



Corporation of the Township of Brock

Staff Report to the Mayor and Members of Council

From: Robin Prentice, MCIP, RPP

Position: Director of Development Services

Title / Subject: Downtown Community Improvement Plan Review

Date of Report: November 7, 2023

Date of Meeting: November 13, 2023

Report No: 2023-DS-017

1.0 Issue / Origin

As part of the 2023 budget and workplan, a review of the Downtown Community Improvement Plan was initiated.

2.0 Background

A Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is a tool available to municipalities under Section 28 of the Planning Act and Section 106 of the Municipal Act, 2001. CIPs guide the revitalization of communities through programs, grants and incentives, addressing the reuse and restoration of lands, buildings and infrastructure, energy efficiency, growth management challenges and planning for rehabilitation, development and land use change in defined areas. CIPs are an important tool to assist in encouraging local economic development initiatives and can be used to promote and attract tourism and business investments. They are undertaken by municipalities for specific areas and types of development.

Township Council adopted the Downtown CIP in 2013 to help stimulate investment in the downtown areas. The Downtown CIP provides financial incentives to stimulate private investment to lands within the designated Regional Centres (downtown areas) of Beaverton, Cannington, and Sunderland and helps to promote beautification, commercial revitalization, tourism, residential choice, intensification of properties, preservation of heritage and architectural buildings, and sustainable development within the downtown cores.

The Downtown CIP provide opportunities for the municipality to offer financial incentives in the following areas: planning, building, and development charge fee rebates, parkland dedication and parking standard exemptions, property tax grants, commercial façade and residential rehabilitation grants/loans, project feasibility and design studies programs, as well as programs for environmental rehabilitation.

Over the past 9 years, several local businesses in all 3 communities have benefitted from the Downtown CIP grant program to help with façade improvements and residential rehabilitation. A review of the CIP was anticipated after 10 years to assess implementation of the CIP and determine if any adjustments and updates are necessary for successful implementation of the Plan.

In February 2023, the Township, with assistance from Regional economic development staff, applied for funding through Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) program to help undertake a review of the Downtown CIP and to review the Township's Zoning By-law with respect to agricultural-related uses and on-farm diversified uses to help expand permitted uses within the rural area. In June 2023, the Township was advised that the RED grant application was approved, but only for the portion of the project related to a review of the Downtown CIP.

3.0 Analysis

In September 2023, the Township invited quotations for this project through a Request for Quotation (RFQ) process.

Three proposals were received. Township staff reviewed and evaluated the proposals and recommend that WSP Canada Inc. be retained to undertake a review of the Downtown CIP. WSP has experience in community revitalization and preparing CIPs for many other municipalities, including King Township and the Town of Caledon as part of the Bolton Community Improvement Plan update.

The project work plan will include several key steps, including:

- Review background materials and resources, policy documents, relevant legislation and regulations, etc.;
- Consultation with agencies and key stakeholders, including the Brock Board of Trade;
- Review and prepare an updated Downtown CIP document;
- Prepare a final Downtown CIP document for Council.

Once the CIP document has been updated, a marketing consultant will be retained to help develop a marketing and communications campaign to promote the updated CIP and associated incentives.

4.0 Related Policies / Procedures

This project involves a review of the Township's Downtown Community Improvement Plan.

Section 4.6 of the Township's OP outlines policies related to Community Improvement and supports a CIP for the three Regional Centres/downtown areas.

5.0 Financial / Budget Assessment

The total budget for the CIP review update used as part of the RED grant, which includes a review of the CIP and a marketing and communications plan, was \$75,078.60.

The RED grant was approved to fund 50% of eligible costs for this project up to a maximum amount of \$37,539.30 and the Region of Durham through the Economic Development department will be contributing \$10,000 towards this project.

The Township's approved 2020 budget included funds of \$30,000 for the Downtown CIP review project and the funds at year-end were transferred to the committed projects reserve. These funds will cover the Township's anticipated portion of this project at \$27,539.30.

Based on the preferred consultant's proposal for the review and update of the Downtown CIP, the proposed contract is \$46,390 excluding HST, which is within the overall project budget. Staff will work closely with the consultant to ensure budgeted amounts are adhered to.

In addition to the review and update of the Downtown CIP, there will also be worked involved (and additional expenses) related to the marketing and communications plan. The total budget remaining for this component of the project is approximately \$28,688.

6.0 Climate Change Impacts

The Downtown CIP provides financial incentives which help to promote rehabilitation and reuse of existing buildings within the downtown cores.

As part of the review and update of the Downtown CIP, the Township can explore incentives that continue to promote sustainable development by helping to make existing structures more energy efficient and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

7.0 Communications

The work plan for this project will involve public and stakeholder consultation to obtain input. A marketing and communications plan will also be developed at the end of the project to promote the updated CIP and associated incentives.

8.0 Conclusion

Based on a review of the three proposals received, Township staff recommend that WSP Canada Inc. be retained to complete a review of the Downtown Community Improvement Plan.

9.0 Recommendation

Be it resolved that staff report 2023-DS-017, regarding the Downtown Community Improvement Plan Review, be received.