

## MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council

From: Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner

Date: June 23, 2020

Re: Participating in Local Community Improvement Plans as a Means to Deliver COVID-19 Small Business Support

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This memo provides clarification on existing Community Improvement Plans (CIP) in place in the local municipalities and the ability for York Region to participate in those Plans as it relates to providing COVID-19 small business support.

On June 11, 2020 Committee of the Whole received a Planning and Economic Development report titled [COVID-19 Small Business Support](#), which identified three options for leveraging Regional funds to provide support to small businesses. The report recommended Regional funds be used to expand the Starter Company Plus program, which is delivered by the Region's four Small Business Enterprise Centres on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Leveraging the Starter Company Plus program ensures that the Region does not offend the "antibonusing" prohibitions under section 106 of the Municipal Act. Further, it means the support is available to small businesses located in all nine local municipalities.

Council requested staff bring forward further information regarding the option of participation in local municipal CIP as a means of providing support to small businesses.

### **Community Improvement Plans enable municipalities to support development or rehabilitation of land and buildings**

A CIP is a planning tool that allows municipalities to target specific areas for rehabilitation and/or growth by directing funds and implementing policy initiatives. Through [Section 28 of the Planning Act](#), municipalities have the authority to implement CIP through tax assistance, various grants and other loan programs for projects that enable development or rehabilitation of lands and buildings within a specified CIP area. Amendments to the Planning Act in 2006 provided prescribed upper-tier municipalities, including York Region, the ability to initiate CIP.

## **Community Improvement Plans apply to targeted areas and programs**

CIP generally focus on the maintenance, rehabilitation, development and redevelopment of targeted areas. Adoption of a CIP requires official plan policies and a by-law designating a CIP project area. Official Plan policies must specify municipal programs and incentives and their eligible works, improvements, buildings and facilities. Municipalities are required to consult with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as part of this process.

CIP at the lower-tier level, vary by municipality depending on the objectives that are achieved, but typically include programs to address one or more of the following:

- Industrial area remediation and redevelopment
- Streetscape and façade improvements
- Refurbishing of core business areas
- Heritage conservation of homes
- New commercial buildings or redevelopment
- Affordable housing initiatives

CIP can also include land assembly policies to make projects feasible or to create financial incentives that encourage increased housing choices, mixed densities and compact spatial forms in redevelopment and/or rehabilitation areas. Municipalities can also make grants or loans available within the CIP project areas to help offset costs related to:

- environmental site assessment
- environmental remediation
- development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes
- provision of energy efficient uses
- works improvements of facilities

In many cases a CIP may require an applicant to submit plans, permits, drawings and other documents to confirm that a grant is being used for redevelopment purposes.

There are several CIP at the local municipal level, however, they are not all at the same stage or have mechanisms in place to facilitate providing grants to businesses for operational purposes. Attachment 1 lists the nine local municipalities and highlights whether they have an existing CIP with financial incentives in place.

## **An upper-tier municipal Community Improvement Plan would not enable the Region to provide COVID-19 relief for businesses**

Under the *Planning Act*, 1990 (Ontario Regulation 550/06) prescribed upper-tier municipalities can create CIP as long as they are related to:

- Infrastructure that is within the upper-tier municipalities jurisdiction

- Land and buildings within and adjacent to existing or planned transportation corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density, mixed-use development and redevelopment
- Affordable housing

Through the Planning and Economic Development Branch, there are ongoing efforts to develop a Regional CIP for affordable rental housing incentives. While the effort is underway, Regional Council has not adopted a CIP to date.

The limited scope of prescribed matters that may be dealt with in an upper-tier CIP would prevent the Region from initiating a CIP to provide COVID-19 business relief, specifically around operational, marketing and sales recovery.

For more information on this memo, please contact Jonathan Wheatle, Director, Economic Strategy at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71503.

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Chief Planner

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Bruce Macgregor  
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment (1)  
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