

Main Street Revitalization Initiative

Purpose

The Main Street Revitalization Initiative provides funds to municipalities for implementation of community improvement plans or projects identified in other land use planning documents which help to attract residents and visitors to town centres and downtowns, supporting the business community. The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the allocation of funds to the City through Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative, seek Council authorization to apply the funding to the Town Centre Community Improvement Plan and Public Art in downtown Sudbury, seek Council's direction to authorize staff to enter into a Municipal Funding Agreement with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), and, finally, to delegate the administration of the program to staff.

Background

The Main Street Revitalization Initiative is a \$26 million fund to help governments undertake main street revitalization activities that support and benefit small businesses. The program is being administered by AMO on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). The funding is allocated to municipalities based on population size, and targets small businesses which employ less than 100 paid employees and employ approximate one-third of Ontario workers. The funding will help move projects forward on Ontario's main street, which will help to attract residents, visitors and support the business community.

The initiative is directly targeting the funding of Community Improvement Plans that provide financial incentives, such as the City of Greater Sudbury's Town Centre CIP. As a secondary stream of eligibility, and for those municipality's that do not have existing Community Improvement Plans the Main Street Revitalization Initiative allows for funding of strategic physical infrastructure as identified in municipal land use policy, for example a Master Plan. Greater Sudbury's Downtown Master Plan (DMP) fits within the strategic physical infrastructure stream. The DMP identifies a series of recommendations, including public realm improvements, which aim to improve the level of economic, cultural and retail activity, create a sense of place and reinforce the Downtown's role as the urban centre for the region. As a result, improvements identified in the DMP would be eligible.

Funding

On April 1, 2018 staff were notified that funds had been allocated to the City of Greater Sudbury in the amount of \$172,487 under the Main Street Revitalization Initiative. In order to be eligible, costs must be incurred between April 1, 2018 and March 31, 2020. The City must enter into a Municipal Funding Agreement to receive the funds. The agreement must be signed by June 20, 2018.

Main Street Revitalization Initiative Program Eligibility

Though the amount of funding that the City has received under the program is relatively small, it is a flexible program that can be applied to a wide range of activities as determined by municipal councils.

According to OMAFRA and AMO, work completed under this program can fall into one of two categories:

Implementation of priority financial incentives in existing Community Improvement Plans such as:

- a) Commercial building façade improvements;
- b) Preservation and adaptive reuse of heritage and industrial buildings;
- c) Provision of affordable housing;
- d) Space conversion for residential and commercial uses;
- e) Structural improvements to buildings (e.g Building Code upgrades);
- f) Improvement of community energy efficiency; and
- g) Accessibility enhancements.

Funding of strategic municipal infrastructure such as:

- a) Signage – wayfinding/directional, and gateway;
- b) Streetscaping and landscape improvements – lighting, banners, murals, street furniture, interpretive elements, public art, urban forestation, accessibility, telecommunications/broadband equipment, parking, active transportation infrastructure (e.g. bike racks/storage, cycling lanes and paths) and pedestrian walkways/trails; and
- c) Marketing plan implementation – business attraction and promotion activities, special events.

Projects under the municipal physical infrastructure priority must be identified through a municipal land use planning document. Examples of such land use planning documents in Sudbury would be the Downtown Master Plan, the Official Plan, or other Community Improvement Plans that do not provide financial incentives. The key

criteria, in addition to being identified in a land use planning document, are that projects must be located within a main street or downtown area.

Investment Options

There are eleven (11) existing CIPs covering various areas of the City. The majority of the CIPs recommend public realm improvements (Capreol 2018 CIP, Donovan CIP, Flour Mill CIP, Junction Creek CIP, Junction Creek Waterway Park CIP, Minnow Lake CIP, Ramsey Lake CIP, and West End CIP) , while a few provide financial incentives (Downtown Sudbury CIP, Town Centre CIP and Brownfield Strategy and CIP). All of these CIPs are at various stages of implementation, as are other land use planning documents which may be eligible under this initiative such as the Downtown Master Plan. Two projects identified in the Downtown Master Plan which are currently under construction and slated to be completed this year are the Brady Green Stair and the Elgin Street Pedestrian Tunnel. Many of the projects that are identified in the CIPs and other land use planning documents are unfunded.

Given the small amount of funding allocated to the City and the relatively quick turnaround time, staff looked at a variety of projects and opportunities to add value to projects that are already approved by Council or to fund CIPs that are already in place.

Staff have reviewed and identified a number of projects which would meet the program eligibility criteria and provide significant benefit to the Downtown and Town Centres. The DMP calls for public art. There are two DMP projects that will be completed this year and have mural components that are unfunded. It is proposed that \$10,000 of the Main Street Revitalization Initiative funding be allocated for two murals (\$5,000 per mural), one located at the Brady Green Stair and one located at the Elgin Street Pedestrian Tunnel. Staff recommend that the remaining \$162,487 be allocated to fund the current Town Centre Community Improvement Plan which provides incentives for redevelopment in the town centres of Capreol, Chelmsford, Levack, Flour Mill, Lively, Copper Cliff, and Kathleen Street.

The Town Centre Community Improvement Plan was recently updated as part of Council's Strategic Plan and now features new programs, including incentives to create additional residential units. This new Main Street funding in addition to the existing funding of \$77,907 would enable the City to realize significant change in the City's town centres. It would also provide us with an opportunity to market and promote the program in a similar fashion to the process undertaken for the Downtown Sudbury Community Improvement Plan.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) process would be undertaken in 2018, similar to the EOI process that was run in Downtown Sudbury for the Town Centres. The Main Street

Revitalization funding would augment the existing funding of the Town Centre CIP, which is approximately \$77,907. A total of approximately \$240,394 would be available which would be sufficient to justify undertaking an EOI process which would likely involve an intake period in late 2018 and approval of projects in 2019. With the total amount of funding that would be available to property owners and businesses, the City could realize a significant improvements to the public realm within the City's town centres.

The Main Street program is very flexible. Should there be any unspent funds after the EOI process has been run and results are reported to Council, funds can be reallocated before the March 2020 deadline. Staff would report to Council in early 2019 recommending that unspent funds be allocated for projects identified in existing council approved projects or community improvement plans, such as lighting as identified in the Downtown Master Plan or signage identified in a number of the City's existing Community Improvement Plans. The following table identifies proposed allocation of funds.

Project Title	Project Description	Eligible Project Category (CIP/Municipal Physical Infrastructure)	Estimate of Funds (Main Street) Spent
Brady Green Stair	Mural included in the design of the project	Municipal Physical Infrastructure	5,000
Elgin Street Pedestrian Tunnel	Mural	Municipal Physical Infrastructure	5,000
Town Centre Community Improvement Plan	Fund existing incentive programs	CIP	162,487 Dependent on program uptake
	Street lights	CIP/Master Plan	TBD
	Signage	CIP/Master Plan	TBD

Reporting

Municipalities need to report initial upfront anticipated projects for 2018 and once annually thereafter until all the funds are spent. Adjustments can be made in the annual reporting to reflect actual project amounts spent.

Next Steps and Communications

The next step is for the City to enter into a Municipal Funding Agreement with AMO authorizing the transfer of funds. The funding agreement requires municipalities to identify projects that are anticipated to be undertaken with the funds. Annual reporting and results reporting is also required and can account for changes in the amount of funding allocated or used for each identified project.

The City is expected to acknowledge funding of projects by the Province by inviting them to participate in media events or announcements relate to projects under this program. If the Town Centre CIP is funded, staff propose to hold focus group sessions with property owners, conduct outreach with businesses within each of the eligible Town Centre and advertise the EOI process. After undertaking the EOI process, staff would evaluate and report the results to Council and seek further direction.

References

1. Ontario's Main Street Revitalization Initiative, <https://www.amo.on.ca/MainStreetRevitalizationInitiative>
2. Town Centre CIP, <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/community-improvement-plans/town-centre-cip-initiative/>
3. Community Improvement Plans, <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/do-business/planning-and-development/community-improvement-plans/>
4. Downtown Sudbury Master Plan, <https://www.greatersudbury.ca/play/downtown-sudbury/the-downtown-sudbury-master-plan/>