



# Community Improvement Plan

Prepared for:  
The Township of Johnson  
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Desbarats, Ontario P0R 1E0

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# Introduction

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The Township of Johnson Community Improvement Plan (CIP) provides key revitalization and improvement strategies to stimulate and support growth in local businesses and the tourism sector. The CIP defines goals and objectives as well as financial incentive programs, including grants and tax relief to support revitalization efforts, in the Township of Johnson.

## BACKGROUND AND PLANNING CONTEXT

The Township of Johnson (population 751) is located 60 km east of Sault Ste. Marie in the Algoma District. The Township is home to the hamlet of Desbarats and is known for its freshwater lakes with public beaches and access to the North Channel of Lake Huron. The economic base and heritage of the community is closely tied to agriculture and seasonal tourism. The objectives of Township Council's vision to foster development and growth forms the basis for developing the CIP.

The Township hosts a vibrant agricultural community with a seasonal farmers market. Although the market is relatively new (it was founded in 2007), it has been deemed a "destination market", offering local produce and products from the local community and regionally from producers throughout Northern Ontario. The vendors are Old Order Mennonites traditional farmers, as well as young, upcoming farmers. Agricultural lands are located centrally in the Township.



Employment in the Township is heavily linked to the service industry which is connected to tourism, highway commercial trade, and service centres in the hamlet of Desbarats. Second to the service industry, employment in transportation and manufacturing are also significant. Forestry is not a significant industry in the Township. Maintaining and growing the employment base is possible if the Township continues to evolve as a dormitory community for those willing to commute to Sault Ste. Marie.

Future development will be primarily located in the hamlet of Desbarats, along the shore of St. Joseph's Channel (and to a lesser extent the outlying archipelago), and the shorelines of the inland lakes. The development of a communal water sewer system in the hamlet has enabled opportunity for an infill of approximately 42 units. Approximately 20% of the population is over 55 years of age and thus housing, accessibility and other services for seniors are a priority.

The CIP project area (the Township) comprises a range of land uses. Land use designations include the following:

- Hamlet Policy Area
- Agricultural Resource Lands (Prime Agricultural Lands)
- Rural Policy Area



## PURPOSE

CIPs are tools available to municipalities in the Province of Ontario for community revitalization. The purpose of the Township of Johnson CIP is to support local businesses and foster growth within the business and tourism industry by establishing programs that will promote private sector investment and revitalization. In order to support private investment, Township funded incentive programs will be put in place to encourage private property/business owners to make investments leading to beautification, business and consumer attraction, job and assessment growth, and economic development within the Township. As the majority of the Township's businesses are outside of the Hamlet of Desbarats, the CIP project area will be designated as the entirety of the Township.



The CIP enables the Township of Johnson to provide financial incentives including grants and land under section 28 of the *Planning Act*, and tax assistance under section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001. Examples of incentive-based programs include commercial building façade improvements, core area revitalization, property tax assistance for remediation purposes, structural improvements to buildings and accessibility enhancements. The hope is that the revitalization tools employed will help to promote business and economic development resulting in public benefits such as more socially cohesive, environmentally friendly, and economically sound communities.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the CIP is to ensure the vitality and viability of the Township by stimulating and supporting growth in local businesses, employment and tourism. The following objectives will help to improve the physical environment of both the rural and Hamlet areas:

1. Enable the Township of Johnson to acquire and improve lands within the CIP project area by obtaining public funding
2. Promote investment amongst private property/business owners in rural and Hamlet areas
3. Remove barriers to building (re)investment for existing and potential business/property owners as a means of facilitating business retention, expansion and attraction.
4. Support the longevity of existing buildings
5. Improve the appearance of residential and commercial buildings through façade improvement incentive programs
6. Support the development of accessibility in the Hamlet
7. Assist residents in pursuing developments that will add value to agricultural areas and enhance agri-tourism

# Legislative Authority and Policy Review

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The Community Improvement Plan has been developed in accordance with Section 28 of the *Planning Act* as well as other relevant policies and documents including the Provincial Policy Statement, the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, the Township of Johnson Official Plan and the Township of Johnson Strategic Plan.

## ONTARIO PLANNING ACT

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* pertains to Community Improvement.

**Community Improvement** is defined in Section 28(1) 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 therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary".*

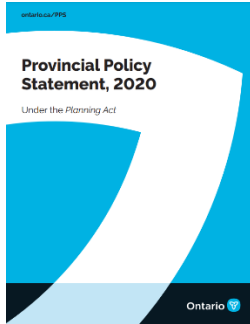
Section 28(1) defines **Community Improvement Project Area** as:

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

More specifically, Section 28 describes the powers available to municipalities to carry out Community Improvement Planning which include:

- Designating by by-law, a specific property, area or entire community as a community improvement project area where the Official Plan contains community improvement provisions (s.28(2)).
- Acquiring, holding, clearing, grading or otherwise preparing land for community improvement (s.28(3)).
- Constructing, repairing, rehabilitating or improving buildings on municipal land (s.28(6)(a)).
- Selling, leasing or otherwise disposing of municipal land (s. (28(6)(b)).
- Providing grants to owners, tenants and their assignees within the community improvement area to pay the whole or any part of identified eligible costs (ss. 28(7) and (7.1)).
  - Eligible costs include:
    - Environmental site assessment
    - Environmental remediation
    - Development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and building for rehabilitative purposes
    - The provision of energy efficient uses, building, structures, works and improvements or facilities
- Providing property tax assistance for environmental remediation purposes (s. 28(7.3) by reference to s. 365.1 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

## PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS) 2020



The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2020 provides guidance and policy direction to municipalities on matters of provincial interest pertaining to land use planning in the Province of Ontario. The implementation of a Township CIP will supplement and further support the policies and objectives in the PPS put forward by the Province of Ontario.

The PPS does not specifically reference Community Improvement Plans but does outline policies focusing on economic development through strategic community investments and reducing barriers to investment (s. 1.3.1). The PPS also recognizes that in rural areas, *"rural settlement areas shall be the focus of growth and development and their vitality and regeneration shall be promoted"* (s. 1.1.4.2).

The PPS also recognizes the importance of the rural areas to the provincial economy and states that rural areas should be supported by building upon rural character, leveraging rural amenities and assets, promoting diversification of the economic base and employment activities, providing opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism and providing opportunities for economic activities in prime agricultural areas (s. 1.1.4.1).

Additionally, the financial incentive programs introduced as part of this CIP will support Section 1.1.1 e) which states that *"Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by: e) improving accessibility for persons with disabilities and older persons by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society"*.

## GROWTH PLAN FOR NORTHERN ONTARIO

The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is an economic development plan, infrastructure investment plan, labour market plan and land use plan. The plan focuses on ways to leverage economic, social and natural capital more strategically, on approaches to attract a wider range of opportunities to the North, and looks to *"enable decisions about growth to be made in ways that sustain a robust economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment and a culture of conservation"*.

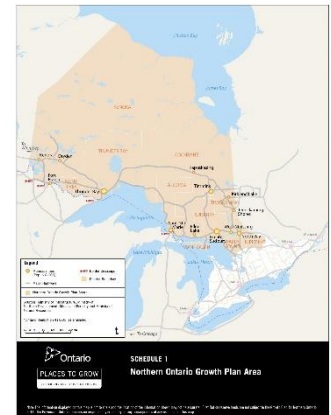
The plan is founded on six guiding principles, including: *"creating a highly productive region, with a diverse, globally competitive economy that offers a range of career opportunities for all residents"*.

Section 2.2.2 states that the Province will focus economic development strategies on priority economic sectors including advanced manufacturing, agriculture and tourism.

Section 2.2.3 states that economic development strategies for these sectors will examine several opportunities including ways to attract investment.

Section 4.2.1 states that long-range community strategies should look to achieve *"...a) economic, social and environmental sustainability...c) optimized use of existing infrastructure; d) a high quality of place; e) a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive community identify that builds on unique local features..."*

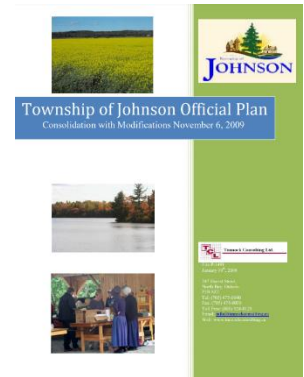
The programs introduced in this CIP support the Growth Plan's vision for northern Ontario by providing financial support to a range of businesses resulting in increased opportunity for financial investments and career opportunities with the end goal of improving the quality of Johnson Township, and creating a strong, vibrant, welcoming and inclusive community.



## TOWNSHIP OF JOHNSON OFFICIAL PLAN

An Official Plan is a long-range planning policy document which reflects a community vision for future development over a 20-30 year time frame. Official Plans contain goals, objectives and policies to guide the future physical development of a community while considering social, economic and environmental impacts.

Section 3.21 of the Township of Johnson Official Plan (JOP) contains policies pertaining to Community Improvement within the Hamlet Policy Area. Currently, the Official Plan policy allows only part or all of the settlement areas of the Township to be designated by by-law as Community Improvement Project Areas. An amendment to the JOP is necessary to allow for any part of the Township to be designated by by-law as a CIP project area. Additionally, Schedule 'A' Land Use Plan to the JOP depicts the limits of the Community Improvement Policy Area to be that of the Hamlet Policy Area.



The community improvement policies in the Hamlet Policy Area allow for a wide range of actions including offering grants to pay for all or part of the costs of rehabilitating lands and buildings, tax assistance (pursuant to Section 365.1 of the Municipal Act), and participation in programs providing assistance to private landowners for the purposes of community improvement.

In terms of implementation, the JOP requires that a CIP Project Area is designated by by-law. The by-law allows Council to prepare a plan that will be suitable for the adoption of a Community Improvement Plan for the community improvement project area. The CIP must be adopted in accordance with the public consultation requirements of the *Planning Act*.

## JOHNSON TOWNSHIP STRATEGIC PLAN

The current strategic plan lists Township priorities in the short, medium and long-term. Implementing a Township CIP may enable improvements to the following priority issues, which include several municipal infrastructure projects:

- Sidewalks and accessibility in the Hamlet
- An accessible natural playground and walking path in the Hamlet
- Retrofitting the exterior of the community arena
- Replacing/refurbishing Diamond Lake dock
- Replacing all one-lane bridges
- Resurfacing Huron Street
- Installation of storm sewers and covering with sidewalks

These capital projects are within the intent of the noted CIP policy. It is understood that these projects will take time to implement, however the purpose of this plan is to set out short- and long-term objectives. The CIP can be amended by Council at any time to recognize fiscal realities and new priorities.

# Public Consultation

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The CIP programs were developed in consultation with community members, residents, business owners, stakeholders, Township staff and Council to ensure the programs meet the needs of all potential applicants. The consultation process involved a public survey to determine public opinion on community improvement needs and opportunities, the interest in various financial incentive programs and grant opportunities, as well as to better understand the barriers to community improvement and development in the Township.

The *Planning Act* requires a minimum of one public meeting to take place in order to allow the public to comment on the proposed plan. The Township considers the inclusion of public feedback a vital component of the development of successful incentive programs. Additionally, public engagement provides an opportunity for community members to become familiar with the proposed CIP thus resulting in a higher likelihood of public uptake and overall project success.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A survey was distributed in paper and electronic format. A total of 21 responses were received with approximately 71% of responses from permanent residential property owners and 24% from farm operators or owners. The respondents have resided or worked in Johnson Township from as little as 6 months to more than 60 years and the majority of respondents originally moved to the Township for personal or employment reasons. Respondents believe that the main reason visitors come to the Township of Johnson is for the seasonal farmers market, followed by the community centre and fishing/boating opportunities.

### Issues

The issues identified by respondents included barriers to development in the Township of Johnson. These included the following:

1. Lack of Community Character (selected by 10 respondents)
  - a. Specifically, many respondents mentioned messy front yards as a big issue in the community.
2. Planning Act Application Costs (selected by 6 respondents)
3. Lack of Available Infrastructure (selected by 6 respondents)
  - a. Some respondents mentioned that the roads in the Hamlet are in very poor condition
4. Lack of Customers/Small Population (selected by 6 respondents)
5. High property taxes (selected by 5 respondents)
6. Building Permit Fees (selected by 4 respondents)
7. Lack of Available Workforce (selected by 4 respondents)
8. Vacant Land availability or costs (selected by 3 respondents)
9. Lack of Community Interest/Support (mentioned by 1 respondent)
10. Property Zoning Restrictions (mentioned by 1 respondent)
11. Poor Reputation (mentioned by 1 respondent)
12. MPACS Property Assessment - doesn't encourage people to improve curb appeal of homes since taxes will go up (mentioned by 1 respondent).

### Opportunities

When asked what respondents thought could be done to beautify the Hamlet and rural areas of the Township, the following suggestions were made:

- Murals, landscaped gardens, outdoor public gathering space, community food garden, community clean up day with vouchers provided for the dump.



- Clean-up day with pre-arranged pickup for trash for home owners
- Façade improvement grant
- Better/more appropriate by-laws
- Add a fee to peoples' property taxes for failing to comply with property standards by-law
- Clean-up after dogs and horses
- Improve drainage in cemetery (too wet)
- Repair main streets of Desbarats; put out flower planters and hanging baskets, Canadian flags, etc.; put in a nice park; update the exterior of the Township buildings.
- Enforce by-laws; tidy up and trim ditches of main streets; improve visual appeal of campground on Amory Street.
- Rewards program for fixing up visual appeal of properties (cash prizes)
- Tree planting
- Do not allow people to raise chickens and pigs in Town; do not allow people to burn garbage
- Diversify services and shops to attract more tourists from the highway

When asked what respondents think could be done to help businesses within the rural area of the Township to grow and be more attractive to visitors the following suggestions were made:

- Create a gathering area around main businesses for a visitor rest stop and gathering place
- Install Ontario blue road signs that point to all amenities
- Reduce tax rate and bureaucracy
- Expanding and promoting the business directory on the Township website
- Promote local products (buy local, support local) including grant incentives
- Clean up the Hamlet
- Council needs to be more available and more accepting of ideas
- Improve signage, curb appeal, and marketing
- Improve infrastructure to draw more permanent residents; advertise shopping opportunities within the community.
- Improve roads and cut grass
- Create a truck stop/trailer park/rest stop to encourage people to get off the highway and spend the night
- Encourage subdivisions on lots of 5+ acres.
- Municipality should purchase, re-zone and subdivide property along Highway 17 between the tracks and the Highway just East of the Hamlet - rail, natural gas, power and highway access available.

When asked what type of incentives or grant programs respondents were interested in, the following grants were selected (listed from most, to least popular):

1. Exterior residential and business improvements (e.g., signage, landscaping, renovations, expansions)
2. Reducing taxes on new/more intensive land uses (Tax Increment Equivalent Grant) - TIEG
3. Reducing Planning Act Application costs (e.g, Zoning By-Law Amendment, Minor Variance application, etc.)
4. Reducing Building Permit Fees
5. Incentives to clean yards

# Financial Incentive Programs

The following programs are designed to encourage long-term private sector investment within the Township and have been designed to support the needs and opportunities identified through community consultation and by Township council. The programs will be in effect for an initial five-year period (2022-2027) and can be adjusted annually during budgetary reviews based on program costs and the relative success of each program. Once council approves an annual CIP budget, program priorities and financial limits for each year of implementation can be determined. The following programs are available in the CIP project area during the initial five-year period of the CIP.

## BUILDING AND SITE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

1. Exterior Improvement Grant (available for businesses Township-wide)
2. Accessibility Improvement Grant (available for businesses Township-wide)
3. Residential Exterior Improvement Grant (available to residents in the Hamlet Only)
4. Agriculture Value-Added Program (available Township-wide)

## MUNICIPAL FEE REDUCTION & TAX INCREMENT GRANT PROGRAMS

1. Township Fee Rebate Program (available Township-wide)
2. Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (available Township-wide)

The following table presents a summary of the recommended CIP programs:

Program	Grant Amount
Exterior Improvement Grant (for businesses)	Matching grant up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$8,000 per property, whichever is less. For a maximum of 2 projects per year.
Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG)	Available for tax increases of \$2000+, for up to 5 years.
Accessibility Improvement Grant (for businesses)	Up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$2,000 per property, whichever is less. For a maximum of 1 project per year.
Agriculture Value-Added Program	Up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$5,000 per property, whichever is less. For a maximum of 3 projects per year.
Township Fee Rebate Program	Percentage of fee will be waived based on total project value.
Residential Exterior Improvement Grant (Hamlet only)	Up to a maximum of 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of \$1,000, whichever is less. For a maximum of 5 projects per year.

# Program Policy Details

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## EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT (FOR BUSINESSES)

**Purpose:** to encourage business (commercial/industrial/agricultural) owners and tenants to revitalize, rehabilitate and restore building facades to result in high-quality, attractive improvements to buildings throughout the Township. The grant is focused on exterior improvements that will support local business and tourism in the Township. The grant is applied towards improvements and upgrades to street fronts of properties but may also be applied to the rear or side of buildings in cases where it is highly visible to the public.

**Grant Amount and Disbursement:** Matching grant of up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$8,000 per property, whichever is less. For a maximum of 2 properties per year.

### Eligible Costs:

- Repair, replacement or restoration of façade materials, such as masonry, brickwork, wood siding, plaster, metal shingles and/or architectural detailing
- Repair, replacement or installation of awning or canopies
- Repair, replacement or installation of energy efficient exterior lighting
- Painting or installation of wall art (design must be presented in application for approval)
- Landscaping
- Replacement or restoration of windows
- Installation, repair or replacement of exterior signage
- Costs associated with professional architectural services in association with the design of the above eligible projects
- Any combination of the above

**NOTE:** Home-based businesses are eligible to apply, however, the percentage of the home dedicated to the business use will determine the percentage of eligible costs for reimbursement.

**Additional Requirements:** Applicants will submit design drawings, engineering plans, a work plan indicating proposed improvements, and a cost estimate for the works. The grant will be paid based on the actual cost of the work, up to an amount approved in the application. All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form. A complete application shall include photographs of existing conditions.

All grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws

## TAX INCREMENT EQUIVALENT FINANCING GRANT

**Purpose:** The Tax Increment Equivalent Financing Grant (TIEG) is intended to remove the perception of a tax increase as a barrier to investment in property, and encourage significant property investments throughout the Township. The property owner pays the full costs of renovation, rehabilitation, or development as well as the resulting annual increase in property tax.

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 based on the incremental change in property tax following completion of the development project. The Township reimburses the owner by way of an annual grant equivalent to the agreed Township portion of the incremental property tax increase over an established

“base” assessment. The grant is provided to the property owner on an annual basis and in decreasing amounts until the property owner is paying the taxes based on the new assessment without any assistance.

#### **Eligible Projects:**

- Redevelopment of a property for residential, commercial, office, industrial, mixed use, tourism, value added agricultural, or on-farm diversified uses that result in an increased tax assessment
- Development of tourism infrastructure/assets
- Major additions to a property for commercial, industrial, mixed use, tourism, value-added agricultural facilities, or on-farm diversified uses that result in an increased tax assessment; or
- Any combination of the above

#### **Grant Amount and Disbursement:**

- The TIEG 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.
- The tax increment is granted to the property owner on an annual basis and in decreasing amounts, for a maximum of 5 years. In year one, the amount of the grant may equal up to 100% of the tax increment. In the following years, the amount of the grant will decrease until it reaches zero.
- The TIEG grant is available for projects resulting in a \$2,000+ increase in property taxes.
- The period may range from one to five years, at the sole discretion of the Township. The Township will also determine the precise terms of the TIEG.
- The property owner pays the full costs of renovation, rehabilitation, or development as well as the resulting annual increase in property tax. The Township reimburses the owner by way of an annual grant equivalent to the agreed Township portion of the incremental property tax increased over an established “base” assessment.
- Property owners must apply and receive approval from the TIEG program prior to commencing with the project.

#### **Additional Requirements:**

- All development associated with TIEG grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws
- An approved TIEG is non-transferable to a new property owner and cannot be transferred by the property owner to another property.



## TOWNSHIP FEE REBATE PROGRAM

**Purpose:** 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 costs to making major private property improvements and encourage desired improvements throughout the Township. Fee reductions are available for the following application types:

- Site Plan Approval
- Minor Variance
- Building Permit
- Zoning By-law Amendment

**Grant Amount and Disbursement:** Percentage of fee will be waived based on total project value (e.g., if value of project is \$100,000-\$150,000, fee will be reduced by 20%; if value of project is \$151,000-\$200,000, fees will be reduced by 40%, etc.)

### Eligible Projects:

- Redevelopment of vacant or underutilized residential, commercial, commercial mixed use or industrial lots/buildings;
- Major additions to a commercial, commercial mixed use or industrial building involving an increase of at least 25% of existing gross floor area.
- Professional services by an engineer, architect, or professional planner (as an eligible expense towards total project value)
- Any combination of the above

### Additional Requirements:

- Applicants will submit design drawings, engineering plans, a work plan indicating proposed improvements, and a cost estimate for the works. The grant will be paid based on the actual cost of the work, up to an amount approved in the application. All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.
- All rebates shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.

## ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT (FOR BUSINESSES)

**Purpose:** to promote the undertaking of building accessibility improvements. Accessible buildings are good for business and for the community. The goal is to remove all barriers to provide equal opportunity for residents and visitors (i.e., make all entrances and exists barrier-free and building interiors welcoming to disabled people). 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.

**Grant Amount and Disbursement:** Maximum of \$2,000 or 50% of project costs, whichever the lesser, for a maximum of 1 project per year. The grant will be paid as a single payment upon completion of the improvements to the satisfaction of the Township.

**Eligible Costs:** Eligible costs include those that clearly improve the accessibility of a commercial, tourist or recreational building or property associated with the following:

- Exterior paths of travel
- Ramps, stairs and handrails
- Doors and doorways
- Lighting
- Parking
- Elevating devices
- Any other related work as approved by the Township

**NOTE:** Home-based businesses are eligible to apply, however, the percentage of the home dedicated to the business use will determine the percentage of eligible costs for reimbursement.

**Additional Requirements:** Applicants will submit design drawings, architectural/engineering plans, a work plan indicating proposed improvements, and a cost estimate for the works. All completed drawings/plans must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form. The grant will be paid based on the actual costs of the work, up to the amount approved in the application. A complete application shall include photographs of existing conditions.

All grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.

Residential uses are not eligible.

## AGRICULTURE VALUE-ADDED PROGRAM

**Purpose:** To promote development or improvement of agricultural, agricultural-related and on-farm diversified uses within the Township.

**Grant Amount and Disbursement:** Up to 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum grant of \$5,000, whichever is the lesser, per property, for a maximum of 3 projects per year. The grant will be disbursed (100%) upon final completion to the satisfaction of the Township.

**Eligible Costs:** the construction or improvements to uses permitted by the Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, including but not limited to:

- Produce stands
- Cheese factory
- Bakery
- Signage
- Agri-tourism and recreational uses (e.g., hay rides, corn maze, petting zoo, seasonal events) or
- Any other use as approved by the Township

**Additional Requirements:** Applicants will submit design drawings, architectural or engineering plans, and a work plan indicating proposed improvements, and a cost estimate for the works. The grant will be paid based on the actual cost of the work, up to the amount approved in the application. All completed drawings/designs must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.

All grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.

## RESIDENTIAL EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT (HAMLET ONLY)

**Purpose:** to invest in the facades of homes and landscaping front yards, as an effort to help beautify the Hamlet.

**Grant Amount and Disbursement:** Up to 50% of project costs or a maximum of \$1,000, whichever is the lesser, for a maximum of 5 projects per year. The payment of the grant for approved projects will occur after final site inspection has been conducted and it has been determined by staff that the approved work has been completed. The applicant must submit all receipts to staff in order to verify expenses.

**Eligible Costs:** The following work conducted to the front or flankage facades of a dwelling will be eligible for grant:

- Exterior painting, including any entranceway, siding, trim, mouldings, porches, decks or other features of the exterior of the main building
- Siding repair, or the replacement of siding with new material
- The replacement or installation of any exterior windows or doors
- The replacement, renovation or installation of exterior front steps, handrails or walk ways
- The installation of any landscaping details including, but not limited to, sod, shrubs, trees and flower/plant beds
- Garbage removal
- Any other related work as approved by the Township

**Additional Requirements:** Applicants will submit design drawings, architectural or engineering plans, and a work plan indicating proposed improvements, and a cost estimate for the works. The grant will be paid based on the actual cost of the work, up to the amount approved in the application. All completed drawings/designs must comply with the description of the work plan as provided in the grant application form.

A complete application shall include photographs of existing conditions.

All grants shall be subject to receiving the required approvals or permits, as required by the Township by-laws and any applicable Provincial or Federal laws.

# Implementation

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The CIP will be administered by the Township of Johnson.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1) Pre-consultation with the Township
- 2) Completion of application forms and submissions of any required supporting documentation
- 3) Screening of applications by Township staff to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements
- 4) Evaluation by Township
- 5) Prior to release of funds, proof of all costs and photographs of completed project (where applicable) must be submitted

All projects must be completed within one year of approval for funding, however recipients may apply for a grant extension.

A deadline for application intake for budgeted programs will be communicated through the Township's website as well as in all materials distributed throughout the community (i.e., mail, brochures, posters). Following this deadline, any excess funds remaining in the budget for that year may (at the discretion of the Township) be applied as additional funds to previously approved projects to ensure the Township's budget for the CIP is used to the maximum extent each year.

Applications for projects that are eligible for funding under more than one program, are encouraged. Council reserves the right to limit access to funding if in its determination, is not an appropriate use of scarce resources or the value going to one project unduly limits the available of community improvement funding to other eligible projects in the Township.

## AMENDING POLICIES

From time to time, the Township may review and amend any of the terms of the programs described in this Community Improvement Plan without amendment to the plan. An extension to any program for up to an additional five years and any decrease in program financing due to budgetary constraints in any given year will not require amendments to the plan.

New financial incentive programs, eligibility criteria changes, or CIP project area boundary adjustments will require a formal amendment to the CIP in accordance with subsection 28(5) of the Planning Act, requiring notice of a public meeting of Council and adoption by Council.

## MARKETING

The financial incentive programs introduced in this CIP will be promoted by Township staff, on billboards at community hubs (e.g., community centre and arena, farmers market, on the Township's website, and through the mail). Social media platforms could also be used to advertise and market the Township CIP to a large demographic. The Township could consider distributing a newsletter or pamphlet regarding CIP programs with property tax bills that are sent out to all residents. Additionally, some marketing of CIP programs will occur at the statutory public meeting, and the Township could consider holding additional information sessions or workshops to assist residents with understanding and participating in CIP programs. Finally, following the completion of successful community improvement projects, the Township could use these as examples to further promote the CIP.



## MONITORING OF PROGRAMS

The effectiveness of the financial incentive programs will be reviewed periodically and an update provided to Council. The following measures are recommended for monitoring the CIP programs:

- **Annual Report** - annual CIP report should be produced and presented to Council
- **Post-Project Evaluation Reports** - Following the completion of community improvement projects, a report should be produced with detailed descriptions of the work completed with any issues that arose. These project reports can be used to assist with the preparation of the annual report to Council.
- **Application Database** - keeping a database of applications submitted will assist with assessing the efficacy of the programs offered and also assist with making any necessary amendments to available programs.
- **Changes in Municipal Tax Revenues** - a clearly specified numerical value such as this may be easier to gauge than more general goals and could be completed upon completion of the first 5-year cycle of the program.



