

Community Improvement Plan – Villages and Hamlets [Phase One]

Township of Whitewater Region

November 2017



Executive Summary

A **Community Improvement Plan (CIP)** was developed for the Township of Whitewater Region to serve as a long-term plan for creating healthy and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods. A Community Improvement Plan is a document that provides municipalities in Ontario with the tools and strategies that allow for the improvement, rehabilitation, or redevelopment of defined project areas. The development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is one of several priorities and objectives of the Township's Strategic Planning for 2016-2019.

The Township of Whitewater Region Community Improvement Plan will be implemented in two stages with Phase One including programs currently permitted within the provisions of the **County of Renfrew Official Plan** and Phase Two implemented at a later date. The County of Renfrew Official Plan establishes the provisions for the development and implementation of CIPs for lower-tier municipalities in the County of Renfrew. Section 28 of the **Planning Act** authorizes municipalities to prepare and implement CIPs. A CIP enables municipalities to provide grants or loans to private property owners to assist with approved programs in designated community improvement areas.

The Township Community Improvement Plan Phase One includes both municipal-driven and financial incentive programs. The Municipal-Driven Programs will allow the Township to effectively demonstrate leadership and initiatives in community improvement planning by redeveloping and improving Township communities. The Financial Incentive programs will assist and encourage private sector investment through various financial support programs.

The Township Community Improvement Plan Phase Two will be implemented following the amendment to the County of Renfrew Official Plan to allow for programs not currently within the provisions of the County Official Plan and brownfield redevelopment. An amendment will be required to include programs such as value-added agriculture, water quality improvement, shoreline protection as well as the designation of the entire Township as a Community Improvement Area.

The Township wishes to acknowledge the work of Robert Tran, municipal intern who completed research and drafted Phase One. In addition, we are grateful to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Brian Whitehead for their review of earlier drafts of the plan. The Township recognizes the financial contribution of the Province of Ontario through the Rural Economic Development Grant for both phases of the Community Improvement Plan.

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1.0 Introduction

The Township of Whitewater Region is a historic and culturally rich community situated in the scenic Ottawa Valley. Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 17) is a major transportation corridor that extends through the entire length of the municipality. The Township is enriched in history with the discovery of Samuel Champlain's astrolabe dated 1603, found in the Township in 1867. As of 2016, the Township has a population of 7,009 and is comprised of the former four municipalities of Beachburg, Cobden, Ross, and Westmeath which amalgamated on January 1, 2001. The Township derives its name from its world-class whitewater rafting, kayaking and other tourism-related facilities along the Ottawa River and is home to several other year-round recreational activities including snowmobiling, camping, boating, fishing, and cross-country skiing. The Township of Whitewater Region is one of seventeen lower-tier municipalities in the County of Renfrew.

Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) have been integral in supporting and encouraging neighbourhood revitalization and commercial/business area improvement in the Province of Ontario. A CIP is being developed for the Township of Whitewater Region to serve as a long-term plan for creating healthy and vibrant communities and neighbourhoods through redevelopment and revitalization. These objectives are achieved through the various financial programs and incentives offered by the Township to eligible property owners and tenants as well as the municipal driven projects and strategies.

Community improvement planning is used to benefit communities in the Province of Ontario by enabling municipalities to provide grants and loans to encourage private sector investment in target communities. The revitalization of communities through the implementation of CIPs can be used to promote and attract tourism, business investments, and economic development. Community Improvement Plans may also be used to encourage brownfield rehabilitation, environmental remediation and redevelopment as well as effectively utilize existing community infrastructure.

Presently, municipalities in Ontario are using community improvement planning to address a range of challenges including the management of growth, the intensification of communities, employment opportunities, and accessibility enhancements. This Plan is intended to enhance the overall quality of life for Township residents while optimizing the use of underdeveloped properties and encouraging private sector investment.

The development of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is one of several priorities and objectives of the Township's Strategic Planning for 2016-2019. The Township of Whitewater Region Community Improvement Plan will serve as a long-term framework that will direct and guide community improvement towards the goals and objectives through financial incentives and municipal-driven projects. The Township Community Improvement Plan will be implemented in two phases: Phase One of the Township CIP will include programs currently within the provisions of the **County of Renfrew Official Plan** under Section 15.4 Community Improvements with the Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs) comprising of the Township's villages and hamlets.

Phase Two of the Township CIP will include programs such as value-added agriculture, water quality improvements, shoreline protection, waterfront improvement, septic system remediation and brownfield redevelopment. An amendment to the **County of Renfrew Official Plan** will be required to the County Official Plan to designate the entire Township as a Community Improvement Area. The CIP policies will also be updated to allow other environmental remediation initiatives to be implemented in the Township.

The Township Council approved a by-law designating the Township's settlement areas as Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPAs) on Wednesday July 5, 2017. This by-law allows Council to prepare a plan which 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.

2.0 Planning Context

The Township of Whitewater Region is experiencing slow growth in its villages and hamlets. Many existing buildings are older and in need of repair and improvement. The County of Renfrew has experienced moderate growth in population which has been influenced and shaped by the county's proximity to the City of Ottawa and its neighbouring municipalities. The Township's aging municipal infrastructure continues to be a high prioritized area of on-going improvement and upgrades.

3.0 Legislative Authority

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**, **County of Renfrew Official Plan**, **Municipal Act, 2001**, **Ontario Heritage Act**, and the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**.

4.0 Policy Review

4.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The **Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)** 2014 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 Community Improvement Plan will supplement and further support the policies and objectives in the **Provincial Policy Statement** put forward by the Province of Ontario.

In regards to Community Improvement Plans, the **Provincial Policy Statement** does not specifically reference community improvement planning but does outline policies that focus growth and development in settlement areas and recognize the importance of rural areas to our quality of life and economic success. The PPS supports healthy, integrated and viable rural areas by leveraging rural assets and amenities while protecting the environment as the foundation for a sustainable economy. The PPS also includes rural policies that support: the promotion of recreation, tourism, and other economic opportunities; development that is compatible with the rural landscape; and the promotion and protection of agricultural uses, on-farm diversified uses, and normal farm practices.

4.2 Planning Act

The Planning Act governs land use planning in the Province of Ontario. Under Section 28 of the **Planning Act**, single-tier, lower-tier and upper-tier municipalities in the Province of Ontario are authorized to implement and approve Community Improvement Plans. Prior to 2007, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing was responsible for the approval of community improvement plans; however, the Ministry now serves an advisory and consulting role for municipalities wishing to pursue community improvement planning.

Section 28 of the Planning Act legislates the implementation of Community Improvement Plans including the granting of powers to local municipal governments for the issuance of grants and/or loans subject to requirements for the preparation of a CIP, public consultation, the designation of community improvement areas, amendments to CIPs, and the appeal process to the Ontario Municipal Board.

A **Community Improvement Plan** is defined in the **Planning Act** as “a plan for the community improvement project area”. **Community Improvement Project Areas** are defined as “a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community of which in the opinion of council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, and unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”.

Under Section 28(1) of the **Planning Act**, **Community Improvement** is defined as “the planning or re-planning, 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 therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary” and includes provisions for affordable housing under Section 28(1.1).

The Community Improvement Plan does not address affordable housing at this time, but could be amended in the future to include incentives in order to create more affordable housing options in mixed use developments. The County of Renfrew is the provincially designated service manager for housing and homelessness programs and has adopted a 10-year plan (2013), which contains goals and objectives.

Under Section 28(3), municipalities are authorized to acquire land within the community improvement project areas, hold land, as well as clear or grade land in the preparation for community improvement.

Under Section 28(6), the Township may construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by it in the community improvement project area in conformity with the community improvement plan, and sell, lease or otherwise dispose of any such buildings and the land appurtenant thereto.

Under Section 28(7), municipalities are authorized to provide grants and loans for the purpose of community improvement planning to registered owners, assessed owners and tenants of lands and buildings with respect to the community improvement plan that has come into effect.

Under Section 28(13), Council is authorized through by-law to dissolve the community improvement project area when they are satisfied that the community improvement plan has been carried out.

4.3 County of Renfrew Official Plan

Section 15.4 of the **County of Renfrew Official Plan** (Community Improvements) establishes the provisions for the development and implementation of Community Improvement Plans for lower-tier municipalities in the County of Renfrew. The Community Improvement Policies designate the Urban Communities, the Village Communities, and the Rural Hamlets in the County of Renfrew as Community Improvement Areas as shown on Schedule 'A' of the County Official Plan. The Community Improvement policies also establish policies for the preparation of community improvement projects.

Any changes to the **County of Renfrew Official Plan** with regards to the program criteria and/or community improvement project areas will require an amendment to the County Official Plan. Phase Two of the Township Community Improvement Plan will require an amendment to designate the entire Township of Whitewater Region as a community improvement project area. An amendment will also be required to allow for programs and projects not currently within the community improvement plan provisions such as value-added agriculture, water quality improvement, septic system remediation, shoreline protection and remediation and waterfront redevelopment.

4.4 Municipal Act, 2001

The **Municipal Act, 2001** under Section 106(1) prohibits a municipality from assisting directly or indirectly any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the granting of bonuses. Under Section 106(2), the municipality shall not grant assistance by:

- a) giving or lending any property of the municipality, including money
- b) guaranteeing borrowing
- c) leasing or selling any property of the municipality at below fair market value or
- d) giving a total or partial exemption from any levy, charge or fee.

Section 106(3) allows an exception to permit Council to exercise its authority under Section 28(6), (7) or (7.2) of the **Planning Act** with respect to community improvement planning.

Section 107 of the **Municipal Act, 2001** provides municipalities with the authority to make and provide grants for purposes that council considers appropriate to any person, group or body, including a fund, within or outside the boundaries of the municipality for any purpose that council considers to be in the interests of the municipality. Section 107(2) provides additional provisions including:

- a) to guarantee a loan and to make a grant by way of loan and to charge interest on the loan;
- b) to sell or lease land for nominal consideration or to make a grant of land;
- c) to provide for the use by any person of land owned or occupied by the municipality upon such terms as may be fixed by council;
- d) to provide for the use by any person of officers, employees or agents of the municipality upon such terms as may be fixed by council;
- e) to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of at a nominal price, or make a grant of, any personal property of the municipality or to provide for the use of the personal property on such terms as may be fixed by council; and
- f) to make donations of foodstuffs and merchandise purchased by the municipality for that purpose.

In addition, under Section 365.1 of the **Municipal Act, 2001**, municipalities are authorized to provide property tax assistance to eligible properties through the cancellation or deferral of the municipal portion of property taxes. The deferral of municipal property taxes is provided to eligible property owners and tenants of commercial and mixed-use buildings who have engaged in improvements and/or repairs where improvements have increased the assessed value of the property taxes associated with the property.

In Phase Two of the Township Community Improvement Plan, an improvement and rehabilitation grant program for brownfield properties will be considered as one of the financial incentive programs. The **Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP)** is an initiative offered by the Government of Ontario to encourage the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield properties. The program provides provincial education property tax assistance to match municipal property tax assistance for the cleanup of eligible brownfield properties. The Province may cancel all, or a portion of the education property taxes of a property for up to three years. The implementation of a brownfields property rehabilitation grant program as well as the **Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP)** will support and encourage brownfield property improvements in the Township of Whitewater Region. It will require an application from the Township to the Province and will be considered in Phase Two.

4.5 Ontario Heritage Act

The **Ontario Heritage Act** came into effect in 1975 and was developed to provide municipalities and the provincial government with powers to preserve the heritage of Ontario. The purpose and focus of the **Heritage Act** is to protect heritage properties

and archaeological sites in Ontario. The Heritage Property Improvement Grant program was developed to ensure the preservation of properties with cultural heritage value or interest by providing assistance for maintenance and repairs. Although there are currently no designated heritage properties within villages and hamlets, the program will help ensure that properties that are designated heritage, cultural, or historically significant in the future will be protected and preserved. The MacDonalld Burial grounds is designated under Part IV of the Act and located outside the project area for Phase One, but may be considered in the Phase Two Community Improvement Plan.

An additional tool outside of a Community Improvement Plan is the Heritage Property Tax Relief program provided to properties designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. At this time, a by-law has not been enacted to authorize such a program.

4.6 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** is legislation that was passed in 2005 and serves to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people living with disabilities. The **AODA** applies to both public and private sector organizations in Ontario with one and/or more employees that provide services, goods, and facilities. The Township Community Improvement Plan – Phase One includes municipal driven and financial incentive programs that will help address issues of accessibility in the Township. The Accessibility Improvement Grant program was developed to provide assistance to eligible property owners and tenants of commercial, mixed-use, and institutional buildings with accessibility improvements. Municipal-driven programs such as infrastructure improvements will focus on repairing of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and roadways which will improve accessibility throughout the Township for those living with disabilities.

5.0 Public Consultation

A statutory public meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at the Municipal Township Office to discuss the implementation of the Draft Township Community Improvement Plan – Phase One including the various programs and strategies. The purpose of the public meeting was to provide an opportunity for Township residents, community members, and businesses to address any concerns or questions regarding the implementation of a Township CIP. Additional public consultation will be conducted at a later date to review and obtain public input on draft policies and programs for Phase Two of the Township CIP and to roll out programs for Phase One.

6.0 Goals and Objectives

The establishment of Community Improvement Plan goals and objectives will ensure that steps are made towards achieving community improvement targets set forward by the Township of Whitewater Region. The development of goals and objectives will be an ongoing process with residents and businesses as a means to determine whether targets are achieved.

The following goals and objectives are proposed as part of the Phase One Community Improvement Plan for the Township of Whitewater Region:

1. Identify and improve municipal infrastructure to enhance the quality of life for Township residents, visitors, and tourists to the Township.
2. Enhance and improve the public realm and streetscape for residents as well as visitors, and tourists to the Township.
3. Identify and upgrade existing signage in the Township to allow for easier navigation and wayfinding throughout Township communities for residents, visitors, and tourists.
4. Promote and encourage a healthy active lifestyle through minimizing and removing barriers to accessibility while encouraging walkability and universal access throughout the Township for all.
5. Foster economic development by encouraging the redevelopment and improvement of business and commercial corridors throughout the Township.

7.0 Application Process

Property owners and tenants seeking to apply for a financial incentive program must submit a Community Improvement Plan Phase One application form in person, electronically or by mail to the Township Office. In addition to the main application form, applicants are required to submit supporting documents such as contracts, professional drawings, renderings, and cost estimates of the project(s) they wish to pursue. Once applications are received, they will be forwarded to the **Township Community Improvement Plan Review Committee** for consideration.

Final decisions on the applications and allocation of funds shall be made by Council on recommendation of the Committee. The applicant shall be afforded an opportunity to appeal the Committee's recommendation to Council. The applicant will be contacted following submission to discuss the next steps and determine whether or not other supporting documents and/or changes are required. Any questions or comments

regarding the Township CIP programs can be forwarded to the Township of Whitewater Region to the attention of the CAO/Clerk.

Applications will generally be received twice annually (spring and fall) or as otherwise determined by the Township with Council establishing the overall funding envelope through the annual budget process. Applications will be reviewed by the Committee and presented to Council for approval.

8.0 Conditions

This document outlines the Community Improvement Plan programs and policies for the Township of Whitewater Region. The maximum amount of eligible grants and loans as well as program policy details listed below are conditional, subject to the approval of an annual budget allocated for a Community Improvement Plan by Council. Additional general requirements of the financial incentive programs are provided within this Township CIP under Section 11 Financial Incentive Programs. This Plan is to be used solely for the purpose of community improvement for the Township of Whitewater Region and thereby does not nullify other provincial policies such as the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, Municipal Act, 2001, Ontario Building Code, Ontario Fire Code, and Planning Act.**

Pursuant to the legislation, the total amount of grants and loans and tax assistance shall not exceed the eligible costs of the community improvement plan with respect to the lands and buildings.

9.0 Community Improvement Project Areas – Phase One

The designated Community Improvement Project Areas in Phase One of the Township CIP include the Village Communities of Beachburg and Cobden, and the Rural Hamlets of Westmeath, LaPasse, Foresters Falls, and Haley Station as shown in Schedule 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', and 'F'. The Head of the Lake (Muskrat Lake) is identified as a hamlet, but is not included in Phase One. **Community Improvement Project Areas** according to the **Planning Act** are defined as “a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community of which in the opinion of council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, and unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”. The CIPAs were identified based on the villages and hamlets already designated as Community Improvement Areas in Section 15.4 of the **County of Renfrew Official Plan.**

1. **Beachburg** is one of two Village Communities in the Township of Whitewater Region that consists of a mixture of land uses with several commercial, institutional buildings, recreational facilities as well as residential homes. Beachburg has one of the two main commercial and business districts in the Township of Whitewater Region. Several of the financial incentive programs may be applied to the area for community improvement planning including accessibility improvements, façade and building repairs, new signage, and parking repairs.
2. **Cobden** is the second Village Community in the Township with Main Street serving as the commercial hub for the community with several commercial businesses established in the area. Cobden is conveniently located on the Trans-Canada Highway (Highway 17). Cobden is comprised of a mixture of uses with several community facilities, public institutions, and residential properties in the community. The use of financial incentive programs may be applied to the area for community improvement planning including accessibility improvements, façade and building repairs, new signage, and parking repairs.
3. **Forester Falls** is one of four Rural Hamlets in the Township and consists mainly of residential properties, some commercial businesses, and institutional buildings. The community is the home to the Ross Museum which was established in 1995 by the Whitewater Historical Society to preserve the Township's heritage and history. The broader area is also home to several whitewater rafting facilities which continues to attract thousands of visitors every year. The application of municipal-driven programs including wayfinding and signage in the area can be used to direct visitors to tourist facilities as well as Township facilities and local businesses.
4. **Haley Station** consists mainly of residential properties. The application of municipal-driven programs and financial incentive programs can be used to further improve the community as well as attract future development.
5. **LaPasse** consists primarily of residential properties with a commercial business and institutional facility located within the community. The hamlet is situated adjacent to the Ottawa River and directly across from Quebec. The application of municipal-driven programs and financial incentive programs can be used to further improve and/or rehabilitate the community through residential façade repairs facing county roads, signage and wayfinding improvements, boat launch and gateway improvements.

6. **Westmeath** consists mainly of residential properties with a few commercial buildings, recreational facilities, community, and institutional facilities. The application of municipal-driven programs and financial incentive programs can be used to further improve the community through infrastructure upgrades residential façade repairs facing county roads, signage and wayfinding improvements, and gateway improvements.

10.0 Municipal-Driven Programs

The Township may effectively demonstrate leadership and initiatives on the redevelopment and improvement of communities and neighbourhoods through municipal driven programs. The purpose of municipal driven programs is to encourage and promote the revitalization and improvement of communities in the Township by engaging in various municipal projects and programs. Township-led projects and programs will contribute to achieving the goals and objectives identified in the CIP.

The Municipal Driven Programs in Phase One of the Township CIP will include projects oriented towards:

1. Improving and enhancing the gateways and entrances into the Village Communities and Rural Hamlets of the Township;
2. Creating a township signage program to further support the signage improvement grant program and wayfinding; and
3. Upgrading and repairing municipal infrastructure.

10.1 Gateway Improvements

The Township may undertake projects to improve gateway entrances into the Village Communities and Rural Hamlets through the replacement or installation of gateway signage, lighting, flower bedding, landscaping, or other improvements that improve the aesthetics of entrances. Further information and options on existing and new potential Township gateways may be gathered following the **First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE)** program. Following the data and information collected from the FICE program, it is recommended that the Township consult with the County of Renfrew and Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) to discuss signage regulation.

The following Township locations have been identified as areas subject for gateway improvements and/or upgrades in addition to existing Township signage:

- Beachburg: Beachburg Rd. and Watchorn Dr.; Beachburg Rd. and Davidson Rd.; and Beachburg Rd. and LaPasse Rd.; Robertson Dr. and Powers Road.
- Cobden: Snake River Line and Main St.; Hwy. 17/417 and Astrolabe Rd.; and Hwy. 17
- Foresters Falls: Forester Falls Rd. and Government Rd.; Forester Falls and Grants Settlement Rd. /Kohlsmith Rd.
- Haley Station: Godfrey Rd.; and Haley Rd.; Hwy. 17
- LaPasse: Gore Line and LaPasse Rd./Lacroix Bay Rd.; LaPasse Rd. (South); and LaPasse Rd. (North)
- Westmeath: Gore Line and Phoebe St.; Rapid Rd.; and Westmeath Rd. (South)

It is recommended that the Township review the existing tourism signage located on the local roadways and county roads designed through the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport Tourism-Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) program and County of Renfrew. A report identifying areas of improvement and/or new signage where required shall be prepared for Council. New signage will allow the Township to display its tourism-related facilities, promote local businesses and other establishments within the area.

10.2 Township Signage Program

The Township will develop guidelines to ensure the installation of new and future signage is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Township CIP. Guidelines will further assist in the organization of commercial signage as well as reduce the clustering of signage on streets such as Main Street in Cobden and Beachburg Rd. in Beachburg.

The program will improve the current wayfinding in the Township by providing individuals with information on landmarks, municipal services, visitor information, and other essential information. The wayfinding signage throughout the Township will include information on:

- Municipal facilities
- Tourist and visitor information center
- Public washrooms, and
- Historical sites and landmarks.



Figure 1.0: The Township's tourist Information booth is open from mid-May to early-September and attracts thousands of visitors every year.

10.3 Municipal Infrastructure Works

The Township will examine existing municipal infrastructure and identify areas in need of improvement, upgrading, and/or repair. By investing and improving in municipal infrastructure, it will ensure that a high quality public realm is made possible for Township communities and its residents. Addressing aging municipal infrastructure in need of repair will help ensure that the Township residents will have access to various quality municipal services and infrastructure. Municipal infrastructure includes but is not limited to water and wastewater treatment facilities, storm drainage, public parks and space, community centers, local roads, sidewalks, and bridges.

Municipal infrastructure improvement projects applicable in the Township may include:

- Repairing of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and roadways
- Improving public parks and recreational spaces and
- Upgrading to existing community facilities
- Improving storm water management facilities.

Municipal projects within the community improvement project areas will be identified annually as part of the budget process.



Figure 2.0: Pedestrian crossings should be made highly visible to both pedestrians and vehicles – Perth, Ontario.



Figure 2.1: Pedestrian crossings should be marked with the appropriate signage – Perth, Ontario.



Figure 2.2: Pedestrian crossings where other uses are permitted should clearly marked – Toronto, Ontario



Figure 2.3: Pedestrian crossings should be designed to enhance visibility and calm traffic – Toronto, Ontario.

11.0 Financial Incentive Programs

Financial Incentive programs encourage and promote private sector investment in the township through various financial supportive programs in improving, repairing, and restoring properties within the community improvement project areas. These programs will assist property owners and tenants within the designated community improvement areas with various projects through grants and/or loans.

Applications for one and/or more of the financial incentive programs must adhere to and satisfy all of the general requirements of the Township CIP including:

- a) Applicants are required to submit supporting documents in addition to the main application form such as copies of contracts, professional drawings, renderings, and cost estimates of the project(s) they wish to pursue;
- b) If applicants are not the registered owner of a property (tenant), they must provide the approval of the registered property owner in writing along with their application in order to pursue one or more of the financial incentive programs under the Township CIP;
- c) Township staff may conduct on-site visits and inspections to the property where the applicant has applied for one or more of the financial incentive programs;
- d) The property must have no outstanding tax arrears or any other charges at the time the application is submitted;
- e) The community improvement projects carried out must be in compliance with the zoning by-law provisions of the Township's hamlets or villages;
- f) Applicants are permitted to apply for one or more financial incentive program at any given period;
- g) Pursuant to the legislation, the total amount of grants and loans and tax assistance shall not exceed the eligible costs of the community improvement plan with respect to the lands and buildings;
- h) Applications for community improvement projects must adhere to the application for planning approvals and/or building permits as well as the Ontario Building Code;
- i) Applications for community improvement projects shall be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Township CIP;
- j) Applications that are submitted for community improvement projects must be true to the approved application. In the event where the project(s) is not consistent with the initial application unless approved by Council, the Township may reduce, defer or cancel the approved financial incentive;
- k) All fees and costs for the project need to be paid up front, then the approved amount will be granted later;

- l) A project may have commenced at the time of the application, but cannot be substantially completed prior to final approval of the application by Council;
- m) If general requirements are not fulfilled as determined by the Township CIP Review Committee, applications will be deemed invalid and applicants will be required to resubmit applications with the necessary documents and/or changes; and
- n) Final decisions on applications and allocation of funds shall be made by Council.

The following programs are available under Phase One of the Township Community Improvement Plan:

1. Accessibility Improvement Grant
2. Building Façade and Property Improvement Grant
3. Heritage Property Improvement Grant
4. Parking and Landscape Improvement Grant
5. Planning Application and Building Permit Grant
6. Signage Improvement Grant

11.1 Accessibility Improvement Grant

11.1.0 Program

The program encourages eligible property owners and tenants to make accessibility improvements and enhancements to existing buildings for those living with disabilities as well as promote universal access. The program will help address issues of accessibility and ensure that residents are able to access commercial and business establishments barrier-free. Identifying, removing, and preventing any barriers for those living with disabilities in Ontario is the mandate for the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** legislated in 2005.

11.1.1 Eligible Costs

The grant will cover the costs associated with improvements and enhancements including:

- The installation of new automatic doors or mechanisms
- New or replacement wheelchair and mobility device ramps
- The widening of entry ways; leveling or repairs to pathways/accesses and stairs
- Or any other improvements designed to improve the accessibility subject to the review of the Township's CIP Review Committee and approval by Council.

11.1.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the costs of improvements and enhancements, up to a maximum amount of \$2,500, whichever is the lesser.

11.1.3 Criteria

The grant is only applicable to commercial, mixed-use, and institutional buildings within the designated Community Improvement Project Areas and therefore is not applicable to residential properties. The improvements and enhancements shall meet the minimum requirements of the **Ontario Building Code 2012** and **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005** as applicable to the property.

11.1.4 Examples of Accessibility Improvements



Figure 3.0: Accessibility ramps ensure that entrances to businesses are barrier-free – Perth, Ontario.



Figure 3.1: Accessibility ramps with handrails allow individuals to access businesses barrier-free – Cobden, Ontario.

11.2 Building Façade and Property Improvement Grant

11.2.0 Program

The program encourages eligible property owners and tenants to repair, restore, and improve the façade or areas of the property that may need rehabilitation in the designated villages and hamlets. The program encourages property owners and tenants to maintain the existing building stock in the designated villages and hamlets through improvements and redevelopment. Improvements will aim to improve the overall aesthetics of the streetscape, support the maintenance of private properties, promote walkability, and encourage activity in communities. Improvements and repairs must adhere to the criteria and guidelines on building façade and property improvements.

11.2.1 Eligible Costs

The grant will cover the costs associated with improvements made to the front, sides, or rear building façades that face onto a public street. It will include:

- The restoration of façade, brickwork, wood, masonry and/or cladding;
- Replacing or repairing entablatures, eaves, parapets, or other architectural features;
- Redesigning of storefronts;
- Art installations and/or murals that are dedicated to the Township's history and culture;
- Or any other improvements as approved by the Township's CIP Review Committee.

11.2.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the construction costs associated with improvements and repairs to a maximum amount of \$5,000, whichever is the lesser. The grant will be provided upon the completion of approved façade and property improvements, repairs, and restoration.

11.2.3 Criteria

The program is applicable to commercial and mixed-use buildings in designated improvement areas (villages and hamlets). It also applies to residential properties in designated improvement areas (villages and hamlets) with façades that front onto County of Renfrew roads or Highway 17 identified in County of Renfrew Official Plan Schedule 'A'. Any façade or building improvements, restoration, and repairs must fall

within the list of eligible improvements. Although program funding is available for residential properties in the designated improvement areas (villages and hamlets), funding will be prioritized for commercial and mixed-use buildings engaged in building façade and property improvements.

11.2.4 Examples of Permitted Building Façade and Property Improvements



Figure 4.0: Repairing architectural features on existing buildings are encouraged – Kingston, Ontario.



Figure 4.1: Maintaining architectural features on existing buildings are encouraged – Ottawa, Ontario.



Figure 4.2: Art murals enhance the aesthetics of a building while enriching a community's history – Pembroke, Ontario.



Figure 4.3: Historical art murals on the side of buildings are encouraged – Pembroke, Ontario.

11.3 Heritage Property Improvement Grant

11.3.0 Program

The program provides eligible property owners with a grant to preserve, restore and rehabilitate properties that have been designated as a heritage property under the **Ontario Heritage Act (1990)**. The program will ensure the preservation of properties with cultural heritage value or interest that is important to the history of the Township by providing assistance for maintenance and repairs.

11.3.1 Eligible Costs

The grant is only available to property owners of heritage designated properties located within the Township's defined Community Improvement Project Area(s). In order to be eligible for the improvement grant, properties must currently have status as a designated heritage property as defined by the **Ontario Heritage Act (1990)**.

11.3.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the costs associated with the undertaking of restoration and rehabilitation projects of heritage properties, up to a maximum amount of \$3000, whichever is the lesser. The grant will be provided to property owners following the completion of restoration and rehabilitation projects as well as upon of the application.

11.3.3 Criteria

The program is applicable only for property owners of designated heritage properties as defined by the **Ontario Heritage Act (1990)**. Heritage properties must be located within the designated Community Improvement Project Areas (villages and hamlets).

11.4 Parking and Landscaping Improvement Grant

11.4.0 Program

The program provides eligible property owners and tenants with assistance for the improvement and repairing of existing property parking areas and landscaping. The grant encourages and promotes safe, green, and aesthetically pleasing parking areas and landscaping that adhere to the guidelines on eligible costs.

11.4.1 Eligible Costs

The grant will assist property owners and tenants of businesses in improving parking areas and landscaping of commercial and mixed-use buildings and properties within the defined Community Improvement Project Areas. The grant includes but is not limited to:

- Parking area resurfacing and paving
- Creating pedestrian buffering zones from vehicular traffic
- Creating accessible parking
- General landscaping improvements with designs that adhere to the guidelines on parking and landscaping
- Or any other improvements subject to the review of the Township's CIP Review Committee and approval by Council.

11.4.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the costs associated with parking area and landscaping improvements, up to a maximum amount of \$3,000, whichever is the lesser. The grant will be provided to property owners or tenants upon the completion of improving parking areas and property landscaping.

11.4.3 Criteria

The program grant is only applicable to commercial and mixed-use properties within the defined project area. The grant will be provided upon the completion of the improvements and the approval of the Township's CIP Review Committee with respect to the criteria and guidelines on parking and landscaping.

11.4.4 Examples of Parking and Landscaping Improvements:



Figure 5.0: Creating a safety buffer between parking areas and pedestrian walkways and areas is recommended – Pembroke, Ontario



Figure 5.1: Tree planting and other landscaping improvements between pedestrian walkways and parking areas creates a safety buffer – Perth, Ontario.

11.5 Planning Application and Building Permit Fee Grant

11.5.0 Program

The program encourages attractive and desirable improvements by providing property owners and tenants with assistance for planning application and building permit fees. The program applies to properties where improvements are being undertaken to existing building properties within the designated community improvement project area(s).

11.5.1 Eligible Costs

The grant will cover the costs associated with planning applications and building permit fees for the repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of commercial and mixed-use buildings. These fees must be paid in full, with the appropriate amount granted back upon approval.

11.5.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the costs of planning applications and building permit fees, up to maximum amount of \$1,000, whichever is the lesser. The grant will be provided to property owners and tenants upon the successful completion of improvements and repairs.

11.5.3 Criteria

The program grant is only applicable to commercial and mixed-use properties within the defined community improvement project areas. The grant will be provided upon the completion of the improvements, repairs, and/or redevelopment activities.

11.6 Signage Improvement Grant

11.6.0 Program

The program grant provides eligible property owners and tenants of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use businesses with assistance to upgrade current signage by installing new attractive signage. The installation of new signage shall be oriented towards pedestrians and sized at a scale suitable to the building and street as well as surrounding business establishments.

11.6.1 Eligible Costs

The grant will cover the costs associated with the installation of new signage including signage canopies and awnings. The Township does not currently have a by-law regulating signs and will develop guidelines to assist applicants in keeping with the following general requirements.

- a) Signage and accessories that are permitted under the signage improvement grant program include:
 - Awnings that display the business name
 - Hanging, perpendicular signs
 - Embossed lettering
 - Overhanging lighting
 - Or any other signage as approved by the Township’s CIP Review Committee.

- b) Signage that is generally discouraged as their character is not suited for the designated community improvement area(s) includes:
 - Backlit, LED (light emitting diode) signage
 - Neon signs
 - Or any other signage that detracts from the architectural features of buildings as deemed by the Township’s CIP Review Committee.

11.6.2 Details

The grant is applicable to 50% of the costs associated with new signage including design, materials, and installation, up to a maximum amount of \$1,000, whichever is the lesser.

11.6.3 Criteria

The program grant is only applicable to commercial, industrial and mixed-use businesses within the defined project areas. The grant will be provided upon the completion of signage installation and approval of the application.

11.6.4 Examples of Signage and Accessories



Figure 6.0: Embossed lettering with overhanging lighting are encouraged – Kingston, Ontario.



Figure 6.1: Hanging, perpendicular signage oriented towards pedestrians are encouraged – Cobden, Ontario.



Figure 6.2: Embossed lettering set on architectural elements enhances a buildings' architecture – Perth, Ontario.



Figure 6.3: Signage awnings displaying business names with overhang lighting is encouraged – Pembroke, Ontario.

12.0 Marketing Policies

The marketing of Community Improvement Plan programs including municipal-driven and financial incentive programs will ensure that residents, property owners, and tenants, are familiar and aware of the programs offered for community improvement planning. Marketing campaigns and strategies shall be developed by the Township following the implementation of the Township CIP Phase One.

The following are a number of marketing practices that will be used to market several of the Township CIP programs.

1. **Township Website and Social Media** – A newly designed webpage for the Township of Whitewater Region is expected to launch in the Fall of 2017, providing an opportunity to advertise the Township CIP and many of the municipal-driven and financial incentive programs. Social media platforms could be used to advertise and market the Township CIP residents which can be used to reach a large demographic.
2. **Newsletters and Pamphlets** – The Township may prepare newsletters and pamphlets for residents, property owners, and tenants containing information on the Township CIP. Township CIP pamphlets may be included in the annual tax bills that are sent out to all township residents including those within the designated Community Improvement Project Areas.
3. **Information Sessions** – The Township may hold one or more workshops and/or open houses for Township residents regarding community improvement planning in Ontario as well as the various municipal-driven and financial incentive programs offered.
4. **Newspaper Advertisements** – The Township may prepare newspaper advertisements in local media marketing the programs of the Township CIP.
5. **Successful Projects** – Where there are successful improvement projects, the Township shall use examples to further promote and market the Township CIP in presentations, reports, brochures, and pamphlets where appropriate.

13.0 Monitoring Policies

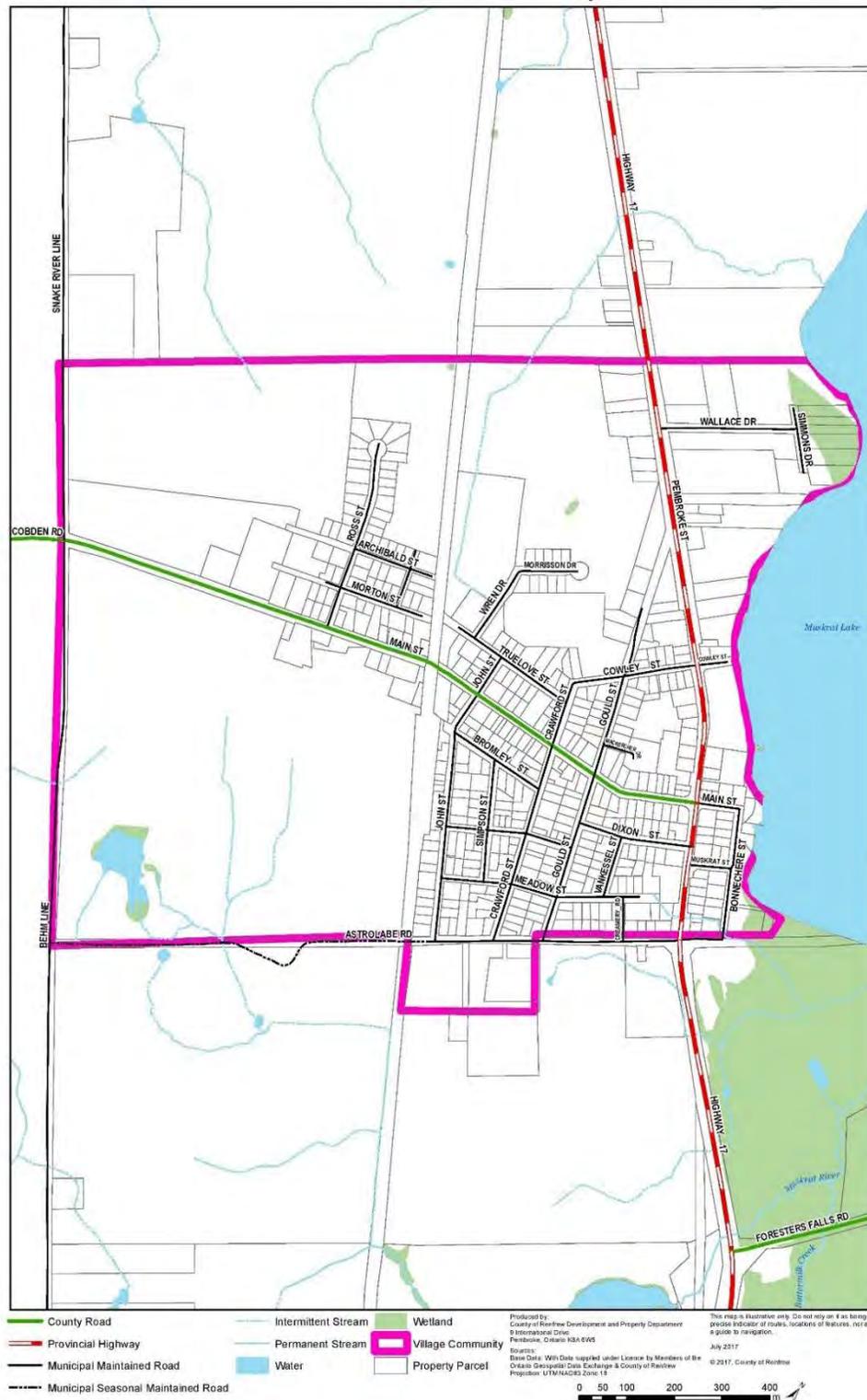
The monitoring of Township CIP programs will ensure that the programs developed by the Township are effective in community improvement planning with regards to the redevelopment and rehabilitation of the Township communities.

Council may direct funding toward programs that receive the most interest/success and stop funding for certain programs.

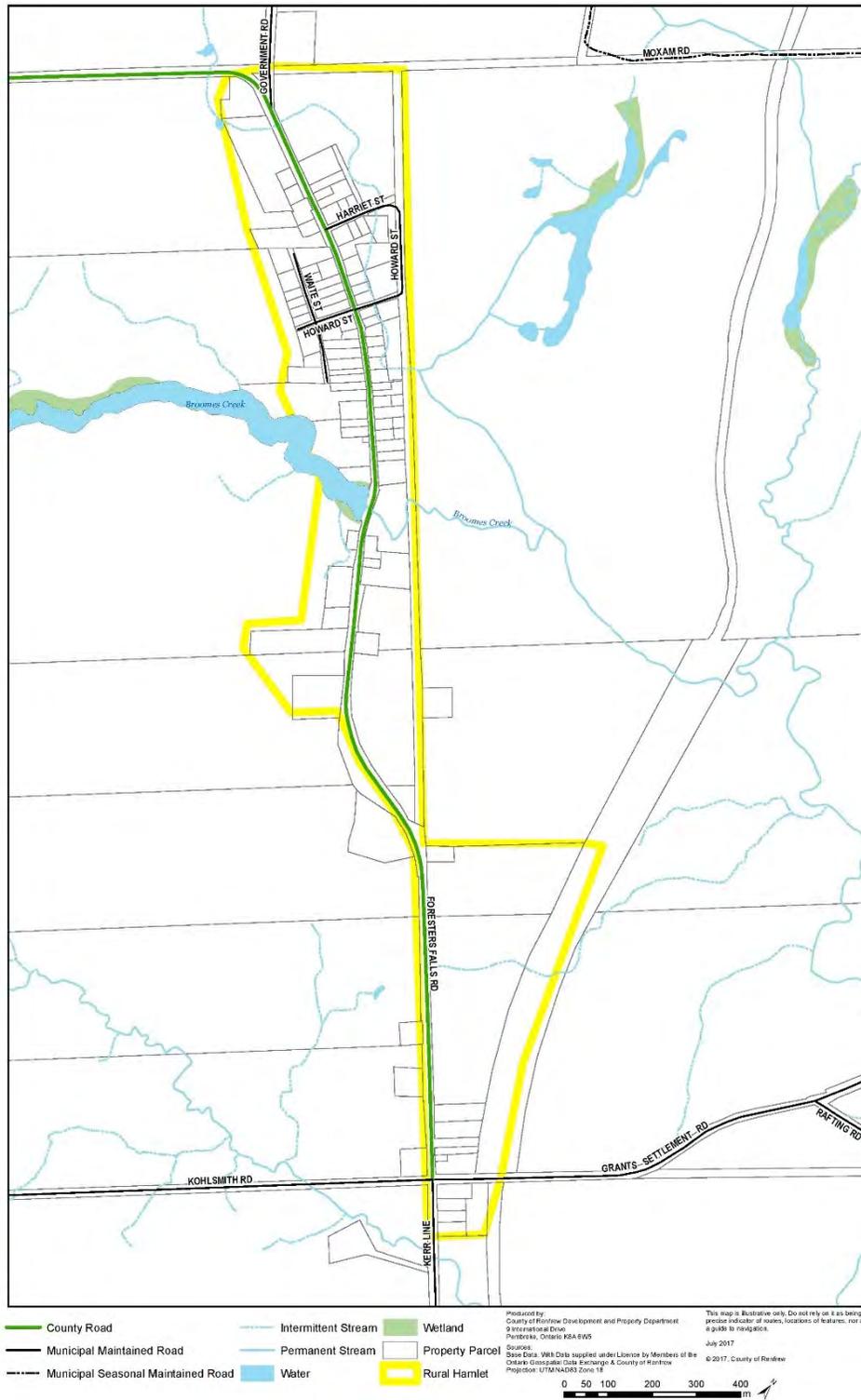
Regular and on-going monitoring of CIP programs carried out by the Township as well as the private sector will ensure the goals and objectives are met.

1. **Annual Report** – An annual Township CIP report will be produced and presented to Council.
2. **Post-Project Evaluation Report** – Following the completion of the community improvement project(s), municipal staff should prepare a project close-out checklist with detailed descriptions of the work completed with any issues that may have arisen during the application process. This information can be used in the preparation of the annual report to Township Council on Community Improvement Plan projects.
3. **Application Database** – A database of past CIP applications can be used to assess the effectiveness of various financial incentive programs with amendments to the Township CIP made where necessary.

14.2 Community Improvement Project Area Schedule B: Cobden



14.3 Community Improvement Project Area Schedule C: Foresters Falls



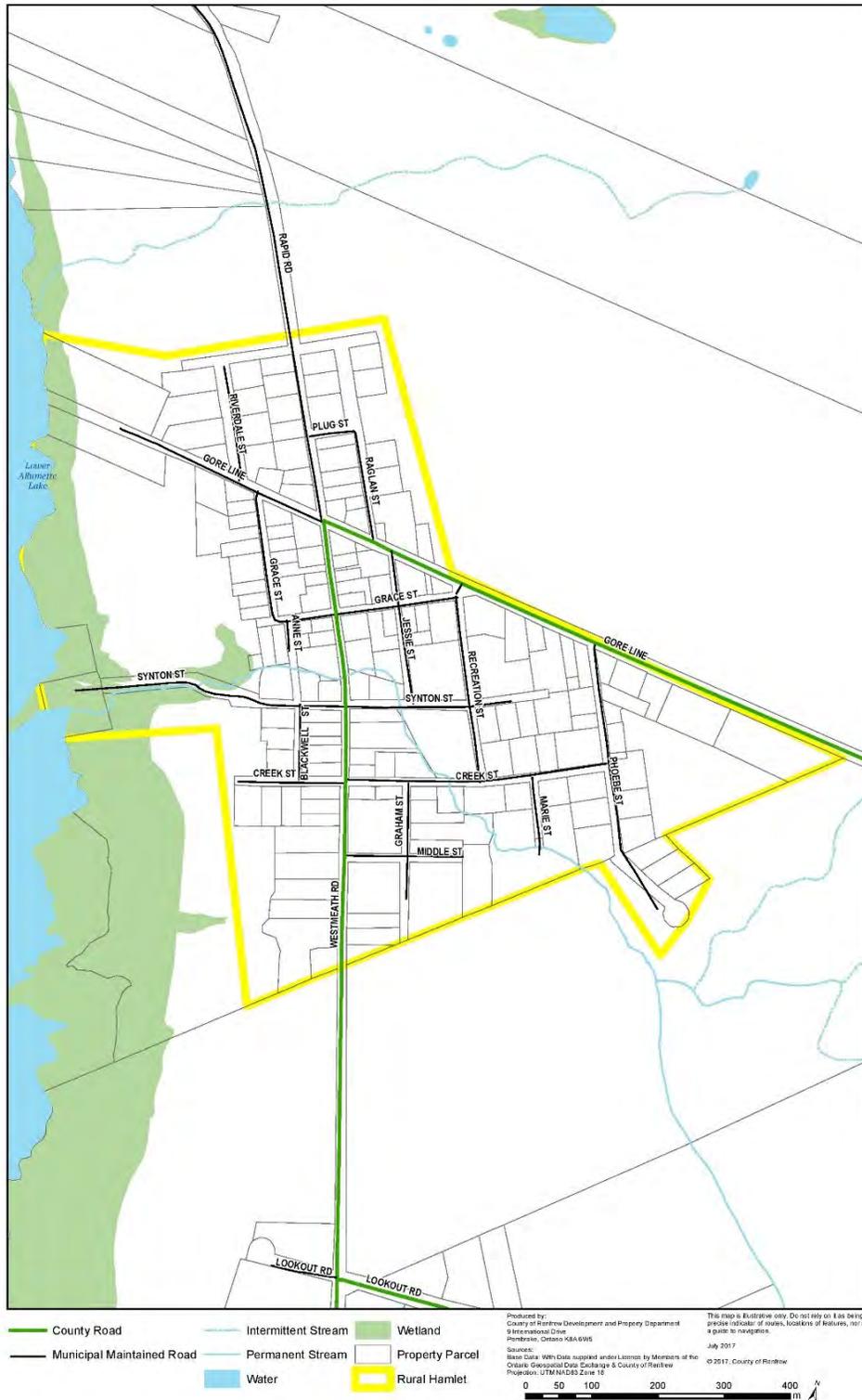
14.4 Community Improvement Project Area Schedule D: Haley Station



14.5 Community Improvement Project Area Schedule E: LaPasse



14.6 Community Improvement Project Area Schedule F: Westmeath



15.0 Concept Renderings



Figure 7.0: Current Main Street storefronts, Cobden.



Figure 7.1: After improvements to Main Street storefronts in Cobden utilizing the Building Facade and Property Improvement and the Signage Improvement programs as well as municipal streetscape improvements.

16.0 Glossary of Terms

Applicant refers to the registered property owner, tenant, and/or assessed owner of lands or buildings within the designated community improvement project area who is authorized under the criteria to apply for one or more of the financial incentive programs of the Township CIP.

Commercial Property refers to land that is being used for the purpose of buying and selling of commodities and services.

Community Improvement under Section 28 of the Planning Act is defined as “the planning or re-planning, 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 therefor, as may be appropriate or necessary” and includes provisions for affordable housing

Community Improvement Plan under Section 28 of the Planning Act is defined as “a plan for the community improvement project area”.

Community Improvement Project Area under Section 28 of the Planning Act is defined as “a municipality or an area within a municipality, the community of which in the opinion of council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, and unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason”.

Council refers to the Council of Whitewater Region.

Brownfield Property refers to vacant or underutilized places where past industrial or commercial activities may have left contamination (chemical pollution) behind, including: factories, gas stations, waterfront properties (port lands) formerly used for industrial or commercial activities.

First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) refers to the program developed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs for communities to gain a new perspective of their town or municipality from first-time visitors to their community.

Institutional Building refers to a building used for non-commercial purposes and operated by an organized body or society for providing a particular service.

Mixed-Use Building refers to a building that is lawfully being used in part for residential purposes as well as in part for non-residential purposes i.e. commercial business at the lower level and residential units above.

Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is an independent adjudicative tribunal that conducts hearings and makes decisions on matters pertaining to land use planning that have been appealed to the OMB under specific provincial legislation.

Residential Property refers to land containing either a single family or multifamily structure that is available for occupation for non-business purposes.

Safety Buffer refers to the separation between pedestrians and vehicles usually through the planting of trees, landscaping, and/or the installation of physical barriers such as fences or planter boxes.

Settlement Areas refers to urban areas and rural settlement areas within municipalities (such as cities, towns, villages, and hamlets) that are: a) built up areas where development is concentrated and which have a mix of land uses; and b) lands which have been designated in an official plan for development over the long-term planning horizon.

Township refers to the Township of Whitewater Region.

Township CIP Review Committee refers to a group appointed by Council comprised of Council members, volunteers and/or municipal staff who are responsible for reviewing Community Improvement Plan applications for recommendation to Council for final approval.