registered professional consulting engineer or other such professional approved by North Huron staff to design, submit and supervise construction work for which a grant is requested.
11. Buildings must be structurally sound to be eligible for a CIP grant program. Should there be a question regarding the structural soundness of a building, the Chief Building Official has sole discretion in requiring an engineer's report regarding the structure (the cost of which will not be an eligible cost under the program).
12. Community improvement works undertaken and completed that are associated with an approved incentive program application must be consistent with the project description contained in the application form and supporting materials, and with the program agreement. Should the undertaken or completed works not be consistent with the original project description, to the satisfaction of the Township, the Township may delay, reduce, or cancel the approved incentive program benefits, and may require repayment of any of the incentive program benefits, at the discretion of the Township.

b) Application Process

Step 1

- Contact EDO or designate to discuss proposed CIP application

Step 2

- Submit complete application to the Township Office

Step 3

- Application will be reviewed by the CIP Review Committee

Step 4

- CIP Review Committee makes recommendation to Council
- Council makes decision (cannot be appealed)

Step 5

- If approved, applicant has 18 months to complete the project as approved

Step 1: Applicants are required to contact the Economic Development Officer (EDO) or designate prior to the submission of their application. The purpose of this consultation meeting is to discuss and confirm application requirements, program eligibility, proposed scope of work, project timing, supporting documentation requirements, etc.

Step 2: During the continuous intake on first come first serve basis for applications, submit a complete application form to the Township office, which will include all of the required information and supporting documentation required by the CIP Review Committee. Additional information required by the Committee may include but is not limited to:

- photographs of the existing building condition;
- historical photographs and/or drawings, where available;
- a site plan and/or professional drawings;
- specifications of the proposed work including a work plan for the improvements and construction drawings;
- one (1) cost estimate for eligible work provided by a licensed contractor. The contractor's WSIB number must be listed on the cost estimate.

Step 3: All applications will be subject to review by the North Huron CIP Review Committee. The Committee will review the application against program criteria and make a recommendation in a report to the Council to approve or deny the application.

Step 4: The Council will consider the recommendation of the CIP Review Committee and will make the final decision on applications. There is no appeal of the Council's decision.

Step 5: If approved, the applicant has eighteen (18) months to complete the project as approved. No variations from the approved project are permitted without written approval from the Council. Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the Township which will outline the terms, duration, default, and any other provisions of the incentive program as well as obtain any necessary permits.

Once complete, the applicant provides the Township with copies of paid receipts for the work involved in the approved project. Provided the project is completed as approved and to the satisfaction of the Chief Building Official, the Township's Director of Finance will issue payment to the applicant to a maximum of the grant amount approved by the Council.

c) Payment of Grant

Grant payment will be provided upon the successful completion of the project pending the submission of paid receipts and the approval of the Chief Building Official that the project was completed as approved. Should the actual costs be less than the quote provided at the time of application, the Township retains the right to lower the amount of the grant to fifty percent of the actual costs. Should the actual costs be greater than the quote provided at the time of the application, the Township is under no obligation to change the amount of the grant as approved by Council.

Property owners or tenants located within the CIP Project area are eligible for various grants to support improvements and development. These include:

- **Façade Grant Program:** Up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of \$8,000.
- **Direct Grant for Structural Work:** Up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of \$8,000.

- **Agri-Tourism Grant:** Up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of \$10,000.
- **Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement and Planning Application:** Up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of \$5,000, covering leasehold improvements, planning application, building permit fees, and site study fees.
- **Development Charges and Tax Increment Equivalent:** Up to 50% of eligible costs, with a maximum grant of \$10,000.

Note: In all cases, grant amounts are subject to specific eligibility criteria and the total project costs.

Applicants have eighteen (18) months to complete the project from the time of approval or will forfeit the grant. In the case of an unforeseen circumstance, the applicant may apply in writing to North Huron Council for consideration of an extension to this timeline; this decision will be at the sole discretion of the Council.

In the event that any portion of the approved project remains incomplete, as determined by the Township, on the final completion date and an extension was not requested or granted, neither the funding nor any portion thereof shall be payable by the Township. The Township shall not be liable for any loss, costs, or damages arising as a result of the applicant's failure to obtain funding due to the failure to complete the approved project within the project completion timeframe. No grant payment will be made at any time prior to the completion of the planned project in its entirety.

Section 8.2: Program Administration

a) Staff and CIP Review Committee Involvement

- North Huron CIP Review Committee will be responsible for the evaluation of applications. In addition to the Committee, Council shall approve all applications. This Committee may include the EDO, Director of Legislative Services/Clerk, Chief Building Official (CBO), North Huron Fire Department, the Planner, County, Director of Public Works and Facilities, and the Director of Finance/Treasurer.
- EDO will be the point of contact for those interested in the CIP program. EDO will respond to CIP applicants, conduct pre-consultation meetings prior to application submission, review and evaluate all CIP applications and supporting materials against program requirements, prioritize applications in the event funding is oversubscribed, and present recommendations to Council for consideration.
- In lieu of architectural guidelines and a Heritage Conservation District Plan, the CIP Review Committee shall, with applicable staff, review received CIP applications using other applicable by-laws and guidelines including but not limited to:
 - The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada
 - Municipal Sign By-law
 - Urban Design Guidelines for Downtowns
 - North Huron Zoning By-law
 - Huron County Residential Intensification Guidelines

- The CIP Review Committee may consult with heritage experts to provide recommendations on all CIP applications involving properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or adjacent to properties designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- The Chief Building Official, in addition to participating as a reviewer of the received applications as necessary, will be responsible for inspecting and verifying the completion of projects to ensure no variances from the approved project have occurred during construction.
- EDO or designate and Director of Finance/Treasurer will be responsible for administering the financial agreements and payments to approved applicants.

b) Budget

Funding for the incentive program described in the North Huron CIP is determined on a year-to-year basis according to current budget priorities. Council shall have the sole discretion to determine whether or not an annual budget allocation will be made to the grant programs under the CIP. In addition, the Township reserves the right to limit the amount of assistance it will provide under any particular project. The budget for the CIP will be set in the preceding budget year to allow the Council to approve projects before the current calendar year budget process is complete.

c) Marketing Plan

The Township, Blyth and Wingham Business Improvement Associations, and EDO will promote the CIP and its incentive programs as described below:

- The CIP will be targeted to landowners, potential developers, real estate agents, local businesses, and organizations within and outside of the CIP area in order to inform eligible property and business owners and potential developers, about the opportunities available through the North Huron CIP.
- Program details, eligibility criteria, application forms, and other information related to the financial incentive programs will be provided by the Township and be available at the Township office and on the North Huron website.
- Additional information to market and support local businesses, products, services, and contractors (for example) may be provided in association with marketing material for the CIP.

d) Application Intake

The intake of applications for CIP applications for the designated CIP area will be continuous intake on a first come first serve basis throughout the year. Applicants should allow up to two months for review, recognizing that additional time will be needed if the application requires the involvement of additional review. Applications that are unsuccessful in being approved for CIP funding may be resubmitted the following year.

e) Monitoring Program

The EDO will conduct periodic reviews of the CIP to determine its effectiveness. Specifically, the purpose of the monitoring program is to determine if the funding program is achieving the goals

and objectives set out by the CIP; and/or if program adjustments are required. This review will include consultation with the County Planner and the Business Improvement Associations for Wingham and Blyth.

f) Data Collection

In order to successfully monitor the program, the EDO will be responsible for maintaining statistical data which will allow the municipality to determine if the program is meeting the goals and objectives set out by the CIP. Statistical data could include the number of successful and unsuccessful applications by type (façade (front/side), signage, accessibility improvement, heritage restoration, etc), the total dollar amount of grant and total cost of the project by type, and estimated increase in assessed value of the participating program. The EDO will also be responsible for soliciting feedback from successful and unsuccessful applicants to determine where adjustments to the program are needed; this feedback is proposed to be collected in the form of a short survey completed by the applicant at the time of the completion of a successful project or through informal feedback following an unapproved project.

g) Reporting

Based on the information obtained through the monitoring of the grant program applications and from applicant feedback, the EDO will prepare a brief annual report for the purpose of providing feedback to the Council, the business community, and other interested community partners. This annual report will also include recommendations from staff should any adjustments to the CIP be required.

h) Program Adjustments

The EDO may periodically review and recommend an adjustment to the terms and requirements of the program contained in the Plan. An amendment to the CIP will not be required to discontinue the program contained in the Plan, however, any of the following changes will require a formal amendment to the Plan in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning Act:

- a change or expansion in the geographic area to which financial programs apply;
- a change in the eligibility criteria;
- the addition of new municipal CIP programs involving grants, loans, tax assistance, etc.; and/or
- an increase in a financial incentive to be offered within a municipal CIP program.

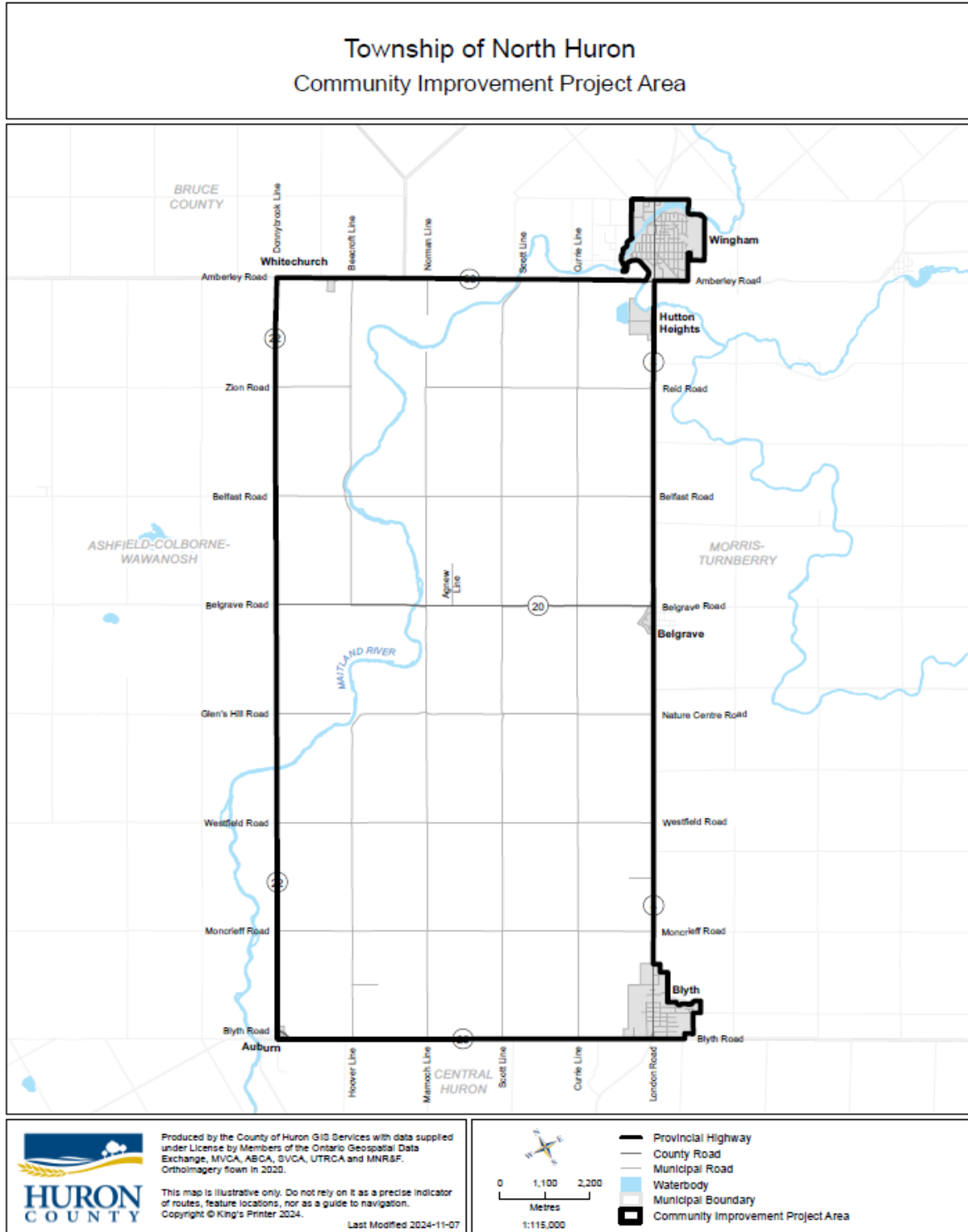
i) Interpretation

The North Huron CIP must be read and interpreted in its entirety, and in conjunction with the Planning Act, and all other municipal planning documents. In addition, the CIP will be interpreted at the sole discretion of North Huron Council in consultation with, and based on advice from the EDO and the Township staff.

j) Schedules and Appendices

The schedules and appendices that form part of this Plan will be passed by By-law.

Figure "1"
Township of North Huron Community Improvement Plan Project Area



Appendix 1 - Façade Improvement Grant Eligibility Criteria

The Façade Improvement Grant is described in Section 7.1. Building owners or tenants within the CIP Project area are eligible for a grant of up to 50% (unless noted) of the eligible improvement costs up to a maximum grant of \$8,000.

The following types of front or exterior sidewall façade improvements are eligible:

- Install, repair/replacement of storefront, including repair or replacement of doors and windows;
 - Preference will be given to projects which:
 - retain and restore original elements such as windows, doors, chimneys, masonry or other architectural details;
 - maintain the location, size, and shape of all original windows facing, or visible from the street;
 - enhance the accessibility of the storefront entrance; and
 - locate meters, vents, and service connections (wires) away from street façade.
- Install, repair/replacement of façade masonry and brickwork in accordance with approved methods recommended by a heritage professional and/or architect. Sandblasting and other methods which have the potential to damage the brick will not be funded;
- Façade painting and cleaning treatments;
 - Funding is available to repaint existing painted masonry. New painting of masonry will not be eligible.
- Addition/alteration for accessibility features;
- Repair/replacement of architectural details;
- Repair/replacement of retractable awnings, canopies and fixed fabric awnings;
 - Wood, aluminum and metal fixed awnings are not eligible.
- Restoration to or replacement of building signage in accordance with the municipal sign by-law to a maximum of 50% of the total grant amount.
 - Signage should be contained within the signboard above the main floor display windows or perpendicular to the façade. Free standing signs are not eligible.
 - Signage should be compatible with the character of the building and should not detract from or obscure any important features. Signage should be subordinate in terms of the overall visual impact of the property.
 - Digital, internally lit or plastic signage is not eligible.
 - Signage lighting should be achieved with light fixtures attached to building façade.
- Addition of new lighting or upgrading of existing fixtures on exterior façade;
 - Lighting will be directed downwards to avoid light pollution.
- Architectural/design fees required for eligible works to a maximum of 30% of the grant amount provided the design is prepared by a licensed Architect, a member of the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, or a similarly qualified person.
- The physical improvement and beautification of seasonal outdoor sidewalk café spaces and permanent outdoor patios in the CIP area, where permitted and appropriate.

- Other similar installations, repairs/improvements may be approved at the discretion of Council.

Ineligible costs include but are not limited to:

- labour provided by the applicant;
- expenses occurred prior to the approval of the application for funding;
- general maintenance costs (e.g. repair/replacement of roof, eavestroughs, etc.); and
- fees associated with any planning applications and/or building permits required.

Appendix 2 – Direct Grant for Structural Work Eligibility Criteria

The Direct Grant for Structural Work is described in Section 7.2 of this document. Grant assistance is provided in the form of an up to 50% matching grant up to a maximum grant of \$8,000, which is paid upon completion of the previously approved work. Please review the specific grant program terms and conditions.

To qualify for a structural grant applicants must employ the services of an architect or registered professional consulting engineer to design, approve, and implement the construction work.

Under Section 7.2 of the Community Improvement Plan the Township could offer grant funding inside the CIP Project Area for significant commercial, residential, or institutional redevelopments that accomplish more than one of the following:

- a) address structural and life safety issues to create usable and efficient floor space;
- b) improve property standards or preserve architectural significance;
- c) upgrade public infrastructure such as sanitary sewer, water, stormwater drainage, roadway, sidewalks;
- d) preserve or enhance employment opportunities;
- e) improve accessibility;
- f) create affordable housing in a range of occupancies;
- g) enhance fire protection such as sprinkler systems, fire separations, and similar;
- h) improve energy efficiency or reduce water and sewer needs;
- i) enhance urban design on and around the subject lands and adjacent public space as well as linkages to trails, parks, core areas, and other focal points.
- j) support planting, replacement, and enhancement of healthy trees and landscaping; and
- k) implement sound watershed planning practices that help mitigate, protect or reduce flooding impacts within the Maitland River watershed or other local or rural drainage areas.

Preference shall be given to projects that demonstrate the highest community benefit by addressing the greatest number of the criteria in this Section.

Below are the criteria the Township seeks to address when to evaluating structural grant applications. When marking for a project indicate with a number whether the work is:

Minor = 1

Moderate = 2

Major = 3

1. Building Structural Integrity – Total =

Footing = ____

Foundation = ____

Floor Joists = ____

Ceiling Joists = ____

Other _____ = ____

Walls = ____

Rafters/Trusses = ____

Main Beam(S) = ____

2. Life Safety/Emergency – Total =

Exit Signage = ____

Extinguishers = ____

Fire Doors = ____
Sprinkler = ____
Emergency Lighting = ____
Other _____ = ____

Fire/CO2 Alarms = ____
Firewall Separation = ____
Siamese Connection = ____

3. Usable And Efficient Floor Space – Total =

Increased Density = ____
Increase Ceiling Height = ____
Accessible Washroom = ____
Architectural Restoration/Retention = ____
Other _____ = ____

Accessible Entrance = ____
Upper Floor Residential = ____
Main Floor Commercial = ____

4. Brownfield Remediation – Total =

Phase 1 = ____
Phase 2 = ____
Site Specific Risk Assessment = ____
Other _____ = ____

Record of Site Condition = ____
Monitoring Program = ____

5. Improve Environment – Total =

Tree Planting = ____
Windbreak = ____
Buffer Zone = ____

Riverbank protection/enhancement = ____
Other _____ = ____

Landscape Plan = ____
Species at Risk = ____
Manage Storm Water = ____
Add/Protect Habitat = ____

6. Upgrade/Improve Public Infrastructure – Total =

Oversizing of Main = ____
Roadway Widening = ____
Road Turning Lane = ____
Curb and Gutter = ____
Sanitary Sewer Collection Main = ____
LED Street Lighting On-Site Storm Water Retention = ____
Other _____ = ____

Public Sidewalk = ____
Water Distribution Main = ____
Energy Efficient Lighting = ____

7. Employment Opportunities – Total =

Fills Market Demand = ____
Retains Existing Jobs = ____
Construction/Spin-Off Jobs = ____
Other _____ = ____

Creates New Direct Jobs = ____
Addresses Skill Shortage = ____

8. Housing – Total =

Housing for Seniors = ____
New Affordable Rental Housing = ____

Special Needs Housing = ____

Affordable Condominium Housing = ____
 Affordable Freehold Semi or Townhouse = ____
 Other _____ = ____

9. Energy Efficiency – Total =

Low Flow Fixtures = ____	Increased Insulation = ____
Solar Technology = ____	Window/Door Upgrade = ____
Graywater Recycling = ____	Passive Energy Benefit = ____
Alternative Energy = ____	Rainwater Harvesting = ____
New Furnace/Cooling Technology = ____	
Other _____ = ____	

10. Enhance Urban Design – Total =

Native Species = ____	LED Street Lighting = ____
Sidewalk/Trail Link = ____	Boulevard Tree Planting = ____
Design Consistency = ____	Contribution to Parkland = ____
Architectural Rehab = ____	Compatible Façade Design = ____
Professional Landscape Plan = ____	
Exterior Accessibility (ramps etc.) = ____	
Other _____ = ____	

11. Total 1 through 10 Grand Total =

The leverage ratio and the total score assist provide a numerical basis to help compare applications and establish funding amounts. Final decision rests with Township Council.

12. Calculate Leverage Ratio

Total Project Cost \$ _____
 Total Funding Requested \$ _____
Leverage Ratio \$/\$
 e.g. \$200,000 \$40,000 5:1
 \$ _____ \$ _____ Leverage Ratio ____: \$1

Appendix 3 – Agri-Tourism Grant Eligibility Criteria

Agri-Tourism Grant is described in Section 7.3 and is intended to encourage agricultural property owners and tenants to diversify their on-farm offerings and expand into new markets. Subject to the Council's approval, the recommended Agri-Tourism Grant would provide up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$10,000.

The eligibility criteria for the project that accomplish more than one of the following:

1. Applicants must be a tenant or property owner of a property zoned for agricultural purposes within the Community Improvement Project Area.
2. Applicants must complete a pre-consultation with the EDO or designate before submitting an application.
3. Only grant applications that comply with municipal by-laws will be considered.
4. Projects may require a Building and/or Sign Permit. Permits must be issued before the project commences. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining a Building Permit, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding. Approval of a grant will not guarantee that a Building or Sign Permit will be issued.
5. Projects may require Planning application approvals, including but not limited to Site Plan Control. Planning application approvals must be issued before the project commences. Approval of a grant will not guarantee that Planning application approvals will be issued.
6. The subject property shall not be in a position of tax arrears and not have any outstanding orders or non-conformity with zoning.
7. Projects should not have commenced prior to the awarding of the requested grant. Applicants that have commenced work prior to obtaining approval for the requested grant, acknowledge that their project may be deemed ineligible for funding.
8. Projects must be completed in 18 months after getting approval from the Council. Extensions are not granted unless prior approval has been received. If money is not spent it will be deemed an incomplete project and you will need to reapply next year.
9. Applicants must provide a minimum 50% contribution towards the total cost of the project for which they are applying for a grant.
10. Taxes are the full responsibility of the applicants.
11. Eligible project costs must be actual cash outlay to third parties acting at arms' length and which can be documented through original invoices or proofs of payment. An exception may be granted for a property owner that wishes to do the work

The following projects are eligible under this program as mentioned below:

- Agri-tourism experiences (e.g., adding a corn maze, on-farm workshop, events as defined by Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA))
- Bioproduct farming (as defined by OMAFA)
- Direct consumer sales (e.g., pick-your-own, roadside stands)
- Organic farming (e.g., free-range chickens)

- Small-scale Food & Beverage Processing (e.g., making jam on-site from grown raspberries)
- Specialty crops farming (as defined by Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Agribusiness (OMAFRA))
- Other projects approved by the Council that include value-added or innovative purchases or implementation

Items that are ineligible for Agri-Tourism Grant

- Temporary, 'removable', or consumable project materials or elements
- General maintenance repairs
- Permits required for improvements (e.g. Building, Sign)

Appendix 4- Development Charges Grant Eligibility Criteria

As described in Section 7.4, the purpose of the Development Charges Grant is to encourage the development and redevelopment of sites within the CIP project area. The development charges owed by an owner or tenant of a property for residential (10 or more residential units in an apartment or multiple-unit building), commercial, and industrial development could pay the development charges in equal installments within 4 years subject to the Council's approval.

To qualify for a Development Charge Grant, the applicant's development must meet the following criteria:

- The proposed development must be in the designated CIP area of North Huron.
- The project must be a new development or extension within North Huron.
- Apply for funding before receiving a building permit or within 90 days of receiving a building permit
- Demonstrate the positive economic impact that the development will have in North Huron.
- The subject property shall not be in a position of property tax arrears.
- One of the following criteria must be met by the property owners or tenants:
 - ✓ Development of a mixed-use or multi-residential building that results in at least 10 new attainable/affordable dwelling units.
 - ✓ Development of a vacant property that results in at least 10 new attainable/affordable dwelling units.
 - ✓ Redevelopment of a non-residential building for a mixed-use or multi-residential building with at least 10 units.
 - ✓ Major additions to an existing mixed-use or multi-residential building involving an increase of at least 10 additional units.
 - ✓ Major commercial or industrial investments such as hotel development, manufacturing, production facility, or warehouse which will demonstrate a positive economic impact on North Huron.

Appendix 5 – Planning Application, Building Permit Fees, and Site Study Grant Eligibility Criteria

The Planning Application, Building Permit Fees, and Site Study Grant is described in Section 7.5. This program intends to stimulate investment by property owners or tenants of commercial or mixed-use buildings, and industrial and residential property in the CIP area through the provision of a grant to those who wish to invest. Subject to the Council’s approval, the recommended grant would provide up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to a maximum grant of \$5,000.

To qualify, property owners or tenants must satisfy one of the following conditions:

1. The property must be located within the boundaries of the CIP area of this Plan.
2. The applicant must be either a registered property owner, an assessed property owner, or a tenant of a property to whom the owner has assigned consent to receive assistance under the CIP.
3. The grant is not intended for single detached dwellings.
4. For residential land, only projects involving the construction of at least 10 or more residential units in an apartment or multiple-unit building will be eligible.
5. For the purpose of monitoring the success of the CIP program and promotion, before and after photos of interior and/or exterior improvements shall be provided at the outset and upon project completion.
6. All fees shall be paid in full at the application stage. Once the work is completed to the satisfaction and building permit is finalized or a planning decision is rendered, the fees shall be refunded to the applicant.
7. Applications to the Planning and Building permit fees, study fees, can be combined and applied for on multiple occasions during the lifetime of the program, provided that total value of all approved grants does not exceed the individual grant cap or overall combined maximum of \$5,000 dollars;
8. Grant eligibility shall be based on the allocation of funds to the CIP by Council. Applications will be dealt with on a “first come, first served” basis.
9. The application deadline will be established dependent on the allocation of budget funding.
10. If conditionally approved for a grant, the applicant shall have one month from the conditional approval date to obtain a building permit (if required). If a building permit is not obtained within one month, the conditional approval is rescinded.

Appendix 6 – Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) Eligibility Criteria

The TIEG is described in section 7.6. The time period for the TIEG program is subject to the Council’s discretion up to a maximum of 5 years per project, or until eligible remediation and redevelopment costs have been offset, whichever comes first. This Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) program provides tax assistance to private land owners in order to encourage private sector investment in residential, commercial, and industrial properties or buildings.

The TIEG program will provide tax assistance equal to all or a portion of the municipal property tax increase (increment) following the completion of a project owned by a private landowner that has resulted in an increase in the assessed property value. To qualify, property owners or tenants must satisfy one of the following conditions:

1. Remediation purposes to assist in bringing existing buildings up to current Ontario Building Code standards;
2. Eligible applicants will only include the registered owner/assessed owner of the subject property. Tenants will not be eligible for this grant.
3. Development or redevelopment of a vacant property for residential, commercial, retail, office, industrial, or a mix of uses.
4. Costs associated with the redevelopment of a property for the purpose of a new eligible uses.
5. Costs associated with the restoration or improvement of an existing building to accommodate additional eligible use.
6. The conversion or adaptive reuse of property to accommodate an eligible use such as affordable housing, commercial, retail, office, industrial, or a mixed-use.
7. The expansion of a building that results in an increase to the gross floor area of an eligible use.
8. The project must be new construction and located within North Huron.
9. The development must be medium or high-density purpose-built apartments or rental housing.
10. This program is available to both nonprofit and charitable organizations, and market/for-profit housing developers, or partnerships between them.
11. Projects must have received Site Plan Control approval and have submitted a building permit application.
12. Projects can be under construction but must not have been issued an Occupancy Permit by Building Services.
13. The property owner must agree to enter into an agreement with the Township of North Huron respecting the terms, duration, and default provisions of the incentive(s) to be provided.
14. The property under consideration shall not be in a position of property tax arrears.
15. Other types of projects may also be considered eligible, at the discretion of the CIP Committee and/or Council.

Appendix 7 – Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Eligibility Criteria.

The Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant is described in Section 7.7. The purpose of the Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant Program is to assist new businesses and start-up companies to ‘set -up -shop’ by providing grants for the financing of permanent leasehold improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces that increase the marketability of the property and commercial rental units in the designated CIP area. Where all eligibility requirements are fulfilled, a Start-up Space Leasehold Improvement Grant may be provided for up to 50% of the eligible project costs up to \$5,000.

For this program, a Start-up shall generally satisfy one of the following criteria:

1. Property owners and authorized tenants looking to establish a new business or start-up company within a Commercial or Mixed-Use building within a Commercial zone, as defined by the Community Improvement Plan, located in North Huron are eligible to apply for funding under this program.
2. A new business that has not previously been located within the North Huron.
3. A business currently located within the North Huron that has existed for less than two (2) consecutive years.
4. Where a property owner does not satisfy one of the criteria above, they must be matched with a perspective Start-up prior to submitting an application.
5. Applicants will be required to submit sufficient documentation, to the satisfaction of the Township of North Huron, that their respective business satisfies the definition of a Start-up and intends to be located within the Downtown. Documentation may be in the form of a signed lease agreement, affidavit, or business plan.
6. Funding may be applied to start-ups located on both the ground floor of a building and/or the upper storeys.

Appendix E

Glossary

Adaptive reuse: means the recycling of a building and/or structure usually for a new function, such as the use of a former industrial building for residential purposes.

Additional Residential unit: means an accessory dwelling unit with its own kitchen, sanitary facilities and bedroom(s)/sleeping area in a single detached dwelling, semi-detached, rowhouse or accessory building to a single detached dwelling, converted dwelling, semi-detached dwelling, triplex, quadraplex or rowhouse.

Affordable housing: for the purposes of this CIP, affordable is referred to in the case of rental housing and means the least expensive of:

- a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households; or
- a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.

Attainable housing: for the purposes of this CIP, attainable means, an individual making the Living Wage spending not more than 30% of their income on housing. The Living Wage is identified based upon the most current Living Wage determined by the United Way Perth-Huron's (UWPH) Social Research and Planning Council (SRPC). During the lifespan of this CIP, should the Province, County of Huron or the Township of North Huron determine another definition of 'Attainable', that definition will supersede the above.

Brownfield: means undeveloped or previously developed properties that are vacant, underutilized, unsafe, unproductive, or abandoned where redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. They are usually, but not exclusively, former industrial or commercial properties that may be underutilized, derelict or vacant.

Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Administrator: means a staff member appointed by Municipal Council (which in many cases is the Economic Development Officer) who is responsible for managing the day-to-day responsibilities of the CIP, including undertaking pre-consultation meetings with potential applicants for financial incentives and coordinating application submission process.

Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) is an area of the Municipality, as defined through a separate by-law, to which the Community Improvement Plan applies. The CIPA can be amended independently of the Community Improvement Plan; however, a CIPA 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.

Eligible Applicant: means someone who meets all the general and program specific requirements of the financial incentive programs and prepares and submits an application for a grant or loan that is in accordance with the specific requirements of the program, as outlined in this Plan. The CIP Administrator reserves the right to determine whether an applicant is eligible for the financial incentive programs.

Eligible Project Costs: means 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.

Financial Incentive Program Agreement: is an agreement made between the Municipality and a successful applicant outlining the terms and payment of the grant and other relevant conditions. The agreement will be signed by the applicant and the Municipality.

Living Wage: refers to the Living Wage calculation published by Perth-Huron United Way. The calculation for Perth-Huron adheres to the principles and methodology developed by the Canadian Living Wage Framework as adopted by the Ontario Living Wage Network. Based on a 35-hour work week, the calculation* is determined using local data and considers the living expenses of a weighted average of family types including a family of four, a single parent family, and a single individual. Annual family expenses include food, childcare, clothing and footwear, shelter, communications, insurance, transportation, and parent education. Expenses such as debt repayment, home ownership, and savings for children's education or retirement are not factored in.

Mixed-Use: means any combination of commercial uses (retail, personal services, restaurants, etc.), offices, institutional uses and/or residential uses, provided that there are commercial uses at grade.

Municipality: means the Township of North Huron.

Redevelopment: means the creation of new units, uses or lots on previously developed land in existing communities, including brownfield sites, as defined in the County Official Plan.

Tax Increment: means an increase in taxes, which is calculated by subtracting the Township portion of property taxes before assessment from the Township portion of the property taxes after reassessment. The Tax Increment does not include any increase/decrease in Township taxes due to a general tax increase/decrease or a change in assessment for any other reason.

Vacant or underutilized (land and/or buildings): means developable land within a district that would otherwise qualify as substantially developed land, but which contains land, buildings, and/or structures that are not being used to their full potential and may potentially be developed, recycled, or converted into a better, more compatible use, such as a residential or Mixed-use development. Part or all of a parcel of land shall be considered vacant and/or underutilized if it

is no longer necessary to support the current use, based on factors including but not limited to current and projected employment levels, vacancy rates, and parking demand.